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Ref. 91794
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Monterey
First Theater
A Museum (Whalers Resort)

Van Tuyl, Bert Know Your California.
68 pp. 1937

p 19.

This theater, now a state monument, is located in Monterey, at Pacific and Scott streets. It was built in 1844. Here Jennie Lind, the Swedish nightingale, sang to the miners. The place was first built as a sailors' lodging house, then was commandeered by soldiers to be used as a theater. It afterwards became a resort for whalers, a dance hall and a bar. The stage in the theater was a foot above the floor and the footlights were tallow candles. It is now a museum.

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Monterey
First Theatre in California
(Jack Swan's adobe)

R. Room
Berk. Lib.

v. 11.
no. 5

"First Theatre Open Again"

in. Pony Express Courier

p 2

3 ppms

v. 11, no. 5 (Oct.) 1937.

"The First Theatre in California" Jack Swan's adobe in old Monterey, threw a re-opening last month with a limited engagement of Gatters, the Pet of Squatter's Gulch," the Cornell Californian reports. Opening night sold out at \$2 1/2, a real band the old bar in front was crowded with sophisticates buying soda pop. The history of the theatre is of interest to Californians. Swan arrived in Monterey in 1843, on the Soledad, from Mazatlan. After "jumping ship" he went into business and made cakes, pies, and bread for sale.

With the proceeds he bought land at Pacific and Scott streets and built a saloon and boarding house

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for sailors Colonel Stevenson and his New
York Volunteers were stationed at the
Presidio and, looking for entertainment,
decided to produce a play. Jack Swan
loaned them the use of his main
room, and with the aid of tallow
candles and whale oil drips as foot-
lights the evening was a merry one.

Only five women were in attendance
at that first performance: "Putnam
of the Lion, son of 1776," the Californian
notes. The seats sold as high as
\$5 each. One of the later plays was
"Nam, the Good for Nothing." So
great was the success of these amateur
shows that traveling troupes began
to come to Monterey to appear
at Jack Swan's saloon. A fine
story has gone the rounds for
years that Jenny Lind sang there,
but this has been debunked by
those who have looked into the
records. The legend is said to have
been a yarn concocted by the facile

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R. Room

V. 1 V.

no. 5

Monterey
First Theatre In California

Pony Express Courier

p 2 Cont'd

Jack Swan himself on the premiere that it was good advertising to assert that the Swedish Nightingale had been a performer there, scattered, too, is the myth of the wooden curtain. That wooden curtain was a movable partition built by Swan to close off the alcove from the rest of the building, that and nothing more.

In 1909 the old adobe was sold to the state and has since been a public museum, open to visitors.

But, for a time last month, our First Theatre was no longer "dark" -

Villain pursued virtue with his fell regard and melodrama reigned supreme once more in Monterey!

1-14-38. J.T.

Monterey

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Book Lib

Newcomb Kafford
The old Missions and
Historic Houses of California
Philadelphia, 1925.

"The old houses of Monterey"

First Theatre in Monterey

p 339. At the corner of Pacific^{and} Scott Streets stands an interesting but unpretentious one-story house that boasts of having been the "first theatre in California." The structure a long low adobe, typical of its date of erection (1843), was built by John Swan, a sailor who came to Monterey from Mazatlan, Mexico. He erected the house as a sailors' boarding-house, and its use as a theatre was only one incident in its long history. This building is now used as residence, with a two-room^{and} book-shop occupying the northern wing.

1. 3. 78. J.T.

Ref Cal
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Standard F.C.S.
California as a Health Resort
San Francisco 1916.

Monterey.
Book No. 299 pps.

First Theatre in Monterey.

pp. 157-59.

Though brief of its former position as the seat of government, Monterey, has always attracted visitors. Many famous men have been residents of the city and its vicinity. Among those whose names are associated with region are Robert Louis Stevenson, Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Joaquin Miller, Ambrose Bierce, Commodore Stockton, General Fremont and General Sherman. The old adobe opera house, the first theatre in the State was built in 1847. Jenny Lind sang here in the early days. The son and daughter of the Swedish Nightingale recently came all the way from England to pay their devotion at his shrine. The little building which served as the first United States post office in California is nearby. The ship Natalie that bore the first Napoleon to Elba was wrecked in Monterey Bay. The skeleton of the vessel may be seen at low tide not far from the shore.

