

**The Very Short Story of
La Esperanza Fish Packing Company**
740 Ocean View
Monterey

A historic site
1916 to 1928 with a bit of before
and a bit of after



José Benito Rodríguez & Rita Riveiro Otero

This little paper
researched and written
for my family focuses on a brief period
of my paternal grandparents' lives.

It also solves a long-running family mystery.

Because of the setting,
a Cannery Row cottage that would become Ed Ricketts' lab,
the story may be of interest to local historians.
Or not.

robin rodriguez aeschliman
27 October 2015
update
August 2016
26 October 2016
13 November 2016
29 January 2017
30 January 2017
24 February 2017
8 May 2017
21 September 2017
2 February 2018
26 April 2018
14 October 2018
2 April 2019

LA ESPERANZA FISH PACKING COMPANY

740 Ocean Avenue

Cannery Row before Ed Ricketts

A story of hope

She was standing at the kitchen sink peeling potatoes. Her uncle's kitchen sink. Tió José María García. In San Francisco. Her hair was wrapped in a kerchief. She had just arrived from Spain and would soon be 22. She spoke no English and could not read nor write. The visitor – same dark features, same short stature as the potato peeler – was smitten. July 1911.¹ They would marry a month later on 27 August, four days before her birthday, and live on Green Street – two blocks from her brother and sister.² She was 21; he, 34.³ The first three of their five children would be born in the Green Street home – the names, dates, and times carefully recorded by their detail-oriented father on the end-paper of the family medical book. Francisco, Jaime, and Maria.⁴

Perhaps lured by the growing market and rising prices of the sardine industry, José Benito Rodríguez y Pérez and Rita Otero Riveiro and their three very young children, and perhaps, Vicente Rodríguez⁵, relocated to Monterey.⁶ With a dream. Spring, 1916.⁷

The family moved into a small three-room vernacular cottage (ca. 1910-1912) at 740 Ocean Avenue on the wave-lapping edge of Monterey Bay – which they must have rented – the owner was Mary J. Nelson.⁸

Now, let us switch to the Anglicized version of the lilting Spanish names. Jose/Joseph Rodríguez, as did many of the immigrant Spanish of the time, believed in assimilation.⁹ Joseph was literate in both English and Spanish; his children would be, too. Never his wife.

Joseph held an 1898 fishing license in Sada, Spain—a coastal fishing village in Galicia. It was issued the year he turned 21.¹⁰ He worked his way to America in a ship boiler room and as a stevedore, date unknown.¹¹ A worn vintage photo in the author's collection provides a clue: San Pedro, 1909.¹² His occupation in Monterey in 1916 was 'cooper' – a cask or barrel maker.¹³ Joseph Rodríguez and Vicente/Vincent Rodríguez, no relation, a neighbor when both were in San

Francisco, started a fish-packing plant, **La Esperanza** – *The Hope*.¹⁴ Simple cement holding tanks were built behind the house somewhat in the style of the ancient basin method. It is reasonable to assume that Joseph and Vincent built them.¹⁵ Francisco/Frank, almost four at the time of the move from San Francisco to Monterey, wrote when in his 80s:

*"It was a business that consisted of keeping sardines in a brine [the cement tanks, extant] and after a period of time the sardines were placed in a round wooden vat [barrel] that was about six or eight inches deep and about 24 inches across. [In another interview in 1995, the vats were described as 18 inches.] The sardines were in layers . . . then put in a press and pressed for about two weeks."*¹⁶

At summer's end of that year Joseph and Vincent agreed that Joseph Rubino of Alameda County would represent them in the marketing of their product – ten cents a pound. In a very old cloth-covered book in the Monterey County Recorder's office the researcher will find the quite formal agreement drawn up by a local firm. The firm continues to this day – Hudson Martin and (in 1916) Jorgensen.¹⁷

Sixteen months later at the end of 1917 the partners along with two others purchased 740 Ocean Avenue from Mrs. Nelson.¹⁸ In 1903, Mrs. Nelson, then of San Luis Obispo County, purchased the land from J. B. and Edna McAbee.¹⁹ At the time of the sale to "*Joseph Rodriguez et al*," Mrs. Nelson lived in Pacific Grove and was "*active in local women's organizations*". Mrs. Nelson, a widow, formerly of San Joaquin, California, was an investor.²⁰

A March 1918 document addressing another matter confirms Cosantino Roldos (of Monterey) and Joseph Lopez (of the County of Monterey) as the additional partners named in the purchase of 740 Ocean Avenue – "*with equal capital*".²¹ The document on **La Esperanza Fish Packing Compapny** letterhead is written in Spanish.

The Joseph Rodriguez family took another big step in early February 1918. Joe and Rita bought a small three bedroom home on two lots along Foam Street – two blocks above the growing bustle of the canneries.²² A Victorian that had once been in Pacific Grove. And moved.²³ A not unusual event of the day.²⁴ Joseph would build a cellar [where he made wine ²⁵], add a big family dining room to the little house, and a compound of various sized cottages, a laundry/workshop, and a garage on the surrounding land. But that's another story. Foam Street would be the family home base until Rita's death in 1974.²⁶

La Esperanza's first distant shipment of product, date unknown, to the East Coast disappeared. Joseph Rodriguez journeyed by train to find it. Unsuccessfully.

When he returned, he found his business was gone and so was his partner – who took a mailbox “to keep mail from me”.²⁷

One can only guess why in October of 1920 the four partners – Roldos holding Power of Attorney for Lopez who was living in Havana, Cuba ²⁸ – sold 740 Ocean Avenue to Fred Spallino, a shoe repairman, of Monterey.²⁹ The *Bargain and Sale Deed* did not guarantee clear title. It was understood that Spallino would sell 740 Ocean Avenue back to them.³⁰

Instead, four months later, February 1921, Spallino sold the property to Joseph Lopez.³¹ That would be the same Joseph Lopez

- who entrusted his POA to Roldos,
- who moved to Havana,
- who was brought in as a partner in **La Esperanza** in March, 1918.

And two years after that, March 1923, Joseph Lopez sold the property to Vincent Rodriguez, one of the two original partners in La Esperanza.³² At the time, Vincent was living on Prescott Avenue in New Monterey and working on Lighthouse Avenue, his trade listed as ‘shoes’.³³ By 1926 Vincent had moved to the site of **La Esperanza**, 740 Ocean View (note street name change), his trade listed as ‘shoe repair’.³⁴

In 1928 Vincent sold 740 Ocean View to Ed Ricketts’ Pacific Biological Laboratories.³⁵ For \$8,000.³⁶

Two months prior to Vincent’s sale to Ricketts, Josefa Lopez, Town of Casas, County of Mugaros, La Coruña, quit-claimed her interest in 740 Ocean View to Vicente Rodriguez.³⁷ It is not known *how* Josefa Lopez acquired an interest in 740 Ocean View. Was she the ex-wife or widow of Joseph Lopez? The clues:

- 18 December 1917, Lopez was on the Nelson to J. Rodriguez et al deed.
- 7 February 1919, Joseph Lopez assigned Power of Attorney in all matters to Roldos, another partner in **La Esperanza**.
- 13 October 1920, Joseph Rodriguez, et al, [Vicente Rodriguez, Roldos, Joseph Lopez— *a married man*—of Havana with Roldos acting as Attorney-in-Fact] deeded the property to Spallino.
- 21 February 1921, Spallino deeded 740 Ocean View to J. Lopez, marriage status unstated.
- 6 March 1923, Joseph Lopez, now of Monterey, deeded 740 to Vincent Rodriguez – marriage status unstated.³⁸

- 24 July 1928, the Bank of Italy, Beneficiary [lender] for Ricketts' purchase of 740 Ocean View from Vincent Rodriguez, would have required clear title to complete the sale. And that could explain the quit-claim deed, Josefa Lopez to Vicente Rodriguez in the same year.
- With the exception of the 1920 deed, J. Rodriguez et al to Spallino, Lopez's marital status is unstated.

