

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 4, 1964

Gomez And Garcia Adobes

Rafael Gomez was a Mexican lawyer who came to California in 1830 as "asesor" or legal adviser to the government. As a supporter of Governor Victoria, or rather of his legal opinions in criminal cases in 1831, he excited considerable opposition among the Californians and tried to escape after Victoria's downfall, but fled and was not molested. He was the grantee of the large Tularcitos rancho in Cannel Valley in 1834; became regidor (governor) of Monterey in 1835; was a member of the diputacion in 1836, and at this time was also appointed general agent to Mexico, but did not go. At this time, he was only 36 years of age.

On Alvarado street, north of Adelida street (Franklin), once stood an adobe owned by Rafael Gomez. In 1851 the property was assessed to the estate of Gomez for the sum of \$750. The assessment also shows ownership of other property on Alvarado street, north of Adelida, being opposite another lot owned by Gomez and occupying a space 66 by 50 varas.

Gomez was a man of quite some education, inclined to be literary, and his "Diario de Cosas Notables de 36" has proved to be of some value to historians. A short time after this effort was completed, he was accidentally killed at his rancho, becoming strangled in the reata of a horse.

Don Rafael was a man of good character and a lawyer of ability, who came to California in reality as a kind of political exile.

The old adobe building on Alvarado street has long been displaced by a business building.

This information was acquired from Bancroft's History of California and the records of the Monterey Assessor's office.

On the west side of Van Buren street, formerly Spence street, at the intersection of Jackson street, there stood until a few years ago the shell of a two - story, abandoned building, re-enforced with concrete. We always referred to it as "the chalk - rock house", and the History and Art Association and many citizens tried to save and restore it, but it was torn down and now there is no evidence of its ever being there.

This large residence was supposedly erected between 1848 and 1850 by Francisco Garcia, a native of Mexico, who arrived in Monterey in 1836, at the age of 34. In 1842, he was grantee of a rancho in Monterey County, and in 1845 grantee of another in Santa Clara County. Garcia was Juez (Judge) at San Feliciano, 1845-1846.

However, the actual work of building the house was done by a German man, with the understanding that one of Garcia's daughters would become his wife, and for this favor the price of erecting the building would be \$13,000. The daughter refused to marry the carpenter, so he charged Garcia \$18,000.

A. Rosales, who married into the Garcia family became the owner in later years.

Andrew J. Molera, owner of the Big Sur and Toro ranchos and who died in 1931, owned the property for years and at his death Miss Frances Molero, his sister, became the owner.

For years, the house was unoccupied and in years past entire families of Mexican itinerants would camp there.

According to an advertisement in 'The Monterey Democrat' of April 18, 1868, J. Santos was opening a hotel in the Molero chalk rock adobe on Van Buren street. The opening was scheduled for April 23, 1868, the name to be Bay View House. In addition to clean, entirely remodeled rooms, warm meals were to be served to order at any hour.