

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Gutierrez Family

The 1849 map, which is part of the valuable collection of early day records in the Few Memorial Building, lists the Gutierrez Adobe, also known as Casa Gutierrez, as the property of Jacob Leese, a prominent businessman of Monterey in the middle 1800's. It was this old adobe that suffered a fire May 10, now owned by the State of California. It is expected that the state, under the direction of the division of beaches and parks, will restore the building as soon as possible and it will resume its rightful place in the proposed Island of Adobes.

The Casa Gutierrez may have been owned by Thomas Oliver Larkin, for in 1849 he exchanged all his Monterey property for the San Francisco property of Jacob Leese, who had been his partner in the mercantile business in Monterey.

On the 1852 assessment rolls the property was listed in the name of Joaquin Gutierrez and his wife, Josefa Gutierrez, who probably built the house.

Joaquin Gutierrez came to Monterey in 1831 at the age of 16 years. In 1836, he listed as a soldier and his age given as 20 years. In 1842 he was again listed. In the 1840's he married Josefa Escobar, the daughter of Marcelino and Tomasa Escobar. Her father was at one time alcalde of Monterey; in the year of his marriage he made a commercial voyage to China with Santiago Estrada and others. He made a great deal of money and returned to California with many beautiful and expensive possessions. Josefa's mother was born in Monterey. The couple had 15 children, of whom one daughter married and established herself in the home next to her parents after married a Capt. Pray.

In 1852, Joaquin Gutierrez owned the Rancho El Potrero de San Carlos. At that time it was one league square. Joaquin may have been a younger brother of one of the padres who served at the Mission San Carlos and at San Antonio. The fifth generation of the Gutierrez family is now living on the Peninsula, and possibly the sixth.

On June 30, 1954, this news appeared in the Monterey Peninsula Herald: "The State of California yesterday was given title to the Casa Gutierrez at 590 Calle Principal, and another link was added to the chain that binds Monterey to California's historic past.

Members of the Monterey Foundation, which bought the century-old adobe several years ago for delinquent taxes, turned the building over to the State Division of Beaches and Parks during a special meeting on that date.

Actually, the state paid the foundation \$8,580, half of the appraised valuation of the two-story, three-room structure. The foundation, a non-profit corporation which grew out of the Monterey History and Art Assn., in 1945 said it would use the money for future purchase of historic buildings to prevent their destruction.

At the time the foundation said it turned the building over to the state after completing a program of restoration. Meanwhile the state negotiated for purchase of a lot which ended from the rear of the building to Pacific street.

Present at the meeting when the state was given title to the adobe were Miss Margaret Jacks, president; Mrs. W.M. O'Donnell, secretary, G.H. Burnette, treasurer, and Frank Work, J.F. van Lobeen Sels, Allen Griffin, Carmel Martin, R.H. Patridge, Mrs. Harry Lusignan, Mrs. W.R. Holman, and Mrs. Maria Antonia Thompson.

In 1949 when restoration was begun on the structure Mrs. Henry Potter Russell was the president of the Monterey Foundation; Mrs. Margaret Morse was vice-president and Edward Tickle was second vice-president.