

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 27, 1966

Charles Underwood Adobe

On April 28, 1949, the members of Junipero Parlor, Native Daughters of the Golden West, dedicated a bronze plaque on the Madison street side of the old Underwood Adobe to the memory of Margaret Underwood Brown.

Members of the Grand Parlor of the Native Daughters, including the grand president of the year, were present to do honor to Mrs. Brown and her descendants.

Mrs. Owen Byles, a native daughter of Monterey and in that year the president of Junipero Parlor, the great grand-daughter of Charles Underwood who bought the old adobe home, now incorporated in the Few Memorial building, was a special guest as were her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brown.

The City of Monterey acquired the adobe in 1926 almost 23 years after the death of Charles Underwood, who had expressed the wish that the property should pass into the hands of the city.

For several years after its acquisition the old building was known by various names, such as "the Brown House", and the "American Legion Headquarters."

In 1927 the late City Manager Randal Dorton announced that thereafter the little house would be known as the Charles Underwood Adobe.

The building, together with its large the holdings in Colton Hall Park and its acquisition, made possible a municipal rose garden which was planted at the corner of Dutra and Madison streets. Later, when the Few Memorial was built, the Underwood Adobe was made part of the Civic Center as it now stands.

The land on which this old adobe is situated was included in the original Monterey City Lands, which totaled more than 27,000 acres granted by the Mexican government and later patented to the city by the United States Government.

It was in 1843 that the site of the Charles Underwood adobe was deeded by the alcalde of Monterey to one Santiago Stokes who put up the older portion of the building. Three-foot adobe walls constructed by Stokes are still intact and good for many years of use.

Later in the same year Stokes sold the property to Jose Maria Sanchez. The deed under which the residence was transferred is a very interesting document.

It describes how Stokes took Sanchez though the place while the new owner opened the doors, pounded on walls, scattered handfuls of dirt about the back garden and performed other ceremonies. Thus Sanchez' title to the property was established without question.

Sanchez died in 1853 and the adobe passed to his heirs. At a public auction held during the next the residence was bid in for \$700 by Bill Roach, the sheriff of Monterey County. At this time both Monterey and San Benito were one, Monterey was the county seat of government.

W.S. Johnson, county clerk, purchased the property for the price of \$700 and Johnson maintained title until 1866 when he sold to Charles Underwood for \$650. From this date until property passed to the City of Monterey in 1926 it was in the Underwood family.