

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Replica of An Old Hacienda**

There is still more to the story "Know California First." We plead guilty to the offense of no having thoroughly explored our native state before travelling across the continent to see Boston and New England for the first time.

Though we have described in this Diary much that we saw in Southern California while attending the Western Museums, the Casa de Adobe and the California State Exposition, all located within the city limits of Los Angeles.

Those attending the Museum Conference were taken by special bus first to the Planetarium and then to the Casa de Adobe where we were thrilled and impressed with the warm reception offered us.

As we entered this charming replica of an early California adobe home we picked up a handbook, and the first printed line that met our eye was "The Southwest Museum has never had a cent of the taxpayers' money, performed any service for profit, or charged admission to its facilities." True California hospitality was extended to us here. A senorita sang gaily to the accompaniment of her senor. Both were dressed in traditional costumes and seemed delighted to entertain.

The Casa de Adobe is a replica of Spanish Colonial "hacienda," or ranch house of old California. According to our guide book it was built about 1900, and has been occupied ever since.

Two rooms opening on a patio in which there is a fountain and a typical Spanish garden, are used as a museum for the display of certain appropriate objects. The Casa as a whole, however, is not a museum but a home, and in this fact lies much of its historical value and most of its charm.

Also historical are the names of the women who have helped make the Casa de Adobe the place it is; Senora Florencia Sepulveda de Schoneman is chairman emeritus of the Casa de Adobe committee of the Southwest Museum and Senora Isabel Lopez de Fages as general chairman is assisted by a number of others whose names are familiar in California. The resident hostess is Senora Marcella Wolfskill de Palethorpe. When we met them and others of the reception

committee, they greeted us in gowns that had been worn by their mothers, grandmothers or in some instances –by their great-grandmothers. Their jewelry was exquisite.

Casa de Adobe had its inception in 1914 when a Hispanic Society of California was conceived by the late Henry W. O'Melveny, Mrs. Randolph Huntington Miner, and Messrs. John G. Mott and Hector Alliot, but it was not until the following year that the organization became a reality. Its membership, in large measure, consisted of those related through birth or marriage to the original families of California. With enthusiasm stimulated by desire to create an enduring picture of the home life of the Spanish settlers of California, the society set out to build a reproduction of an old ranch house and to furnish it in keeping with the period.

The building which is now Casa de Adobe was erected under the leadership of the members named above. World War I interfered, and little could be done in the way of furnishing until after the Casa was presented to the Society of the Southwest Museum in 1925, through the efforts of Mr. O'Melveny.