

**NOTICIAS**  
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*Alvarado Street in 1890*

**Inside: Manuscript of Stanford Student, Lucy Morse,  
Circa 1895**

# LUCY MORSE MANUSCRIPT: MONTEREY THROUGH THE EYES OF A VISITOR

## INTRODUCTION

By the 1890's Monterey already had a long and eventful past. The Rumsien Native Peoples had been living on the Monterey Peninsula for about five thousand years. These native people gathered enough food and supplies from the land and sea to live comfortably and peacefully. In 1602, Spanish explorers in search of a port for Pacific trade became the first Europeans to set eyes on Monterey. Due to political changes in Spain however, the port was not put into immediate use. Then, with the threat of Russian, English and Dutch advancement into central California in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish moved to establish its claim over the area. Although the expeditions from Baja California to Monterey were long and perilous, a small group of men reached the Bay in 1770 with orders to establish a fort and church, with the purpose of founding a settlement under Spain. The Franciscan Junipero Serra was a member of this group. His energy and dedication to converting the native population into Catholics led to the establishment of the Carmel Mission, and eventually several other missions around the area.

Monterey remained under Spain for over fifty years until April 11, 1822, when Mexico declared itself independent from Spain, thereby making the mostly Mexican-populated Monterey a Mexican settlement. The Mexican administration opened San Diego and Monterey ports to foreign trade, and was not adverse to friendly relations with citizens of the United States who pioneered westward. Managing Monterey was not an easy job however, and leadership changed frequently as various factions competed for power. Adding to the turmoil in

Monterey were American and European businessmen who established companies in hopes of great trade profits.

In 1845, President Polk, wishing to add California to the expanding United States, looked to Thomas Larkin for help, the U.S. consul for California. Larkin had gained influence in Monterey through his 12 years as a local businessman, and had encouraged many Americans to make California their new home. Polk hoped Larkin could peaceably convince Californians that life and business would be better under the U.S. government than under the tumultuous Mexican rule. The increase of Americans into Monterey created tension between the native Californians and these foreigners, for many Americans disregarded Mexican laws. The tension heightened as inhabitants of Monterey learned of the war between Mexico and the United States. In July of 1846, American Commodore John Drake Sloat arrived in Monterey Bay and proclaimed California as "a portion of the United States." In February of 1848 a peace treaty was signed, in which Mexico ceded California to the United States.

In 1849 Governor Riley called for a convention in Monterey to determine the status of California. The delegates quickly decided on creating a state government rather than a territorial government, voted against slavery, and after many debates agreed on the present boundaries of the state. Monterey was not to remain the center of activity in California however. With the discovery of gold on Columbia River in 1848, and the moving of the state capital to San Jose, the town of Monterey quieted down significantly. In fact, the press referred to Monterey as "Rip Van Winkle town – the town that went to sleep."

Three notable events in the town's future were the opening of the Monterey Salinas Narrow Gauge Railroad in 1874, the visit of Robert Louis Stevenson in 1879, and the opening of the Hotel Del Monte in 1880. The hotel became so popular that tourists flocked to the Monterey Peninsula from all

over the country, enabled by the newly expanded Southern Pacific Railroad. But by the 1890's, when Lucy Morse visited Monterey, even the Hotel De'l Monte had not helped the appearance of the city. The old buildings and crooked streets of Monterey did not see improvement until the early 1900's, when the fishing industry and tourism brought the capital into the old city that helped develop Monterey into what we see today.

Lucy Morse, a student at Stanford in the 1890's, planned a brief visit to Monterey in order to learn more of the town's fascinating history. After spending only a half-day in Monterey Morse decided a longer stay was necessary, and found a room to rent in an old adobe. In her weeklong exploration of the town and its surrounding area, Lucy Morse toured old buildings and homes and eagerly discussed Monterey's past with well-established residents. Morse not only admired the remnants of the past, but sought out the stories behind each building, legend and rumor. She took every opportunity to study old documents and books, and to record first-hand accounts of Monterey's history. In her chronicle Morse delighted in the natural beauty of the area, the bountiful gardens, and the hospitable people she met each day. Her interviews with long-time inhabitants of Monterey are interesting and at times humorous, as they reveal the opinions and memories of those who witnessed the entrance of California to the United States, and the resulting effects on the town of Monterey. The following is an unedited account, with no corrections or updating of spelling or grammar.

## Monterey, The Old Capital of California by Lucy Morse

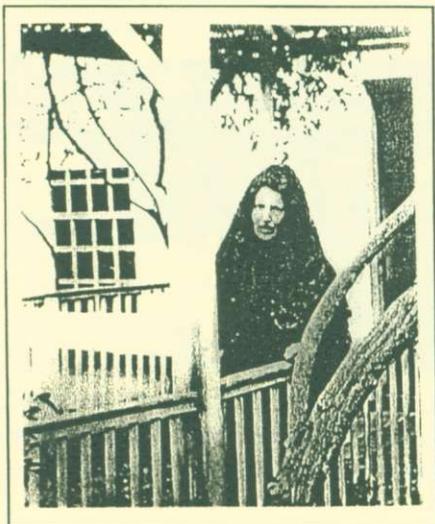
New York and Boston are perhaps, the meccas for the tower of American History. As he gazes upon the vast panorama of American enterprise from the tower of the New York World; as he sails up the Hudson rich in national history and Knickerbocker legend, and beautiful bay and description in natural scenery; as he threads the streets of north Boston, crosses the Charles, passes through Cambridge and stands with uncovered head in Mt Auburn; traverses the road traveled that famous night by Paul Revere and looks with awe upon the ground consecrated with the blood of patriots; passes through Salem to the old fort at Marble head, on down the coast to Plymouth Rock, standing there on the eastern margin of our loved America, looking out with sparkling eyes on old Atlantic, his heart thrills with patriotism.

