

Mayo Hayes O'Donnell Peninsula Diary

October 10, 1951

Family of Fifteen

Joseph P. Colling of Pacific Grove had an interesting story to tell when I had the pleasure of interviewing him a few days ago. Mr. Colling, not only has an interesting family background, but he made the art of fine printing his lifetime work and hobby. He has received unusual recognition from some of the foremost paper manufacturers for his work, and samples of his craftsmanship have been used as specimens for exhibits and sales promotion throughout the United States, because of use of fine papers with good printing.

Mr. Colling joined Del Monte hotel employes in 1918, coming to the Monterey Peninsula from San Francisco where he was associated with the leading printing establishments. Prior to that he had been in Los Angeles and Sacramento, where he was connected with the State Printing office for many years.

But it is of his parents and his childhood that Mr. Colling likes to talk. He is a descendant of a pioneer family of Los Angeles; his grandparents coming there from Mexico City in 1836 where his grandfather, Don Ignacia F. Coronel, assumed the position of school teacher from 1838 until 1842 through the recommendation of Governor Pio Pico of California. Mr. Coronel stopped in Monterey on his way to Los Angeles and while here Mr. Colling's mother, Maria Antonio Coronel, was born in the Salvador Pacheco home.

Mr. Coronel retired as schoolteacher in 1842 and resumed work in his orange grove on 60 acres of land which he had acquired as a Spanish grant. This land fronted on Alameda street and ran from 6th street on the north to 8th street on the south—now almost the center of Los Angeles.

His family, consisting of fifteen children, were raised in this home on the orange grove of the old days. They were all musical and played the guitar, harp, clarinet and violin.

An older son and the uncle of Mr. Colling, Antonio F. Coronel, became interested in politics and served as Mayor of Los Angeles from 1853 to 1854 and was California's state treasurer from 1867 to 1871. Mr. Colling's father, Benjamin Colling, was a native of New Castle-on-Tyne, England. He came to Los Angeles to assume a position as railroad engineer, taking charge of

running the first railroad train between Los Angeles and Wilmington in 1869.

Joseph P. Colling decided in November of 1946 that he would make a trip to Old Mexico to visit places of interest. Because he could speak Spanish so fluently, he was given a hearty welcome, he reports. He is still enthusiastic about Mexico's beauty, quaintness, and picturesque scenery, combined with its gentle and kindly people.

Lovely Guadalajara was visited and the birthplace there of his maternal grandmother.

Several years have elapsed since Mr. Colling's visit south of the border, but he still thinks of Mexico as modern yet so ancient, her colonial buildings, architectural treasures, her hundreds of luxurious churches, her great open markets, her plazas with their quaint fountains, her patios, colorful fiestas, her awe-inspiring pyramids and ancient ruins, and the tiny shops with silver and goldsmiths, potters, glass blowers, weavers, wood-carvers or leather workers, who carry on their arts often with crude tools as compared on the other hand to its up-to-date hotels, factories, schools, street cars, theaters, homes and automobiles.