

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Sherman Rose Garden

On May 26, 1920, forty-six years ago, the Chamber of Commerce of Monterey initiated steps to save the Sherman Rose Tea Garden from destruction. The property, known as the Casa Bonifacio, was purchased by the First National Bank and it was announced that the famous old landmark would be wrecked, a street cut through, and a new bank building erected on the site.

The late Mrs. Louise Dobbins, chairman of the committee, stated that she expected to get subscriptions from all over the state to raise the \$20,000 required to purchase the property. There was a possibility that an effort would be made to form a corporation to take over the property and erect a new hotel on the Tyler street side with the old property on Alvarado street left intact with interior improvements.

All of this did not happen, never-the-less, the famous old house was saved and occupies a charming location on the Mesa in Monterey.

After the death of Senorita Bonifacio on January 5, 1916, the property passed into other hands, and this, the Sherman Rose house, stood in the path of progress on the main street, so it was decided to tear it down.

Thomas Work and the directors of the First National Bank, the owners of the property, published the following notice in the Monterey paper in 1922:

"The First National Bank of Monterey, being about to erect a new bank building on its land commonly known as the Sherman Rose property, hereby offers to give the historic adobe thereon to any civic body which will promptly remove and preserve it, elsewhere in the City of Monterey.

"The Sherman Rose itself is reserved by the bank, which will care for and preserve it in connection with the new building.

"This adobe building was built in 1835 by Jose Rafael Gonzales, a retired lieutenant of cavalry and then the Administrator of the Custom House. In 1860 it became the home of Carmen Pinto de Bonifacio and remained such thereafter during her lifetime, and passed upon her death to her daughter, the Senorita Maria Ygnacia Bonifacio, whose romance with General Sherman (then

lieutenant), is preserved by the Sherman Rose, and there she lived until her death many years ago.

A clipping from the same paper at a later date makes the following statement:

"Restoration Sherman Rose is now made a certainty."

"The removal and reconstruction of the Sherman Rose house is now to be assured through the efforts of J. C. Anthony. Arrangements have been made to take down the old landmark, which is to give way to the march of improvement on Alvarado street (?) and rebuild it on Sherman Lane, between Del Monte Hotel and Monterey. The famous Sherman Rose is to be removed and the house and its surroundings are to be restored as far as possible. This disposition has been favored by many of the civic, art, and women's clubs of Monterey."

The house was removed and stands today admirably restored. It was for several years the home of the late artist, Percy Grey and Mrs. Grey, and now is the home of Mrs. Guy Catlin. One of the Monterey History and Art Association historical markers stands in front of the house. The arbor and Sherman Rose are there.

The reconstruction of the old adobe was the work of the late J. C. Anthony, who took accurate and complete measurements of the entire house, and adobe brick by brick, rebuilt the house according to the scale on the new site.