

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Another Historical Landmark**

Another California historical landmark has been added to the long, important list of sites and buildings which the Division of Beaches and Parks has deemed Worthwhile for preservation - the Riverside Mission Inn, a famous hotel in the southern city.

Mission Inn was begun in 1876 as a two-story, 12 room adobe. After its continuous use for 85 years as a hotel, the inn now covers every inch of a full city block which was originally purchased as its site.

C.C. Miller, a civil engineer and Riverside pioneer, bought the land for the inn in 1874 and he and his son, Frank, built the first building two years later.

Frank bought the inn from his father in 1884 and developed it into a unique, sprawling hostelry it is today. The Inn was in the Miller family until the death of Mrs. DeWitt Hutchings, Miller's only child. It is now owned by Benjamin Swig and Associates who bought it in 1956.

Peter Vachek, inn manager, was notified by the Division of Beaches and Parks, State Department of Natural Resources, that the inn now is a state historical landmark.

A plaque telling of the inn's historical interest to California will be placed on a wall of the hotel.

More restoration and recognition! The National Park Service has promised substantial help to the St. Augustine Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission in restoring the Spanish section of this historic city, which will celebrate its 400th anniversary in 1965. The Park Service has an important stake in St. Augustine as a tourist center since it operates the historic Castillo de San Marcos there and Fort Matanzas, both of which are national monuments. Castillo de San Marcos, or Fort Marion, the oldest fort in the United States still in existence, was started in 1672. For 84 years the Spaniards and their slaves worked with Indian laborers to complete the fort. Fort Matanzas, built in 1737, is on Rattlesnake Island; about 16 miles south of Fort Marion. The drawing power of these two monuments as tourist attractions is indicated by the attendance figures for the last year when more than 366,000 persons visited Fort Marion and upwards of 62,000 toured Fort Matanzas.

A master plan for the restoration of the city's old Spanish section has been drawn up after a year of research by a group of architects, archaeologists, cartographers, and historians from various universities.

This past summer, Dr. Charles W. Arnade of the University of Florida, did extensive research on the Arrivas house in the old Spanish section, which will be the first section selected by the commission for complete restoration. Dr. Arnade found in his research that the house was built about 1712. One of the earliest occupants was Ramundo de Arrivas, and the building now being restored has long been known by that name.

While St. Augustine is paying rapt attention to its antiquity, modernization is also taking place. At the northern city limits, we have read, a \$70,000 motor lodge has been completed on U.S. Highway 1, the largest addition to St. Augustine's tourist facilities in many years. Nearby is a replica of the old city gates, built in 1743 by the Spanish as a defense against the English.

St. Augustine was a charming city when we were there four years ago when we visited many of the old monuments and buildings, comparing their preservation and restoration to what we had accomplished in Monterey since 1931, when the Custom House was saved through the efforts of the newly organized History & Art Assn., public spirited citizens and the State of California.