

# NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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

VOLUME III, NUMBER 2

JUNE, 1959

## How To Become A Millionaire . . . Monterey, 1846

"We have received from an old resident in California a voluminous correspondence extending from October (1846) to the 23 of January (1847). Being chiefly occupied with the events of the California revolution, or conquest, as the case may be, most of the details have lost their interest by delay. Such as have not, we proceed to lay before our readers." Thus, in 1847, the editor of the *New York Journal of Commerce*, a daily newspaper, apologetically began the publication of a series of articles dealing with California which, unknown to him or anyone else, was on the threshold of a violent change from one culture and way of life to another totally different. These most informative writings, to our knowledge, have never before been exhumed from the yellowing newspaper files where they have lain forgotten for over a century.

The letters, and some others published in the Philadelphia *North American* about the same time, apparently comprise the entire literary output of an unusually observant, imaginative man who was jarred from the rut of his daily routine by the impact of profoundly moving events. He wrote, with the exception of a few squibs and a political editorial in Spanish for California's first newspaper, *The Californian*, nothing else for publication. Except for his initials, W. R. G., his name appears on no recognized list of authors. He writes with grace, fluency and clarity, yet he must have adopted the Spanish tongue when he chose California as his home twenty-two years before. Indeed, his son confessed that he never learned English from his father.

Who was this man? That is a story that will be published soon in the *Noticias*. For the present, let it suffice that he was William Robert Garner, known to the Californians as *Patas Largas* or *Long Shanks*, to his enemies as "that convict Garner," and to sober historians as a responsible member of the pre-conquest foreign community of Monterey. During the trying days following the capture of the old port by Commodore Sloat, he acted as a highly satisfactory secretary and interpreter for Alcalde Walter Colton. He died under tragic circumstances in 1849.

Garner either saw the actual landing of the American soldiers and marines on that July 7 in 1846, or he was immediately informed of it by the native Californians. He lived in Monterey at the time in a house overlooking the harbor. Alas for those other letters culled by the *Journal's* editor because they had lost their timeliness and could not compete with dispatches come red-hot from the camp of old Rough and Ready Zachery Taylor, deep in Mexico!

We regret the loss of those rejected letters, for they came from a man intimately connected with and aware of political happenings in California immediately preceding the American occupation. He was linked, as Richardson, Colton and Larkin never were, by ties of marriage and citizenship with the native Californians; he was privy to their councils, their fraternal bickerings, their social and religious customs, their ambitions and their fears.

In contributing his sheaf of articles to the *Journal*, Garner was following the common practice of the day. The local correspondent was the backbone of the out-of-town news coverage of the mid-nineteenth century newspaper. Garner undoubtedly caught the writing fever from his employer, Alcalde Colton, who was an assiduous reporter of impressions gained on his naval voyages, and it is interesting that the apprentice scribbler sent his work to the same journals favored by his master.

All this, remember, was written two years before the cataclysmic discovery of gold at Coloma. If there had been no gold rush, how strong would have been California's attraction for the settler? Garner, at least, was determined to urge her merits, and no modern Chamber of Commerce could have presented a more glowing picture of her mercantile and agricultural prospects.

—DONALD M. CRAIG

Monterey, Oct. 1846

Just as I was finishing my last letter to you, a Mexican gentleman, who is one of the most prominent persons in favor of the American cause, stepped into my house, and seeing a number of papers on the table, asked to whom I was writing. I told him I was giving my American friends some information on the state and prospects of California. His first words were, "For God's sake, let our American friends know that we want some person here who knows how to make blankets; the winters here are chilly and raw, and I cannot find where to buy a blanket."

This may appear to you and your numerous readers as something incredible, in a country like this, where sheep are so plentiful, and where it costs nothing to breed them and keep them, but a boy and a dog; but I can assure you that there is not, neither has there ever been, a man in this country who knew how to weave a blanket. It is true they make here a sort of rug; but even of these there are not sufficient made to supply one-twelfth part of the population. The blankets chiefly used in this country come from Tepic, in Mexico, and are sold at from ten to ninety dollars each. What enhances the price of these blankets, is their color; a few red or blue spots, with a border, will make one of these blankets sell for almost any price.

Common to second-best cloth has always been worth from twelve to fourteen dollars a yard, and the tailors charge eighteen dollars for making a coat and furnishing the plainest trimmings. Common wool hats are worth here, among the natives, who prefer them to all other kinds, eight dollars apiece.<sup>2</sup> Wool stockings of the coarsest kind are one dollar and twenty-five cents per pair.

