

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 31, 1959

Saving Our Pines

"Every untouched, natural or wild area that can be saved from exploitation gives tomorrow's generations a living museum as a link to America's past."

These lines are quoted from a leaflet distributed by "The Nature Conservancy" which has set out on a program to preserve our heritage of wild nature. It is a member-governed organization, incorporated in the District of Columbia for non-profit educational and scientific purposes. Its work began in 1917 as a national committee organized as an independent group, and in 1950 adopted the name of Nature Conservancy.

I have a letter before me written by Ronald L. Church, a graduate of the Pacific Grove High School and San Jose State College and now studying for a doctorate at the University of California. Before entering the university at Berkeley he spent a tour of duty in the U.S. Navy. Ronald is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Church of Monterey.

Church, thoroughly interested in the preservation of nature in California and writing from the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Life Sciences Building, University of California at Berkeley, has this to say regarding the objects, hopes and accomplishments of this group of conservationists.

It is readily apparent to Montereyans that the pine forests are continually being cleared, sub-divided, and otherwise exploited, paralleling the Peninsula's increases in population and activity. The time is foreseeable when no pure stands will remain unless some protective action is taken.

"Subscribers and supporters of 'The Nature Conservancy' are interested in preserving, here and there over the country, representative tracts of natural habitats, especially those in danger of final obliteration. The organization is reported to be interested in initiating action toward procuring an unspoiled stand of Monterey pine, which stand would be set aside as a preserve. This idea is especially appealing to me, both as one vitally interested in conservation and as a native of the Monterey Peninsula.

"Any information you may give in this matter will be greatly appreciated. There are others than myself who

hopefully anticipate whatever might be accomplished in Monterey."

The pamphlet accompanying the letter declares:

"Natural areas constitute an irreplaceable resource, as important to mankind as the Earth's economic products. They are the living museums that exemplify the past for the benefit of the future. Once they have been destroyed, they are gone forever.

"The more civilization crowds forward, the fewer natural areas there will be, and the more precious they will become. If there are to be any natural areas left for the future, such as a forest of Monterey pine, they must be set aside as soon as possible."

In education the natural areas are a source of wonder and excitement as they unfold the story of nature to children of the future. They will demonstrate the true character of our land, its vegetation, and its wildlife. They will provide a living picture of the country as seen by the pioneers surviving the wildness that nurtured our civilization. They will show the amazing variety and profusion of the natural resources that made America the land of opportunity.