

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 7, 1958

### **The Stevenson House**

The Stevenson Home Children's Room has been given a part in a TV program. Along with other State Monuments in Monterey, the Stevenson House had a part, Monday, March 17, in the taking of a motion picture for Station KQED non-commercial TV.

The producer of a program on American history, Sing Hi, Sing Lo, is also the photographer – Mrs. Kathleen Rawlings. With her was the narrator, Mrs. Bash Kennett. They "shot" all the boys and children's furniture, in the children's room at the Stevenson House on Houston street, a State Historical Monument.

The program, on Channel 9, began Jan. 6, at 4:30 p. m., and will run for 104 periods, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. It is a children's program, and the period toys, will be shown as part of "an American pageant of folklore for youngsters." We, the State of California Division of Beaches and Parks, the Monterey History and Art Association which has collected most of the toys and materials, Mrs. Anne Issler, the curator; and the generous donors of the children's play things, are delighted that the Children's Room has received such appreciation and attention.

Mrs. Rawlings has given us much information on the Sing Hi, Sing Lo program, an almanac of America with Mrs. Bash Kennett. The purpose of the program is to portray the folk-history of America, presenting historical, geographical and sociological information through stories, folk art, folk music and folk dancing. In this, Monterey's Stevenson House Children's Room will play an important part.

If our readers have not viewed the exhibits in this old and historic adobe on Houston street, we hope that they will do so very soon. There is a special exhibit in the small "sewing room" at the top of the stairs on the second floor. Years ago, it was the habit of housewives and grandmothers to have a seamstress come to the home a couple of times a year to make clothes for the entire family and this room represents that period in history.

There is an early model sewing machine in the sewing room of the Stevenson House, a lap board, a sewing table with some old-fashioned patterns, a thimble with an open end, a bound Volume of the magazine,

"Godey's Ladies Book," showing fashion pages etc. In the wardrobe hang several dresses. A rose-colored dress that was made for a trousseau in the 1860's has simple lines, and is an interesting contrast to a maroon colored dress made in the 1870s, for the same owner. The latter has pleats, flounces, various other trimmings, and a bustle. There is also a stand display a lovely wedding dress with a train.

At present there is a new exhibit of doll clothes, which Mrs. Issler, the curator, deemed suited for display in the sewing room, because these little garments, too, are the careful work of the family dressmaker. There are two coats, one dark red, the other gray with lilac velvet cuffs and standing collar; a purple dress with heavy braid trim, a light cotton print with little red apron, a lace evening dress trimmed with large velvet pansies, a pale blue wool trimmed with lace edging.

The prize period dress for a smaller doll, is an exact replica of a lady's two-piece outfit of about the same period and style as the maroon dress of the 1870s mentioned above. The skirt has a bustle, horizontal silken sash below the bustle, tied at the back and finished with fringe.

Blouse or basque is closely and fitted and as carefully tailored and finished as any of the grown-up's dresses shown in the sewing room. It has beautifully finished hand-made buttonholes, and 10 tiny red buttons. Trimmed with dark red silk like that of the skirt, and with very narrow ivory color lace neck and wrists. A real triumph of the dressmaker's art.

We will look further into the displays at the Stevenson House and will have another story for you very soon.