

## Montecito Historic 1820 Masini Adobe



*Home of the "Paso" master Masini, here shown with vineyards to the west around 1870*



### Masini Adobe History



The Masini Adobe, named for the first person deeded the property on which it stands by the City of Santa Barbara, is at 129 Sheffield Drive, at the intersection of Sheffield Drive, North Jameson Road and Ortega Hill Road. It was originally part of the four leagues of Pueblo Lands over which the Royal Presidio of Santa Barbara had jurisdiction. As Pueblo Land the Commandante had the authority under Spanish and Mexican law to give portions of it in lieu of monetary compensation to soldiers serving in Santa Barbara. Currently no written records or titles have been found to lands awarded soldiers in this fashion. Deeds to Pueblo Land only originate during the American period.

1820-1825: Date of construction of the Masini Adobe is uncertain. Marino Palomares y Lopez, grandfather of Helena Arroqui Meyer, one-time owner of the property, told her of coming to Santa Barbara as a boy in 1815. He died in 1897 at age 85 and remembered the Masini Adobe being built when he was a boy.

David Gephard, interviewed in the Santa Barbara News Press in 1987, said, "We don't know when it was built; maybe as early as 1825. It was there by the end of the 1840s." He believed the "Monterey" style "actually represents a commingling of Hispanic and Anglo architectural traditions influenced by English, French, Spanish and American dwellings in the Caribbean, the American Southeast, the lower Mississippi Delta and the American Southwest. The sources of the Monterey tradition are much more complex than had been realized."

Some people believe the Masini Adobe was built as a lookout guarding the eastern entrance to Santa Barbara over Ortega Hill. Ortega Hill name probably relates to Ortega land in Summerland reaching over the hill into Montecito; first noted on maps in 1880s. 1883, 1907 and 1925 maps all show Ortega Rancho as a legal definition. Map drawn in late 1880s shows the area where the town of Summerland now is called Ortega.

In 1819, as a result of the Bouchard raids on Monterey, Refugio Ranch and Mission San Juan Capistrano, the Spanish government in New Spain sent 200 men to fortify the four Alta California presidios. Fifty dragoons came to Santa Barbara. It is possible that they had a hand in the building and manning of the Masini Adobe but no record of that has yet been found. Arguing for the Masini Adobe being a military outpost are: 1, the estimated 1820-25 time period for its construction and, 2, the commanding view the adobe had of Fernald Bay and the Santa Barbara Channel from which a Bouchard-type attack might have come.

Masini Adobe is built with two stories and cantilevered balconies on east and west sides of house. The first floor's walls are 24 inches thick and the second floor walls are 12 inches thick. No window on ground floor on east side facing Ortega Hill. One story detached kitchen. The contractor who did the most recent renovation on the building, believed the wood he replaced from the balcony supports was pine. It is uncertain if that lumber was the original wood used in construction the adobe.

1855 The Diary of Charles Enoch Huse entry for April 25 says Huse recorded a mortgage for Pedro P. Masini in the morning. Later in the day he went to Masini's Shop. (Pg. 82)

On Oct. 25, Huse records that Masini tells him of an error in a deed from Juan M. Fabregat. "...Fabregat sold more than he intended with the result that one wall of the main house is sold and not the house." (pg. 120). Fabregat was a Spaniard, a Catalonian Volunteer who led the 50 soldiers to Santa Barbara in 1819 to reinforce the presidio and also led the expedition to return the Mission Chumash after their revolt. He retired from the army in Santa Barbara and received a land grant that was the original Hope Ranch. All of his holdings appear to be west of the mission.

1858 David Myrick in Montecito and Santa Barbara Vol. 1 says, "Another pioneer, Newton M. Coats, born in Tennessee in 1821 or 1824, came to California by wagon from Missouri with his wife Catherine. He secured a large (105 acre) grant from the city, dated December 22, 1858; two years later his Las Fuentes Ranch had grown to 175 acres, but only 15 acres were improved with wheat, barley and hay crops. His livestock consisted of two horses, 12 milk cows and 21 'other cattle.' the additions to his property represented more grants from the city and today much of his ranch, located south of East Valley Road and west of Sheffield Drive, constitutes the Birnam Wood Golf Club and residential properties.

