

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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A Report From Mexico

A report from Mrs. Mary Greene, former curator of the Old Custom House in Monterey and now residing in San Miguel de Allende in Mexico, tells of her exciting life south of the border. Mrs. Greene is attending the "Instituto" in San Miguel and is building a house there.

We quote from a recent letter:

"The big news hereabouts is the tremendous rains we have had for a week and two cloudbursts, one Thursday, the worst on Saturday. I got my car into the garage Saturday just at the beginning of the hard rain but by the time I got into the house it was coming down like it was out of a barrel. Soon the street could not be seen for the torrent of water. Then it began to hail and huge drifts of it formed against the walls of my garden. In fact, Sunday morning there were still patches of hailstones about the size of peas. Out on some of the ranches they said the stones were the size of baseballs. We are on a steep hillside and just the second door above me an American couple have a beautiful large house and the torrent turned over their station wagon, which they had parked on the street, and washed it part way down the hill. I was glad my little "Volks" was inside, otherwise I might never have found it. Many of the adobe houses collapsed, many people were caught in the floods in the arroyos and were drowned. So far in the town there were eight persons killed. They say never has there been such a storm. I had a lovely little patch of red lettuce which for a week I had been able to enjoy at my table and had given some to friends, they were all beaten to a pulp. My tomato plants also suffered and stock and scabiosa plants I set out are also gone.

"I don't know yet. how my new house fared, the roof is on and the walls all done but no windows or doors in yet. The new summer session at the Instituto starts today and there are 300 students enrolled, the largest, it is reported, they have ever had. It must have been exciting to the schoolteachers from the U. S. to arrive in such exciting times. There is also a new school, new since I left here over a year ago.

"Academia Espanyol-Americano." "They teach Spanish, history, etc., and sponsor lectures etc. Last week they sponsored ballet from the University of Michigan, just a

small group of five dancers. It was held in the local theater, a small one, about the size of the First Theater in Monterey, but a mite wider. All the American colony turned out in full force.

"Silvia Jordan is attending morning, classes at the Academia, also two classes in Spanish at the Instituto and a class in Mexican history. In the afternoon at 3 o'clock, she teaches a class in English in a school for boys downtown, gratis, and the evenings she teaches a class in English for people of the town who want to learn English at the Instituto. Needless to say, she is kept busy. She plans to come again next summer because she cannot get all her credits by the time, she must be back in Monterey for the fall opening of the school session."

Mrs. Jordan is a member of the teaching staff in the Monterey school system and is at present on leave to attend the college in Mexico.

Mrs. Green writes more concerning her active life in San Miguel. "I keep busy. I enjoy much reading. They have a good Library here they accept gifts of English books, all the revenue they obtain from house and garden tours (every Sunday, four houses), they spend on maintenance and purchase of books in Spanish. They have large rooms where free breakfasts are given to poor children and they also have classes in crafts, painting, puppets, etc. a sort of social center.