But thousands of miles away, on the western border where the grand Pacific has cut a beautiful harbor among the rocks, is a quaint old town, full to o'erflowing with American history as well as Spanish legend.

There is no musical cadence in King's Mountain but Monterey with its soft liquid sound might recall volumes of mystic romance. At first we wonder why it was not called Valle del Rey as it is not on, but surrounded by mountains. We find however that it was named in honor of Count de Monte Rey, viceroy of Mexico and patron of the expedition which under the leadership of Don Sebastian Viscaino accompanied by two priests, landed on the shores of Monterey Bay during December 1602, and took possession of the country in the name of his royal highness, Philip III of Spain. For nearly two centuries more, Monterey de America was but a name to Europeans. Then came Junipero Serra, the zealous, the kind hearted, the faithful, un baffled by hardships and dangers.

Spending the summer at Pacific Grove two miles from Monterey, I had passed through the town many times on my way to various places of resort, such as the palacial Del Monte in its magnificent park, the mighty live oak beyond whose expanding branches cover nearly an acre, Point Lobos nine miles away where the most sublime natural scenery thrills one, and San Jose Cannon with its babbling stream and precipitous sides delighting the eye with their covering of golden poppies, and pink and blue larkspurs. I had had Monterey's places of interest pointed out and been delighted with its old adobe walls and tile roofs. I had visited the mission of San Carlos de Carmello on Carmel Bay and attended mass in the San Carlos mission de Monterey, but it is only recently that I took a half-day to study the town all by myself.

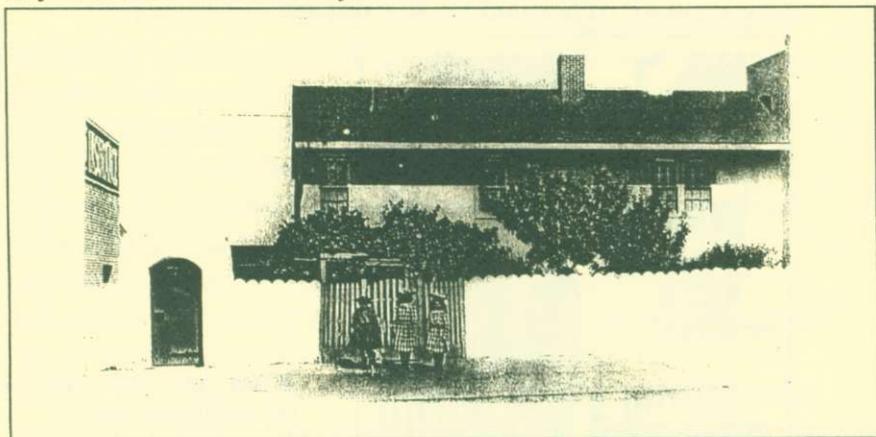
In that half day I learned so much that I was not at all satisfied with the result and am now domiciled for a week in one of its quaintest, most romantic Spanish houses. It is the house pointed out to tourists as the one where Gen. Sherman planted the yellow rose and wooed the daughter of the house, then a fair young Spanish maiden, now a comely woman, the sole survivor of her family, still unwed.



*Maria Ygnacia Bonifacio at  
the Bonifacio Adobe.*

*Photo from the California  
History Room, Monterey  
Public Library.*

The house is of adobe, long and rambling. It is partially hidden from the street by a high adobe wall topped with tiles. A gate of red pickets opens into the broad walk which leads to the hall running through the house. On the left of the main hall is the reception room. With its deep window seats, white sloping ceiling, clean matting, old fashioned mahogany centre table, easy chairs, ample fireplace, choice pictures and mirrors on the wall, and vases of flowers here and there, it is the personification of restfulness. My room is on the right of the entrance, in the wing. It is spacious, old fashioned, plain, simple, restful. It opens into the flower garden in front which is filled with rose trees, bearing blossoms yellow, pink, crimson, and white, daturas whose immense leaves and white trumpet shape blossoms would cause their humbler, but possibly more useful cousins the potatoes to blush with envy, as well as fuchsias and geraniums peering over the wall at the passersby. Sweet mignotte borders the walks. The room has a window overlooking the garden in the rear, where peach, pear, and fig trees grow among the flowers. Back of this garden is the chicory hidden by the shrubbery – nothing anywhere to offend the eye.



*Bonifacio Adobe, "The Sherman Rose," ca. 1895-1898. Photo from the California History Room, Monterey Public Library*

The mistress of the place is a sprightly little gentlewoman with sparkling black eyes. In spite of the tradition she does not look more than fifty. I learn that the celebrated rose tree was planted by herself in 1855, and that she was little more than a child when she was the partner of Lieutenant Sherman in the dance between 1847 and '50.