1858 David Myrick in Montecito and Santa Barbara vol. 1 "The Nidever property, across Romero Creek from the adobe of Pedro P. Masini (still standing) was acquired from the city of Santa Barbara in 1858-1859 as one of the many grants of Pueblo lands received by that family. In 1863, Rhoda and Ebenezer Nidever sold three parcels extending back from the ocean bluff and aggregating 139 acres to J. Downs Wilson.

Wilson borrowed heavily from Pioche and Bayerique, well know San Francisco bankers, pledging his land but also selling it to Austin D. and J. Preston Moore for \$10,000 in October 1864.

“California had gone through a drastic climatic change in the early 1860s. Excessive rains fell in the winter of 1861-1862, destroying property and changing landscapes. With the lush grass, cattle herds in Santa Barbara County numbered some 200,000 head. The drought of 1863-1864 reduced local herds to something less than 5,000 as tens of thousands of cattle died of starvation or were slaughtered at the Matanza located on the former Nidever land near the western base of Ortega Hill adjacent to the Masini Adobe.

“Perhaps as many as 100,000 cattle were slaughtered at the Matanza. The hides were salted and dried, the carcasses were boiled in great caldrons to recover tallow, which along with the horns were sold. The remainder became hog fodder. The enterprise was unprofitable and appears to have been short-lived. Wilson went bankrupt and his property was sold at a sheriff’s sale.

“After much litigation, the Matanza property was sold in sections. Charles Fernald bought a portion along the shore in 1881 which now constitutes Fernald Point. Another section, north of the county road, was acquired by Josefa Loureyro, the widow of Jose M. Loureyro, the president of the Trustees of the Town of Santa Barbara in the 1860s. Mrs. Loureyro, who held considerable real estate, sold this section to Mrs. A.M. Carpenter in late 1904 who then subdivided the property as the Loureyro Tract. During the first decade of this century, H.J. Show operated a poultry farm on the flat just below the east end of San Leandro Lane.”

1860s Article in Montecito Journal 2003 says the Adobe was a stagecoach stop between Ventura and Santa Barbara, with four bedrooms upstairs for overnight travelers. No documentation yet found of that. Carpinteria was well-known stage stop. In History of Santa Barbara County by Michael James Phillips, published in 1927, John Waugh, a stagecoach driver from Los Olivos was quoted as saying, “South of Santa Barbara the next station was at Old Town, Carpinteria on the Coast Highway. From there south the route was sometimes by way of Casitas Pass. At other periods it stuck to the shoreline and the drivers had to take a chance of the tide catching them as they were rounding Rincon Point.”

1862 In May a Mr. Pierce of San Francisco sent a note to P.P. Massini or H. G. Trussell, Santa Barbara saying, “This will be handed you by Capt. Nelson of the brig “Curacoa” Should he wish to load asphaltum you will please furnish him with a cargo.” How was this loaded? Chapala Wharf 1868, Serena Wharf built in 1870, Stearns Wharf in 1872

1865 Newspaper article written in 1939 says a Pedro Mesina discovered oil in the mountains behind Carpinteria. Article says “Mesina” was “a well known Carpinteria settler.” He kept the find secret until 1876 when he told J. H. Swift. (Pedro Masini died in 1871) The find become the foundation of the Santa Barbara Oil Co. in 1877. There are no records of Masini found at the Carpinteria Historical Society.

David Myrick, writing in Noticias, Winter 1988, says “about 1865, when Pedro Masini searched for asphaltum, he discovered the oil seepage.” Asphaltum was first mined in Carpinteria in 1857.

1867 Map shows creek called Arroyo de los Ortegas coming in front (east) of the Masini Adobe. By 1871 the course of the creek is west of adobe according to a new map.

1868 Pedro Masini bought adobe and 37.27 acres from Mayor & Common Council of City of Santa Barbara for \$55.87. Deed is given by President and Board of Trustees of Santa Barbara. A year later Masini bought 19 additional acres from Newton Coat’s Las Fuentes Ranch to the north. (Myrick Pg. 72). He develops vineyard stretching to beach. (Redmon)

A letter written to the Montecito Journal says there was a winery called La Bodega on the Masini property that the writer remembers his ancestors going to buy their wine.