June 21, 1928, a month prior to the close of escrow of Vincent Rodriguez to Ed Ricketts, Joseph Rodriguez recorded an affidavit.³⁹ Surely the intent was to stop the sale. The affidavit told of the shenanigans of his partners. The document was flawed. The chain of title was in error. Joseph's legal advisor confused the legal description of 740 Ocean View with that of the home on Foam Street Joseph and Rita purchased back in 1918. The customary check of the record at the time of recording the sale would not have readily led to the affidavit. And stopped the sale.

And that's the story of **La Esperanza**. "*The Hope*." Hopeless.

The author of this paper has come to believe that Rodriguez & Rodriguez launched **La Esperanza Fish Packing Company** on a "hope and a prayer." It appears they were undercapitalized and found themselves in a financial muddle. They entered the wrong niche of the market at the right time. History tells us sardine by-products—fertilizer, fish meal—were the money makers. And, per Joseph Rodriguez family lore, shoemaker Vincent Rodriguez took advantage of the situation—he brought in a consortium of shoemakers—the "money men?"

The good thing is that it happened. If it weren't for the troubled partnership and the shenanigans, if the Rodriguez & Rodriguez entrepreneurial adventure had successfully navigated the changing industry, if Edward Flanders Ricketts had not found the little house squeezed among the long row of canneries – a little house with cement tanks in place and on the very edge of Monterey Bay – would the characters, the colorful businesses, the stories of *Cannery Row* have made their way to Steinbeck's pencil? Stories and characters that, as it turned out, would outlive the fishing villages, McAbee's tourist hopes, and the canneries that are no more. . .⁴⁰ Would that section of Cannery Row be described as the "Literary Core National Register Historic District" by today's historians?⁴¹ Would Cannery Row have become today's tourist magnet?

POSTSCRIPT

There were two Ocean Avenues in early Monterey – confusing to the researcher and possibly early residents as well. Monterey's cannery-filled Ocean Avenue became Ocean View Avenue sometime between 1918 and 1926.⁴² In 1958 the name was changed to Cannery Row.⁴³ 740 Ocean View is known today as 800 Cannery Row, is on the National Register of Historic Places, and is owned by the City of Monterey. And that's another story.

Following the failure of **La Esperanza** Joseph Rodriguez went to work for his former Ocean Avenue neighbor Knut Hovden's Cannery [the site of the Monterey Bay Aquarium] as a foreman in various departments.⁴⁴ A man of many talents, he also filled a variety of positions within Work Lumber Company – cabinet-maker among them – a grandson has the surviving tools. On those days when the whistle blew and the fish were so plentiful that there was no meal break, Rita and little Maria walked to the cannery carrying a pot of homemade *caldo* wrapped in a white dish towel – along with soup plates and spoons. Mother and daughter would pick up a loaf of fresh bread from the New England Bakery and the little family would share a picnic lunch under a large cypress tree near Hovden's.⁴⁵ Joseph and Rita had two more children after the move to 457 Foam – Josefita and Alejandro. Eventually, along the rear property line, Joseph would build a little house, a row of four fisherman cottages, a garage – all connected – and a spacious apartment above a large laundry building. Rita did laundry and mending for the fisherman tenants and took in the laundry of others.⁴⁶ Behind the white picket fence the big lot would burst with the colorful flowers and vegetables nurtured by Rita's green thumbs. Joseph made wine in the cellar he dug – family and friends would gather by the cellar door at the back stoop for mussel feeds.⁴⁷ And then, without warning and while Rita and the two youngest children were visiting family in San Francisco, Joseph died. 1934. At home. He was 57 years old.⁴⁸

Francisco, Frank, valedictorian of his eighth grade class at Bay View School, ending his formal education. He went to work when he was fourteen so his mother could stay home with his younger siblings.⁴⁹ As a young child, Frank's good friend was Jack Yee, son of Won Yee—Steinbeck's *Lee Chong*, owner of Wing Chong Market. Wing Chong was across the street from the Joseph Rodriguez family home when located at 740 Ocean.⁵⁰ Frank's earliest job – he worked his way up to manager – was in La Espindola, a New Monterey grocery store. Carol and John Steinbeck were his customers. Flora Woods, too.

Jaime, Jimmy, when he was 23, became a Monterey policeman. 1937. His first beat was Cannery Row. The characters? *"I knew all of the characters in Cannery Row very well."*⁵¹ Jimmy's younger brother Alex assisted Jimmy in

activating the first National Guard unit on the Monterey Peninsula in 1947. Jimmy retired in 1973 as a respected and legendary Undersheriff of Monterey County.⁵²

Beautiful Maria, Mary, mom-two to Josephine and Alex. . . and to several nieces [the author among them] and nephews as well . . . lived lightly, left a legacy of humor, an always full cookie jar—Oreos or Hydrox—and managed to keep the family records and treasures safe from harm. She and Jimmy were Monterey High classmates of the young girl from Carmel who became their older brother Frank's wife. [The writer's parents.]

Josefita, Josephine, today's lone surviving Rodriguez sibling, just celebrated her 90th birthday.⁵³ Jo was a bouncy inquisitive child – Cannery Row her playground. When a little girl, she and her best friend Wilhemina visited with Ed Ricketts. Always welcomed, they were fascinated by the 'water babies'.⁵⁴ Jo remembers Flora Woods bringing chicken soup to the family when Rita had gall-bladder surgery. Jo met her husband at the Monterey USO during WWII. Jo and Byron took-over a family farm in Colorado – her spunk making light of no electricity, no inside plumbing, and lots of hard work.⁵⁵

When the bundle of nieces and nephews began to come along, tall, dark, handsome, mischievous, and not-much-older-than-they Alejandro, Alex, easily slipped into the role of favorite uncle. Effortlessly, young Alex burst into song – usually *Cielito Lindo*. He was Mr. Fixit for his mom, Mr. Entertainer for the family, toy-maker for his nieces, nephews, and, later, children. There wasn't any heart Alex didn't steal or anything he didn't tackle or couldn't do.⁵⁶

José Benito/Joseph Rodriguez died before the grandchildren came along--grandchildren who would gather for Sunday dinners in the large family dining room their grandfather had added to the little Victorian. The children would come to know him through the opera music that embraced them (not the younger cousins born in the 1950s – for them the sounds of TV prevailed ☺), the bullfight posters on the wall, the cypress trees that peeked through the many windows. . . and through the example of their hard-working, honest, bright, and respected parents, aunts, and uncles.

Robin Rodriguez Aeschliman
Pacific Grove
October 2015
©

ENDNOTES

MCR = Monterey County Recorder

¹ New York, Passenger Lists, 1820 -1957; National Archives and Records; Ancestry.com; family notes. Rita Riveiro emigrated from Sada, La Coruña, Spain, on board the S. S. Hudson and arrived on Ellis Island 8 July 1911.

Rita's mother died when Rita and her siblings were young. Their father abandoned them. Rita traveled on board the Hudson with her uncle, Tió Jose Maria Garcia and cousin, Joe Garcia, six years old. On arrival at Ellis Island, during medical inspection, Cousin Joe was detained due to ringworm contracted because of unsanitary conditions and Tiá Francisca due to "geographic tongue," a hereditary condition. The family group then traveled by train to Oakland where they took the ferry to San Francisco – a note of destination pinned to Rita's dress. Rita carried with her a letter of introduction to Jose Benito Rodriguez from his mother.

Joe Garcia to Josephine Rodriguez Linden, April 1990.
Family tradition.

² Family records. Marriage License and Certificate, City and County of San Francisco. The certificate states they were married in the Spanish Church; witnesses were Rita's brother Francisco and sister Francisca who lived at 916 Vallejo. The marriage date is 27 August 1911. Rita's birth certificate indicates a birthdate of 31 August 1889. Rita's age on the marriage certificate (20) is in conflict with the math. In all public documents and on most family papers Rita's surname, Riveiro, is misspelled. The correct spelling is taken from written correspondence between her relatives in Spain and Mary Jane Porter Perna (Rita's granddaughter).

³ Joseph Rodriguez was born 22 December 1876; State of California, Monterey County, Death Certificate.

