

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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'California in the Making'

Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt's "California in the Making" has just reached us as a complimentary copy. Dr. Hunt is a true California pioneer having been born in Sacramento of pioneer parents in 1868 and living all these years in his native state.

Since 1947 Dr. Hunt has been the Director of the California History Foundation at the College of the Pacific, his Alma Mater. In 1952 he was honored by the college when the directors of the Stockton college created the Rockwell Dennis Hunt Chair in California History. Dr. Hunt came to Monterey a number of years ago as a special guest of the Monterey History and Art Association when he spoke on his favorite subject, California history, before the membership.

"California in the Making" presents a collection of 23 papers and essays by Dr. Hunt, written over a period of more than a half century. Dating from "Legal Status of California, 1846-1849," which he published in 1898, to "California Mountain Men of Another Breed," published in 1952, they deal with the political, economic, educational, religious and cultural life of the state and constitute a cross section of the author's extensive writings in the field of California history. The volume is a significant contribution to Californiana.

In the introduction to the third chapter in this new book of Dr. Hunt's, titled "Picturesque Days in California" he writes of the Spanish period thusly: "It has been well said that California is the child of Spain. Her marvelous work of discovery and early explorations and colonization made Spain the pioneer nation of the New World. In Europe no nation could claim to be her equal; in America her opportunity was matchless."

In another early chapter Dr. Hunt writes of his native state, "California is a land of superlatives. She claims that her big trees are the oldest and largest living things on earth; Mount Whitney is the highest mountain in the United States, (barring Alaska), from whose summit one may (figuratively) look down upon Death Valley, the lowest place in the country; with the exception of the giant world of Texas," she has the greatest area of any state in the American Union. Within her boundaries may be found every kind of soil and every variety of climate in the temperate and subtropical zones. For

years California has boasted the largest production of petroleum, then headed the nation in the production of airplanes. She has been called the "geographic wonderland," a "terrestrial paradise," the "golden state," the "empire state of the Pacific," the "land of heart's desire."

An interesting chapter, especially to those who know the Santa Clara Valley, is a chapter entitled "Houses That Came Around the Horn for the 'Alameda Gardens'." These houses had been ordered by Commodore Stockton in Philadelphia to be shipped around the Horn and erected on his ranch property near San Jose. At least 10 soon followed an earlier consignment which had been destroyed by fire in San Francisco harbor. They were transferred to a schooner, landed at Alviso, and hauled to the Stockton ranch. They were considered, according to Dr. Hunt, as very fine houses, or in the later-day phrase, "quite swell."

Other chapters in this latest book from the pen of Dr. Hunt deal with "Aspects in the study of History," "Local History as an Aid to the Study of General History," "Legal Status of California, 1846-1849"; "California in Perspective, Evolution of Transportation in California"; "John Bidwell, a Prince Among California Pioneers"; "Cornelius Cole, Centenarian"; "William Lewis Manly"; "Pioneer Protestant Preachers of Early California"; "Martin C Briggs"; "1850, A Year of Destiny"; "Some California Pioneers I Have Known, Great Women of California"; "California Mountain Men of Another Breed"; "California, the Child of Destiny"; and "Some Speculations on California History."

In the latter chapter Dr. Hunt deals with many "ifs" in his speculations on California history beginning with "If James Marshall had not been possessed with a bump of curiosity, there probably would not have been a gold rush in 1849." He further deals with the "ifs" in the travels of Sir Francis Drake, Padre Serra's determination to find Monterey and establish missions, the Russian colonization, Fremont's expedition to the West, the Bear Flag episode, Sloat's raising of the American Flag, Larkin's part in the plans for peaceful acquisition, California's loyalty in the Civil War and some other "ifs,"

Dr. Hunt ends the story of "California In The Making" with these lines from a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

"One ship drives east, another west,

With the selfsame winds that blow,

Tis the set of the sails and not the gales

That tells them the way to go.”