

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 27, 1964

Old-Time Dances

"Dances of Early California Days," by Lucille K. Czarnowski, has been presented by the author to the Monterey History and Art Assn. for its fast-growing and valuable collection of Californiana on the book shelves in Casa Serrano, association headquarters.

The book was first printed in 1950 by Pacific Books in Palo Alto, and has had wide coverage in the west. Not only are the dances described authentic and popular, but the list of Peninsula residents who assisted Miss Czarnowski, and to whom she gives full credit, is a long and impressive one.

Miss Czarnowski has been an associate supervisor of physical education at the University of California at Berkeley, where she taught dancing.

In the introduction the author thanks the late Louis Sanchez for the many letters of introduction to descendants of California pioneers, living mainly along the coastal area of California. Mr. Sanchez was born in Monterey, the son of Mrs. Nellie Van Der Grift Sanchez, who was the sister of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson.

Gratitude for assistance is also extended to Mrs. Mary L. Greene, former curator of the Old Custom House, and now a resident of San Miguel Allende, Mexico, and Mrs. Alfred Elkinton, former curator of the museum in the Pacific House.

Miss Czarnowski writes: "In Monterey and Pacific Grove I should especially like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Greeb, who gave generous assistance and supplied information and music on the Monterey Contradanza, the polka in jig time and a number of other dances; Mrs. Inez Harkless, who demonstrated for me La Cachucha, La Paloma, El Borrego, Pin Waltz, and discussed with me La Contradanza and La Varsouvianna."

Mrs. Marie Garcia (of the First Brick House) who performed for me many Spanish dances and described for me the cascarone balls in Monterey; Mrs. Florence Noon and her daughter, Miss Flora Noon, who danced with me La Varsouvianna, El Borrego, and told many interesting details about early days in Monterey; the late Mrs. Maria Antonia Bach Thompson, who showed old treasures of early days, among them dolls dressed in early California costumes; the late Mrs. Emma Ambrosio, who described dances which she saw

performed when a child; Mr. and Mrs. Tony Castro, who performed La Varsouvianna.

Others mentioned as giving information on social settings, dances and music of early California are Mr. Hugh Campbell and Mr. Harry Downie of Carmel and the late Miss Maria Antonia Field of Monterey.

Several paragraphs tell of early fiestas and cascarone balls. One reference is made to a graphic account of Juan Bautista Alvarado of the great celebration he witnessed in his youth in Monterey.

Walter Colton's account of some early festivals is also mentioned, including the Feast of Guadalupe at Monterey. Another is the Christmas drama, Los Pastores, as it was performed at midnight mass on Christmas Eve and on the following days, with actors going from house to house.