

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Point Lobos History

At the annual meeting of the Western Museum Conference held at Cambria and the Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument recently, two representatives of the Peninsula were elected to important offices. Don Muchmore, director of the Science and Industries Museum in Los Angeles, was chosen as president; Vern Yahn, director of the Pacific Grove Museum, and Mrs. William Kneass of Monterey, curator of the Old Pacific Building, were elected as vice presidents, representing natural history and history museums, respectively.

The conference will meet in October 1959, at Asilomar, with Pacific Grove and the Monterey History and Art Assn. acting as hosts.

After a Saturday tour of Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument, 40 visitors from Stockton spent the night in Monterey and Sunday morning made a tour of the historical buildings in Monterey. Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Stuart, directors of the library of California history at the College of the Pacific, and Glen Price, executive director of the Westerners Foundation there, were the leaders of the group. Price was formerly with the State Division of Beaches and Parks and stationed for a number of years at the Will Rogers Memorial Park in Southern California.

A recent issue of the News and Views, a monthly publication of the California Division of Beaches and Parks, featured a cover design of the monarch butterfly and an article describing its beauty and habits. Also in another recent issue of the publication is a story on Point Lobos written by the staff stationed there.

Of interest is this information: "The common name milkweed butterfly, sometimes applied to the monarch, derives from the preference of this species to lay its eggs on various milkweeds and which, from all accounts is the only food that its larvae (caterpillars) will accept. If these feeding habits are actually this strict, it is interesting to note that here again is an example of insect life in which a provision is made by nature for the mother to know unerringly where to lay her eggs.

"The mature caterpillars sometimes reach a length of almost two inches and are a yellowish - green in color banded with shining black. Even more striking than the

adult butterfly or caterpillar is the chrysalis (the immediate form between the caterpillar and the adult butterfly). Approximately an inch long, of a bright jade green, suspended by a black stalk, partially banded by a black and gold line around the thickest portion and displaying a scattering of spots of burnished gold, it is a beautiful object to behold."

The article on Point Lobos begins with the acquisition of the Point Lobos Reserve 25 years ago as a new addition to the California State Park System. The anniversary of that event was celebrated last month when the "Save the Redwoods League" held a meeting at Point Lobos with Aubrey Drury presiding. Drury edited a publication in 1954: "Point Lobos Reserve — Interpretation of a primitive Landscape."

History has it that Rancho San Jose y Sur Chiquito of which Point Lobos was a part, was lost in a high-stake poker game. The ranch was won by ten soldiers who turned it over to their commanding officer, Col. Jose Castro. Castro lost the ranch in court action in 1882, which resulted in 34 claimants holding an interest in the Rancho. These people eventually sold out to the Carmelo Cove Land and Coal Co. A. M. Allen, who eventually sold to the state through his heirs, bought his holdings from the land and coal company.

Coal was mined in the hills behind Point Lobos. A little prospecting and mining for gold caused a flurry and -as early as 1863 the San Carlos Gold Mining Co. was formed to develop gold properties at Point Lobos. An old granite quarry exists on the west side of Carmelo Cove and according to old-timers this granite was used, to build the old U. S. Mint in San Francisco and the jail of Colton Hall in Monterey.