

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Mission San Luis Rey

The fumigation of Casa Soberanes and Conference of Western Museums held in San Diego were two very good excuses to absent ourselves from home and for the neglect of numerous duties during the past two weeks. We hope that the fumigation has ridded the historic old adobe of all infestation which might eventually have caused damage to its original beauty, and that the unfamiliar scent which the rooms now have will disappear with the termites, where ever they might have gone. This important event also provided an excellent reason to continue on from San Diego to Ensenada in Baja, California, then on to Tecate and Mexicali where we reentered California and proceeded on to Tucson, Arizona. We found all the highways excellent and the scenery from Tecate (where the famous beer is made) over the mountains very exciting and beautiful.

On our way south from Los Angeles we visited Mission San Luis Rey near Oceanside. This "The King of the Missions" was founded in 1788 as the 18th in the chain of missions. It was built under the direction of Father Antonio Peyri, a Franciscan padre, who was still in charge as late as 1832. In that year he retired from the mission he had founded, when the law of "secularization" was passed and padres were forbidden to supervise the secular affairs of the Indians.

In the excellent museum at this mission is to be seen the original deed signed by President Lincoln when the mission was restored to the church. The beautiful building is now a house of studies for members of the Franciscan Order, a seminary for future missionaries. The exhibit of vestments and other church appointments are among the very best we have seen and the beautiful gardens are well worth the few miles off the highway one must drive to see it.

A visit to San Luis Rey is not complete until one had also seen Mission San Antonio de Pala at Pala, for this was the Assistencia of San Luis Rey. It is a tiny chapel which still plays a big part in the lives of the Mission Indians who live here on the reservation. The Mission of Pala today has no connection with the original parent church. It is now a parish church on an Indian Reservation and is still being used by those for whom it

was originally dedicated—the only one in all of California having this honor.

This mission was dedicated on June 13, 1816 by Father Peyri himself. In 1903 when the Cupeno Indians from Warner Hot Springs were evicted from their ancient Village Cupa, they were brought to Pala to form the reservation along with the local San Luiseno Indians already there. The Verona Fathers are in charge at Pala.

The mission at Pala is best known for its Campanile or bell tower in the Indian cemetery adjacent to the mission. The original tower was built in 1816 and the one now standing was re-dedicated in 1916. The chapel altar is the work of an Indian, carved from local granite, and the statues, all carved from wood by the Indians, and were probably made about 1800.

Motoring back to the highway from Pala we stopped for coffee at Solvang, or Little Denmark as it is sometimes called. We think that it is probably the most unusual communities in the west. Located about 30 miles northwest of Santa Barbara in the Santa Inez Valley, it was established, so we were told, in 1912 by two teachers from Des Moines, Iowa, and now has a population of about 250 persons. Atterdag College there is unique in that there are no textbooks, examinations or diplomas. Teaching is by the spoken word.

Mission Santa Inez, founded Sept. 17, 1904, is one of the most attractive in the chain of Missions. Original Indian decorations in red, yellow, brown and black still remain in the sanctuary and sacristy. It was the 19th mission built and is situated in the town of Solvang, on the old road over the San Marcos Pass in one of the loveliest valleys in this part of California. The mission was returned to the supervision of the Franciscan fathers in 1924.