

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

November 3, 1952

Exhibition of Indian Art

The most complete collection west of the Rockies of the costumes, utensils and handcraft of the American Indian belongs to the Southwest Museum, and no trip to Los Angeles can be complete without a visit to this most interesting and educational institution.

The American Indian's contribution to human history is not generally appreciated. We are indebted to the red man for the development and utilization of every important food plant of the New World. It was he who gave us corn, potatoes, tobacco, chocolate, vanilla, rubber, squash, sweet potatoes, pineapples, peanuts, avocados, tomatoes, two important species of cotton and many varieties of beans. Yes, the list is imposing! It surprised this writer when she read it.

A perfectly beautiful and valuable collection of Indian baskets, numbering 2,446 specimens and one of the largest and finest of its kind, is only one of the outstanding exhibits at the museum. Collected by Mrs. Caroline Boeing Poole and presented to the museum by her husband and son as a memorial to her after her death, this collection contains baskets from most of the Indian tribes west of the Mississippi.

Indian pottery from various tribes of the Southwest is also on display, and in the Plains Indian room there is a model of a typical Great Plains Indian camp which is most fascinating to study. There is also an imposing collection of oil portraits of Blackfoot leaders done from photographs of the chieftains taken years ago.

On the second floor a display arranged chronologically traces the history of the Southwest. Here we can see the first rude tools used by prehistoric man, the work of the basket makers (who introduced the knowledge of farming) and the artifacts of the Pueblo Indians which illustrate this tribe's development from earliest days up to their great period.

The Southwest Indians' room is probably the most interesting to Californians. A study of this exhibition will reveal designs and color schemes of real beauty and a consummate technique in the crafts, developed without the use of a single tool or chemical dye.

Though a trip to Los Angeles should certainly include a trip to the Southwest Museum, we would like to suggest to our readers that "they know the Peninsula

first." Pacific Grove's splendid museum also has a very fine and valuable collection of Indian art.