

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 17, 1954

**'Women Are Safe in P. G.'**

A few gleanings from our desk file today may be interesting to our readers as they were interesting to us.

The California Diocese of the Episcopal church has published a monthly magazine for many years called "The Pacific Churchman." In an issue dated Aug. 1, 1907, there appeared on the cover a half page advertisement inserted there by J.P. Pryor, general agent for the Pacific Improvement Co. of Pacific Grove, extolling the virtues of that city. The story ran thus: "Pacific Grove, the Christian Seaside Resort of California, on the shores of beautiful Monterey Bay. The absence of saloons and the high moral tone of the community ensures that women and children while alone in Pacific Grove are equally as safe and happy as when alone in their own homes elsewhere. Here are found an equable and temperate climate; vernal beauty the year around; healing balsams of the pines; salubrious breezes; driving, cycling, boating, fishing; hot and cold salt water baths; rambles and historic scenes.

"Send for a bird's-eye view of the town, and a map of the new Fifth Addition to Pacific Grove. Special inducements offered to clergymen who will build a cottage."

Mr. Pryor was a prominent resident of Pacific Grove and former mayor of that city. He was the father of Mrs. Duncan Murray, who with her family now occupies the Pryor family home on Ocean View boulevard.

Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt of the history department of the College of the Pacific at Stockton, has informed us that the mansion of General John Bidwell and his wife, Annie Kennedy Bidwell at Rancho Chico, is about to become a state historical site. This is a most commendable move, worthy of hearty popular support, not only for the part that Bidwell played in California's past but as a hospitality center for the visits of illustrious leaders in public life who were guests there: including President and Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes, Gen. William T. Sherman, Senator Leland Stanford, and others.

Nothing pleased this great California pioneer more than the visits from men of renown, especially in such fields as botany, geology, astronomy, and other realms of nature study. Among those who accepted the

hospitality of the Bidwells were Sir Joseph Hooker, whose name was given to the great spreading oak in Bidwell Park; Dr. Asa Gray, eminent botanist, and John Muir, one of Bidwell's dearest friends and great admirers.

General Bidwell died in 1900 and Mrs. Bidwell followed him in 1918, in the mansion which had been prepared for her as a bride just 50 years before.

Dr. Hunt wrote that a book might be written about the Bidwell mansion, where he had personally enjoyed the hospitality of the general and his gracious wife. "It should be restored to its original beauty, in its lovely setting on the banks of the arroyo, in the splendid city which Bidwell founded."

The Monterey History and Art Association has acquired a tape recording of an informal talk made by the late Ms. Isobel Field, the stepdaughter of Robert Louis Stevenson, telling of her friendship and work with the famous author during their sojourn in Samoa, of his illness and death, and later the death of her mother, Mrs. Fanny Osborne Stevenson and her burial beside her distinguished husband on the South Sea Island. The recording was made by Dr. R.J. Brines of Santa Barbara who visited Mrs. Field, then a very old lady, many times before the complete story was told. Mrs. Field's voice is very clear for the most part and as she describes the life of the family in Vailima, Samoa, the natives and their devotion to R.L.S., and his death and burial, you have the feeling that you are actually present.

Last Tuesday about 40 students from the Robert Louis Stevenson School at Pebble Beach visited the Stevenson House in Monterey, toured the building and listened to the voice of Isobel Field recording history for the information of future generations.