

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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California Pioneers

The Society of California Pioneers have sent out a special message to all members which seems worth repeating to our readers. It reads: "An inspiring tradition in the Society of California Pioneers is that of handing down from grandfather to father to son the lore, the customs and the memorabilia of early California. Fortunate are we that our forefathers had the foresight and the wisdom to create a means of preserving something of the spirit and some of the valuable material things of that bygone era when California was largely a wilderness.

"At the time that our grand society was founded, in 1850, there were relatively few societies, social groups or clubs in California. Were one to count the organizations of this kind in the state today it is likely that he would be amazed at their number, their diversification, and their geographical distribution. Assuredly the perpetuation of our society, which is the oldest historical society in the state, merits the most earnest and zealous support that we, our sons, our nephews and our grandsons can devote to it."

Rudolph ver Mehr of Carmel to the representative in Monterey County for the society.

A reminder of the first events of the fall season in the program of the California Historical Society has been mailed to all members, these dates and the program are announced: Tuesday evening Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, presents USS California onyx punch bowl to the Society; Sept 18th Wednesday afternoon, League of Women Voters presents its archives to the Society; Sept 19th, Thursday noon, Dr. Glenn Dumke, the new president of San Francisco State College, speaks at the Sheraton-Palace luncheon on "The Boom of the 'Eighties in Southern California", Oct 5th, Saturday afternoon, unveiling of plaque at Krug Winery in Napa Valley.

This is certainly a well-planned program and we heartily wish that we were able to attend the series.

Rockwell D. Hunt's "California Firsts" is "respectfully dedicated to the United Nations whose charter was drafted in San Francisco, 1945, with the Hope that Springs Eternal." Dr. Hunt is president emeritus of the Conference of California Historical Societies, former

history professor at the College of the Pacific In Stockton, and "Mr. California" through appointment by Gov. Goodwin J. Knight. Dr. Hunt is now 87 years of age and "California First" is his 17th book.

As we should already know, Dr. Hunt begins his preface with this statement "California is rich in beginnings. To know about the first times - the genesis of things - is to be well on the way to the climax of the story . . . This book is not intended to be a mere index or catalogue, or a chronology of California Firsts. It represents rather an attempt to give a readable account of the significant or interesting firsts, while at the same time seeking accuracy as to factual data."

The volume should be an aid in filling a need in the schools of California, and a useful reference in the libraries of the state. It is certain that no two writers would select identical items of the firsts, and Dr. Hunt does not claim that his list is the one and only, but it certainly is a list of significant firsts. The list should prove of value to historians and stimulate further study and research in California history.

The first firsts listed are those during the exploration and discovery period, including the first Californians, first El Dorado, Manila Galleons, first New England, foreign visitors, early American ships, sea-otter hunting, the Russians, Americans across the Sierra Nevadas, emigrant trains, coast survey, discovery of Yosemite.

The second firsts include the Mexican 'Carreta', early bridges, clipper ships, steamboats, pioneer steamship, express business, Pacific Mail, Pony Express, Camel Corps, telephone and cable car, bicycles, automobiles, state roads, aviation, mining, minerals, names in early Placerville, steel industry, cement production.

There are chapters on religion, agriculture, education, including first schools and colleges; state boards of education. literary societies, parent-teacher associations; educational journals, university extensions, teachers' associations.

Government and politics include claiming first provincial governor, first presidio, first pueblo, first lawgiver, vigilance committee, U. S. Consul, American Alcalde, trial by jury, constitutional convention in Monterey, and many other (?) of interest in the history of California.

There are chapters in Dr. Hunt's book on socioeconomics, literature and art, expositions and pageants, and miscellaneous firsts: oldest living things,

first lady of distinction, first elopement, first brick buildings, great seal of the state, American Pioneer Society, state flower, etc.

Fearon of Berkeley are the publishers of "California Firsts" and the price is \$5.50.