

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

December 4, 1959

Historic Points

In 1932 the Monterey History and Art Assn. was instrumental in having the most important landmarks in Monterey registered with the Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the California State Chamber of Commerce, with a view to the eventual marking of these points in a manner uniform throughout the state.

A list of unmarked, or inappropriately marked, historic sites and buildings in Monterey had been completed by a committee whose chairman was Laura Bride Powers, the first curator of the Old Custom House. Through the generosity of three 1932 directors, Mrs. Mary Black Morrison, Mrs. Sidney Fish, and Miss Maria Antonia Field, \$150 was subscribed toward providing suitable markers. Eleven markers in all were eventually obtained, ten of which were placed in position by the City of Monterey. The eleventh marker was installed by the commandant at the Presidio of Monterey, replacing the rusted-out one at Portola-Serra landing place. This work of placing new markers or replacing worn out ones and correcting the historic data on old ones is still a project of the association at this time.

Col. Roger S. Fitch, the president in 1933, wrote in his annual report for 1932: "No historic buildings have been pulled down in Monterey during the past year. The fact that the first French Consulate west of the Rockies - the century old adobe at the corner of Fremont and Abrego streets - is still standing is encouraging. The French Consulate, historically, is next in importance to the Larkin House, in my opinion."

Col. Fitch again wrote on Jan 15, 1934: "In last year's annual report, attention was called to the threatened destruction of the First French Consulate despite continued effort to save it on the part of the association. Now, however, due to the unemployment situation, the initiative of the city manager and cooperative action of this association, the French Consulate has been moved and is being restored on an appropriate new site at the foot of Franklin street in El Estero Park. This association appointed a committee composed of E. P. Howard, chairman, Miss E. Charlton Fortune, and C. J. Ryland, to raise the promised \$250.00 toward purchase of necessary building materials and to furnish desired technical assistance in the restoration of the consulate.

"The appearance of the First Theater has been greatly improved during the past year." wrote Col. Fitch in the year's report. "The funds for this were provided by the State Parks Commission and the work was carried out under the supervision of W. O. Raiguel, chairman of the First Theater committee. Mrs. Jane Todd superintended the removal and restoration of the trellises and roses, as well as the co-ordination of exhibits. Charles W. Allaire, voluntarily and at his own expense, did some much needed extra work, including the painting of the ceiling of one large room and the staining of various display cases." These three members of the Monterey History and Art Assn. have all gone from our midst but we have daily reminders of the good work they accomplished while here Mr. Raiguel had a part in designing the Monterey Post Office and the Few Memorial Building, as well as many other homes and buildings on the Peninsula. Mrs. Todd designed and planted the small sunken garden near the Brown adobe, part of the Few Memorial Building. Charles Allaire's painting is still a part of many of the historic shrines in this first capital of California.

Another interesting item accomplished in 1934 was, according to the president's annual report: "Only a few days ago the Association was requested by Col. Ralph M. Parker, to make recommendations for the site and design of a \$30 000 recreation building, outdoor swimming pool, etc., at the Presidio. Through a committee, consisting of Miss E. Charlton Fortune, Walter E. Snook, Allen Griffin and Col. Fitch, the Association did as requested. Mr. Snook designed the real Monterey type building and Miss Fortune the landscaping. The constructive help given by the committee was greatly appreciated by Col. Park and the construction of this building, of pure Monterey type, will give a further impetus to the use of this attractive and appropriate type of architecture in this community. Work has already begun on the building near Fort Mervine."

The directors voted at their regular meeting in December, 1934, that such funds as became available to them the next year should be utilized as far as practical for the following: (1) to assist in the restoration of the First Theater with special reference to the stage and accessories (b) to Assist in the development of the Old Custom House Museum (c) to provide markers of the same type as those already erected, for historic places still unmarked.