

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 28, 1965

History Group

On Saturday, Nov. 8, 1930, there appeared this headline on the front page of the Monterey Peninsula Herald: "Historical and Art Association to be Organized."

Now that the association is involved in many and various activities, it seems appropriate that the real beginning of the group should be recalled, so our story today is devoted to its first activities in the interests of Old Monterey.

Plans to form the association culminated at a dinner meeting held Nov. 16, 1930, when the matter was discussed and the corporation formed, as announced by Laura Bride Powers.

The meeting was held in Cademartori's Italian restaurant, then on Fremont street opposite Marsh's Oriental Shop. The meeting was open to the public. It was the day that marked the 388th anniversary of the discovery of Monterey Bay by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo.

Cabrillo, Mrs. Powers pointed out, was Portuguese by birth but was sailing under the Spanish Flag at the time of the discovery. He named this area Bahia de los Pinos for the pine-covered hills and mountains that ran down to the ocean. Mrs. Powers was the first curator of the Old Custom House when it was opened as a state monument.

In the nature of a "holding" organization it was to be tentatively named the Monterey History and Art Assn. and to have as its objectives the development of interest in Monterey landmarks and sites, development of historical museums and revival of national interest in the art possibilities and development of the old California capital.

The primary objective of the moment was to create a holding corporation that could take over properties, real or personal, that civic-minded persons might bequeath or donate. It was to be a nonprofit and nonpolitical organization.

Included in the group active in the movement to form such a corporation were Mr. and Mrs. Armin Hansen, Col and Mrs. Roger Fitch, Col. and Mrs. Jerome Pillow, Col. and Mrs. E.R. Gibson, S.F.B. Morse, Mr. and Mrs. Francis McComas, Mr. and Mrs. William Raiguel, Mr. and Mrs. Gouverneur Morris, Mr. Allen Griffin, Mr. and

Mrs. Louis C. Merrell, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Rowntree, Capt. And Mrs. P.J. Hudgins, Mrs. Lottie Shipley, Mrs. Laura Bride Powers, Miss E. Charlton Fortune, Miss Lucy Pierce, Mr. Myron Oliver, Mr. and Mrs. Carmel Martin, Mr. and Mrs. .R. Sneyd-Kynnersley, Mrs. Mary C.W. Black, Mr. and Mrs. William O'Donnell and the Misses Lee, Vida and Margaret Jacks.

The first project of the association after its organization was the erection of historic markers before some of the most important adobes in the Old Town and historical sites.

An interesting exhibit, including photographs of early sailing vessels by Louis Slevin, Carmel photographer; a map showing the popular conception of California in 1849, the property of Burton Boundy Monterey artist, and a copy of "The Californian," dated March 15, 1848, and announcing the discovery of gold in California, were presented by Mrs. Powers at a dinner at Cademartori's.

In the December 1931 issue of the Herald appeared this story:

"Monterey this week is the richer for 10 more double markers for its historic buildings. They were again the gift of the History and Art Assn., which long ago took up the task of providing markers for the town's historic spots and has now given more than 50 of them.

Very recently the association installed new markers at the Fremont Headquarters on Hartnell street, next to the post office; the lovely old Doud house on Van Buren street, home of the late Francis Doud who was sergeant-at-arms at the California Constitutional Convention in 1849; the Estrada adobe on Tyler street, recently restored by Monterey Saving and Loan; at Fort Mervine and at the Presidio of Monterey. The latter marker had been damaged by vandals.