

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **More About Greenfield Village**

In our last issue of the Diary we told you about our visit to Greenfield Village, just out of Detroit. This is not our first visit to the east coast but it was our first visit to Greenfield. It is our first experience in motoring across the continent and stopping to see the historic and beautiful parts of this great expanse of country which we are proud to call the United States. There is so much beauty, both natural and man-made, so much history and so much to appreciate, that it is difficult to absorb it in the short time one has to travel.

An entirely different kind of America than any of us have ever seen still flourishes in Greenfield Village, the creation of Henry Ford. Here can be seen nearly 100 buildings, representing every phase of national life as it was lived by our forefathers. In many ways it reminded us of our visit five years ago to Williamsburg. But Williamsburg is a restoration of the original while Greenfield is a creation of a dream of an ideal American village in the very early days. It is not built upon an original site of any historical episode, it does not represent a special village; its buildings, the furnishings, the exhibits, all depict all America and the people who originally founded the country.

The homes of many famous Americans – including William Holmes McGuffey, Noah Webster and the Wright brothers – have been restored. But the one home which would interest all Californians is that of Luther Burbank. The marker on the home reads: "The Birthplace of Luther Burbank."

This home was erected in Lancaster, Mass., and it was here that the famous horticulturist was born on March 7, 1849. The notes in the little booklet presented to the visitors relates: "Burbank was a studious youth with a skill for things mechanical and a keen interest in plant life. As he grew into manhood his health failed and this gave him an opportunity to spend many hours in the sunshine where he devoted the majority of his time to the study and experimentation of plants.

"A few years later, at the age of 24, he developed the Burbank potato, which was superior to any existing variety. For this work he received a prize and it is said that he used the money to migrate to Santa Rose, Calif. A short time later he established a nursery, where he

performed thousands of experiments and contributed many new species of plants for which he has since become famous.

"He died on April 11, 1926, at the age of 77, and is buried in California."

A little dark brown structure to the extreme left of a great floral clock is the office and study of Luther Burbank which was used by the noted horticulturist at his Santa Rose nursery. Ford and Edison often visited Burbank there when the building was in its original location. Two years after Burbank's death in 1926, the building was brought to Greenfield Village.

As the visitor enters the Museum building the first object that meets his eye is the signature of Thomas A. Edison and his footprints in cement, covered with glass. This impressive exhibit is the cornerstone of the building. In other buildings in the village are stored birthplace with many heirlooms of the Foster family.

The boat "Suwanee" was named after one Thomas Edison often used during winter months when he worked at Ft. Myers, Fla. After the original boat had sunk, its engines were raised, and installed on the new "Suwanee" now in Greenfield Village. The steamer is kept in operating condition and is often used by the children of the Edison Institute Schools.