

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Jewelry Masterpieces

The subject of early jewelry and early jewelers in Monterey has proved fascinating as we gather more and more information. There were two prominent jewelers back in the days of the Gold Rush who made priceless jewelry of the pure gold for the prominent families in Monterey and vicinity Trujillo and P.H. Masters.

We already have listed some of the pieces and told of the history and the families who ordered pins, brooches and earrings made for their womenfolk, as well as pieces of men's wear. Today we will conclude.

In the archives at the National Art Gallery is a history of most of these pieces of California jewelry. Among the photographs is that of a small gold horse designed and made by Celestino Trujillo about 1860.

It is two and one-half inches from tip of the ears to the tip of the tail. This intricate piece of early-time jewelry, made from pure California gold, was owned by the late George Kinlock, former owner of Casa Alvarado on Dutra street. It was made for one of his ancestors, a pioneer resident of Monterey. Kinlock also had a pin made about 1850 of California gold quartz and a gold nugget, by either Trujillo or Benales, a jeweler who preceded Trujillo in Monterey.

Mrs. Walter Norris of Salinas, a sister of the late Mrs. Anna Geil Andressen and sister-in-law of the late Thomas Wayne Norris of Carmel, past president of the Monterey History and Art Assn., has an oval stickpin of tortoise shell with a gold rim, made in 1860, which is listed and registered at the Smithsonian Institution.

She also prizes a bar pin of onyx with a gold edge designed in leaf and rose pattern. It was made by Trujillo, the same artist who designed and made the gold buckle fashioned from a five dollar gold piece in Monterey for Mrs. Frank Jacobs of Monterey, who also is the owner of a number of pieces of old-time jewelry made from California gold, and designed by the early jewelers of this city.

Another piece of early jewelry now in the possession of the Monterey History and Art Assn. was given by Mr. and Mrs. James Hernandez in memory of his grandmother, Guadalupe Holjin de la Torre, and his mother, Maria de los Angeles Hernandez. It is a small gold cross and chain. The articles belonging to the association are at present carefully stored in the huge safe at the Stevenson House, but it is expected to display the collection for some occasion of importance at the Casa Serrano, now owned and occupied by the history and art association.

Miss Grace Brune's loop earrings of pure California gold brought from Placer County in 1849 by her grandfather, Carlos Espinosa, are of the same construction as Rosalie Tobar Machado's filigree earrings.

The Trujillo brilliant gold pearl is evident as his hallmark. It is a red gold and the earring is comparatively pale gold. The sphere has a hole drilled through the center of it and the end of the earring was pushed up into this aperture. Then a tiny hole was drilled through on the side of the sphere and a golden peg was driven in, locking and securing it. On the end of the gold wire which is inserted into the ear and which is hinged to the earring on one side is a tiny hook which after passing through the ear ingeniously snaps into the pearl-like sphere.

The flat portion of the earring is so highly polished that it imparts to the touch a feeling similar to that of sandalwood in softness. The quaint border on the narrow, semi-circular band has high reflecting little surfaces and projects like a string of tiny beads.

The Spanish people in Monterey admired and encouraged Trujillo and, in turn, developed his art and endeavored enthusiastically with firm and enduring purpose to please them.

It seems to one that the person who ordered the dove of the late Mrs. Maria Antonia Thompson, must have been a "don", because the dove signifies love in Spanish and this particular one is bearing a present of pearls.

The dove was made for Maria Antonia Castro de Sanchez, the sister of Gene Manuel Castro, a maternal relative of Mrs. Thompson. It can be imagined that great admiration at the fiesta when la palomita (the little dove) appeared as a tiny focal point of sparkling wonder on the breast of the Spanish senorita. Perhaps she sang "La Paloma," the Spanish song and was surrounded by candlelight within a circle of dons.

"Oh! Oh! Look at the dove of gold

With pearls at her feet!

Fly, my little dove,

To the one I love most,

Upon her heart!"