

The Monterey History and Art Association  
Presents

# “The Old Pacific Capital”



Mayo Hayes O'Donnell Library  
155 Van Buren Street  
Monterey, CA 93940



# Adobe ,79 Tour



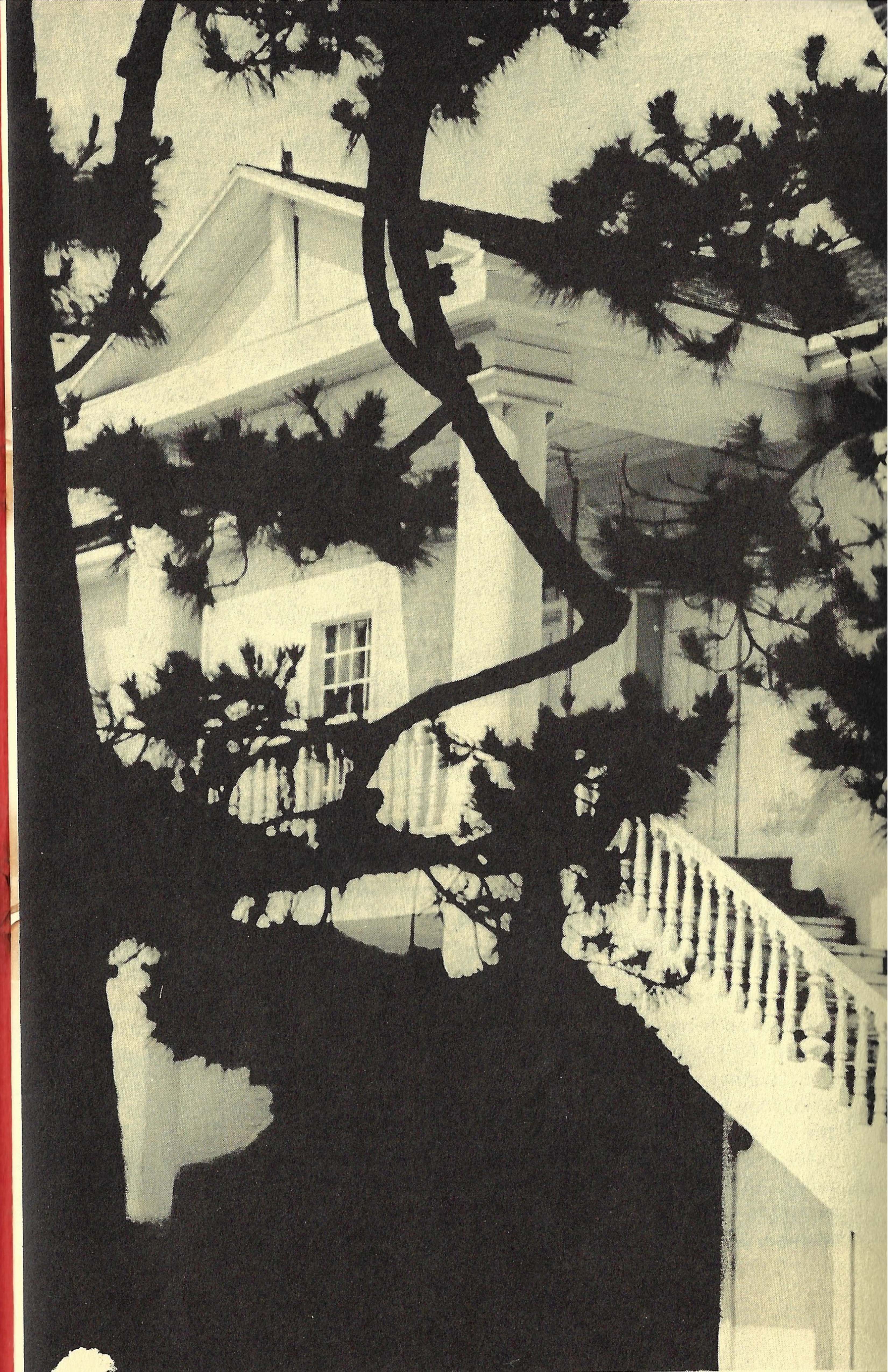
## MONTEREY HISTORY & ART ASSOCIATION, LTD.