Monterey.

Murphy, Thomas D. ^{12/28/37}
On Sunset Highway,
Boston, 1921.

9.7.94
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"The Charm of Old Monterey"
First Brick House and First Theatre

213.-14 The first brick house and the first adobe are also to be seen in the town, and the first Theatre - where Jenny Lind sang in 1861 - still stands.

As one views the historic buildings of Monterey, the painful thought is forced upon him that nearly all are in a deplorable state of dilapidation and that many will have disappeared in a few years unless steps are taken to restore and preserve them. Neither Monterey nor the State of California can afford to lose the memorials of the romantic days of old and it is to be hoped that an enlightened movement to protect them as well as the missions, may soon be inaugurated by the State.

1-11-1938 J.T.
Mantony.

Q
9.7.94 Brooks, Charles J.
B 79 A Western Kind
Book New York, 1935. Book 158 pp.
"No pause at old Mantony"
First Theatre in Mantony.

pp 64-66.

On another excursion we entered a low white-washed room whose signboard informed us that it was Mantony's first theatre. It was built in 1843 to serve as a lodging-house and a saloon for the sailors who cruised for whales and were eager to cash in a pound of blubber for a drink of whiskey and a bed. And then later its inside partitions were knocked away to provide a general floor for entertainment. The stage is not lifted on a platform but is a mere alcove at the end of the room and on the level of the chairs. There is enough audience space for two hundred lounging sailors to stretch their legs, as they bawled for a favorite dram of poison.

But instead of a usual curtain in this crude theatre a sort of barn door was drawn upward

1-11-38. Ft. ②

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"Mr. Fausse at Old Monterey"
Monterey

First Theater in Monterey.

pp 64-66.

on a hinge across the stage and was fastened to the ceiling. This was used, the custodian explained, as a protection for the actors if the play failed to give satisfaction to a crowd of rough braves who wanted full value for their entrance payment. With whiskey no more than a shilling to the gallon and freely purchased from the profits of their cruise we can imagine the drunken uproar of discontent - the raw remarks that greeted the hero if he did not promptly rescue the little blonde lady who had been tied upon the trundle, the foul instruction that he hustle his dod-blasted stumps when now there was already a roaring of the locomotive in the wings. "Kill the fawn!" a bottle was hurled in his direction. A beer-mug splashed against his ear. There was an ominous rustling of chairs as the audience moved forward. And

1-11-38. V.T.

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Book

"The Faune at Old Monterey"

First Theater in Monterey.

pp 64-66. See the great door swung down across the stage and saved the players from assault. We ourselves, in amateur theatricals, once sang behind a net that guarded us from the banana peelings and the other enthusiastic tributes of our friends; but it did not occur to our sluggish invention to hang up a barn door that could be dropped in place behind the foot-lights when our upper notes went down. A first company, recruited from the garrison, played in this theater of Monterey in 1848. We assume that it was a ghastly Melodrama such as we have just described, but we were not able to confine our guess by giving a program of the performance. It is needless to say that a stage which was swept at the end of each act by a downward swinging door could not be set with furniture. Only a bare stage could have been employed; and, if an actor did not treat a quiet retreat after

1-11-38. H.

Mantrony

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"The Fause at Old Mantrony"

First Theatre in Mantrony.

pp 64-66.

he made his final speech, he would have been paddled from behind and bumped off across the foot-lights. With such dangerous possibilities at the conclusion of the drama, "Hamlet" might close with a dogue ultra corpses tossed upon the audience.

1-10-38. H.

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Wood Ruth Kedzie
The Tavernists California
New York, 1914

Monterey

Book has, 395 p/p

First Theatre in California

p.61. Monterey, the "Old Pacific Capital" is notable for many first things in the history of American California — the first flag-raising, the first English school, the first newspaper, the first Congress and the first American theatre. Richard Dana, Jr., recorded in 1835 that Monterey was "a great place for cock-fighting, fandangos and various kinds of amusements and knavery." Spanish plays were given in a long low adobe which still remains a Monterey landmark. Jenny Lind was one of the first to appear in the theatre of the American intenders who in 1846 seized the Mexican seat of Government for their own. In 1847 she was heard in a concert there.