

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Historic Furniture

Directors of the Monterey History and Art Association Ltd. are happy to announce that the association has purchased the collection of old-time furniture which has been gracing Colton Hall since 1949. The association will leave it there on loan to the City of Monterey.

The furniture had been in the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. Guy S. Curtis of Monterey for many years and when the city began preparations for the Centennial of the 1849 Constitutional Convention; they generously loaned these authentic furnishings that the hall might assume a dignified atmosphere. Mrs. Curtis was a member of the Museum Board and made an extensive study through historical channels of the period and use to which the hall was put in 1849, before placing any of the appointments which the visitor sees there today.

In the collection now owned by the History and Art Association are four benches – a Boronda school bench and a meeting-house bench from the Curtis collection, and two matching benches which were acquired a number of years ago. The Boronda bench came out of the old Casa Boronda which is now the home of Dr. and Mrs. Mast Wolfson. This adobe building is perhaps the oldest residence in Monterey. It was in this house that Manuel Boronda opened the first boys' school in Monterey and it was then that the bench now in Colton Hall, was used.

There is a charming old schoolmaster's desk and a small school desk of mellowed pine. The schoolmaster's desk holds the visitors' register and a pewter inkwell that might have been created by Paul Revere, who knows? Two small chairs acquired by Mrs. Curtis a long while ago from Mrs. Trinidad, a pioneer resident of Monterey, and from Harry Greene, also a pioneer of the old town, whose home in New Monterey still stands on Lighthouse avenue opposite Scholtze Park. There are two matching frames – one holding a steel engraving of the head of George Washington, hanging over the fireplace at the south end of the beautifully proportioned Hall, and the other holding a copy of the Bill of Rights as composed by the 1849 convention held in Colton Hall.

The fireplace contains a pair of antique brass andirons and a set of fireside tools and stand, which are in the

collection. Among the other items acquired is a book "Fremont's Memoirs". A small glass case which Mrs. Curtis was lucky enough to find in some out-of-the-way place, has on display a number of interesting things – an 1849 school book with map written by Moore and a foreword by Walter Colton; two pairs of antique spectacles, some Chinese matches and a small Bible.

The combination of all the articles now on loan in Colton Hall from the Monterey History and Art Association are valued at about \$650.

Also on display at the meeting of the directors Monday evening in the Custom House, was a small wooden cradle which had once been used by the Abrego family and acquired at auction from the Abrego adobe last Saturday. The cradle will be placed in the children's room in the Stevenson House.

Arriving in time for the regular monthly meeting of the directors was the photostats of the manuscript on the Town Hall and Jail of Monterey, as planned in 1834. A picture of the jail in ruins is included (the only part of the plan which was carried out), and a copy of the artist's plan for an elaborately decorated council chamber. There is also a translation of the original document concerning the project for the construction of "Casa Consistorial (Town Hall and Jail at Monterey, California, in the year 1834.)"

This document, written in Spanish, had been in the collection of the late Thomas W. Norris and has been recently acquired by the Bancroft Library at the University of California. Dr. George Hammond, director of the University's library had the photostats made at the request of the History and Art Association directors. They will be placed on display for a short time in the Custom House.