

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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Fort Halleck, constructed by Co. F, 3rd Artillery, 1847, of squared logs, 100 feet long, 17 feet wide. It housed army detachments until 1852. Sergeant Francis Doud remained as caretaker for many years. Photo taken about 1885.

Medical Topography and Diseases of Monterey

by Assistant Surgeon William S. King: 1852

(Continued)

Dr. Williame Shakespeare King, on duty with the 3rd Artillery in Monterey from about April, 1849, until September 19, 1852, was a man of many

parts. Apparently, any soldiers who stayed in Monterey after the news of the gold rush were either very healthy or too few to occupy much of the doctor's time. Reading between the lines, he seems to have become a consultant or a local doctor himself, for his observations on the medical problems of Monterey have much to do with the diseases of children and those of women, areas usually beyond the scope of an army doctor's primary concern.

It is well that he did so, however. The usual historical sources are reticent on these important points. Yet, obviously, a woman's life in a frontier out-post calls for as much attention as the showier deeds of explorers, grizzly-lassoing rancheros and storm-tossed sailors. It could not have always been a matter of flirtations behind a fan or guitars under the window.

The romance was there, right enough. According to the reports of American, English and French visitors, the women of Hispanic California were small and good-looking, brunette, blessed with fine, shining black hair, sparkling dark eyes, good teeth and were excellent wives and mothers. Even lacking all other favors, they were, in truth, most excellent mothers. Rare indeed was the childless marriage. A prudent calculation based on baptismal and other records gives the astounding average of ten children per family. Not a few boasted from twenty to twenty-five.

The girls frequently married young, and normally, a new baby made its appearance every two years, if not sooner. Births outran deaths three to one, except among the Indians. Juana Cota died leaving 500 decedents. The wife of Secundino Robles had twenty-nine children. Jose Maria Martin Ortega was the eldest of twenty-one brothers and sisters and was himself father of twenty-one. Jose Antonio Castro's wife had twenty-six. Mrs. W. E. P. Hartnell (born Maria Teresa de la Guerra y Noriega) appeared in any number of travellers' accounts: she had twenty-five children and was an accomplished hostess and *grande dame*.

After reading Dr. King's report, the wonder is that a mother lived through her first experience. The women were strong, though, and their life was one of constant exercise and simple pleasures. The longevity of the Californians was as famous as their fecundity. Many reached their eighties and nineties; those who could count their hundred years were not uncommon. The rural homes had room for all; it was simplicity itself to add another room or a whole wing to a house. Life could have its moments of hectic excitement, but ordinarily it was a peaceful, undemanding round of traditional duties. Each person had his part to play: the older children cared for the toddlers, the aged and incapacitated were segments of the complete family circle. If there were no real hospitals or speedy communication, neither were there in all California any insane asylum, nor old peoples' homes, nor orphanages, nor poorhouses nor penitentiaries.

Dr King had yet another side. He was an ardent botanist and ornithologist. Although his report on *Medical Topography...* does not include much natural history, appended to it is a list of some 230 plants collected and classified by him and his family and Dr. Andrews, "an indefatigable botanist of Monterey."

In this activity, Dr. King was no lone eccentric. In 1846 the Smithsonian Institution had been created by Congress and by 1850, the great naturalist, Dr. Spencer F. Baird, had taken charge of making its collections. In his search for expert assistance, he turned to the Army Medical Department. The department numbered only 85 doctors in 1855, most of them cultured, many of them young and exceedingly well-educated, especially in the sciences.

If Dr. King sent back botanical specimens in 1852, he must have been contacted very early by the staff of the Smithsonian. The great contribution of the army doctor-naturalists did not come until 1853. In that year, six army exploring parties were sent streaming westward from the Mississippi to find the best routes for transcontinental railroad lines. Each expedition numbered a doctor-scientist. They did not finish the job until 1855. Congress embalmed their magnificent reports on the birds, animals and plants of the untrammelled west in thirteen mammoth tomes, and the Civil War intervened to erase further their contribution to American history. Dr. King is noted in them as an ornithologist, this time from San Diego, not from Monterey. He had moved to his new post after the Monterey log barracks were abandoned in September, 1852.

