

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 24, 1955

A Mayan Lecture

Members of the Monterey History and Art Assn. and their guests will be privileged to view a showing of "The Maya Through the Ages" tomorrow evening, in the Community Room at the Monterey Public Library. Dr. Giles Greville Healey, executive secretary of the Institute of Navigation, University of California at Los Angeles, who filmed this record in its entirety, will present the program. Dr. Healey and his family have been spending some time in the Big Sur country during summer vacation from college.

The editing of the film, assembly, and script represent the devoted and voluntary contribution of Kenneth Macgowan. In addition to these gentlemen, the United Fruit Co., the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and the governments of Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala gave valuable counsel and cooperation.

This pictorial story of the Maya of northern Central America and southern Mexico; is a record of aboriginal achievement, and an account of the present-day life of the Maya, whose ancestors created the most brilliant civilization of pre-Columbian times.

The project of taking the pictures by Dr. Healey was sponsored by the United Fruit Co. as an expression of respect and appreciation for a Middle American culture so magnificent that it deserves permanent documentation and presentation to the world. The 16-mm film is of 45 minutes duration. It is in color and scored to voice and music. Ancient cities pass in panoramic review; Chichen Itza, with emphasis on the temple of the warriors and the ball court; the pyramid of the magician at Uxmal; the ceremonial city of Labna; the jewel-like buildings of Palenque, and the structures of Yaxchillan, and the pyramids of Zaculeu in Guatemala, restored by the United Fruit Company.

The next section deals with examples of figurines, ceramics, textiles, glyphs, and reproductions of pertinent sections of existing codices. The camera also captures examples of everyday life, including religious festivals, pottery making, and weaving. Then there is a sequence devoted to Lacandons, and almost distinct tribe numbering less than 200 who live in the jungle under very primitive conditions.

It was Dr. Healey's preoccupation with Lacandon religion that led him to the discovery of the magnificent frescoes in the temple at Bonampak, in the Department of Chiapas, Mexico, where some of these primitives worshipped.

"Such is the picture story of the Maya—the filming of a civilization founded on and conditioned by the cultivation of maize—one of the greatest experiments in agriculture in all human history. It is a pictorial pageant of achievement, in architecture, astronomy, mathematics, and chronology, in the opinion of Dr. Healey.

Among the visitors to Monterey on Saturday who made the Tour of the Adobe homes as the guests of the Monterey History and Art Association, were Miss Mildred Mendia and her father from San Jose. As a small boy of eight years of age, Mr. Mendia remembered visiting and spending at least one night in Casa Amesti on Polk street. The builder and owner of the old adobe was his grandfather, Don Jose Amesti, who married Prudencia Vallejo, the daughter of Jose Ignacio Vallejo.

Another visitor was C. B. Baker of Kent, Washington, who called at Casa Soberanes to see the bedroom which was his home many years ago when he owned the Star route and stage which made the trip up the Carmel Valley and down the coast. Casa Soberanes was then the home of the family for which it is named.