

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 14, 1959

100 Most Beautiful Rooms

Recently off the press of The Studio Publication, Inc. New York, and London, in Association with Thomas Y. Crowell Company, is "100 Most Beautiful Rooms in America" by Helen Comstock. One of the homes chosen among the 100 is in Monterey and here are five others from California with only one of those representing Southern California.

The Thomas Oliver Larkin House in Monterey is chosen for an honor and is represented with both an interior and exterior views.

Other California house pictured and described in the text are Mr. and Mrs. Charles Blyth's home at Burlingame; "The House on the Hill," in San Mateo; "La Pineta," the Santa Barbara residence of Mr. and Mrs. Avery Brundage; "Filoli" in San Mateo, owned by Mrs. William P. Roth, and the Los Angeles residence of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Ramser.

Most of the other 100 are in the eastern part of the United States. All give an interesting insight into the cultural background of the early residences of this great country of ours, their knowledge of the best in architecture and taste in furnishings, mostly simple but very beautiful and dignified.

The Larkin House, a historical monument administered by the California State Division of Beaches and Parks, since Larkin's granddaughter, Mrs. Alice Larkin Toulmin deeded it to the State of California a couple of years ago. It is open to the public five days a week from 10 o'clock in the morning until five in the evening, closed on Monday and Tuesday.

The exterior view of the Larkin House published in "100 Most Beautiful Rooms." "Is from the walled-in garden, showing the south veranda of this old adobe home, a view which we have not seen photographed previously.

The caption reads: "This house, like other Monterey, combines Spanish colonial and New England features, but the fact that it is not built around a patio makes it rather unusual in plan. The patio is at the side enclosed in its own walls. Here bougainvillea, irises, and roses bloom in profusion.

The home of Mrs. Tobin Clark, "The House on the Hill" in San Mateo, is of particular interest in Monterey. Mrs.

Clark is a frequent visitor to the Monterey Peninsula where she is a member of both the Monterey History and Art Assn. and the Monterey Foundation.

She and Mrs. Edith van Antwerp purchased the Stevenson House many years ago to save it from destruction and because both these ladies were devotedly interested in Stevensoniana, they later presented it to the State of California to be preserved as another state historic monument in memory of the great writer. It's now open to the public every day in the week except Thursday and many visitors make a pilgrimage there each year.

Another interest in Mrs. Clark's home lies in the fact that it was designed by the late David Adler, the brother of the late Frances Elkins of Monterey, who gave her home, Casa Amesti, to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and is leased by them to the Old Capitol Club of Monterey.

Helen Comstock, the author of "100 Best Beautiful Rooms in America" is one of the country's leading experts on furniture, antiques, and traditional American decoration. Her work as contributing editor to Antiques Magazine has had her on many fascinating explorations throughout the country. She has been on the program of Antiques Forum in Williamsburg four times, and in 1952 she organized the Exhibition of Southern Furniture, 1620-1820, held at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Miss Comstock was born in Missouri, educated at Washington University in St. Louis and at the University of California. Recently she edited a two-volume "Concise Encyclopedia of American Antiques. She also is the author of American Lithograph in the Collection's Little Book Series.