

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Central Hotel Adobe

The Central Hotel Adobe, often referred to as the Underwood Hotel, was a part-adobe and part-frame, two-story building of 18 rooms, which once stood on Alvarado street on the site of the present Underwood building.

Report has it that the original building was an adobe residence owned by the Vasquez family, parents of the noted outlaw, Tiburcio Vasquez.

In 1865, the property was sold to Dolores Vasquez, a sister of the bandit, for \$600. The next owner was Charles Underwood, who bought it for his town residence.

Underwood, a native of New York state, was a sailor for many years. In the early 1860s he left the sea to become a resident of "California where" " he spent the remainder of his life, and for years was one of the leading factors in the development of Monterey County. He first located on the Los Tularcitos Rancho of 28,000 acres, in the Carmel Valley, where he engaged in sheep raising. In 1868 he contested a claim for the old Spanish grant commonly known as Corral de Tierra, which finally resulted after 11 years of litigation, in judgment' for Underwood.

That same year Underwood founded the Central Hotel in Monterey by adding to the old Vasquez adobe which he had purchased. With the assistance of his wife he managed the hotel for many years, until 1876, when he went to San Francisco and engaged in the wholesale piano business. Returning to Monterey about three years later, he rebuilt the hotel. As he was also operating his ranch, Underwood leased the hotel for a while.

In 1884 he retired from, farming and again took over the management of the hotel, until 1886, when it was leased to William Tibbetts.

Tibbetts was a pioneer resident of California, having arrived in 1852, moving to Monterey County in 1873. He also engaged in sheep raising in the Carmel Valley. Later, Tibbetts was a hotel manager in Aptos, mined gold there, and returned to Monterey in 1880.

After Tibbetts gave up the management of Central Hotel, Alex Underwood, son of Charles Underwood,

who was also connected with the Underwood-Brown adobe, now the city manager's office, took over the hotel management, continuing in this capacity for many years. His sister, Mrs. A. W. Brown, succeeded him.

In 1911, Underwood had the old hotel building torn down, and in 1914 he erected the steel and brick building now known as the Underwood Apartments. So ended the existence of another of Monterey's old adobes.

Until the building was razed in 1911, the Central Hotel was said to be the oldest hotel in continuous operation in Western California, south of Sacramento.

The register in 1883 showed guests registered from many places now out of existence, or at least very seldom, heard of: Slack's Canyon, Hungry Hollow, Gold Hollow, Jackass Gulch, Yube Dam, Happy Valley, Hangtown, Sow Creek, Bixby Mill, Tar Flat, Salinas City and Camp Capitola. (