

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 13, 1962

Compliments, Documents And Endowments

An interesting group of short items which we have found among the many papers on our desk today may be of interest to our readers at this reading of the Diary.

Here is a nice compliment from Margaret M. Esrey extolling the beauty and historic atmosphere of Monterey: "I am very fond of this Peninsula area and most interested in its history. In 1900 I came into the harbor by boat from Los Angeles with a great aunt with whom I had traveled from my home in Topeka, Kansas, to visit relatives in Los Angeles, Lompoc, San Francisco (Angel Island to be exact), and Sacramento.

"I do not remember the name of the boat we came on, but I do remember that it was very stormy so we could not land that night and had to wait until morning before we were taken ashore. I was six years old and the fact that I was very seasick on the trip has kept it fresh in my memory. I also remember being driven around Monterey by a horse and carriage. It was over 35 years ago before I again visited this area, but I was very glad to see that some of the old buildings had been preserved.

"I am enclosing my membership dues in the Monterey History and Art Assn. and am happy to be able to help in the preservation and restoration of others."

February is history month in California, so designated by the Daughters of the American Revolution, with Commodore Sloat Chapter of the Monterey peninsula taking a prominent part in the collection of data, documents, etc. of early history as it would pertain to the DAR program.

We have a note at hand from Mrs. (John W. Sherwood of Carmel, historian for Commodore Sloat Chapter, inquiring as to where she might acquire a document or letter containing the signature of the Hon. Peter Burnett, first American governor of the State of California, following the adoption of the first constitution formulated and adopted in Monterey In 1849.

Mrs. Sherwood writes: "The historian general of the DAR requests it for the 'First Governors of the State's Portfolio,' which is part of the historian general's collection in the American Room, Constitution Hall, Washington, D. C."

We have recommended that Mrs. Sherwood contact Gov. Burnett's grandson, John Burnett, a practicing attorney in San Jose, who may be willing to give assistance in this historical and important matter. Of course if there is anyone on the Peninsula who has a document or the signature of Peter Burnett, and wishes to part with it, don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Sherwood in Carmel.

During last Monday's regular monthly meeting of the Monterey History and Art Assn, several gifts were announced and are on exhibit. Mr. and Mrs. Charles McFadden were the donors, through the W. R. Holmans, of oars from a whaling vessel which operated in Monterey a long while ago. Mike Noon came in possession of them first, then they came into the possession of a diver, Henry Porter; They were thrown behind the building now occupied by the National Dollar Store. Later they were given to Mr. and Mrs. Holman by Charles McFadden, who had owned them for a long time, knowing that the Holmans would place them where they would be taken care of in the best possible manner.

Another interesting gift is a cooking pot of cast iron once owned and used by Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson made arrangements with Jonathan Wright to take him to the Wright place up the Carmel Valley. Across from Wright lived a Mr. A. D. Height, brother of superior court judge of San Bernardino County. Wright traded the pot, which had belonged to Stevenson for a big copper-bottom family pot. The story has been told and verified that Stevenson would not eat goat meat, so he cooked his venison stew in this old black vessel. Height gave the pot to Charles McFadden's father in 1890.

A driftwood planter also was given by the McFaddens. This planter had been found by Clarence Darrow, the famous lawyer. He gave it to the late Lincoln Steffens of Carmel, who in turn presented it to Dr. R. A. Kocher, and then Charles McFadden acquired it and gave it to the Holmans. It will be used in the Casa Serrano.