

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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More About The Merienda

"In the mantel of old tradition, in the rime of vanished day, the shrouded and silent city sits by her crescent bay."

Such were the words written by the late Daniel O'Connell as he described Monterey in the early days when he was numbered among the early settlers.

Today the poets' great-grand-daughter, Miss Diana Davison, enjoys the privilege of reading those first four lines of the longer poem written by Daniel O'Connell as it is carved into the stone monument in front of Colton Hall in Monterey—a city which he describes as a "solemn city of dreams."

Next Wednesday, June 3, Miss Davison will have the honor of acting as an attendant to La Favorita at the Monterey History and Art Association's annual Merienda in Memory Garden, in celebration of the city's 183rd birthday. A better choice for the honor could not have been found, for Miss Davison's maternal and paternal grandparents had made a name for themselves in California history long before she was born.

Her maternal grandparents were the late Mr. and Mrs. M. Moran of Monterey. Her grandmother was the author of a number of books and her mother was the illustrator of "Trail of the Little Paiute." Mrs. Moran's last writing before her death.

Daniel O'Connell was born in Ireland. He came from a distinguished family, his father was a noted lawyer, and his grand-uncle was the famous patriot and statesman, Daniel O'Connell, known to history as the "Irish Liberator."

He came to San Francisco in 1870, took up journalism and by his talent and versatile pen, soon, attracted favorable comment. He was known as a journalist, dramatist, novelist, and gifted poet, one of the many brilliant men and women of that era who in prose and verse pictured the glamor of the Golden State, and particular Monterey, where the scenes of several of his poems are laid.

In 1874 Daniel O'Connell married a Monterey girl, Miss Anita Ashley, and after that much of his life was spent in and about the Old Capital. He was a man of fine

presence, gentle, sunny, a lovable nature, a melodious voice, a fund of keen Irish humor and as one writer describes him, "he had many friends and no enemies."

During Daniel O'Connell's lifetime a volume of his poems was published under the title of "Lyrics." After his death in 1899 another book of his poems collected by his daughter and edited by Ina Coolbrith, the poet laureate of California, was published in 1900 by Robinson's with the title "Songs of Bohemia."

O'Connell with his interesting family, made his home in Sausalito. In 1899, while on a visit to his beloved Monterey, he contracted a severe cold from which he never recovered, and passes away on Feb. 23, 1899.

Daniel O'Connell, was one of the originators and organizers of the Bohemian Club of San Francisco, gave it its name, and during his membership had been, perhaps the most gifted of all its contributors to entertainment according to the tribute in the club's annals written by Clay M. Greene.

After his death his friends caused his memory to be commemorated by such monuments as he himself might have chosen. On one of the terraced drives high above San Francisco Bay in Sausalito his friends erected an enduring stone resting seat which bears his name; afterward a tree was dedicated to him in Bohemian Grove, and later under the inspiration of Charles Rollo Peters, two such dedications were held in and near Monterey.

Peters, "the master painter of the night," as he was appropriately called because of his glorious nocturnes, sent out invitations to several Bohemians and other friends to assemble at his residence for the purpose of dedicating a tree to the memory of the gone but not forgotten Bohemian. A large oak tree was so dedicated and it still stands in Peters Gate near the home of Miss Judy Todd.

The same group who dedicated the Monterey tree were later invited to attend the dedication of a redwood tree, followed by a barbecue in a canyon on San Francisquita Rancho by the owners, Messrs. Richard Ross and Bradley Sargent. Among those who attended were D.W. Delmas, one of the state's most prominent attorneys' Clay M. Greene, Charles Rollo Peters, Charles Dickman, Francis McComas, all noted artists; George Sterling, writer; Willis Polk, noted architect; Frank Powers of Carmel, and Charles Warren Stoddard, the author.