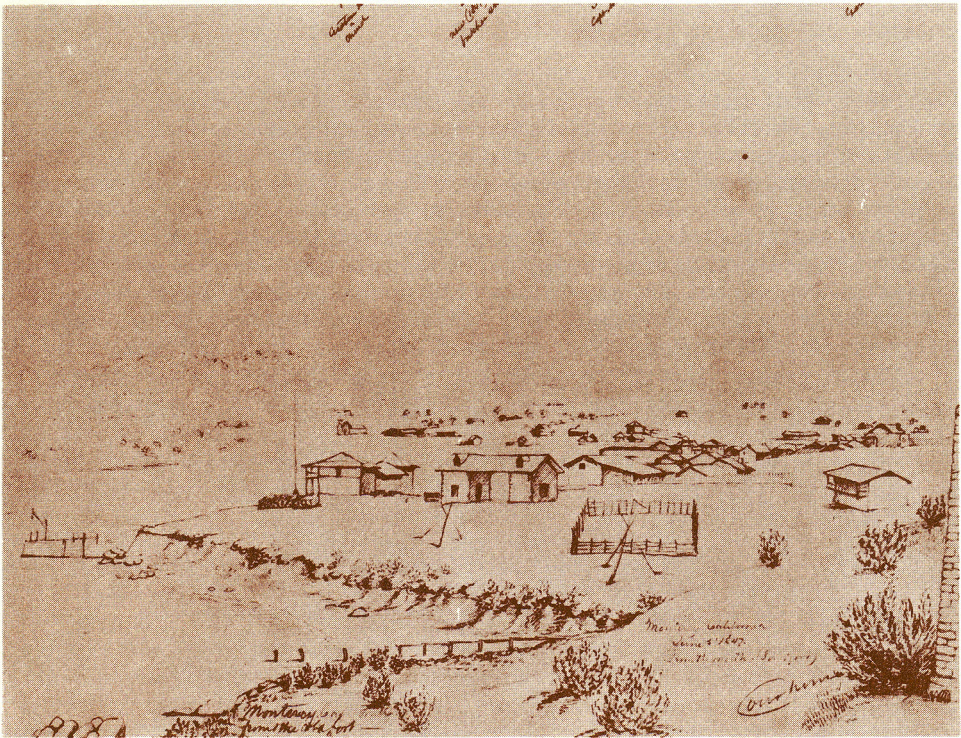
It has been fairly proved that the sheep of this country need nothing but a little care and attention to produce wool of the finest quality. Another great advantage is, there is no sickness amongst them ever known of any kind whatever.

Should any of your readers be weavers who wish to make an independent fortune, I would advise them to fly to California, where there is little doubt of their soon accumulating one to their satisfaction.

<sup>1</sup> Bancroft, *California Pastoral*, 448-453. Coarse, durable sarapes were made at missions, but there were very few looms in 1845.

<sup>2</sup> Colton, *Three Years in California*, 22. Mexican duty on imported hats, \$3.00 each.





In 1847 Monterey was sketched from the Presidio slope just across the arroyo from the Serra Landing by William Rich Hutton, a young government clerk. He lived at the time in William Garner's house, shown at the far right with a second-story balcony.

Courtesy of The Huntington Library

Having employed some men to quarry stone a few days ago, I went to see how the work went on. They had quarried about eight feet deep; in going into the quarry, I perceived a sort of Fuller's earth. I ordered one of the men to dig a little deeper, and to my great satisfaction discovered a stratum of potter's clay, of the finest kind. There is not a particle of grit in it. In rubbing it between my hands it felt like soap.

Like all other manufactured articles, all of the crockery ware used in California has come from the States; and the family which can boast of a full set of good crockery is to be considered almost a prodigy. This scarcity of all sorts of manufactures, we hope will in a short time be remedied. Should the United States retain California (which is not to be doubted), here is room and opportunity for thousands of mechanics and artisans to enrich themselves.

About a fortnight ago a new coal mine was discovered, situated in or near the mission of San Luis Obispo. This article was sold here last year for five dollars a bushel, by an American whaler. There are no less than three coal mines within a distance of three hundred miles or less but such business as this, like many other branches in California, requires a capital to put it in operation, and there are no capitalists in California. If there were, they would not risk their money in this



branch of business, because there are no persons here that understand it, or anything else that requires practical knowledge.

Even shoes are obliged to be brought from the States before we can go out of doors. Notwithstanding that ox-hides are sold here for a dollar and fifty cents each for cash, or two dollars in barter, you cannot buy, one-half the time, in any part of California, as much leather as will sole a pair of shoes; and when, at some singular time they can be bought, shoes cost from three to four dollars a pair. Still, ox-hides can be taken from California to America, and the same hides there tanned and dressed, and made into shoes, and then brought out again around Cape Horn, a distance of ten thousand miles, and an importation duty paid on them of at least one dollar per pair, and after all this trouble and expense, they are sold here at the same price as those manufactured in the country, and very frequently from twenty-five to fifty per cent less.

