

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 12, 1964

Old Whaling Station

A history of the Old Whaling Station written by Miss Edith M. Marsh, granddaughter of David Wight, the builder, was sent to Mrs. Mary L. Greene, former curator of the Custom House, by Miss Ruth Magaw of Montebello in 1949. Miss Magaw and her sister were visitors in Monterey during the Centennial celebration and became so interested in the old buildings and historical displays that they decided to contribute the old letters and documents given to them by Miss Marsh before her death.

Miss Marsh probably wrote the history of the Whaling Station to read before a club meeting in Los Angeles. It begins: "My grandfather, David Wight, was born in Doddington, England, in 1810. Doddington is ten miles south of Berwick-on-Tweed and the Scottish border, 10 miles west of Bamborough and Bamborough Castle, that fortress on the North Sea in Northumberland, built in 1070 A.D.

" . . . I will never forget the day I took a motor trip from Berwick-on-Tweed to Bamborough and return. On the way up the east coast of Britain (this was in 1926) to Berwick I stopped two days at Newcastle-on-Tyne where my mother, Isabel Wight Marsh, was born in 1840."

These two paragraphs, quoted from Miss Marsh's paper, will give the reader a picture of the birthplace of the young couple who journeyed and pioneered in Monterey, as she writes.

"It must have been 1845 or '46 that they came up the coast from South America to Monterey, Calif., and in 1847 grandfather built their new home, just around the corner from the Old Custom House. My mother told me it was the first two-story adobe residence in Monterey. There were two-story hotels and office buildings. It is next door to the first brick house in California built by Mr. Dickenson.

"I met Mr. Dickenson's daughter, Mrs. Lawrey, then an old lady in the 80s, living in Pacific Grove. She told me her father and her husband, then a boy of 15, and supposedly some Indians, helped my grandfather build his house. She remembered my grandmother, and she said she was so glad to have a home again. My mother remembered sitting in one of the downstairs windows

and learning the letters of the alphabet, taught by her mother." David Wight was the son of George Wight and grandson of David Wight. This David Wight, the elder, had built whole streets of homes in Carlisle, England. Miss Marsh's mother was the eldest child of great grandfather George Wight's eldest child, David. When she was one year old she was taken on a sailing vessel to New Zealand; then the family went to Chile for a time before their arrival in Monterey.