

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 25, 1963

A Gem Of A History

"This little book is a gem!"

With that introduction, who would not be curious enough to send to the California Historical Society in San Francisco for a copy and to read it after you received it? I did just that.

The little book of 15 pages, written by Theodore H. Hittell, has the title of "El Triunfo de la Cruz," the first ship built in the Californias, and published by the California Historical Society. This essay "El Triunfo de la Cruz," meaning "The Triumph of the Cross," was first published in The Californian, San Francisco, of January 1880.

It is more than just the interesting account of the building of the first ship built in the Callfornias; it is the inspiring story of a determined man who simply ignored insurmountable obstacles and got the job done anyway.

A ship was badly needed in 1719, according to the lines written on the dust cover. What matter that everyone laughed at his idea, but Father Juan Ugarte was a man of action. The technically trained person turned him down; the only wood available was 200 miles away in the form of uncut trees in almost inaccessible high mountains; that he had only unskilled Indians to help cut the trees, hew planks, build a road for 90 miles? What matter that he, himself knew nothing about such things?

This book tells how he succeeded despite problems that would have stopped a lesser man, how he built the very good ship, El Triunfo de la Cruz.

The author, Theodore Henry Hittell, was born April 5, 1830, graduated from Yale in 1849, then joined his father's law firm in Hamilton, Ohio. He came to San Francisco in 1856, joined the staff of the Bulletin then edited by James King of William. He died on Feb. 23, 1917. His reputation as a historian rests securely on his "History of California" (four volumes, 1885-97), the first serious and comprehensive work on the subject and still held in high respect.

The book is distributed by Lane Publishing Co., Menlo Park, and printed by Roger Levenson, Tamalpais Press, Berkeley.

The Talisman Press of Georgetown, Calif., is preparing to issue a history of New Almaden, situated in Santa Clara County, which dates back to Spanish California. In 1824, when Antonio Sunol first worked the ground for silver. Its history extends through the gold rush and beyond and was one of the most intense and bitterly fought land claims in California history.

The book contains 16 photographs of the mine, taken from the Bulmore-Winn album. Kenneth M. Johnson is the author. The copies, numbering 75 in a special edition, are offered for sale at \$20 each. They will be numbered and signed by the author and will contain two original pieces relating to New Almaden Mines consisting of letters, receipts, telegrams, ore shipment reports, etc., and dated 1860-1919.

Another good recently published book has been drawn to my attention, it is "Nancy Hanks, the Destined Mother of a President." The factual story of a pioneer family as revealed in an exhaustive study of ancestral history by Adin Baker, also the author of "Nancy Hanks of Undistinguished Families" and "The Hanks Family Legacy."

During his 25 years of collecting Hanks family data Mr. Baker discovered no less than 27 Nancy Hanke's born in an interval of 50 years following the Revolutionary War. To sort them and positively identify the one who was to become the mother of Abraham Lincoln required an additional 13 years of arduous research.

This book is sold exclusively by Arthur H. Clark, Box230, Glendale, Calif. It is priced at \$15 net postpaid. The issue is limited to 500 copies.