Any person not acquainted with California, or the manners and customs of the inhabitants will naturally inquire the cause of this. I answer, the want of industry on the part of the people, and the want of encouragement on the part of the government. Whoever lives to see California in the hands of the Americans for the space of ten years, will be able to more than prove whatever I have advanced in its favor.

We now entertain the most sanguine hopes that a conclusion will speedily be put to the war now existing between Mexico and the United States, and that the government of the latter will be firmly established in this country.

Should this be the case, what an amazing field for enterprise will California hold out! At present there is not a yard of tape, a pin, or a piece of domestic cotton or even thread, that does not come from the United States of North America; and this in a country where everything connected with their manufacture can be procured with less trouble and expense, on account of the superiority of the climate, than in any other part of the American continent.

What in California is called winter, would in most parts of the United States be termed the middle of spring. Here are no snows, that is to say, none which lie twenty-four hours on the ground, unless it be on the summits of the mountains. In twenty-two years residence in California, I have never seen on the plains or lowlands the snow last long enough for the boys to gather a snow-ball. What little snow does fall melts immediately on its reaching the earth. As another proof of the mildness of the winters in this country, I must inform you that such a thing as a chimney or fire-place in houses, was never known until within a few years. They were introduced by foreigners, and not so much from necessity as luxury. The rains in the winter are heavy, and generally last from the middle of December to the end of February or the middle of March, during which time the earth imbibes sufficient moisture to promote the growth of all vegetable matter. When the winter has been what is here called severe, the travelling is very bad. On account of the country being so thinly populated, the roads are nothing more than beaten tracks, and in most parts of the country the traveller must be very careful not to let his horse leave those tracks, or he will immediately sink into the ground above his knees, and often in such a manner as to make it difficult to extricate him.

Here are no bridges. In the rainy season, that which in the summer time is nothing but a small creek or rivulet, will increase with the freshets to an inconceivable degree; so much so, that they become quite impassable for a few days; but the country being somewhat mountainous, these rivers soon subside, though the passage still remains difficult on account of the mud which remains on each side of the stream.

The French Consul, Mr. Moerenhout, has been ordered by Col. Fremont, to leave the town, for having attempted to uphold a false claim, made by one of his countrymen on the American government.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that a Frenchman residing in Monterey, by the name of Clement Panaud, had by some means obtained a passport to go to the town of San Jose, where he had some property, which he was going to bring into Monterey, and an order had been issued by the Military Commandant of this place, prohibiting any person whatever from carrying arms, unless he was in the service of the United States. As Panaud was seen by a party of Americans, with a pair of pistols, he was arrested, his pistols taken from him, and his horses and saddles were likewise taken possession of by the American party. Panaud came into Monterey and made his complaint to the French Consul, and, as is supposed, was persuaded by that gentleman to bring in a claim against the American government to an extraordinary amount; it appears, however, that the French Consul made no inquiry into the justice or injustice of Panaud's claim, but immediately wrote an official letter to Capt. W. A. T. Maddox, Commandant of the middle department of California, demanding immediate satisfaction. At eleven o'clock this morning, Panaud was called before the civil Magistrate, Walter Colton, Esq., and on the claim which had been handed in by the French Consul being shown him, and his being asked if that was his claim against the American government, he said yes, it was.- He was desired to swear to the truth of the statement of the property lost. He asked leave to go out of the court for a quarter of an hour, that he might compare the account with his book. He was told that he might send for his book, or any thing else that he might require to make good his claim, and prove the legality of it. After vacillating in a few moments, he said he would abandon the whole claim made by the French Consul in his behalf. On being asked if he wished to do so voluntarily, he said he did. He accordingly gave a certificate to the magistrate to that effect.

The truth is, he found himself unexpectedly in a bad scrape, and saw at once the impossibility of making his claim good. He had put down in his account, 300 arrobas<sup>2</sup> of tallow, at \$5 per arroba, when it was not worth more than \$1.50 all over California; and every thing else in proportion. The amount of his claim was nearly \$7,000.

This country is now opening a field for all sorts of enterprise; not only for male persons, but for females also. In the first place, there is not such a thing, all over California, as a hired female servant. The only female servants which the supervisory classes of the people have been able to procure are Indians, which have been brought wild from the mountains in their infancy. These remain in some houses until they arrive at the age of twelve or fourteen years, when they are almost sure to run away; and as none have been brought into the settlement for some time past, there are very few families now, who have any servants at all. A California woman though she may be naked and cold, will not enter into regular service. They think it a degradation, and many of them will rather sacrifice their virtue, than enter into any kind of regular servitude.