⁴ Copy of applicable pages of the Rodriguez family medical book on file; handwriting is that of Joseph Rodriguez. The address is 664 Green Street, San Francisco.

⁵ If correctly interpreted, family notes indicate that Rita and the three children, Rita holding the infant Mary, met "Tiá Maria", who was walking home from work (in a cigar factory). Rita was in front of her home (flat) on Green Street, San Francisco. They spoke. Rita expressed concern that "Papa and the *Zapatero* had gone to Monterey to check out . . ." [the sentence is unfinished]. Infant Mary was born 15 December 1915. Information is consistent with move to Monterey in the spring of 1916. See also Peninsula Directory 1916-1917: 20, Monterey Library; 917.9476, DIRE CA RM.

In July 1914, Francisco Rivero [sic] Otero certified that he received from Jose Benito Rodriguez, an amount of money, assumed to be Rita's dowry for their

marriage three years previous. The document, handwritten and in Spanish, is witnessed by Vicente Rodríguez—not related— noted as a neighbor on the document.

Zapatero in English is *shoemaker*. Research confirms that Vicente Rodríguez was a shoemaker; he returned to that profession following the failure of *La Esperanza*.

⁶ Sardine industry information taken from: “Final Cannery Row Cultural Resources Survey, City of Monterey:30, *Architectural Resources Group, Architects, Planners & Conservators, Inc.*, March 2001.

⁷ Undated handwritten document in author's collection; handwriting is that of Frank Rodríguez, the author's father.

⁸ Pat Hathaway, photo archivist, Ricketts scholar, *California Views Photo Collection*; Pat provided a photo of 740 Ocean View taken in 1924. It is a vernacular cottage, with wood channel-groove siding. Emilio Cal identified those pictured in front of the house as his aunt, Irene Rodríguez Longueira and Pat Lopez, Irene's cousin, along with “Mr. Aiello, Tony's dad.”

Katharine Rodger; *Breaking Through, Essays, Journals, and Travelogues of Edward F. Ricketts*; (University of California Press; 2006), 9: “. . . a 50' lot with a stoutly built three-bedroom plastered house in fair condition and a cement floored shed in fair shape containing four cement tanks offering a splendid place for storing dogfish. . . ” (Ricketts, PBL Shareholder meeting, July, 1928).

The house is described, as above, in the National Register of Historic Places, Section 8:5. Ricketts raised and relocated the house on the lots. An iconic photo of the house during Ricketts' time shows a two story plastered house. There is a disconnect between the description “plastered house” and Pat Hathaway's 1924 photos of the house, which show channel groove wood siding. At this writing, the date the house exterior was plastered and by whom, is not known—of course, ‘plastered’ could describe the interior finish of the house when Ricketts purchased it, or, the house could have been plastered on the sides not shown in the iconic photograph.

The build date range is extrapolated from Sanborn Maps, Monterey Public Library, SAN Reel 37:1905 & 1912 maps; and MCR Deed Book 116:122-123, Mary J. Nelson to Monterey City, Drainage Easement, 23 March 1910. See also Peninsula Directory 1916-1917: 20, Monterey Library; 917.9476, DIRE CA RM. It is possible the house could have been moved to the site from another location. Mrs. Nelson was a property investor, focusing much of her activity in Pacific Grove.

“Former Resident of Grove Passes,” *Pacific Grove Daily Review*, 25 January 1926:1, microfilm, Pacific Grove Library Local History. Mrs. Nelson, widowed in 1897, married Lucien Villinger, 5 November 1905. “Married in San Luis Obispo,” *The Californian*, 9 November 1905:1, www.newspapers.com. She later divorced

Villinger then petitioned the court in 1909 to reinstate her married name. "Villinger Sounds Unpleasant to Her," *The Californian*, 24 February 1909, www.newspapers.com. Archived newspapers published in the area [*The Californian*, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*], accessed on www.newspapers.com and <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/> indicate Mrs. Nelson was a property investor; the newspapers contain many recorded property transactions, mostly in Pacific Grove. It is unlikely she ever lived in the little house on the edge of Monterey Bay. 1880 census records indicate she lived in San Joaquin, California and that her husband, Andrew Jackson Nelson was a farmer. 1900 census records indicate she lived in Pacific Grove on Lighthouse Avenue.

⁹ At the Spanish descendants (of early Monterey) gathering hosted by the Monterey Library Foundation in 2014 the author learned that most of those present did not speak Spanish. The guests' Spanish parents were children or grandchildren of immigrants who believed in assimilation. Although not a universal experience, for this group of descendants the mantra of their parents/grandparents appeared to have been, 'We're American; we'll speak English'. During this festive event, guests meandered among the stacks of the Monterey Library sharing their history. Most considered themselves unfortunate they had not been taught their parents' mother-tongue. My grandmother, for instance, never learned English. Rita's first grandchildren, the author the first-born in 1941 (on her youngest Rodriguez uncle's birthday), communicated with her with smiles, gestures, hugs, and a few words. By the time the youngest grandchild came along, 1955, there was a better grasp of English, albeit, broken English.

¹⁰ Copy of original document in author's possession.

¹¹ Josephine Rodriguez Linden interview, Joe Garcia [cousin]: 22 April 1990.

¹² Studio portrait; *Alberta*, 440 Broadway, San Francisco; on the reverse, in Spanish, a note to his father, Jacobo Rodriguez, signed José B. Rodriguez, San Pedro, September 3, 1909. Another arrival date clue is the 1920 census in which it states he arrived in 1907. Census information for 1930 indicates he arrived in 1919. Oops! We know that's not right. NOTE: One needs to be wary of Census information: errors abound. Jose Rodriguez received his Certificate of Naturalization 15 May 1915, in San Francisco, copy on file.

¹³ Directory of Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Del Monte, 1916-1917:30, Monterey Library; 917.9476, DIRE CA RM.

[Note: Vincent Rodriguez is not listed in this directory.]

The author's cousin, A. J. Rodriguez (son of Alejandro/Alex) recalls the workshop of his youth that was in the rear of the laundry building of the Rodriguez home on Foam Street. He remembers the vintage tools that were in that room – among

them, he believes, was a combination barrel press and banding tool – Joseph's tools.

¹⁴ MCR , Agreement Book G:161-162. MCR Deed Book 155:424-425. Family documents. Family tradition is that *La Esperanza Fish Packing Company* was the first fish-packing plant (as opposed to *canning*, a quite different process) on Cannery Row. It is interesting to note that Vicente Rodriguez, Jose Rodriguez, and Rita Riveiro Rodriguez were all from Sada, Spain. Family tradition is that Rita and Jose did not know one another when in Sada. It is not known if Vicente and Jose were acquainted when in Sada.

In 1920, Vicente Rodriguez visited his wife and two daughters, Irene (15) and Maria (17) in Spain. When he returned to America, he brought the two daughters and their cousin with him. His wife remained behind. Daughter Maria did not want to make the move. Vicente would not agree. Following their arrival in Monterey, Maria became a cannery worker and married. Vicente's grandchildren never met their grandmother. Interview with (Vicente's grandchildren) Emilio Cal and Teresa Longueira Petersen, January 2017.

See, <https://spanishimmigrantsintheus7.wordpress.com/voices/voices-10-19/10-emilio-cal/>, accessed 9 August 2016.

¹⁵ Sanborn Maps; Monterey Public Library; 917.9476; SAN Reel 37:1885. 1888, 1892, 1905, 1912, 1926 maps. See also National Historic Register, Section number 7:2, Pacific Biological Lab, Monterey, CA, Monterey Library California Room, clippings file 'R'. See also, Rodger, *Breaking Through: 9*.

¹⁶ Undated handwritten document in author's collection – handwriting is that of the author's father, Frank Rodriguez. The document may have been written in 1993 when Frank was 81 and the author's mother, Jean Basham Rodriguez, was in the process of creating a Rodriguez genealogy which the two would gift on Christmas to Rita and Joseph's descendants. Together with the binder of charted ancestors was the promise of future biographical sketches (for the binder) of each of the five Rodriguez siblings. Never happened. The drafts, however, of Rita and Joseph's adult children's stories are in the author's possession. She hopes to complete her mother's project.

