

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### 'El Conmemoracion'

Petra on the Island of Mallorca, has been brought closer to Monterey through the letters of Mrs. W. C. Aldous of Carmel, who recently visited there and those of Mrs. Dina Moore Bowden, who makes her home in Palma and is active in the restoration and preservation of Father Junipero Serra's birthplace in Petra.

An elaborate celebration was held in Petra from July 18 to 21: "En Conmemoracion del CLXXV Aniversario de la Muerte Del Fundador de California." (175 years since the death of Padre Serra, founder of California). He died at Carmel Mission on St. Augustine's Day in 1784, and there he is buried in front of the altar.

Mrs. Dina Moore Bowden, former resident of San Francisco who is well known on the Monterey Peninsula and is now active in the preservation and restoration of Serra's birthplace, writes us of the celebration. She is the representative in connection with the Serra House from California. She reports that our ambassador (John Davis Lodge) could not be present at the festival but sent the cultural attache from Madrid, Dr. Jacob Canter. The cultural attache from the U. S. Consulate General was also present. The civil governor was so impressed by Dr. Canter's address that he requested it for the press of Mallorca. Thus it was published in all newspapers.

On the day of the "Festivales Juniperianos", Mrs. Bowden presented to the center a photograph of Ambassador Lodge and one of Vice President Nixon which he had autographed and sent for the occasion.

She also presented a copy of the San Francisco Chronicle dated Nov. 24, 1884. It was sent by the Society of California Pioneers, the body now responsible for the maintenance of the Serra House which was given to the City of San Francisco in 1932, by a group of Mallorcans. San Francisco still retains the title to the Serra birthplace house and pays the taxes.

The Chronicle had been bound, gratis, by the famed Barcelona book-binder, Brugalla. Several other gifts were received. The Monterey Peninsula was well represented in historical material, chief of which was 20 oil-paintings of the missions before their restorations, sent not long ago by Harry Dowie. They now surround

portrait of Padre Serra and hang on a background of antique handwoven Mallorca rug in russet and blue.

Monterey Peninsula will shortly have a showcase of its own to contain precious relics such as the reliquary containing a piece of Padre Serra's habit. Mr. and Mrs. John B. Morse have donated \$100 for this case that will be made of native wood by the cabinet maker of Petra. All the work on the center was done by Petra workmen and museum is of Petra stone.

The Serra House, thanks to the sum of \$400 voted by the San Francisco supervisors, has been completely restored, according to Mrs. Bowden, and is in better condition than it has been in many years. The house originally had a strip of sea stone paving" running from the front to the back door, historian D. Miguel Ramis reports.

Ramis is now the director of the Center of Studies of "Fray Junipero Serra." It was he who discovered the actual Serra House after which, it was restored and given to San Francisco. At that time the paving had not been replaced, but Mrs. Bowden had this done when the floor had to be renewed.

Many houses in Petra, she writes, have this feature and it gives character to these ancient houses. The flags sent by the Society of California Pioneers (the American Flag and California Bear Flag) have now an accompanying Spanish Flag and these hang on one of the walls of the Serra House. Mrs. Bowden, in the name of the association "Amigos de Fray Junipero Serra" wishes to thank all those "Amigos" in California whose generous donations to the building fund of the Center have made possible this beautiful building, which, with its forecourt, already filled with flowering plants, is a veritable oasis in the town of Petra.

Should anyone still wish to participate, writes Mrs. Bowden, donations towards benches would be most gratefully received. There are places for several, one being under the grape-vine at the back of Serra House. She also writes that it was "a great pleasure to have Mr. and Mrs. Aldous with us as representatives of Carmel on this historical occasion."