

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Early Jewelers of Monterey

In the "Hand Book of Monterey and Vicinity," published in 1875, there appears several classified advertisements of jewelers and silversmiths in Monterey. Listed are the McClure Bros. on Washington Street; John Hall, Abrego Street; Celestino Trujillo and P.H. Masters, both on Alvarado Street. No numbers are listed, so perhaps Monterey in those days did not need house numbers—everyone knew everyone else and the business buildings were few in number.

Today we are particularly interested in the jewelry, for there are still in existence in Monterey and in California much of the beautiful jewelry designed by these early merchants of Monterey. Many of the individual owners and their possessions are important enough in the history of the country to be listed in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Upon request we recently received a list of the jewelry plates that were made in Monterey area during the W.P.A. projects program. Mrs. William Kneass, now the curator of the Stevenson House State Historical Monument, was the director here of this project.

On the data sheets and water color renderings are listed the following objects from the Monterey area as filed in the National Gallery of American Design at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.: six plates of earrings, two plates of jet crosses and chains, one plate of watch chains, two plates of bracelets, three plates of pins, two plates of buckles, two plates of brooches and earrings; one plate, silver horse watch fob; and three photographs of objects: oval pin, silver horse and dove stick pin.

Mrs. Millie Birks, of Scott and Tyler Streets, has three very beautiful pieces of jewelry made by her grandfather, Peter H. Masters an early day jeweler who advertised in the "Hand Book of Monterey and Vicinity." Masters, the father of Mrs. J.G. Lambert, wife of Captain Lambert, who for 33 years was the government custodian of the Old Custom House in Monterey, died in the Custom House in 1879. He specialized in abalone jewelry, a medium which is still popular in costume jewelry.

Mrs. Birks' three pieces are much more beautiful and valuable than the abalone jewelry and much more

interesting as historical items of early Californiana and the artistic work of the old time western designers of jewelry. Her pieces were composed of gold quartz, taken from the California mines, and pure gold mined from the State's abundant supply. The minute design engraved upon the frame work around the beautifully polished quartz of the brooch, is the work of an artist. The earrings, of course designed for pierced ears, are of matching quality.

The gold dove pin mentioned in the list of jewelry from the National Art Gallery, is a piece owned and valued by Mrs. Maria Antonia Bach Thompson. A colored cut of this piece of Monterey designed jewelry is pictured in color in the "Index of American Design." It was made and designed by Celestine Trujillo during the 19th Century in Monterey and has been in Mrs. Thompson's family for several generations. It was made from \$20 gold piece, as was a gold buckle, for Maria Antonia Castro de Sanchez, the sister of General Manuel Castro, a maternal relative of Mrs. Thompson.

Miss Maria Antonia Field has an heirloom of which she is very proud—a ring which was made for her grandaunt, Ann Munras. Seniorita Munras initials were engraved inside the gold band made from a California nugget. Celestino Trujillo was also the designer of this bit of women's jewelry. Miss Field reports that his shop was in the La Porte building at the south end of Alvarado Street, according to information she had gleaned from her parents and her maternal aunts.

The small silver horse watch fob was made in 1860 from a design made by Trujillo. It is two and one-half inches from tip of the ears to the tip of the tail. This intricate piece of early time jewelry, made from pure California gold, is owned by George Kinlock of Salinas, former owner of the Alvarado adobe on Dutra Street in Monterey. It had been made for one of his ancestors, a pioneer resident of Monterey. Mr. Kinlock also has a stickpin made about 1850 of California gold quartz and a gold nugget, by either Trujillo or Benales, a jeweler who preceded Trujillo in Monterey.

Mrs. Walter Norris of Salinas, a sister of the late Mrs. Anna Geil Andressen and sister-in-law of the late Thomas W. Norris of Carmel, has an oval pin of tortoise shell with a gold rim, made in 1860, which is listed and registered at the Smithsonian Institute. She also prizes a bar pin of onyx with a gold edge designed in leaf and rose pattern. It was made by Trujillo. The same artist also designed and made a gold buckle fashioned from a

\$20 gold piece in Monterey in 1863. Mrs. Frank Jacobs of Monterey is also the owner of a number of pieces of old time jewelry, made from California gold, and designed by the early jewelers of the city.