

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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John Sutter

"John Sutter of California" by Glenn Clairmonte will be released on Sept. 20, by Thomas Nelson & Sons of New York. The author of this new addition to the collection of Californiana is well known on the Monterey Peninsula, for she was formerly a member of the faculty at the Monterey Peninsula College where she taught English composition, and in Carmel where she was an instructor in fiction technique for five years and directed a summer writing conference.

Mrs. Clairmonte now resides in New York. The publishers of "John Sutter of California" list her favorite sport as mountain climbing, her college as the University of California, her native city as New York, a winner of the Emily Chamberlain Cook Poetry Prize and the publisher of two volumes of verse. She graduated from the University of California with honors in political science.

The story as told by Mrs. Clairmonte is of John Sutter's rise to fame in California, of his crossing the plains to California in 1839, and of his life at New Helvetia. She relates the stories of his three ambitions – to become an American citizen, to ensure California's annexation as U.S. territory and, finally, to gain her admission as a state. It is a colorful story of how he eventually realized all of them. These historical episodes are told in simple, direct language which could be easily read by school students as well as all those interested in California history. Sutter's Mill, Sutter's Fort, and the triumphant hour when Sutter led the San Francisco parade that celebrated California's entrance into the Union, as well as the discovery of gold, all become very realistic through the telling by Mrs. Clairmonte.

Leonard Vosburgh designed the jacket cover and the title page for the book. His watercolors have been exhibited at the National Academy and by the American WaterColor Society.

Elmer L. Watson of Boronda road in Salinas has written us a note concerning the "Rancho San Bernabe" about which we wrote a series on Monterey County Mexican grants a short time ago. He relates: "The San Benito Ranch of 1842 was owned by James Watson, my great-grandfather on my Dad's side of the family, who was one of the sons of Thomas Watson. Thomas was the son

of James Watson, who settled in the Corral de Tierra. My father, Abel A. Watson, was a building contractor and carpenter for many years.

"Abel Watson had his shop next door to the old feed lot and livery stable of the Chavoyas. The family home was on the edge of the lake near the cemetery. The house faced Cortez street and was owned by a Mr. Silias, an early day teamster. Where the residents and tourists now stop to feed the ducks was our cow pasture. My father was active in Knights of Columbus and the Native Sons.

"I was born in Pacific Grove," writes Mr. Watson. "I lived as a boy in the home on Cortez street. My father helped to build or rebuild part of the Old Custom House."

Another valuable book of collectors or for those interested in California has just come to our desk from the Dawson's Book catalogue, compiled by Glen Dawson, and including a check list of "The Zamorano Eight."

The list of "Zamorano Eighty" selected by the Zamorano Club, and published in 1945, is a collection of distinguished California books, chosen because the members felt that they should be the cornerstones in any real collection of Californiana.

The best collection of Zamorano Eighty items in Southern California are in the Huntington Library where all are present in first editions, except Carlos Antonio Carrillo's "Exposicion," Mexico, 1831; and John R. Ridge's "The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta," San Francisco, 1854.