

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Historical Flashbacks

"Christmas Eve at Rancho Los Alamitos" was published for 1957's Christmas book by the California Historical Society. It was written to Katherine Bixby Hotchkiss and her (?) Susanna Bryant Dakin wrote the foreword.

They had shared the experiences, retold in the book which happened at Christmas time on the Southern California rancho of their grandfather, John Bixby and his wife, Susanna Hathaway Bixby. This little book is delightfully illustrated by Clement Hurd and printed by Lawton Kennedy making it a collector's item.

Mrs. Dakin, a resident of Marin County with many warm friends on the Monterey Peninsula, writes this in her foreword: "Near each other in the village of Skowhegan, in the State of Maine, lived the Bixby family of boys and the Hathaway family of girls. Time and again, Bixbys married Hathaways. Several of them came to California to ranch and raise large families. Like many other Americans, they brought their regional customs to their Spanish land grants on which they (?).

In the story of "Christmas Eve at Rancho Los Alamitos" the author describe their Christmas with the introduction of those customs to the California (?).

Mrs. Dakin is the author of "The Lives of William Hart (?) A Scotch Pisano, (?) Mrs. Sarah Bixby Smith, another descendant of the Bixby family, wrote "Adobe Days." She was born on a sheep ranch, the San Justo, near San Juan Bautista.

An historically minded fiend in Nevada City, Ray Polk, mailed to us an interesting card showing the photograph of the great train wreck of the Nevada County narrow gauge in the summer of 1890. In the caption is the notation: "No mishap in the annals of railroading can equal the story of how a circus elephant put most of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge rolling stock into the ditch out near Idaho Maryland. Six-foot-wide cars on three-foot gauge tracks spelled disaster in 1890 when a pachyderm being transported carelessly leaned against a wall of his boxcar and tipped over the entire double-headed train."

"At the Approach of Ninety" is the title of the Christmas booklet sent by Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt. College of the Pacific, who has many titles, including "Mr California," former director of the California History Foundation,

professor of economics, and president emeritus of the Conference Historical Societies, just to name a few.

Of his life Dr. Hunt has written: "I find no valid reason for complaint or unhappiness; there are so many things I can do with keen relish, things befitting my age and station. Some of these have been continued from youth, others have acquired further development - all stimulate to activity, adding to the zest of living. My problem lies not in finding things I can do and enjoy, but in finding time for pursuing them and allotting to each its reasonable portion. Present interests being so many and so varied, of all the commodities I possess time has become the most precious."

Motorland, the January issue of the publication of the California Automobile Association, has featured a pleasing article "Links with the Past" in which Monterey's historical monuments play an interesting part. There are two pictures of Monterey, used as illustrations. A lithograph, made in 1842, names Monterey as the most important settlement in California and its harbor as the only lawful port of entry. Another picture shows Monterey and the bay in modern times.