

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 20, 1954

An Old Acquaintance

Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson Dundas of Oakland spent several days in Monterey last week visiting the historic buildings and renewing old friendships.

Mrs. Dundas was born and raised on a ranch near the Sargent property in the Carmel Valley. During school terms she was sent to Monterey where she lived with the late Mr. and Mrs. W.W. James and attended classes in Colton Hall. She recalled when that building was condemned for school purposes and how the children were marched, for the last time, down the long stairway. She also remembered the visit of President Benjamin Harrison on April 30, 1891, when Colton Hall was draped in red, white and blue bunting and the President, Secretary Rusk and the postmaster-general, John Wanamaker, made short addresses.

Another happening which Mrs. Dundas remembers taking place on that important event was the presentation to the distinguished guests on behalf of Salinas, Monterey and Pacific Grove, of a solid silver card, having on one side an engraving of the old Custom House, "Where the first American flag was raised, 1846," and on the reverse side, "Greetings to our President, April 30, 1891."

President Harrison spoke from the upper balcony of Colton Hall to the large attendance of Monterey County persons who came to honor him. As he approached the historic building the school children, including little Elizabeth Thompson, strewed flowers at his feet.

Mrs. Dundas was 16 years old in 1901 when the Junipero Serra monument was placed on the hill overlooking the Padre's landing place near the Presidio gate. The monument was the gift of Mrs. Jane Stanford, wife of the former Governor of California and United States Senator Leland Stanford. They were also the builders of Stanford University as a memorial to their son and only child. Mrs. Dundas, with other school children, took part in the dedication and celebration on that day also.

The visitor, after 26 years absence from the scenes of her childhood, recalled that she and her sister frequently went bathing in the bay below the Custom House. They would rent suits for 15 cents each from Mrs. J.G. Lambert who managed the bathhouses which

lined the waterfront between the south end of the Custom House and the beach.

We enjoyed reading an article printed in the Christian Science Monitor concerning the marvelous restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. It is estimated that the restoration will take another 10 years and \$15,000,000 more money before the old capital has been replaced on its original foundations. This project of reconstructing the past, which began in 1926 with the financial backing of John D. Rockefeller Jr., already has drawn more than 6,000,000 visitors from each state in this country as well as from many foreign lands, according to a review of the first 25 years of the program.

This very recent report is the first of the restoration published and represents a new policy based on the premise that since Colonial Williamsburg exists for the American people, its affairs should be made public as well.

Colonial Williamsburg has received gifts and income from securities amounting in all to \$48,457,647.69. In its first 25 years Colonial Williamsburg spent for construction, and other purposes nearly \$30,000,000. It now has a general capital fund at book value amounting to \$18,929,247.81.

The report shows that 423 old buildings have been restored or removed from the restored area. Today every principal building, restored or reconstructed, looks substantially as it did in the 18th century. It is surrounded by gardens, walks, and fences, reflecting the correct design of the period.

"Present day Williamsburg is a city lived in – a city of lights and voices – a city of 18th century concerts and plays and Yuletide festivals – a city where old craft shops are still producing wigs, handwoven goods, printing and other necessities for 1954 living," declares the Monitor editor. And we remember it that way from our never-to-be-forgotten visit in 1946.