

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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'Mission 66'

The National Park Service's Mission 66, a program to bring the National parks and monuments up to a standard where they can handle adequately the increasing travel by the year 1966, has dealt kindly with the areas in California.

Just what is Mission 66? Quoting from an official on the subject: "Mission 66 is a conservation program for the National Park Service, and all other areas managed by the National Park Service. It proposes to develop and staff these parks so as to permit the parks' wisest possible use, maximum enjoyment for those who use them, and maximum preservation of the scenic, scientific, and historic resources which give them distinction. It is a 10-year program commenced July 1, 1956 to be completed in 1966, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service hence the name Mission 66."

From Mexico to the Oregon line there is already evidence that this great program is under way and will gain momentum within the next few years. It is a program embracing improved roads better accommodations, and facilities for visitors, replacement of antiquated utility systems, better housing for personnel and probably more important, planning for greater protection and understanding of the natural value of the parks and monuments.

Let us look at some of the changes which will and are taking place within California.

In all the program envisions a total of over \$40 million being spent in California national parks and monument in 1966.

As would be expected, the large areas with their extensive utility systems, roads and trails, and visitor facilities are most in need of improvement, and these areas will receive proportionately more of the funds made possible through Mission 66.

Just what will the American people gain by this great expenditure of federal funds? It will expand camping facilities to accommodate more visitors, eliminating the necessity for some to sleep in their cars as has occasionally been the case in the past. It will improve roads, not to make them faster, but to make them safer. It will improve sanitary facilities so there will no

longer be waiting lines at comfort stations and water faucets.

In addition to these Mission 66 anticipates an expansion of the program whereby visitors can learn more and thus better understand their national parks and monuments. New and in some cases enlarged exhibit rooms, an increased program of campfire talks and field trips, and a series of roadside signs and exhibits all will aid in a keener visitor appreciation through a better understanding of the natural wonders of the area.

Mary Greene, curator at the Old Custom House Museum, has reminded us that the harpoon gun in the museum was made by Liddle and Kaeding in San Francisco in 1860. Both men were among the pioneer gunsmiths we mentioned in a Diary column a few days ago. Liddle was an immigrant gunsmith who arrived in California about 1853 and found employment with P. B. Comins and O. H. Bogart. He later opened his own shop on Long Wharf in San Francisco. Still later he purchased the Bogart "Sportsmen's Emporium." and formed a partnership with Charles Van Beurin Kaeding and their names appear on hundreds of firearms owned by sportsmen throughout the West.

The harpoon gun in the Custom House was purchased by the Monterey History and Art Assn. a couple of years ago from a collector in Paso Robles and added to the exhibits there pertaining to the whaling industry in Monterey.

Fifteen students from Switzerland visited the Custom House Museum and the other historical monuments in Monterey last Sunday. During last week, Mrs. Greene reports the number of visitors to the museum for the week beginning Aug 11 at about 6,000 with Sunday the best attendance 1,328.