

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Norris Exhibit at Casa Serrano

Casa Serrano at 412 Pacific St., headquarters of the Monterey History and Art Assn., is now holding open house every Friday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 1 until 4 o'clock. Mrs. Margaret Hanna Lang, the curator, is the hostess on these days. So it is expected that the membership of the association, tourist and friends will drop in to see the historic restored adobe and the special exhibits which will be there from time to time.

The Christmas decorations have been arranged there for December and will remain until after the coming of the new year. Among the exhibits is a collection of the Christmas cards of the late Thomas Wayne Norris, former president of the association and a well-known collector of California. Mr. Norris used original copies from his collection to send as Christmas cards, most of which were printed by Grabborn Press in San Francisco, making the doubly valuable and interesting. There are 14 greetings in this collection, loaned by Mrs. William M. O'Donnell.

Tom Norris resided in Livermore, where for over 30 years he held the position of president of The Coast Manufacturing and Supply Co. He was born and raised in Sonoma County, one the few locales that still held to an appreciable degree the traditions and flavor of pioneer days. This was perhaps the motive which inspired him during his maturing years to become an ardent student of early California history.

Also, Sylvester Pattle, the first American to reach California overland via what is now New Mexico and Arizona and who died in San Diego in 1828 while a prisoner of the Mexicans, was a great grandfather of Mr. Norris. With his background it was but a step from student to collector.

The Sacramento Book Club announces as its publication No. 6 "The Narrative of William Robinson Grimshaw."

In February, 1848, Grimshaw signed on as an ordinary seaman at New York on a vessel "under charter to the government to convey stores and supplies to the U.S. squadron on the Coast of California." Sailing around the Horn, he finally arrived at Monterey in August of 1848

Jumping ship at Monterey, he stowed away on the Anita, a naval vessel, and in time arrived at San Francisco. There he was fortunate enough to meet Sam Brannan, who offered him employment as a bookkeeper in his store at Sutter's Fort, which he accepted.

Visitors to the open house days at Casa Serrano each Friday, Saturday and Sunday, will see an early painting new to Casa Serrano although not new to the history and art association. The picture is a large oil by Henry Chenowerck, painted in 1880. It was presented in the 1930s, soon after the association was organized. It has been hanging in the Old Custom House since that time.

It was presented by Mrs. Charles W. Felton, San Francisco, widow of the late State Sen. Felton, for whom Felton Redwood Grove near Santa Cruz was named. In 1949 it was loaned to the San Diego Museum for a special centennial exhibit.