

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 17, 1961

### **El Alisal Open House**

On Sunday, March 5th, the California Historical Society celebrated the establishment of its new Southern California headquarters with an open house at El Alisal, the former estate of the late Charles Fletcher Lummis, a cultural pioneer of the whole Southwest area.

Lummis started work on El Alisal in 1894. He himself designed it and except for two Indian boys who carried heavy stones, he performed all the construction until 1919 when illness compelled him to relinquish the work. Among famous personalities of former days received at El Alisal by Charles Lummis were Theodore Roosevelt, Helen Modjeska, William Allen White, Vicente Ibanez and Will Rogers.

El Alisal is now California State Historical Landmark No. 351. It has been refurbished and is maintained by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks and will in the future be the Southern California headquarters of the society.

Charles F. Lummis was well known on the Monterey Peninsula. He attended Harvard University and later was given an honorary degree of Bachelor of Arts. After serving as editor of an Ohio newspaper, he set out on a continental walk from Cincinnati to Los Angeles under contract to write a series of articles on the adventure for the Los Angeles Times. He was editor of "Out West", founder of the California Landmarks Club, dedicated to preserving California missions and was largely responsible for saving Missions San Diego, San Fernando, San Juan Capistrano and the asistencia San Antonio de Pala.

Throughout his career he found time to complete an impressive body of published works, some of the best known of these are: Mesa, Canyon and Pueblo, Pueblo Indian Folk-Stories, a Bronco Pegasus, and Flowers of Our Lost Romance.

He is probably best known as the founder of the Southwest Museum and the donor of his extensive collections of books and artifact, to that institution. The California Historical Society's Notes reports: "Of all the honors conferred upon him he was proudest of the Doctor of Letters degree from Santa Clara University and the Order of Isabella la Catolica bestowed on him

by the King of Spain in recognition of his work on Spain in America."

"Charles Loomis died of cancer in 1928 but his spirit remains alive in the museum he founded, his books, and the house he built with his own hands. El Alisal."

The first annual California Mission meeting will be held at old Mission San Miguel, San Miguel, on Saturday, May 13, and Sunday May 14th. Membership in this organization is limited to the historical societies in California. The program for the event sounds interesting and informative.

The first session will begin at 3 p.m. on Saturday when the delegates will be welcomed by Fr. Regis Rohder, Q.F.M., superior of Mission San Miguel, and host of the convention. At 3:30 p.m. a field trip will be made through old Mission San Miguel with extended study of the original artifacts. At 5 p.m. the third session will start with an address by Fr. Florian Guest, O.F.M., on the civic administration of towns in early California, Fr. Guest has recently completed extensive research in Spain and Mexico on the early California period, and is associated with the Academy of American Franciscan History, Washington, D.C.

Country style supper served in Padre Martin Hall by the ladies of San Miguel is scheduled for 6 p.m. At 7 p.m. there will be an address by Mr. Ed Ainsworth of the Los Angeles Times, followed by an illustrated lecture on Indian Life at Mission San Antonio.

Sunday morning will consist of a field trip to Mission San Antonio. Mission San Antonio, it is claimed in the announcement of the conference, is the most untarnished example of genuine mission life. Lunch will be served that day in the patio of the mission.