

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Casa Soberanes Featured

In the February issue of "Antiques" there appear four pages of photographs and an article describing and giving the history of Casa Soberanes at 336 Pacific St. In Monterey. Harold Davis of Hollywood was the photographer and he also wrote the story which accompanied the pictures.

Davis writes: "The Casa Soberanes in Monterey, California, was built in 1840 by Don Jose Estrada ranking officer of the Presidio of Monterey under the Mexican regime and has been lived in continuously ever since. It is from its second owner, Don Mariano Soberanes, that it takes its name, and during his long tenure it acquired historic associations. As his wife was a Vallejo, the house was frequently visited by members of this famous family from the northern frontier.

A mysterious package arrived at my desk a week or so ago, postmarked from Germany. Upon opening, a drawing of Monterey in California appeared. It was without date, but drawn from the bay looking toward the old Custom House, showing the Cuartel at the extreme left and a few other adobe buildings scattered between.

With the package also was a statement from M. Kruger for \$2. Needless to say, we sent the check for that amount off to Germany and kept the picture for the Monterey History and Art Assn. to frame and hang in Casa Serrano.

Mrs. Louisiana Dart, curator of the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society's historical museum in San Luis Obispo writes: "May I again call your attention to the date of the ninth annual conference of California Historical Societies in San Francisco on June 20, 21 and 22. Please, oh please, do not let the committee in Monterey have the annual Adobe House Tour on that date.

"That is something I look forward to every year and would not miss it, rain or shine. I think it is one of the very loveliest occasions in California. Please mention this date to the board of directors, for I do remember one year when the conference and the Monterey Adobe Tour coincided and how heartbroken I was. This is not just selfishness on my part – so many people at

the conference regretted that they had to miss the tour in Monterey."

Did you ever ride on the "Skunk Line," twisting through 40 miles of lovely wilderness area between Fort Bragg and Willits in Northern California, the most unique little railroad known in the West? I did it once and enjoyed the experience thoroughly. Officially, the California Western, the Skunk has been in operation for 75 years and was nicknamed for its old-time gas engines – "You could smell 'em long before you could see em."

In the January issue of Telephone News there is a short story about this fascinating little train.

Running alongside the Skunk are phone lines which connect the area's few residents with the outside world. Telephone men run little motorized rail cars over the Skunk rails. In return for use of the rails, they maintain the magneto phones. "Anywhere" is where the Skunk makes stops, letting off campers and hunters wherever they like. Sometimes they even deliver mail and needed groceries to the families along the line – a most friendly operation if ever there was one.

We made the trip once a few years ago when it was recommended by the California Automobile Assn. when we applied for a marked map to guide us to interesting places on our way to Victoria, B.C.