

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Let's Believe

Before a community can sell itself to the world, it must believe in what it has to offer, so may we submit a few facts as to what Old Monterey has to sell to the world, and what she has not yet sold to herself.

- It was the capital of the Pacific Empire from the Rockies to the Sea, from the Oregon line to Mexico, from 1776 to 1849. Every event of major interest or importance between these events or periods began and ended here.
- The capital mission, San Carlos de Borromeo de Monterey de Carmelo, was located within its area. Carmel Mission Basilica, 1771, is still functioning.
- The only presidio church to survive in California is here, the Royal Presidio Chapel of San Carlos de Borromeo de Monterey, 1770.
- The only custom house in the Spanish and Mexican eras, and the first in America. Economic, political and later social center of Alta California.
- The United States began its life in the west in Monterey, the Custom House the scene of the event when the American Flag was raised there on July 7, 1846.
- The Constitution of California was written here, in Colton Hall, September 1849.
- Forty-one old adobes are still standing in Monterey, which does not include other historic houses such as the lovely old Francis Doud house at the north end of Van Buren street, from the Spanish, Mexican and early American period.

Never mind what we may have lost, except perhaps El Cuartel. Four have been destroyed since 1933, namely General Castro's headquarters on Tyler, First U.S. Post Office on Alvarado street, the stone house on Van Buren, the old house and adobe wall at Pearl and Calle Principal.

We hope that this year none will be torn down to satisfy progress. There are still a few in private hands and a few within the borders of redevelopment which must be watched.

What does the list mean to you (it matters not what line you are in) in dollars and cents? If Monterey would open her eyes and electrify her consciousness of this incomparable heritage, and capitalize on it, the world would be at our doors.

If we have this array of historical places, and only buildings are enumerated here, not sites, like the Presidio of Monterey (oldest military reservation in the United States), the landing place of Father Junipero Serra and Don Gaspar de Portola; the old cemetery where names of signers of the California Constitution and many other historical personages are buried; and many others that still thrill the imagination, we can keep visitors here for days on end.

And romance and authentic history does it, particularly when sports and physical beauty of the area conspire together to enhance, as it does in Monterey.