The MONTEREY HISTORY AND ART ASSOCIATION was founded in 1931 when it was incorporated under the laws of the State of California. Since the first meeting of a group of prominent citizens of the Monterey Peninsula at the Old Custom House the latter part of 1930, the Association's primary objective has been the preservation of those reminders of historic Monterey: the old adobe homes and significant buildings of the early Spanish, Mexican and American California. The Association has also obtained through gifts, purchase and loan, numerous articles for exhibition in various historic buildings. It has taken an active part in impressing on the people of Monterey the inestimable value of the City's place in history, the uniqueness of their heritage, and the importance of retaining for succeeding generations of Californians, adopted or native-born, those irreplaceable relics of a bygone age which embody the State's romantic history.

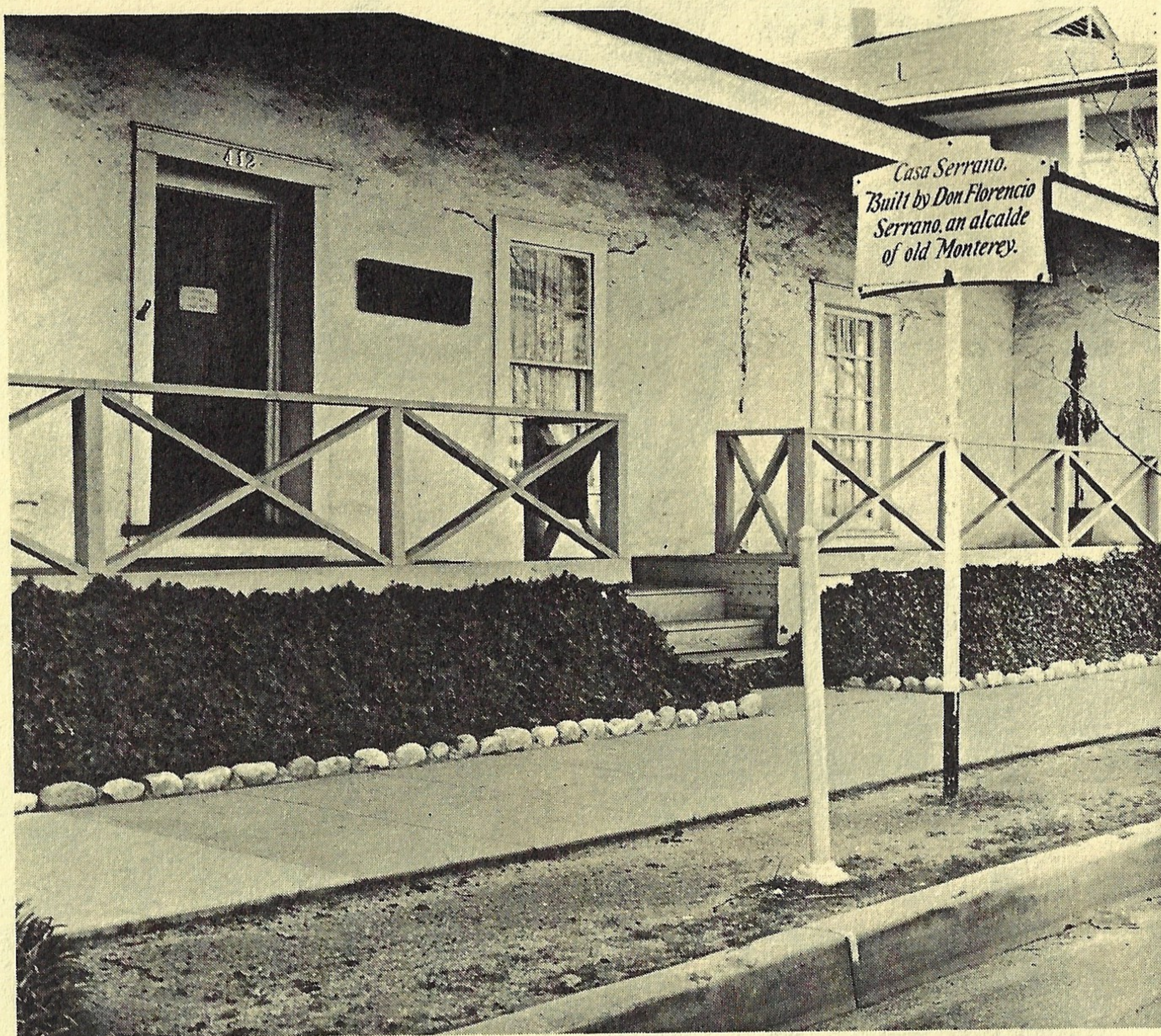
The Association sponsored the Historic Route through Monterey indicated on the street by a red line which, when followed, guides the visitor to all the adobes and historic places in Old Monterey. These sites are also indicated with Historic markers. A bulletin of historic Monterey, "Noticias del Puerto de Monterey", is issued quarterly. An annual Adobe Tour for the public is held on a date chosen by the Board of Directors, usually the last weekend in April.

