

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### California Antiques

"Antiques" for January has again featured California. In November this magazine, published in New York, gave a great deal of space to the Colonial period in this state, when Spanish and Mexican influences were dominant. This month they focus attention on the American antiques of California.

The feature picture on the cover is titled "The Gold Rush" and is a lithograph by Currier & Ives, dated 1850. In the left hand corner of the title page is a reproduction of the original drawing for the California state seal as designed by Charles C. Nahl, now a prize possession of the Colton Hall Museum in Monterey. The editor, Alice Winchester, points out in her introduction that California collectors possess enough 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century antiques to deserve recognition in a second edition of "Antiques."

The article that introduces this issue with a survey of antiques in California, and also introduces a specialized subject of California collection, is by Carl I. Wheat of San Francisco. A lawyer by profession, Mr. Wheat is also a collector, writer, and enthusiastic student of the old West. He is the author of numerous books and monographs on western history, and editor of various early western diaries and letters.

The Currier & Ives lithograph of a view of the California and Oregon stagecoach, with Mt. Shasta in the background, was first lithographed by Britton & Rey in San Francisco, and though it has been used by other lithographers, impressions are scarce today, according to Miss Winchester.

Among the photographs of homes and rooms in California which contain genuine antiques, are a few which are well known to Monterey Peninsula folk. Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Grabhorn of San Francisco's famed Grabhorn Press, have permitted a view of their living room to be shown, as have Mrs. B.A. Behrend of "Spindrift" at Carmel Highlands, and Mr. and Mrs. Carl I. Wheat of Menlo Park. Among the photographs of American furniture in California are two handsome pieces belonging to Mrs. K.D. Mathiot of Carmel Valley. One picture shows a New England slant top desk of maple, and the other a Pennsylvania painted chest with tulip design in red, yellow, black and gray. These pieces

were formerly owned by Mrs. Mathiot's father, Dr. Edwin Atlee Barber, for many years director of the Pennsylvania Museum and author of "The Pottery and Porcelain of the United States, Tulip Ware, etc."

A short paragraph toward the back of the magazine "Antiques" refers to the Amesti House in Monterey, a photograph of which was published in the California issue of last November. The article says in part: "The Amesti House is one of the finest of the town house in the Mexican-Colonial period of architecture. Mrs. Frances A. Elkins, who died recently left it in her will to the National Trust for Historical Preservation. ... While California has many historic sites related to the Gold Rush period and while the missions are being preserved and restored where necessary, examples of domestic architecture of the early period – the house was built in 1825 – and in such a fine state of preservation are decidedly rare. This beautiful and important building on the Pacific Coast would make a splendid addition to the work of the National Trust as a nationwide organization."