

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Carmel's Lost Mine

(Ed. Note: Today's column is a reprint of a Diary of 1950.)

A little bit of this and that for today's Diary

A few days ago we wrote two articles on the origin of the Monterey Foundation and the publication by a group of a brochure on Monterey's old adobe buildings and the history of the foundation.

Today we will add a brief report of the several historical tours which have materially assisted in the first projects of this newest organization. In 1945 the Monterey History and Art Association had a tour of several of the old historic homes and were able to give a check for \$250 to the foundation as subscription to their fund to purchase and restore the old buildings.

On October 6, 1948, another tour was given by the association when the Casa Soberanes, the Larkin House, Casa Amesti, and Casa Alvarado were opened by their owners and \$910 was realized. After the expenses were paid, a check for \$744 was sent to the treasurer of the foundation to defray the expenses of a new roof on the Gutierrez Adobe on Calle Principal, which had been purchased by the latter group and was in the process of restoration.

During the centennial celebration in Monterey in 1949 another tour was given under the auspices of the Centennial Committee of Monterey. Mrs. Harry Toulmin was appointed chairman by Dr. Hugh Dormody, then mayor of Monterey. She selected a committee of women to assist and it was decided, with the permission of the Centennial Committee, that all funds collected would be used to defray the expenses of the restoration program on the Gutierrez Adobe.

Plans were then made for another tour to be held the latter part of June of 1951.

Old tales of the hidden treasure of Joaquin Murietta, famed California bad man of the gold rush days, were revived when cave-ins at the Mission Ranch Club at Carmel, disclosed what appeared to be the lost mine of the padres.

If treasure were hidden there—or even silver ore reputedly mined for a half century by Franciscan fathers of the Carmel Mission—it would have been disclosed,

for bulldozers and hoisting equipment were being moved to the property.

Don McFadden, manager of the club, admitted that preparations were under way to explore the workings.

There seemed ample grounds for the tales of Murietta's buried treasure, for long after he was given refuge in the Carmel Mission in the early 1870s, octagonal gold pieces he supposedly stole in a raid on a mint at Auburn circulated in the Carmel Valley.

Murietta was reported to have seized \$75,000 in octagonal gold pieces in his raid. About \$10,000 eventually was recovered in Carmel region.

Presumably he discovered the workings of the old silver mine after he had been chased out of San Juan by soldiers, taking refuge in the mission, and there secreted his loot.

Descendants of early day settlers insist the Franciscan padres operated a rich silver mine, some 175 feet deep and extending for considerable distance, apparently in the vicinity of the Mission ranch, which lies between the mission and Carmel River.

When McFadden lost several lambs, he found them in holes where the ground had caved in. The holes, apparently shafts, extended in a straight line from the Carmel Mission and were 50 feet apart.

In line with the holes is a ranch house occupied some years ago by Mrs. Vanderbilt Phelps of New York, McFadden believed the house concealed a passageway into the workings.

McFadden said the declivities, resulting from recent heavy rains, were about 10 feet in diameter and of varying depth. In one hole he was unable to reach bottom. In another, he descended 75 feet on a rope and found an old stove, dry kiln, and rusty mining machinery. The shafts were heavily timbered.