

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 31, 1950

Garden Club History

The Monterey Peninsula had a garden club in 1922, according to the minute book presented to this column by Miss Emma Perry, secretary of the group. First meeting was called in the Monterey Chamber of Commerce rooms on November 22, 1922, by Allen Griffin. Mrs. Jane C. Todd was unanimously elected president, Harry A. Greene, honorary president; and Miss Perry, secretary.

The object of the club was "to take not only an active interest, but an active part, in planting, forwarding civic and neighborhood improvement in which flowers, shrubs and trees would be planted and cared for. A yearly payment of 25 cents per member was decided upon and school children will be given a junior membership free of dues."

Mrs. Will Jacks, Monterey; Miss Helen Parks, Carmel, and Mrs. J.A. Pell, Pacific Grove, with the officers of the club, constituted the executive committee.

At the next meeting of the group held on November 28, the by-laws were adopted and the name of the club became the "Outdoor Circle." The organization provided for the division of the Monterey Peninsula and adjoining communities into groups, and within the groups "neighborhood circles." Mr. Harry A. Greene was one of the most interested members and the speaker at the December meeting.

At a very early meeting the Circle took up the problem of billboards and determined to wage war upon the unsightly boards along the highways of the state. Brought to the attention of the members at the first meeting in 1923, was the lack of any planting around the S.P. Depot and it was decided that a letter should be sent to the officials of the company asking them if some action could be taken to beautify the building and grounds.

Mr. Greene, at the same meeting spoke of the way in which Berthold Park (located in Colton Hall grounds) had been neglected. Mrs. Will Jacks, Mrs. Pell of Pacific Grove and Miss Ethel Berkman of the Highlands were appointed on a committee to war on the billboards.

In April of 1923, the Circle held its first flower show in the lounge at Del Monte Hotel. Among the exhibitors of wild flowers from the Corral de Tierra were Mr. and

Mrs. Claude Engles, Mr. and Mrs. D. Leibrandt, Violet Smart, Janette and Del Large.

Dr. Walter K. Fisher of the Hopkins Marine Station won the first prize for the best collection of iris. Mrs. de Forest, second prize, for an exhibit of Spanish yellow iris. Miss Emma Perry first prize for a collection of roses; Mrs. Milton Withers second, for a bowl of pansies, and Mrs. William TenEyck, an exhibit of pelargoniums. Mrs. R.D. Olmsted, Mrs. William Dale and Mrs. William Orchard and Tom Lee, were other prize winners.

At a June meeting of the Circle Gouverneur Morris, noted author who resided for many years in the Castro adobe, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Work, was the speaker and he offered a prize of \$100 for the best flower garden produced within a year on the Peninsula. The offer was accepted with thanks by the organization. A representative of one of the largest outdoor advertising agencies attended the meeting and was allowed to speak briefly.

Charger members of the Outdoor Circle were Mrs. E. Briggs, Mrs. F.A. Edwards, Mrs. H. Futterer, Miss G. Hamilton, Mrs. J.C. Anthony, Mrs. W. Orchard, Mrs. F. Grantham, Mrs. J.A. Pell, Mrs. J.C. Todd, Miss E. Perry, Mrs. M. McCormack, Mrs. E.B. Lewis, Mrs. R.A. Rhodes, Mrs. E.G. Morrison, Mrs. W. Olmstead, Mrs. M.E. Scholer, Mrs. G.A. Millar, Mrs. E.J. Hearn, Mrs. H. McLaughlin, Mrs. A.F. Lafler, Mrs. H. McLeroth, Miss Juanita Todd, C.A. Briggs, M.E. White, W.E. Kirchhoff St., F.E. Grantham, Harry A. Greene, W. Orchard, and Allen Griffin.

The last minutes in the book were written on March 12, 1924. At that date Miss Maria Antonia Bach (Mrs. Thompson) was the corresponding secretary, and Mrs. William Fiddes, who later became Mayor of Pacific Grove and president of the Monterey Peninsula Garden Club, was active in the Outdoor Circle.

On the above date there were 215 members, including residents of Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Seaside, Salinas, Carmel Highlands, Hollister, San Francisco and Pebble Beach.