

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

June 30, 1965

Powers Awards

On June 5, Monterey celebrated her 195th birthday in Memory Garden with over 650 members of the Monterey History and Art Association present to enjoy the colorful event.

One of the most important announcements on the program was the names of the persons chosen to receive the Laura Bride Powers award "in recognition of service enhancing the general interest and historic renown of Monterey.

The awards are truly very handsome; the printing and design were done by Lawton Kennedy of San Francisco. The seal at the top of the 11 by 15 inch sheet is the work of Margaret Hanna Lang, with a series of dates 1603-1769 and 1822-1846 surrounding drawings of the landing of Serra and Portola, of Commodore Sloat's landing and of the flags which have flown over California.

The awards were presented "in recognition of outstanding service to Monterey in the spirit of the association's goals in testimony whereof we have set our hands and seal of the Monterey History and Art Association, recalling the ceremonies which Fray Junipero Serra and Don Gaspar de Portola held at the site of the Viscaino-Serra Monument when they took final possession of California in the name of Charles III of Spain."

Receiving awards were Col. Allen Griffin, Myron Oliver and Mayo Hayes O'Donnell, none of whom knew that he had been chosen for the honor.

Donor of the awards was Mrs. George Applegarth of San Francisco and Carmel, the daughter of the late Laura Bride Powers, a newspaper woman of distinction, the author of "Old Monterey" a book now out of print and a collector's item—first curator of the Old Custom House and the woman whose inspiration brought the Monterey History and Art Association into being.

Mrs. Applegarth has supplied a sufficient number of the printed awards to last a dozen or more years and to be given to one person each year who has been outstanding in interest in preserving Monterey's history and heritage.

On May 27, 1937, a resolution was adopted by the history and art association board of directors as follows:

"Be it resolved on the occasion of the retirement of Mrs. Laura Bride Powers as curator and custodian of the historical landmarks of the Monterey Peninsula this body express to her its deep appreciation of her thought and initiative in the conception and organization of this association and her creative imagination and practical energy in visualizing and bringing into actuality the annual "Birthday Party," and her various, untiring and successful efforts in preserving and restoring of historical relics of the Monterey Peninsula, in developing a proud and active community consciousness of them and in gathering together and disseminating a large body of authenticated fact concerning events of historical importance occurring on the Monterey Peninsula...(signed) J. H.R. McKillop, president and R.F. Brady, Secretary."

Col. Roger S. Fitch became the first president of the association through the choice and suggestion of Mrs. Powers. He was then (1930) the commanding officer at the Presidio of Monterey. He carried on for many years and participated in all historical events staged during his lifetime.

Mrs. Helen S. Giffen, executive director and librarian for the all-male Society of California Pioneers, where she has been employed for the last 23 years, received a signal honor yesterday, the day San Francisco celebrated its 189th birthday.

She was given the Laura Bride Powers Memorial Award "in recognition of service enhancing the general interest and historic renown of our great city."

Mrs. Giffen and her husband, the late Guy S. Giffen, were authors of the book "Casas and Courtyards, published in 1955. She also wrote the first complete biography of Gen Mariano Vallejo, which she published serially in the Pony Express Courier, and many other books and articles.