Each year in June the members of the Association gather in Memory Garden for a Merienda commemorating Monterey's birthday, June 3, 1770, when Don Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra landed at Monterey and claimed California for Spain.

Monterey History and Art Association, Ltd.  
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Monterey, California 93940  
408-375-2553







### CASA SERRANO

The Monterey History and Art Association purchased the Casa Serrano in 1959 and completely restored it as a home for the organization and to house the antique furniture and other historic items it has acquired. In addition to being a part of Monterey's heritage which is shared with visitors, the adobe serves as the organization's headquarters for social functions.

Florencio Serrano bought a piece of property on Calle Estrada (now Pacific Street), on which an adobe had been started, after he had courted and won the daughter of Don Joaquin de la Torre. Following their marriage in July, 1845, they lived in the adobe which they completed. Several generations of the Serrano family have called it home.

Casa Serrano has the distinction of being one of the early schools in Monterey. Florencio Serrano, a well educated man, established and taught a private school in Spanish. After losing his eyesight, by relying on his phenomenal memory and on his daughter he was able to continue as a teacher.



### GARDEN OF THE CASA SERRANO





**CASA SOBERANES**

Casa Soberanes, sometimes known as "The House with the Blue Gate," is a unique example of intermingling of architecture of Southern Spain and New England during a period of prosperity under Mexican rule. Its preservation was assured in 1957 when Mrs. Mayo Hayes O'Donnell presented it to the State of California as a historic monument.

It is one of the few two story homes of that period with a cantilevered balcony with no posts to support the roof. Shakes were substituted for handmade tiles on the balcony roof to relieve the balcony from additional weight.

The adobe illustrates the practice of constructing the roof to slant from two-story height in the front to single-story height in the rear. To accommodate this design, the upper floor rooms were placed along the front only. Main walls in the structure were extended to achieve a sheltered and livable feeling. The "sala" has been used as an example of early adobe in the Thorne collection of Early American homes in the Chicago Art Museum.



**LARA ADOBE**

Although the name "Jesus Soto" has long been associated with the adobe sheltered under the magnificent cypress on Pierce Street, legal records show the property was first granted as a town lot in 1849 to one Feliciano Lara. It was in her possession until 1905, when the town marshall, administrator for her estate, sold it for delinquent taxes.

The history of the adobe is unclear from the 1860's, when the property was somehow dropped from the tax rolls, until its sale in 1905. It is known that the house was occupied by one Manuel Soto and his Indian wife, Felicidad, in the 1890's. The purchaser was careful to obtain a second deed from Antonio Dutra and his Indian wife, Ramona, who were squatters on the property at the time.

