

## THE STORY.

This was the home of several large interrelated families who lived in early San Diego. The marriage of Rosa María Machado to Jack Stewart in 1845 combined *Californio* and New England customs, languages and lifeways. Oral histories of their descendants, recorded in the 1960s and 1970s, contain fascinating glimpses into the lives of ordinary *Californio*-American people. Stories are remembered of women gathering salt along San Diego Bay and crushing it with a *metate* (grinding stone). Traditional Mexican food was prepared with New England food. The Christmas holidays included Mexican *buñuelos* (bread rolls) and English plum duff. Abalone and clams were taken from the ocean at Point Loma, while deer might be hunted in Mission Valley. Quail, coyotes, snakes and rabbits also populated the valley north of Old Town.

Life on the frontier could be hard and with few luxuries. This house reflects those times. The Machado-Stewart house is typical of ordinary people who had achieved a level of comfort, if not wealth. Their lives would be brightened by Catholic customs with its celebrations and devotions. One bedroom had a tile floor and a "small covered altar with a religious figure." Other family possessions included two pictures of saints ornamented

with seashells hung on either side of the fireplace (after 1850), a



crucifix, the Stewart family Bible, glass bottles and tumblers, painted gourd drinking cup, and Jack Stewart's Chinese camphor wood chest.

## THE PEOPLE.

Corporal José Manuel Machado (1756-1852) was a *soldado de cuera*, Spain's mounted dragoons who wore leather jackets. He married María Serafina Valdez (1788-1861) around 1805 and initially lived at the *Presidio* of San Diego. As some soldiers began to move out of the fort in 1822, José and Maria built this adobe house and raised eleven children. One daughter, Rosa Machado (1828-1898), was born in this house and became a bridge between two cultures when she married New Englander John "Jack" Collins Stewart (1812-1892) in 1845. He was a sailor and second mate on the *Alert*, a New England hide and tallow ship. One of his shipmates was Richard Henry Dana, who mentions Stewart in his book, *Two Years before the Mast*. Stewart settled in San Diego around 1838. Stewart and Rosa had 11 children while he worked as a harbor pilot, rancher and carpenter. His old shipmate Richard Henry Dana visited the Stewarts in 1859 and described this home as a "one-story adobe house, with its piazza and earthen floor."

There are hidden stories of other people at *La Casa de Machado y Stewart*; including stories of the Kumeyaay people. Indian women doing the housework and helping in child care including Carmel Searles, who helped raise the Stewart children and also had a farm in Mission Valley. One Indian woman, who worked for the Machados, was fondly remembered by one descendant as a "jolly woman strong as an ox." Kumeyaay would harvest wood on Point Loma and sell it in town as firewood.

Thank you for your interest in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, a part of the California State Parks system. Inquire at the Robinson-Rose Visitor Information Center or visit our website to find additional ways to experience California's history. Feel free to share your State Park adventures with us on our Facebook and Twitter. #inventyouradventure

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Illustrations by Megan Curtis.

# LA CASA DE MACHADO Y STEWART.

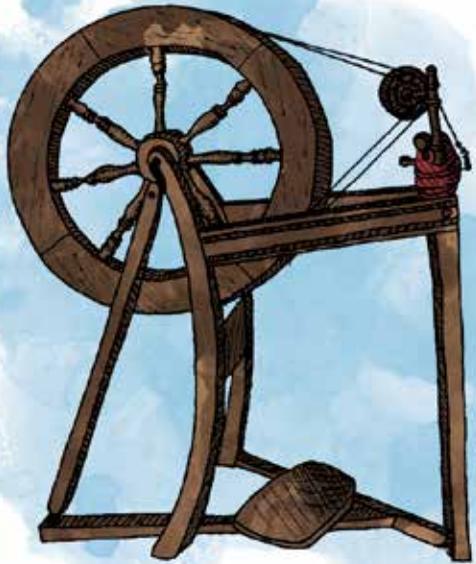
(THE MACHADO-STEWART HOUSE.)  
THE MACHADO-STEWART MUSEUM.

Date Built: **Circa 1829.**  
Interpretive Period: **Mexican.**  
Original Structure restored in 1968.  
**California Historical Landmark  
Number 73**

## THE BUILDING.

The first part of this residence was built about 1829 by Corporal José Manuel Machado. It is one of the five remaining adobe buildings in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park. Many adobe homes begin with two rooms; one a living space (*sala*), the other for sleeping. As with most adobe homes, additional rooms were added over time as the family grew in size. Some rooms may have been free-standing, others attached to the original adobe rooms. Jack Stewart, a carpenter by trade, probably added wood frame additions.

