

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **New Christmas Books**

Talking about books - old books - last Wednesday there was a meeting in the ballroom of the California Historical Society's new headquarters, on Jackson street in San Francisco at which Harold Holmes, owner of the oldest antiquarian book business in California, reminisced on his 62 years in the book trade in the Bay Area.

Robert Holmes, an Englishman, opened the Holmes Book Company in 1894 at 3rd and Mission streets in San Francisco, and was joined the following year by his son Harold, who is still active in directing the firm in San Francisco and Oakland. The review in the Society's Notes relates this fact: "His charm and wit coupled with his long acquaintance with the greater and lesser collectors, book dealers, and writers of the area resulted in a stimulating talk."

Again, this year the California Historical Society is issuing a book on the Christmas theme, suitable for Christmas giving to persons of all ages. Written by a member of the society, Katherine Bixby Hotchkiss, it is called "Christmas Eve at Rancho Los Alamitos," and gives her childhood's eye view of the holiday parties at that rancho in the early years of this century.

She relates that to these parties all the families on the rancho were invited, which meant hours of preparations at the ranch house, preparations which were a delight to the children of the family and culminated in the big party with the huge tree - too big, in fact, for the low-ceilinged California adobe.

The account of this blend of American and Spanish holiday practices is charmingly told by Mrs. Hotchkiss, and is delightfully illustrated by Clement Hurd, prominent illustrator of children's books. Lawton Kennedy is the printer.

John H. Kemble, a member of the faculty of Pomona College, well known authority on maritime history, has recently published an important work, "San Francisco Bay; a Pictorial Maritime History." With a wealth of pictures, the book traces many facets of Bay history - waterfronts, ports, shipbuilding and repair, bay and river craft, ocean-going trade and coastal shipping, fishing, the Navy, yachting, etc.

W. H. Hutchinson has written an account of the beginnings of commercial lumbering in the Sierra Nevada entitled "California Heritage." The book is fully illustrated and may be obtained for the asking from the Diamond Match Company, Box 1037, Chico.

During a recent Pioneer Day celebration in Paso Robles a window display contest on pioneer history was held, and the sweepstakes winner was the San Luis Obispo Historical Society which filled two windows. Emphasized were railroading and Chinese costume and cultural material from the days when the Chinese labor built the Pacific Coast Railroad and some of the county's roads,

Three California pioneer publishers were named to a California Newspaper Hall of Fame in San Francisco during the past week.

Selected for these honors were two former residents of old Monterey - the Rev. Walter Colton, and Robert Baylor Semple, co-publishers of the Monterey Californian, first newspaper published in the state. James King of William, publisher of the San Francisco Evening Bulletin, was the third journalist selected. Colton and Semple's paper appeared on the streets of Monterey on Saturday, Aug. 15, 1846.

They were selected by a committee that included representatives of the California Press Association, the Los Angeles and San Francisco Press Clubs, Theta Sigma Phi and Sigma Delta Chi.

It was the members of the Northern California chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, national journalism fraternity, who placed the plaque on the wall at the Munras street entrance to the rear of the Stevenson House. The Cuartel, where the first newspaper was published, had once occupied the space where the small and charming garden is now located.