

May 27, 1957

Founding the Society

On Nov. 16, 1930 a group of enthusiastic townspeople decided to launch a movement for more effective perpetuation of this region's historical and artistic treasures. Two months later the Monterey History and Art. Assn. Ltd. received definite and permanent status with the adoption of the constitution and by-laws.

Nearly two score men and women prominent in art circles of the Monterey Peninsula or enthusiastically committed to a policy of preserving the Peninsula's historic landmarks became members at a dinner meeting held in Cademartori's Restaurant. The election of the temporary officers conducted at the November meeting was ratified.

Col. Roger S. Fitch, president; Carmel Martin, vice president; Col. Easton R. Gibson, secretary and Bernard Rowntree, treasurer, comprised the association's official staff. Fifteen directors were elected as follows: W.O. Raiguel, Col. J.G. Pillow, Carmel Martin, Mrs. W.W. Wheeler, Harold Mack, Gouverneur Morris, Col. Gibson, Allen Griffin, Col. Fitch, Miss E. Charlton Fortune, Louis C. Merrill, Bernard Rowntree, Myron Oliver, Stanley Wood, Ralph Sneyd-Kynnersley, were members of the elected board. Fifty members were formally approved by the board. Ten of these original members are still regular members of the association.

The first project undertaken by the new group was the marking of a selected list of historic landmarks and mapping a historic trail on the streets which would pass the majority of the buildings and sites of memorable events, to be known as "The Path of History."

An interesting exhibit, including photographs of early sailing vessels by Louis Slevin, Carmel photographer; a map showing the popular conception of California in 1849, the property of Burton L. Boundy, and a copy of the "Californian," dated March 14, 1848 and announcing the discovery of gold in California, was presented by the late Laura Bride Powers, at that time curator of the Old Custom House.

Besides designating 13 historical sites for distinctive markers, with suggested legends, the report overed several other privately owned buildings which are to be marked by their owners in cooperation with the association.

At the same meeting Col. Fitch also reported progress in restoring the First Theater. "Drainage and heating systems have been installed, the interior has been improved, the grounds cleaned up and a brick sidewalk installed. A stone retaining wall will replace the dilapidated board fence on the upper side and funds have been made available by the state for repainting the exterior." The colonel announced.

It was also suggested by Col. Fitch at that meeting in 1931 that the theater's old stage and wooden curtain be put in condition for use in amateur theatricals.

Cost of erecting the historical markers was estimated at \$150. Three of the directors of 1931 immediately subscribed \$50 each for the purpose: Mrs. Mary C.W. Black, Mrs. Sidney Fish and Miss Maria Antonia Field.