

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

June 10, 1963

Conference

The Conference of California Historical Societies will meet at the Hotel Bellevue in San Francisco Thursday through Saturday June 20-22. This year's host is the California Historical Society which is holding a pre-convention reception at its mansion, 2090 Jackson St., June 20 at 8 p.m. Schubert Hall, the society's new library building also will be open to guests that evening.

At the conference there will be round table discussions on group tours, Clyde Arbuckle leading; historical displays, Dr. Aubrey Neasham; California Heritage Council, Ted Moulton and historic house preservation, June Reading.

Mrs. Guernsey B. Nevius has written us an interesting note after reading our story concerning the introduction of the potato in California. Jean Francois Caloupe de la Perouse, commanded the French frigates "Boussole" and "Astrolabe" when he landed in Monterey, Sept. 14, 1786. Perouse was the first friendly foreigner of distinction to visit California. He stayed in Monterey for 10 days. Through gifts to the missionaries and military officials; he is credited with the introduction of the potato to California.

Mrs. Nevius writes: "I was very interested in the article about the history of the potato, as I have records of one of my ancestors, the "Parmentiers" Sudbury, Mass. Of course, they originally escaped from France, (Parmentier) and fled to England during the "persecution". My records have it they were the ones who discovered that the potato was edible. They may have taken it to England when they fled France. They came to America in 1635 and I have a picture of a large stone monument, next to Wayside Inn in Sudbury, where their home was more or less of a garrison for all the families around."

Mrs. J. William MacLennan of Cannel has presented a painting "The Cathedral of Palma," to the Monterey History and Art Assn. E. Cashion MacLennan's painting of Palma, Mallorca was painted from Terreneco, across the Bay of Palma. The painting is centered on the cathedral, located not far from the Franciscan monastery where Padre Serra studied and taught.

At the time the painting was made, the MacLennans were spending a month in Mallorca, and were fortunate

to be there at the time of the Easter ceremonies. The Thursday before Easter, they followed the Mallorcan custom of visiting as many churches as possible; it should be an odd number and they went to nine that morning.

In the evening, the most revered image in Palma, a life-sized image of Christ, was carried on a platform borne on the shoulders of men from the hospital to the cathedral. Often, as the image was passing, someone in the crowd watching would sing to it, beseeching a blessing on soldiers far from home. Accompanying the image were representatives from the various Catholic brotherhoods wearing the Duns Scotus hooded costume, each man carrying a candle, and they were followed by penitents walking barefoot over sanded streets, most of them dragging iron chains.

Easter services in the cathedral were impressive, with several cardinals, in their gorgeous robes, officiating. It is said that the Easter services in Palma are the most inspiring in all Spain.

Later on Easter day it was a gala time for the young people. On the broad central walk, La Rambla, the young men and the young unmarried women strolled in separate groups. They were not permitted to stop and talk to each other; Duenas were seated watching on benches along the walks. But the young people, by means of their smiles and eyes, flashed expressive messages back and forth.

MacLennan found sketching in Mallorca a great pleasure, especially at the cathedral and at the Monastery of St. Francis.

Palma is a monument out of the past that is of special interest to Californians for her influence has been deeply felt and has had great influence on the lives of Californians.