

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 23, 1955

An Institute Meeting

We attended the Eighth Annual Institute of the California History Foundation held at the College of the Pacific in Stockton on Friday and Saturday of last week. It was a great meeting with more than 100 members present, representing city and county historical societies and museums from all over the state.

The event began with the annual foundation banquet Friday evening in Anderson Hall of the college when Dr. Vierling Kersey, former state superintendent of public instruction and now director of the Valley Junior College in Van Nuys, spoke on "California History in Perpetuity." Dr. Robert E. Bums, president of the College of the Pacific, presided.

Mrs. Mary Greene, regional vice-president of the Conference of California Historical Societies; Mrs. W. M. O'Donnell of the Board of Sponsors of the California History Foundation, and Mrs. Alla McCarthy of Castroville, represented the Monterey History and Art Assn. at the meeting.

"The Snow Covered Wagons," an illustrated musical reading of the epic poem by Julia Cooley Altrocchl, entertained the visitors following the banquet. The presentation was made by the Stockton branch of National League of American Penwomen, and a group of national professional societies in music. The theme of the poem was the tragedy of the Donner Party, an epic in early California history.

We learned a lot about the California Indians vs. the United States in a scholarly talk by Dr. Donald C. Cutter, department of history at the University of Southern California. He discussed the Indians' right to land in the state or the payment for same by the government. Dr. Cutter has been a witness at several hearings in Washington and expects to be called upon to testify again because of his interest and knowledge of the subject.

Before lunch there was a splendid talk by Dr. A. P. Nasatir, department of history, San Diego State College. The contents of his paper gave an amusing story of the life and work of Patrice Dillon, an Irish-born French consul in California, about 1850. After hearing his story we decided that there were "fighting French" as well as "the fighting Irish."

Dr. Tully Knoles presided at luncheon when Dr. Rockwell Hunt and Dr. R. Coke Wood, both of the College of the Pacific, spoke of the Conference of California Historical Societies, with special emphasis on the annual meeting of the group to be held in Monterey in June. Mrs. Mary Greene, curator of the Old Custom House Museum, gave a resume of the plans of the Monterey History and Art Association for the entertainment of their guests.

The California Folklore Society has sent out announcements and invitations to historical societies and the Native Sons and Daughters to attend an annual folklore conference in Chico, May 13 and 14. The theme this year is to be "Folklore and Local History." Hector Lee of Chico State College is the program chairman.

Long a landmark in Solano County, the historic old Juan Felipe Pena adobe south of Vacaville may soon be restored as a museum, reports the Knave in the Oakland Tribune. Restoration plans are being urged by several Solano County groups who point to the adobe as the oldest home now standing in the county. It was built in 1841 at the foot of a sweeping range of hills and adjoins the adobe of Manuel Cabeza de Vaca, for whom Vacaville was named.