

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 17, 1951

### **Restored With Restraint**

Under the title "Chiefly Speaking" Newton D. Drury, chief of the California State Park Commission had the following to say in "News and Views" (Division of Beaches and Parks publication): "Renewal of old associations at Monterey this last month was a profitable, as well as a pleasant experience. The Merienda or birthday party, of the City of Monterey (its 181<sup>st</sup>) was held in Memory Garden of the Old Pacific Building, and was a colorful affair.

"I was able to say to the History and Art association and their guests with all sincerity, that Monterey seemed to me to be in the forefront among the communities in America that had been successful in preserving many historic buildings and, equally important, much of the charm and atmosphere of the earlier day.

"With District Superintendent Lee Blaisdell and Assistant Superintendent Jess Chaffee, our splendid group of Monuments in Monterey were visited – the Custom House, First Theatre and Stevenson House. This is as fine a group of historic buildings as any state can boast. Our custody of them has enhanced their value to the people of the state of California, and I was glad to say this to Mrs. Greene, Mrs. Hartigan and Mrs. Kneass and others responsible. Year after year the museum exhibits in these buildings, through research and intelligent selection, are becoming simpler and unified in telling the story appropriate to each site.

"An increasing number of states and communities have come to realize the importance of preserving reminders of their past, and I think of many, such as the old French Quarters in New Orleans, the early capitols in Little Rock, Ark.; and Newcastle, Delaware, just to name few at random.

From Monterey Mr. Drury went to San Juan Bautista Historical Monument. He named it "another example of an eloquent re-creation of the atmosphere of a sleepy old town and plaza of the Spanish and Mexican regimes, with the Plaza Hotel and the gay nineties' livery stable as a further page in our historical past.

"The Castro Adobe, restored with restraint, is undoubtedly one of the most perfect examples of early California architecture, besides having unquestioned symmetry and charm, it is authentic. In contemplating

it, as well as other historic buildings in our system, and our future policy with respect to them, it is well to bear in mind the dictum of the historians of the National Park Service:

It is better to preserve than repair;

It is better to repair than restore;

It is better to restore than to reconstruct."

California's First Theater has just received from Frank Gilbert of Pacific Grove an old leather wallet in which is a piece of Confederate money and a single piece of old theater money.

In 1902 Mr. Gilbert was in the old theater wandering around out of interest in the old building. At that time part of the roof had fallen and the entire building was in very poor condition. As he continued to investigate the construction and materials used in the structure, he came across the old wallet under the rafters and has now returned it to be exhibited at the Theatre.

Mr. Gilbert declared that he tried to spend the money but soon found out that Confederate money was no longer of any value. The Confederate bill is for \$5. It was printed in Richmond, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1864, and bears the number 43540 written in ink also the notation: "Issued two years after ratification of peace between Confederate States by the United States; engraved by Keating and Hall, Columbia, South Carolina for the Treasurer."

The Theatre money bears the date May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1869. Theatre Comique, Northwest corner Pine and Kearney Streets, John Pacheco & Co. mgr. The Original Can-Can! Our Lady High-Kickers. Our Company: Tom Macklin, Harry Conley, Tommy Morris, Charley Fremont, Nellie Lamont, Leona Morris, Nina Zane and Jose Mayfield. Mr. Al Cohen, leader of the orchestra, Charles Fremont, stage manager."

Mr. Gilbert is sure that this company played in Monterey for the time he found the billfold there were other papers in it telling of the various plays, and he believes the Theater Comique sent the above troop to Monterey.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Levinger of San Jose have given to Mrs. Isabel Hartigan, curator at the theater, a very old copy of Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," with original illustrations by George Cruikshank, famous English artist. The copy is a special theater edition. This story is now a hundred years old and was first published in the "National Era."