

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 30, 1956

'Mr. California'

"Mr. California," an autobiography of Rockwell D. Hunt, president, Conference of California Historical Societies; educator, lifelong Californian, and historian has just been published and is now in the hands of a great many of Dr. Hunt's admirers we are sure.

Dr. Hunt is dean emeritus of the Graduate School, University of Southern California and the director, California History Foundation, College of the Pacific, Stockton, where he makes his home.

On Feb 3, 1954 Gov. Goodwin J. Knight wrote this proclamation: "In recognition of his outstanding contribution to California life through his teachings and writings and of the many years he has devoted in service to his native state in various capacities, I hereby name Dr. Rockwell D. Hunt 'Mr. California.'" It was because the honor had been bestowed upon Dr. Hunt that the publishers of his autobiography Fearson Publishers of San Francisco, chose the title for his life story.

Dr. Hunt has always been interested in California history, being a native son of this great state. His autobiography is that of an able educator whose academic training began in California, but which reached a culmination in the conferring on him of the degree of doctor of philosophy in 1895 at Johns Hopkins University, where he had studied under the direction of some of the most distinguished educators of the nation. In August of 1895 there was published by The Johns Hopkins Press "The Genesis of California's First Constitution, (1846-49)" by Rockwell Dennis Hunt, professor elect of History and Political Science, University of the Pacific. Dr. Hunt is 88 years of age, having been born in Sacramento on Feb. 3, 1868 to Mr. and Mrs. Dennis R. Hunt.

Dr. Remsen Bird of Carmel, president emeritus, Occidental College, wrote these words in appreciation of Dr. Hunt and they are published on the jacket: "What is more beautiful than a man who adds many years and whose mind is rich, open, and the clear fresh winds of thought and faith pass through it!"

Dr. Tully Knowles, chancellor of the College of the Pacific, writes of Dr. Hunt: "We of the older generation of Californians are greatly pleased to learn that one of

the greatest of California historians and educators is giving to the world his own life story. Our association began in 1908 when we were teaching colleagues at the University of Southern California. Since retirement, he has been guiding students and citizens in the further appreciation of California history. As director of the California History Foundation and president of the California Historical Societies, he has greatly assisted in stimulating interest in the history of California."

Dr. Hunt's photograph appears on the front cover of "Mr. California" and on the back is a full-page reproduction of his book plate, one of the most complete and interesting of any plate we have ever seen for it not only has life but a history of the state.

The Stanford University Press announces the publication of a (?) of poem on 47 episodes "Fray Junipero Serra, the Great Walker," by MacKinley (?) missing words) and binding is designed by Adrian Wilson.

The author written books about Spanish and Mexican art including "Modern Mexican Painters," and Spring in Spain." Mr. Helm was first introduced to the Serra tradition on Mallorca, under the auspices of Father sera's Spanish biographer, Fray Miguel Caldentey Vidal, late Prior of the Franciscan convent of Lluchmayor. He began the book in Morelia, Mexico after he had visited the Serra sites and monuments in Mexico and completed it there four years later.

More than 200 years ago, Junipero Serra, a Franciscan friar sailed from the island of Mallorca to bring the Word of God to the New World. He was past his first youth, he developed a cancer of the leg which made walking very painful, every kind of difficulty beset him from sparse supplies to unreasonable demands from Spain. But he had an intensity of spirit and enthusiasm for his mission that transcended obstacles coupled with a practicality that enable him to lay enduring foundation for the chain of missions that was to be his harvest.

MacKinley Helm tells the story of this great figure in the form of a poetic drama. The characters are: Father Serra, Friar Francisco Palou, his disciple and biographer, who is charged with reciting much of the narrative; a 20th century commentator who asks leading questions, explains and interprets; an ageless Indian youth, Orlando, who represents the attitudes of the natives whom the friars came to convert; an 18th century

dancing sailor, and a chorus of 20th century Franciscan friars and their leader, the Advocate.