

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

November 5, 1952

Reminiscences of Early Days

Another great addition has been made to Northern California's cultural wealth – a large and priceless collection of rare old lamps collected from all parts of the world.

During the summer it was placed on display in the California Academy of Sciences in Golden Gate Park. It occupies a special room in the new Hall of Science, the building which also contains the Alexander F. Morrison Planetarium, which, we believe, was scheduled to be opened about the first of November.

A year ago in October we attended the Western Museum Conference when it convened in San Francisco and were among those who had the privilege of seeing this wonderful collection of rare lamps in one of the great store rooms of the Academy of Science building where they were being unpacked and catalogued for this display opening one year later. We also witnessed scientists cutting the lenses for the great planetarium which was also opened for the delegates to the museum conference. Officially it was opened to the public Saturday, Nov. 8, 1952.

This remarkable collection was donated to the academy by Mrs. Maude Rex Allen, a former San Franciscan and a graduate of the University of California but now a resident of New York. She is internationally famous as the author of "Japanese Art Motives," "Early Lamps of China" and other books on art. She spent 30 years gathering the lamps, many of which are irreplaceable and, in her words, "beyond price."

In the PG&E Progress, Randolph O. McGougan, the editor, writes: "There are 260 lamps on display and they represent the history and development of artificial lighting from primitive times to the middle of the 19th century. The oldest in the collection is a shell lamp used in Mesopotamia about 2800 B.C. Shells gathered on the shores of the Persian Gulf were filled with vegetable oil which kept crude wicks aflame. Among the other lamps, associated with later eras, are fascinating examples made of stone, pottery, bronze, brass, iron and glass."

The lamp display was designed and arranged under the leadership of Dr. Robert C. Miller, director of the California Academy of Sciences, who told about it at a

recent meeting of the western museum staffs in Los Angeles.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward P. Stafford of Pacific Grove recently presented to the Monterey History and Art Association an old and handsome baby buggy which had been made about 1870 by the father of the late William Cook of Pacific Grove. He had been a finished carriage maker in his day and fashioned the carriage for his son in the best style and material possible. The buggy is now on display at the Stevenson House on Houston St. in Monterey.

Col. J.M. Williams, U.S.A., retired, Pacific Grove, has given the association, also for display in the Stevenson House, a framed poem of Robert Louis Stevenson which he purchased at an auction in London a few years ago. It is a quotation from Stevenson's "Christmas Sermon" and is also the inscription on the Stevenson monument in Portsmouth Square, San Francisco. We quote:

TO REMEMBER

"To be honest, to be kind, to earn a little and spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary, and not to be embittered, to keep a few friends, but these without capitulation – above all, on the same grim conditions to keep friends to himself – here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy."

"From Childhood to Adolescence" or "El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora, La Reina de Los Angeles" recently published in Los Angeles are the reminiscences of Joseph Benjamin Colling, long-time resident of the Monterey Peninsula and former veteran printer for the Del Monte Properties Company. Mr. and Mrs. Colling make their home in Seaside, and he devotes his spare time to reminiscing on California history.

Colling is a descendant of a Los Angeles pioneer family. In 1836 his grandparents moved to California from Mexico City where his grandfather, Don Ignacio F. Coronel, had been a schoolteacher, recommended by Gov. Pio Pico. Mr. Colling's mother, Maria Antonia Coronel, was born in the Salvador Pacheco home in Monterey.

Harry F. Maidenberg, the publisher of "Childhood to Adolescence," writes in a foreword: "In presenting this brochure, which depicts many interesting and dramatic historical episodes of the early years of Los Angeles ... I have printed it as written because of my deepest

respect and admiration for the author, Mr. Joseph B. Colling, now 82 years old.”