Because this is the recalled memory of one who at the time of *La Esperanza* was just turning four and because the method is consistent with preservation techniques of the poor fishing communities in Europe at the time and for centuries previous, it is reasonable to assume that the fish were salted and that the process created the 'brine' that Frank recalled. In another typed interview, 25 March 1995, when he was 83, Frank recalled the diameter of the 'vats' as 18". The 18" is consistent with the tool in the possession of Alex Rodriguez, Joseph's grandson. However, Tim Thomas, Monterey fishery expert, advised the vats or barrels would most likely be 24" in diameter.

Also, refer to National Register of Historic Places, Section number 7:2, Pacific Biological Lab.

For one of many explanations of the fish packing process available online, see *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission* V18:442-443 – a Google digitized book found using the prompt “fish packing barrel press”, accessed 22 September 2015.

In 1919, the Western California Fish Company began shipping dry-salted fish to San Francisco, where packing was finished. Approximately 1921, Santiago Briones Inc., fish packers of New York, established and bankrupted a plant in Monterey. The end product was called “Salachini” – a kind of dry-salt pressed sardine for the Italian and Spanish trade of California and certain Eastern markets. During the war there was a strong demand for such goods for Spain and Italy and the industry in Monterey attained fairly large proportions, a considerable tonnage being deported. *Pacific Fisherman*, 1921:56; *The New York Herald*; January 19, 1921:16. Although the process is similar, family members do not know if La Esperanza was a part of this movement or if La Esperanza's product was called “Salachini” by the partners. Thank you to Pat Hathaway for ca. 1917 Hedrick photo copy of El Toro Brand Anchovies in Salt and news clippings containing this information.

¹⁷ MCR Agreement Book G:161-162, Joseph Rodriguez et al with Joseph Rubino, 4 August 1916, “. . . exclusive right to buy all of their product . . . for the sum of ten cents a pound (including weight of barrels or other packing material), at the Packinghouse of the parties of the first part in New Monterey . . . ” (attached).

[NOTE: In approximately 2018, Monterey County Recorder's Office removed from public access all the old Deed, Agreement, and Miscellaneous Books. Records, at this writing, 29 March 2019, are digitally available in the Recorder's Office. The writer wishes to note that the change takes the romance out of research.

Note: H. G. Jorgensen, their attorney, was the City Attorney for the City of Monterey, *Monterey Daily Cypress*, 6 April 1916. Jorgensen became a Superior Court Judge, “Henry Irvin Jorgensen, a credit to Pacific Grove,” *Cedar Street Times*, 2 October 2012:18. <http://www.cedarstreettimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/October-12th-2012-Issue.pdf> accessed 9 September 2015.

¹⁸ MCR Deed Book 154:329, 18 December 1917, Mary J. Nelson to Joseph Rodriguez [sic] et al. Note: all names except Nelson are misspelled. The deed was corrected in Deed Book 177:58-59, 21 October 1920.

¹⁹ MCR Deed Book 72:134, J.B. and Edna McAbee to Mrs. Mary J. Nelson, 17 February 1903.

²⁰ "Former Resident of Grove Passes," *Pacific Grove Daily Review*, 25 January 1926:1, microfilm, Pacific Grove Library Local History. Mrs. Nelson, widowed in 1897, married Lucien Villinger, 5 November 1905. "Married in San Luis Obispo," *The Californian*, 9 November 1905:1, www.newspapers.com. She later divorced Villinger then petitioned the court in 1909 to reinstate her former married name of Nelson. "Villinger Sounds Unpleasant to Her," *The Californian*, 24 February 1909, www.newspapers.com. Archived newspapers published in the area [*The Californian*, *Santa Cruz Sentinel*], accessed on www.newspapers.com and <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/> indicate Mrs. Nelson was a property investor; the newspapers contain many recorded property transactions, mostly in Pacific Grove. It is unlikely she ever lived in the little house. 1880 census records indicate she lived in San Joaquin, California and that her husband, Andrew Jackson Nelson was a farmer. 1900 census records indicate she lived in Pacific Grove on Lighthouse Avenue.

²¹ Copy of document and translation in author's possession (attached).

²² MCR Deed book 154:138, 2 February 1918, Geo. S. Gould, Jr. to Joseph B. Rodriguez et ux. The Deed of Trust in favor of Andrew Anderson was for \$1200 at 7%; Deed Book 69:178-180.

Note: Gould was the Monterey County Assessor, *Monterey Daily Cypress*, 2 May 1916, microfilm, Monterey Public Library.

NOTE: At the time of purchase, 1918, the address was 417 Foam Street; in the 1920 and 1930 census records, the address changed to 457 Foam Street.

²³ Family tradition.

²⁴ Pacific Grove Heritage Society, *Board and Batten*, June/July 2002:8.

²⁵ Family Tradition.

²⁶ Certificate of Death State of California, Rita Rodriguez, 12 November 1974. The family sold the property in 1976 for \$75,500. The location, at this writing, houses the Victorian Best Western Inn, Monterey. The Rodriguez home and all the out-buildings were razed, the cypress trees are gone.

²⁷ Family papers and documents.

Note: Added March 2019: Through ongoing study, it seems reasonable to believe the East Coast shipment loss happened in 1920 or earlier:

- Mary's remembered walk with her mother to share lunch with her dad while he worked at Hovden's happened when she was probably 4 or 5—her 1915 birthdate supports the educated guess of 1920. (Interview Ryan Aeschliman / Mary Rodriguez Porter, 1992, a 6th grade school project.)

- Partner Vincent Rodriguez traveled to Spain, 1920, and brought his daughters to America. [Interview, Robin Rodriguez Aeschliman / Emelio Cal.]
- The family moved to Foam Street in early 1918 when Mary was two; and,
- Transfer chronology:
 - 1917 December 18: Mary J. Nelson to J Rodriguez et al;
 - 1918 February 2, Joseph and Rita bought Foam Street;
 - 1918 March, Roldos and Lopez brought in as equal partners;
 - 1919 February 7, POA, Lopez to Roldos;
 - 1920 October 13, Joseph Rodriguez et al to Spallino;
 - 1920 Vincent Rodriguez travels to Spain, returns with his daughters;
 - 1921 February 21, Spallino to Lopez.

Logistically, it makes sense.

²⁸ MCR Book Power of Attorney 'D':267, Joseph Lopez to Constantino Roldos, 7 February 1919.

²⁹ MCR Deed Book 177: 60-61, Joseph Rodriguez et al to Fred Spallino, 13 October 1920.

For residence and occupation information see also Peninsula Directory 1916-1917:33, Monterey Library; 917.9476, DIRE CA RM; and Directory of Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Del Monte, 1922-1923 (Spallino listed in both Monterey and Pacific Grove sections), Monterey Library, call number 917.9476, DIRE CA RM; and Polks Directory, 1926-1927:319, Salinas, Monterey and Pacific Grove, Monterey Library call number 917.9476 POLK, CALIF.

³⁰ An undated note, in the hand of Joseph Rodriguez, provides a clue.

Never could accept the \$300⁰⁰ as payment for the property as before we passed the property to Spallino we had that in the market for \$3,000 with Monterey Investment Co. he forced me to take out as the price was too low
 The fish was good they wanted a reduction in price then he sent head and claimed the fish was no good
 He wanted a mail box to keep the mail from me

Note shown enlarged, next page.

³¹ MCR, Deed Book 178:400; Fred Spallino et ux to Jospheh Lopez; 21 February 1921.

