

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Portola Papers

If you are a Friend of the Bancroft Library, an organization interested in the preservation of books and documents for the library at the University of California, you have had a part in providing a group of extremely rare documents giving new insights into the historic explorations of the California coast in 1769-70 by Gaspar de Portola.

The newly acquired papers are the first signed originals by Portola to be received into the Bancroft collection. Such papers are scarce because Portola was in California for only a year, and he was first of all a soldier, which does not require the writing of reports or of many letters.

The Portola papers are divided into two groups: one relating to his service as governor of California; the other treating his career as governor of the town of Pueblo, Mexico, the important midway station between Mexico City and Vera Cruz. The new documents deal mostly with accounts of the juntas or councils of Portola and his officers and the friars, held between Oct. 1769, and Feb. 1770, during the explorations to locate Monterey Bay, which the party reached but failed to recognize from earlier descriptions.

The documents provide a ringside seat at the conferences of Portola and his staff as they struggled with the confusing problem of California geography. Almost all have been unknown and unpublished but plans for publication are now under discussion.

Dr. George Hammond, director of the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, and a member of the Monterey History and Art Assn., has just received the honor of being elected a member of the managing board of the School of American Research in Santa Fe, N. M. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the institution.

The School of American Research was organized in 1907 as the School of American Archaeology by the late Dr. Edgar L. Hewett, an able and dynamic leader, who gave a tremendous impetus to the study of the art, archaeology, ethnology, and other phases of the life of the Indians of the Southwest. The school includes the Museum of New Mexico, the Laboratory of Anthropology, and the Museum of International Folk Art, all of Santa Fe.

Friends of the Bancroft Library will receive their copies of Robert Eccleston's Journal of 1851 very soon. It will contain the only known account of the first military expedition into Yosemite. The force was under the command of Major James D. Savage, one of the noted pioneers of the San Joaquin Valley.

Robert Eccleston came to California in search of gold in 1849. As a member of Fremont's association, which followed the southern route through Texas and New Mexico, he saw a part of the country viewed by few of the Argonauts. His excellent account of the march was published in 1950 by the Friends of the Bancroft Library as Vol. 2 in its series of books. This volume has now been out of print for several years which makes it a collector's item and of added value.

Eccleston's Yosemite diary has been edited by Dr. C. Gregory Crampton, "now professor of history at the University of Utah. He earned his doctorate at the University of California under Prof. Herbert E. Bolton, writing on the topic, "The Opening of the Mariposa Mining Region, 1849-1859, with particular reference to the Mexican Land Grant of John Charles Fremont." This Yosemite diary is being published by the Friends in conjunction with the University of Utah Press, and will be distributed to members of record during the 1956-1957 year. During the 1957-1958, members of record will receive the delightful "Stockton Boyhood," of Charles Grunsky, edited by his daughter, Mrs. Clotide Grunsky Taylor. An unusual book, it is to be printed by Lawson Kennedy for the Friends.