

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 27, 1952

'Know Your Own State'

"Know Your Own State" is good and sufficient reason to make a tour of the museums and historical spots in Southern California, and that is what we did recently with excellent enjoyable results.

One of the most beautiful and interesting places in Orange County is the Charles W. Bowers Memorial Museum in Santa Ana. The Spanish style building and the grounds with their fine old trees and lawns have a satisfying and distinctive charm.

Interesting, because within its walls has been arranged an array of exhibits portraying graphically the various historical periods of that section of the state.

Charles W. Bowers and his wife in their later years talked over plans for a gift to the city that had been their home for many years and was very dear to them. As a result of their planning and generosity a trust was created by which the Bowers residence was given to the City of Santa Ana together with funds for the construction of the museum building. It was stipulated that the city, in accepting the gift, "would promise to furnish and maintain for all time the Charles W. Bowers Memorial Museum."

Near the entrance to the building, an inviting, restful fountain is centered with a statue of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the explorer who sighted San Diego in 1542 and was the first white man to set foot on the shores of California.

In the Spanish room are gathered costumes of rich brocade, lace mantillas, small embroidered shoes that once graced the feet of dancing señoritas, brilliantly colored Spanish shawl and sandalwood fans. All these treasures, which bring to the museum the glory of rancho day in California, were either loaned or given to the museum by the descendants of Spanish and Mexican California families.

We saw in the cases gowns which had been worn by women who once called Monterey home and which had probably brightened many parties in the salas of casas here. One of the most beautiful, a pale blue brocade trimmed with rich old lace, had been the prized possession of the Dona Angustias Ord, wife of Dr. James Ord, and daughter of Don Jose de la Guerra of Santa Barbara. His first husband had been Don Manuel

Jimeno, Secretary of State during Gov. Alvarado's administration. He was also the builder of an adobe home located where the San Carlos Hotel now stands and the building behind it on Calle Principal which later became the home of California's first convent.

Another beautiful gown was once the property of another of Don Jose de la Guerra's daughters who became the wife of Alfred Robinson and whose wedding is so charmingly and vividly described in Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast."

An Indian room in the museum is so arranged as to show the development of Indian culture from the earliest and crudest stone work on down through the mission days.

Our first visit to a working planetarium was made at Griffith Observatory and Planetarium in Griffith Park in Los Angeles, and it was truly a revelation. We had visited the unfinished planetarium at the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in October of 1951, but of course, did not see the heavens lightened with stars, the moon and the sun as we were able to see them in the Griffith Institution.

The planetarium show is held in an air-conditioned theater having a capacity of 500. In the center is the planetarium projector, which reproduces upon the dome all the stars visible to the naked eye so realistically that spectators feel they are outdoors looking at the heavens under the clearest of conditions.

The planetarium show is held hourly and is accompanied by an explanation of the most interesting aspects of astronomy. The topics are different each month of the year.