

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Trees At Del Monte Park

John Muir once wrote: "I go into the woods to find myself; it is so easy to get lost in the world."

These lines are quoted from a booklet prepared many years ago by the late Alexander Eddie, long time the supervising gardener of the Hotel Del Monte Park before the hotel was taken over by the Naval Postgraduate School.

The trees which dominate the park are California live oaks (*quercus agrifolia*). There are upwards of 500 species of oaks recorded from over the world, but none surpass the beauty of those to be seen here, Mr. Eddie declared. He requested the reader to contemplate the sturdy trunk and its branches, tons of weight carried far off balance, but built to carry the stresses and strains imposed by the storms. A full-grown tree, he wrote, will transpire as much as 120 tons of water each year. There was and probably still is to be seen, near where the garages were, a cork oak. This is the tree which furnishes the cork of commerce, and is itself a study.

The beech is a close relative of the oak. Near the lower tennis courts is a fine specimen of the copper beech.

"Close to the beech is a very remarkable genus known as the Maiden Hair tree. We are indebted to the priests of China for its existence in the world today for nowhere is it to be found growing native. It has been called a living fossil, for its genealogy goes back to the time before man was even a promise on earth," Eddie continued in his tale of Del Monte Park.

"Also, in this area are two huge lindens, known also as basswood, linn and lime. They are the genus which grace the famous "Unter den Linden" in Germany. This tree is woven into German folklore and poetry. A leaf of the linden fell between the shoulders of the otherwise invulnerable Siegfried, which enabled Hagen to stab him. Virgil speaks of it and Longfellow tells of its wood being made into bowls at Hiawatha's Wedding.

"Close by is a tulip tree with its curious violin-shaped leaves and greenish tulip-like flowers. To the lumbermen of the eastern states it is known as yellow poplar."

During the fall and winter the colorful leaves of the liquid amber or red gum, a native of America from

Connecticut to Missouri, are a seasonal attraction. The gum of the liquid amber was used by the Indians as a dentifrice.

English holly trees thrive abundantly, in the Navy school park. Their rich green crinkled leaves and bright red berries at Christmas time remind us of the festive boards of the Anglo-Saxons. The American evergreen holly, *ilex opaca*, is a first cousin of the English holly, and there are several other species in this country. From Japan and China comes *ilex cornuta*, the horned holly, equally at home in the school park.

(To be continued)