Although life in the Monterey backwater was dull enough during the gold hunting period, Dr. King had at least one chance to accompany troops on a campaign. On February 11, 1851, he reported for cantonment near Stockton with two companies of the 3rd Artillery and two companies of infantry en route to the Mariposa Indian War. He made a small report from Fort Miller, on the San Joaquin where it emerges from the foothills. He does not mention it, but it was in March, 1851, that Major James Savage and Captain John Boling discovered the Yosemite Valley and made known its wonders.

Dr. King left San Diego and California in March, 1854, and returned east. In 1856, he was promoted to Surgeon and served in Texas and New Mexico. His Civil War record was distinguished. He retired in 1882 with the rank of Colonel and Surgeon. He died in 1895, having been born in Paoli, Pennsylvania on December 28, 1810. (*1)

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As many of the people live in low adobe houses without board floors, and in many instances without windows, the only means of ingress being a very low door-way, it follows as a matter of course, that these dwellings will be low, damp, and illy-lighted and ventilated. If to these causes be added coarse and badly cooked food, and the practice of the whole family sleeping in one apartment, it will not be surprising, that as a result of this mode of life alone, scrofula and summer complaint of children, and diseases of the lungs will occasionally be found, without supposing anything in the nature of the climate disposing to these complaints. Scrofula is of rather lobular or infantile pneumonia than from any other disease. These affections, as I before observed, are produced more by

(*1) Hume, Edgar E. *Ornithologists of the United States Army Medical Corps*, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1942.

the mode of living than any climactic agency. It is the custom among all classes of native Californians to clothe their children very scantily until they attain the age of four or five years. Before this period no shoes or stockings are used, the only garment worn being a single short petticoat of thin calico, and often, indeed, are without any clothing whatever. During the rainy season, the lower extremities of the children are constantly cold and damp, and, as fire-places and chimneys are almost unknown, their garments are seldom dry, and in this condition they usually sleep on mats laid on a ground floor. To these causes are to be ascribed also the catarrhal affections so common to children, and the pleurisy frequently met with in adults.

Asthma is a disease of rare occurrence in Monterey or in California. I have seen but two cases in three years.

The Asiatic cholera has not as yet visited this place. During the season that cholera prevailed in California, it began in Sacramento valley; next we find it in San Francisco, and proceeding to San Jose, passed in a southerly direction to the eastward of Monterey, to San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara. None of the premonitory symptoms of this epidemic were ever present at this place. The cause of this exemption is involved in mystery.

But two cases of diarrhoea and dysentery are reported in my returns of the sick for the past year.

It will be inferred, from the foregoing sketch of the diseases of this post and vicinity, that it is a post enjoying a high degree of salubrity, and also from the fact that there are no diseases of peculiarity or importance, that no promineny can be given to any class of affections, or any points of striking character can enter into this account.

Before closing this paper with a brief allusion to some of the diseases of women of this region, I will barely allude to one peculiarity I have observed in the diseases not only of Monterey, but in all California, and that is the extreme tendency to functional disturbance of the brain. What I allude to is the fact that, in diseases (often of a mild character) which, elsewhere and in similar circumstances are unattended by the slightest mental aberration, are in California often accompanied by impaired intellect and sometimes delirium. It is owing to this peculiarity, I think, that delirium tremens is found to follow very slight excesses in drinking, and which I before supposed to be entirely inadequate to produce this affection. A contrary opinion, I am aware, exists to some extent here; but I believe it is founded in error, and that all who have studied this subject will agree with me that no one can indulge in the use of spirituous liquors with the same impunity in California as elsewhere. Insanity, it is well known, is very frequent in California, where it is true the predisposing causes exist to an unusual extent in the excited condition of the country, yet how much is due to the influence of climate remains yet to be determined. In this small town there are five cases of confirmed insanity of long standing. I have before, in my reports, mentioned the disposition of the slightest cuts or abrasions of the cuticle, if not immediately protected from the influence of the air, to take on inflammation,

which frequently degenerates to ulcers of great obstinacy and long duration. This has been observed in all parts of the country, and may be owing as much to the character of diet as to atmospheric influence. My own impression is, that it is due mostly to the latter influence, as it is found to exist where there is apparently no want of proper aliment.

