

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Elegance of Another Day

Historians of the State have been interested in the historic restorations which have been going on in Southern California for the past several months and which came to a climax early this month when the members of the California Historical Society met on the Lucky Baldwin estate at Santa Anita for a preview of the famous Queen Anne Cottage located there.

Here elegance of another day became spanking new and white, a rococo structure wrested from decay, termites and dry rot. Maurice Block, director of the restoration and for many years curator at the Huntington Museum, told of the difficulties faced in attempting the project at the State and County Arboretum in the face of 40 years of neglect.

Soon, he said, the interior will be furnished – richly carpeted, decorated in keeping with the day. There will be many mirrors and glass chandeliers. Demonstrating the value of never throwing away anything old without first finding out if it has historical value – such as papers, manuscripts, antique furniture, etc. is the fact that the workers on this Southern California project, made a fortunate discovery of marble, tile and stained glass windows in the old carriage house. These items, which will play an important role in the restoration not only were true to the period but assisted the historians in determining the type of furnishings to be added to the cottage. The carriage house is next in line for restoration.

A third structure at the Arboretum is the famous Hugo Reid adobe, which had withstood the years in better shape than the wooden buildings. It too will be restored to its original state, the historians present were told as they wandered about the grounds and listened to the talks given by Maurice Block and others.

Mrs. Richard Y. Dakin, the author of "The Lives of W.E.P. Hartnell" was chairman of the historical committee which had the restoration in charge. Mrs. Dakin often visits the Peninsula from her home in Marin County. She is a member of both the California Historical Society and the Historical Society of Southern California.

Mrs. Edna Martin Parratt of San Francisco and Carmel Highlands, managing director of the California Historical

Society Museum on McAllister Street in the city, told of the importance to the State of the restoration project.

Two delightful watercolor sketches of Monterey in 1827 as seen by Captain William Smyth, artist of the Beechey expedition, are the recent gift of Miss Edith M. Coulter to the archives of the Bancroft Library at the University of California.

Those views are already familiar to many as they have been reproduced in color by the Grabhorn Press in "An Account of a visit to California, 1826-27" reprinted from a "Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Bering's Strait performed in His Majesty's Ship 'Blossom' under Command of Captain F.W. Beechey, in 1825, '26, '27, '28."

Although these views were not included in the original editions of Beechey's narrative, lithographs from them have appeared in many books on early California from Alexander Forbes on down to the present day.

The original painting however had been lost in private hands until the two of Monterey turned up for sale in London some 20-odd years ago, at which time Miss Coulter was fortunate enough to acquire them. They now rest in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley and are safe and available for use by historians.