

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 16, 1965

Colton Journal

"The untiring exertions of Walter Colton for the advancement and prosperity of Monterey have never been made public at home, neither appreciated in California, as would have been the case but for the discovery of gold mines, which absorbed the thoughts and interests of every man in the country.

"Yet the erection of the substantial edifice for the public schools and Town Hall will be an enduring monument to his worth and memory. The building was constructed entirely by the individual exertions of Mr. Colton."

The foregoing paragraph was copied from "The Sea and the Sailor" and "other literary remains" of Rev. Walter Colton, as published by D.W. Evans and Co. in New York in 1860.

As we read this over one-hundred year old account of Colton's trip by sea from the East Coast to Monterey, during which he was the chaplain on the frigate Congress, we picked out bits which applied to Monterey as life existed here in 1846.

On the 27th of June 1847, he wrote from Monterey to his wife and son:

"I will now give you some idea of a planter's establishment in California. A difference of opinion having arisen between two planters, whose land adjoined, about the boundary line, I was called upon, as chief magistrate of the jurisdiction, to go and settle the affair. I said I would be ready on the following Monday.

"On that day about noon, a gentleman called with his servant, who was also mounted and leading two horses. One was white, a splendid animal, with broad chest, slender legs, round shoulders, long, flowing tail and mane, and an eye full of fire, and champing at the bit. The gentleman told me it was for me; I forthwith mounted the horse and my secretary took the other one.

"Four miles took us over the mountain ridge which encircles Monterey. Descending this, we came to a beautiful plain of 15 miles more, with a broad stream running through the middle. We galloped over it and entered a wild, romantic ravine extending 15 miles more, and then emerged upon another rich plain which,

with the one we had just passed, was covered with an immense herd of cattle.

"Here we found another mountain stream and breaking through the forest which overhung it, discovered, on the brow of an elevation which swelled up from one bosom of the vast and verdant plain, a large mansion, whose white portico glittered in the sun."

From his description it has been judged that this was Los Tularcitos Rancho of 26,581 acres, owned in 1834 by Raphael Gomez and confirmed by the U.S. in 1860. It was originally a grant by Mexico. The rancho is now owned by John Marble; Mr. and Mrs. Marble reside there.

The mansion had a main building and two wings, with an intervening portico; the great parlor was in the center. There two ladies amused guests with their guitars. The evening passed away with music and chat. At ten o'clock came supper, "almost fit for a king, but this is always the main meal in California."

He wrote Mrs. Colton that the farm of the don was 15 miles square, in the richest land in California, that he had only 8,000 head of cattle, 1,000 horses and 4,000 head of sheep!

The two ladies of whom Colton spoke were the daughters of the don; their mother, the dona, though aged was still lively. He wrote:

"They made me tell them all about you and Walter. The single lady said if I bring you out here, she would give you the horse I rode; the married one said she would give you 40 cows; the dona said she would give you 500 sheep; the old don said he would give you 1,000 acres for Walter!"

The fourth day Colton and his party returned to Monterey, and he sent the horse back with a rose to its owner.