

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Memento of Whaling Days**

The Board of Directors of the Monterey History and Art Assn., Ltd., recently entertained the membership at large with an evening program in the Old Pacific building. The guests were greeted in the recently furnished Spanish room where punch and cookies were served at the close of the evening's program, which was held in the adjoining sala. Huge arrangements of greenery in various shades gave the large rooms an added atmosphere of hospitality which they seemed to radiate even without further embellishment.

A surprise feature of the event was the unveiling of a miniature whaleboat complete with tiny whalers. This small model is a perfect scale and all the equipment used by whalers is in place as it would have been during the days when Monterey Bay was the site of a profitable whaling industry beginning about 1810 and lasting until the early 1900s.

The association is indebted to Mrs. Eulalia Stauffer and Miss Harriet Coombs for the intricate handwork on the tiny figures and the refurbishing of the boat and the "waves" which surround it. Mrs. Stauffer is an artist in her own right. She not only paints pictures but makes the amusing little Leprechauns which are usually on exhibit at the Monterey Library and in the Poor Scholar Book shop.

These little make-believe figures are never for sale, they are part of Mrs. Stauffer's family and she cannot ever bear to part with one after she has created it. But when she was appealed to to make the whalers that should be in a whale boat, she entered into the project with enthusiasm and now the Old Custom House museum has an exhibit of which we are justly proud.

Each little whaler was molded entirely by hand, then painted and fired, after which the six figures were clothed, even to four knitted caps and two tiny hats. Two standing figures have pipes in their mouths, and one had a handsome leather jacket for which Miss Coombs sacrificed a perfectly good glove. The artist says that the little men are even supplied with heavy underwear, under their equally warm clothing, made to withstand the cold fog and winds.

The little boat and its occupants are encased in glass which rests upon a wooden base designed by Miss

Coombs, and this now sits upon a stand made for the exhibit by Neil Powers of the Division of Beaches and Parks. It will be on exhibit every day in the Custom House from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

There is an interesting story connected with this model of an old-time whaleboat. About a year ago Mrs. Mary Greene, curator of the Custom House, was told by Col. Arcadi Gluckman of Carmel that there was a very fine and very old whale gun in the shop of Eric Lundgren In Paso Robles which he believed the History and Art Assn. should acquire for the Custom House museum. So, we made a motor journey to the southern city, inspected the gun, decided that the association should own it, loaded it in the car, along with some antique guns, a Spanish helmet and a couple of old Spanish sabers, and returned to Monterey, but not before we had been offered the little whaleboat as a gift to the association.

The whalers were then tiny dolls looking not one bit as old-time whalers should look, and the water was constructed of corrugated paper which was not at all convincing. It had been made by a whaler at San Simeon many years ago and given as a wedding gift to a friend who probably was also a whaler. How it came into the possession of Mr. Lundgren we do not know, but we accepted it with thanks after having the happy thought that Mrs. Stauffer and Miss Coombs, members of the History and Art Assn., would be willing workers upon its reconstruction.

The result of all this effort shows in the finished product now waiting for residents and Monterey visitors to inspect during a visit to the Old Custom House.