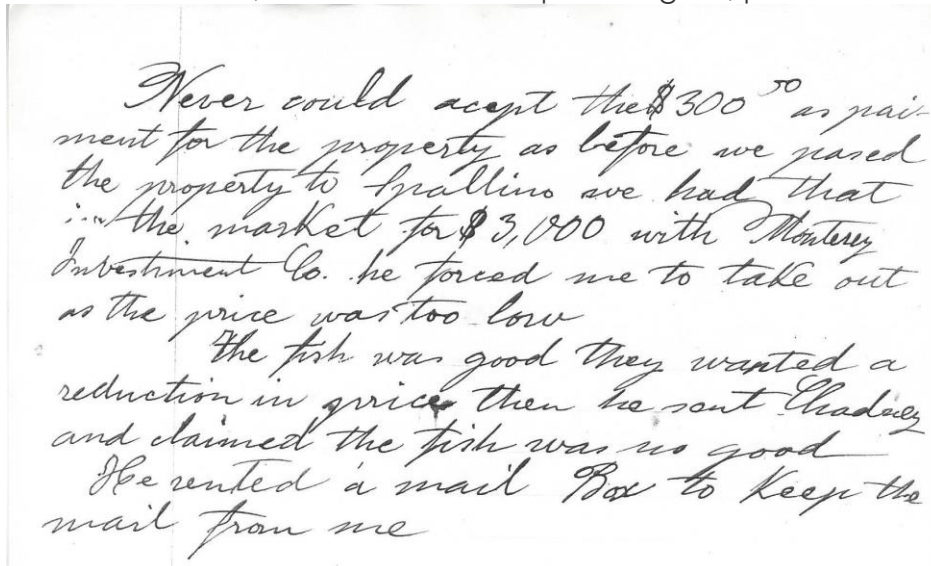
³² MCR Deed Book 14: 485-486, Joseph Lopez to Vicente Rodrigues [sic], 6 March 1923.

³³ Directory of Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Del Monte, 1922-1923, Monterey Library, call number 917.9476, DIRE CA RM.

³⁴ Polks Directory, 1926-1927, Salinas, Monterey and Pacific Grove, Monterey Library call number 917.9476 POLK, CALIF.

³⁵ MCR Deed Book 157:414-415, Vicente Rodriguez to Pacific Biological Laboratories, 24 July 1928.

³⁶ MCR Deed Book 159:319, Deed of Trust, Pacific Biological Laboratory, Trustor; Bank of Italy, Trustee. Because Monterey County did not begin documenting sales price until the 1930s, the selling prices of the previous transactions are unknown; i.e., Mary J. Nelson to Joseph Rodriguez et al; Joseph Rodriguez, et al to Fred Spallino; Fred Spallino to Lopez; Joseph Lopez to Vincent Rodrigues [sic]. An undated note, in the hand of Joseph Rodriguez, provides a clue:



Never could accept the \$300⁵⁰ as payment for the property, as before we passed the property to Spallino we had that in the market for \$3,000 with Monterey Investment Co. he forced me to take out as the price was too low
The fish was good they wanted a reduction in price then he sent Chadley and claimed the fish was no good
He rented a mail Box to keep the mail from me

³⁷ MCR Deed Book 168:150-151, Josefa Lopez and Vincente [sic] Rodriguez, 24 May 1928. The quitclaim deed was witnessed by Walter H. McKinney, Consul of the United States of America in Vigo, Spain on 29 September 1928 and recorded 30 October 1928 in Monterey County. The relationship between Josefa Lopez and Joseph Lopez is unknown.

NOTE: The transaction above was not noted in the 2012 timeline Ms. Robbie Behrens prepared for the Cannery Row Foundation.

³⁸ MCR Deed Book 14:485, Joseph Lopez to Vicente Rodrigeus [sic], 6 March, 1923.

³⁹ MCR Deed Book 155:424-425, Affidavit, Joseph B. Rodriguez, Affiant, 21 June 1928.

⁴⁰ McAbee Beach, "The Historical Marker Database", <http://www.hmdb.org/Marker.asp?Marker=55191>, accessed 29 September 2015.

Hovden Cannery, once site of a Chinese Village to the northwest, was built in 1919 and is now the site of the Monterey Bay Aquarium; <http://www.monterey.org/Portals/1/PDFs/History%20Room/Historic%20Timeline.pdf>, accessed 11 August 2016.

Del Mar Cannery to the southeast was built in 1927 in the location of the Bayside Fish & Flour Co., established, 1916; it is now the site of the InterContinental The Clement Monterey hotel; <http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=55164>; accessed 11 August 2016.

NOTE: Hopkins Marine Station would relocate (from Lovers Point, Pacific Grove) to the burned-out site of the Chinese Fishing Village in 1918; <http://seaside.stanford.edu/>.

⁴¹ "Final Cannery Row Cultural Resources Survey, City of Monterey:45, 46 & 50, *Architectural Resources Group, Architects, Planners & Conservators, Inc.*, March 2001.

⁴² Extrapolated from deeds, Sanborn Maps, and City Directories.

⁴³ Historic Monterey Timeline, <http://www.historicmonterey.org/learn/timeline/>.

⁴⁴ Family tradition; also, Our History, "*Monterey Bay Aquarium*", <http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/about/our-history>, accessed 29 September 2015.

⁴⁵ The child, Maria/Mary, described the long ago picnics in a written interview with her grand nephew (the author's son) as part of a sixth grade project while he was a student at All Saints' Day School in Carmel Valley. (1992)

⁴⁶ The author has a childhood memory of the cottages. Board and batten, flat roof. The garage – quite large – was built in the Spanish Eclectic style. All were off-limits during the author's childhood. Historians might refer to them as "Fisherman Shacks". One aunt shared that as WWII newlyweds she and her husband lived in "*one of the cottages out back*". The 1940 census indicates a Japanese couple with a baby, formerly of Watsonville, also lived on the property – one wonders what happened to the Masuda family during the war. There were four connected cottages and a small pitched-roof house. An attached communal shower-room separated the apartment/laundry building from the little house and the row of fisherman apartment/shacks. Between the two middle "cottages" was a shared toilet-room for the four cottages. The entry steps of each dwelling led to a screen door which opened to a small room with a wooden kitchen bin table, stove, and refrigerator. Beyond was a bedroom, with a back door, no window. Each room had a hanging light bulb with pull string. The tenants could go out the back door to the Spanish store on Lighthouse Avenue. That back door also served as a ready escape for those

tenants who over-imbibed and needed to hastily remove themselves from Rita's wrath.

The author is fortunate to have the benefit of the shared memories of cousins Mary Jane Porter Perna (Maria/Mary's daughter), and Alex John ('AJ') Rodriguez (Alejandro/Alex's son), and aunt, Josephine Rodriguez Linden.

When the property was sold following Rita's death, Frank Rodriguez gathered, restored, and gifted each of the kitchen bin tables. They are coveted family treasures.

⁴⁷ Author's childhood memories; family photos.

⁴⁸ State of California Standard Certificate of Death, Joe Rodriguez, 4 August 1934. The Rodriguez children were 5, 9, 18, 19, and 22 when their father died.

⁴⁹ For additional information: Bonnie Gartshore, "New Monterey Dropouts Remember School Days, An Unusual Group of Scholars", *The Herald Weekend Magazine*, 18 March 1979 (attached); and, undated handwritten document in author's collection; handwriting is that of Frank Rodriguez.

⁵⁰ Obituary, Jack H. Yee, *The Monterey County Herald*, January 1, 1996. [Clipping of obituary in author's possession.]

⁵¹ Kristi Belcamino, "The Heyday of Cannery Row", *The Monterey County Herald*, 23 March 1997:1 & 9 (attached). Also, A. L. "Scrap" Lundy, *Real Life on Cannery Row: Real People, Places, and Events That Inspired John Steinbeck*. (Angel City Press, Santa Monica, CA, 2008).

⁵² Obituary, James Rodriguez, *The Monterey County Herald*, 6 January 2000:B3.

Note: As is often the case, the Rodriguez name is misspelled in the obituary.

See also, Monterey County Sheriff's Office, "Wikipedia", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monterey_County_Sheriff%27s_Office, accessed 6 October 2015.

⁵³ Just a few days following completion of this paper, Josephine, 90 years old, died. Her death was unexpected; 5 November 2015.

⁵⁴ "He never tired of looking at animals on the shore, and he was especially delighted to see children learning things. Carol Steinbeck remembered that his eyes would take on an almost phosphorescent glow during such interactions." Joel Hedgpeth, PhD., *Outer Shores*.

