

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Ferdinand Burgdorff is back in his Pebble Beach studio after a motor trip through Southern California. Mr. Burgdorff is one of the oldest, in point of time as a resident of the Peninsula, of the many artists now residing here. He was among the three or four artists who first discovered Carmel as a potential artists colony and was the first to build a studio in Pebble Beach. He came to the Peninsula in 1908, after a leisurely trip across the continent from his family home in Cleveland, Ohio, stopping for several weeks in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Indian country, and in Palm Springs, California, in route to Monterey. He is a charter member of the Carmel Art Association, was for many years a working member of the board of directors, and is still an active member.

In a recent conversation, Mr. Burgdorff had the following to say about his visit in the southland:

"Yes, I was down in Palm Springs last week. I go down there every once in awhile just to get the feel of that part of the desert, just to recall the days when Palm Springs was only a small spot in a real desert. The last time I was down there was in 1932, when it was still an up and coming desert town, but now it is more like a bit of Hollywood.

"The first time I was in Palm Springs," he continued, "was in 1908 – yes, 40 years ago – when there was only one road and only about three adobe houses. At that time I stayed in one of those adobe houses on Indian Road. On one side of the house there was only the dry wash, on the other side the mountain. At the base of the mountain was an orange grove, watered by water from the stream of clear snow water.

"Along side that little stream," said Mr. Burgdorff, "which, by the way, ran right across the road, there was a miner camped with his burro and pack outfit.

"That orange grove was where Mrs. Coffman built her fabulous Desert Inn, and where the miner camped, at the stream, is a corner of the Desert Inn property, where now there is a gift shop. In 1908 there were no paved roads or lights; now there are boulevards through the town."

Mr. Burgdorff says that the present main street, Palm Drive, in its early days was a burro trail. Now it is distinguished amongst the city streets because it has a

mile of palm tree on both sides of the road. These are the big Washington palms, which every morning get a drink from a faucet at the bases. In as short time they will be hosts to electric lights to light the roadway. Now the store fronts do this lighting.

Where there were only cactus and greasewood a few years ago, according to this artist, there are now modern apartments and motels. well planned and attractive," And over across the dry wash on the slopes that reach toward the mountains, where I used to paint cactus and palms," he continued, "there is a village spread out as big as Carmel.

"The lure of Palm Springs has worked upon the visitors and residents, a charm – the charm of smiling. They smile because they are glad to be in this surprisingly beautiful and healthful spot, glad to be away from the cold of the East, the smog of Los Angeles, the traffic – glad to be alive."

But Mr. Burgdorff settled in Pebble Beach, and still says he is happy to be right here on the Monterey Peninsula.

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In July, 1846, Monterey was taken by a squadron of the U. S. Navy, in the war with Mexico, and Rev. Walter Colton, a navy chaplain, a writer and lecturer, was appointed the alcalde of the town. This enterprising clergyman found the old Zamorano press, on which was printed the first and rarest of California imprints, and put it to work again. With Robert Semple, who later became chairman of the Constitutional Convention, aiding in its preparation, the first issue of the Californian appeared at Monterey on August 15, 1848. The small sheet of eight and one half inches by twelve and one half inches, printed on odds and ends of paper as could be found, made the authentic start of the newspaper press in California. The type was the same that Zamorano had used. By aid of the translator Hartnell, a portion of the paper was printed in Spanish. There were terrible mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar.