

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 29, 1953

### **Children Enjoy History**

Monterey school children who are studying California history are fortunate to have so many important historical buildings within so short a distance from the school buildings. It was not so for the bus loads of children who came from Berkeley, Ceres, Turlock, Alisal and San Francisco to visit the Custom House and other buildings recently.

The Rev. Father McGloin, S.J., professor of history at the University of San Francisco, brought 25 history students to Monterey for a day's sightseeing and study. Harry Downie of Carmel Mission, accompanied the group and gave historical talks at the sites, monuments and buildings of importance were visited.

Students of various ages from Turlock, number 45, were accompanied by their principal, and several adults. The tour was interrupted at Colton Hall and a picnic luncheon enjoyed on the plaza lawn, with the hearty permission of the city officials.

The third and fourth grades from the Barnes School at Alisal were delighted when Mary Greene, the curator, played the music box in the old grandfather's clock, once the property of Gov. Alvarado, one of the attractions in the Old Custom House Museum. Two groups from the high school Spanish class of the Monterey Bay Academy of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, made a second visit within the month to the Custom House on April 14th.

The Seaside Brownie troop, under the supervision of their leaders, toured the Custom House and admired the exhibits on the 16th of April. And on the previous Sunday a large group of girls from the Deaf School in Berkeley, accompanied by an interpreter, spent an hour or so of concentrated study in the old and historic building. They also visited the Stevenson House, First Theater and Colton Hall.

In addition to playing the tunes in the old clock, Mrs. Greene always entertains the school students by playing the old Abrego square piano for their pleasure ending with America which the children sing.

Recently a group of elementary school children from the Thomas O. Larkin School visited the Custom House with their teacher. Returning to their classroom the visitors showed their appreciation of the visit by writing

their "thank you" to Mrs. Greene. We have picked out some of the best letters to illustrate how much these buildings mean to the educational system in Monterey.

Judith Sumida wrote: "I appreciated that you could spend your time telling us so many interesting things. I enjoyed the lovely gowns, especially the white lace gown and the lovely wax flowers. Thank you for telling us about early Monterey history which was so interesting. I enjoyed the beautiful Dutch clock that sounded like a tune. I enjoyed coming to the Custom House that had so many interesting things. I hope to visit you again." Judith illustrated her letter with drawing of the case with the gowns, the clock, old table and chest.

The boys, typical of their sex, were most interested in the case of guns and the swords, as shown in Alex Djakonou's letter: "I liked everything you showed us. I like the trabucka, it sure didn't look like the guns we have today. I liked the old Dutch clock and its music. You told us a very interesting story about old Monterey. Thank you for showing us around. The swords were as fine as anything. We had a fine time with you. I hope I can come again with my parents so I can see everything over again. I hope I shall remember the name of the gun—trabuka."

Mary Acquaviva wrote that she liked best of all the "Cascarone eggs as they looked as if they were Easter eggs because they had bright colored paper on them." Three color crayon cascarone eggs illustrated her letter.

Sharon McGuire wrote her "thank you" in rhyme:

"I looked around the Custom House  
And guess what I saw,  
Some saddles and needles made out of bone  
And a little cannon so shiny I know  
And pieces of glass that you had found  
One by one under the ground."

David Covell sent a nice letter: "I had such a good time at the Custom House. I especially liked the ease of guns. It is interesting to note how guns have changed in the past years. I was amazed at the history of Monterey. I like the things you told us about our history. I liked the trabuska you showed us. It really was funny looking thing, wasn't it? Thank you for an interesting visit."