

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 10, 1961

Historic Gifts

The Monterey History and Art Assn. has been on the receiving end of gifts recently presented by members and friends in Monterey and elsewhere. The association is always happy to receive gifts that pertain to the past history of Monterey or early California or monetary gifts such as a donation to the purchase or restoration of an historic building. In the present case there is the Fremont Headquarters just purchased but yet to be restored and the finishing of the restoration at the Casa Serrano, which is now the headquarters of the association.

A beautiful old fan was recently presented by Mrs. Helen A. Baxter of Forest Hill Manor, Pacific Grove. She also gave a photograph of the young woman to whom it had belonged many years ago.

This is the story of the fan's history: It is an old Spanish fan, black with hand painted rose decoration, in excellent condition, that had belonged to a niece of Don Manuel Dominguez, one of the signers of the California Constitution, whose picture is at his place on one of the tables in the museum at Colton Hall. The owner of the fan was Francisca Alexander Fleming, the daughter of Henry Nash Alexander and Feliciano Cota de Dominguez. She was born Francisca de Paula, April 14th, 1865, their seventh child, at Rancho San Pedro in Los Angeles County.

It is also interesting to note here that Judge William F. James of Monterey and Palo Alto is a great nephew of Henry Nash Alexander, whose sister Sarah Ann Alexander married John Francis Cox in Monterey, July 28th, 1852. Judge James' mother, Alice Cox, the first child, married William W. James April 15th, 1871, and their son William F. James was born October 16, 1875. W. W. James became postmaster in Monterey on June 30th, 1897 and remained in that position until Aug. 11, 1914. Upon the death of his parents, Judge and Mrs. James retained possession of their home on Madison Street in Monterey and where they spend vacations and weekends. The late Miss Edith Cox, who was also a post office employee for many years, was Judge James' aunt and her home adjoined that of her nephew.

Francisca Alexander was the third queen of the Los Angeles Fiesta in 1897 and was married to Dr. Ernest

William Fleming on Feb. 10th. 1898 at Rancho San Pedro, the home of her cousins, Victoria Dominguez Carson and William Carson. She died Feb. 16, 1901 at Los Angeles. Francisca's uncle, Delegate Don Manuel Dominguez, was one of the great California landowners, but he was listed at the Constitutional Convention in 1849 as the "banker" among the delegates to organize the state government.

Born in 1803 at San Diego, Don Manuel was the son of Sgt. Cristobal Dominguez and thus a member of one of the oldest families in California.

From his family connections, Don Manuel was active in the Mexican regime - as a member of the ayuntamiento and first alcalde of Los Angeles. He was its representative in the territorial legislature at Monterey for a couple of years in the 1830s and later as district prefect and captain of defense. Under the American era he was a Los Angeles supervisor in 1854.

The next year the huge rancho of the family was portioned between him, his brother Pedro and two nephews. Don Manuel's share was about 25,000 acres, and he lived on it until his death in 1882. In his last years Dominguez was almost totally blind.