Now, as she stands in the midst of her flowers, her arms laden with roses and carnations, smiling pleasantly and chatting in Spanish with a group of admiring young friends, she is a goodly sight to look upon.

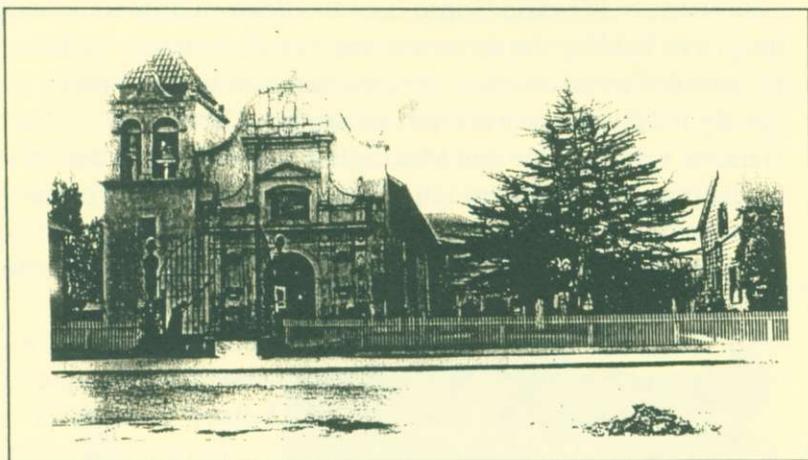
The monument, the Custom House, the old theatre, the first lumber house, Colton Hall, the Gov. Alvarado houses, the old convent, the first brick house, the whaling station, the old Pacific House, and the Washington are among the places held by the drivers as their stock in trade. All these I proceeded to investigate. Among those to whom I feel greatly indebted in my researches are Mr. Oliver, Mr. Hannon, Capt. Bralee and Mrs. Allen. Mr. Oliver is a most genial gentleman, a thorough scholar and a specialist in his own line conchology. He enjoys an enviable business location being apposite the old Custom House, thus attracting all the tourists.

Mr. Hannon is a real estate agent on Alvarado St., a man thoroughly interested in the advancement of Monterey.

The monument erected by Mrs. Leland Stanford in 1891 in honor of Junipero Serra is a fitting testimonial to the worthy father and stands on an eminence just below the old fort and above the cross marking the spot where Junipero landed, hung his bells upon an oak and held mass June 3, 1770. This land is government reservation. It was on the reservation that the enterprising part of the population of Monterey desired to have the Soldiers' Home, now at Santa Monica, located. Monterey was at one time in possession of 44000 acres of land surrounding the town. This land was bequeathed to the city of Monterey by the Mexican

government, and the grant afterwards confirmed by the United States government. The land was foolishly sold for \$1002 to pay the expense of litigation.<sup>1</sup> At the time the effort was made for the Soldiers' Home the purchaser asked \$50000 for a few acres adjoining the reservation. This sum the Board of Managers refused to pay. Thus the avarice of an individual practically defeated the enterprise.

One afternoon Mr. Hannon drove me over to the rectory of San Carlos Church where we examined the old records. The oldest records are in the hand writing of Father Serra, bearing his own signature. Their execution is beautifully neat, the penmanship resembling somewhat the vertical writing of to day. They are neatly bound in vellum.



*The Royal Presidio Chapel (San Carlos Church), Monterey, ca. 1895. Oliver Collection. Photo from the California History Room, Monterey Public Library.*

The San Carlos Church was dedicated in 1794 as a chapel for those who could not attend services at Carmello. Upon the dedication of San Carlos de Monterey as the parish church,

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, it was 30,000 acres sold to David Jacks and D.R. Ashley in 1859. Jacks later purchased Ashley's interest for \$500.

San Carlos de Carmello was abandoned but services are held there once a year in honor of the patron saint San Carlos. During recent years it has been repaired but artists say "uglified" instead of beautified. It is said that Father Serra and fifteen governors of California are buried at Carmello. The walk leading to San Carlos de Monterey is made of whalebone, a substance now becoming very scarce as most of the old walks have been exhumed and sold to the dealers for the manufacture of fancy articles. Whalebone is valueless for this purpose before it has been buried and exposed to the weather for years.

In the rear of the church are exhibited many relics brought from Spain and Mexico by Father Serra one hundred and twenty nine years ago. Among them are pictures painted in Mexico, an iron safe, gold communion and altar services, crucifixes and rich vestments. Silver candlesticks and a silver crucifix of the same age are now in place upon the altar.

It is everywhere customary to leave one door of Catholic churches open for any who may choose to enter. But the depredations made at San Carlos by the souvenir crazed tourist, have rendered it necessary to close all doors to strangers not Catholics unless officially accompanied. Entrance can be obtained by application at the rectory.

On our way out we saw Mrs. Diez, an old lady who years ago gave her white satin wedding dress for a vestment. The vestment is hand embroidered and very beautiful.

Mr. Hannon left me at Mr. Bralees or Capt. Bralee, as he is commonly called.

Captain Bralee is an Englishman by birth but has been for many years a patriotic American citizen. He is one of Monterey's oldest residents and his word is considered unimpeachable.

"Capt. Bralee," said Mr. Hannon, "this lady would like to talk with you about raising the first United States flag on the Custom House."

