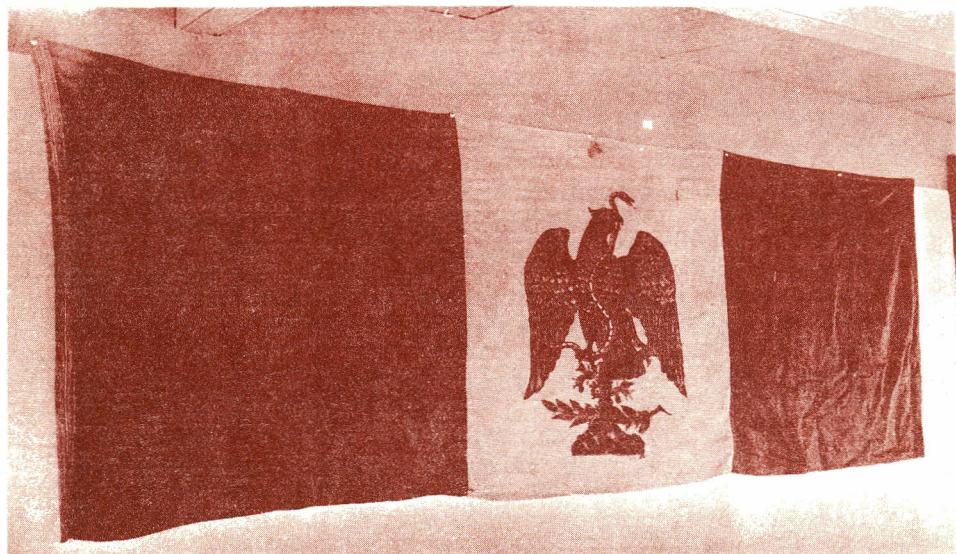


NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

A Quarterly Bulletin of Historic Monterey Issued by
The Monterey History and Art Association

VOLUME I, NUMBER 2

JUNE, 1957



Photograph by Claude Faw

AFTER 111 YEARS, HAS THE OLD FLAG COME HOME?

It had long been believed by the government of the United States that its manifest destiny should be "to extend from ocean to ocean." The men of Texas had broken off from Mexico and declared themselves an independent republic in 1835. The Mexican government had never recognized this state of affairs and being suspicious of the intentions of the United States, had declared that if Texas was ever admitted as a state in the Union, that would be a declaration of war.

The president of the United States had recognized a state of uncertainty, too, and a squadron of the U. S. Navy was kept in the Pacific with instructions that in the event of news of the outbreak of war, they were to see that the U. S. flag should be raised over the "Seat of Government" at the capitol at Monterey. These instructions led to the premature raising of the U. S. flag at Monterey by Commodore Jones in 1842. That flag flew one day—Jones was shown his mistake and apologized to the officials and sailed away.

Nevertheless, in December, 1845, Texas was admitted as a State in the Union—and war broke out. No cables nor telegraph existed in that period, but Commodore

Sloat, while anchored at Mazatlan, was brought the word by courier. He sailed immediately for Monterey.

No news of the war had yet been received by the officials here, but rumors of war, we are sure, must have been thick in the air. The people themselves had not been too happy with the type of government furnished them since 1822 under the Mexican flag. In fact, Governor Alvarado had declared California an independent republic in 1836, and so it continued for a year. When concessions were made to Alvarado, he brought his republic back into the fold. The Californians knew they had not the strength to stand alone. The French Consul here was very busy trying to bring the government of France to see the rich and fertile lands that could so easily be added to her empire. The English had seen that repayment of Mexico's debt to her could best be settled by taking over California, and there were also Russians. But the ever-alert and energetic U. S. Consul, Thomas O. Larkin, had worked on the prominent Californians to show them that it would be to their advantage to be a part of the United States of America. It goes without saying that the number of Yankees who had settled in the country but who had become Mexican citizens to hold land, agreed with him, and numbers of citizens of Spanish blood such as Mariano Vallejo, acquiesced.

These last, of course, recognized it as inevitable. However, there was still a feeling of loyalty to the motherland, so that when Commodore Sloat arrived there was no flag flying over the Custom House, "the Seat of Government," and it was on the morning of July 7, 1846, that Sloat raised the U. S. flag over the Custom House on the flagstaff that for some time had flown no flag.

