

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Beautiful Gonzalez Residence**

An adobe residence, now non-existent, once stood on the southwest corner of Fremont and Abrego streets. On the map of 1849 it is shown as occupying a space 100x80 varas. In 1851 and 1855 the assessment records read: one house assessed to Theodoro Gonzalez, \$1000.

In later years the town of Gonzales was named for Theodoro Gonzalez, although the latter "z" was changed to "s."

Theodoro Gonzalez, according to Bancroft, came to Monterey from Mexico in 1825. He was licensed to hunt otter in 1833, and in 1836 he became regidor and acting alcalde in Monterey, during the troubles with Governor Chico. In 1836 he was granted Ranchos Rincon de la Puente Del Monte; an area of seven leagues, and Sur Chiquita. He was 30 years of age at that time and his wife was Guadalupe Viliarnel de Rico.

Theodoro Gonzalez was alcalde of Monterey in 1837; lived in Buenavista in 1840; was juez de paz in 1842-43 and was de policia (police) in 1846. He became a man of great wealth and good standing in California and in 1879 gave Bancroft much of the information contained in his California histories, regarding the Revoluciones de California. His death occurred a few years later.

Theodoro Gonzalez built for his family in 1831, one of the most beautiful adobe homes in Monterey, famous for its gardens. It was said to have had also one of the best libraries in this part of California.

The Monterey History and Art Assn. is the recipient of many valuable and historical gifts coming from Mrs. Winifred Wolf of Gonzales, a granddaughter, some of which are in the Stevenson House and others in the Casa Serrano. In 1950 Mrs. Wolf gave two large photographs of her grandparents, Theodoro and his wife. There is the signature of K. Iverson Booth on the photograph of Dona Guadalupe. If the two, the same size, could be hung at the south end of the sala on each side of the antique Stevenson cabinet, they would be seen by all those who visit the building.

For several years, the gate was not there, and the tourists could enter the grand sala, but not too long ago someone sat on the antique Spanish couch and broke several inches of the old caning. This couch and the six matching chairs are on loan from the Monterey History

and Art Assn. So, because of the thoughtlessness of a visitor, the gate had to be replaced. Needless to say the visitor did not report the damage done.

In the same room is a very old piano which once belonged to the Soberanes family and was in the Casa Soberanes sala. There is also a very old, and interesting Spanish table and two matching chairs in this large room, also loaned by the History and Art Assn. The wooden floor in this sala is original and is very beautifully kept by those in charge.

Don Rafael Gonzalez was the original owner of the Stevenson House and that is one reason why Mrs. Wolf thought when she gave the pictures, that they should hang in the sala there. Mrs. Wolf now lives in the old family home in Gonzales. The Gonzalez family gave the land for the first school and the townsite and supported the development of the town.