

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 11, 1964

A Guided Tour

Let us make the Stevenson House the first stop on our next walking tour to see and appreciate all the beauty in Monterey and its many historical monuments.

The Stevenson House garden may be entered either from Munras avenue, where there is an historical marker, or from Houston street, a short, narrow street between Pearl and Webster streets.

This old two-story adobe is literally a shrine for Stevensonians. Within its adobe walls are many articles of furniture, books of first edition, manuscripts, keepsakes and personal belongings of the beloved writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, given by members of his family to the house where he spent several months in 1879.

In 1937 the adobe was purchased by the late Mrs. Edith C. van Antwerp and Mrs. C. Tobin Clark, now of San Mateo, to save it from destruction and decay. They in turn, presented it to the State of California as a memorial on Nov. 13, 1932.

The house is open every day in the week except Thursday and Friday. It has been of great interest to the Monterey History and Art Assn., which has placed most of the furniture and displays in rooms on the upper floor.

From the Stevenson House, continue to Abrego and observe the Casa Abrego on the corner of Abrego and Webster streets. It is one of the oldest landmarks in Monterey.

The home was built of adobe brick and wood by Don Jose Abrego, a Spanish merchant who came to Monterey from Mexico in 1834 with the colonists under Don Jose Maria Hajar on the vessel "La Natalie," said to have been the vessel on which Napoleon escaped from Elba.

The adobe is now the home of the Casa Abrego Club for women, having been purchased and redecorated by the members in 1956. It is not open to the public.

Casa Pacheco is directly across Webster street from Casa Abrego. It is a men's club serving luncheon each day, and having a swimming pool and other athletic equipment for the benefit of the membership.

This casa was built in 1840 by Don Francisco Pacheco, who came from Mexico in 1819, as a sub-lieutenant of the Mexican artillery, under Jose Ramirez. He later became one of the wealthiest landowners in the county. Pacheco and his wife are buried under the altar of San Carlos Church in Monterey, according to the records.

Continuing south on Abrego and turning left on Church street the next historic building is the Royal Presidio Chapel or San Carlos de Borromeo de Monterey.

This church really had its birth on June 3, 1770, when Father Junipero Serra and Don Gaspar de Portola met at Monterey to establish the mission church, claim California for Spain and name the future city in honor of the Count de Monte Rey, viceroy of Mexico.

The oldest building in the Old Capital is the San Carlos Church. It was to have been the second in the chain of missions, but then when Padre Serra discovered that the Indians were not here, he elected Carmel for the second mission and built Monterey's church for army personnel.

This church was dedicated in 1795 and has served California's beginnings since 1770 without a break. Among the workmen sent from Mexico to build the church was a stone carver, Manuel Ruiz. It is thought that he was the one who carved the little figure of the patron saint of Mexico, the Little Virgin of Guadalupe, high atop the façade.

The walk might continue along El Estero to enjoy and feed the ducks and other water birds, Sit on the lawn to have a luncheon brought from home, visit Dennis the Menace playground and then back to Old Town and home.