

CALIFORNIA STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS

at MONTEREY



VIZCAINO-PORTOLA-SERRA LANDING PLACE

SERRA LANDING

CUSTOM HOUSE

CALIFORNIA'S FIRST THEATRE

STEVENSON HOUSE

CASA DEL ORO

EARLY MONTEREY, FROM AN OLD PRINT



MONTEREY REFLECTS OTHER FLAGS, OTHER WAYS . . .

Monterey retains many eloquent reminders of its past as the capital of the Spanish, Mexican, and early United States regimes of Alta California. Important among these are its historic sites and structures. Preserved, their stories will serve as sources of inspiration for generations to come.

Monterey, the Old Pacific Capital

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Portuguese navigator sailing for Spain in 1542, was the first white man to sight the California coast. Sixty years later he was followed by Sebastian Vizcaino, who was sent to find a suitable harbor for Manila galleons sailing back from the Philippines. Here he found one, which he named "Monterey," in honor of the Count of Monterey, Viceroy of New Spain.

Many years passed before Spain was able to start colonization in California. On June 3, 1770, more than 200 years after Cabrillo, Don Gaspar de Portola, with Fray Junipero Serra, landed where Vizcaino had at Monterey Bay. After setting up a simple altar under an oak tree, and with ritual and pomp, they founded the Presidio and Mission of San Carlos de Borromeo. Their landing site is now a State Historical Monument.

Mexico obtained her independence from Spain in 1821, and for 25 years the Mexican flag flew over Monterey, the capital since 1776. The town expanded beyond the old presidio walls; and seafaring men from New England modified the Spanish colonial style. This resulted in the "Monterey Architecture," so popular in many parts of our country, of which the Larkin House is considered to be the prototype. The Mexican Government built the Custom House, among other public buildings; comfortable, whitewashed adobe houses dotted the hills; and stores lined the crooked streets. Visitors were charmed by the picturesque beauty of the pueblo.

Today, under the United States Flag, many of the old buildings have disappeared, but, through the cooperation of individuals, patriotic groups, the City, and the State of California, fine examples are preserved for the enjoyment of all.



THE OLD CUSTOM HOUSE

The Custom House

The Custom House at Monterey has nation-wide significance, for here the United States Flag was first officially raised by Commodore John Drake Sloat on July 7, 1846. Thus California and a large adjacent area became a part of the Union.

The north end of the Custom House is the oldest part of the structure, having been built about 1827. In 1841 work was started to enlarge it; and early in 1846 it had been completed in its present form. It is the oldest government building on the Pacific Coast. Customs duties collected here from foreign shipping formed the principal governmental revenue source of this northern province of Mexico.

The building was abandoned as a custom house about 1867. Later in 1901 it was rescued from oblivion by the Native Sons of the Golden West, who restored it to its original appearance. Operated under trusteeship of the State, which held custody under an agreement with the Federal Government, it was finally opened as a museum in 1929 under the administration of the Division of Parks. Purchased by the State in 1938, it is preserved and interpreted as one of the outstanding historic buildings of the State Park System.



CALIFORNIA'S FIRST THEATRE

The First Theatre

California owes its first theatre to John A. Swan, who was born in England of Scotch parents in 1812, and shipped as a sailor in 1832. Eventually arriving in Monterey, he liked the "Old Capital," and purchased land on Calle Estrada (Pacific Street). Here in 1846-47 he built a lodging house, with a bar-room as an added attraction.

About this time life had become dull for two companies of Col. Jonathan D. Stevenson's New York Volunteers, assigned to Monterey. To relieve their boredom, several soldiers decided to put on plays. Jack Swan had the suitable building, and agreed to furnish it with a stage, rough benches, and candles or lamps. Curtains were made of red and blue blankets. Among the first productions were "Putnam, the Iron Son of '76," "Box and Cox," "Nan, the Good-for-Nothing," and a scene from "Romeo and Juliet." It is said first night receipts were \$500. Seats sold at \$5 each and the house was packed.

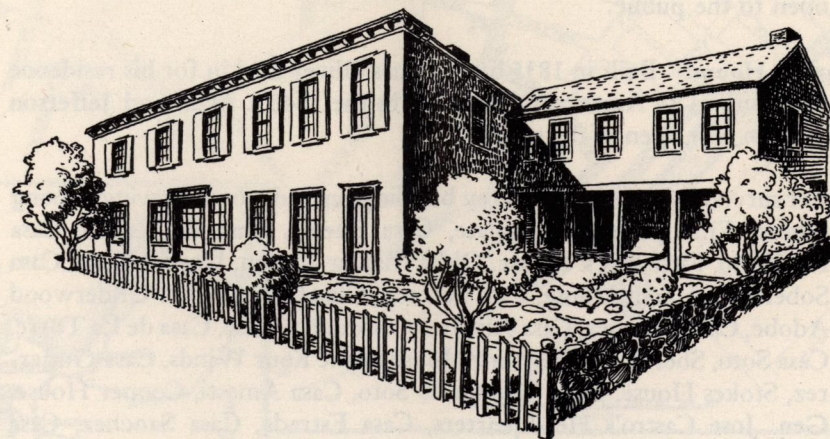
The building was presented to the State in 1906 after its purchase by Montereyans, assisted by the California Historic Landmarks League. Since 1937, the building has been again used as a theatre.

