

San Diego Union

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 8, 1970



Hans K. Lindemann, owner of the Museum of American Treasures at 1315 Fourth Ave., National City, demonstrates that antique bell in front of his museum is still in working order and ringing.

IN NATIONAL CITY

Museum Holds Loved Treasures

By JERRY REEVES

NATIONAL CITY — Craftsmanship, a word of relatively little meaning in a mass-production society, is a magic word which opens the door to the Museum of American Treasures and the heart of its owner Hans K. Lindemann.

Lindemann, now 72, has devoted his life to his one-man museum which stands quietly on a tree-lined street at 1315 E. Fourth St. Off the beaten path, the museum's single qualification for an antique, a photo or a collection of carved elephant tusks is craftsmanship.

NEW BRONZES

The brown frame building contains a treasure-house full of historical items which range from 100 million years old to a recent memorial to deceased member of the USS Pueblo crew.

Lindemann likens his museum to the family he never had and estimates it contains half a million dollars in treasures. He said he spends \$5,000 annually to update his collections and make it even more appealing.

Among his newest additions

are some bronze busts including one of Queen Victoria, a dignified-looking gentleman from the early 1900s called the "unknown personality," and a bust of a woman cast in France 150 years ago.

Other additions are an animal kingdom, a painting from butterfly wings, buffalo horn utensils and hand-crafted animals from Mexico. Lindemann has arranged his collection in new cabinetry and installed red curtains to show off the rows of marble busts which line one of the corridors.

His favorite is a bust of Princess Piccarda, a 330-year old sculpture from central Italy. He estimates the value of his princess at \$20,000. "If I were to find her in Italy today," he says, "the Italian government would not let me take her out of the country."

A new addition to the museum is a Reginaphone, about 100 years old, which plays music from a metal disc which looks like a round IBM card. He says this was used in turn-of-the-century United States.

SHELL CASINGS

Admitting his partiality to

sculpture, he also admires his collection of shell casings. He proudly points to the fine engraving on a 75 mm shell manufactured by General Motors in 1917. He also takes pride in his 300 mm casing left over from World War I. He said it is one of the war's few survivors.

A recent addition is a mistake, but it is likely to be an historical mistake. Lindemann said a memorial was planned for the grave of Duane D. Hodges, USN, who died in the USS Pueblo seizure. "Unfortunately," he said, "they forgot to put his date of birth or the day he died on the memorial. It was discarded."

Lindemann estimated there are 12,000 single pieces in his museum which include intricate items from the Orient, Ecuador, Alaska, Peru, France and practically every country in the world.

The museum owner said all the items have a single thing in common and that is craftsmanship. He inspects each item as if it were the first time he saw it and says, "Look at the work that went into that. It must have taken years."

Lindemann, who celebrated the museum's 16th anniversary in September, has willed his museum to National City.

Frank Rhoades

I BECAME CONCERNED when I learned that Hans Lindemann, the cold foods chef at Lubach's, had retired.

It was no big surprise; he had worked past his 82nd birthday. But what would become of his beloved private museum, the Museum of American Treasures in National City?

Would the art works he had spent his life and earnings collecting be affected, perhaps closed at last, by his retirement?

I went to see him and found my sly old friend had pulled the unexpected.

I knew all about the sacrifices and the drudgery that had gone into assembling a houseful of bronze and marble statues, giant ivory carvings and a conglomeration of Americana.

And he has taken such joy in finding a prize and buying it at a bargain price.

When I was visiting him and his bride, he placed a loving hand on a life-sized bronze bust and said: "This is President Taft. I bought it for \$500. It's worth \$20,000."

Hans served in the German army in World War I, an artilleryman. Then he put up an apprenticeship in the Black Forest as a "culinary artist." (That's his term.)

Hitlerism was repugnant to Hans and he came to the United States in 1936. He came to San Diego because his brother Ernest was an architect here.

Ray Lubach remembers Hans from 1938. Ray was assistant manager of the Bel Air County Club and Hans was there, making the fancy desserts.

LINDEMANN WORKED at Lubach's here 23 of the restaurant's 25 years.

So the customers miss him standing behind the plate glass that separates the seafood counter from the dining room, standing majestically straight in his white jacket and chef's hat.

(Hans slipped little plates of seafood appetizers to favorite customers, making the delivery to their tables himself. No charge. I'm sure Ray Lubach never knew about that.)

Shirley Fulks Lindemann is aware of the extent to which her bridegroom traveled and plunged himself into debt assembling his incredible collection.

"At one time, he had seven bank notes going," she said during my visit.

Quoting again from the column of Jan. 31, 1967: "Now, at age 69, Lindemann finds himself living in a closet-size room in the museum, cooking himself one meal a day and wearing second-hand clothes. But, at the same time, he has the things he wants most. He lives to be surrounded by man-made beauty."

The museum is a converted house at 1315 East Fourth St., National City. Hans owns it and the houses on either side of it. He and his wife occupy one of the houses.

LINDEMANN ONCE offered to make National City a gift of the museum but he and the city government could not come to terms.

Hans said shamefully the other day: "They wanted to store the collection and sell pieces at will."

So what will become of the museum now that Hans has retired.

"We will continue to operate it," said Mrs. Lindemann, "opening it to groups by appointment."

All through the years, visitors were charged no admission. Near the door was a collection box to receive a donation if a visitor cared to make one but he never was asked to do so.

Hans still is a little wobbly from a winter illness, which, it is believed, was a chief factor in his deciding to retire.

His bride is aware of their age difference and is, at the same time, a realist. She said during my visit: "I'll have to sell some of the (museum) pieces when the time comes to pay the inheritance tax."



The San Diego Union/Carol Woods

Hans Lindemann

What Hans did a couple of days after his retirement in March should not have surprised me either. It was just that I did no reasoning.

For years Hans had needed a wife and now, in retirement, he had quietly married Mrs. Shirley Fulks, an attractive, middle-aged blonde, a National City native.

A review of old columns I had written explained my surprise.

FROM THE COLUMN of Jan. 31, 1967: "I asked Hans Lindemann if he ever had been married and he said, 'I've never even been kissed.'"

But Hans has not gone through life without loving. He has been dominated by his devotion to art and anything American, anything he could display.

