

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Mary Greene in Mexico

Mrs. Mary L. Greene writes most enthusiastically of her stay in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where she intends to spend the next six months "going back to school." She is attending classes at the Institute there brushing up on her Spanish and taking some art courses. Mrs. Greene was for many years the curator of the Old Custom House in Monterey.

"I have moved into a little house not far from the Institute," Mrs. Greene writes. "It is owned by a professor of art at the University of Maryland. He spends the summers here and plans to retire here in a few years. It is completely furnished with an electric refrigerator, and I have a maid who does everything, cooks well, keeps house well, washes, markets, etc.

"Last evening, I attended such a nice affair at the Institute. It was a show of typical Mexican costumes worn in different parts of the country. I never before saw such beautiful embroideries, weaving, etc. Some of the costumes were worn by women and some by men. Afterward I took in the Sunday night Paseo in the Plaza. There was band music, and I am sure the entire population of the city was there. I am told that about 600 Anglo Saxons live in this city. Some have very beautiful homes, many are artists. Some Canadians come every year. There is a library association and a group who are working to build a modern hospital."

Mrs. Greene's friends will be interested in her class schedule - a busy day for one supposed to be in retirement: "I am very busy six days a week, Saturdays have two classes, 9:30 a. m. to noon and 3:30 to 6 p.m. The other days I go to class 9:30 a. m. to noon, 1:30 to 5, 5 to 6 and 6 to 7. It is quite late when I get home.

"Loilita, the criada (maid), comes about 7:30, gets my breakfast, then does the marketing and has the main meal for me 1:30 to 2.

"The houses the Americans have built here or have done over, are really magnificent and you could never dream they are from the outside. The houses are built along the street, they look neat and are identified by screens on the windows, but when you open the doors and go in, they are like dreams from Hollywood - glass, flag stoned floors, some have spiral staircases - nothing like you would expect in Mexico.

"Had supper last night with a Virginia Osgood. She has people living north of Salinas on San Juan road, but she comes from Laguna Beach. She has been here two years and is renting such a house as I have just described. She is building a new house which she plans to move into Dec. 1.

"We have had much rain." Mrs. Greene reports. "Day starts with beautiful blue sky and sunshine, then comes thunder and lightning and torrents of rain, streets are rushing rivers as the town is built down the mountainside. Just below in the valley some of the towns are one meter deep in water, 30,000 people are homeless, their adobes melted in the flood.

"Here in San Miguel loudspeaker trucks are parading the streets calling for donations to help the sufferers, food, old clothing and money. The American colony has brought thousands of yards of manta (cloth) and they are asking for donations, or loans of sewing machines, everyone who has time is sewing. In just a few days they hope to have it all available. In the meantime, San Miguel is planning its huge annual celebration of San Miguel Day Dancing will start Saturday night at 11 p.m. and will continue until 4 a. m., then a parade to the railway station, workers (unions) will join in, then back to the plaza for fireworks, Indian dances, band music the rest of the day.

"I must go to Mexico City on the train Sunday. I found that having come into the country on an immigrant (student) passport, I must register with the government as an alien. If I fail to go, I might be heavily fined and then deported. What a fate.

"I am enjoying San Miguel very much and I think the Institute is wonderful, their instruction is certainly tops. Keeps me busy."