

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Casa Abrego

Mrs. Esther Steven Barney of La Jolla was the house guest of her cousin, Walter L. Steven, and Mrs. Steven in their Pebble Beach home recently. Not only was she a welcome guest here because of her charm and her interest in Monterey, but because of her years of residence here when she was the second owner of Casa Abrego now the Casa Abrego Club on the corner of Abrego and Webster streets. Mrs. Barney bought the old adobe building from Don Jose Abrego, the original builder and owner, in 1917. She sold it to Mrs. Mary Black of Santa Barbara. Mrs. Black later became Mrs. Douglas Morrison and established her studio in the adobe, bought several surrounding lots, built the two-story building to the north and surrounded the handsome garden with a high wall.

Mrs. Barney, a graduate of Stanford, is also an artist with a studio in Ramona, a charming district not far from her home in La Jolla. It was she who put in the large window to the north end of the present dining room at Casa Abrego, which room was divided into two rooms with a wooden wall. There was also a small corner fireplace in the studio, she remembers. Most of the woodwork Mrs. Barney thinks is teak, for that is what she was told by Don Jose Abrego. The main entrance door was carved in Monterey. She had also been told that the wood in the door resisted bullets which frequently went astray in Monterey in the first years after Casa Abrego was built.

During Mrs. Barney's visit here she was a guest at luncheon in Casa Abrego and made the annual Adobe House Tour on June 24 when she renewed friendships, saw the houses she had known in the early 1920's, and remarked at the many changes in the old town since her days of residence here.

The June "Noticias del Puerto de Monterey" has been mailed to the 795 members of the Monterey History and Art Assn'. This quarterly booklet, besides containing at least one historic article, gives the news of the events sponsored by the association, a list of new members since the previous publication, a list of gifts and other news of interest. Donald Craig, a director of the association, is the editor.

So popular and important has the bulletin become that the secretary receives frequent requests for copies from libraries and institutions in foreign countries. The latest request for placement on the list of subscribers comes from Bologna Center, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, via Belmeloro, Italy, library.

The librarian writes from 'Bologna: "The library of the European Center of American Studies, which is an integral part of the Johns Hopkins Bologna Center, attempts to collect source and research materials on the U.S., and North America as a whole."

Five California historical societies will host the 1961 annual meeting of the American Assn. for State and Local History in San Francisco Aug. 30 through Sept. 1. They are the California Historical Society, the California Division of Beaches and Parks, the Historical Society of Southern California, the Society of California Pioneers, and the Conference of California Historical Societies.

Donald Biggs, director of the California Historical Society, is in charge of the local arrangements. Some of the panel sessions planned for the three-day meeting will attempt to give concrete solutions to problems faced by historical society personnel, and "Historical Preservation in California" "Historical Society Libraries," and "Local Historical Societies."

Mrs. Margaret Hanna Lang, formerly a resident of Monterey and now living in Sonora, California, acted as the official delegate from the Monterey History and Art Assn. to the annual meeting of the Conference of California Historical Societies held in Columbia June 22-24.

Mrs. Lang writes: "It was a great thrill to be a delegate of the Monterey History and Art Assn. I put it on my badge which confused the people of Tuolumne County. It was a wonderful conference and since it was my first, I got a lot out of it, although I sat in the lobby helping to register arrivals."

"People were very good sports for they were almost immobilized with the heat which got to 112 degrees in Sonora. Los Angeles won the conference for 1962, over Visalia and San Diego. There are 14 associated societies in the Los Angeles area who will assist in entertaining the California conference and to plan the program of events."