1870 David Myrick in Montecito and Santa Barbara Vol. 1 “By this time the Coats family included seven children, the eighth, a boy, was accidentally killed several years before by his own gun while climbing over a fence. Newton Coats was active in the community, serving as a school trustee. Following his death in 1873, his widow married George W. Ferrier, a farmer from Missouri. Mrs. Ferrier sold the Montecito property in 1887 and subsequently purchased several parcels on the east side of the Mesa in Santa Barbara.

“Longevity ran in the family. Catherine Coats Ferrier lived almost a full century as did her son, George W. Coats, who lived until 1955. His occupation was varied. For a time he drove a stage to Mattei’s Tavern but for many years he was a stone mason. A number of Santa Barbara churches display his work. Another example is the stone lemon packing house of Crocker Sperry (Las Fuentes Ranch), the place of his birth.”

1871 map shows Coats with four contiguous properties: 103 acres; 33 8/10 acres; 25 3/10 acres and one lot where no acreage is identified but looks to be over 30 acres. These are all along the intersection of East Valley Road and Sheffield Drive, not near Ortega Hill or Jamison Lane.

1871 Pierre P. Masini dies at age 50 following an operation. His will leaves property to wife Margarita Ayala. Discrepancy about Margarita Ayala Massini—some records say she was Pedro’s daughter but his will shows no daughter by that name but shows Margarita was wife of Pierre Massini.

1872 Patent from USA to Mayor & Common Council of City of Santa Barbara for 17,826.17 acres (perhaps all of Montecito) and shows a sale of 37.17 acres to Pedro P. Masini on Jan. 30, 1868 for \$55.87

1876 On April 24, Margarita Ayala Masini marries J. M. Rosales.

1877 On June 21, Margarita and J.M. Rosales default \$2,846.35 on mortgage; property is ordered sold by sheriff on the courthouse steps.

1877 On Aug. 25, Sheriff sells property to Josefa Loureyro and Josefa Lopez de Etchas for \$2,991.97 gold. Josefa Loureyro said to be of French Basque decent and a single woman who amassed substantial properties in Montecito and Santa Barbara.

On Feb. 16, 1861, J. Loureyro (Josefa) arrived in New York with her husband Jose Maria Loureyro. Josefa was 17 years old at time of her arrival. According to immigration documents she was born in Spain. She and her husband sailed from Liverpool England on the ship City of Baltimore. Her birth year is given as 1844 and her husband's date of birth as 1828. Jose was 38 years old upon arrival.

In the Pacific Coast Directory of 1867, J. M. Loureyro is listed as a general merchant and Jose Maria Loureyro as Santa Barbara County 2<sup>nd</sup> District Supervisor. In the 1870 census Jose is listed as a retired merchant and Josefa as a house keeper. He is shown with a personal estate of \$3000; Josefa is shown with a personal estate of \$300 and property valued at \$8,000. Jose's death between 1870 and 1877 is not recorded.

Josefa Lopez de Etchas, age 30, is shown in the 1870 Census as living at home with her father, Mariano, age 53, and mother Maria A Lopez, age 49. Mariano is listed as justice of the peace. Josefa is listed as "no occupation. Her sister, Bernarda, age 22, is also living at home with the occupation "day laborer"

1881 Article in Dec. 31 Weekly Press says a man named Gillis found Giovanni Trabucco, age 56, murdered in kitchen of Masini Adobe. He was killed on Dec. 23 or 24. Gillis was caring for horses pastured in the vineyard when he went to the house and found the body.

1882 The Weekly Press of Jan. 7 calls the crime, "The Assassination at Ortega Hill." The article describes in detail the brutal wounds Trabucco received before dying. Two shot bags "which had evidently been filled with coin were found on the floor and it is supposed that the murderers got between five and six thousand dollars."

