

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### 'Welcome to California'

The California Historical Society has recently published a pamphlet entitled "Welcome to California," decorated on the cover by a large imprint of the California State Seal. Within the three-page folder is an article written by Oscar Lewis, well known California author, which he heads: "Some Highlights of California History."

"There are those who find a reading of history of their home state a dull and tedious business. But not the Californians: For to them, whether they be longtime residents or newcomers of only a few months' standing, such reading can be downright fascinating. The reason is that California's story is an uncommonly eventful one - a 400-year pageant of drama and color that can be equaled in no other part of the world. The result is that those who dip into the state's history rarely fail to find it a rewarding experience, and if this outline of its highlights arouses in some a wish to learn more it will have served purpose," Lewis writes in his opening paragraph.

Another paragraph worth quoting follows: "Even during the free-and-easy early months of the gold rush there was hardly a camp from Shasta south to Mariposa that did not have, along with its bars and gaming tables a tent or wooden shack that sheltered theatrical troupes, touring groups of musicians, and occasional lecturers. Nor was it long before to these were added those three other symbols of a community's coming of age: a newspaper, a schoolhouse, and a church.

"Californians of today like to believe that the forward looking attitude of the Argonauts of '49 has been preserved by the generations that have followed, and it is with the same wisdom and fortitude as were those of a century and more ago."

Newcomers to California are generally struck with the number of Spanish names for California cities and towns. Such names predominate in Southern California and along the coast from San Diego to San Francisco and are common in other parts of the state. Some of the Spanish-named cities are now given an English pronunciation - for example, Los Angeles (loss ange-less or loss an jell-ease) - but many, others retain the Spanish pronunciation or a close approximation. The following guide to the pronunciation of certain Spanish

letters will help new Californians with some of the more troublesome place names, as arranged by the California Historical Society:

A is sounded like the a in father: La Habra (lah-hob-rah)

E is sounded like the e in they: La Brea (lah bray-ah; San Mateo (san mah-tay-o)

I is sounded like the e in me: Sierra (see-air-ah)

O is sounded like an English round o: Bodega (bah-day-gah)

U is sounded like the oo in food: Laguna (lah-goo-nah)

The consonants:

J is sounded like an h in English: San Jose (san ho-say)

LL (a separate letter in Spanish) is sounded like a y in English: La Jolla (lah hoy-yah); Camarillo (cah-mah-ree-yo)

QU is sounded like a K in English: Carquinez (car-keen-ess)

The California Historical Society also gives in their latest information booklet a list of suggested readings. For younger children are listed: "California Rancho Days" by Helen Bauer; "Mission Indians of California" by Sonia Bleeker; "Big Ride" by D. W. Erskine; "Stories California Indians Told" by Ann Fisher; "A Child's History of California" by Enola Flower; "Fly High, Fly Low" by Don Freeman; "California Gold Rush Days" by May McNear, and Leo Politi's "Song of the Swallows."

For older children are listed: "California Stepping Stones" by Robert Buell, Garthwaite's "Thomas and the Red Headed Angel," "Story of California" by Oscar Lewis and Howard Pease's "Long Wharf."

Among the books recommended by the Society for adult reading are: "From Wilderness to Empire" by Robert G. Cleland; "Three Years in California" by Walter Colton (1848-1849); Richard Henry Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast"; "The Big Four" by Oscar Lewis; Dale L. Morgan's "Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West"; "The Wake of the Prairie Schooner" by Irene D. Paden, Mark Twain's "Roughing It." "The Big Bonanza" by William Wright, John W. Caughey's "Gold Is the Cornerstone" and Cary McWilliams' "California, The Great Exception."

The California Historical Society is offering membership to all persons who are interested. It is a statewide, nonprofit institution, founded in 1852 and incorporated

in 1886, devoted to collecting, preserving, and distributing information relating to the history of California and the American West. Active membership dues are \$15 a year, sustaining: \$25 year; and patron membership \$100 a year. Mrs. Frances Andrews of Carmel Valley is local membership chairman for Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito County.