

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Fifty Famous Faces, Mary, And Another Little Goose

The Bancroft Library at the University of California has announced through "Bancroftiana," published occasionally by the Friends of the Library, that a portrait of Thomas O. Larkin will dress up their forthcoming publication "The Larkin Papers." The portrait was painted by Stephen William Shaw a prominent California artist and a gentleman whose past seems sufficiently interesting to merit a few lines in both the "Bancroftiana" and the Peninsula Diary.

Shaw was born in New England, but he roamed the country while he learned and developed his art. At the close of the Mexican war he painted Zachary Taylor in Baton Rouge and Persifor Smith in Mexico. Early in 1849 he succumbed to the lure of gold and boarded a sidewheeler for Charges. He crossed the Isthmus by the usual trail from Charges to Panama, and there, with a group that included Collis P. Huntington, took ship for San Francisco.

Like everyone else Shaw tried his luck in the mines for a short time, but he soon decided that his hand was better suited to the brush than to the pick. The following year, 1850, Shaw again sought adventure – this time with the Laura Virginia Association. The group sailed their schooner north along the coast until they found a harbor which they named Humboldt Bay. There they established a settlement where Shaw remained for several years.

By 1856 Shaw was back in San Francisco, both his studio and reputation were established. His canvasses were on display at nearly every exhibit and he painted such noted figures as John W. Geary, William Ralston, and General John M. Schofield. His portrait of Larkin was done, presumably from photographs, the year after Larkin's death.

Shaw painted more than two hundred portraits of California Masonic leaders which were destroyed in the Masonic Temple in the San Francisco fire and earthquake of 1906.

Shaw died in 1900 at the age of 83, leaving a pictorial record of famous faces – documentation for a half century of California history.

It seems that any reference of Mother Goose and her Melodies always brings forth a number of interesting

additions and comments. A nice one came to me during the past week from J. William MacLennan of Carmel, in which he says: "Reading your article on Mother Goose reminded me that one day, when I was a boy living in Boston, I found the gates to the King's Chapel Burial Grounds open and wandered in.

"I was looking at the names of the many famous people on the tombstones when I overheard a young woman say to her mother – 'Did you see the tombstone of Mother Goose. Beside it is a little one, reading: "Here lies Hannah, another little Goose'."

"I tried to find it but couldn't as it was growing dark and as the graveyard which had been opened for a few days to the public during a Christian Endeavor Convention held in Boston, (it had been closed for thirty years), was again closed, I did not have a chance to go back and look for it."

Mrs. Mary Green, curator at the Old Custom House in Monterey, relates that the little white school house where Mary took her little lamb to school, was directly across the street from her grandmother's summer cottage in Sterling, Massachusetts. The historic little building was later purchased by Henry Ford and is now among the exhibits in Dearborn, near Detroit, the home of the late Henry Ford and the site of the early American village founded by him. Many thousands of tourists visit Dearborn each year to see the collection of early American historical items exhibited there.