

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 15, 1968

Museum Board Plans Party

The Board of Museum trustees of the City of Monterey plan another annual reunion of the pupils who went to school in Colton Hall. The former students gathered for their first reunion in the museum upstairs to renew old friends, converse with former classmates about their families and friends and to enjoy refreshments in the old hall where the California Constitution was drafted and signed in 1849. The Museum Board acted as hostesses, assisted by Mrs. Pauline McClear, then curator.

It seems appropriate to review the history of the group of interested citizens who gave of their time and knowledge to make the upper floor of the Colton Hall the charming place it is today. Not only are the two rooms upstairs in the hall beautiful architecturally, but the museum board through the years since 1959 have succeeded in bringing back the feeling of the place as it looked during the Constitutional Convention 112 years ago

It was on Thursday, Sept. 15, 1938, that a group of five citizens selected by Emmet G. McMenam, then mayor of the City of Monterey, met for the purpose of organizing an historical museum.

On the evening of September 20th the council took the first steps toward establishment of an historical museum in old Colton Hall, when the suggestion of the newly appointed museum committee that the upper floor of the building be set aside for their use, was referred to the city manager with the request that it be given every consideration.

On the first museum board were Mrs. G.S. Curtis, the official chairman; Mrs. H.W. Toulmin, Mrs. W.M. O'Donnell, Arthur Gill Gilbert and Pal Clark.

On the 21st of March, 1939 the Council of Monterey passed ordinance No. 402 for the establishment and maintenance of a public museum of natural and historical objects within the City of Monterey. The ordinance was signed by Mayor McMenam, and Councilmen Peter Hay, J. R. Perry, John Thomsen; and Clyde A. Dorsey, city clerk.

In May the first museum board, was appointed by B.J. Pardee, city manager at that time. On Sept. 28, 1943, Mrs. Christine Raynsford, who followed Mr. Pardee as

city manager, appointed Myron Oliver, Arthur Hill Gilbert, Mrs. Curtis, Mrs. Mary L. Geene and Mrs. John Sandholdt to the board, Mrs. O'Donnell and Pal Clark having resigned.

In the centennial year of 1949 members of the board who served so well during the past three years and who actually accomplished the work of bringing Colton Hall back to its rightful historical place in the community, were: Mrs. Curtis, chairman; Mrs. W.M. O'Donnell, Mrs. Hugh Dormody, Mrs. Thomas Mathews, Mrs. John Sandholdt, Myron Oliver, Thomas W. Norris, Arthur Hill Gilbert and Mrs. Margaret Morse.

When Mrs. Hugh Dormody, Mrs. Mathews and Arthur Hill Gilbert retired from the board, they were replaced by Mrs. Alfred B. Railton, Dr. Wesley Heard and Pal Clark.

It was on Feb. 15, 1944, that the Council of the City of Monterey passed to print an ordinance, No. 4135, stating that: "The use of the upper floor of Colton Hall in the City of Monterey, be given to Board of Museum Trustees for the purposed of establishing and maintaining therein a public museum, subject to the rules and conditions provided in the ordinance No. 4135." It was signed by Mayor J.R. Perry and Councilmen Guy Curtis, Dr. Hugh Dormody, Peter Hay, and Shedo Russo.