On July 8, 1846, Consul Larkin wrote to his friend Abel Stearns in Los Angeles describing the event. He said, "Commodore John D. Sloat yesterday . . . sent to the House of Don Mariano Silva (the highest Military Commandant at the time in town) Captain Mervine of the *Cyane* . . . demanding surrender of the Country. Senor Silva contested the latter, saying he had no orders nor anything to give up, property, soldiers, or Flag (the Commandancia of this port has had no Flag this two months."

A number of years ago a small strip of red finely woven silky wool was given to the Custom House museum with the information that it had been acquired by Major Edwin Sherman, the patriotic Mexican War veteran who headed the great celebration here in 1896. He had been given this fragment which was said to have been part of the last Mexican flag that had flown over the Custom House. He had been told that the Mexicans, not wishing their flag to be surrendered, had taken it down and had turned it over to Salvador Vallejo at Mission San Jose to be cared for. Later on, as it sometimes happens, the significance of the flag was lost sight of, and the children in the Vallejo family played with it and the red was torn away from the white and green sections. Then this red section was divided up and given as souvenirs to friends.

It was in April, 1957, that Mrs. T. J. Barkle presented the beautiful Mexican flag to the Custom House where it had belonged originally. Her husband, the late Reverend T. J. Barkle, had purchased it from the estate of Father Mestres, the Spanish priest who so long served at the Presidio Chapel.

This large flag, 8½ by 3 feet, of finely woven wool, has the Aztec symbol, the eagle and the serpent, painted on the center white section. It is painted on both sides of the cloth so that it is plainly visible when flown.

We can see that in some places there has been repair with machine stitching and we are told that while the red section is of finely woven wool it is not part of the original but is a replacement. This leads us to believe that the red section which came to us through Major Sherman was originally part of the flag just presented, and that it is truly the flag that was taken down by the Mexicans themselves. It has now returned to its rightful home, the old Custom House, where it will be cherished and preserved forever.

—MARY GREENE

RECORDS OF THE CUSTOM HOUSE

(Continued from the March issue)

We continue the publication of original file copies of letters written from the Custom House in Monterey during the term of Isaac Wall as Collector. The bark *Libertad* arrived in port July 1, 1853, from Valparaiso, with 10,572 sacks of wheat imported by J. Ruurds, on which duties were \$4,905.06. Extra inspectors were hired during her stay in port, and several of these letters are notices of termination of employment.

—A. K.

Custom House
Monterey 13th July 1853

Sir

Your communication of this date, addressed to the Collector of the Dist. has been recd.

If Capt. Faulkner of the Am. Bark "H. F. Bartlett" withheld his papers from your inspection, after you had demanded them from him, & left the Port of Santa Cruz for Castro's Landing without allowing you, previous to his departure, to inspect his papers—you have full authority by Law to impose a fine of One hundred-\$100 Dollars—

It is incumbent on you to act in this case with much discretion, & be perfectly satisfied that you have strictly conformed with the Law regulating the Coasting trade. You have your instructions before you, hence all mistakes must necessarily be avoided.

Wm. D. Farrand Esq
Inspector
Santa Cruz

Very Respectfully
Chs H. Johnson
Depy. Collector

Custom House
Monterey 20th July 1853

Sir

Your services as Inspector on board Chilian Bark *Libertad* will be no longer Required.

Chs. G. Harron Esq

Very Respectfully
Chs. H. Johnson
Depy. Collector

Custom House
Monterey 30th July 1853

Sir

Your services as Inspector are no longer Required.

Very Respectfully
Chs. H. Johnson
Depy Collector

Chs. Leighton Esq

Charles H. Johnson, native of Maryland, Deputy Collector under Wall, later settled in San Luis Obispo and was a Customs Inspector there to December 1860. In 1861 he represented San Luis Obispo County in the legislature.

Farrand, native of New York, but ardent Democrat and southern supporter, purchased the San Lorenzo House in Santa Cruz in 1856 with James Skene.

