

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Kicking Bear's Art

The Keepsake series of the California Book Club during 1956 were specially attractive and informative. The 12 folders consisted of treasures of California collections, each dealing with a book, manuscript or work of art in some California library or museum.

The subject of each of these "Treasures of California Collections" was chosen by the author of the text, in each case, a person prominently identified with the library or museum in question. The series was edited by Robert de Ross and was designed and printed by Lawton Kennedy of San Francisco.

A treasure from the Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco, was selected by William H. Monihan, S.J. and is the Memoirs of Edward Bosqui printed in San Francisco in 1904. The book has since become a recognized scarcity. Of the 30 copies printed by this fine craftsman for his family and a few friends, only six could be found when the Grabhorn press made a reprint in 1952. The University's copy is marked "Author's Copy."

An early banker, Daniel Meyer, praised the "Memoirs" because "it contains more history of the older times in California than any other book I have ever read ... You described impartially everybody you were connected with ... you described Colonel Fremont kindly ..."

Father Monihan tells us that Bosqui was ideally suited to tell the story of at least three institutions: the San Francisco Art Assn., The Bohemian Club and the California Academy of Sciences. In the formation of each he devoted his time and enthusiasm.

A reproduction of a letter written by Lucius H. Foote, attorney and later adjutant-general of California, is an illustration in the Keepsake together with another reproduction on the cover from Edward L. Greene's "Illustrations of West American Oaks from the Drawings of the late Albert Kellogg, M.D." printed by Edward Bosqui in 1889.

Several letters are quoted from San Francisco folk who had received copies of the Memoirs. These add much color to this valued narrative of Edward Bosqui who humbly stated near the end of the Memoirs "It has been my rare privilege to have witnessed the stirring events which have conspired to create almost an empire – all within the space of one short life; and I

have been personally acquainted with the chief actors in the grand drama that changed a vast country whose solitude was broken only by Indians and wild beasts into a prosperous community of several million souls, possessing all the advantages of the highest civilization."

Another fascinating folder for the Keepsake Series is Kicking Bear's pictograph of the Custer massacre, a treasure from the Southwest Museum, selected by Carl S. Dentzel. A map of the Big Horn country decorates the cover, and the pictograph fills center pages.

The Custer massacre occurred June 25, 1876. Kicking Bear made his drawing at the Pine Ridge Agency about 1898. This outstanding piece of aboriginal American art painted on muslin by one of the leading participants in this greatest of Indian victories never fails to thrill the historian or even the most casual museum visitor.

Irvin S. Cobb, historian, writer and collector of Indian relics, reported Kicking Bear, the sub chief of the Sioux, was persuaded by Frederick Remington, the artist, to do his version of the battle. Remington failed to return for the painting so the chief sold it to the resident agent. In 1902 the agent sold the drawing to George Rehse, an artist, from whom Irvin S. Cobb purchased it in 1934. Mr. Cobb loaned it to the Southwest Museum and through the generosity of his widow, it was transferred as a memorial to Mr. Cobb in 1945.