Josephine Blanch, artist and curator of the first local Art Gallery at old Hotel Del Monte, purchased and restored the Lara Adobe in 1919 for her residence. Author John Steinbeck and his family occupied it in the 1940's. Later, when remodeled for professional offices, additions were made with loving care as to architectural style of old Monterey.



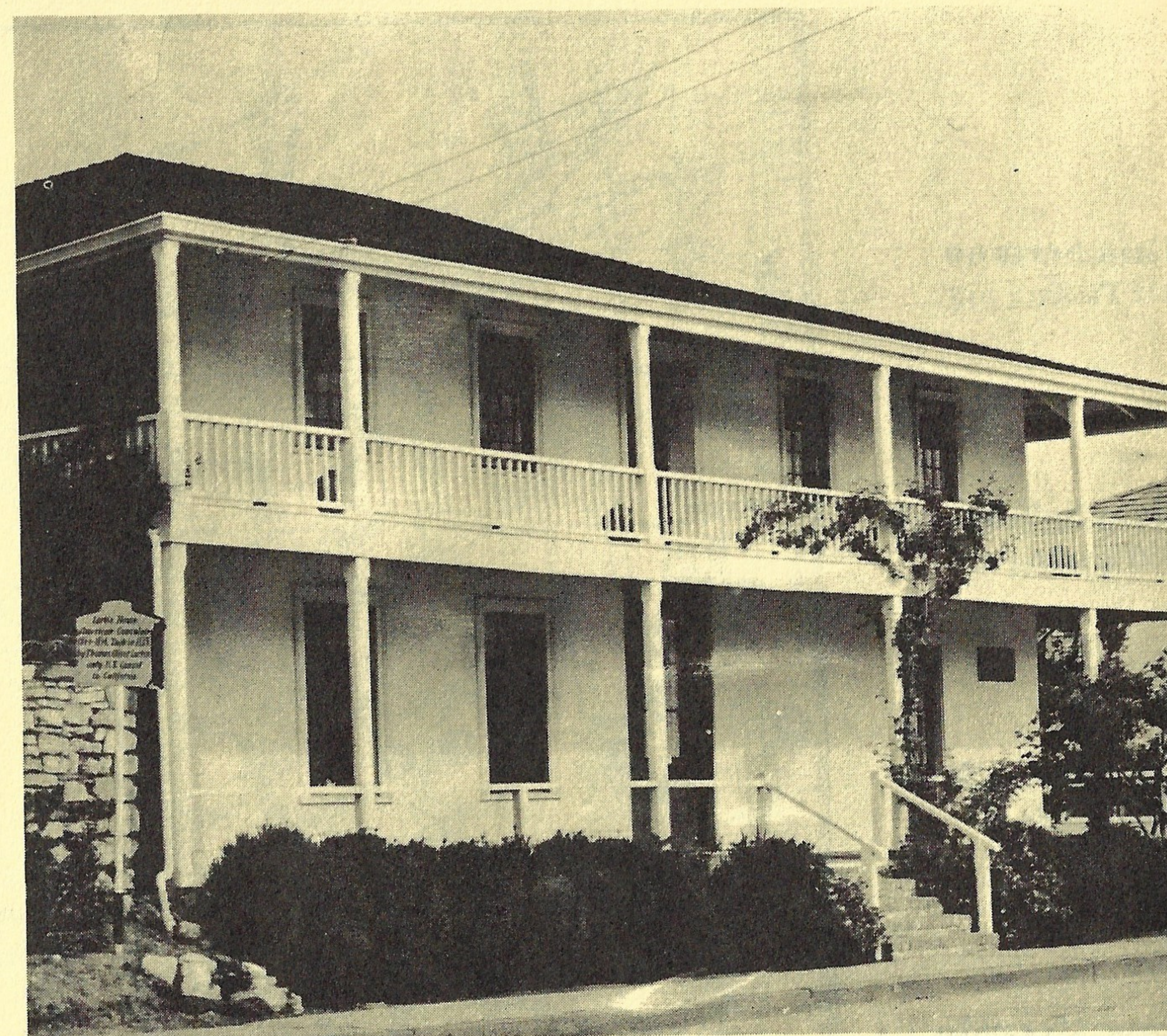


**CASA ALVARADO**

Casa Alvarado, on Dutra Street, was built in the 1830's by Don Juan Bautista Alvarado, first Monterey-born governor of California. A direct descendent of Captain Cortez, he was the son of Don Jose Francisco Alvarado and Josefa Vallejo.

Originally a three room structure with a tule roof, the adobe illustrates several characteristics of design customary of that period. Dwellings faced the east so occupants could take full advantage of the morning sun on the front of the home. Each room opened directly to the out-of-doors. Walls were twenty-four inches thick, of adobe bricks laid up with adobe mud mortar and supported on a heavy chalkrock foundation. When the roof was being repaired in recent years, an Indian sandal was found on top of the wall. Evidently a workman had stepped out of his sandal on the wet adobe, and when the roof was fastened on with thongs it was hidden from view. The sandal is now preserved in a local museum.

Manuel Dutra purchased the adobe in 1842; it remained in the family until sold in 1946. It is now a beautifully restored private residence.



**LARKIN HOUSE**

The Larkin House is a living reminder of the influence Thomas Oliver Larkin exerted on California's political history and on her secular architecture during the first half of the nineteenth century.

The first two story house built in Monterey and one of the earliest examples of Monterey Colonial architecture, it was started in 1834 shortly after Larkin came to California as a Yankee merchant. Larkin adapted eastern form to available materials: adobe and redwood.

In 1844 Larkin was appointed U.S. Consul to California, and for the next five years the adobe served as headquarters and the center of social life of the capital. Here historic decisions regarding California's future role were made.

This important adobe was presented to the State of California as a historic monument in 1957 by Mrs. Alice Toulmin, Larkin's granddaughter, as a tribute to California's first and only American Consul.



