

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 14, 1958

### **La Favorita, 1958**

In the mantel of old tradition

In the rime of vanished day,

The silent and shrouded city

Sits by her crescent bay.

This beautiful tribute to the Monterey of long ago may be found on the George Berthold monument in the Friendly Plaza off Pacific street. Written by Daniel O'Connell, one of California's earliest poets, it reflects his love for the tranquil little city where many of the happiest days of his life were spent.

On July 4th. his great granddaughter, Diana Davison, will be La Favorita at the Merienda in Memory Garden, sponsored by the Monterey History and Art Assn., in celebration of Monterey's 188th birthday. It was on June 3, 1770, that Don Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra met under an oak tree near the entrance to the present Presidio of Monterey and in civil and religious ceremony claimed California as a possession of their native Spain. It is that date that is honored each year with a fiesta.

Today this great granddaughter, now a student at the Dominican Convent in San Rafael, may read with pride this poem "In the Mantel of Old Tradition" written by Daniel O'Connell describing Monterey in the early days when he was numbered among the early settlers. The entire poem is engraved into the stone monument in the Plaza where he describes Monterey as a "solemn city of dreams."

A better choice for the honor of being Favorita could not have been found, for Miss Davison's maternal and paternal grandparents had made a name for themselves in California history long before she was born.

Her maternal grandparents were the late Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Moran of Monterey. Her grandmother was the author of a number of books and her mother, Mrs. Claire Davison, was the illustrator of "Trail of the Little Paiute," Mrs. Moran's last writing before her death.

Daniel O'Connell was born in Ireland. He came from a distinguished family, his father was a noted lawyer, and his grand-uncle was a famous patriot and statesman, Daniel O'Connell, known to history as the "Irish Liberator." He came to San Francisco in 1870, took up journalism and by his talents and versatile pen, soon

attracted favorable comment. He was known as a journalist, dramatist, novelist, and a gifted poet, one of the many brilliant men and women of that era who in prose and verse pictured the glamor and history of the Golden State, and in particular Monterey, where the scenes of several of his poems are laid.

In 1874 Daniel O'Connell married a Monterey girl, Miss Anita Ashley, and after that much of his life was spent in and about the Old Capital. He was a man of fine presence, gentle, sunny, of lovable nature, a melodious voice, a fund of keen Irish humor and as one writer describes him. "he had many friends and no enemies."

During Daniel O'Connell's lifetime a volume of his poems was published under the title of "Lyrics." After his death in 1899 another book of his poems collected by his daughter and edited by Ina Coolbrith, the poet laureate of California, was published in 1900 by Robinson's, with the title, "Songs of Bohemia."

O'Connell with his interesting family made his home in Sausalito. In 1899, while on a visit to his beloved Monterey, he contracted a cold from which he never recovered, and passed away on Feb. 23, 1899.