

# STORY OF DANA RANCHO

## Mrs. De la Cuesta Recalls Adobe Past

Nov 20 - 1955

NIPOMO, Nov. 19 (VNS) — Through the eyes of a little girl of yesteryear, with long-cherished memories, a group from the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society was given first-hand information of life at the Nipomo adobe, Case de Dana, during a period when one of the original owners, her grandmother, Mrs. William G. Dana, wife of Captain Dana, occupied it. Captain Dana had died earlier.

A description was given of the furnishings of the various rooms and occupants of the numerous bedrooms listed. The gay fiestas at the ancestral adobe, which were a part of every wedding and other events, were described. Visits of bandits and numerous other incidents that are regarded as important in the future restoration plans of the historical old adobe, now owned by the Historical Society, were related vividly by this little girl now long grown up.

Today, this same "little girl," who has seen many years of the area's formative history, divides her time between her ranch home, Rancho Cerra Alto, in Santa Ynez Valley and her home in Santa Barbara.

### GRANDCHILD

She is Mrs. Virginia De la Cuesta, one of the oldest of Captain and Mrs. William G. Dana's grandchildren and the only person now living who lived at the picturesque adobe with the first lady of the house.

Mrs. De la Cuesta, with her daughter, Miss Tulita De la Cuesta, met at the Dana adobe here earlier this week with other Danas of Nipomo and with the representatives of the historical group and told them many incidents that occurred during the time she, and her brother, George Pollard, went to live at Casa de Dana with their grandmother upon the death of their mother, Mrs. Maria Josepha Pollard, a daughter of Captain and Mrs. Dana.

Mrs. De la Cuesta pointed out the site of the first three-room adobe house built by Captain and Mrs. Dana and in which they lived while building the present large adobe which was destined to play such an important part in early California history.

The 13-room adobe was built in 1839 by Captain Dana with the aid of Indian labor on his 37,887.91 acre Rancho Nipomo, received as a land grant in 1835. Case de Dana was one of the four headquarters set up by Captain Folsom on the first regular mail route ever established on the Pacific Coast.

Mrs. De la Cuesta said the three-room adobe that was Captain and Mrs. Dana's first home on their rancho, was situated nearby the large adobe in an easterly direction. She also told the members of the Historical Society of the faithful Chinese cook and his wife, Oin and Aquo, and showed the location of their quarters on the rancho.

She illustrated how the dining room stools were made and said many doors in the adobe building today, were nonexistent when she lived there.

Mrs. De la Cuesta recently donated a table to the Historical Society which had come from the USS Edith which went ashore between Point Arguello and Point Sal in 1848. The officers and crew had been entertained by Capt. Dana for several weeks until they left for Monterey, Capt. Dana providing horses and guides for them. Some stories have said that the ship was purposely grounded so that the crew could join in the California Gold Rush.

### MOVED BODY

Mrs. De la Cuesta told the gathering the story of how she was seated on the front porch with her grandmother one day.

"Grandmother said, 'Look, there goes a load of wood'—they were moving grandfather from the hillside grave near the adobe house where he had been buried, to San Luis Obispo, and the coffin was covered with wood, so grandmother would not know." Captain Dana had died on Feb. 12, 1858 and his remains were years later moved to the San Luis Obispo Catholic cemetery where an elaborate monument, as was the custom of the day, marks the grave.

Of the Historical Society she said they were very much interested and Mrs. De la Cuesta expressed the hope that "some benevolent Foundation Fund will come to their aid" in their restoration plans for the historical old adobe.

Mr. and Mrs. John Badgley, the former architect for the Society; Mrs. W. H. Hartzell, president; Mrs. Mel Sebastian, secretary; Mrs. Gladys Norton, curator of the San Luis Obispo County Museum; Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Felix, Mrs. Dan Sheehy, David D. Dana, Miss Anita Hathaway and Mrs. Mollie Knotts, Mrs. De la Cuesta and De la Cuesta.

S  
i  
g  
d  
N  
B