

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Fearless Lady

Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Bullock of Mill Valley were unexpected guests recently at Casa Soberanes. They had come to Monterey to see once again the Rodriguez-Osio Adobe building on Alvarado street and to appeal to those in charge not to destroy the old structure, built about 1810.

They also brought a copy of the Santa Cruz Sentinel published in 1963, telling the story of another Rodriguez adobe in Santa Cruz which was given to the State of California by Mrs. Cornelia Hopcroft, last of the Jose Antonio Rodriguez descendants who lived in the long, low adobe on School street continuously for nearly 125 years.

The School street adobe was built as part of the Santa Cruz Mission and first occupied by the family when Roman Rodriguez purchased it after secularization. His father, Jose Antonio Rodriguez, a retired soldier, came to Santa Cruz in 1798.

Still in Mrs. Hopcroft's possession is a Spanish document drawn up in 1850, after California became a state, to establish the family's claim to the home.

In 1957 a drive sparked by the Santa Cruz Historical Society and Assemblyman Glen Coolidge resulted in the purchase of the entire house for a state monument. Mrs. Hopcroft was given a life tenancy.

The late Mrs. Martha Bolton was the daughter of Dona Escolastica Rodriguez de Dye. Her father was Job Dye, an early merchant of Monterey and business partner of Thomas Oliver Larkin, the only American consul to Monterey. He was also a descendant of the Rodriguez family, prominent in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties' history. Mrs. Bolton often told stories of her grandfather's life and tales about her mother's life in Monterey from her memories of activities in the Old Town when she was a very young lady.

She is buried beside her mother, Dona Escolastica, in a tiny private cemetery on a hillside between Jolon and Lockwood in southern Monterey County.

Job Dye, owner of the sailing ships which brought merchandise into Monterey for his store, was much older than his 16-year-old bride, Escolastica, who was

high-spirited and daring as well as lovely to look upon. Mr. Dye liked to show off his lovely wife as they rode about in a carriage.

Her father, Mrs. Bolton related to me, shipped gold dust from the mines, hiding it in the collars of his horses. This dust was often used later in Monterey to fill the cascarones which added to the gaiety of the dances and parties.

Mrs. Bolton was very proud of an authentic story of her mother's winning of a stallion and \$10,000 from Gov. Pio Pico. He had brought the animal from Sonora, and from the headquarters in El Cuartel of the Mexican officers, he let it be known that in his opinion there was not one in Monterey who could ride the horse.

This was said in the presence of Jacinto Rodriguez (builder of the old adobe on Alvarado street), a cousin of Escolastica. The latter heard the story and challenged his statement. Rider of horses since early childhood, she had no fear. Riding the sidesaddle and wearing the long habit of ladies of that day, she mounted the animal.

History tells it, just as Mrs. Bolton told it, that Escolastica rode the animal through the streets to the edge of what is now Pacific Grove. Running with her were several hundred Spanish residents. On her return she rode to El Cuartel, where she made the horse place its hooves on the steps as she saluted the governor.

True to his promise, Pio Pico presented the horse to the lovely and fearless Escolastica, and when Commodore Sloat left for New York, \$10,000 accompanied him on the "Savannah," the gift of the winner.

In return, Sloat sent her a library of 1,000 books. The Monterey History and Art Association acquired 100 of them after the death of Mrs. Bolton.