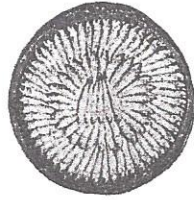
⁵⁵ Hallie Blunt, "A Wealth of Life and Love: Byron and Jo Linden", *Herald Times*, January 26, 2012; <http://www.theheraldtimes.com/a-wealth-of-life-and-love-byron-and-jo-linden/meeke/>, accessed 5 October 2015.

⁵⁶ Obituary, Alex Rodriguez, *The Monterey County Herald*, 19 August 2003.

Attachments

La Esperanza Fish Packing Company

V. Rodriguez



J. Rodriguez

Telephone 259

740 Ocean Avenue

Monterey, Cal., Marzo 14/ de 1918

Nosotros J.D.Rodriguez y V.Rodriguez abajo firmantes declaramos haber saldado nuestras cuentas y declaramos quedar enteramente satisfechos de todas las deudas atrasadas pagandonos a este efecto mutuamente y ajustadas nuestras cuentas,

Este certificado de que cada uno de nosotros tiene una copia no tiene nada que se comprometa por ningun concepto con la empresa de LA ESPERANZA FISH CO. de cuya somos los dos socios en Compania de J.Lopez yC.Roldos en capital igual

Y para que conste damos y firmamos la presente carta y documento de certificacion en la ciudad de Monterey Estado de California U.S.A. a 14 de Marzo de 1918

Jose Benito Rodriguez
V. Rodriguez

NOTE: JOSE BENITO RODRIGUEZ + V. RODRIGUEZ ARE NOT RELATED.
TRANSLATION ATTACHED.

[Translation of typed letter of certification]

The Esperanza Fish Packing Company

V. Rodriguez

[Seal]

J. Rodriguez

Telephone 259

740 Ocean Avenue

Monterey, Cal., March 14/ of 1918

We the undersigned, J.B. Rodriguez and V. Rodriguez, do declare that we have settled our accounts and state that we are entirely satisfied regarding all the debts in arrears, paying ourselves mutually to this end and adjusting our accounts.

This certificate of which each of us has a copy in no way promises anything to the Esperanza Fish Packing Company of which we are both partners along with J. Lopez and C. Roldos with equal capital

In proof thereof we give and sign this certifying letter and document in the City of Monterey State of California U.S.A on March 14 of 1918

Jose Benito Rodriguez [signature]

V. Rodriguez [signature]

10 Nov 1916, RECORDED

✓
JOSEPH RODRIGUEZ
et al
WITH
JOSEPH RUBINO

THIS AGREEMENT Made and entered
into this 4th day of August, A.D.1916, by and between
JOSEPH RODRIGUEZ and VICENTE RODRIGUEZ, of the City of
Monterey, County of Monterey, State of California,

and JOSEPH RUBINO, of the County of Alameda, State
of California, the party of the second part,- WITNESSETH: THAT WHEREAS, the
parties of the first part are in the business of packing sardines for the market;
and whereas the parties of the first part desire that a market be created for
their product; and

WHEREAS the party of the second part desires to create a market for said
product by advertising, soliciting and otherwise,-

THEREFORE IT IS AGREED by and between the parties hereto as follows, to-wit:

The parties of the first part hereby give to the party of the second part
the exclusive right to sell their product of packed sardines, in whatever form,
within the State of California, and to solicit orders through Brokers and Agents
for orders without the State of California, and further agree to give the
party of the second part the exclusive right to buy all of their product which
the party of the second part may require for the sum of ten cents (10¢) a
pound (including weight of barrels or other packing material), at the Packing-
house of the parties of the first part in New Monterey, Monterey, California.

The parties of the first part agree to furnish to the party of the second
part all of the product that the party of the second part may require in his
business at the rate of ten cents (10¢) per pound, as above mentioned, and the
party of the second part agrees to pay to first parties the said sum of ten
cents per pound (including weight of barrels or other packing material).

Payment for all of the sardine product that is sold and delivered by the
parties of the first part to the said second party is to be made within ninety
(90) days from the date of the delivery of said product. Settlements to be made
on the first day of each and every month after this contract has been in force
for the period of three (3) months from date hereof.

The party of the second part, in consideration of his being given the
exclusive right to sell the sardine product of the first parties herein, agrees to
use his best endeavors to sell the product of the first parties and to create
a market therefor by advertising, personal solicitation and by other means that
would tend to create a market for the product.

It is further understood that in the event that the parties of the first
part should change their method of packing sardines from their present method
that such change of packing will in no way effect the terms of this contract.

The parties of the first part agree to pack all of their sardines in a good
marketable condition and in the event that said sardines are not packed in a
good marketable condition, said party of the second part shall be under no
obligation to receive them or pay for them.

It is further understood and agreed that the parties of the first part shall
not have the right to cancel this contract unless for cause, that is to say,

that in the event that the party of the second part should refuse to advertise the first parties' sardine product for sale, or refuse to take any steps or measures to create a market, or refuse or neglect to put forth any effort to sell the product of the said parties of the first part after a market is created, then the parties of the first part shall have the option of cancelling the terms of this contract.

This agreement shall bind the heirs, executors, administrators and assigns of the respective parties hereto.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunto set their hands and seals, in duplicate, the day and year first above written.

Joseph Rodriguez (SEAL)
Vicente Rodriguez (SEAL)
Joseph Rubino (Seal)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }
County of Monterey } SS.

On this 22nd day of September in the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixteen before me, H.G. JORGENSEN, a Notary Public, in and for the County of Monterey, personally appeared Joseph Rubino known to me to be the same person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument, and he duly acknowledged to me that he executed the same. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Official Seal, at my office in the County of Monterey, the day and year in this certificate first above written. H.G. Jorgensen...Notary Public in and for the County of Monterey, State of California..(Notarial Seal)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA }
COUNTY OF MONTEREY } SS.

On this Ninth day of November, in the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and sixteen...before me, EDWIN C. RUST, a notary public in and for the County of Monterey, State of California, personally appeared Joseph Rodriguez and Vicente Rodriguez, known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the within instrument, and they duly acknowledged to me that they executed the same. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Official Seal at my office in the County of Monterey, the day and the year in this Certificate first above written. Edwin C. Rust...Notary Public in and for the County of Monterey, State of California (Notarial Seal) My commission expires December 18th, 1918.

Recorded at the Request of Hudson, Martin & Jorgensen..Nov. 10th A.D. 1916 at 7 minutes past 9 A.M.

New Monterey Dropouts Remember School Days



An Unusual Group of Scholars

In 1928, New Monterey was a different place from the exclusive residential area which had been envisioned some three decades earlier when the beaches and vistas offered the same attractions as the more remote Pebble Beach area.

The sardine fishing industry, with its many canneries, was well established by 1928 and the beaches had all but disappeared under the wooden structures which housed the vital industry. Most of the families living in New Monterey were connected in some way with the canneries.

The population was concentrated below Pine Street, with a generous scattering of empty lots among the houses, places for kids to play. Above Pine there were more wooded and undeveloped areas, with scattered houses, and above Grace Street even that minimal density diminished. This was the area that later became known as one of Monterey's Huckleberry Hills, but then it was simply "Prescott Hill," or "The Hill."

An important event in New Monterey that year — 1928 — was the first graduation at New Monterey Grammar School, newly named Bay View School and

Bonnie Gartshore is a freelance writer. Now a resident of Pacific Grove, she lived for many years in New Monterey.

By **BONNIE GARTSHORE**
Herald Special Writer

housed in a new building on Prescott, between Laine and Belden. Until then, the New Monterey students had to attend 8th grade classes at Monterey Grammar School on Pacific Street, and thus graduate in Old Monterey. But in 1928, 28 young people received their diplomas in their own school.

Two members of the class were swapping memories the other day, and Charles Nonella and Salvador (Sam) Solis had nothing but good ones about the principal, Mr. Talcott, who was also their 8th grade teacher.

"Because he was principal, he couldn't be in the room with us all the time," explained Solis. "So we were on the honor system. He gave us our work and came in now and then to check on us, and we worked on our own."

"If we got stuck on an arithmetic problem," chimed in Nonella, "Yoshi Higuchi or Herman Has would go to the board and explain it to us. We helped each other that way, but there was no cheating."

