

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Old San Jose High School

Various and sundry students of old San Jose High School, when it was situated at San Fernando & Sixth before the 1906 shaker, are getting a great lift out of the latest book by Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt, principal at the time, now 97 and living at 1630 N. Edison St., Stockton, reported Frank Freeman of San Jose. The book is entitled "Boyhood Days of Mr. California."

And in case you are wondering, Dr. Hunt and Mr. California are one and the same. Gov. Goodwin Knight named him that in 1954 because of his stature as a California historian ... He has 18 books, innumerable articles to his credit ... After leaving San Jose High School, he was dean of the Graduate [school] of USC for 25 years; at this time he is president emeritus of the Conference of California Historical Societies ... One of Dr. Hunt's old friends has this to say about him: "His life of educational endeavor has been one of courage, unselfish devotion to his native state as a citizen of honor, integrity, unselfish giving and upright living ... Dr. Hunt is confined to a wheelchair, and writing is very difficult for him, but he wants to hear from his former students."

Dr. Hunt received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. From 1895 to 1902 he was professor of history and economics at the University of the Pacific in San Jose. After six years as principal of San Jose high school, Dr. Hunt became professor of economics from 1908 to 1920 and dean of the graduate school at the University of the Pacific for an even quarter of a century.

The Monterey Peninsula has been presented with a bronze plaque which once was on the front of an old building on North Alvarado street. It was delivered to the Casa Serrano recently by Dr. Arnold Manor.

The plaque relates this bit of history: "On this spot once stood (1832-1920) the old adobe building known as the Federal Headquarters. It was the first building in California to be used (1846) as a governmental headquarters by the United States of North America. Tablet placed in 1912 by A.G. Metz. It was designed by Rowena Meeks Abdy, a prominent artist in Monterey in those days.

The building which replaced the old adobe was the Federal Hotel, now to be demolished by Urban Renewal. At the top of the plaque is a bronze drawing of the building as it looked in 1832.

A chalk-rock two-story house once stood on a lot on Van Buren street between Franklin and Jackson streets. It was a handsome structure and could have been restored if sufficient public spirited residents of Monterey had been interested as most of us are today. The Monterey History and Art Association, at that time a small organization, tried hard to save it but to no avail.

The lot and stone house, belonging to the estate of A.J. Molera, had to be sold to settle that estate. On August 5, 1939, Miss Frances Molera wrote to Col. Roger S. Fitch, then president of the association, that she had accepted an offer of \$2,599 for the house and lot but that it could be acquired by raising that bid 10 per cent. The building was erected in about 1846, was made of cut stone from Monterey and was the only home made of cut stone in Monterey, of course, excepting the Church of San Carlos.

Van Buren street was then known as Vittoria St. in the 1840's, then as Spence street and lastly as Van Buren street.

The Porterville Historical Society in Tulare County is now receiving materials for exhibit in its museum. The Southern Pacific has given its unused depot to the city and it has been thoroughly renovated and somewhat remodeled.

Members of the Monterey History and Art Association, their friends and tourists are invited to visit Casa Serrano, 412 Pacific street on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1 until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. At present there is an interesting exhibit of small and large boxes. Some are early American, some Oriental and others from European countries. They were all arranged by Mrs. Guernsey Nevius and Mrs. Margaret Hanna Lang. The hostess on duty will be most happy to take guests through the old Adobe, now the headquarters of the Monterey History and Art Association.