“You will excuse me if I sit first. I do not get around much these days,” said Capt. Bralee.

“Yes I helped raise the first United States flag on the Custom House.”

“No the soldiers did not have anything to do with it. I was a sailor. The sailors did it. We just sailed up and took it. We took it because our country had declared war on Mexico and was winning victories everywhere. It was in 1846.<sup>2</sup>

Commodore Sloat was in Command. Beside his flagship Savannah we had two transports. We had been coasting along Peru and stopped awhile at the Sandwich Islands. After leaving the islands we went to Mazatland and laid there at anchor seven months awaiting orders.

“Admiral Seymour in command of the English ship Collingwood watched us pretty close. The Collingwood carried eighty guns. He followed us out of the harbor several times but we fooled him and came back in. At last when we did get out he thought we were still fooling him and did not get here until twelve days after we had raised the United States flag.

“Seymour and Sloat met and had a good time. You see those officers don’t have any enmity towards each other. Seymour asked Sloat what he would have done if he had come in and found the English flag on the Custom House. ‘I would have put a shot through it if I had gone to the bottom next minute and left my government to settle the bill.’

‘I expected that answer’ replied Seymour, ‘but there is not a man serving her Britannic Majesty who would dare take that responsibility.’

‘But you see I am not serving her Britannic Majesty, I serve Uncle Sam’ said Sloat

“We used the Custom House as barracks. The officers occupied

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<sup>2</sup> July 7, 1846 the United States flag was raised over the Custom House.

+61

the upright part and the men the other part. We swung our hammocks just as on shipboard.

"We built the old fort."

"Yes I know they call it Fort Fremont; but Fremont had no more to do with it than I had. Not so much for I helped build it.

"We called it Fort Mervine.

"Some wanted to call it Fort Stockton but Stockton said he would not have such an apology for a fort named after him.

"We built a stockade of pine trees in the form of a square. The Block house which had three forty-two pound guns, was in one corner." This Mr. Bralee illustrated with his pencil. "The Men's quarters were log houses within the stockade. These were burned by tramps a few years ago. We dug a ditch around the stockade.

"You may have noticed the base of a monument near the old fort?

"Well that is the beginning of a monument they have started for Sloat"

"No, there never was a battle at or near Monterey California."

"That is one of the hack-drivers' stories. Those fellows tell the worst yarns., Why I hear the talking as they pass by and see them, point to me and hear them say 'There is the fellow who raised the first American flag on the Custom House'"

"But that is true, Capt. Bralee."

"Yes but a lot of other stuff they tell isn't true. The nearest approach to a battle was at Salinas in 1847 when two men were killed. One was Capt. Foster's brother."

"The Custom House was built by the Mexican government in 1843.<sup>3</sup> Thos. O'Larkin, the American consul took the contract.

"O'Larkin lived in that large house with a corridor in front in line with the state house. He met his wife while coming

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<sup>3</sup> Built in 1827 by the Spanish government. Thomas Larkin later made additions to the building in 1842 and in 1846.

around the Horn. She was coming to meet her husband but when she got here she found him dead. You see being together so much on ship board she and O'Larkin got pretty well acquainted and after awhile were married. O'Larkin and Capt. Cooper were half brothers. Every body knew Capt. Cooper. He died only a short time ago.

"Gen. Castro was in command of the military. Alvarado was the first Spanish governor. Mason was one of the first governors appointed by the United States.

"This you know was a penal station for Mexico. Some of the richest men in Cal. are descendants from convicts. The Mexican government in order to keep their convicts here and colonize the country, gave them large grants of land. You may have seen that large adobe?

"That is the Blank house. The original Blank was a convict. He received a grant of five good leagues of land and his partner five. The partner tired of the country and gave his land to Blank. At one time Blank had 10000 head of cattle.

"The Abrigo building is the one next door. They are descended from the Vallejos.

"The Gov. Alvarado house is on Main St.<sup>4</sup> You probably noticed it as you came by. They are tearing out the front partition and fitting it up for a store. It has been built over several times. It used to be only one story high. Different lodges occupy the second floor.

"No Gov. Alvarado never lived in that one story house back of the state house. That was occupied by a private individual.

"I would rather see the old buildings go. The taxes are heavy and they bring in no incomes. If they are allowed to stand they should be exempt from taxation."

"The old theatre? Well yes I do know about that as I helped build it. I am a mason by trade and I did all the mason work. Partitions were on hinges so that they could be raised.

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<sup>4</sup> Now Alvarado Street.

"They used whale oil in the lamps, did not have anything else in those days. After the building got all smoked up it was used as a whaling station. It was built for a bowling alley. The first theatrical performers belonged to Col. Stevenson's volunteer regiment from N.Y.

"Yes Halleck and Sherman were both here. Gen. Sherman was then a lieutenant in Company F of the third Artillery. They came around the Horn. A lady who came around with them died only two years ago."

Then of course I asked him about the rosebush romance.

"No truth in it."

"O yes! Sherman knew the family. You see the officers were gay young fellows and must have company. The Bonifacios were a little better than the common run and used to entertain the officers. No Sherman never had anything to do with the rosebush. That is another of the drivers stories.

"I built the first chimney in Monterey on the Bonifacio house."

