

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 23, 1951

Under the Fig Tree

The coming event of historical importance in Monterey will be the dedication of a tablet in the garden at the Stevenson House honoring Mrs. Celia Tobin-Clark and the late Mrs. Edith Van Anthwerp, who purchased the building and gave the property to the State of California as an historical monument in 1941.

The simple wooden tablet will be placed beneath a fig tree in the rear garden on the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 11, with Mrs. Clark present at the ceremony, and the Monterey History and Art Association directors and members acting as sponsors. The event will also mark the 101st anniversary of the birthday of Robert Louis Stevenson, the celebrated author who made Monterey his home for a short time during his brief residence in California.

By the date of the dedication of the tablet under the fig tree which was planted by Mrs. Van Anthwerp and Mrs. Clark, the old time roof on the Stevenson House will have been replaced by a new leak-proof one, and the historically furnished upstairs rooms of the building will be reopened in all their attractive grandeur of early Monterey.

Downstairs the Stevensoniana, generously given to the house by Stevenson's stepdaughter, Mrs. Isabel Field of Santa Barbara, Flodden Heron of San Francisco and many others, will be displayed. From time to time articles of furniture, documents, pictures and other mementoes have been presented, until now the Stevenson House is one of the most attractive of the many historic buildings visited by tourists on the Peninsula.

Another tablet, in bronze, placed there on Nov. 26, 1932, occupies a place of honor near the front entrance to the Stevenson House. It bears this inscription: "In this House in the Year 1879 Lived Robert Louis Stevenson, Essayist, Story Teller, and Poet, Whose Contributions to Literature Delight the World." The Anniversary Club sponsored the occasion and Mrs. Clark, the late Mr. and Mrs. Van Anthwerp, Flodden Heron, Edward Berwick, Miss Josephine Blanch and several others were present.

The Monterey History and Art Association has recently acquired another historic clock, making five in a collection, two at the Custom House and two others in

the Stevenson House. The recently acquired clock had originally belonged to Rafael Gonzales, the building of the Stevenson House, where it will be placed.

The timepiece stands about 30 inches high, the case is of rosewood, and it keeps excellent time. The patent date was 1875, according to the printed notice on the face and the name McClure Bros. Monterey, is noted. In the Monterey Handbook, printed in 1875, the McClure Bros. Jewelry Store was on Washington street, and they were dealers and watchmakers, carrying jewelry and hardware, and were also listed as gunsmiths.

In another notation on the old clock is a date in November 1860, probably the date when the clock was repaired. November is written Nobv, the Spanish abbreviation for November. The clock probably had been in the family of Estelle Gonzales who lived in the house, torn down to make room for the store building opposite the Larkin House on Calle Principal. The timepiece was made by the Waterbury Clock Company of Waterbury, Conn.

The Friends of the Bancroft Library at the University of California, elected Mrs. Harry W. Toulmin of Monterey, Joseph Henry Jackson of San Francisco, William G. Paden of Alameda and Thomas W. Streeter of Morristown, N.J. members of the council for the term ending June 30, 1955.

This year the Friends are sponsoring publication of an early description of California, written about 1828 by Jose Bandini, father of the now famous Juan Bandini. It will be printed by two friends, Alfred and Lawton Kennedy of the Westgate Press. The edition will be limited to 400 copies and distributed to members only, sometime this year.

In the recent issue of the California Historical Society Quarterly under the heading "A History of the Book Trade in California," 1849-1859, there appears this reference to Monterey. "There was a library association in Monterey; a small state library followed the peripatetic capital from Monterey to Sacramento .." Then again Monterey is referred to as follows: "On June 3rd, 1853, LeCount and Strong announced in the Alta that they had published "The Discovery of California and Northwest America" by Alexander Taylor of Monterey. This 19 page pamphlet is an historical sketch based on the records kept by Cabrillo in 1542.

Alexander Taylor, noted as California's first bibliographer, was the agent for LeCount & Strong of

San Francisco in Monterey in 1854. He published his
"Sketches Connected With California History" here in
1855.