

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Adobe Tour Date Set

Think of the way Monterey would look today if the residents of a comparatively few years ago had had the foresight to save and restore their adobes for this generation to love and admire, and to appreciate the immense amount of history represented in each and every one. Think of the millions of dollars that have been spent to restore Williamsburg, Va., yet Mr. Rockefeller and his advisers probably had less to start with than we had in Monterey in the early 1900s. But our old adobes have disappeared one by one throughout the years. There are more than 40 still standing, a number of which will be opened for the annual adobe house tour given by the Monterey History and Art Assn., on May 9.

On the west side of Calle Principal, north of Jefferson, near the present site of the Montgomery Ward building, once stood the adobe home occupied by one of Monterey's leading citizens, James Watson.

The exact date of the building of the house is not known, but it is shown on the map of 1849. On the assessment rolls of 1851, it was assessed to Watson for \$2,200.

James Watson, also known as Santiago, the Spanish for St. James, was an English sailor who left a whaling ship at Santa Barbara and came to Monterey by land in 1823 or '24. Here he located and engaged in merchandising, becoming identified with local public matters. He was one of about 50 citizens to organize a complete extranjera (meaning company of strangers) for the defense of Monterey against forces from the interior, when, in 1832, the country was in a state of warfare. He was naturalized in 1833, a lot was granted to him in 1835, and in 1856 he purchased a house from Luis Beltram.

In 1837 Watson sold the house to John Casimiro Fuller, an English sailor, who arrived in Monterey in 1823; on the "Rover." Two years later, Fuller retransferred the house to Watson. Fuller, who was a butcher and cook, moved to San Francisco, where he died in 1849.

From 1836 on, Watson was often a member of the Ayuntamiento. Thomas O. Larkin writes of him as "an educated, unambitious, honest man, not inclined to politics." He became a prosperous merchant and

amassed a fortune. In 1850 he bought the San Benito rancho, consisting of a league and a half, and there he moved his family, consisting of his wife and eight children. He was financially ruined by the drought in 1863 and died the following year.

Thomas, one of his sons, was a well-known cattle buyer, and served as Sheriff of Monterey County for four successive terms, commencing in 1866.

There is little evidence left of the old adobe home, except traces on the rear of the property.

In the early 1850s a small adobe was erected on Alvarado street by Andrew Randall, who arrived in Monterey in 1847, as a gunner on the U.S.S. Portsmouth. In the records of 1859, Randall is mentioned as a doctor and a scientist. In 1853 he was apparently the claimant of several ranches. In 1851 the house often referred to as the "Calaboose," was assessed to Randall for \$2,500. He was also the owner of a small residence on Van Buren street then known as Spence street. It was on a lot 15 by 69 varas.

Honore Escolle a Frenchman who came to Monterey when he was 21 years of age, in 1856, and started the first bakery, purchased the property now known as the Stokes adobe. Escolle later on imported from France an artisan to assist him in making experiments in pottery. Escolle was the first person in California to make pottery and his original kiln still remains in the rear of the house, in a state of good preservation. There is a very excellent example of this pottery now in the Custom House museum, presented by Mrs. Jane Todd.