The Stevenson House

The fine two-story home now known as the Stevenson House has, since the Mexican era, sheltered families of wealth, government officials, simple working folk, artists, writers, and fishermen. The original portion of the building dates from the late 1830's, when it was the home of Don Rafael Gonzales, first administrator of customs of Alta California. Juan Girardin, pioneer French resident, and his dainty wife, Manuela Perez, became the owners in 1856. They made some additions and other changes and rented the spare bedrooms to roomers. One of these, Robert Louis Stevenson, occupied a second floor room opening onto the patio veranda during part of the autumn of 1879. He had come to Monterey to be near Fanny Osbourne, who a few months later became his wife. Poor, unknown, and in frail health, he was cared for by Jules Simoneau, in whose restaurant he had his one real meal of the day. For articles contributed to the local papers, Stevenson received two dollars weekly. One, entitled "The Old Pacific Capital," is an accurate picture of Monterey in the late 1870's.

The building has been restored as a home of its period, with several rooms devoted to Stevensoniana. The magic of his name, and his transitory presence here, has given this building its name.

STEVENSON HOUSE



Historic Buildings and Sites of Monterey

Vizcaino-Portola-Serra Landing Place. State Historical Monument. Near Presidio Gate, just off Pacific Street.

Custom House. State Historical Monument and museum. On waterfront at end of Main Street.

First Theatre. State Historical Monument. Pacific Street at Scott Street.

Casa Del Oro (Boston Store). State Historical Monument. Olivier and Scott Streets.

Stevenson House. State Historical Monument. Houston between Pearl and Webster Streets.

Colton Hall. Built in 1847-49 by the Rev. Walter Colton, first American alcalde of Monterey, and co-publisher of California's first newspaper. Meeting place of the Constitutional Convention, 1849. Museum upstairs. Pacific Street. Owned by the City of Monterey.

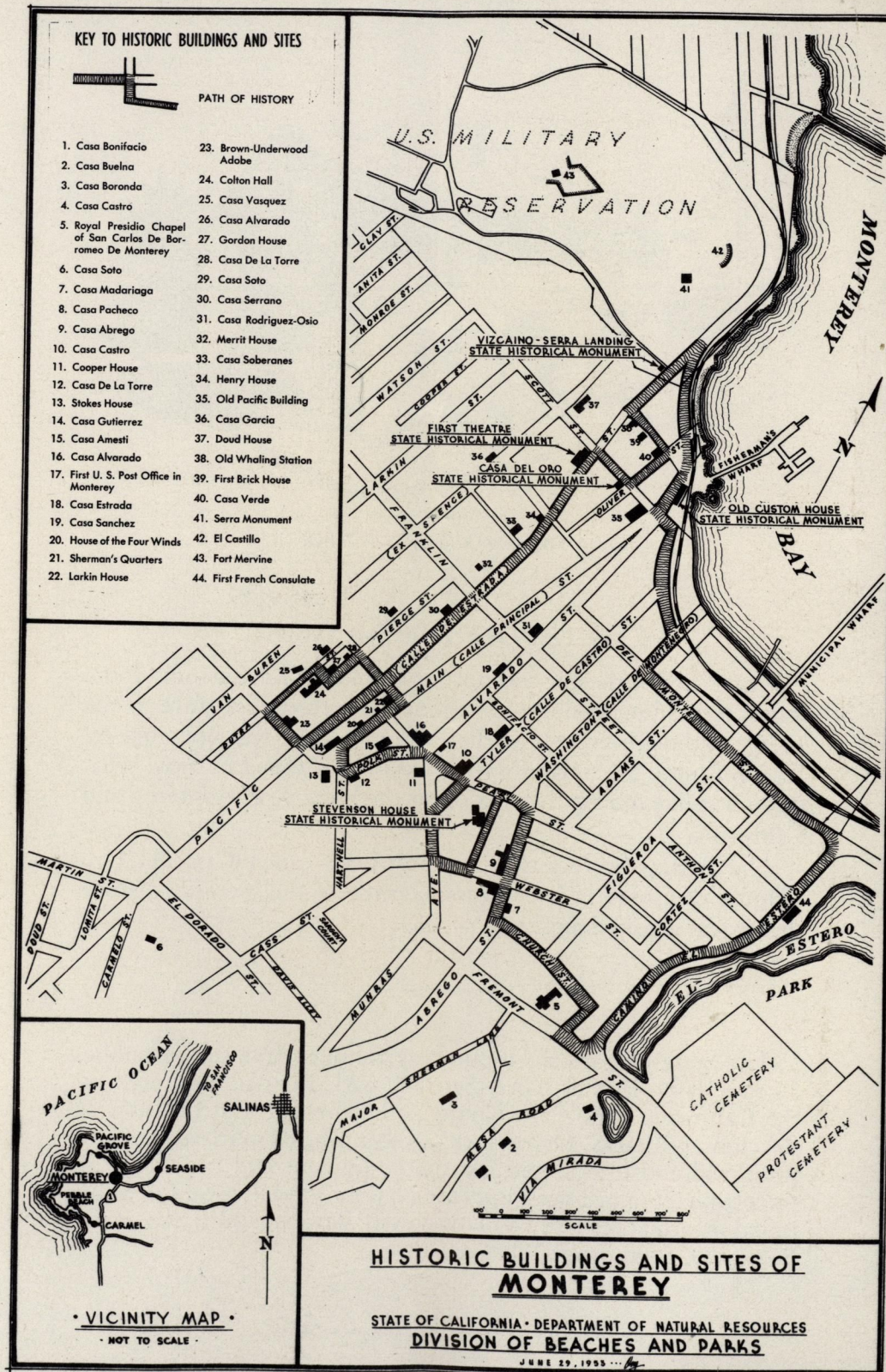
Old Pacific Building. Dates from 1847. Hotel in days of early Monterey. Restored by the Jacks family in 1925. Memory Garden in rear open to the public. End of Main Street, near Custom House.

