

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 27, 1963

City Beautification

Back in 1910 the Monterey Women's Civic Club really was interested in civic matters. Members were so genuinely interested in the beautification of the City of Monterey that they spent one week preparing the soil and planting the Serra Landing Place. That was in 1914.

Early in 1910 the women of the club decided that the Monterey cemetery needed their attention and so they went to work in earnest to clean it up, do some planting and in general make needed improvements there. This project needed financial aid, so they gave a ball in Bagby Hall.

The Monterey Daily Cypress of Feb. 8, 1910, reported: "The Civic Club ball last evening was one of the most pleasant affairs that has been given in Monterey this year. It was a full-dress affair, and the young ladies looked pretty in their dainty gowns."

At a meeting of the club on Feb. 11, 1910, the committee of the cemetery improvement reported that "work was progressing fine, walks had been fixed, trees trimmed, and water brought into the grounds." At this same meeting it was reported: "The club had undertaken the restoring of the first playhouse in California to a condition that it can be used as a clubhouse, and also for the production of plays on stated occasions." On the same afternoon the club members visited and inspected the building and premises. Estimates of repairing the building had been received, according to the report. One company was willing to do the exterior work for \$900 and the other quoted the price of \$1,500 to put the building in good shape so that it could be occupied, the inside finished and seats placed in it.

The women had further plans to plant the grounds and they had the promise of A.D. Shephard of the Pacific Improvement Co. that he would furnish plans for the garden and free water service.

On Feb. 16, 1910, a delegation from the club attended the city council meeting to thank the city for the financial help given them in the improvement of the cemetery. Present were: "Mrs. Dr. McGowan, Mrs. Hilby, and Mrs. Dr. Davies." Mrs. McGowan spoke for the club and said Dr. Freeman had been "very kind to them and always furnished the committee with a horse

and buggy whenever they wanted to visit the cemetery." Trustee Steadman said: "They have done the work better than the trustees themselves could have done it."

At a meeting of the club on June 11 the members were still interested in the "Old Theatre" project, but a report was brought by the committee, that the commission had done nothing toward turning the building over to the club and until they did, they could do nothing.

At the same gathering Mrs. Husted presented to the club "a very pretty" gavel made from teak wood taken from the ill-fated "Roderick Dhu". We hope that the gavel is still preserved and treasured by the club, as likewise we hope the gavel given by Mrs. J.C. Anthony and made from wood of the old Allen House, the first frame house in California, has been placed among the historical items of the club. The wooden house stood on Munras avenue not far from Alvarado street.