"You should go in and see old Mrs. Allen"

"Yes she will be glad to talk to you. Her house was brought from Australia. It is built of Sydney oak, a wood resembling ironwood. It was framed while green as nails cannot penetrate it after it is seasoned.

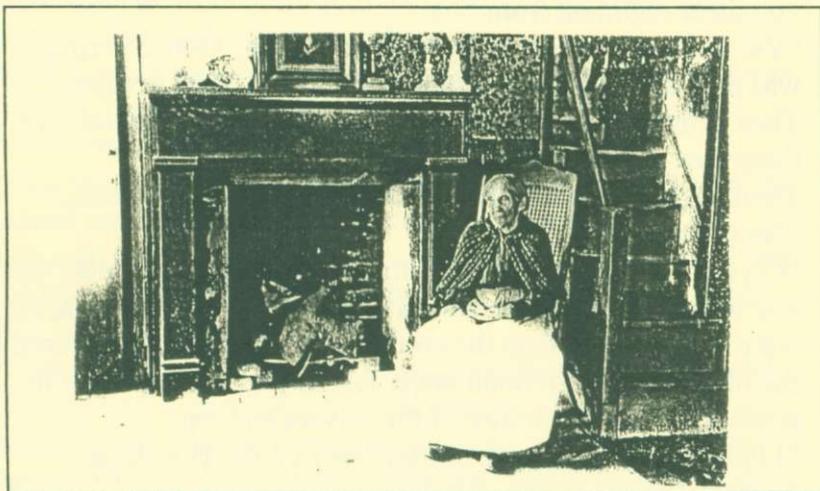
"The old lady lives there with her son. He would like to repair the house but she will not hear of it. The son has lost one arm but he is the best shot in the country and earns a good living by hunting."

I thanked Mr. Bralee for his kindness and wended my way across the street to rap at the door of the oldest lumber house in Monterey. The picture gives a good idea of the house.

An old lady answered my rap and ushered me into a pretty old fashioned parlor containing blendings of the modern.

"Is this Mrs. Allen?"

“May I talk with you a little while about the old land marks?”  
“Certainly. Sit right down,” as she bustled about and raised a window shade, coughing as she settled herself in a little hairseat rocker.



*Mrs. Jane Allen in the living room of her house, the first frame house.  
Photo from the California History Room, Monterey Public Library.*

“I have the grip. Have had it four or five times”

“Perhaps I will tire you if I stay to day?”

“Not at all I am glad to see you”

“I understand you have the oldest lumber house in Monterey.  
Was it really brought from Australia?”

“I don’t rightly know. That is what many ladies ask me. I lived in Hobartstown. Some say it was in Australia. I was quite young when we came. It was somewhere near New Zealand, a five or six days sail. Is Australia where they found gold?”

“Well then I did not come from there and I am glad I didn’t. Such carrying on as there were there. Robbing, killing, burning and gambling. They were awful wicked people. No, I did not come from there and I am mighty glad I didn’t. I did not know much about it then but I have heard since.

(“That is my granddaughter you hear talking in the next room.)

“We came on the Elizabeth Starbuck, Capt. Parker was in command.

“Yes I have lived in this house fifty years. There are not many who can bring their house with them, live in it fifty years and raise their children, grand children, and great grand children.”

“How old were you when you came to this country, Mrs. Allen?”

“I was thirty three. I had six children then.”

“How did you happen to bring your house with you, Mrs. Allen?”

“My husband said, ‘I am going to California.’

‘To California!’ I said, ‘and what are you going to do with me and the children?’

‘I will find a boarding school for two of the girls. You and the other children can stay here. I will be back in two years!’

‘No sir,’ said I. ‘I don’t stay here. If you go, the children and I go too.’

‘But where will you sleep? They have nothing but barrels to sleep in over there’

‘The barrels must be pretty big if we can sleep in them. Will the children have to sleep in barrels?’

‘Yes the children will have to sleep in barrels. They can put their head in and let their feet hang out.’

“Now I could not think of doing that. Sleep in barrels! No indeed!”

‘I will not stop here and I will not sleep in barrels,’ said I.

‘What will you do?’ said he.

‘We have four or five good little vessels of own. We will send them to New Zealand for lumber, have it framed then taken down and take it with us and have it put up there.’

‘That is a pretty good idea,’ said he.

‘Have they furniture there?’ said I.

'No.'

'Then get two good slabs, one for a dresser and one for a table.'

'What is the use? We shall stay only two years'

'I don't care while I stay I will live'

That's what we did. We brought six houses and set them up here."

"Was your husband a ship builder?"

"No, he owned vessels and sailed them between our country house and our city house. We bought grain when it was cheap and sold it when it was dear. That was our business."

"You must know all about the old residents in Monterey, Mrs. Allen."

"Yes, but it was a dreadful wicked place. Gambling, swearing and drinking on the Lord's day. Those were wicked times. No judge, no law, no anything. If any one did any thing wrong, only the military tried him. Often of a Sunday has my husband closed the door to keep out the noise and said 'Why did I bring my children to such a wicked place to raise them?'

I said, 'Don't blame yourself, it was not you who brought them it was I' But he did blame himself. I was the one to blame."

"Then were you sorry that you came, Mrs. Allen?"

"Sorry? I have always been sorry. At home I had every thing I wanted and somebody to do my work. Here I have worked awful hard to bring up my children.

