

July 2, 1952

'A Piney Paradise' Reviewed

I have before me a copy of Lucy Neely McLane's recently published book "A Piney Paradise," a documentary history of Pacific Grove's first 25 years and a glimpse of her adulthood. It was handsomely printed and bound by Lawton Kennedy of San Francisco and is priced at \$5. The first edition was published and distributed privately, through the efforts of a small committee of Pacific Grovians, with R.H. Partridge of the First National Bank acting as trustee and attending to distribution of orders.

Miss McLane begins her book with a quotation from the Del Monte Wave of 1886, and we think it is of sufficient interest to repeat in the Diary of today.

"Out of the old historic Monterey on the road that skirts the rocky cliffs and sandy beaches stretching along the bay lives Pacific Grove.

"Around you is a forest of pine. There are gravel roads that lead you on its thoroughfares; there are woodland trails that track its plazas.

"The coast is broken and picturesque; sandy beaches lie scattered below as you wander along the cliffs; and as your eye rests upon the glassy waters, it is more suggestive of a placid lake than a part of the great ocean so full of strong and majestic power; and as you stand on the sands and look away over its blue waters, the breakers roll softly at your feet and in language of beautiful interpretation express their name as they bring you peace." A bit flowery but nevertheless true.

Miss McLane states also on the first page of chapter one that "Pacific Grove is because Monterey was." During those early years settlements sprang up because of local economic and social needs. But not Pacific Grove. Its object was fundamentally religious and its motto "Dedicated to God."

The chapter relates that the city was established as a project of the Methodist Christian Seaside Retreat and several quotations from the first minute books of that organization (1873) prove the statement.

Succeeding chapters deal further with the origin of Pacific Grove, old Chinatown, the old town and the new, the old homes, government, unforgettables, tales of fact and fiction, trails, streets and roads; chautauqua,

museum and library, her churches, first call fire department and marshals; the Hopkins Marine Station and a delightful conclusion.

Miss McLane has sense of humor. For instance, she writes, the Seaside Drug Store was a place where you "would always find a large and select stock of pure drugs and chemicals, patent medicines, chest protectors."

The Pacific Grove Improvement Company set sections apart for business property with certain restriction, wrote Miss McLane and the "request that the use of tobacco in any form shall not be allowed to be sold." Soon there were under way six new buildings "where one might buy so much or so little as he chose of any article usually found in other towns – except intoxicating drinks."

In her paragraphs on the physicians which Pacific Grove has welcomed and loved through the years, there is much of interest and good-natured humor. The mussel bakes on the beaches, berry picking parties, hikes to the big tree at Seaside and picnics on the sand dunes are all delightfully described by Miss McLane. Then there is the tale of hay rides as told to the author by Col. William McC. Chapman, in which Winifred Tuttle Beaumont played a part.

The tremendous amount of research and writing and rewriting that must have gone into the book is appalling and can only be appreciated by another author or by Miss McLane herself. The stories are all fascinating and well told, the documentary facts are written in a manner that holds interest because it is not presented as dry material – it is alive with human interest and deals with folks we all know, have known or know from their work and life in Pacific Grove.

"A Piney Paradise" is certain to find a place in most of the private libraries in this part of California and will serve as a delightful gift from local residents to both former and prospective residents. The reproductions of old photographs alone make the book worth owning and musing over.