

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

October 1, 1962

### **Columbia Report**

A report of the activities at Columbia, a California State Monument in the Mother Lode country near Sonora, sounds interesting and makes one wish to pack up and motor over, to this delightful old town, once the largest mining camp in California.

A letter from Mrs. Margaret Hanna Lang, formerly a resident of Monterey, now active in many ways in the life of Columbia, tells of many gay and interesting activities in which she is taking an active part.

"Life has become very full for me since I started to work weekends at the Lode-Lore Shop here. Every imaginable sort of person comes through Columbia, and the crowds have been enormous. The business association and the state got permission of the supervisors to close the main street to cars and it has been an uproar. The old timers feel they have lost their town, although the grocery store and the post office were moved up to the edge of town long before, the street was closed. Practically all the tourists are in favor of it, and hundreds of people have written their approval to the supervisors. The stagecoach would make its trip into town and it went by all day long. To sit on the box and hold the shotgun costs an additional quarter. I loved to see some small boy all thrilled with the shotgun across his lap. Now the 90-day closing is over, and cars line the streets.

"I keep on writing, and having some material printed. I have done some research for a professor at the University of California at Berkeley, and hope to do more.

"The Jedediah Smith Society meets this month and all who attend are asked to represent some actual person who lived up to 1869. I am copying a dress, with variations, from a daguerreotype of my grandmother. And taking the history of the great-grandmother of a friend here who came here from Ireland.

"The ladies Fire Auxiliary of Columbia had a booth in the fair, which took a lot of work. Then Columbia had "Fire Day." which meant that the ladies served 150 persons the state sending its fire camp kitchen. The little old fire engine, Papeete, won the contest between the four old hand pumpers of the Mother Lode. All us fire ladies wore red shirts and blue skirts. We also went to the

Memorial Day ceremonies at the old cemetery. The ceremonies were very touching with the graves of veterans of five wars.

"Yesterday we were very apprehensive over the fire at Mi-wuk Village. The borate planes roared overhead all day long. But the fire was extinguished by dark. There may be people up here who can remain apart from all the happenings but most of us, even newcomers take everything as our own affair.

"Marian and Bert Dienelt who own the Mission Ranch in Carmel have bought the old Gunn Adobe and are remodeling it into a beautiful motel; The middle part of it was Dr. Gunn's first printing office for the Sonora Herald, which was printed on the Zamorano press. It is in the middle of Sonora and there was no one or organization to retain it for its history.

"I tried to dispose of some of my pottery and other things at the "flea market" held by the church, but like everyone I brought home as much as I sold. The two milk cans I found at the dump, I sold at once. These flea markets are unbelievable. Anyone who wants to pay \$3 for a table, \$6 for a large one, and then puts on it anything they want. I sold pottery, etcetera's, and items I had packed up at Junk shops. I bought an electric fan for 75 cents and a solid silver bag top for 50 cents. The prices on the antique tables were high. The town of Jamestown had another flea market the next day, on the main street. People came from all over just to hunt for items.

"This letter has gone on and on because I know you love this country. I wish there were some way you could just run up when something interesting is about to happen."