

WHO'S WHO

MILDRED AND KEAMER WALTER

Do you admire Mexican costumes, dances, customs, art? The chances are you have met Mildred and Keamer Walter; especially if you live in the Los Angeles area.

Have you attended lectures on the folklore, history and customs of our neighbor to the south, sponsored by UCLA, L.A. City College and other schools? If you have, you have benefited directly from the vast knowledge of the Walters on all these subjects.

Keamer was born in Harvey, Illinois. He has degrees from the University of Chicago and USC, and has taken many courses in a variety of colleges. He has taught at Los Angeles City College. Although he is now supposedly retired, Keamer still does enough substitute teaching to sometimes wonder if he really is retired.

Mildred, although born in Toronto, Canada, saw the light of the world right off as an American citizen. She, too, holds University degrees and is a retired teacher. Now Mildred uses her considerable talents to compile a dictionary of Spanish, Indian and English.



Mildred and Keamer commenced folk-dancing in 1950 when like so many Los Angeles enthusiasts--they went to Queen Anne playground and saw the fun others were having at a folk dance party. The following week the Walters were to become a part of the group who were learning to folk dance from Helen Schuyler; and they have been dancing ever since. Now they are members of the Hollywood Peasants, Glendale Folk Dancers, Westwood Co-op and Chapa. The last group is a special pet of the Walters. It is dedicated to perpetuating the customs and

MILDRED AND KEAMER WALTER (continued)

songs and dances of early California.

Neither of the Walters has ever held office in any of the clubs in which they hold memberships. But for several months Mildred was Federation delegate for one of them, Los Ayuneros. The group is no longer in the Federation, but the Walters are still active in it. Mildred taught for over a year for some exhibition groups and has served as guest teacher where and whenever asked to do so.

In the rambling two-story house which Mildred and Keamer call home, the whole second floor is a museum. "Museo Mexicano Mildre" is a veritable treasure trove of Mexicana. Costumes, art objects, pictures, textiles, jewelry, leather, masks -- all sorts of fascinating items, spill from drawers, shelves and chests in Mildred's museum. All of these items were collected, lovingly and with care, by Keamer and Mildred on their frequent and lengthy trips to Mexico.

The Walters' hobbies are many, varied and shared. They love to dance. They travel. They enjoy music by listening and by making some of it themselves. They produce programs of dance exhibitions for senior citizens' groups and dance or participate in various ways at monthly folk dance festivals and at the annual events.

When some time ago a local group found itself in financial straits the Walters' collection of beautiful Mexican costumes was graciously loaned to them. A "fashion show" was put on with Mildred serving as commentator. The club has been solvent ever since that event, and those who were smart and lucky enough to have attended the show, are still talking about it. The last five Statewides were enriched by having some of their beautiful costumes exhibited in costume parades, modeled by the owners and by some of their friends. Lucky, indeed, are the people who are invited into the Walters' home. The hospitality is not only warm and charming, but also most informative and educational. If Mildred manages to locate interesting films on Mexico, she invites friends to come and share the pleasure of viewing them.

Not too long ago both Keamer and Mildred were seriously ill, worrying their many friends. Now they are well again, and livelier than ever. They brighten folk dance parties once more with their dances, costumes and gracious manner.

Among their plans for the future is the wish to continue on with their activities as usual. Mildred also is serving as State consultant in Elementary School Spanish, under the Bureau of National Defense Education Act Administration. Both of them plan to continue their lecturing on the culture and folklore of Mexico. Their married sons have presented Mildred and Keamer with five grandchildren, of whom they are understandably and justly proud. One of these sons lives with his family in Rio de Janeiro, and, among the plans the Walters are making is a trip to visit this part of their family.

LIESL BARNETT