Once a week the 8th grade boys walked to Monterey Union High School for a class in mechanical drawing, and again they were on their honor to get there and back, walking through the Presidio.

These young New Monterey musicians were perennial winners in the talent contest Buck Russo held at the Monterey Theater. They are, from left, Angelo De Maria (Chappell), John Coustette, Joe De Maria, Manny DeMaria and Mike Marotta, the group's 8-year-old drummer. First prize was a five dollar gold piece.

"I don't remember what the girls were doing during that time," said Solis. "Probably sewing or something like that."

All the memories of principals and teachers aren't as pleasant as the ones about Mr. Talcott. The pair remembered "Old Rubber Hose" Bancroft, who had come to his job as principal out of the Army and liked to put the students through marching drill on the playground. His nemesis was Eddie Bushnell, or maybe it was the other way around; at any rate their clashes are part of New Monterey folk history.

Because only about 30 percent of these New Monterey graduates of Bay View School went on to high school, they looked enviously at the various high school reunions through the years until Joseph Solis, Sam's younger brother, decided to do something about it.

Three years ago he, along with Elizabeth Has, Joe Mondragon, Juanita Ponder and Mike Marotta, masterminded a "dropout" reunion which brought more than 250 former Bay View School students (some of them hadn't even graduated from grammar school) together at the Monterey Elks Club for a happy sharing of tales of the old days.

Bertha Has and Ray Parga met for the first time since they had graduated together in 1925. Frank Rico came all the way from New York for the reunion, and Ardan Ardiar came down from San Jose a week early

to help out. Otto Winklehaus got a prize for sending in the first reservation check.

Honor guest was Manuel Joseph, longtime principal at the school who died not many months after the reunion, and when Joey Solis introduced him during the program Joseph learned for the first time that it was Joey, not Art Marshall, who hit golf balls toward the schoolyard, often breaking windows. And that it was Joey, not Stella Sino, who buried squid heads in the kindergarten sandbox.

That kind of mischief, given a soft patina of sentimentality by the years in between, figured in a lot of the memory sharing at the reunion. Solis recalled the time "Doc" Ricketts told Frankie Begara and Victor Schwab he would pay 50 cents for each cat they brought in (to be prepared and sold by him as biology class specimens), and all the other boys joined in the hunt as soon as they found out about the offer. The feline population of New Monterey was wiped out in a couple of days.

Hilmer's School Store, across the street from Bay View School, figured in a lot of memories, notably the penny candy called "Lucky Bite" — if you bit into it and it was pink inside you got a free candy bar.

"If you could manage to hang onto your pink candy and the wrapping," Joey Solis remembered, "you could pretend to win for several days in a row. But finally Mr. Hilmer got wise and insisted on taking the candy when he gave you the chocolate bar."

Principal figure in a lot of New Monterey folklore was Craig Beckley.

"He was a legend," said Sam Solis. "You could hear him at night whistling up and down the streets. When it was time to make wine, he would always be with the Italian people, helping one family one night and one the other. He was black, but the Italians and the Spanish took him in as one of the family."

"I could tell you a story," said Charlie Nonella. "Once he kidnapped the chief of police..."

Woven into all of the memories were the canneries, because that was where mothers and fathers worked, and it was there and on the golf courses that the boys

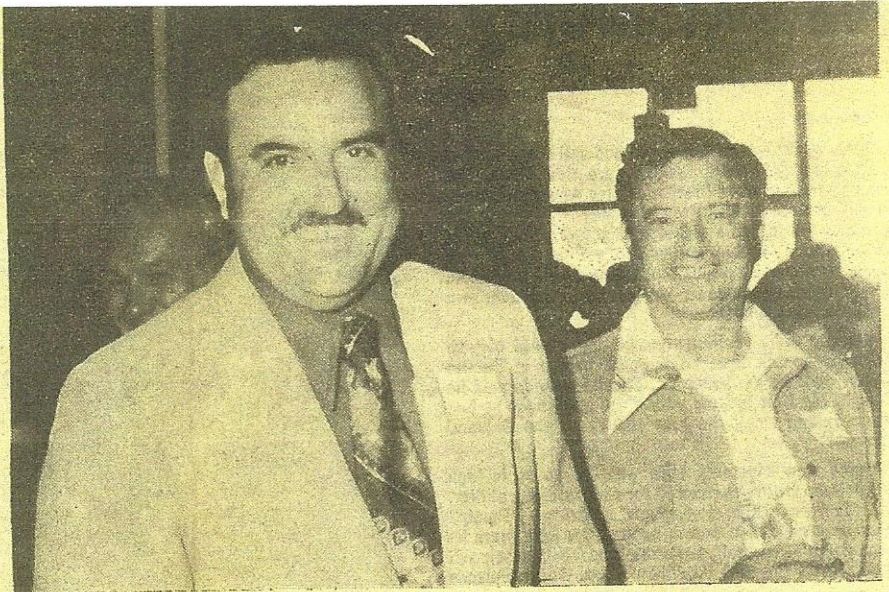
got jobs as soon as they were old enough. The girls found work at the canneries, too. The names of all of the canneries formed a pattern on the floor at the reunion party, and the partiers tried to remember the distinctive whistles that let the workers at each cannery know when the catch was in.

There weren't many telephones in New Monterey houses in those days, so the whistle was the signal to don boots and caps and trudge down the hill. And the Solis brothers remember their mother trudging back

up, her apron filled with fish for the family dinner table.

Because the cannery work was seasonal — the sardine fishing season ran from August to February, with squid following — there was always a struggle for money to keep food on the table and shoes on the feet during the "off" season. Families in New Monterey tended to be large.

(Continued)

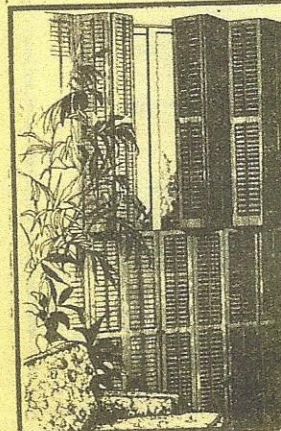


Frank Rico, right, came from New York to attend the reunion of dropouts and to visit his brother, Hank, with whom he poses.



The 1928 graduating class at Bay View School sits proudly on the new stage with Principal Talcott. Left to right are: (front row) James Brucia, Salvador (Sammy) Solis, James Bell, Dorothy Maddox, Adam Balcina, Mr. Talcott, Dorothy Perry, Yoshi Higuchi, Herman Has, Frank Rodriguez and John Bommarito; (second row) Claude Aiello, Arlo James, Irene Melville, Eugene Jewell, Charles Nonella, Angelina Scardina, Manuel Quezon, Woodrow Wilson, Yee Yock King, Wendell Holmes; (back row) Rosalind Quesada, Viola Brown, Frank Pinkston, Phillip Anello, Violet Frease, Dorothy Mayo, Kenneth Juckaby and Prudence John. It was the custom in those days to shower the graduates from grammar school with flowers, as well as gifts.

Boys: 1st row, 2nd right



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New Monterey

(Continued)

Kids would collect pinecones and sell them for two bits a sack ("always making sure that Mama had enough for her stove first"), or they would pick huckleberries and sell them to get money for a movie ("a dime to get in and a nickel for candy"). They would hang around baseball games at the Presidio, praying for someone to hit a long foul which meant they could scoop up the ball and run — using it later for their own neighborhood games.

Sammy Solis remembered getting an old bicycle with paper-thin tires from some people in Pacific Grove that he gardened for. Charlie Nonella said he bought his first bicycle with a \$10 gold piece he had earned, and using the bike to deliver the Oakland Tribune.

Some New Monterey boys who did go on to high school are still remembered for their athletic ability. At Monterey High, for example, George "Pondy" Parker earned five letters each of the four years he was there — football, basketball, baseball, track and golf. From the 1928 Bay View class, Adam Belsena played varsity football in his freshman year at Monterey High. Clyde Klaumann (former Carmel police chief) and Jimmy Rodriguez (former Monterey County undersheriff) were New Monterey boys who played varsity football. And there were many more.

