

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **The Story Behind 'End Of The Trail'**

To those readers who remember the Panama-Pacific Exposition held San Francisco in 1915 also will remember two pieces of statuary in front of the Court of Palms, "The End of the Trail" and "The Pioneer" and probably have been wondering these many years whatever happened to them.

When I was in Tulare a couple of weeks ago, visiting my birthplace and attending to other interests, I visited Mooney Grove, a large and beautiful county park between Tulare and Visalia. As a very young girl I remember this grove of huge valley live oaks very well and often heard my parents and others hoping the grove could be saved and become a park, It is now several acres of sweeping lawns, tables and benches for picnic parties, plenty of fresh water for large and winding lakes, much bird life, a museum and many old buildings brought into the grove because of their historic interest.

The two pieces of sculpture from the exposition are most noticeable, "The End of the Trail" by James Earl Fraser, probably the most popular group on the grounds, stands well back from the highway so it can be admired by all passersby. The Indian with his spear, seated on his tired pony after many hours of traveling over the mountains battling with the wind bends forward with weariness. The group has an added pathos in suggesting the end of the Indian race.

Mrs. Monica Borglum Davies, daughter of Solon Borglum, who executed the famous statue of the "Pioneer," a copy of which stands in Mooney Grove, has written to the Tulare Historical Society telling the organization a bit about the artist and his work.

Among Solon Borglum's papers is an outline of his own thoughts, wrote Mrs. Davies, which guided him in the making of this group which would depict the achievement of the white man, symbolically expressing his success and what had brought him to it. In the sculptor's mind, the group portrays the pioneer of many years back, who was born and cradled in hardship. His prancing, well-fed horse represents his present position. Solon wrote: ". . .on the lower border (of the saddle blanket) is suggested the buffalo robe with Indian characters on it; this part represents entirely the Indians

of the Plains, the next above this is a stockade . . . against this stockade is shown, at intervals, a cross. The stockade and the cross are what all the pioneers, or real home builders, surrounded themselves with from the Atlantic to the Pacific . . . My whole thought has been the home and he is simply dreaming over his old days. . ."

Mrs. Davies wrote: "I recall vividly the model who posed for this old pioneer. . .he was known for miles around as 'The Basket Man,' because he took orders and delivered baskets. For years he was a familiar sight as he traveled by foot with the baskets strapped to his back, standing out in all directions. His long gray curls came to his shoulder and he was tall and erect, just as Father portrayed him. He must have been close to 80, but the round trip to Father's studio, some 10 miles each way, didn't faze him. His name was Rezo Waters."