

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Daughter's Story

A short time ago we quoted in this column a letter received in Monterey from William A. Roebuck of Hinsdale, Ill., written in July of 1932, praising Monterey for the saving of so many of the old historical landmarks, regretting that some important ones had been destroyed and criticizing our southern neighbor, Santa Barbara, for the destruction of so many of the old adobe buildings there.

We find today that the column was reprinted in the Santa Barbara News-Press. The daughter of the writer of the letter of 1932, Miss R. M. Roebuck, has written us a letter of appreciation which we think is worth repeating here giving her the honor which we were happy to extend her father.

Miss Roebuck writes: "Can you imagine my complete surprise and wonder when, my neighbor came to me Tuesday evening and showed me the editorial page of the "News-Press" and asked: 'Is this William A. Roebuck a relative of yours'?"

"I think I gasped for my father has been dead for 15 years and the last thing I would ever expect would be to see anything he had written, in our paper. He had come for a vacation in California in 1926 and 1930 and had hoped to come to live here. The first time he left the train at San Francisco and visited around historical landmarks in that vicinity,

"He took the Greyhound to Monterey and Carmel and other places, stopping over a couple of days here and there and making 'notes'. Finally arriving in Santa Barbara and vicinity, spending a week with his brother and together they found many places historical and more 'notes' were made here.

"Hinsdale is a suburb of Chicago. In 1932 he retired and then the 'notes' were brought forth, some reaching Monterey it seems. History and music were his hobbies and he had something to work on as most men should have to keep them happy.

"Of course finding California a Catholic state, did not bother my father, even though he was a Protestant and a Mason, for he loved the old history of religion, and the missions he visited.

"Little would he ever dream that his daughter would become a member of the Catholic Church eight years after his death, and would build her new home in the parish of the 'Old Mission', and little would he have thought at the time (1906) he wrote the words and music of a lovely song called 'The Angelus' that when he died in 1943 at the age of 81, in St. Francis Hospital at 6 p.m.. that the last two lines of his song came true. That was 15 years ago. They were:

"Through the dark and lonely vale may then my spirit hear the Angelus". He died as the Missions Bells rang the 6 o'clock Angelus and the Angelus bells in the hospital were heard also. Tonight, I heard the same Angelus Bells from the Old Mission as I sat in my living room. And before me is the article you wrote and copied by the News-Press.

"So I will just say 'Thank You' to the unknown person this letter is addressed to and I know my father would have been happy, to know anyone cared enough for his letter to have had it printed."

Miss Roebuck adds a postscript: "Almost 71 years old, yet love to get up for rainbows in high Sierra and Lassen Park area."