

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Mementoes

Early in 1947 the Monterey History and Art Assn, received a valuable collection of historical items from Mrs. Ann Burke of Ben Lomond in memory of her son, Francis Burke, a San Francisco attorney. Mr. Burke was very fond of the Monterey Peninsula and spent many vacations here roaming about the town visiting the Custom House, the waterfront and the old buildings that then were open to the public.

Another time Mrs. Burke, then living in Menlo Park, sent an even more valuable assortment of items than the first gift. She expressed appreciation of the manner in which the memorial collection was then exhibited and promised that other gifts were to follow.

Now that the History and Art Assn, has its own building, the Casa Serrano, a plan is afoot to have shelves installed to house its fast growing library and where students may comb and study in the quiet atmosphere of the old adobe building on Pacific street. The cases probably will be installed in the south room, now hung with a dozen framed etchings of the late Armin Hansen, and displaying the printing press which Mr. Hansen used to reproduce his etchings. These all were gifts from Mrs. Hansen, in memory of her husband.

Among the books presented by the late Mrs. Burke is Leidesdorff's log of the "Julia Ann" a ship which had Monterey as its port of call. It is a rare item from the collectors' viewpoint. Leidesdorff served as U. S. vice-consul by Larkin's appointment. His correspondence, in those years, especially with Thomas Oliver Larkin, is a most valuable source of historical information.

A second book is one written by Capt. George H. Derby, U. S. A., who also wrote as John Phoenix, Esq., an early day humorist from whom it is said that Mark Twain got his first idea of becoming a writer of humor.

Lieut. Derby was an actor at our California's First Theater and an officer at the Presidio before 1850. The book presented to the association by Mrs. Burke is "Phoenixiana." It was given by Maj, I. Snyder from his friend in San Francisco on April 25, 1856. It is a collection of sundry sketches, once published in newspapers and magazines of California, according to data in the 1856 publication.

Another book sent by Mrs. Burke with the above first edition was "John Phoenix, Esq., the Venerable Squibob, the Life of Capt. George H. Derby— U. S. A." by George H. Stewart Jr.

Captain Derby tells in one of his letters of his, adventures of playing Romeo to relieve the tedium of the garrison duty. There is also a paper-bound pamphlet of "The Topographical Reports of Lt. George H. Derby.

"Life, Adventures and Travels in California," to which are added "Conquest of California," printed in 1857. and written by J. T. Farham is another rare book in the collection. This book speaks for itself, but of interest on the Peninsula will be the accounts of his visit to Monterey and Carmel Valley.

"Death Valley in '49" by William L. Manley also is a first edition, with the signature of Theodore Kytka in at least two places. Kytka was a handwriting expert, who figured in many early day trials in San Francisco. This book describes Monterey in 1849.

Put's "Golden Songster" by the author of Put's original "California Songster," is a small paper-bound book published before 1849 and continuing the words of the very songs sung in California even before the Gold Rush.

The Book Club of California, announces an exhibit of "My First Publication" the club's fall book and other work its designer-printer, Adrian Wilson. The affair will be held as open house today from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Book Club headquarters, 545 Sutter St., San Francisco, where the exhibit will be on display through Saturday, Dec. 1.