

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Parkman Papers

The Bancroft Library at the University of California has announced a new gift of valuable historical documents from south of the border which explains some of the common bonds that underlie the history of Mexico and the United States.

Presented to the Bancroft Library by Don Pablo Parkman of Guanajuato, Mexico, the gift includes papers of the Parkman family, of whom Samuel P. Parkman, grandfather of the donor, was clerk to the great Rocky Mountain fur trader and explorer, Jedediah Smith, who in 1826 completed the first overland journey to California from the Mississippi River. The Bancroft Library already possesses the Smith papers among its precious holdings of Western historical materials.

Three years ago, Dr. George P. Hammond, director of the Bancroft Library, made a trip to Mexico where he was the guest of Senor Parkman at his home in Guanajuato. The latest gift to the library is a direct result of this visit.

The Parkman papers are especially notable in containing the first draft of the Jedediah Smith will, 1831; a diary kept on Parkman's journey through Chihuahua, Durango and Zocateccas in 1832; a letter by Augustus Storrs, 1836; many interesting commissions, passports, and land papers; a diary by Robert Watson Noble kept in 1849 while on a trading venture for Parkman from Chihuahua to San Jose, Calif., and other letters pertaining to mining affairs in Mexico.

In 1835, Samuel Parkman married Senora Antonio de Verga, and the collection includes many letters from their sons, between 1855 and 1869, as well as several letters to Senora Parkman from President Porfirio Diaz, after her husband's death.

Parkman assisted Jedediah Smith in preparing his journal and map of the 1826 overland journal for publication and accompanied him on the 1831 journey to Santa Fe on which the explorer was slain by Indians. After this catastrophe, Parkman took charge of Smith's business interests, entered into a partnership with a younger brother, Peter Smith, went into Old Mexico, where he occupied himself with silver mining until his death in 1873. Peter Smith's papers, which are also in

the Bancroft Library, include many letters from Parkman. The Jedediah Smith Society was organized in 1956 to promote research and writing of American explorers prior to the Gold Rush period. The Society is sponsored in California by the California History Foundation with headquarters at the College of the Pacific in Stockton.

Specifically, it aims to place a proper emphasis on the American contributions in the building of the West. It has a national organization and local chapters, Dr. Robert E. Burns, president of the College of the Pacific, is an executive vice president of the national organization.

The Eleventh Annual Mission Tour, sponsored by the College of the Pacific will leave Stockton tomorrow morning, arriving in Monterey Sunday evening, stopping overnight at Casa Munras. During the stay here the group will visit Carmel Mission and San Carlos Royal Presidio Chapel as well as one home, Casa Soberanes; as the guests of Mrs. William O'Donnell.

The tour will end at Stockton on Saturday, April 5, after visiting all of the Missions from Sonora to San Diego and back.