Harron was Acting Mayor of Monterey, November 1851; Justice of the Peace 1851 to August, 1853, when he resigned.

Leighton (he signed his name Layton) native of Banbury, England, arrived in Monterey 1847 as Sergeant of Co.F, 3rd U. S. Artillery. First Keeper of the Point Pinos Lighthouse, he served until his death November 19, 1855, age about 38.

Custom House
Monterey 1st Aug 1853

Sir

Your services as Inspector will be no longer Required.

Very Respectfully

Chs. H. Johnson

D. Leitch Esq.

Depy Collector

Custom House
Monterey 1st Aug 1853

Sir

I herewith transmit three sets of abstracts, One embracing the time from the 31st March to the 31st May 1853. and the others for the months of June & July respectively.

On entering upon the discharge of my duties as Collector on the 28th of May last, I found no Evidence in this office, in books or papers, of any money having been received by my predecessor, for duties on merchandise or Tonnage, or for the Relief of sick and disabled seamen from the 31st of March to the 28th of May.

For this Reason I have certified to the Abstracts Embracing the months of April & May, believing them to be correct.

I forward no accounts by this mail, inasmuch as I received no money from the former Collector, nor from any other source, and have made no disbursements since entering upon the duties of my Office.

Your Obt. Servt.

First Auditor
Washington City

Isaac B. Wall

Collector Dist. Monterey

Custom House
Monterey Aug. 1st 1853

Sir

I herewith enclose a Certificate of Registry of the Steam Ship McKim which vessel was sold in this Port by order of the U. S. Dist. Court:-

I granted a temporary Register in lieu of the One given up, as the Vessel was sold out of the Dist. in which she belonged.

Your Obt. Servt.

Register of the
Treasury Dept.
Washington City

Isaac B. Wall

Collector Dist. Monterey

Custom House Monterey
Aug 20th 1853

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt by the last mail of your communication of the 18th ult. approving my nominations of Wm. D. Farrand Inspector at Santa Cruz and Wm. J. Graves Inspector at San Luis Obispo, and disapproving the appointment of a Deputy Collector & Inspector at this point. It is true the service in this District is almost entirely preventive & that but small receipts can be expected, but it is equally true & a well known fact to the Department, that there had been before the commencement of the present Administration a great falling off in the duties received at San Francisco, whilst there had not been a corresponding decrease in the importations. This must have been owing to one of two causes, or perhaps to both- The cause must have been with the U.S. appraisers at San Francisco, or with the officers charged with the revenue service, in the southern

Leitch, native of Virginia, was Monterey Constable, 1851, and Justice of the Peace from 1853 to his death January 9, 1856, at the age of 26.



The oldest known photograph of the Custom House. The date is uncertain, but since the United States Revenue Flag is shown flying, it must antedate 1868 when orders came from Washington to abandon the Custom House. There is another photograph, taken apparently the same hour, which shows the front of the building and a man, a boy, and a girl on the balcony. These two pictures may mark the closing of the Custom House since the revenue flag is much in evidence in both.

Courtesy Monterey Public Library

districts of the state. I cannot speak confidently with respect to the manner in which the service was performed in the Dist of San Diego, but I am satisfied that a proper degree of vigilance has not heretofore been observed in this. And that from the loose manner in which the duties were performed the revenue might have been defrauded to a great extent.

On entering upon my duties I at once gave my attention to the object of detecting if possible any frauds which might be practised upon the service and at once organized my office with this view. Since which time I have made two official visits to the southern portion of the state. And although I have become more thoroughly convinced that fraud has been heretofore practised, and that if the matter be watched with proper vigilance, it will either be detected, or force the payment of a larger amount of revenue. And though it may not be seen in the Southern Districts, it will be manifested in the receipts at San Francisco. And in order that I may be enabled to devote myself to this object in the degree required by the public service I trust that the Department will approve the nomination of a Deputy Collector and Inspector submitted in my letter of the 8th of June last.

Hon James Guthrie
Sec Treasury
Washington City

Very Respectfully
Your Obt Servt
Isaac B. Wall
Collector Dist. Monterey

Sources for notes: Monterey Sentinel 1855-56; original Custom House papers at Bancroft Library; Justice of Peace volumes, Monterey; Alcalde's Docket, City Hall, Monterey; Bancroft Pioneer Index.