"My husband died and I worked awful hard to bring up my children."

"The doctor said, 'Mrs. Allen if you don't work less, they will take you over to the graveyard.' But I said 'God helps them who help themselves. I am strong and well.'

"Sunday night was the only night I slept."

"You do not mean that you worked all night?"

"Yes, I worked all day and ironed all night. I would just stop to nurse my baby and my little boy of eleven would bring me a cup of tea."

"Did you wash for others?"

"Yes, I washed for the convention people."

"For the convention people?"

"Yes the rich gentlemen; they had plenty of money and paid three dollars a dozen. Every pair of socks and every handkerchief counted a piece.

"You might not believe me but I work now. I do not have to but I want to; any thing to keep my head busy and not think of the past. I want to forget it. I make, mend, any thing. I trust in God and that helps me. That is the way I have always done. That's the way I brought up my children to do, and if they do it, they will be all right. Someway I am always contented. I never lose any of my ladies or any of my babies. I have my profession and I pray to God to help me. None of them die." Again she bustled up and handed me a photograph from the table, of two very pretty babies.

"That young lady was born at two o'clock at night and that young gentleman at seven in the morning. Five hours difference. I pray to God and none of my ladies or my babies die."

"Do you go out now Mrs. Allen?"

"To be sure I do. They say they don't want a young person. They want someone who knows something. They want Mrs. Allen. I have earned seventy-five dollars a day. I used to charge \$20 and the ladies would often give me a present of five dollars. I have attended as many as three ladies a day.

"Yes I have worked hard to bring up and educate my children. My husband's partner rented one of the houses to a gang of thieves.

"One night when Dr. Randall the Custom House officer was at supper, between eight and nine o'clock, it was Sabbath

night – they robbed the Custom House of thirty thousand dollars.

“The money was hid in this house. At first I did not dare tell where it was for fear of my own and the children’s lives. At last two gentlemen came to protect me and then I told. They could not convict them. Some ladies will not believe me when I tell then that the thieves divided the thirty thousand dollars with the officers.”

“Yes they were lynched at last for firing a house in San Francisco.

“O but my husband’s partner was a bad man! How he cheated me!

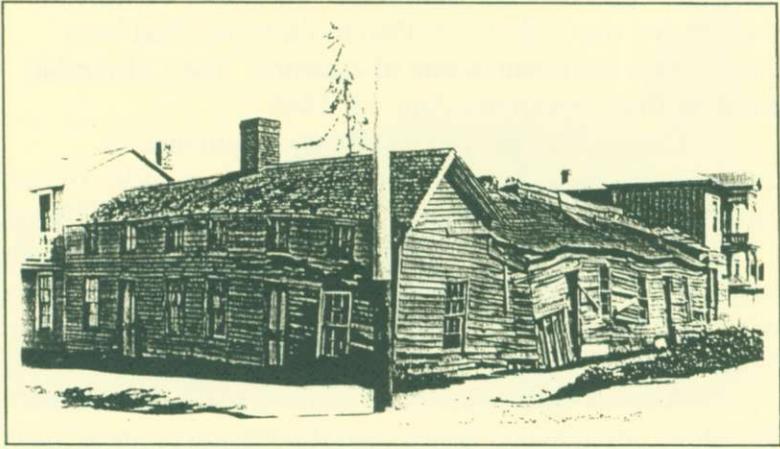
“Yes I have worked hard but I trust in God. God makes me sick and makes me well. I never need a doctor.”

“Come out and I will show you the old house,” she said as she rose to lead the way. I then had my first good view of her. Previously I had been too much interested in her conversation and manner to notice her personal appearance. She is a little woman, much stooped, one shoulder higher than the other, hair snowy white but her step as sprightly as a girl’s.

She led the way through a large uncarpeted room containing an old fashioned bed, into a scrupulously clean kitchen, furnished with a set of shelves filled with dishes, a small cook stove, chairs, table, etc. As we passed through I noticed several open doors leading into comfortably furnished rooms. Evidently the six houses are connected.

She shook the fire, called “Come girls, can you set the table?” and proceeded to pull it out herself. A pretty young girl of perhaps sixteen, whom she introduced as her granddaughter came to her assistance.

A man apparently fifty or more with one sleeve hanging limp entered just as I was admiring some dogs in the yard. Mrs. Allen introduced the man as her son, said the dogs are his and that his profession is hunting.



*First frame house, corner of Webster and Fremont. Photo from the California History Room, Monterey Public Library.*

I thought it time to withdraw. She politely admitted it was their supper hour but cordially invited me to return another day.

Never have I spent a more interesting hour. Her manner, her emphatic gestures, her simplicity, were charming.

One morning I spent considerable time on the steps of Colton Hall, sometimes called the old schoolhouse, sometimes the courthouse, sometimes the capitol and occasionally the statehouse. It was built by Walter Colton for a town hall and schoolhouse in 1847-1849. It was used as a courthouse until the county seat was removed to Salinas. Feb., 1873.

Here the convention met in 1849 that formed the state constitution. But as it also passed a resolution which moved the capital to San Jose, Colton Hall was not long the Statehouse.

