

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Delightful Texas

We are delighted with Eastern Texas. The scenery is exceptionally beautiful. Green grass borders the highways, the roadside plantings, and the roadside parks, which provide picnic spots for the traveler, are a delight. We know for we have used one almost everyday for the past week. Each little park is as clean as a whistle. There are picnic tables, benches, trash containers and barbecue conveniences for each party. It could not be true that Texans are cleaner, or that they are more proud of their state's appearance than Californians, could it?

This morning we read in the Houston morning paper that Houston ordinarily is not known of as a "cow town." Ft. Worth has long held that title, where Texas is concerned.

Yet Houston is the hub - and statistics easily prove it - of the greatest livestock raising sector in the state. With the exception of sheep and hogs, Harris County has more livestock than any other county in Texas.

Texas is the largest state in the union, and roughly comprises about one-twelfth the area of the entire United States. One becomes very conscious of this vast territory as you drive through it day after day, with all variety, from desert, to farmland, to cattle ranches, and then to forest of unclaimed land. But are Texans proud of their state! Every service station attendant, every merchant, or the casual acquaintance on the street, always invites you to come back. But don't think, dear reader, that we are being untrue to California, for we will be back in Monterey after we have absorbed some of the history of the deep South, visited the old homes and gardens and enjoyed more of its people's hospitality.

This morning it was pouring rain in Houston, so we motored out of the city to visit the San Jacinto Monument and its Museum of History, which is located on the San Jacinto Battlefield, 22 miles east of the city. During the entire two hours which we spent there we could not resist comparing the history of Monterey with the history which was being told in the museum of the great monument in Texas, for both Spain and Mexico played a part in Texas just as those countries did in Monterey, California.

San Jacinto Battleground, a State park of 460 acres, located on the Huston Ship Channel, is the site of the famous battle between Texas and Mexican armies which on April 21, 1836 won independence for Texas. Led by Gen. Sam Houston, 910 Americans completely routed the Mexican forces, numbering over 1200 under the command of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.

Measured by its results, the folder which we picked up at the museum tells us, "San Jacinto was one of history's decisive battles. Texas freedom from Mexico led to annexation and to the Mexican War, resulting in the acquisition by the United States of the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma, near one third of the present area of the American nation.

This beautiful monument to the memory of the men who fought in the Battle of San Jacinto, was built in 1936-1939 with Federal and State funds at a cost of approximately \$1,500,000, it stands 570 feet high, is built of reinforced concrete faced with Texas fossilized buff limestone. The museum proper, which forms the base of the building, is 125 feet square.

Instead of three, as Monterey has had, Texas has had six governments which have exercised sovereignty over it. We noticed on the museum's four bronze doors are flags in relief of these six governments. On the outside of the base are eight massive panels on which is engraved a brief account of the history of the Texas revolution against Mexico. Above the panels at the base of the shaft, is a frieze depicting significant phases in the Anglo-American colonization of Texas. We hope that someday Monterey may be able to accomplish something on the same order which may tell her history from the date when Portola claimed California for Spain until she became a state.