

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 24, 1966

Families Of China Beach

Many years ago, there was a colony of Chinese families living on China Beach below the Highlands on the coast. Not many residents of the Peninsula remember them, but many folks recall the wooden cabins which remained there for many years. All are gone now, but the beach will always be known as China Beach. The Chinese were fishermen.

The Monterey History and Art Association recently received a reminder of the colony and its residents in the form of a very beautiful wedding skirt from Mrs. Alfred Spinks of Jackson, Amador County, California, who most fortunately thought that the skirt should come back to Monterey in memory of one of the families who lived on China Beach.

With the skirt, Mrs. Spinks enclosed a note of presentation and a letter written on February 9, 1951 by Margery Tong, saying: "We were glad to hear that you are deriving so much pleasure from the wedding skirt and enjoying it with your friends." Mrs. Spinks' note stated: "I am afraid I will not be able to furnish too much additional information as to its history besides these facts: Phil's mother, Minnie Jone, wore it at her marriage to Sam Tong (born in Canton, China) in 1914 in San Francisco at the Chinese Methodist Church. She was born near Point Lobos as was her mother, the first Chinese child born in Monterey County, and her father, (Phil's great grandfather) as you recall, was of the party that crossed the Pacific Ocean in a junk."

The Phil mentioned must have been Margery Tong's husband, whose mother was also born in Monterey as were several of her eight children.

The skirt will be on display on Saturday and Sunday at the Casa Serrano where hostesses will be on duty from 1 until 4 o'clock in the afternoons. The public and members of the History and Art Association are invited to visit the Casa at that time.

There is also on display at Casa Serrano a very fine collection of antique glass paperweights, belonging to Mrs. Barry Jones of Pebble Beach and Mrs. Guernsey Nevius of Monterey.

Mrs. Oliver Watson, chairman of hostesses who staff the Casa Serrano each Saturday and Sunday afternoon, has announced the hostesses and substitutes for the

year: Mesdames G. V. Nevius, Josephine Fussell, Van Court Warren, Norman Downer, Elizabeth Hill, Gordon Hall, Donald Goodhue, Margaret Hanna Lang, R. C. Barkelew, Wilma Lazenby, E. M. Porter, D. R. Hall, Mary Elizabeth Thomsen, C. R. Spangler, Stewart Goode, Lealand Paul, Parker Fox, Andrew Beaumont and Frank La Cauza.

Another letter asking for information is from R. E. Doell of Mason, Texas.

"I have in my possession a small chest which was recovered after a flood here more than two years ago, in a pretty badly battered up condition. After finding that it was solid cherry, I restored it to very nearly the original condition. On the front was stenciled in black letters "No. —, Miss E. S. White, Presidio, California. I thought that you might be able to contact this young lady or relatives or descendants, as the case might be, and get some data for our museum.

"Some people who have seen it think that it is a museum piece, and I would like to loan it to our local library, providing I can secure information as to the date and origin. The chest is apparently handmade, and any information may be sent to the Peninsula Diary, Monterey Herald."