

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Historian Of The West

We attended the University of California's Bancroft Library's 100th anniversary last week. The celebration began with an open house at 3 p m. in the library. In Berkeley where many of the outstanding treasures were on display for the pleasure of those in attendance.

The library is the World's foremost center for historical research on California and the Far West. It began as the private library of the businessman historian Hubert Howe Bancroft 100 years ago. Now it totals 125,000 volumes and unaccounted millions of papers. The collection was begun when the Ohioan came west in the 1850's and opened a stationery store at Merchant and Montgomery streets, where it prospered handsomely.

Bancroft took a trip to Europe in 1862, became interested in historical documents, and resolved to expand the library he had begun.

For forty years, he was the principal historian of the west. In 1905 he offered his enormous collection to the University, and after much debate the Legislature agreed to pay \$150,000 for it. It survived the 1906 fire and earthquake and was moved to Berkeley later. The collection, had been valued at \$250,000, so Bancroft actually donated \$100,000.

O. Cort Majors, San Francisco paper products executive and prominent UC alumnus presided at the afternoon meeting of the Friends of the Bancroft Library, which featured presentation of the historical papers of Thomas Starr King, Unitarian minister during the Civil War. He was credited with keeping California in the Union at the beginning of the war. The papers are the gift of his grandson, Navy Captain Thomas Starr King (ret.) and were presented by the great-grandson of the minister, Navy Commander Randolph W. King of San Francisco. Two great-great grandsons were also present. Bancroft died in 1918.

Susanna Bryant Dakin (Mrs. Richard Dakin) author of "The Lives of William Hartnell" and a "Scotch Paisano" (Hugo Reid's Life in California), was the speaker at the Sunday centennial of celebration of the Bancroft Library. Mrs. Dakin spoke on the lives of some notable women in early California, in the Spanish, Mexican, and pioneer American periods, under the title, "Rose or

Rose Thorn." Several of the women she discussed were early residents of Monterey. The published volume of this book soon be placed on sale.

Hubert Howe Bancroft once wrote. "A library is not merely a depository of learning, but a society for the promotion of knowledge.

Among the displays on special tables at the centennial observance of the Bancroft Library, literary authors of the West, were letters, manuscripts, and inscribed books of well-known writers including Gertrude Atherton, Mary Austin, Ambrose Bierce, Gelett Burgess, Bret Hart, Jack London, Frank Norris, John Steinbeck and George Sterling, all of whom were well known on the Monterey Peninsula in years long past.

In the main floor cases were document and pictures of a number of "Women of Spanish California", several of whom were mentioned in Mrs. Dakin's talk. They included Feliciana Arballo, Eulalia Fages y Callis, wife of Gov. Fages: Concepcion Arguello, Teresa de la Guerra Hartnell, Maria Teresa de Sepulveda Angustias de la Guerra Ord, Eulaia Perez, Rafael Cota and Francesca Carrillo de Vallejo.