

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### Christmas Cards

Now that Christmas cards have begun to arrive and the spirit of the Yuletide is upon us once again, we are going to write about the variety of cards and messages we receive - some religious, some educational and some just greeting's - but all appreciated for the thoughtfulness of the sender.

Dr. Paul Michael of Monterey has mailed to us two cards which he and Mrs. Michael sent to their friends in 1954 and 1957, before they came to Monterey to make their home here, although if you read between the lines, you will know that they were dreaming of the Monterey Peninsula through the years. They had been part time residents of Carmel Point for many years.

Dr. Michael's family chose a theme which it had long wished to follow - California and this state's influence on architecture. The small pictures of Mrs. Michael and their two sons, Peter and Paul, were taken before the various historic buildings in Monterey.

We are quite certain that Dr. Michael will not object if we use some of his material in this column today. He wrote in 1954: "With the exception of certain principal centers along the eastern seaboard where our democracy was founded, no community in the United States has so zealously preserved the physical evidence of its birth and heritage as has the city of Monterey, California's first capital. Thanks to the broad vision of the Monterey History and Art Assn., the Monterey Foundation, the clergy, and the state government, Monterey can display with pride the birthplace of American civilization in California."

". . . One can still sense the romance of the past welded with the beauty and charm of the present in this little city surrounded by some of the loveliest countryside in America: the Monterey Peninsula, Carmel and the world-famous Seventeen Mile Drive along the Pacific. Robert Louis Stevenson called this the finest meeting place of land and water in existence.

And in their travels the Michael family pursued the Path of History down the middle of the streets that mark the journey into the past and felt richly rewarded by what they saw. "For here we have many of the 'firsts' of their state" wrote the Doctor, "surely justifying the well-

deserved accolade as the nidus of American civilization and culture in California."

Dr. and Mrs. Michael with Peter and Paul visited the Gordon House, the House of Four Winds, "Casa Gutierrez, Royal Presidio Chapel, Casa Vasquez, Casa Pacheco, Casa Abrego, the Pacific Building, Whaling Station, Casa de Soto on Pierce street, Robert Louis Stevenson House, First Theatre, and the John C. Fremont house on Hartnell street. Pictures of each of the above accompany the history of each, which is correct and very exciting to read.

"We saw two of the most beautiful and certainly among the most significant homes in Monterey today," continued the Christmas card greeting, "the famous Amesti House and the Larkin House. Casa Amesti is one of the most beautiful and graceful structures still in existence and typifies the vision and love of beauty of the builder, Don Jose Amesti, in 1830. Possibly historically and most assuredly architecturally, the Larkin House is one of the most important in the area. ... Larkin combined New England architecture with Spanish-California provincial and envisioned a design, popular the country over, called Monterey Colonial."

And finally the family came to two of the most historic buildings, Colton Hall and the Custom House, the former the symbol of American California, the birthplace of the state. The Custom House, silently and languidly nestling along the shores of Monterey Bay, seemed to welcome them and tell them of the days long past - of the glory of Spain, of the tranquility of old Monterey - of years filled with romance, history, and progress.