

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Our First Printer

It is always a thrill to discover something new concerning the history of California's first printer, Agustin Zamorano, and his printing press, for both the printer and the press were at one time residents of Monterey. It was 110 years ago that Zamorano printed the Californian in Monterey with the Rev. Walter Colton and Robert Semple as the publishers. Recently we received from the Huntington Library the important announcements of events to take place there and in the art gallery, the most important of which was an addition to the exhibit of "Zamorano 80" now being held there.

To quote from the Calendar of Exhibitions: "On the Fourth of July 1849, Enos Christman, aged 20 years, member of the California Gold Mining Association of Philadelphia, having thrown down his composing stick, left his affianced, Miss Ellen Apple, and his fellow printer's apprentice. Pebbles Prizer, in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and set sail for San Francisco on the vessel Europe.

"Enos kept a journal and wrote Miss Apple and Pebbles. These journals and letters have been published (One Man's Gold, New York, 1930), but only just now has one of the letters come to the Huntington Library. No gift could have been more appreciated or more appropriate than this presented by the Friends of the Library in time to take its place in the current 'Zamorano 80' exhibit."

It contains young Christman's account, written on July 21, 1850, from Sonora in the Mother Lode, of the printing press used in Monterey by California's first printer, Agustin Zamorano. The letter, along with an 1850 issue of the Sonora Herald, printed on the press, is now part of the exhibit made up of books on California selected by the members of the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles.

"Imagine your humble correspondent," wrote Christman, "seated at a table covered with papers, in the middle of a rag house, 10 by 14 feet, surrounded by all the parnaphernalia (sic !) of a printing establishment. . . . We have but two or three cases of old type, a wooden 'stick' manufactured by my own hands with jack knife, and an old Ramage press that has long been a pioneer in the business; the first numbers (of nearly all the papers then printed in California) having been

printed upon it, after it had been brought second hand from the States through Mexico . . . to millions, and no one can calculate the amount of good it has already done. . . . As a reward of past services, it well deserves to be placed by the side of Franklin's old press, in Washington, as a curiosity for future generations to look upon."

Speaking of printing and the art of printing we must mention a new book which is just now coming off the press of Adrian Wilson in San Francisco, the title of which is "Printing for the Theater." The post-publication price is \$25.00.

The handsomely printed and designed announcement states in the introduction that it has long been a question of what to do with leftover programs and announcements by the theater management since playbills were invented. The Interplayers, San Francisco's distinguished drama group, solved the problem by returning them to the printer. He in turn has hit upon the idea of selling them in the form of a book to his friends: other printers, past and present Interplayers, bibliophiles, booksellers, librarians, etc.