To Be Continued In The Next Issue



The seizure of Monterey by the American Navy, July 7, 1846. In the bay ride Commodore Sloat's flagship, the *Savannah*, and her consorts, the *Cyane* and the *Levant*. From a painting by W. A. Coulter.

Courtesy Monterey Public Library

THE RAISING OF THE FLAG, JULY 7, 1846-1957

On July 6, 1957, the American flag will again flutter to the peak over the Custom House of Monterey just as it has done at each commemoration of the day since Commodore John Drake Sloat, on July 7, 1846, raised the Stars and Stripes over the old building.

The heavy cruiser *St. Paul* and several smaller ships-of-war plus contingents of the U. S. Army, will again re-enact the event that took place at the same spot one hundred and eleven years ago. Chairman Allen Knight hopes that the Spanish destroyers now on a Pacific cruise will also be part of the pageant.

In the actual event, Commodore Sloat, after hesitating for five days, sent ashore a formal demand for surrender of the port. The Mexicans, having neither troops nor arms to oppose the pending seizure of the town, could only look on resignedly as Captain Mervine and a force of 250 marines and sailors came up the beach at ten o'clock on the morning of July 7, 1846. The flag was hoisted, three cheers were given, twenty-one gun salutes fired from the warships and Monterey passed without bloodshed into the hands of the United States.

In 1886, a joint celebration of the 110th anniversary of the independence of the United States and the fortieth anniversary of the taking possession of California was held in Monterey under the sponsorship of the Associated Veterans of the Mexican War. The revenue cutter *Richard Rush* represented the sea forces, and Light Artillery Battery K of the 1st Regiment, U. S. Army, marched down from San Francisco to fire the salute to the flag which old General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo raised over the Custom House. He was the sole survivor of the Mexican officials of 1846, and with him were three old men, representatives at the Constitutional Convention of 1850.

The fiftieth anniversary found Major Edwin Sherman of the Mexican War Veterans again heading the celebration in Monterey. The warships *Philadelphia* and *Monadnock* saluted the flag as it rose in the hands of William Toler, who, as Sloat's midshipman, had raised it in 1846. After this two survivors of the Bear Flag Revolt who had first raised their home-made banner at Sonoma, hauled it up again at Monterey.

At the Monterey Centennial of July 6, 1946, the pageant surpassed anything seen previously. The Navy sent the *St. Paul* and four other ships, Governor Earl Warren gave the keynote speech, and a spirited costumed re-enactment of the first landing and the events surrounding it. Instigated by Curator Mary Greene, excavation revealed the base of the flagpole upon which Midshipman Toler ran up the flag one hundred years ago.

On July 6, then, the old Custom House will again play its central part in a drama which has, through the years, become a symbol of Monterey's historic heritage.

—D. M. C.

COSAS DE INTERÉS PARA LOS SOCIOS

The Association, with President James F. van Loben Sels as master-of-ceremonies, held its twenty-sixth Merienda in Memory Garden on June 1 in celebration of Monterey's 187th birthday.

The new seating plan worked out by Mrs. W. M. O'Donnell, Mrs. F. L. Knudsen and their helpers eliminated much of the crowding and confusion of previous Meriendas. The tables were tastefully decorated by Mrs. Ruth Cooke and Mrs. Sylvia Jordan, while the barbeque dinner, as usual, was under the expert supervision of Dr. Harry Brownell and his corps of chefs.

Wearing an antique tortoise shell Spanish comb presented by Mrs. C. J. Hamlin, La Favorita, charming Miss Camille Stahl, descendent of Monterey pioneers, was attended by Miss Molly Costello and Miss Mimi Doud, whose families also have been long-time Monterey residents. Mrs. Mary L. Greene acted as Duena and received high praise for her outstanding service as curator of the Custom House State Monument and as staunch guardian of Monterey's historic tradition. The day was climaxed by the cutting of the huge birthday cake, and original dances by the Monterey Peninsula Civic Ballet Company.

