

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 17, 1950

A Local Arbor Day

Friday we told of the founding of the Monterey Woman's Civic Club and reported on the plan of the club in 1907 to plant forty trees in the city in observance of Luther Burbank's birthday and the State Arbor Day. The trees were to be the gift of Mrs. Maude.

At a meeting of the club members held in April of that year the committee on the tree planting reported that the trees would be planted in the school yard. In later years it was Mrs. B.D. Marx Greene, president in 1937, who led the campaign to plant trees along Calle Principal and to change the name of that thoroughfare from Main street to its original, Calle Principal.

It was during the term of the late Mrs. M.M. Gragg, who was president of the club for seven years, that the House of the Four Winds was acquired in 1915; first held in trusteeship; but finally in 1923 the property was purchased.

The House of Four Winds was the first structure in the community to boast of a weathervane and thus it received its name. This one-story adobe was built by Thomas Oliver Larkin, for a store in 1835. It originally adjoined the building that General Sherman occupied as his headquarters, which in turn, is a few feet from the Larkin House. The Masonic building now separates the buildings.

After Larkin gave up his store, it was also used for the same purpose by Governor Alvarado. Still later on it was the headquarters for Henry W. Halleck, as secretary of state. Afterward it became the first Hall of Records in California, until this department was moved to El Cuartel. The first recorder of Monterey County, W.C. Johnson, had his office in this building at a later period.

The House of Four Winds was owned by Larkin from 1835 until 1850. From 1851 to 1855 it was the property of Jacob P. Leese.

Past presidents of the Civic Club through the years have been: Mesdames Roderick, Gragg, E.T. Erb, James Freeman, C.H. Hinckley, Robert Shaw and Frank Darling, all of whom have passed away; and Mesdames J.P. Sandholdt, Mary Shaff, Jessie Kinloch, W.E. Parker, Roy Frisbee, Peter Hay, Ray Baugh, Houghton Roberts, M. Porter, John Davies, Mrs. C.B. Bentley and Mrs. Hugh Olinger, the present presiding officer.

The Monterey History and Art Association and the curator of the Steven House, Mrs. William Kneass, are thankful to the friends who have visited the Stevenson Memorial bearing appropriate books for the charming old bookcase which the Association recently presented to the house. Among the donors have been: Mrs. Eleanor McCaskey Conklin, who gave "A Christmas Sermon" by Stevenson printed in 1900, and R.L. Stevenson Memories" by T.N. Foulis; Thomas W. Norris placed on loan a copy of Frederick Thompson speech on R.L. Stevenson given at the Bohemian Grove on July 22, 1949; The Poor Scholar Book Shop gave a copy of "Happier for His Presence," which the author, Anne Roller Issler, has autographed; a copy of "Dawn and the Dons" by Tirey L. Ford given by Mrs. W. M. O'Donnell, and four bound volumes: "The Ladies Repository" a monthly magazine with issues from January to June 1860; Godey's Ladies' Book, July to December 1860, edited by Sarah J. Hale and Louis A. Godey; The Union Magazine, January to June 1848, and Peterson's Magazine, January to June 1863, all the gifts of Pal Clark. The issues of the above magazines are full of amusing illustrations of fashions of the time, needlework patterns, poems and stories. It is hoped that some day someone will wish to give or loan a set of Bancroft's work, especially the volume on California.

Mr. Jack Heldaman is the efficient gardener at the Stevenson House, who takes great pride in the appearance of the gardens, both the one on Houston street and the very large and charming one at the rear of the old building where benches and winding paths invite the tourist and the local residents to enjoy a pause in the sunshine. He would be happy if someone would present a weeping willow tree to the garden for he has just the place to put it. A pepper tree has been given by Mrs. A.B. Currie of Carmel and a pomegranate tree by Mrs. William C. Bogen of the Country Club.