

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Happy, Dusty Days

The late Gouverneur Morris, who was a resident of the Peninsula for many years and whose home was that now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Work, once compiled a small two-page folder entitled "A Great Tribute to the Monterey Peninsula."

This prophesy has almost come true: "The playground of California's future millions." But when Morris was first here, Jules Simoneau was still alive, and there were more adobe buildings than there are now more red tiled roofs. In the whole of California, he wrote, there were, only three or four automobiles, and the incomparable approaches to Monterey, that from Carmel and those from Salinas and Castroville, were not desecrated by signs.

Gouverneur Morris had been loaned a gray pony named Fiddlesticks in those happy, dusty days, a pony who could find his way blindfolded into the heart of the old maze at Hotel Del Monte and with whom he became intimately acquainted with every square foot of the beautiful land on the Peninsula.

"Now unless it be the Island of Mt. Desert, off the Maine coast, there is no small geographical unit in all this immense world so variedly, deliciously and peacefully beautiful as the Monterey Peninsula," Morris wrote in his tiny leaflet - which might well have been a chamber of commerce project. "Nor has any other region an air so sweet, so fresh and so compelling," he continued.

Under the subhead "Wonderful Land," Morris declared: "If there are people still left in this restless world who care about homes which grow more beautiful with occupancy and care - people, in short, who can be content to pick on some one place and live in it, I have always thought that from January around to January again there is no place in all this world that has so much to lavish as the Monterey Peninsula."

Morris continued: "If you love a wild coast it is here. So is the deep tranquil forest and the rolling uplands, set richly with live oaks and in the springtime exploding into flowers."

We wish we knew, or could guess, when Morris predicted this: . . . "The Peninsula's future is a better and surer kind. Someday there will be 20 million people

in California, and this will be their playground. It cannot be otherwise for there is no other region upon the whole California coast which can hold a candle to it or which for beauty of contour and vegetation and climate is fit to be mentioned in the same breath with it."

Gouverneur Morris came back to Monterey and purchased the Casa de Castro, a small adobe which had been the home of Gen. Jose Castro, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Work. The house he built around the original old adobe. Morris won fame through his writings as a novelist and a contributor for many years to the Saturday Evening Post.