Colton was appointed Alcalde of Monterey when it was taken possession of by the Americans in 1846. He, together with Semple a Kentuckian, established the Californian, the first

newspaper published in California. The paper on which it was printed was little larger than foolscap and had been intended for the manufacture of cigaritos. The Californian made its first appearance Aug. 15, 1846.

Colton impaneled the first jury summoned in California. It was composed of equal numbers of Mexicans, Californians and Americans.

Colton Hall is built of white sandstone covered on the outside with rose colored plaster marked off into rectangles with black lines, giving it the general appearance of being built of carefully hewn wood or stone.

A room on the first floor is now used as town hall. The stone jail attached is still used if occasion requires. It is usually empty.

Blackboards and maps to be seen through an uncurtained window, tell of its former use as a schoolhouse. The fireplace and andirons in this room did not indicate recent use. The parts of the building now in use are lighted by electricity.

As I sat on the steps contrasting the present with the past, my eyes wandered over the bay shadowed by mountains bathed in mist, paused for a moment on Del Monte nestling at the base of ever green hills and peeping out from the tops of the gnarled oaks alder on the placid water, drew nearer passing over old adobe houses and ruined walls as well as modern edifices among them the fine new school building, and finally rested on a fig tree in the yard.

What an opportunity for a moralizer, a dreamer, a romanticist.

It was on these steps that ex-president Harrison made a speech when here in 1891. In this speech he referred to his brother being in Monterey in 1849.



*Colton Hall and Monterey Jail, ca. 1890. Photo from the California History Room, Monterey Public Library.*

I descended the steps and passed around the jail with its heavily grated windows and strong iron doors. This jail was built in 1854. The old prison built by Colton as well as the old calboose which it adjoined have long since disappeared.

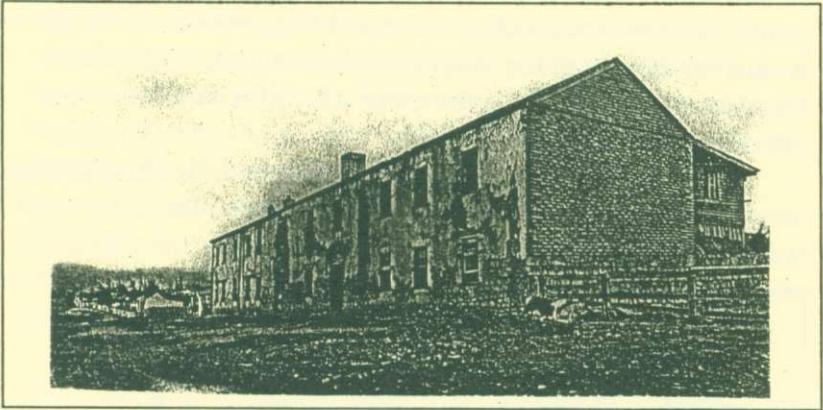
A high adobe wall is on one side of the jail, but in the rear is a board fence which separated me from the road which I wished to enter. Being a nineteenth century woman I entered. And there it was, the house for which I had been searching, the clapboards off at one end just as the photograph told me, also the two beautiful cypresses. The deep window seats indicates the thickness of the front wall of adobe. The roof of the corridor is supported by wooden pillars and the customary barrandal protects it from the street. In the corridor were many beautiful plants on benches between the windows. On the opposite side of the street the view is completely hidden by a high board fence over grown with masses of casti and scarlet geraniums in full bloom. I rested against this fence awhile gazing at the house, finally mustered up courage, crossed the street opened the portal of

the corridor and rapped at the open door which leads to the hall. It was Saturday morning and from the kitchen beyond came the sounds and odors of culinary preparations. At length a middle aged woman whose complexion proclaimed her a native Californian even before she spoke, responded to my rap. Her English and my Spanish were about equal. Nevertheless I gathered that her father did buy the place of Gov. Alvarado and that her brother who works in a down town restaurant could tell me more about it. Later in the day I saw the brother who confirmed his sister's statement. He said that his father and Gov. Alvarado were great friends, that the governor was his elder sister's godfather.

The old theatre is occupied by several families of half-breeds. Many dark chubby faced children, ragged, dirty, but happy, play around the wooden steps or peer at the stranger from the dingy panes. A hasty glance through one of the open doors revealed a gallant Senor with his arm encircling his gay Senorita – then there was a move as hasty as my glance. One of the gainsaid stories is that Jennie Lind sang here in 1853. True it is that an Irish singer of some celebrity coming from Australia, once sang an Irish song here with telling effect.

The old convent eluded me for sometime. Guided by a picture which shows the convent with one wing torn away, I found a number of old adobe buildings which I surrounded with fanciful romances of Spanish nuns. Nothing now remains but remnants of adobe walls.

Since writing the above I have had the pleasure of an interview with Father Mestres the Pastor now in charge of San Carlos. He tells me that not even the walls of the old convent remain, that they were destroyed years ago and that the walls reported to be convent walls are on an adjoining lot and are the walls of a private residence.



*First Convent in California. Erected in 1852. Photo from the Mayo Hayes O'Donnell Library.*

The old convent was under the order of Dominican Sisters. The new convent, a fine frame structure is under the sisters of St. Joseph. It is situated across the street from the church. The school has one hundred and seventy-five pupils. Father Mestres is a Spaniard by birth, an American by adoption and much beloved by his people.

