

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 21, 1952

### **Noted Bibliophile**

There passed away in San Francisco on the fourth day of February, Flodden Wortley Heron, noted San Francisco bibliophile. The news of his death is important to Monterey and especially to the Stevenson House, for it was Mr. Heron who gave a group of 171 items of Stevenson's works and mementoes to add to the collection of Stevensoniana housed there.

In the collection there are first editions of practically every book ever written by R.L.S. There are autographed pictures, letters, music manuscripts and a fine group of scrap books. It is probably the most extensive private collection in existence. Mr. Heron also presented a press which had been used by Stevenson during his stay in California.

Mr. Heron's ancestral home was in the Scottish Border, but he was born in Durham, England, about 74 years ago.

As an infant he was brought to Wisconsin by his parents, his father being engaged in the mining business.

After some years the family moved to Philadelphia where Mr. Heron was educated.

As a young man he was trained in the insurance business, and later became proficient as an insurance actuary, and as a financial agent for his company for investing funds upon his personal appraisal in many of the states of the United States.

During this time he became interested in book collecting, and his library contained first editions. His gifts of books to Stanford University, U.C. Berkeley, Mills College, and the Stevenson House in Monterey, were not generally known. The bronze plaque on the outside wall of the Stevenson House he placed there when he was president of the Literary Anniversary Club. His influence in raising funds to match the state appropriation for the purchase of the state park on Mt. St. Helena named by the state in honor of Robert Louis Stevenson resulted in the final acquisition of the property.

Mr. Heron was a member of the Shakespeare Club in England, the Stevenson Club in Edinburgh, Roxburghe

and the Book Club of San Francisco, and a life member of St. Andrew's Society in San Francisco.

He traveled extensively, and while in England at the time of the first World War, he learned of the death of the parents of two small boys. He became interested in them and had them educated in Durham College, England. Recently while in San Francisco, one of these boys called on his benefactor. He is now a professor in English at Sorbonne, Paris

Mr. Heron's lectures on Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson were dissertations on these subjects, which showed a thorough and exhaustive analysis.

Mr. Heron was a man of the highest integrity. His life was gentle, his mind cultured, and his heart was generous.