Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Let's Prepare For 1970

In 1950 the registration of historical landmarks which had been carried out through the California State Chamber of Commerce, with the markers placed by the Division of Highways, was transferred to the California State Park Commission.

The California Centennial Commission, which had carried on during the three years of observances in various parts of the state of the admission of California to statehood, was most appropriately commemorated.

Remember 1946 and 1949 in Monterey and how beautiful Alvarado street looked and what a gay time we all had. Also remember the historical pageant at the Monterey Peninsula College?

The Department of Highways still maintains the approach signs which call attention of motorists to the location of such markers.

The California Centennial Commission undertook the responsibility of marking these buildings and sites with permanent bronze plaques placed upon stone bases. The policy of the commission was to furnish the bronze markers, and the various localities or organizations furnished the bases.

This was done in Monterey when on June 3, 1949, the bronze tablet was placed on the large boulder near the Father Serra landing place, in memory of Don Gaspar de Portola. The Monterey History and Art Association furnished the stone and sponsored the unveiling of the plaque furnished by the State Centennial Commission.

Under the auspices of the Native Daughters of the Golden West, Junipero Serra Parlor of Monterey, a boulder was placed in El Estero Park just off Fremont street in honor of De Anza, who reached Monterey on May 1,1774, the first white man ever to make a journey from Sonora, Mexico, to the California coast by land.

The Native Sons, Monterey Parlor, sponsored the placing of a marker on the La Porte building, comer of Alvarado and Pearl streets, as the headquarters of Juan B. Alvarado, the state's second native, governor, who was born in Monterey February 14, 1809. He later became administer of the Custom House. This plaque was also presented by the commission.

The largest of all these markers was placed In Portsmouth Square in San Francisco, which is the most prominent historic shrine in the city, telling the story of the great events occurring in the plaza from the raising of the American Flag to the oration over the body of Senator Broderick following the death in a duel with Chief Justice Terry.

At the dedication of the Shasta Dam, a tablet was placed on the wall of the great dam honoring the pioneer mothers and fathers, with the title: "If you seek their monument look about you."

Among the most outstanding of these markers were those erected commemorating the Death Valley 49ers who started for the gold fields via the southern desert route; marking the birthplace on the Anza Trail of the first white child born in California; the site in San Francisco where the Society of California Pioneers was organized in 1850; the spot in Southern California where the Temecula Treaty with the Indians was signed; at the old mining communities of Fiddletown, Dutch Flat, Yankee Jim's Ophir, Forest Hill, Jamestown, Michigan Bluff, Iowa Hill, Chinese Camp, Vallecito , Copperopolis, O'Bryne's Ferry, Campo Seco, Poloma, the site of the first adobe in Lake County.

The placing of these plaques in historic places was one of the popular activities of the Centennial Commission, and it is most fortunate that this important work is to be continued. It would certainly be appropriate if Monterey should be represented upon the historic advisory committee, for what city in the state has a more historic background and where is a continual vigilance more needed to save a heritage?

From now on until the 200th centennial four years from now, Monterey should be ready to sponsor a celebration even larger and more beautiful than those staged in 1946 and 1949. There are still buildings, adobes and other places which should be marked. The Monterey History and Art Association and the Monterey Foundation are willing and ready to assist.