The adobe walls of the original building were about three feet thick and it was roofed with tule thatch (*carrizo*) and topped with dried mud. The Stewarts whitewashed the adobe house about every six months. A tile roof was added much later. The home was further from the Plaza at the center of town but much closer to the San Diego River. In the early 1800s the



river was within a hundred yards of the town before its diversion into False Bay.

Descendants of Machados continued to live here until 1966 when the property was sold to California State Parks and restored to its approximate 1830s appearance in 1968. It was restored as if built for an early family of slightly more than modest means to help reflect the different social and economic differences in the community.

## THE GARDEN.

The garden is planted to reflect a kitchen garden similar to what the residents of San Diego might have had in the early years of its development. The garden was the source of vegetables, fruits, herbs, and edible flowering plants. Herbs were used for both cooking and medicinal purposes. One descendant remembers the garden having rue, parsley, borage, and *canchalagua* (sometimes called dwarf Mexican marigold).

Explorers of the Spanish Empire found that San Diego had a climate that was as mild as that of Southern Europe. Soon after their arrival, missionaries began planting many types of fruit trees from Europe. As the development grew, additional plants were imported. Grapes flourished and soon California was producing wine and brandy. The Machados had fig, pear and pomegranate trees. Vegetables included corn, squash, peppers, tomatoes, and beans. So self-supporting was the family that the only staples the family needed to buy were sugar, flour and New Orleans molasses.

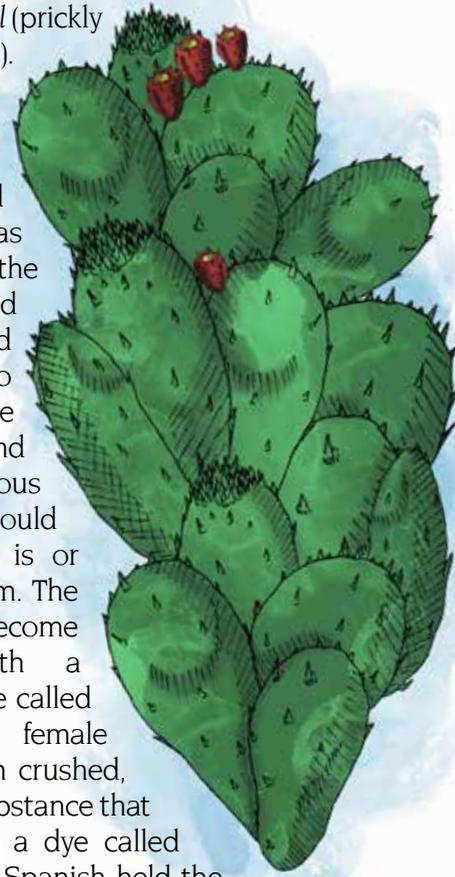
One of the most useful plants found in the

garden is *nopal* (prickly pear cactus).

*Nopal* had many uses.

The young leaves could be cooked as a vegetable, the juice could be added to adobe to harden the bricks, and the delicious fruit, *tunas*, could be eaten as is or made into jam. The leaves can become infested with a type of beetle called *cochineal*. The female beetles, when crushed, yield a red substance that was used as a dye called carmine. The Spanish held the source of the dye secret for years. It produced a major cash export from Mexico, second only to silver. The famous British Redcoat soldiers wore jackets dyed with cochineal. Look for white spots on the leaves that indicate the presence of cochineal, or “crimson” scale.

Historically, there would have been a variety of outbuildings that would have housed horses, cattle, goats, pigs and chickens. Typically, outside open air structures, called *ramadas*, provided shade for a variety of activities. Cooking facilities, including an *horno* (beehive shaped oven), were also located outside the house.



## MYSTERIES

- Where did the San Diego River go?
- How many rooms did the house originally have?

## DID YOU KNOW?

- In the early years, furniture for ordinary *Californios* was so scarce that most people sat on the ground on mats or used the vertebrae of whales as stools.
- The red food coloring we use in baking is sometimes made from crushed beetles (cochineal).

## CAN YOU FIND?

- A whale vertebrae.
- A spinning wheel.
- An *horno* (oven).
- *Nopal* (cactus) with cochineal.

