

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### Historical Music Series

The California Book Club has completed its 1959 series of 12 keepsakes for its members with "California Sheet Music Covers." Robert B. Honeyman of San Juan Capistrano, a collector of the music covers printed in California, has permitted the reproduction of these historic songs, a bit of the accompaniment and the cover illustrations.

Number nine in the series is "Independent City Guards" (quick step), dedicated by the Sacramento Union Brass Band and played by them on the occasion of the visit of the Guards to San Francisco on Sept. 27, 1858. The occasion was the laying of the Atlantic Cable.

The leader of the group was also, apparently, the man who wrote the music: August Wetterman, an important figure in early California music. His memoirs are an important source of Northern California music history. The cover of the music lists no composer, but Wetterman held the copyright.

George Holbrook Baker, who drew and lithographed the cover and was the publisher, was a leading artist at the time. He was born in 1827, and was a student at the National Academy of Design in New York when gold was discovered. He joined a group bound for California by way of Mexico and arrived in San Francisco in May, 1849. He traveled to the mining camps to sketch the gold rush on the spot.

No. 10 in the series of the Book Club's Keepsakes is the "California Flood Mazurka," composed and respectfully dedicated to the Sacramento "Howard Benevolent Society" by Max Zorer.

The "California Flood Mazurka" has a lithographed cover showing Sacramento inundated, in the greatest flood to that time when the Sacramento crested for the second time in weeks. The Society was organized in Sacramento's Philharmonic Hall in December, 1857. Its declared objective – "the relief of the destitute and the sick of whom there are many." In late 1861 smallpox raged through the city and the society financed and recruited nursing for the pest house. They served meals daily to 500 and set up dispensaries and flood refugee camps. The Thompson and West History of Sacramento County, after tracing the work of the society, said of the work, "Never, perhaps in the history of the United

States has there been a parallel to the situation in this town upon that occasion."

The "Bay-View-Park Gallop" the next in the series, was composed by P. R. Williamson about 1863. The music commemorates the Bay View Race Course, built in 1863 on the shores of San Francisco Bay south of the city. The park was located on filled ground between Hunter's Point and Candlestick Point, both of which can be seen in the main illustration of the music cover. According to the San Francisco directory of 1864-65, Bay View Park cost "upwards of \$200,000," a considerable sum for those days and nearly triple the \$70,000 expended ten years later on the Bay District course which was the pride of San Francisco in the '70s and the '80s. It was built by a group headed by George Hearst. William F. Williamson, to whom the gallop was dedicated, was the manager of the course. Bay View Park is one of the eight courses which are buried beneath the asphalt of the city and county.

No. 12 in the keepsake series is one of the most interesting – "Hank - Monk Schottische - dedicated to Miss Lille Swift. The lithograph is by Thomas Hunter in which he shows a Pioneer Stage Co. coach, driven by Hank Monk with Horace Greeley seated beside him and miners, Chinese and travelers inside and on the top and four horses racing at top speed. The famous saying of Hank in quotes below "Keep you seat Horace, I'll get you there on time."

Hank Monk was probably the most famous of all the Gold Rush drivers and doubtlessly the most skillful, and possibly the greatest "ham."

In 1862, Horace Greeley made a tour of California, stopping on his way to deliver a scheduled lecture at Carson City, Nevada. Being unfamiliar with the geography, he neglected to mention, until he had boarded Hank's coach the next morning, that he had scheduled a lecture in Placerville, California for 8 o'clock that evening. Hank got him there – 112 miles over one of the highest mountain ranges in the United States in 12 hours flat.

Ralph Moody, who wrote the history of the Schottische, said, "By 1883 stage coaches were on their way out, and Hank Monk had reached the end of the fabulous route, but the feel of the reins was still in his hands. In his final delirium, he rose up on his bed and shouted, 'It's getting dark and I'm on a long downgrade, and I can't get my foot on the brake!'"