

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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'What Cheer House'

Two important events, historically, took place in California this week: Santa Barbara's 177th birthday celebration, and the placing of a marker on the site of "What Cheer House" in San Francisco.

The Santa Barbara event took place on Tuesday and was sponsored by the Santa Barbara Historical Society, Plans and Planting Committee and Los Rancheros Visitadores. An outstanding feature on the program for the day, which began with a luncheon at Restaurante Del Paseo, was the placing of a plaque by the state Park Commission marking "Casa Covarrubias" as State Historic Landmark 308, Los Adobes de Los Rancheros, 715 Santa Barbara Street. The "Trussell-Winchester Adobe" and the "Hunt-Stambach House" held open house throughout the day.

Dr. Aubrey Neasham, historian of the State Division Beaches and Parks, spoke at the noon luncheon on "Current Trends in Preservation of California History."

"What Cheer House" ceremonies and dedication of State Historical Landmark No. 640 was sponsored by the American Trust Company, The California Historical Society, and the California State Park Commission. The program was held today at the corner of Sacramento and Lionesdorf streets in San Francisco, at 11 o'clock a.m. The site is now the head office of the American Trust Co.

The old "What Cheer House" was an historic hotel opened in 1852 by R. B. Woodward and destroyed by the fire of 1906. When built the establishment catered to men only, permitted no liquor on the premises and housed San Francisco's first free library and museum.

Dr. Coke Wood, a member of the College of the Pacific and executive secretary of the California Historical Foundation, the organization behind the conference of California Historical Societies, reported at the 12th annual meeting of the foundation, that there were 68 member societies represented and a membership of 119,539 individual members throughout the state. These figures certainly show an interest in the historical values in California and a growing concern over preservation and restoration of our rich heritage. Siskiyou County Historical Society leads in number of

members with 1,048, with Tulare County second with 944 members.

Several very fine books suitable for a collection of Californians have recently been published. Howell-North has recently announced the first edition since 1883 of "Comstock Mining and Miners" by Eliot Lord. This is a rare, out-of-print book for 75 years, and certainly the fountainhead of all subsequent books on the Comstock Lode. Lord's account was drawn from personal observations on the scene, and from research in contemporary newspaper files and business papers now lost forever. The report was commissioned by the United States Geological Survey and, although written with surprising warmth and skill, is a most factual, and true account of these incredible bonanza days. There are many photographs and drawings, some published in the book for the first time.

The Duchow Journal, the story of a voyage from Boston to California in 1852, is a recent contribution to Californiana, published by Mallette Dan of Fairfax, Calif. John Charles Duchow's journal of his voyage from Boston to California in 1852, a recent acquisition by the Bancroft Library, is an unusually fascinating personal account of the rush for gold. Unlike the typical diary, this one is warmly emotional and highly descriptive of the departure and shipboard life. Duchow was well educated, a born narrator, and singularly sensitive and objective to the human element in such an adventure. Unlike most of these diarists who vanished into obscurity upon arrival in San Francisco, Duchow became an important figure as the founder, editor, and publisher of newspapers in the gold country.

In the foreword of this book, Dr. George P. Hammond, director of the Bancroft Library, has given a remarkably fine account of Duchow's family background in Spain, a description of the boat on which he sailed, and his subsequent activities in California. Therefore, although the journal takes us from Salem to Boston and around the Horn, there is a complete picture of this man's significant contribution to the formative period of California.

The price is \$15 per copy.