

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 31, 1963

Restoring Casa Gutierrez

Restoration work has again started on the Gutierrez Adobe on Calle Principal, after the recent fire, and now will be followed through to completion, according to David Walton, who has established his "Sancho Panza" in the casa a number of years ago. This makes the second restoration that the old adobe building has gone through since the latter part of 1949, when it was purchased by the Monterey Foundation and opened first as a house museum in March of that year. It was the first project of the foundation.

Several years before, the old adobe building was to be sold for taxes and was threatened with destruction to make way for a modern building. A group of interested citizens bought the building and preserved it as an example of Monterey architecture of the early Mexican period.

The restoration was slow, at times, because of lack of funds, because of war years which intervened between the purchase time and the beginning of the repairs when were necessary to make the renovation authentic.

These items were all met and within a few weeks the little house was ready for the next chapter in its life history.

The 1949 map, which is part of a valuable collection of early day records in the Few Memorial Building, listed the adobe building now known as Casa Gutierrez as the property of Jacob Leese, another prominent merchant who had been his partner for a while.

On the 1852 assessment rolls the property is 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 was listed as a soldier and his age given as 20 years. In 1842 he was again listed as Juez Auzilar. In the 1840's he married Josefa Escobar, the daughter of Marcelion and Tomasa Escobar. Her father was one time alcalde of Monterey, who in the year of his marriage 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. Her 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, and another daughter married Captain Fray.

In 1852 Joaquin Gutierrez owned the Rancho El Portero de San Carlos, now owned by the Oppenheimers. At the time it was a league square, Joaquin may have been a younger brother of one of the padres who served the Missions of San Carlos and at San Antonio. The fifth and sixth generations of the Gutierrez family are now living on the Peninsula.

On June 29th the State of California was given title to the Casa Gutierrez at 590 Calle Principal, another link in the chain that binds Monterey to California's historic past.

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

NOTE: The spelling for Gutierrez in the original article was corrected in this transcription.