

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **'Bancroftiana'**

There is always a fund of interesting material in "Bancroftiana" which is published occasionally by the Friends of the Bancroft Library at the University of California. The information is specially released for book lovers and historians, of course, but there is also up-to-the minute news for those who wish to keep informed upon doings at the university and among the writers of today and yesterday.

First of all, the eighth annual meeting of the Friends will be held on Sunday afternoon, May 22, at 4:30 p.m. at the library. Mr. Carl I. Wheat, author, bibliophile, explorer and humorist, will speak on "The Riches and Poverty of the Bancroft Library," on the 50th anniversary of its acquisition by the University of California.

Of interest to Monterey is the announcement of the gift of 30 copies of "A Reminiscence" by Samuel Hopkins Willey. The donor is Perc S. Brown, a "Friend of the Library." Dr. Willey came to California in February 1849 and organized a movement which led to the founding of the University of California. His association with Monterey is a matter of history, for the Rev. S. H. Willey was chosen as chaplain of the convention that formed the first California constitution in Colton Hall. He officiated in alternation with the Rev. Padre Antonio Ramirez during the six weeks of the labors of that dignified body.

The Rev. Mr. Willey conducted a school for six months while carrying on his regular church work and serving as chaplain at the Presidio. Among his other activities here was the founding of the first library in Monterey for the English-speaking population; he also assisted in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church here. He married Martha Jeffers, a young lady who had accompanied her sister, the wife of Capt. Westcott, to Monterey.

The Rev. S. H. Willey was a member of the class of 1845 at Dartmouth College and "A Reminiscence" was prepared for a meeting of Dartmouth alumni in San Francisco in 1898.

We are sure that there must be a great many Peninsula admirers of Mrs. Irene D. Paden, the author of "In the Wake of the Prairie Schooner" and "Prairie Schooner

Detours," who will be happy to know that she has received a Guggenheim fellowship for the year 1955-56. She expects to carry on her work at the Bancroft Library. Mrs. Paden's late husband was superintendent of the Alameda City Schools for a number of years, and had begun work at the College of the Pacific at Stockton, as director of California History, when death took him.

Dr. George P. Hammond, director of the Bancroft Library, has returned to his desk at the library after a sabbatical leave of six months. During the first weeks of his leave, he finished the fifth volume of the Larkin Papers which also are of local interest; then he spent November and December in New Mexico where he worked at the University of New Mexico, ranging through documents and sites marking the trail of Spain in the Southwest. After Jan. 1, Dr. Hammond went on to Old Mexico and Mexico City where he spent the rest of his leave. After examining several hundred bundles of documents he selected some 50,000 pages of manuscript for microfilming out of the collection of the Archivo Historico Militar of the Ministry of National Defense.

Dr. Hammond and Carl I. Wheat must have had a talk fest after the former's return from Mexico for they had the fascinating story of Jedediah Smith to discuss. Carl I. Wheat, with Dale L. Morgan, has just published "Jedediah Smith and His Maps of the American West" and Dr. Hammond had had the experience of tracing descendants of Smith's agent, Samuel Parkman, who entered the Mexican trade after Smith's death in 1831. He had found these descendants in Mexico City and in Guanajuato, and with the help of a grandson, Don Pablo Parkman, was able to bring a substantial collection of the documents to the Bancroft Library for microfilming.

Dr. Hammond also "hefted" and photographed Parkman's rifle, a 55-inch Rogers Bros., muzzle loader, still carefully preserved in the family. Which reminds us that the Monterey History and Art Assn., has just acquired an antique gun for historical exhibit. It is a breech-loading, percussion carbine, model 1840. The gun was used by U.S. Dragoon Regiments (from 1840 to 1851. The type was invented by Capt. John H. Hall in 1811 and made by Simeon North in 1840. This type of gun was also used by Gen. Stephen Watts Kearney's men in the battle of San Pascual in 1846.