

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **California's History Related by Dr. Hunt**

Rockwell D. Hunt, the author of "California's Stately Hall of Fame," will be remembered by so many of his former students, his friends and by those who knew his writings, that he should be the envy of all of us today who would like to write, who would enjoy having friends, who would have wished to have had the influence upon young people that Dr. Hunt has had and the appreciation of having been born and raised in California that Dr. Hunt has enjoyed through these many years.

Dr. Hunt is Dean Emeritus of the Graduate School, University of Southern California and Director, California History Foundation, College of the Pacific. His most recent contribution to Californiana has been "California's Stately Hall of Fame" published by the College of the Pacific at Stockton as one of a series of publications of the California History Foundation, in January of this year.

Dr. Hunt has spoken twice in Monterey in recent years, first under the auspices of the Monterey History and Art Association and then in Colton Hall as the guest speaker for the Monterey City Museum board of directors, both times telling, in his own delightful manner, of his knowledge of California history.

Many school children will remember studying his "California the Golden," others may remember "Great Women of California," published by the Historical Society of Southern California, and "California Pioneers I Have Known," published in 1948, and "Pioneer Protestant Preachers of Early California," reprinted last year from the Pacific Historical Review.

In 1895 Johns Hopkins University published Dr. Hunt's thesis entitled "The Genesis of California's First Constitution (1848-49) by Dr. Rockwell Dennis Hunt, A.M., Professor-elect of History and Political Science, University of the Pacific. Other publications which should be credited to this native California writer are: "California, An American Commonwealth," "A Short History of California" written in collaboration with the late Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, a resident of Monterey and a sister of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson; "California: a Little History of a Big State," "California, the State Everybody Loves," "John Bidwell, the Prince of

California Pioneers" (1942); "California Ghost Towns Live Again" (1948); and "California Vignettes in 1948."

"Dr. Hunt dedicates his book "To the Commonwealth of California, My Native State, with Enduring Gratitude and Affection." He divides the publication into five sections: The Hispanic Period; First American Period, Middle American Period; Recent Years; California Noblewomen: with an extensive list of illustrations, a section of Selected References for Further Reading and an Index. It is also well illustrated with portraits of early California pioneers, both men and women.

The first of the notable characters which Dr. Hunt writes of in his last publication is Hernando Cortes, the Great Conquistador (1485-1547), a Spanish pioneer of the glamorous age; and he ends his book of six hundred and seventy five pages, with Charlotte ("Lotta") Crabtree, the "Unapproachable," of whom Dr. Hunt says "Criticize her as you will, you can never erase her name from California's Hall of Fame, nor will another ever be found who can be fitted into the mold and pattern of Lotta Crabtree."

In part I, the Hispanic Period, Dr. Hunt lists, in addition to Cortes, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Discoverer of Alta California; Sebastian Vizcaino, Voyager Extraordinary; Sir Francis Drake, dashing freebooter, who probably landed at Moss Beach on the now "Seventeen Mile Drive," if the old bottle and scroll recently found there are authentic; and Rezanov, who fell in love with Concepcion Arguello and met death as he sped to Russia to obtain a permit from his superior to marry a native Californian.

In the Pioneers by Sea chapter are names Juan Bautista de Anza, explorer and colonizer, to whom the Native Daughters of Junipero Parlor of Monterey erected a monument on the shore of the El Estero last September; and Gaspar de Portola, to whose memory another plaque was placed in June of 1949 beside the cross placed in memory of Father Serra at the Presidio gate. Alvarado, the first governor of California, is included in part one in the book as a political and military leader. His home is marked with an historical marker and is now the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Wesley Heard.

Among the military and naval leaders listed by Dr. Hunt are: John Charles Fremont, the "Pathfinder" and John Drake Sloat, Conqueror of Monterey in 1846. "Some American Pioneers" includes Thomas Oliver Larkin,

American Consul to Monterey; Samuel Hopkins Willey, Devoted Chaplain, Wise Founder; Walter Colton, First American Alcalde.

Among the Literary Leaders Dr. Hunt lists Bayard Taylor, Master of Graceful English, who wrote "Eldorado," a book of California in the early days, which has gone through several editions and is still used as a reference book. It has much of interest about Monterey before 1850, and during the first Constitutional Convention. Another author who had much to do with the preservation of early Monterey history listed in Dr. Hunt's book is Hubert Howe Bancroft, historian of the Pacific States. The library at the University of California bears his name in appreciation of the gift of his library of Californiana.

Others mentioned in the book, recommended as an excellent reference book for any who study California history, are in relation to their life or interest in the Monterey Peninsula: George Sterling William Keith, Lincoln Steffens, Mary Austin, and Jessie Benton Fremont.

One of the very excellent features of the book is the detailed bibliography, in which the author has listed hundreds of books and magazine articles through which the interested reader may add to his knowledge of any of the persons of early California history whose careers he may wish to follow. It is, without a doubt, a standard work for the collectors and for those interested in the history of the state.