

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Historic Gifts

Ask any historical society official to help himself to any of the 19th Century objects and papers cluttering up your attic, and he will be in his element.

The detective in him springs to the surface as he shuffles through dusty merchandise. For attics and old homes are the chief supply sources of historical society possessions.

While a few societies can afford to bid for Gen. Sherman's coat button or a letter signed by Robert Louis Stevenson, they cannot bid high, and most cannot bid at all.

But the Monterey History and Art Ass. does not buy much, in order to save its funds to buy an historic building about to be destroyed or an historic item which should remain in Monterey.

The association has been most fortunate in having many kind and generous friends who have made gifts of books, pictures, paintings and even furniture of the correct period to assist in beautifying the adobes here, including the Old Custom House, Stevenson House, Pacific Building and last but not least the Casa Serrano, now the headquarters of the Monterey History and Art Assn. at 412 Pacific St.

Once these things are gone, they're gone. Sometimes things are saved when they are on their way to the junk yard or given to a rummage sale.

The Lynn (Mass.) Historical Society is currently on the lookout for material on the early shoemaking industry, because the town was once the largest manufacturer of women's shoes in the country.

Monterey should have, through the history and art association, a collection of items concerning the whaling industry and the whalers. The jewelry and ornaments the whalers made from the ivory tusks, etc., would be an addition to any of our buildings.

We have a whale gun with a spear attached In the Old Custom House display ad a tiny whale display and a tiny whale boat with miniature whalers and the correct setup of necessary equipment, which young and old alike study and enjoy. And where do you suppose we got it? In a gun shop in Paso Robles

The Monterey History and Art Assn. Is proud of the Oriental rugs in Casa Serrano, all given by friends to assist in making the association's adobe a delightful place to visit. I came across this story a long time ago in an old newspaper:

Each color in an Oriental rug has a significance. Green, the sacred color of Islam, stands for holiness, wisdom, learning; blue represents virtue, sincerity and truth; white stands for innocence and purity, except with the Chinese, who consider it the color of mourning; red is the color of happiness; orange is the color of patience; yellow is the color of joy and romance, and black represents evil except where used sparingly."

In Casa Serrano at present is an exhibit of antique colored glass in the cases in the library that lovers and collectors of old glass would enjoy. Many of the pieces are named, but there are other examples which need to be identified.

Mrs. Guernsey V. Nevius and Mrs. Margaret Hanna Lang have artistically arranged the exhibit and invite friends and members of the association to come to see it.

At present Casa Serrano is closed in preparation for the Merienda – the opening hours are from 1 until 4 o'clock Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The building will be reopened directly after the Merienda.

A new addition to displays in Casa Serrano is the guest register of the old Washington Hotel, a huge adobe building which stood on the corner of Washington and Pearl streets, built about 1834 and torn down in 1914-15. The book was on display at the Estrada adobe during the May Adobe House Tour.