

Gracious Living of Past Centuries Comes to Life at Frank Church Home

BY MILDRED C. HUNT

Stepping across the threshold of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Church, of 251st St., Lomita, is like taking a sojourn into past centuries of time. Their home contains a collection of antique furniture, clocks, paintings and figurines.

Exterior of their home follows a ranch type design, which is built in an L shape, but once inside you are carried back to the days when dainty ladies in pastel gowns and powdered wigs with escorts in

satin, knee britches and broad-cloth coats, danced a graceful minuet. This picture occurs to you as you glance at the 1804, table top piano with its soft musical tones designed by John Broadway in London, England, more than a century and a half ago. It is an earlier model than the spinet.

Lending charm of atmosphere to the piano is a tall, 16th century, Italian cabinet covered with rich carvings of nymphs as well as old Spanish, hip chairs which can be folded up. These chairs carved from one piece of wood, are designed in half-barrel fashion and can be folded up much in the manner of closing a scissors. Hanging at eye level on the four walls of the room is an array of old clocks, the line broken only by grandfather clocks in quaint old, cabinet cases.

As though striking a serious note in the room replete with objects of gracious living of the past, stands a statue of an early Madonna between two, tall, carved wood candle sticks arranged in a corner of the room. Back of the statue which once occupied a place in a 18th century, Ecuador church, is a strip

of embossed purple velvet bearing an ecclesiastical pattern of that period. The three foot statue is mounted on what appears to be the head and horns of an animal, but Mrs. Church explained it represents the crescent of the moon.

Other rooms of the house beckon with their mute resemblance of by-gone days and as you walk around, you come to another living room bigger than the first one, filled with pieces of furniture withstanding centuries of use.

Catching your eye is a large walnut cabinet, hand carved in the pattern of folded linen which represents its use. Carved doors on both the top and bottom sections have locks which appear to be brass strips and are unlocked by sliding over one of the brass strips where the key is inserted. These secret locks appear on some of the early chests and cabinets. Keys to these cabinets are in themselves, works of art. Wrought iron in the color of pitch black, the top of the key is designed in a lacy pattern.

At one end of this room is a large fireplace built to match the antique furniture. Over it on a rack which can be extended out from the mantel top, hangs large brass spoons used for stirring food cooking in the old iron kettles during the 17th and 18th centuries. Also hanging on the rack is a brass cylinder which is wound up like a clock making it rotate when hanging over the fire for cooking large pieces of meat which can be hung from a bar attached to the bottom of the roaster.

Also lining the room are quaint china cabinets and bookcases. One of the chairs is what is called the "throne chair," a high backed walnut wood frame, the back and seat covered with dark leather fastened by buttons pegs the size of a half dollar.

lar. This chair was used by the lord and master of the house and not for royalty as its name implies. Looking at the impressive chair, you can almost picture the man of the house coming home seating himself in the chair and after kicking off his long, leather boots, calling for a mug of ale to revive his tired body.

Hanging close to the fireplace is a picture frame holding a sheet of music on which large notes are penned in black ink. Name of the music is the "Griego" and the notes are written on four line scores as was the custom in the early days.

The only modern furniture in the room are a red, overstuffed sofa and chair along with a low table beside one of the hand carved cabinets. Glancing away from the grandeur of the antiques to the square lines of the television set, you almost sense that the modern set is apologizing for its plainness and brazen glass front.

To the left of this room is the bedroom which is a contrast in early American furniture. A four-poster bed which is a copy of the Sheraton Tester bed of the 18th century, occupies a favored place. Rarest piece in the room is a 7 foot, 9 inch original high boy of mahogany wood. It was made in Philadelphia sometime between 1730 and 1760 and has the original handles which are set on a design resembling large leaves. It took the Churches 26 years to find this rare piece which has only one duplicate and that is a museum piece. Building high boys of mahogany wood in those days was unusual.

Deviating from the early American theme are several old pieces of Spanish origin. At the foot of the bed is a carved wood chest called the "Bridal Chest" which was used in the old days by fair maidens preparing articles for their future homes. The heavy lid is held open by lifting a smaller lid at one end of the chest. Another interesting piece is a small chest designed to hold the Holy Bible but sometimes used to store away old letters.

One of Mrs. Church's hobbies is weaving and she has several looms which occupies an entire room. Her most recent work is fashioning a pall for St. Andrew's Episcopal Church of Torrance. It is woven of purple wool with an orchid colored cross in the center. The pall will be used at funerals held in the church and is an old custom of the Episcopal church. It signifies that the soul, not the body, is to be remembered.

Mrs. Church entertained members of the Centinela Antiquarian Club Monday at her home. Each year they gather at the Church home, although Mrs. Church is not a member of their group. This year a picnic in the spacious grounds was a prelude to the meeting.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Church have been collecting antiques for the past 29 years. They started with a set of figurines which they later gave to a relative. Since that time, they have acquired a house full of some of the most outstanding pieces in the country. Their latest is a water clock, which is operated by pouring water into a large brass cylinder in the center of the wall clock. A twenty-



LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL . . . and it is proven by Mrs. Frank Church, who is not only an antique enthusiast, but has woven many interesting hours into her life. At the left, she is shown at the loom on which she made this beautiful pall, a gift for St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. At the right Mrs. Church is seated near an exquisite, early American highboy, one of the



rarest items in her large antique collection. The coverlet she is holding is more than 100 years old. It was woven on a handloom and was colored with homemade indigo dye. In the lower corner of the picture is a part of a hand carved, old Spanish bridal chest.

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Catholic Daughters Chairmen For Coming Year Are Named

New chairmen for the year gave their first reports at a formal dinner meeting held at Catholic Women's Club in Los Angeles. Attending were Mmes. John F. Gitschier, J. J. MacDonald, Lyle J. O'Hara, and Robert Lewellen, Jr.

Beau Jardin Club Meets

Mrs. Naomi Hayes was hostess to the Beau Jardin Garden Club at its regular semi-monthly meeting Wednesday, July 13.

HUGE RUMMAGE SALE AUG. 26, 27

Women's Auxiliary of the St. Andrew's Episcopal church are planning a mammoth rummage sale to be held in the downtown area of Torrance on Aug. 26 and 27. The sale is being directed by Mrs. Ralph Sprout.

MAUKS OFF ON MONTH'S TRIP

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Mauk, 1218 Acacia Ave. will leave July 29 by plane for Mexico City. From there they will fly to New Orleans for several days and then to New York for a week. They will be met in New York by their daughter, Donna Mauk, stewardess with TWA.

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Fuchsia Unit Has Election New Officers

New officers were elected at the meeting of the Lomita Fuchsia and Garden Society July 15 at the American Legion Hall.

Elect New Officers for Iris Society

Mrs. Elsa F. Stone of Torrance was re-elected president of the California Iris Society at a meeting held Wednesday at the Redondo Community Center.

STUDENTS IN RECITAL

A piano recital was held Tuesday, July 12, by students of the Lee Walker Warf studios.

NOBLE GRANDS

Past Noble Grands of the Trio Rebekahs will meet at the home of the president, Mrs. Bertha Fern, 1320 Acacia on Monday, July 25.

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