

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Gordon House

"As an Australian architect visiting this country, I passed through your beautiful city recently. Only after I had left did I learn from your publication 'Path of History' that there is a pre-fabricated house in your city. Naturally this would have been of great interest to me and the Australian Institute of Architects."

This note was signed by Reuben Lane, who continued with this compliment:

"My short stay in Monterey was delightful and I was very impressed with the manner in which the old historic buildings are being preserved."

We sent off the book, "Old Monterey," published a number of years ago by the Monterey Foundation, to Mr. Lane. He replied with this note: "The Gordon House is reminiscent of some homes in Australia, with the possible exception of the window shutters. The house is in very good condition, and I have made some research on it and the people connected with it."

"When this research is completed, I am sending the information home with the hope that it will be published - as this house is indeed a rare one for Australia."

The Gordon House is one of the most charming of the old wooden houses in Monterey. It is located on the corner of King and Pierce streets, across the street from Colton Hall. Lumber for the Gordon House was milled in Australia, shipped to England, and reshipped around the horn to Monterey. A plain frame house, it was built in 1849-50 by Philip Roach, last alcalde and first mayor of Monterey. It was one of the first all-wooden houses to be built in California, and although its owner did not trust California adobe as a building material, its design follows the simple lines and pattern of the adobes (American Guide Series).

The last issue of the California Herald, the official publication of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, contains a featured article, "Asilomar" by Elmarie H. Dyke, past grand president of the order, and a resident of Pacific Grove. Illustrating the article is an aerial view of Asilomar State Park, photographed by Lee Blaisdell of Monterey. Mrs. Dyke reviews the history of these former campgrounds established in 1913 by the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Assn.,

now the property of the State of California. On July 1, 1956, at a dedication ceremony, Asilomar became a part of the system of state parks, administered by the Division of Beaches and Parks, with the City of Pacific Grove assuming all responsibility for its operation successfully.

It is interesting to note that Asilomar received its name in 1913 when the YWCA joined the name from a couple of Spanish words meaning "refuge" and "sea." Before that, the grounds were called Guardamar and were used only for picnics.

The annual meeting of the Monterey History and Art Assn. will be held next Monday evening, Jan. 20th, in the USO at 8 o'clock. The meeting will mark the 27th anniversary of the founding of the association which has endeavored throughout the years to perpetuate the historical atmosphere of Monterey and to preserve and restore the old adobes and old time records, manuscripts and other items of interest

Francis Price of Santa Barbara will be the speaker. He is an authority on California history, a graduate of Stanford University, a lawyer who has been interested in water cases in Southern California, and an author of several books relating to early history of the state. His subject will be "Way of Life in Rancho Period."

Ted Cross, recent lead in "South Pacific," played at the Wharf Theater, will sing, accompanied by Miss Lucy Valpey. A business meeting will be held, presided over by the president, J. F. van Loben Sels. Reports from officers will be given, refreshments will be served. A social hour will follow.