

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 1, 1967

### **Rare Volumes**

Early in 1947 the Monterey History and Art Association received a valuable collection of historical items from the late Mrs. Ann Burke of Ben Lomond in memory of her son, Francis Burke, a San Francisco attorney. Mr. Burke was very fond of the Monterey Peninsula and spent many vacations here roaming about the town, enjoying the Custom House, the waterfront and the old adobes.

During an inventory, for insurance purposes, these last few months, these precious things have again been brought to special attention.

Among the books sent by Mrs. Burke is Leiderdorff's "Log of the Julia Ann" which had Monterey as its port of call. It is a rare item from a collector's viewpoint. Leiderdorff served as U.S. Vice Consul by Larkin's appointment. His correspondence in those years, especially with Thomas Larkin, is a valuable source of historical information.

A second book is one written by Captain George H. Derby, U.S.A, who also wrote as John Phoenix, Esq., an early day humorist, from whom it is said that Mark Twain got his first idea of becoming a writer of humor. The book given by Mrs. Burke is "Phoenixiana" by John Phoenix, Esq.

It was presented to Major I. Snyder from his friend in San Francisco on April 25, 1856. It is a collection of sundry sketches, published in the newspapers and magazines of California, according to the 1856 publication date.

Another book sent with the above first edition was "John Phoenix, Esq., the Veritable' Squibob, the life of Captain George H. Derby U.S.A." by George H. Stewart Jr., published before 1847.

Captain Derby was once stationed at the Presidio of Monterey and was one of the actors at the First Theatre as he tells in letters of his adventures, of playing Romeo to relieve the tedium of the garrison duty.

In the collection in memory of Francis Burke, there is also a paper bound pamphlet of "The Topographical Reports of Lieutenant George H. Derby."

"Life, Adventures and Travels in California," in which are added "Conquest of California", printed in 1857 and

written by J. T. Farham is another rare book in this collection. This book speaks for itself but of interest to the Peninsula will be the account of his visit to Monterey and the Carmel Valley.

"Death Valley in '49" by William L. Manley is also a first edition, with the signature in at least two places of Theodore Kytka, early day handwriting expert, who figured in many early day trials in San Francisco. The book describes Monterey in 1849.

Put's "Golden Songster" by the author of Put's original "California Songster," is a small paper-bound published before 1849 and containing the words of the very old songs sung in California even before the gold rush.