

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Log of Julia Ann

Early in 1947 the Monterey History and Art Association received a valuable collection of historical items from 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 buildings that were then open to the public.

Then another package arrived from Mrs. Burke, who now resides in Menlo Park. It contained an even more valuable assortment of items than the first gift. A letter from Mrs. Burke expresses her appreciation of the manner in which memorial collection is exhibited at the Custom House and promises there will be other gifts to follow.

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

A second book is one written by Captain George H. Derby, USA who also wrote as John Phoenix, Esq., and 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. It was presented to Major I. Snyder from his friend in San Francisco on April 25, 1856.

It is a collection of sundry sketches, recently published in the newspapers and magazines of California, according to the 1856 publication data. Another book sent with the above first edition was "John Phoenix, Esq., the Veritable Sguibob, the Life of Captain George H. Derby—USA" by George H. Stewart Jr., published at a recent date.

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

There is also a paperbound pamphlet of "The Topographical Reports of Lieutenant George H. Derby.

"Life, Adventures and Travels in California," to which are added "Conquest of California," printed in 1857 and written by J.T. Farhan is another rare book in the collection. This book speaks for itself but of interest to the Peninsula will be the accounts of his visit to Monterey and the Carmel Valley.

"Death Valley in '49" by Williams L. Manley is also a first edition, with the signature in at least two places of Theodore Kytka, early day hand writing expert, who figured in many early day trails 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 book published before 1849 and containing the words of the very old songs sung in California even before the Gold Rush.