

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 11, 1968

Frances A. Elkins Park

Honor was paid to the memory of a Monterey resident who created a bit of beauty in Monterey's historic adobe area on Dec. 11, 1961.

Members of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors and the Monterey History and Art Association officially dedicated Frances A. Elkins Park adjoining the county building on Pacific street.

A bronze plaque, mounted on a white pedestal supporting a white urn was unveiled as a permanent tribute to Mrs. Elkins. It reads: "Frances Adler Elkins Park – in recognition of public service to the City and County of Monterey by resolution of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors."

Members of the history and art association then went to the front of El Cuartel nearby and unveiled a second plaque, this one on a rock in front of the huge California oak which shelters the building.

This plaque is in memory of the late Mrs. Elena Soler Chaîne, who planted the oak when a child.

The small park, which runs from Pacific street to Calle Principal adjoining the county building, was designed by Mrs. Elkins and she also furnished the boxwood and yews and other planting and took charge of their installation. She also provided the two fine cast iron urns and saw to the maintenance of the park until her death in 1953.

County Supervisor Tom Hudson, chairman of the board, proposed that the park be named in her honor and the supervisors unanimously adopted the necessary resolution.

The plaque was presented to the county in behalf on the Monterey History and Art Association by Allen Griffin, president of the association, who said "Mrs. Elkins was a wonderful friend of Monterey."

Hudson said: "I accept this plaque in behalf of the county with quiet contemplation in appreciation of what she did so quietly."

Carmel Martin Sr. also said a few words of appreciation for the contribution Mrs. Elkins made to the beauty of the city.

Griffin acknowledged the tender care to the park that has been given it for over 20 years by the gardener, Svend Jensen, who was present.

It was noted that Mrs. Elkins, an interior decorator, had owned and maintained Casa Amesti for many years before her death. She left the historic house at 516 Polk St. to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

At the Cuartel dedication it was recalled that Mrs. Chaîne, according to legend, planted the acorn, from which grew the great oak, in 1876. Her father was a well known Monterey painter and the family home was on the present site of the Cuartel, city's police and fire departments.

Participating in this dedication were two friends of the Chaîne family, Robert McKeever and Martin.

Also participating in the ceremonies were two other supervisors, Frank Echeverria of San Ardo and Harold Henry of King City.

Other participants were Mrs. Jane Campbell, Mrs. Orval Polk, Mrs. C. Tod Singleton, Mrs. Jean Day, Mrs. Allen Griffin, Fritz Wurzmman, Allen Knight, John Martin and Monterey City Manager Al Coons.