

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 30, 1953

### **Gourmet Taleteller**

We agree with one critic who wrote "This is by far the most original and comprehensive cookbook I have ever seen." These are the words of Frances Parkinson Keyes, author of "Dinner at Antoine's." The book referred to is "The Dorn Cookbook," written and illustrated by Frank Dorn, with a preface by Morrison Wood, the author of "With a Jug of Wine" and the column "For Men Only." Many of us who were in Monterey "before Pearl Harbor" remember Frank "Pinkey" Dorn – then Major Dorn – and his delightful quarters at the old Presidio of Monterey.

We will remember an occasion when we were invited to a buffet supper by Major Dorn. We were greatly impressed by the manner in which one of the frame houses in an upper row of the almost, we might say, ancient homes in the Monterey Presidio had been redecorated and furnished in most excellent taste and with unusual and charming accessories. We could not imagine that the Major had accomplished this setting without aid, so we asked to meet Mrs. Dorn. We were astonished to be told that we were in the home of a bachelor. We learn from mutual friends that his home in Georgetown, a suburb of Washington, is still without a feminine helpmate and is just as charming and hospitable as the one at the Monterey Presidio was in the days before the war.

Brigadier General Frank Dorn is Deputy Chief of Information for the Department of the Army at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. He reports that he first learned to cook as a boy on his father's ranch in Northern California. During World War II he was on the staff of General Joseph W. Stilwell, and was with him on his epic march out of Burma. He has been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star the Bronze Star, and several Chinese decorations

During all his travels and the war years, mixed with his well-earned Army promotions, General Dorn did not forget Monterey and the Presidio. In his introduction he writes of his cooks in Texas, in the Philippines Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and elsewhere, with this note on Monterey: "Geraldine at the Presidio of Monterey, California, with her nine children and her difficulties, all of which she eventually surmounted."

"Moss Landing on Monterey Bay used to be our favorite fishing spot. We never caught much, but that made little difference to us kids. Years later old habit led me back to the pier – I suppose in a subconscious effort to recapture the easily satisfied spirit of childhood. One day the smelt and mackerel were running and we made quite a respectable haul." After that introduction the general gives his recipes for preparing and cooking fish and shellfish.

During General Dorn's service at the Presidio and Fort Ord he played an important part in designing the Soldiers' Club and made drawings for two other buildings, designed along the lines of other Monterey historic buildings. The war intervened and the two companion buildings became a mere dream of pre-war days.

Frank Dorn's Army career took him to most of the exotic spots in the world. The publisher of "The Dorn Cookbook," Henry Regnery Company of Chicago, writes on the jacket: "Between military duties, Dorn made it his business to savour the food native to the countries in which he lived – and he went out into the kitchens and learned how to prepare the special foods he liked. From the great restaurants of Peking he returned with the recipe for duck livers, crisply browned in butter and dipped in a delicate ginger sauce. In Paris he learned the secret of preparing steak flambe, fixed in a chafing dish with flaming brandy. From Java he brought the exotic recipe for duck with guava sauce, and learned the subtle flavorings for curried shrimp and chicken."

Another reference to Old Monterey: "Before the war Cademartori's Restaurant was in an old Spanish adobe, which had been enlarged by building additions into the rear garden. It was a fascinating place with a long sloping tile roof, three-to-four-foot thick walls, low ceilings, and old wrought iron door fixtures which were handsome but never worked." Then he speaks of Paul Cademartori and his two good looking daughters in most complimentary fashion.

The Dorn Cookbook ends with a list of menus for breakfast, luncheon and dinner, and several pages advising on how to procure "Ingredients That May Be Difficult To Find," and their substitutes.

We must not forget to tell our readers that since General Dorn is no less accomplished as an artist than as a host and an author, his delightful illustrations enhance both the value and attractiveness of the text.

His pictorial maps of several of the fascinating cities in China have become collectors' items – all additions to Dorn's sundry accomplishments.