

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The State Park System

The annual report of the California State Park Commission to the Honorable Earl Warren Governor, State of California, for the year 1949-1950 has just been received. It is interesting to note the number of references made in this 89-page bulletin, to the Monterey Peninsula and its State Parks and Monuments. J. R. Knowland, chairman, State Park Commission of California, and J.H. Covington, executive secretary, submitted the report, which was signed by the following members: Leo Carrillo, Santa Monica; Charles Kasch, Ukiah; George A. Scott, San Diego, and George Waldner, Ferndale.

The report summarizes the progress within the development of the California State Park System during the period mentioned – July 1, 1949 to July 1, 1950.

It states that existing laws provide for the administration of the State Park System by the State Park Commission, which shall consist of five members appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate to serve for four years. They shall be selected because of their interest in park and conservation matters and serve without compensation, except their necessary travel expenses and other actual expenses, incidental to their offices. The State Parks Commission shall administer and protect and develop the State Park System for the use and enjoyment of the public, according to the report.

It is stated, "California now has one of the finest systems of State Parks in the United States, included are lake and lagoon parks, arboretums, river and waterfall parks, sand beaches, desert parks, mountain parks, rocky coast parks and historic monuments, all contributing to a well balanced State Parks system.

Pfeiffer Big Sur Park is mentioned as one of the organization camps in a few of the parks. The Boy and Girl Scouts have camps there. This park also has lodge and cottage and camping accommodations.

The Commission, in its continuing recognition of the history of this great state, has acquired during the year the Benicia State Capitol as an historical monument, also the Petaluma Adobe, the former estate of General Vallejo in Sonoma County. These in addition to those already acquired, such as the gold discovery site, the

town of Columbia, Old Shasta, Sonoma Mission, the Old Custom House, the First Theater, Casa de Oro, Stevenson House and Serra Landing Place at Monterey; the Pio Pico home and Fort Tejon in Southern California, all of which will be maintained and preserved for future generations,

The program of registering and marking historical landmarks will continue as started by the Centennial Commission, by the Parks Commission. The base or monuments to be provided by the community and the suitable marker by the commission

First on the list of state-owned parks in the south central district is Pajaro River Beach State Park, near Moss Landing, an undeveloped beach area open to the public. The Old Custom House, Monterey is described as an area of 1.41 acres. During the year termite treatment was undertaken in the attic and roof, a chair rail was installed in the upper north room, two new cases for guns and china were installed and the grounds improved. It is expected that the entire exterior of the building be replastered during the next year. The report reads "Attendance was 31,819 for the year, an increase of 1,726 over the previous year.

The Stevenson House has an [?] tenths of an acre and had an attendance of 21,121 or an increase of nearly 300% over the previous year. The plan for this building establishes the second floor of the main building as a "historic house museum," with the first floor to be devoted to exhibits in cases. In a "house museum" atmosphere. Several improvements are listed for the future.

The Casa de Oro, the report proposes, will be restored to its former character, when it is vacated, and converted into a public museum.

California's First Theater which occupies .25 acres on Pacific street, corner of Scott, has had many improvements. A residence was built for the curator, the old Jack Swan adobe was built and treated with weather-proofing, a stone wall and a fence was built, brick sidewalk laid on Scott street, and the restoration of one room where costumes and props of early California theater are displayed. The attendance was 50,987, a total of 1,674 over the previous year.

Point Lobos Reserve State Park, 354 acres, enjoyed many needed improvements. The attendance was 87,506 in 1948-1949 and 92,285 in 1949-1950. Pfeiffer Big Sur Park had an attendance of 176,156. The

seasonal attendance last summer was reported as the largest in the history of the park.