Among the distinguished guests present were the Honorable Joseph R. Knowland, Chairman of the Park Commission of the State of California, and Mrs. Knowland; the Consul General of Spain, Pedro, Marquez de la Vera, and the Marqueza; Admiral and Mrs. Earl E. Stone, Commandant U. S. Navy School; General and Mrs. William Breckenridge, Commanding General Fort Ord; Mayor and Mrs. Dan Searle of Monterey, and many other officials and notables. Miss Margaret Jacks' absence was regretted by all. Father Michael J. MacInnes, in the robes of a Franciscan padre, gave the invocation.

The Famous Adobe Houses Tour, the date for which has been sent for Saturday, August 3, will be the outstanding event of that month. These homes, some private residences, some now occupied by exclusive clubs, and others the property of the state, will be open that day for the enjoyment of visitors. Tickets may be obtained through Mayo Hayes O'Donnell, 336 Pacific Street, Monterey, California.

Recent gifts to the Association for display in the local museums include: an antique turkey platter, a small handled plaque, and a crystal bowl with double-hinged sterling silver lid, from Mrs. Winifred Wolf of Gonzales, the grand-daughter of Don Teodoro Gonzales; a pendant made from a gold-mounted quartz earring, the work of a Monterey jeweler of 1870, by Mrs. Millie Birks; and a rock crystal decanter which belonged to Dona Catalina Munras, presented by Maria Antonia Field.

The Conference of California Historical Societies will be held on June 20, 21 and 22, 1957, in the U. S. Grant Hotel in San Diego. The principal activities will take place on Friday, June 21, the day being divided into periods for panel discussions under the guidance of well-known historians, archivists and curators. Any member of the Association is urged to attend.

Claude Faw, in collaboration with Planning Consultant Bayliss, has completed a plan which redraws the Path of History through Monterey. This will be presented to the city council for approval. The present route has been seriously affected by new traffic conditions and the new plan seeks to avoid these problems. Mr. Faw also stated that maps showing the changes will be distributed by the California Mission Trails Association, which, at present, gives out some 30,000 brochures every five months.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

All have been most kind in their remarks about our first issue, and for that we thank them humbly. No one but the editors, however, has commented on the howling error in the first paragraph of the Larkin House article. Henry W. Halleck was, through the magic of type, rocketed through the ranks from a simple lieutenant to a general some fourteen years too soon. The Larkin House, too, was given extra luster on somewhat dubious ground. True, it did serve as a home for Lieutenants Sherman and Halleck, and the military governors of California passed many hours there, but the actual business offices of the American military government were in the old cuartel. It was stretching history to call the distinguished Larkin adobe the de facto capitol.

Fortunately, the mail had not yet gone to the various libraries and historical associations, so with the aid of a heavy blue pencil, the offending clause was blotted out and our budding reputation for accuracy saved. Our apologies to those members who will have to do their own blue-pencilling.

Now—to happier things. We are delighted to record the following excerpts from letters of congratulation on the first issue.

From Newton B. Drury, Chief of the Division of Beaches and Parks, Department of Natural Resources, State of California, and a key figure in the acquisition of the Larkin House by the state: "I wish to congratulate you and your staff upon your new publication. Particularly of interest was your excellent article on the Larkin House . . ."

James de T. Abajian, Librarian of the California Historical Society, San Francisco, writes: "We are most pleased to receive Volume 1, Number 1 of your Noticias . . . We know that it will stand as a genuine contribution to the field of Californiana. We are particularly pleased that the Noticias is printed on paper that will last indefinitely (it is important) not only to disseminate historical information, but to do it in a way that it may be indefinitely preserved."

And from the Conference of California Historical Societies and Michael Harrison, Regional Vice-President for Sacramento: ". . . A very creditable job: you have gotten off to a good start. The subject matter was interesting and the process of reproduction of the illustrations leaves nothing to be desired . . . and don't lose sight of the fact that the events of today will be the 'history' of 100 years from now . . ."

—D. M. C.

Mrs. Wm. M. Kneass was appointed Historian of the Association by the president at the June meeting of the Board of Directors. Mrs. Kneass is curator of the Pacific House and an authority on early Monterey. She is charged with the archives of the Association and reference material.