1. Casa Serrano  
412 Pacific

2. Casa Soberanes  
336 Pacific

3. Casa Jesus Soto  
460 Pierce

4. Casa Alvarado  
Dutra at Jefferson

5. Larkin House  
510 Calle Principal

6. House of Four  
Winds  
540 Calle Principal

7. Casa Amesti  
516 Polk

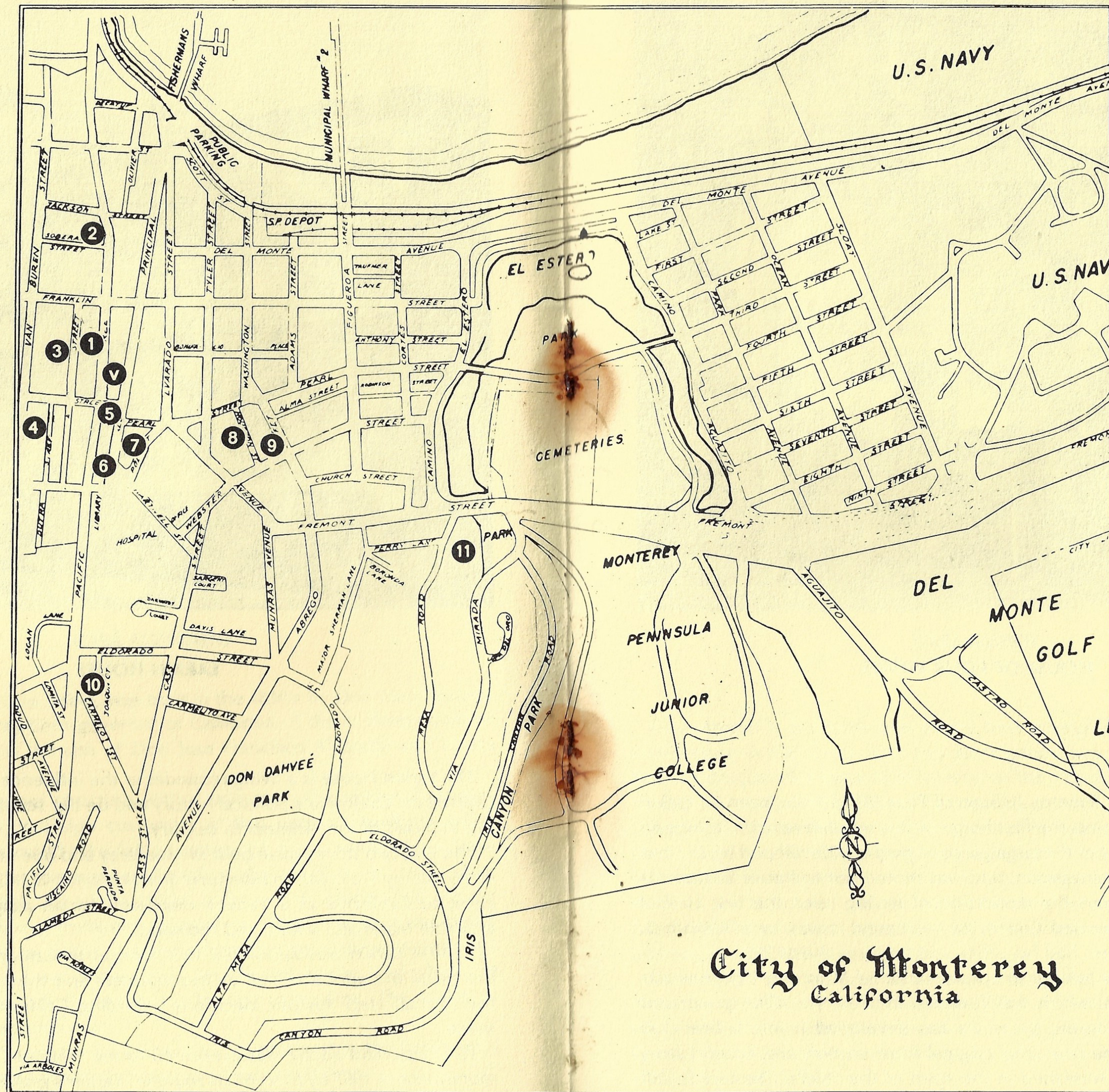
8. Stevenson House  
530 Houston

9. Casa Abrego  
592 Abrego

10. Casa Joaquin  
Soto  
Via Joaquin at  
El Dorado

11. Casa Buelna  
801 Mesa

V Van Pickup



It is suggested for your convenience that your tour follow the above sequence. Courtesy vans for the Soto and Buelna Adobes are available in the parking lot across from Casa Serrano. An exhibition of works by early Monterey artists is available for viewing at the Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art, 559 Pacific Street.