The first brick house and the old whaling station are on the road to Pacific Grove. The brick were made from native clay. Among other occupations, Capt. Bralee used to make brick. He had a fine kiln just burned when the news of the discovery of gold in California reached Monterey. He with many others dropped all business and departed for the gold fields.

The whaling station is of adobe. The Whaling Co. moved their headquarters to Carmel Bay in 1862.

I doubt me if, taken for all in all with its commodious well appointed rooms, wide verandas, beautiful grounds and the ever present music of the sea, there is a lovelier hotel in the land than Del Monte.

True the Flaggler hotels in Florida are veritable enchanted palaces, exceeding in the magnificence of their

grand Moorish architecture and sparkling fountains, but by no means do they rival the magnificent distances, everywhere teeming with beauty of nature and art, of the Del Monte grounds.

Fifty years ago the Pacific House and the Washington were to Monterey what Hotel del Monte is to-day, only rates were much higher being ten dollars a day.



*Old Washington Hotel, ca.1900. Photo from the California History Room, Monterey Public Library.*

Now the old Pacific House is deserted with the exception of one room which is used for religious worship by a dissenting branch from one of the churches. It was fitted up at the expense of the man who bought 44000 acres of city land for \$1002. He was the chief dissenter. The Pacific Ocean House is a well kept hotel on Alvarado St.

One day in my wanderings I passed the old "Washington." Two boys were playing near the steps. One did not even know the name of the house but the other was a resident and somewhat wiser. He gallantly acted as my escort and led me up flights of stairs from balcony to balcony, until we stood on the third floor. While there he informed me that his family lived in the second story but were going out next

day as the building has been declared unsafe. As we descended to the second balcony he pointed with pride to a man-of-war resting on a table, which he said was constructed by his brother. Yesterday I noticed the man-of-war still at anchor, hence conclude the family have not moved.

The one person known to all the town is the Frenchman Jules Simoneau, the friend of Robert Louis Stevenson. He looks very like his picture which was taken in his garden.

With his baskets of tamales and frijoles he is a welcome figure on the streets of Monterey and Pacific Grove. His restaurant where Stevenson used to board is shown in a recent number of Scribner's. He now lives in a pretty little cottage with his wife and married daughter. He is very proud of two sturdy little lads whom he calls his grandsons.

His choicest possessions are a shelf of Stevenson's works with autograph inscriptions by the author. In Underwoods is written:

"If there was a man who was a Good man to me it was Jules Simoneau.

Robert Louis

Stevenson"

On the fly leaf of The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is written:

"But the case of Robert Louis Stevenson and Jules Simoneau – if the one forget the other – would be stranger still!

Robert Louis

Stevenson"

In The Merry Men and Other Tales and Fables:

"To Jules Simoneau for AuldLangSyne

Robert Louis

Stevenson"

With French courtesy Mr. Simoneau passed with me to the gate. He says Monterey has no enterprise, but he is

contented. He can sit on his veranda, look at the bay, read and think of Stevenson.

One of the legends of Monterey is of one Vasquez, a Spanish bandit who like Robinhood of old robbed the rich and gave to the poor. After hiding for years in some ruins just outside the town, he was finally captured, and hanged in San Francisco. I had the pleasure of talking with a gentleman who was a schoolmate of the bandit thus proving the story authentic although somewhat modern.<sup>5</sup>

Another interesting story centres in an old piece of wood perforated with worm holes and bound with copper, lying on the steps of Mr. Durate's fish market. The wood is said to be a piece of the rudder of the Natalia the ship on which Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from Elba, and which was wrecked in Monterey harbor. According to an old resident the Natalia being a swift little craft was bought for piratical purposes and one December night some eighty years ago anchored at Monterey in order to allow her officers and crew the enjoyment of a carousal on shore. While thus engaged a storm arose and the Natalia was soon a wreck upon the beach.

But according to the Handbook of Monterey, the Natalia entered the harbor in 1834 to bring Hajar director of colonization who came to secularize the missions, and the boat was driven upon the beach and wrecked. Be that as it may, there is a piece of worm eaten wood, bound with copper on Mr. Durate's steps.

The native Californians of Monterey are a peculiar people. Good natured, happy, courteous, genial; knowing and apparently caring little for the outside world, and totally oblivious of the wealth of their historic surroundings. However there is something of delight as well as a touch of pity, in meeting people who do not put commercial value

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<sup>5</sup> Tiburcio Vasquez born in Monterey on August 11, 1835, and hanged in San Jose on March 19, 1875.

upon a sight of their ancestral homes nor try to live off the tourist. Though Spanish by descent, many of them knowing no other language, few of them without a trace of Indian blood, they are patriotic American citizens. Pictures of Dewey and Sampson are hung on many an adobe wall.

My week is ended and I must say farewell to Senora Bonifacio and her enchanting home. Some day in the future, unless she says me "no," I shall return for a restful hour – screened from the busy world outside by the high adobe walls – in the sweet rose garden where under its mystic spell, the gay lieutenant whispered words dulce, in the ears of the vivacious and charming young senorita.

Adios

Editor's Note: We are grateful to the Morse family for donating this manuscript to Monterey History and Art Association. Cover photo from the California History Room, Monterey Public Library. The editor transcribed the manuscript and wrote the introduction. Tim Thomas provided footnotes.

Shelley McCabe  
Editor

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