

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Viennese 'Old Home Week'

Mary L. Greene, former curator of the Old Custom House in Monterey, and the restorer of the Casa Joaquin Soto adobe on Via Joaquin, writes such fascinating letters from the various places she is visiting during her European travels that we feel our readers should share them with us.

Mrs. Greene writes:

"It has been a Sort of 'Old Home Week' here in Vienna. In one day, I met Mr. and Mrs. Albertus. He is with the Forestry Dept. in Monterey. Then I met Marguerite Church at the Palace, and as I ate lunch Mr. and Mrs. Martin Flavin passed by.

"As usual I have walked and walked. The roses in the parks are a solid mass of color. Before going to Vienna, I went to Salzburg - that was one place I hated to leave it was so beautiful. A river flows through the city. There are many bridges and, on a hill, overlooking the town a huge turreted fortress castle. The shops are interesting, food wonderful. One thing they serve I have never had before is sweet souffle, just egg and sugar, eggs beaten separately then poured together in a pyrex dish, baked, sprinkled with powdered sugar - delicious! How they keep it from falling I could not make out.

"From Salzburg I took an all-day bus trip through the Tyrol country. Beautiful, mountains, like miles of Yosemite with large lakes for the floor. I heard the "Magic Flute" at the Laudes Theater. I really wanted to say longer in Salzburg, but reservations had been made and had to come on.

"The American Express told me that I could go by train to Berlin, getting a visa at the border. Sounded easy but no one spoke English and the officials were in a dither, finally they brought a soldier who spoke just a little English and I tried to explain why, what, where and when.

"I had to exchange trains at Magdeburg, East Germany. There they led me to an office and I finally got a visa. It would have been much easier if I spoke German. Then I had to wait about three hours for the next train.

"The depot was in shambles because of repairs but I found a bench out near the tracks and watched the Communists work. Women were working on trains,

lifting out baggage and boxes. Most wore pants and a dowdy lot they looked. They must live on potatoes as most of them were widespread and had stringy hair. A tall policeman kept his eye on me, paced up and down and finally when the Berlin train came, he saw that I got on it.

"I was in Berlin for a holiday - which corresponds to our Whitsunday and Easter parade. Everyone was carrying home branches of greenery, street cars, and buses had green branches of birch. When we got out of the opera people were still parading up the avenues and the cafes were crowded. I liked Berlin very much.

"I flew to Cologne and had a wonderful day, 14 hours sailing up the Rhine, then on to Heidelberg which I loved, so quaint and picturesque. There I crossed the path of Mrs. William F. Kroner of Pebble Beach and we had a grand time comparing notes. We are traveling in opposite directions so don't suppose we will meet again.

"I will be several days in Venice and will stay several weeks in Rome, but plans are not definite. Here in Vienna I am in the oldest part of the city. Around the corner is the oldest restaurant in town, built in 1400. Here "Ach de Lieber Agustin" was first heard, a distinction of which they are very proud.

"Opera last night: "The Masked Ball" an Italian, fine singing, wonderful music, felt very grand in a loge seat. However, most of the seats are loge except those on the main floor. Vienna loves her opera, and it is very hard to get seats.

"My address in Rome will be in care of the American Express."