

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **More Adventures in The South**

Last week we attended the Western Museum's Conference in Los Angeles. Two years ago this month the same group was entertained in Monterey by the Monterey city museum board and the Monterey History and Art Association, both organizations being members of the American Museums Association of which the Western group are associates.

We motored to the southern city by way of Santa Lucia in southern Monterey County, and across the pass to Coalinga and Hanford, then on to Bakersfield by way of Highway 99. We paused to read a marker at the side of the road just west of Tulare Lake, placed there by the California Centennial Commission marking the site of "Arroyo de Cantua" and telling in brief the story of the capture and killing of the notorious bandit, Joaquin Murrieta, killed at the spot on July 25, 1853, by Capt. Harry S. Love, leader of a ranger company organized for the purpose of apprehending him.

When we arrived in Bakersfield we were shocked at the results of the recent earthquake. Building after building is undergoing repair, and the work of cleaning up debris is still going on. Some owners had been fortunate enough to procure carpenters, contractors or general workmen at once, while others were forced to wait their turn. "No admittance" signs were frequent but business as usual seemed to be going on. City and county officials have their offices in army tents surrounding the court house.

The outstanding visits we made while in Los Angeles were to a number of the best museums in the state. The Charles W. Bowers Memorial Museum in Santa Ana is owned by the city; Will Rogers State Park is owned by the state of California and operated under the Division of Beaches and Parks. The Griffith Observatory and Planetarium is operated under the Department of Recreation and Parks, City of Los Angeles. The California State Exposition is also state owned and operated, but the Southwest Museum is operated under an endowment fund with a board of directors and an extensive professional staff. Casa de Adobe had its inception in 1914 when a Hispanic Society of California was conceived by the late Henry W. O'Melveny. The Los Angeles County Museum is owned by the county and

assisted by the Los Angeles County Museum Association.

The casual reader might think, after reading the impressive, lengthy list above, that one would be bored after three days of such sight-seeing, but each building was so entirely different from the others and the displays so varied and well arranged that the time was too short to see and absorb it all.

We were especially interested in visiting Will Rogers State Park, because we had paid a visit to the memorial in Oklahoma just one short month ago. This park is one of more than 80 state-owned parks, beaches and historical monuments operated by the California Division of Beaches and Parks. It is a memorial to the late beloved American humorist, Will Rogers, who died Aug. 15, 1935, in an airplane crash in Alaska.

The 186 acres in the park form the heart of the former Will Rogers ranch. He lived here for many years with his wife and three children – Will Jr., Mary and James. On August 19, 1944, the area was formally presented to the state of California by the Rogers family and dedicated as a unit of the State Park System.

Included in the gift were the home buildings furnished completely with the Rogers furniture, art objects, souvenirs and mementoes collected by or given to Will Rogers during his lifetime. The area surrounding the home is highly landscaped and so located as to give a prominent view of the surrounding country and the Pacific ocean. The grass-covered polo field lies to the front and left as the visitor approaches the house. The garden is beautiful and well kept, with fuchsias and begonias most prominent in the plantings.