

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 23, 1965

A Legend Of Old Chinatown

A delightful little book is now on sale in the various book shops on the Peninsula. Its title is "Chinatown, a Legend of Old Cannery Row" by Winston Elstob of Pacific Grove.

It is an unusual book in many ways telling the history and destruction of the old Chinese village which once occupied the land where the Hopkins Marine Laboratory now stands. The name of the village became China Point and beach. Not one trace remains of Monterey's Chinese fishing village.

The Monterey newspaper "The New Era," a weekly, on May 23, 1906, printed this item: "The firemen of Pacific Grove and the members of the New Monterey Hose Co. turned out when the alarm was given and made strong efforts to stay the flames. Their efforts were ineffectual because the only water available was a slight small stream played through a garden hose."

Dorsey and Joyce Alexander walked into the Polygon Bookshop on Cannery Row about one year ago and there met the author of "Chinatown, a Legend of Old Cannery Row." On their return to Berkeley they discussed the possibility of publishing a small hand-lettered account of this facet of California history. They had worked together previously on a hand-lettered, illustrated book, "Soil and Plant Analysis; A Practical Guide for the Home Gardener," published in 1964.

The publisher, Milton Morris Weiner, at the Condor's Sky Press, Orinda, Calif., wrote: "I feel that 'Chinatown: A Legend of Old Cannery Row,' which is the result of Winston Elstob's narrative and their work, justifies my agreement to publish. It is a happy privilege to publish this book to the memory of the friendly, industrious Chinese residents of Cannery Row."

"The Turtle's Quill Scriptorium," in Berkeley was the designer of the book. It was entirely "written out" by hand by Dorsey Alexander and illustrated with wash drawings by Joyce Alexander.

Miss Edythe Foster of San Rafael has presented to the library at Casa Serrano a gift book to be included in the book shelves being installed in the memory of the late Frank La Cauza, from his many friends through the United States. The books for the shelves will be historical California books.

The gift book is "The People of the Pueblo" by Celeste G. Murphy who autographed the copy to Miss Foster in 1938, soon after the printing in 1937. The foreword is written by Charmian Kittredge London at the Jack London Ranch, Glen Ellen, in the Valley of the Moon, Sonoma County, Calif. Mrs. London wrote: "I am affected by her graceful selection, for my inspiration of this remembered toast from one of Jack's books:

"Fill your glass and let us look at the parchments of dreamers of yesterday who dreamed their dreams on your own warm hills."

Mrs. Murphy suggests the fascinating contents of her book much better than I can, so I will quote from her first few lines of the chapter entitled "The Indian Vale": "A fascinating bit of California is this vale of seven moons, Sonoma Valley. Indian fastness, mission settlement, pueblo, presidio, and outpost of the northern frontier in California over which seven flags have flown and others dreamed of flying.

Spain's colonists and priests did not come here with Anza on that long trek across the sandy deserts from Mexico to Alta California. The good Father Serra was gathered to his fathers thirty-nine years before Sonoma's settlement. Sonoma was the last of all the missions, the farthest north."

"The People of the Pueblo" begins with the founding of the mission, followed by Vallejo, the colonizer; founding of the Pueblo in 1835; Alvarado becomes governor, Sonoma in 1841, history of the Bear Flag, Sonoma under American rule, Gold discovery, the question of state capital, muddled land grants and Jack London in the Sonoma Valley. Many names mentioned remind the readers of the close association of the history of Sonoma and that of Monterey.

Another historical book for the bookshelves of Casa Serrano in memory of the late Frank La Cauza, a member of the teaching staff at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, has been given by Margaret Hanna Lang. It is "Folded Hill," an historical story written by Stewart Edward White in 1932, in which he tells the dramatic history of the winning of California. With the long rifle, the story of Andy Burnett, the Yankee hidalgo, and his fiery young son Djo, White tells the dramatic history of the winning of California.