

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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History Society Conference

The delegates from the Peninsula who attended the second annual meeting of the Conference of California Historical Societies certainly feasted upon an excellent program of events planned by the San Jose members when the conference met in San Jose last month. The meetings began on June 21 with an outdoor barbecue in the garden of the Statehouse Replica Museum, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, and lasted through Saturday, as those in charge presented excellent exhibits for the pleasure and education of the guests. Members of historical societies from all parts of the state were in attendance.

Dr. Richard Coke Wood entertained with an amusing sketch of the history of the life of Mark Twain in the Mother Lode country and his reason for writing the amusing story of the "Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," Arthur Farey, public relations representative of the College of the Pacific, added another laurel to his wreath by reciting his version of the famous Angels Camp story which brought fame to Mark Twain.

Woodrow J. Hanson, department of social studies at Napa College, gave the guests a resume of the life and work of each delegate to the Constitutional Convention held in Monterey in 1849 at which the first California State Constitution was drafted and signed. Herbert C. Jones, prominent lawyer of San Jose, followed Hanson with a comprehensive history of the meeting of California's first legislature which was held in San Jose in 1850, when that city was first pueblo capital. Monterey had remained the capital under Spanish and Mexican rule but was moved to San Jose by vote of the convention's delegates at the close of the 1849 meeting.

"California Has Everything" according to Father John B. McGloin's complimentary talk at the luncheon in Hotel De Anza. Father McGloin is historical archivist at the University of San Francisco. Two papers, "The Society of the Southern Mines" and "The Boom of the Twenties" were read by their authors, Dr. William Kenney of Sacramento, and Dr. Glen S. Dunke of Occidental College, Los Angeles.

"I could not have settled the country without the aid of these Kanakas," wrote California pioneer Capt. John

Sutter about the eight Hawaiians given him by a ruler of the Sandwich Islands in 1838. The lineal descendants of those Hawaiians are living in the Sacramento area today, the members of the California Historical Societies were told by Henry Collins of Sutter's Fort Museum, formerly curator of the Stevenson House in Monterey.

Reading a paper written by Charles W. Kenn of Honolulu, Collins of the Sacramento Historical Society, described how the state's first Hawaiians managed Sutter's boat fleet that piled the Sacramento River from Yerba Buena (San Francisco) to Sutter's Fort.

The men and their families stayed around Sacramento after Sutter's "empire" was broken up by the gold-seekers of '49, Collins relates, most of the men marrying California Indian girls.

Collins said there are 15 or 16 in one family, but with others, the line is dying out. The survivors, many of whom work in the canneries, keep alive the traditions, he said.

Collins brought a troop of hula dancers, musicians and singers, all of Hawaiian ancestry, to perform in connection with the talk.

Mrs. Mary L. Greene, curator of the Old Custom House in Monterey, was a member of a workshop group of which there were three, where the delegates discussed museums, libraries, collecting, research and records. Other local attendants at the conference were Mrs. W.R. Holman, Mrs. Guy Curtis, Mrs. Pauline Barbour, curator of Colton Hall museum; and Mrs. W. M. O'Donnell.

Elections of officers for the following year was the program of the final meeting Saturday afternoon when Dr. Rockwell Hunt of the History Foundation of the College of the Pacific was elected president emeritus of the conference. Other officers chosen were: Harold G. Schutt of Lindsay, president; Clyde Arbuckle, official historian of the City of San Jose, vice president; Dr. Richard Coke Wood, College of the Pacific, Secretary; and Mrs. Doris Foley, treasurer.

The 1957 meeting of the California Historical Societies will be held in San Diego in honor of the Overland Mail Centennial. In 1955 the Conference met in Monterey, California's first capital.