

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

November 14, 1950

New Stevenson Mementoes Here

A group of 171 items of Stevenson's works and mementoes from the valuable collection of Flodden W. Heron of San Francisco were placed on view for the first time Sunday when the History and Art Association sponsored an observance of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Robert Louis Stevenson. The items were gifts to the State of California for the Stevenson House in Monterey by Flodden and Alexander R. Heron.

Several hundred persons, members of the Association and friends and admirers of Stevenson, called at the old adobe building on Houston street to see the three collection of Stevensoniana now installed there and to admire the four charming furnished rooms on the upper floor.

In addition to the books and furniture given by Stevenson's step-daughter, Mrs. Isobel Field of Santa Barbara, the Jefferson Collection of books and pictures, and now the Heron Gifts, a friend, Alexander Smith of Burton, Washington, sent a box of sprays of Scotch Heather which had actually come from Scotland at his request for the occasion. Mr. Smith made the same gift last November when the Stevenson birthday was observed. With the heather came this poem:

 "Blows the wind on the
 moors today – and now?"
Thus he remembered youth's
 blustry weather.
And the hills of home would
 tell him how
The winds yet blow through
 the purple heather.
A Centenary wreath is for his
 brow
But "A fig for sic honor," I
 hear him say;
"There's only ain chaplet I'll
 allow
When you keep my Hundredth

natal day."

"Mount Vaea's tomb is far

far away,

Wi' the Southern Cross in the

stars above,

But O! send a wee bit

heather spray

As a token fra hame and

Scotland's love

Steeped in the fragrance o'

sun and mist

Gift of the moors by the north

wind kissed."

Another native of the British Isles, Alexander Eddie, sent from his Monterey nursery a potted Scotch heather to be placed in the garden – a permanent memorial of the poet and author.

From Bruce Porter of San Francisco has come an original letter from Jules Simoneau of Monterey, the restaurant keeper who befriended Stevenson. The letter was written to Mr. Porter in March of 1899.

In the Heron collection are pictures of both Robert Louis Stevenson and Mrs. Stevenson which are hanging on the wall above the cased exhibits of portfolios, first editions, letters in Stevenson's own handwriting, an original of the little paper pamphlet, "Moral Emblems"; music scores and words, also in the original and a group of source material that Stevenson used in writing "Weir of Hermiston", his last and probably greatest book which was unfinished at the time of his death. There are also two pages of the original manuscript of this book in the author's own handwriting.

The letter press which was used by Mr. Stevenson also came with Mr. Heron's generous collection and is also on exhibit in the large room where the Heron and Jefferson collections are now installed. Mrs. Field's memorial collection has been placed in the room to the southeast, downstairs, where it shows to much better advantage than in the upstairs room where it was first on exhibit.

Frank Work and his sister Mrs. Leonard Kirby have presented to the Stevenson House a very charming old mirror, in an oval frame on which the gold leaf has

become beautifully aged. The donors' mother, the late Mrs. Thomas Work, bought the mirror many years ago in San Juan and had prized it very highly for with it came the story that it had once belonged to the Rose of the Rancho, the heroine of the now famous California story. Another delightful legend accompanying the mirror was that if one made a wish before looking into it, that wish would be granted.

Distinguished guests present at the Sunday observances of the birthday anniversary and the acceptance of the gifts were Joseph R. Knowland, chairman of the California State Commission of Beaches and Parks, who accepted the Heron collection in the name of the State, Mrs. Tobin Clark, the donor, with the late Mrs. van Antwerp, of the Stevenson House to the State; and Gelett Burgess, distinguished author, who spoke of the Osbourne-Stevenson family as he had known them through the years. More than two hundred members and guests of the Monterey History and Art Association, Ltd., were present for the program and toured the old adobe, during the afternoon. Col. And Mrs. Charles Sargent were hosts in the garden where punch and wafers were served.