

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 16, 1955

Showered with Gifts

The Custom House museum has been enriched 10-fold by the acquisition of the Monterey History and Art assn. of a group of rare and valuable items which were accepted at last Monday's meeting of the board of directors of that organization.

The collection includes a harpoon gun which will add to the growing exhibit of the once prosperous whaling industry in Monterey Bay; the log of ship Fanny which sailed around the Horn to California in 1849; two Spanish helmets of the type worn by the navigators and explorers; a pair of Spanish pistols and two early Spanish swords.

Other important business transacted by the History and Art Association directors were the acceptance of the plans for the annual Merienda in celebration of Monterey's 185th birthday on June 3rd, and for the observance of the 109th anniversary of the raising of the American flag, over the old Custom House by Commodore John Drake Sloat on July 7, 1846.

The 1846 event was enacted by Capt. William Mervine, for whom the fort on Presidio Hill was named, acting under orders from Sloat, thus formally asking possession of California for the United States without firing a single shot.

Charles McHarry, the president of the association, presided at the meeting with the following directors present: Mesdames Luisa Byrd, Mary Greene, M.R. Gragg, Robert Giet, C.D. Hyde, Wesley Heard, W.R. Holman, F.L. Knudsen, Charles Mason, and W. M O'Donnell, Christine Raynsford and Miss Ethel Solliday, Messrs. Guy Curtis, John Martin, Carmel Martin, Gabriel Burnette, Claude T. Faw, Myron Oliver, Howard Severance and J.F. von Loben Sels.

Passed among the directors for their observance was a list of 127 items loaned by the Monterey History and Art assn. for exhibit in the Stevenson House. These articles have been acquired through gifts to the association over a number of years and are on exhibit every day except Thursday in the State Historical Monument on Houston street. The name of the article, a description of the name of the donor is on the list, one of which remains in the Stevenson House, one goes to the Division of Beaches and Parks which administers the

building and one is kept in the files for the secretary of the association. This system is also used by the Custom House and First Theater curators.

One the first items to catch our eyes was the description of a pair of pillow shams on which were these embroidered words: "Sweet Lilies Close Their Leaves at Night" and "Open with the Morning Light." Another pair of shams bear this quotation: "Go to sleep like the Flowers" and "A glorious Morning Unto You." There are many articles listed which are purely household items such as table linen, personal apparel and bedspreads, ornaments, furniture, kitchen utensils, pictures, childrens' playthings and clothes, manuscripts, books, photographs, all which fit into the house museum of the old adobe.

Among the givers to this historic collection are mentioned Mrs. Freda M Harding, Mrs. Anita Bravo Fernald of Los Angeles, Misses M. and W. Lathrop of Pacific Grove, Mrs. B.H. Boynton of Mt. View, Mrs. W.M. O'Donnell, Mrs. F. L. Knudsen, Mrs. Mary Murray, Dr. and Mrs. E.S. Williams, Carmel; Mrs. Josephine Finley, Carmel; Mrs. Greene Chapman, Carmel; Mrs. Winifred Wolff, Gonzales; George Morse, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Mrs. Lawrence Lyon, Pacific Grove, Rev. K. Fillmore Gray, Carmel, Mrs. H.B. Whitney, San Jose; John Howell, San Francisco; Mrs. Juanita Silva, Mrs. John McCrea, Redwood City; Myfanwy Lloyd, Pacific Grove; Miss Ada Herald, Santa Cruz; Mrs. William Kneass, Monterey; Thomas W. Norris, Carmel; Mrs. Helen Curry, Salinas; Mrs. Jean T. McKinney, Carmel; Miss Ann Hadden, Pacific Grove; W.W. Watts, Carmel.

The above list does not include 160 items dated Feb. 8, 1954; one of May 12, 1950 of 100 items and a single gift of the Soberanes piano from the archbishop of the San Francisco diocese of the Catholic Church.

Among the generous donors from the time of the opening of the Stevenson House not listed in the March 2, 1955 report were: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Work, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hill Gilbert, Mr. and Mrs. Myron Oliver, Grace Brune, David and Arthur Shop, Mrs. Michael Antonsich, Mabel Griffin, Salinas; Mrs. H. Cheroski, Mrs. Mary Bennett, Los Angles; Maria Gordon; Pal Clark, Monterey; Mrs. A. Wiseman, Soledad; Delmar Pugh, Soledad; Mrs. Ethel Frasier Doane, Oakland; Mrs. Ralph Marron, Monterey; Mrs. Eleanor Frasier, Monterey; Mrs. Jeannie M. Klenke, Carmel; Mrs. William Raymond, Big Sur; Mrs. W.L. Teaby, Miss Muriel Ranson, Carmel; Col. J.M. Williams, Miss Mary Louise Allen, Louis

Sanchez, Mrs. John Warboys, Mrs. Tony Castro, Mr. and Mrs. William Branson, Miss E.M. Acroyd, Miss Eva Belle Adams, Mrs. Dexter Rogers, Mr. & Mrs. Houghton Roberts, Fred Myler, Bryan Redington and others.

The total adds up to nearly 400 separate items which have been given to the Monterey History and Art Assn. for exhibit in just one of the State Historical Monuments in Monterey. They have been received from generous interested donors from the Peninsula, Monterey County residents, California historians and many appreciative tourists who have visited the Stevenson House during a visit to Monterey and returned to their homes to send a cherished possessions back to add to the charm of the lovely old house. May other follow their example!