

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Will Rogers' Ranch, Pio Pico's Adobe

The visitors to Will Rogers' home at 14253 Sunset Blvd., Pacific Palisades in Southern California, enter the living room first and observe an old ranch fireplace. On the stone chimney hangs the mounted head of a Texas longhorn steer. Beneath it on the mantel is a miniature replica of a Western scene, one of the many mementoes on display. Will's California saddle focuses the immediate attention of the visitor and then interest travels to Tex Wheeler's statue of Will Rogers on "Soapsuds," his favorite horse. It occupies a prominent place before a picture window under which is placed Will's favorite chair. From here he could view a peaceful scene of the polo grounds and the mountains beyond.

On the walls of the very large living room are pictures of life in the West, drawn or painted by many of Mr. Rogers' personal friends. Outstanding among these is the famous "Buffalo Hunt" by Charles Russell. Large oil paintings of Will Rogers and Mrs. Rogers by Howard Chandler Christy hang to the right of the fireplace.

The living room with its rare Indian rugs and homey atmosphere clearly reflects the personality and taste of the man who lived there and who had to raise the roof in order to get more space in which to practice his roping. Target of much of his practice was the mounted figure of a young calf, given to him by friends in order to save wear and tear on the furniture. Hanging in almost every available spot are chaps, bridles, spurs, silver mounted belts and other trappings of a Western cowboy. The small chaps of the three Rogers' children are also tacked to the wall.

The room is as Will Rogers arranged it except for the addition of some cases in a small room adjoining the living room, where his manuscripts and early pictures are on display. Recently the kitchen of the home was opened to the public. Visitors may walk at their leisure around the house and view the private family living room from the large picture windows there. Walk up a series of steps and enjoy a glimpse of Will Rogers' own library and study. There are several other rooms in the home which are not open to the public, since they are not readily accessible.

Glen W. Price is the curator in charge of this delightful place.

Another interesting historically famous house-museum we visited last week was the home of Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of California. It is located on Whittier Blvd. in the town of Pico, and is a State historical monument administered under the supervision of the Division of Beaches and Parks. This monument contains 2.56 acres, most of which, with the exception of the land on which the old adobe home stands, is leased from the city of Whittier.

This monument has been restored to the period of 1870 and contains some furniture, but there is a great deal yet to be accomplished. We could not resist being a bit proud of what the Monterey History and Art Association and their friends, had been able to do for the beautification and adornment of the historical buildings in Monterey. Pico and Whittier need such an organization to assist them in gathering together furniture and documents relating to the period in which the Casa Pio Pico was built and lived in by the governor. The adobe mansion, so we were told, once had 33 rooms, but floods in 1866 destroyed many of them.

The Pio Pico home was acquired by the State in 1917 and is valued at \$5,000, according to the report of the California State Park System. Martin Cole is the curator in charge.

Pio Pico died in Los Angeles on Sept. 12, 1894. He was born at Mission San Gabriel May 5, 1801, the son of Jose M. and Maria Eustaquia Gutierrez Pico, who had come from El Fuerte, Sinaloa, to Mission San Luis Rey in 1795. Pio Pico married Maria Ignacia Alvarado in 1834.