

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 20, 1952

The Curators Hold A Conference

The Western Museums Conference met on Oct. 10 and 11 at the Los Angeles County Museum in Los Angeles. Attending from the Monterey Peninsula were Mrs. Greene, curator of the Old Custom House; Mrs. Isabel Hartigan, First Theater curator; Mrs. William Kneass, curator of the Stevenson House; Mrs. William M. O'Donnell, secretary of the History and Art Association; Dr. R.E. Maxwell, of the board of directors of the Pacific Grove Museum, and Bertrum Henshaw, curator of that museum. Dr. Maxwell was elected a member of the Council of Western Museums at this annual meeting of the Conference.

Dr. Hildegard Howard, chief curator of the Division of Science of the southern county's museum, the president for 1952 of the western group, presided at the meetings. On the program were educational discussions and panels, guided tours of museums, California State Exposition exhibits, open house was held in the museum offices and laboratories.

Newspaper coverage of museum activities was the special topic on the first day of the conference and the discussion was led by Kenneth Ross, director of Municipal Art Gallery of Los Angeles. Other topics discussed were television in museums; friends of the museums, people, a resource, and school class visits.

Dr. Robert C. Miller, director of the California Academy of Sciences of San Francisco, presided over an inter-museum relations panel in the afternoon. Later the 100 or more delegates were taken on a tour of the State Exposition exhibits at Exposition Park. The exhibit has not yet been opened for public inspection, since the state-owned building in which it is displayed has just recently been remodeled. Those in attendance seemed to be of the opinion that it was an exhibit of "color in design" or commercial art in museums, so unusual was the manner in which the agriculture and resources of California were displayed. To some it was pleasing, to others it was a controversial subject, but the latter admitted it was interesting for at least one visit. The cost of the entire project was \$150,000, according to Norman Bilderback, supervisor of exhibits.

Following this tour of Los Angeles County Museum board of governors entertained their members and

guests at a reception in the Exposition building. That evening the entire assemblage enjoyed dinner together at La Golondrina Café on Olivera [Olvera] Street, a typical Mexican restaurant opposite the Plaza, where Mexican food and a pleasing program of Mexican and Spanish music was presented.

Saturday morning the annual election of officers was held. Doerr Yaeger, historian for California of the National Park System, was chosen as president; Charles F. Gehring of the Los Angeles County Museum, vice president; Mrs. Alice Mulford, curator Oakland Public Museum, secretary; John Ripley Forbes, director California Junior Museum, Sacramento; Clark C. Evernham, managing director San Diego Museum of Man, and Dr. Maxwell, council member.

Sam Hinton, curator of the Aquarium Museum, Scripps Institute of Oceanography at La Jolla, presented a panel, illustrated by slides, on "Museum Exhibits by Outside Talent" and "Maps for Museum Display."

Guides were provided in the afternoon for a complete tour of the Los Angeles County Museum, which included all four floors and the basement where the heating and ventilation system and the fumigation department were of interest to many. Considered most interesting by many delegates was the California exhibit where director Dr. Arthur Woodward was host. The Peninsula delegation was especially pleased with a diorama of the Old Custom House and Spanish and Mexican citizens enjoying a fiesta with newly arrived Americans.

Later in the afternoon buses picked up the entire group and took us off to the Southwest Museum and the Casa de Adobe. Refreshments were served in the latter building which is a splendid replica of an old Spanish hacienda.