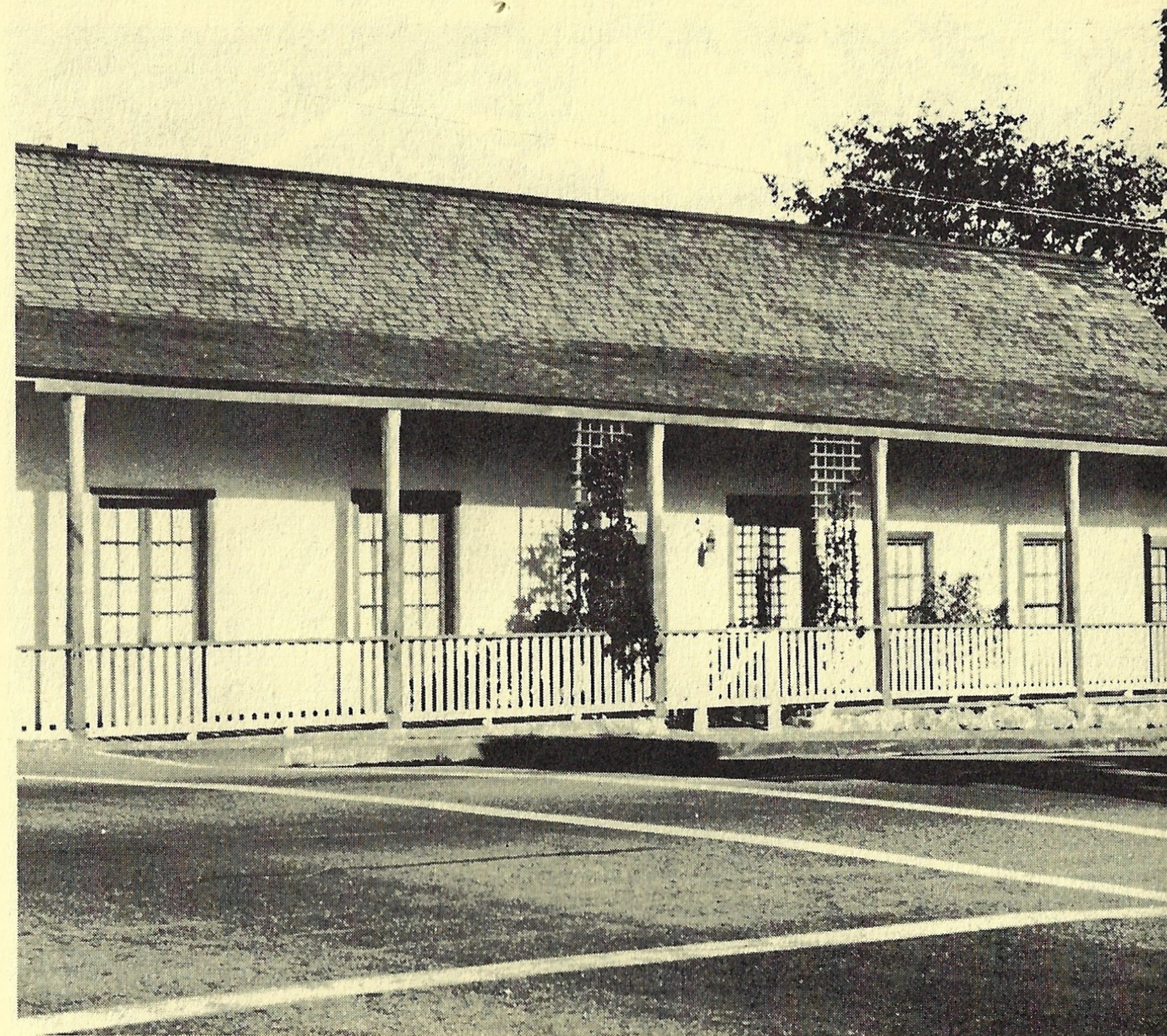


**STEVENSON HOUSE**

The Stevenson House on Houston Street (known as Merchant's Row in early days), between Pearl and Webster Streets, sheltered Robert Louis Stevenson for a time during his visit to Monterey in 1879. While in Monterey, Stevenson wrote "The Old Pacific Capitol."

First owned by Don Rafael Gonzales this fine old two story adobe originally comprised the sala and one large upstairs room. A Swiss businessman, Girardin, purchased it and added on the Houston Street side section. Over the years it served many business purposes, and for a time was known as the French Hotel.

In 1937 the historic adobe was purchased by the late Edith C. van Antwerp and Mrs. C. Tobin Clark to save it from destruction. They in turn presented it to the State of California as a memorial, and it is now a State of California historical monument. A repository of Stevensoniana, it includes many articles of furniture, books of first edition, manuscripts, keepsakes and personal belongings of the beloved writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, given by members of his family.



