

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

August 7, 1961

### **San Francisco's Old Mint**

San Francisco's old Mint Building at Fifth and Mission streets has been declared eligible for registration as a National Historic Landmark, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall has announced. But more important to Monterey is the fact that included in the listing, for such an honor is the Custom House, The Larkin House and Carmel Mission. Now the registration must be applied for, we understand, by the chief of the Division of Beaches and Parks, Charles De Turk, and the division itself.

These landmarks are among 43 sites approved by Udall for addition to the list of more than 200. previously named through the nation.

The registry of National Historic Landmarks is designed to recognize and endorse the preservation and protection of structures and sites now administered by states, other public agencies or historical societies.

It also seeks to encourage private owners of historic landmarks to maintain them. The old Mint in San Francisco is now in use as offices and workshops for the National Park Services.

Other California sites announced as eligible for national registration included the historic towns of Bodie, Columbia and Coloma. New Almaden in Santa Clara County was declared eligible because of the mercury mines there, the most productive ever found in the United States.

Virginia City, Nev., the community that grew up after the discovery of the Comstock Lode, was named, and so was Walker Pass, in the southern part of the Sierra Nevada, where the trapper and explorer Joseph Reddeford Walker made the earliest known crossing into California by an American. Walker visited Monterey in 1883 with his trapping party to remain throughout the winter. The Intrepid leader assembled approximately 50 head of cattle, more than 300 horses, and some 30 dogs preparatory to saying goodbye to the hospitable people of Monterey, Dr. Rockwell Hunt reports in his book "California's Stately Hall of Fame."

Admirers of Robert Louis Stevenson, nature lovers and hikers and haters of litterbugs, will be delighted to know that the Stevenson State Monument on Mt. St. Helena in Napa County has been cleaned up and improved

during the past weeks. The trail leading up from the Lake County highway to the monument was even in worse condition than the public or anyone else realized, for work crews hauled off two tons of trash and garbage which had been strewn over the trail and nearby area by the public.

Clyde Rey, new supervisor of Bothe Napa Valley Park, under whose supervision the Robert Louis Stevenson State Park has been placed, reports that the path is now cleaned to the Stevenson Memorial on the St. Helena mountain side, and the path is now more readily accessible to those who wish to visit the historic site where Stevenson and his bride spent their honeymoon in 1880, Rey reported to the Weekly Calistogan.

This is the first time in the history of the state park that regular maintenance of the area will be available. Park personnel have set up a progressive plan of improvement and that the RLS State park would be included in a proposed five-year plan of acquisition and development of state Division of Beaches and Parks.

The editor of the Callstogan also states that incidentally, although the monument is on state property, the Silverado Mine about the cairn and the dilapidated old barn on the mining road leading to the Silverado Ranch are not state owned but believed to be in the Patten estate. The Pattens once owned the Inn and the toll road, which old-timers enjoyed traveling over in addition to eating a meal that Mollie Patten had prepared.

The upper half of Mt. St. Helena is federally owned. Supervisor Rey reports "We also hope to do something about the water which pours down the draw and directly over the Stevenson monument, and that the situation presents a definite engineering challenge. Old-timers in the St. Helena area are of the opinion that the monument itself is not actually on the site of the Stevenson's honeymoon cabin. It was set where it is, they believe, because title to the more probable site nearby was cloudy at the time of the dedication by Napa county clubwomen in 1911.

Stevenson himself, in his "Silverado Squatters" gave the location of his home as directly in front of the lower entrance to the mine, which would make it be the more level shelf above and to the left of where the monument now stands.