

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 14, 1953

New Gifts for the Stevenson House

Mrs. Thomas W. Norris, whose late husband was the president of the Monterey History and Art Association until his death in the spring of last year, has been most generous in her gifts to the association in memory of Mr. Norris.

To the Stevenson House in Monterey have gone a very handsome large and antique Spanish table; a pair of tall solid brass candle sticks, an old time fire bucket, two ancient drug store mortars and pestles, hand-made fire tongs; five photographs, framed of Vallejo and his home at Sonoma; and several smaller objects for the old-style kitchen in the house

In the collection which Mrs. Norris has presented is also a kaleidoscope, an instrument which, by means of mirrors, presents objects, as bits of colored glass, viewed through its symmetrical patterns (according to Webster). Also a stereoscope, patented July 26, 1859, which holds 100 cards at a time. In addition to the 100 in the stereoscope, there are 200 cards with which to change the program; a series on early San Francisco ending with pictures after the 1906 earthquake and fire, a series on Yosemite Valley and the California missions, dating from 1876 to 1906. A small and very old Spanish leather chest is also in the collection, all of which are to be seen at the Stevenson House in Monterey.

Among other new gifts and loans to the Stevenson House are: a tiny doll's trunk, which had belonged to the grandmother of Mrs. Hugh Dormody, a gift from Mrs. Dormody to the children's room; a handsome Chinese shawl which had once been a possession of Lucy Stokes, the daughter of Dr. James Stokes, who owned and lived in the Stokes adobe home in Monterey, a gift from her daughter, Mrs. Winifred Wolf of Gonzales, who has also been most generous with other gifts to the Stevenson House. Mrs. Katherine Bradley of Carmel has placed on loan in the House an old rocking chair which her grandmother had acquired many years ago in San Diego and which is believed to have come from the home of Ramona, an early Californian, made famous by Helen Hunt Jackson in her novel by that name.

Presented to the editor of this Diary was a group of six daguerreotypes of members of Mr. Norris's ancestors,

long prominent in California history – Sylvester Pattie and his descendants. Also a larger and very handsome daguerreotype of J.A. Sutter with his signature inscribed with his own hand.

A daguerreotype is a former photographic process, using silver coated metallic plates. A French artist by the name of Daguerre invented the process about or before 1850.

Knowing that Sylvester Pattie and his son, James Ohio Pattie, had been early adventurers, trappers, and "surgeons extraordinary" in the west from 1804 to 1851, we began a search for the interesting facts which would most concern California.

Mr. Norris' mother was Nancy Jane Pattie before her marriage, a descendant of Sylvester Pattie. Dr. Rockwell Hunt in his "California Stately Hall of Fame," published by the College of the Pacific, writes this: "Among all the stirring records of Western adventure that have so enriched our American history, it is doubted whether a peer can be found for the 'Personal Narrative' of James Ohio Pattie, the son of Sylvester."

In the father and son were to be found those traits par excellence of those 'western pioneers, the hunters of Kentucky.'" For them to traverse wide deserts, climb mountains, swim rivers, grapple with grizzly bear and encounter the savage, in a sojourn in the wilderness of years, was but a spirit stirring and holiday more of life, wrote the author of the narrative. "They tend to re-inspire something of that simplicity of manners, manly hardihood, and Spartan energy and force of character which formed so conspicuous a part of the nature of the settlers of the western wilderness," concluded the author.

(More on Friday)