

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 28, 1951

### **Symbols of Living History**

Dr. Aubrey Neasham, regional historian of the National Park Service stated in his talk to the conference of curators that there is a nationwide historical program being carried out and that California is a very important part of that overall picture. He sketched the movement from the early beginning and told of one very interesting program going on in the State of Washington in the way of historical restoration, part of the funds being derived from drivers' license fees.

The Oregon Historical Society is carrying on a program of preservation in that state. Dr. Neasham is going to Alaska for the National Park Service to list important historical sites and encourage the preservation and interpretation of those sites.

What we do is a large part of the larger movement on the Pacific Coast stated Dr. Neasham, and in the nation as a whole. Local effort is also being put forth to save history. This idea, even moves on an international basis – the United Nations is studying it at the present time. Every national government is also studying how to save their historic tradition in times of war. No one group can do it all. We must constantly promote a feeling of cooperation.

Dr. Neasham named a few outstanding principles to be stressed. Most important in California is the acquisition of outstanding sites, and their preservation. The second important principle is one of development. These problems should be subordinate to the historic value.

One very vital thing declared Dr. Neasham, the importance of land is often overlooked – a buffer area of protection. There should always be a strip of land around a historic site. Zoning the setting is important from an interpretative point of view."

The third principle is one of interpretation telling the monument's story. Dr. Neasham complimented the arrangement of the Stevenson House. A monument should be furnished as in the day of its historical importance.

Dr. Neasham urged the curators to become aware of the great obligation placed upon each and every one as historical curators – to be aware of what is going on around them that may destroy the historical setting which is so important. He stressed again the

preservation of the historical sights and warned them against the destructive forces which are trying to tear down our American way of life. As living symbols he said if properly interpreted, these historical sites are very important in that way of life, symbols which point out what has happened in the past.

What we are today we owe to those who came before us, and these are symbols of living history. We have a great obligation to pass them on to the future so they will appreciate and realize the importance of the American way of life. Curators have an inspiring work and if you do your part countless people will thank you for it, concluded Dr. Neasham.

Following his address, Dr. Neasham showed a series of views of National Park historic sites, a program which we hope to bring to Monterey and show for members of the Monterey History and Art Association in the near future.

At the last meeting of the Board of Directors of the Monterey History and Art Association the following gifts were acknowledged and letters of appreciation ordered sent to the donors; two booklets, Historic Monterey and Surroundings with map of Withers addition, 1906, and Monterey County illustrated presented by Charles W. Kolb. One old silver Spanish peso, dug up near Carmel Mission presented by Robert W. Van Garrick, one book Memoir of the Life and Public Services of John Charles Fremont by John Bigelow (1858) gift of E. W. Wheeler of Seattle, Washington.