

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Scenic Wonders to Explore**

Aside from the four National Parks in California there are five National Monuments in the state and one National Historical Reservation, all administered by the National Park Service. These include Death Valley, Devil's Postpile, the Lava Beds, Muir Woods and the Pinnacles. The National Historical Reservation is Cabrillo National Monument near the city of San Diego in Southern California.

During the month of January, 1908, two National Monuments were created in California – Muir Woods and the Pinnacles. Muir Woods is in Marin County and the Pinnacles in San Benito County.

Muir woods National Monument was created by Presidential proclamation to protect an especially fine group of redwoods. The Monument contains 426.43 acres. This Monument had been named for John Muir, American naturalist, who walked through most of the State's parks and wrote about them for national publications. He was the discoverer of the largest known tree in the world, a Sequoia gigantea, in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Its circumference, as measured by Muir, was 108 feet, one foot from the ground, and at six feet from the ground it measured 93 feet in circumference.

The Pinnacles National Monument, in southern San Benito County, was created by Presidential proclamation to protect spike-like rock formations 600 to 1,000 feet high and many caves within the mountains. This monument contains 8,908.39 acres.

The Devil's Postpile in Madera County yearly attracts many visitors. This monument was created by Presidential proclamation on July 6, 1911 to preserve an area of remarkable geometrical rock exfoliations. The Monument contains 800 acres.

Modoc County was pleased when on November 21, 1925, the Lava Beds National Monument was created by Presidential proclamation, to protect the weird lava flows, including numerous caves. There are 45,967 acres in this reservation.

The last National Monument to be created in California was Death Valley on February 11, 1933 by Presidential proclamation, to protect the numerous scenic and geological curiosities of the lowest and hottest valley in

the United States. There are 1,601,800 acres in this Monument.

Death Valley had been famous for many years previous to 1933. In 1850 the Jayhawker party of overland emigrants who had sought to reach California by a short-cut from Salt Lake, suffered great privations and hardships in the valley, losing 13 members of the party in and about this desert. In 1890 a party of scientists, headed by Vernon Bailey, E.W. Nelson, and Frederick Vernon Coville, of the United States Department of Agriculture, left Keeler, California, to conduct the first botanical and zoological exploration of Death Valley.

Phil Townsend Hanna, in "California Through Four Centuries," relates that the results of this expedition was a voluminous report on the birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, mollusks, trees and shrubs, cacti and yucca etc., of the region. The data was published by the department under the titles "Botany of Death Valley Expedition," and "The Death Valley Expedition."

The only National Historical Reservation in California is the Cabrillo National Monument at San Diego, designed to preserve the first landing place of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo in California in 1542, and created by Presidential proclamation. The monument is half an acre in area, and was made a reservation on October 14, 1913.

Cabrillo was a Portuguese navigator in the service of Spain and discoverer of California. He commanded two vessels, the San Salvador and the Victoria. He named San Diego Bay "San Miguel" and Monterey Bay "Bahia de los Pinos," or "Bay of Pines." Among his other discoveries were the present Santa Catalina and San Clemente Islands, and Anacapa and Santa Cruz Islands, the Santa Lucia Mountains which he called "Sierras de San Martin"; and he names the Coast Range the "Sierra Nevadas."

Cabrillo died at La Posesion (Cuyler's Harbor) on the present San Miguel Island off the coast of Santa Barbara from a broken arm, probably infected, which he suffered during a shore journey. He was buried on San Miguel, though his grave has never been found.

So ends our story of the National Parks, National Monuments and the one National Reservation in the State of California.