

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 13, 1966

Prepare for Anniversary

It was a happy thought that members of the Monterey Museum board had recently when they voted at this early date to begin to plan for the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Don Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra. at Monterey in 1770, to raise the flag and claim California for Spain, by making some very necessary repairs and a general cleanup of the historic building— Colton Hall.

In 1949 the city celebrated the Centennial of the 1849 Constitutional Convention. The upper story was restored, and the large room to what it was in 1849, and the museum board was set up by the city.

The members proceeded as quickly as possible to make a study of the arrangement of the room as reported by Walter Colton, Monterey's first alcalde, in his diary "Three Years in California." Colton built the hall financing it by fines collected from wrong doers.

Mrs. Guy Curtis was the chairman, and her collection of old-time furniture was placed in the hall and an authentic and dignified atmosphere was immediately acquired. Of course, since that time—seventeen years ago—many authentic pieces of furniture and books and documents have been given by interested friends.

In 1954 the Monterey History and Art Association Ltd., announced the purchase of the collection of old-time furniture from Mr. and Mrs. Curtis. The association loaned the Curtis collection to the City of Monterey to remain in Colton Hall.

Mrs. Curtis was a member of the Museum board and made an extensive study through historical channels of the period and use to which the hall was put in 1849, before placing any of the appointments which, the visitors see there today.

In the collection now owned by the History and. Art Association are four benches—a Boronda school bench and a meeting house bench from the Curtis collection, another bench given by Mrs., W. M. O'Donnell, two matching benches which were acquired a number of years ago. The Boronda bench came out of the old Casa Boronda, now the home of Dr. and Mrs. Mast Wolfson.

This adobe building is perhaps the oldest residence in Monterey. It was in this house that Manuel Boronda

opened the first boys' school in Monterey and it was then that the bench now in Colton Hall was used.

There is a charming old schoolmaster's desk and a small school desk of mellowed pine. The school master's desk holds the visitors' register and a pewter ink well that might have been created by Paul Revere—who knows?

Two small chairs acquired by Mrs. Curtis a long while ago from Mrs. Trinidad, a pioneer resident of Monterey, and from Harry Greene, also a pioneer of the old town, whose home still stands in New Monterey, opposite Scholtz Park.

There are two matching frames—one holding a steel engraving of the head of George Washington, hanging over the fireplace at the south end of the beautifully proportioned hall, and the other holding a copy of the Bill of Rights as composed by the 1849 convention held in Colton Hall. The fireplace contains a pair of antique andirons and a set of fireside tools and stand, which are in the collection. Among the other items acquired is a book "Fremont's Memoirs."

A small glass case which Mrs. Curtis was lucky enough to find in some out-of-way place, has on display a number of interesting items—an 1849 schoolbook with map written by Moore and a foreword by Walter Colton; two pair of antique spectacles, some Chinese matches and a small Bible.

The combination of all articles now on loan in Colton Hall from the Monterey History and Art Association are valued at more than \$700.