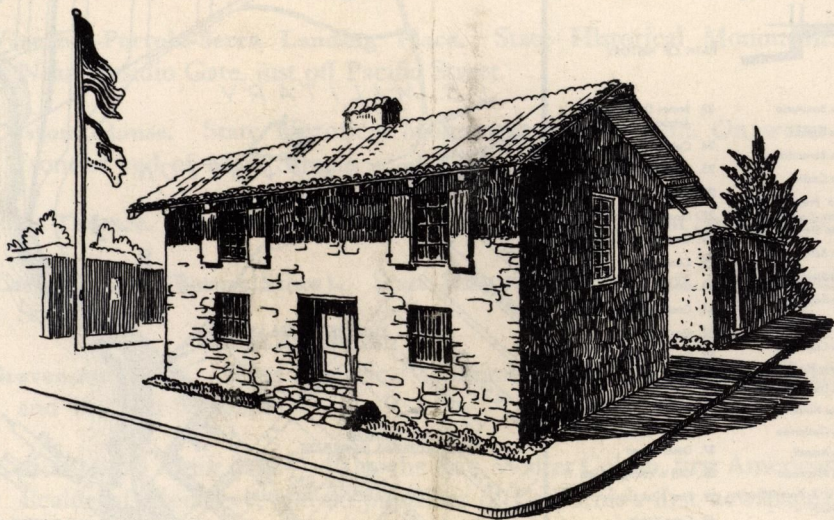
Royal Presidio Chapel of San Carlos De Borromeo. Founded by Father Serra in 1770, completed in 1795, and the only Presidio Church in California to survive. Church Street. Open to the public.

Casa Alvarado. Built by Juan Bautista Alvarado in 1834 and occupied by him while governor of California. Alvarado and Pearl Streets. Not open to the public.

Larkin House. Built in 1835 by Thomas Oliver Larkin for his residence and store. The American Consulate in the 1840's. Main and Jefferson Streets. Not open to the public.

Other surviving historic Monterey buildings include the following, among others: First French Consulate, Casa Buelna, Casa de Castro, Casa Bonifacio, First Brick House, Old Whaling Station, Doud House, Casa Soberanes, Merrit House, Casa Serrano, Casa Osio, Brown-Underwood Adobe, Casa Vasquez, Casa Alvarado, Gordon House, Casa de La Torre, Casa Soto, Sherman's Quarters, House of the Four Winds, Casa Gutierrez, Stokes House, Casa Joaquin de Soto, Casa Amesti, Cooper House, Gen. Jose Castro's Headquarters, Casa Estrada, Casa Sanchez, Casa Abrego, Casa Pacheco, Casa Madariaga, and Casa Munras.





CASA DEL ORO (BOSTON STORE)

Casa Del Oro (Boston Store)

Near the first theater and not far from the Old Custom House stands a building which was a general merchandise store in the 1850's, although erected earlier. The business was operated by Joseph Boston & Co. Restoration has been planned to show what trade was like during that period of the history of Monterey and California.

The Boston Store has commonly been called Casa del Oro (House of Gold) in later years, because of the unverified story that it was a gold depository.

The State Historical Monuments are open free to the public, 10 to 5 daily. Part of more than 120 park areas administered by the California State Park Commission, through the Division of Beaches and Parks, Department of Natural Resources, they are preserved and interpreted for the enjoyment and benefit of all the people. Trained personnel are on duty in each area. For additional information write to Division of Beaches and Parks, P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento 11, California.