The reason Trabucco had so much money in the adobe may lie in the fact that the U.S. economy had gone through one of its periodic banking panics in 1873-74 and another in 1877 in which there was a run on the two Santa Barbara banks that caused them to close temporarily.

Weekly Press continues, "Trabucco had long been a resident of this county, and has no relatives known in the country. He was last seen on Wednesday (Dec. 23). The lead editorial in the same issue carries the headline "HUNT DOWN THE MURDERERS. It says Supervisor J. M. Hunter "has accomplished a good work in raising a reward for the apprehension of the murderers of G. B. Trabucco." Days later the Governor adds \$500 to the reward.

A letter to the paper by an unnamed neighbor in the same issue describes Trabucco: "We found him always industrious and cheerful, indefatigable, because he loved the work he was engaged in and generous to the extreme with the produce of his garden and vineyard...a very kind hearted and good man."

In the Jan. 21 issue of the Weekly Press Mr. Burkill Jacques writes a letter to J. M. Hunter (the Supervisor) saying, "For the several years he was my neighbor, I probably had as good opportunities as anyone for judging his character, and the impression I have of him is that he was as good, kind, generous and honest a neighbor as it was ever my lot to have. For the first two years he rented the place on which he was murdered, he lost his time and rent and lost then cheerfully... He was, as I can testify with pleasure, extremely generous with what he had. He was a hard worker, but I believe worked more for the love of working than for the money he expected to make out of it." Jacques is shown on an 1883 map as owner of Ortega Rancho.

1882, The June 17 issue of the Weekly Press reported that Sheriff C.E. Sherman, city marshal, John Donnellan and Deputy Marshall R. Dowell get the credit of working up the case that led to the arrest of Juan, Apolinario, Amado, Teofilo and Benito Romero, all brothers, and Marcus Olivas, a cousin, for the murder. Subsequently, the information appears to have been based on a plea bargain with a San Quentin inmate. In July, the Santa Barbara D.A. released the accused for lack of evidence. Apolinario Romero became Montecito Constable later.

1884 Novel Ramona written by Helen Hunt Jackson has Ramona fleeing from Camulos Rancho in Santa Paula on her wedding day and spending her honeymoon night at Masini Adobe.

1887 On April 2, Josefa Etchas, a widow, and Josefa Loureyro (feme sole) (This should be the other way around) sell 100 ft. strip of land (about 3.60 acres) to railroad (50 ft. on either side of rail line) which was building from Los Angeles into Santa Barbara. Property is bordered on East by H. L. Williams land and on the west by Charles Fernald.

1887 On April 4, Pedro Masini's children: Angel Mazzini, Isabel Mazzini, Modesta Mazzini de Foxen and Simeon Foxen, Ester Mazzini, F. N. Gutierrez, Antonio Mezzini, J.J. Elizalde, guardian of person and estate of Ester Mazzini, give grant deed to Josefa Lopez de Etchas for one half of their interest in property.

1887 On August 30 the above children of Pedro Masini sue both Josefas to partition their land. Action is dismissed on June 12, 1889.

1887 On Dec. 1, Ester Mazzini quit claims property to F.N. Gutierrez.

1888 On Feb. 4, Antonio Mazzini sells his claim to property to C.A. Thompson.

1888 On April 20, 1888, Mazzini children again sue to overturn Pedro's Will. The action is again dismissed.

1888 On May 5 May 5 C.A. Thompson gives grant deed to Josefa Loureyro for \$1.

1889 On Feb. 25, Isabel Mazzini gives grant deed to Josefa Loureyro for \$100; on March 4, Modesta Mazzini de Foxen does the same for \$100; June 12 F.N. Gutierrez does same for \$200;

1896 On Jan. 19 Josefa Loureyro dies. On Jan. 30 her will shows cash in S.B. banks of \$4,210.09 and land in Santa Barbara, Montecito and Los Alamos. During probate petitions were made by creditors to remove executors; rejected by court. The total value of the estate was listed as \$20,546.45. She willed her half interest in property to three women permanently residing in Spain (at least one a cousin). By Aug. 1900 the remaining executor had died. On Feb. 20, 1902 land is sold; at this time Josefa de Etchas half interest has been conveyed to A. Blair Thaw on Oct. 5, 1899. Deed is not recorded. The court judges there are not enough funds to settle the estate and orders the property sold at auction. Thaw now owns the southern 16.94 acres, and Josefa Lopez de Etchas the northern 15.9 acres. The legal documents in case continue to refer to land in the proximity of the Ortega Rancho. Thaw bids \$292 at property sale to settle estate and get Loureyro's half interest.

