

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Tenth Annual Keepsake Edition Concerns Mexico**

The tenth annual keepsake of the Friends of the Bancroft Library, "Mexico: Ancient and Modern" has been received by the members. For those who are interested in the history of Mexico or for those who have traveled in the country south of the border for pleasure, the book will be a joy to own.

This publication differs from previous keepsakes, which printed a single original document, for this one provides a view of Mexican history as represented by examples of the books and manuscripts in the Bancroft Library recently so significantly augmented by the great Don Silvestre Terrazas collection.

The book, compiled and written by the staff of the Bancroft Library, provides a permanent aid to understanding major movements and documents of Mexican history, and it also serves as a guide to the exhibition which was displayed for the annual meeting on May 6.

The exhibition this year differed from those previously displayed in that it is concentrated on a single subject: the Mexican collections of the Bancroft Library. It included 185 selected items, ranging chronologically from the Codex Fernandez Leal, a pre - Columbian - Mlxtecan pictograph manuscript, to the 1944 obituary summarizing the career of Don Silvestre Tarrazas.

The book handsomely designed and printed by Lawton - Kennedy, was compiled and written by the staff of the Bancroft Library with the assistance of members of the faculty on the Berkeley campus.

In the April issue of Bancroftiana, which is, published occasionally by the Bancroft Library at the University of California, there appears the announcement that Fremont family letters are now the property of the university, and have been the source of several publications of interest to early California and national history.

When, in 1935, Catherine Coffin Phillips published her "Jessie Benton Fremont: A Woman Who Made History," she told of visiting Nellie Haskell Browne at Santa Barbara in quest of the information she needed. Mrs. Browne who was then 86, "had preserved all the letters, more than 100, written to her by Mrs. Fremont. Over a long period of time she read and explained these letters

to Mrs. Phillips. For a number of years, the letters were lost, but now they have reappeared and are now in safe keeping in the Bancroft Library. Mrs. Browne's granddaughter, Miss Evelyn Browne of Durham, N. H., and through the purchase funds made available by the friends of the Bancroft Library, these valuable historical documents will remain permanently available to scholars in the library, where so many Fremont family papers are preserved.

Nellie Haskell, whose godmother was Jessie Fremont, was brought up by the Fremonts and maintained with them a lifelong intimacy. The letters date from 1864 to 1914, are far more numerous than Mrs. Phillips indicated, and include half a dozen from John Charles Fremont himself, written in the 1870's.

Miss Brown says that her grandmother died in 1939. Her mother took charge of settling the estate, and in 1934, having found a mass of your grandmother's letters, sent them to New Hampshire. Although precarious, they did arrive, well cared for afterwards, and now have made their final journey back to California.

The above information should be of interest in Monterey for the reason that Fremont was here in 1846-47 and camped on a hill at the end of the town. When Mrs. Fremont and their daughter arrived, they took up quarters with Mrs. Castro in an old adobe home which now is preserved within the walls of the Frank Work home across Fremont street from El Estero. The Fremont headquarters on Hartnell street next to the Monterey Post Office was purchased by the Monterey History & Art Assn. and has been restored by that organization.