Among the large families in New Monterey in the 20s and 30s were the Solises with eight children, the Nonellas with nine. Then there were the Schwabs, Manchas, Lugones, Salmeris, Bommaritos, Chappells (De Marias), Minettis, Brucias. The LeMestres family included several sons who were boxers, Henry going on to fight main events in Oakland and in Hawaii, where he settled. Sammy Solis remembers their using an old barn on Archer Street as a gym, and the neighborhood boys coming around to try their hand at boxing.

Swimming in Monterey Bay was another popular pastime, for boys and girls.

"John Coustette's mother took the kids to the Boatyard Beach — she swam there every day," Joey Solis recounted. "She had an old-fashioned bathing suit and we'd swim in whatever old pants we had on."

He also told of playing horseshoes at "the Perrys' rooming house on Hawthorne St."

Charlie Nonella talked about getting abalones and fish where the Hopkins Marine Station is now, and sea urchins, too.

"We could get red abalones if we went out deep enough," he said. "We'd take a big rock, jump off the skiff holding our breath, knock off two or three abalones and come up."



Joe Mondragon, Manuel Joseph, Elizabeth Has Henry, Joseph Solis and Juanita Navarro Ponder, from left, pose during the dropout party. Joseph, now deceased, was presented with paddled signed by former students in recognition of his long tenure as principal of Bay View School.

Charlie and his fellow member of the Class of '28 talked about the playing field that was made next to the school after two or three houses "in the left-hand corner" were pulled down.

"They didn't grade the land very good, but we played football there anyway, and we played hard," Charlie said. "If we made a tackle and someone came up not bleeding it wasn't a very good tackle, because there was broken glass, nails, boards and everything else in the field."

"I was born in Spain," added Sammy, "and there were a lot of other Spanish kids in New Monterey, along with Italian, Japanese, Chinese, some Portuguese and a few Filipinos. And most every family was somehow connected with the canneries, or with the Presidio."

He recalled a delicious food he got at the Bom-

maritos, the Favaloras or the Giamoncos — "After school we'd go over to one of these houses and the mother would give us cavadda — don't ask me how to spell it, but it was something like pizza."

Then he and Charlie went back to their graduation day, the first at Bay View School. The colors of the class were blue and white, and both boys and girls wore blue ties with white shirts.

"I bought mine at Sol Hart's on Alvarado Street," said Sammy.

"Mr. Talcott bought mine for me and I had to pay him back," said Charlie.

Charlie went on to High School; Sammy went to work in the canneries. But they both had the fun of a school reunion thanks to the committee that "planned sometime for the dropouts." □

cooks' club

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CARMEL



Thomas Jung, left, and Masao Yokogowa share memories of New Monterey at Bay View School reunion.

The heyday of Cannery Row

Panelists say Steinbeck's book accurate

BY KRISTI BELCAMINO

Herald Staff Writer

John Steinbeck got it right.

At a panel discussion yesterday, people who lived and worked there said Steinbeck's portrait of a noisy, smelly Cannery Row was dead on in the novel of the same name.

The discussion at Monterey Bay Aquarium was part of the five-day International Steinbeck Congress, which drew scholars from around the world. The event, held at San Jose State University and various Cannery Row locations, ends today.

One of the six panelists, Doris Bragdon, said that many of the characters in Steinbeck's novel were her neighbors and that Steinbeck used their real names.

The group shared memories of

a chaotic Cannery Row. They said each cannery had a whistle that would alert cannery workers when the fishing boats pulled in.

The canneries were also loud. Traps carrying the tins of fish across the street on pulleys constantly chattered, said Dick Shaw, grandson of Flora Woods, the infamous madam on whom Steinbeck based his character Dora Flood.

"From a kid's point of view, it was always screaming, hollering, phones ringing and whistles blowing," said Edie Schwab Stene.

It was also a smelly place.

Stene said there was a saying at the time about the smell that included a comment on the abundance of churches in Pacific Grove.

"It was Pacific Grove by God, Carmel-by-the-Sea and New Monterey by the smell," she said.

Jimmy Rodriguez was a policeman on the row.

"I knew all of the characters in 'Cannery Row' very well," he said.

He also knew Steinbeck. He remembers frequently seeing Steinbeck dressed in an old sweatshirt and old jeans carrying a bottle of wine.

Rodriguez also knew the people Steinbeck wrote about, such as the homeless men, Mack and Gay.

Jimmy remembers Gay and his friends going "frogging with his gang."

In Steinbeck's novel, he tells the story of Mack and Gay on

Please see STEINBECK PAGE A9

STEINBECK

FROM PAGE A1

their way to Carmel Valley to collect frogs for marine biologist Ed Ricketts' lab. When the truck they borrowed broke down, Gay headed to town to get a car part. His mishaps along the way included getting drunk, brawling in a bar, breaking the windows of a store and landing in jail for six months.

"He was quite a good mechanic, he just couldn't leave the bottle alone, God bless him," said Rodriguez.

Shaw lived in an apartment above the entrance to Ricketts' lab. He said when the workers left the row and night fell, girls would file into Ricketts' lab and the laughter and music would last all night.

"At about six in the morning they would gradually come down the stairway and go home," he said.

Shaw only met his grandmother three times. He didn't know she was a madam the first time he met her. The second time he walked into her house and asked to borrow a dollar.

"She thought I was going to use it to frequent her business," he said. "I just needed a dollar. She wanted to charge me interest, so I told her to keep her dollar and walked out."

But he said he has heard she was a "very nice person."

Jimmy's brother, Frank Rodriguez, managed Espindola's Department Store on Lighthouse Avenue. He said Flora came into his store every two months. She would fill two baskets with food, going up and down the grocery aisles.

"She would spend a good deal of money and then take the groceries out and give them to poor families," Frank Rodriguez said.

He also remembers Steinbeck shopping at his store.

"His total purchase was a box of Bull Durham (tobacco) and a quart of whiskey," he said. "Then he would sit in the car and roll a cigarette and drink his whiskey while his wife did the shopping."

Frank Rodriguez said Steinbeck wouldn't socialize with the other men gossiping in the store.

"He was only social with the bottle," he said. "It's strange to me that a man I knew became that prominent."

Joe Bragdon, a cannery worker, said he didn't read "Cannery Row" at first. It wasn't the book that made the impression on him, as much as what it did for Cannery Row.

"When we worked on the row never in our wildest dreams could we have believed this stinky, dirty row would become a tourist attraction," he said.

Walking tours of historic sites and of Ricketts' lab will be offered today. Tours of Hopkins Marine Station and "Asian Ghosts," a four-hour tour conducted by Sandy Lydon, are also offered today. More information is available at the Railcar or the recreation trail at Cannery Row, or by phoning 372-8512.

1/4/96

Pomper grew up with them

Jack H. Yee

Jack H. Yee, 82, of Pacific Grove, who took over from his father the Wing Chong market immortalized by John Steinbeck in the novel "Cannery Row," died Tuesday at Hospice House.

Born in Canton, China, on Oct. 5, 1913, Mr. Yee was 2 years old when his family moved to Monterey.

He grew up on Cannery Row around the colorful characters portrayed in "Cannery Row." His father, Won Yee, opened the market in 1918.

Jack Yee graduated from Monterey High School but dropped out of college in the San Francisco Bay area and returned to Monterey to take over the store — Wing Chong means "glorious-prosperous" — when his father fell ill. He continued running the store until he closed it in late 1953.

Alicia Harbey, who now runs Alicia's Antiques in the Wing Chong building, fondly recalls the frequent visits from Mr. Yee and his wife.

"They would always talk walks on Cannery Row and stop in," Harbey said.

Mr. Yee is survived by his wife of 57 years, Frances; a son, Scott of Berkeley; and a daughter, Lillian Johnson of Jacksonville, Fla.

Graveside services will be held at 1:30 p.m. tomorrow at Monterey City Cemetery. The Mission Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

The family suggests that any memorial contributions be sent to the Hospice of the Central Coast, P.O. Box 1798, Monterey 93942.

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