

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 10, 1963

### **Plan for Island of Adobes**

In historic interest Monterey is to California and the entire Pacific Coast, what Plymouth, Jamestown and Saint Augustine, together, are to the Atlantic seaboard and the East. Monterey's historical heritage is not only of municipal and state, but also of national importance. Monterey was the point where Vizcaino landed in 1602, and claimed California for Spain. It was the capital of the State of California. It was here our State of California Constitution was drawn. Monterey is the mother of history in the West and the first seat of established government in all that tremendous area west of the Rocky Mountains.

Fortunately, many of our old buildings still stand and much of her romantic background has been preserved. Some irreplaceable building are gone, but enough are left to recall the past and the future.

Today the historic buildings that remain in Monterey are found principally in three general groups or areas. It is hoped some day to have these connected by appropriate planting of trees in accordance with Old Monterey Preservation Plan.

All these remarks were made in 1933 by the Old Monterey Preservation Committee composed of S.F.B Morse, Allen Griffin, Carmel Martin and the late Col. Roger S. Fitch. In 1963 the Monterey Planning Commission has again taken up the ideals of preservation and restoration, with Hall and Goodhue as the planning consul.

Recently printed is an especially charming booklet prepared to illustrate and develop the plan for an Island of Adobes in Monterey designating an historic district around the intersection of Calle Principal, Polk, and Hartnell and Madison streets. In this group are a quarter of the city's historical adobes and their gardens, close together, by chance, most of them still in use.

The largest group of three general areas, but the most scattered is that in the neighborhood of the original plaza of Old Monterey and the site of the Old Cuartel, the first seat of U.S. government on the Pacific Coast. (At present the Old Plaza is occupied by a gasoline station, and the cuartel site by another.)

Here the first Presidio was established and the first Presidio church was built in 1770. The present church

has been in use continuously since 1795 and is the only presidio church to survive in California.

This area also includes such buildings as the Casa Abrego, Casa Amesti, (now the Capital Club), Casa de Cooper, Larkin House, House of Four Winds, Stokes Adobe, Casa de la Torre, (first federal court); Gen. Sherman and Gen. Halleck headquarters, Casa Manjares, Casas Guterrez (there are two), Stevenson House, and several other places of historic interest.

At present this area possesses practically no building of over two stories and the opportunity for its preservation and for, in part, its restoration still exists. These will comprise the Island of Adobes.

The smallest of the three groups as reported by the 1933 Old Monterey Preservation Committee, and now by the Monterey Planning Commission contains the Old Custom House, over which the flags of Spain and Mexico successively flew and where in 1846, Commodore Sloat raised the Stars and Stripes and took possession of all California in the name of the United States. This group also includes the First Theatre in California. The First Brick House, the Old Whaling Station; Vizcaino, Portola, and Father Serra Landing Place. Casa Soberanes, Pacific Building and the House of Gold.

The second area contains, as its center, historic Colton Hall, while nearby are the Gov. Alvarado House, the former home of the bandit Tiburcio Vasquez; the Casa de Soto; Casa de La Torre and other interesting and historic buildings.