I have heard of many cases of impaired memory charged to the climate of California, but I have no certain evidence that this is true; yet, judging from the complaints of eastern friends, and the many evidences of entire forgetfulness and disregard of the strongest of human ties by those sojourning in this country, one might readily believe that some potent spell, like the Lethean waters of classic story, was exerted by the gentle winds of the Pacific coast. (*2)

(To be continued)

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

The outlook for the development of the Maritime Museum has grown darker since December. In accord with Governor Reagan's financial policy, funds for the Division of Beaches and Parks have been cut back and money for El Castillo State Park on the Presidio bluff will not be available. Since this was the site proposed for the Maritime Museum, such plans will have to be abandoned. Admiral Stone and his committee are persisting, however, and intend to negotiate with the Army for a plot of ground. The land now being used for fill adjacent to the Coast Guard breakwater may be considered. As we said, the outlook is gloomy and the Maritime Museum Committee needs all the political, financial and technical help it can get, right now!

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The great 1970 Bicentennial is also threatened. Monterey was (is ?) to be the high point in a series of celebrations that start in San Diego in 1969. Thousands of people are expected to pour in to Monterey from every part of the United States to see the pageantry and visit the places hallowed by Father Junipero Serra and the courageous men with Gaspar de Portolá in 1769 and 1770.

Unless money is included in this year's budget, the construction work and planning cannot be begun and Monterey will fail ignominiously to carry out what should be the brilliant climax of a two year historical fete, Mayor Minnie Coyle, Senator Grunsky and Mr. Nail, city manager and a director of the association, have been meeting and trying to work the problem out, but

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The Casa Fuente property (the long, two-story building going up just south of the Casa Serrano) has a problem. It needs our permission to build an access stair on the side opposite our property. We should like the open walk-way between our two properties landscaped and maintained. The developers of the Casa Fuentes met with the board at the March meeting and discussed possible solutions. There is a good likelihood that we will both get what we want.

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(*2) A good many California pioneers came well-prepared to forget. A popular song of the Gold Rush was "What Was Your Name in the States?"

We have suffered several grievous losses to our association in the last few month. It is difficult to think of the Association without the people listed among our deceased members in this issue. Some were very active in all our affairs up to the day of their passing. Leonard Heller was a most valued member of the board of directors and a prime factor in the development of the fine arts program on the peninsula; Charles Rollo Peters was an internationally known artist whose paintings of night scenes are prized by collectors; Anne Benson Fisher's books on the Monterey scene, **Cathedral in the Sun, No More A Stranger, The Salinas, Upside Down River**, (illustrated by her husband, Walter K. Fisher, marine biologist and director of the Hopkins Laboratory) and juvenilia were the products of meticulous research. The photographs she collected as background for her descriptions were given to the Association some years ago and are unique.

The loss of Myron Oliver affects not only our Association, but the whole Monterey scene. He was one of the fifteen founders of the Association in 1931, and he never ceased to work for us and for Monterey. He attended meetings faithfully and was our final authority on art and old Monterey.

To Myron we owe many of the paintings saved for Monterey. When he saw something good, he was tireless in seeing that we got it. His last acquisition was a painting of the Custom House by the noted California and Carmel artist Chris Jorgenson, done in 1928. Before that, he secured the 1869 Denny painting of Monterey which was ordered by Alfred Larkin. He induced Norman Winslow to present his find of an atlas of 1753 to the Association. "He was always on the look-out for period furniture, curiosities, object of art, prints and things of beauty and authenticity to enhance the charm and value of the Casa Serrano", as Mayo O'Donnell says.

We are happy that Myron was honored at last year's Merienda with the Laura Bride Powers Memorial Award for outstanding service to Monterey and the goals of the Association, and with a framed certificate of honorary life membership as a director of the Monterey History and Art Association. Myron was delighted with these testimonies of our gratitude, but really, his joy was in giving and helping and encouraging others to value beauty and tradition. We shall miss Myron very much.

