

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 26, 1957

### **John Muir**

There is rarely a week passes that we do not read something concerning the National Park System or the activities of the State Park Commission, which prompts us to be thankful for all the beaches, forests, historical monuments, groves of redwoods, etc., which we have in California for our citizens and visitors to use and enjoy:

We came across an interesting article in Bancroftiana, the publication of the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, which applies to the conservation and preservation of our California scenic beauty in all these respects and also to our historical heritage.

When John Muir accompanied President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 on a camping trip into the Sierra Nevada, history was made, for he won over the President to his views on saving areas of natural beauty for future generations. During the rest of Roosevelt's term in the White House, more national parks and forest reserves were created than ever before.

In Muir's day, conservation was a new idea. Public consciousness had to be awakened to the value of saving unspoiled areas for posterity, and Muir traveled, lectured, and lobbied to spread this idea. The fact that mountains were being mutilated by dredgers for reservoirs, and forests being denuded by lumbermen for profit aroused Muir, and he pleaded for the cause of conservation eloquently.

The Friends of the Bancroft Library are presenting a program for the membership at the annual meeting. May 5, at 4:30 o'clock in the Bancroft Library at the University of California. Prof. John D. Hicks and May T. Morrison will be the guest speakers. An exhibit of the Library's treasures will include a collection of exceptional importance for the history of Mexico and California, a recent gift which will be announced that evening.

Miss Maria Antonia Field has written us an informative letter regarding the early schools in Monterey which we are happy to reprint today. She reports in part, after reading Miss Lulu Pyburn's article written for the Monterey School booklet in 1892, that there were several schools in old Monterey previous to the time of which this young scholar wrote. Miss Pyburn was only assigned to write about public schools, not the private

ones, according to the preface in the small booklet, so she should be excused for not mentioning the old convent and the few schools which were established and taught by well-educated residents of Monterey in that era.

About the year 1840 Don Florencio Serrano taught a very satisfactory school according to Miss Field. Going further back to early Spanish times Miss Field states that several ladies had good schools. Returning to the early 1850s, there was the old Dominican Convent of Santa Catalina, (later transferred to Benicia), but which was the predecessor of the present Santa Catalina School for Girls in Monterey.

In the 1860s and 1870s. Miss Field reports, school was taught in the old Spanish Cuartel, situated at the corner of Munras avenue and Webster street, and attended by the daughters of many well-known families of the early 1850s.