1904 On May 10, Josefa Lopez de Etchas gives deed to Juan Arroqui for her property (approximately half of the original Masini property). Juan Arroqui is married to Bernarda Lopez, Josefa's younger sister. Josefa is also a cousin of the Arroqui family. The Arroqui family is said to have been sheepherders who arrived in the area in the 1820s.

1911 On Dec. 11 Josefa Lopez de Etchas sells two acres of her land to Elena (Helena) Arroqui Meyer and Fred Meyer. On April 23, 1914 she sells them additional land of 2/3 of an acre. Fred Meyer worked at the Montecito Hot Springs resort where his twin sons Edward and Fredrick were born in 1912. They also had a sister Charlotte.

In 1912, following Margarita Ayala Mazzini Rosales death, her will stipulated that Pedro's body be exhumed and the remains placed in her casket and buried with her in the Catholic Cemetery. His casket had already been dug up once before when the East Side Cemetery was abandoned. In attendance at the exhumation were his surviving children: Mrs. A. N. Laker (?), Mrs. Simon (Simeon) Foxen, (Modesta), Mrs. E.E. Arellanes (Ester), Antonio and Angelo Mazzini.

The body was said to be in a "steel air tight casket" with no signs of corrosion. When it was opened, the body and clothing were said to show no signs of decay. "...features of the father as perfect as the day he was buried. Even the garments had not been disturbed by time." This suggests a rather expensive casket for the time. Not being able to fulfill their mother's wishes, the casket was buried in a vault next to Margarita's.

1917 Josefa Lopez de Etchas sells Elena Arroqui Meyer and Fred W. Meyer an additional parcel of 7.65 acres.

1924 Margaret Cameron writes a novel titled Johndover. Set in 1880s, the title character John Dover lives in the Masini Adobe and the story, in part, includes an attempted murder.

1936 Adobe chosen by Historic American Homes survey as worthy of preservation.

1937 Article in Santa Barbara News Press March 28 says Mezzini started construction of adobe but fell and died of his injuries before it was completed. Also says Margarita Mezzini was Pedro's daughter. As noted, this is incorrect.

1942 In Santa Barbara Adobes Clarence Cullimore says "Pedro Masini did not build the house, he bought it from N. Coats. This is incorrect.

1952 Helena has sister Marie who is married to Pierre Baron, owner of adobe home in La Quemada (Tajiguas Canyon). He dies in Masini adobe in 1952. Subsequently, Edward Meyer lives in adobe in Tajiguas Canyon. Helena Arroqui Meyer also dies during decade in Los Angeles and her daughter Charlotte inherits property. She does not live there but uses it as a rental property.

1961 Walker A. Tomkins article says "The old Ortega Rancho hugging the foot of the hill on the west and north, giving the hill its name." He also said Picay Creek flows from a spring on the Rancho. "Francis T. Underhill raised prize hogs there."

1975 Sculptor Charlotte Meyer vanished from Santa Barbara and is never found.

1978 Edward Meyer, retired assistant Montecito fire chief found dead of a heart attack in Tajiguas Creek.

1980s Since the disappearance of Charlotte Meyer there is no ownership of Masini Adobe because no will is found. Seven years pass until she can be pronounced legally dead. During that time adobe falls into disrepair. Then, a will is found in office of attorney Leland Crawford, Jr. and adobe passes into hands of Gary Meyer and a brother, Edward's sons. They continue to rent property.

1987 In Santa Barbara News Press Nov. 15, David Gebhard says Masini Adobe definitely there by the end of the 1840s.

1992 July 7 Santa Barbara County declares Masini Adobe Historical Landmark #31 in resolution 92-383

2000 Property is acquired by Stockwell family.