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The Adobe House Tour, the most popular and evocative occasion of Monterey's spring season, will be held on Saturday, April 29th. Sixteen old adobe dwellings of the romantic era will be opened by their owners for the enjoyment of visitors. Since most of the buildings are private homes or exclusive clubhouses or offices, the privilege of inspecting them is open only to ticket holders during this tour. Such tickets are available at the Casa Serrano and at all adobes on the line of march. For students and servicemen in uniform, the tickets are \$1.50; for all others, \$3.50. The cost of the ticket includes transportation, coffee from 10:00 to 12:00 at the Casa Serrano and the delicious high tea served from 2:00 to 5:00 at the same place. In addition, an **al fresco** lunch, the very popular Paisano Picnic at the Memory Garden of the Pacific House, may be had for \$1.50. Last year some 3,000 people attended and appreciated this unique opportunity to see Monterey as it was in the days of the dons.

The adobes include the Casa Serrano, the Casa Alvarado, the Gordon House, the Larkin House, the Gutierrez Adobe, the House of the Four Winds, the Casa Amesti, the Casa Abrego, the Casa Soberanes, the Old Whaling Station, the Stevenson House, the First Federal Court, the De la Torre Adobe, and the seldom seen

Merritt Adobe and Capitular Hall. An added attraction is the Victorian style Perry House, up the hill from the First Theatre, which is open for the first time. Get your tickets early; it will be a real event.

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The annual meeting at the Casa Serrano on January 9th was attended by over a hundred members and, as usual, was instructive and entertaining (especially Emmet McMenamin's stores after President Bob Stanton appointed him an honorary lifetime director). President Stanton's report listed an impressive number of projects carried out in 1966, and Mr. Heckenlaible's treasurer's report showed a respectable sum credited to the association's favor.

Professor A. Boyd Mewborn, chairman of the By-laws Committee, presented several suggestions for changes so that we might retain our tax-exempt status. These were approved, but other changes in the by-laws were considered to be worth further study by the association as a whole, and were put over until a date yet to be announced.

Mr. Ted Durein, Col. William McCaskey Chapman, Mrs. Harold Hallett, Mr. Robert Littlefield, Mr. Donald Teague, Mr. Robert Stanton, Mrs. Philip Clinton Smith, Professor A. Boyd Mewborn, Mrs. Duncan Todd and Mrs. Van Court Warren were elected to serve on the new board. To save a month's time, the whole board retired immediately and elected their officers for 1967. The names are listed on page eight.

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Frances Elkins Park, tucked in next to the county building on Pacific Street, has been left untended by the county. Our board protested to Supervisor Tom Hudson and he has appointed a committee to report on it. Thank you, Tom.

* * *

The question of moving the restrooms at the Casa Serrano to the north end of the property has finally been settled. At the March meeting, after hearing a report from the Architectural Committee Chairman William Concolino, and considering the large sum involved in new construction (some \$5,000 to \$11,000), the directors voted to leave things as they are, correct deficiencies in the present facilities and open a door near by from the sala to the south garden. This will provide three exits from the meeting hall and obviate going through our kitchen to get to the garden.

* * *

Mrs. Elmer Zanetta urgently reminds all members that their dues become delinquent on April 30th. On the day following, name plates are removed from our addressograph files and so, unless you are still in good standing, you will not receive applications for Merienda tickets, **Noticias** or notices of interest to you. Pay now, rather than regret later.

* * *

New Members

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sortais, Mr. and Mrs. Willard D. Hoot, Major and Mrs. John O. Simpson, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth S. Graham, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Poyner, Mr. and Mrs. Howard F. Healey, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest France, Mrs. Betty Lochrie Hoag, Cmd. and Mrs. Richard S. Downey, Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Rutman, Mrs. Ruth G. Watson, Mr. and Mrs. Vernal A. Diggs, Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Freitas, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Hunter, Mr. and Mrs. Feg Murray, Mr. and Mrs. John Woolfenden, Mrs. Mary Kau-

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* * *

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* * *

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