**CASA ABREGO**

Casa Abrego, located at the corner of Abrego and Webster Streets, is one of the oldest landmarks in Monterey. The home was built of adobe bricks and wood by Don Jose Abrego, a Mexican merchant who came to Monterey in 1834 with colonists under Don Jose Maria Hjar on the vessel "La Natalie". Abrego gradually acquired a large area including all of the present block. The house was much longer north and south, and two fine garden areas were along Houston street. His store was on the north corner facing Abrego and Pearl.

"La Natalie" had drifted ashore during a storm and was wrecked, and Don Jose Abrego later used some of the timbers from this vessel to build his home. The front rooms have fine wood paneling.

The Abrego adobe was purchased in 1956 by the Monterey Foundation to save it from destruction, then leased to the Casa Abrego Club for Women. In 1959 the Abrego Club bought the adobe from the Foundation.





**CASA JOAQUIN SOTO**

Casa Joaquin Soto, on Via Joaquin off Eldorado Street, was built by Joaquin Soto in 1827. This restored adobe in its secluded setting belies the stormy history of its title being in litigation for over one hundred years. It began when Joaquin died at the age of ninety-seven, leaving the property to his wife, Dona Maria del Carmel Castro, and his nine children. The original probate file is still preserved in the offices of Monterey County.

Augustin Soto, grandson of Joaquin, lived for many years on the property until his death in 1942. Familiarly known in Monterey as "Count Soto", he was a colorful paisano of Monterey, one of the last links with the Spanish period in California.

Mrs. Mary L. Greene purchased and carefully restored the old adobe. Two adobe rooms were added, retaining the character of the structure. Now housing medical offices, it serves as an excellent example of an historic adobe adapted to modern use.



**CASA BUELNA**

In the very early days of Monterey, there were no dwellings outside the protection of the Presidio walls. During the first years of the 1800's, a few hardy inhabitants requested land on the mesa and finally ventured outside to build their homes on the mesa south of Fremont Street. Two of the first homes to be built were Casa Buelna and Casa Boronda, both intact and enjoyed as private residences today.

Casa Buelna was built by Antonio Buelna during the years 1818-21. According to property records in the Monterey County offices, documentary ownership to the land was issued when "in session January 16 (1836), the II. Ayuntamiento (town council) decided to give a document to Ilaria Buelna showing that there was granted to her a lot of 50 varas frontage and 50 in depth, whereon stands the house she lives in."

Antonia Buelna, Mexican soldier turned school teacher, established a school for girls in the adobe. After his death Ilaria, his daughter, continued the school for many years.



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## 1979 ADOBE TOUR HOUSES

ADOBE

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The 1979 Adobe Tour Committee and the Monterey History and Art Association, Ltd. gratefully acknowledge the support of the following patrons who have so generously assisted our efforts this year by their sponsorship of your '79 Adobe Tour Souvenir Program:

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“The town, when I was there, was a place of two or three streets, economically paved with sea sand, and two or three lanes, which were watercourses in the rainy season, and were at all times, rent up by fissures four or five feet deep. There were no street lights. Short sections of wooden sidewalk only added to the dangers of the night, for they were often high above the level of the roadway, and no one could tell where they would be likely to begin or end. The houses were, for the most part, built of unbaked adobe brick, many of them old for so new a country, some of very elegant proportions. With low, spacious, shapely rooms, and walls so thick that the heat of summer never dried them to the heart . . . Spanish was the language of the streets. It was difficult to get along without a word or two of that language for an occasion. The only communications in which the population joined were with a view of amusement. A weekly public ball took place with great etiquette, in addition to the numerous fandangos in private houses. There was a really fair amateur brass band. Night after night serenaders would be going about the street, sometimes in a company and with several instruments and voices together, sometimes severally, each guitar before a different window. It was a strange thing to lie awake in nineteenth century America, and hear the guitar accompany, and one of these old, heartbreaking Spanish love songs mount into the night air . . .”

—Robert Louis Stevenson



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