

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 28, 1964

Old Real Estate Deal

The Monterey History and Art Assn. has in its file the acknowledgement of sale of a piece of property on Calle Principal, dated Dec. 1, 1857.

It bears the signatures of Jacob Leese, Joaquin Gutierrez, James H. Gleason and the seller of record, Graciano Manjares.

The document, in longhand on blue-lined paper, relates that Manjares, "the party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of 350 and 59-100 dollars ... has bargained, sold and conveyed unto Alexr. S. Taylor all that certain piece or parcel of land measuring on Calle Principal ... 24 varas (a vara is slightly less than a yard) more or less in width and running back toward Colton Hall 32 varas more or less, being all of the lot of land of Jacob Leese and that of Joaquin Gutierrez, together with the house and all and whatever improvements thereto, the said property being my property derived from the town of Monterey."

According to city records, A.S. Taylor sold the property on June 25, 1860, to Doroteo Ambris, who sold it Dec. 24, 1860, to Petronio Ambris, who, on the same day, transferred it to John Miller, father of the late Dave Miller who lived in Monterey, until his death a few years ago.

The adobe house and land described in the document are now owned by Audrey Wittell Godwin and are part of the adobes known as the Gutierrez property, a state historical landmark. The restoration was done by the Monterey Foundation.

The original owner, Graciano Manjares, was a native of Mexico and grantee of the Saucito Rancho in 1836. In 1842 he became juez auxiliar, or assistant judge. Other judges of the period were Joaquin Gutierrez, 1842; Panfilo Soberanes, head judge in 1843; James Watson, regidor (councilman) in 1844, and Feliciano Soberanes, second judge, in 1845.

In closing his "Three Years in California" (1846-1849) Walter Colton, the builder of Colton Hall, pays the following tribute to his fireside friends in Monterey:

"David Spence, from the hills of Scotland; W.E.P. Hartnell, from England, the best linguist in the country;

Don Manuel Dias, a native of Mexico; James McKinley, from the Grampian Hills.

"Don Manuel Jimeno, once secretary of State; Milton Little; Don Jose Abrego; J.P. Leese from Missouri, whose wife was a sister of General M.G. Vallejo; James Watson, born on the Thames; Charles Wolter of German origin; Governor Pulacio of Lower California.

"J.P. Dye, a partner of Thomas O. Larkin; James Stokes, from England; Senor Severanez, whose saloon is lit by eyes bright as nuptial tapers, and where the Castilian flows soft as if warbled by a bird; Padre Ramirez and the Rev. S.H. Willey, chaplain of the constitutional convention.

"Monterey lost one of its cherished ladies when Mrs. Thomas O. Larkin took her departure. Here for 18 years she had lent her charm to its society. She was the first lady from the United States that settled in California."