

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 8, 1964

### **Ancient Ledgers Amusing**

There are several amusing items listed in the account books of the firm of Curtis and Conover, one of the first of the stores established in Monterey, in 1853. These books were presented to the Monterey History and Art Association by Mrs. Millie Birks a number of years ago. She had had them in her possession and safekeeping these many years.

There is the account headed Democratic Committee. Only one charge is listed in the account: "20 gallons of whiskey at \$1.40-\$28.00." And there is no record of the amount ever being paid. In spite of the 20 gallons of whiskey the Democrats must have lost. The charge was made Sept. 5, 1854,

There is the account of Capt. Davenport from whom launches were hired to go out to the schooners and steamers, and who supplied wood for the ships also. His initials were I.P. or J.P. It is supposed that he is the same Captain Davenport who was head of one of the early whaling companies.

In August 1859, David Jacks and M.C. Irland subscribed \$20 and \$5 respectively to "The Camp Meeting." David Jacks paid \$22 for 44 fruit trees in 1859. S. Gordon bought two panel doors, which shows that the store sold everything and anything.

Beginning with the spring of 1859, the Wharf Company is recorded and by October of the same year was sufficiently successful to pay dividends to Jacob Leese, J.R. Comfort, and to the firm of Curtis and Conover. The wharf also paid taxes amounting to \$35.28.

There were two wharves in Monterey at the time. Henry De Groh (later spelled De Graw) had a wharf in the early 1850s from which planking was shipped for San Francisco wharves. Henry De Graw was also one of the early sheriffs of Monterey County.

Isaac B. Wall, who was murdered on November 9, 1855, and who had been the lighthouse keeper at Point Pinos, had been a representative from the Monterey district to the State Assembly in the third and fourth legislative sessions (he had been one of the customers at the Curtis and Conover store.) These sessions had been held in Vallejo and Sacramento. In the fourth session he was speaker of the assembly. The California Historical

Society Quarterly printed a group of letters of O.C. Wheeler, and he had the following to say:

"Mr. Wall has exceeded the expectations of his warmest admirers and returns to his constituents wreathed with laurels of which they are unitedly proud." Immediately after the fourth session Mr. Wall became Collector of the Port of Monterey, May 28, 1853.

P. K. Woodside, who had an account in the store ledger A, was the engrossing clerk for the third session of the Senate in 1852, and also was clerk of the Supreme Court in 1853.

There is a complete story behind the name of Delos Ashley, whose account is found in the first ledger. He was district attorney of Monterey County in 1852, state assemblyman in the fifth and sixth sessions, and state senator in the seventh and eighth sessions of the legislature from Monterey. He also served as state treasurer 1862-1863. He was the son of the famous Ashley who helped to open the West and was an employee of Jeb Smith.