Neither are there any tradeswomen in California of any class whatever. Most of them are pretty good seamstresses, but charge most unreasonable prices for their labor. They will not make a shirt of the coarsest kind under one dollar; and then they must be found in needles and thread. For washing they charge a shilling for each piece, and some of them make considerable money by this occupation, but they are very extravagant. The washer woman must have as many and as rich dress as the person she washes for, or she would feel debased in her own

<sup>1</sup> M. Moerenhout arrived in Monterey on October 1, 1846, aboard the French corvette *Brillante*. Bancroft records Panaud's claim against Fremont, but apparently did not know of this letter.

<sup>2</sup> An arroba is 25 pounds.



eyes. However, economy is contrary to all the ideas and customs of a Californian, whether male or female. The latter, as the former, would rather have two dollars to spend today, than ten dollars to lay by to-morrow.

The females, as well as the males, are very healthy and robust people, and mostly live to a great age. Their fecundity is extraordinary. Those instances are very rare, where a female does not have a birth within each two years after her marriage, and many of them have a birth every year. There are now no less than three women in this town who have had a birth every year since their marriage; and they have all been married twenty years or more each. I have no doubt on the whole, that all women who have been married within the last twenty years in California would average each the birth of a child every fifteen months.

The same cannot be said with regard to idleness of the females, as may with much truth be said of the men. The women are always occupied in some useful employment, either in their houses or out of them, and do a great deal more service in their families than the men; and there many women in all parts of this country, who actually maintain their husbands and their children by their own personal labor; the husband acting as a mere cypher in the family, when he does not by all the dishonorable means in his power, try to deprive his wife of her hardearned dollar, to carry it to the gambling table, or the tavern. This in a great measure is the reason and has been for years, that many women have sacrificed the connubial bond, which is very rarely the case where the husband behaves to his wife as all husbands ought to behave.

—W. R. G.

## The Reluctant Conqueror

Commodore John Drake Sloat, despite the steely-eyed official portrait, was a gentle, hesitant man. When he entered the bay of Monterey on the 1st or 2nd of July, 1846, on board the *Savannah*, he was still of two minds whether he should accept the awful responsibility for the seizure of the town. His orders for action were ambiguous; he had heard rumors of fighting on the Texas border, but, after all, they were just rumors. Perhaps it would be best to wait for direct orders. Back in 1842, Commodore Thomas Ap Catesby Jones had burned his fingers here in Monterey by prematurely running up the American flag, and Commodore Sloat was not eager to repeat the fiasco. His forty-six years in the navy had given him a healthy respect for protocol. Besides, he was sixty-six years old, and he did not feel very well. Best be cautious.

On July 2, therefore, he politely asked the Mexican officials if they had any objection to his men stretching their legs ashore for twenty-four hours in squads of one hundred. As he wrote to Consul Larkin, "if the men do make some noise, they will also spend \$1,000 or \$1,500 doing it." On the 3rd, Sloat had himself rowed ashore and made his duty calls on the local authorities. All ships of the little squadron were dressed and salutes fired on the next day, the Glorious Fourth. The 5th, a Sunday, was passed in religious services aboard the ships while they swung lazily at anchor. Commodore Sloat wrestled with his timidity.

By the 6th of July, the commodore was forced to make up his mind by news of the Bear Flag revolt, and that day, he and Larkin, heads together in his cabin, drew up a generous, humane proclamation of American intentions to the Californians, and orders to his officers for the capture of the capital of Mexican California on the morrow.

Bright and early on the morning of the 7th, Captain Mervine of the *Cyane* presented himself and a request for surrender to the old artillery captain Mariano Silva. Silva's reply is surely one of the most pathetic that a defending officer ever had to give. There simply was no flag to haul down, soldiers to defend it, munitions to fight with, nor treasury to purchase what was needful for defense. He suggested asking the commanding officer of the Mexican forces, then at Los Angeles, for instructions. By 9 A. M. Mervine was back aboard the *Savannah* with this news, and by 10 A. M. 250 sailors and marines landed with Captain Mervine at their head, raised the Stars and Stripes, and Monterey became an American town. Thus ended one of the mildest conquests ever attempted.

For all his irresoluteness, however, Commodore Sloat's action brought an immense reward. 600,000 square miles of territory fell into the hands of the United States, and from this enormous war booty the states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, the western halves of Colorado and New Mexico and the southwestern tip of Wyoming were carved.

To mark the importance of the capture of Monterey in 1846, the Monterey History and Art Association and the peninsula's Navy League have reenacted for thirteen years, with the help of the United States Navy, that fateful landing. This year, on the morning of July 6, the marines and sailors will come ashore, not splashing through the wavelets on the beach, but up the Yacht Club wharf. A thirty-five piece Navy band, reminiscent of that one whose sweet music soothed Mexican hearts 113 years ago, will parade the streets of Monterey. During the afternoon, the City of Monterey will sponsor a reception for the visiting dignitaries, naval officers and local officials at the Navy Line School.

Commodore Sloat's squadron of three vessels would stand scant show against the four ships that will anchor in Monterey's roadstead from July 3 to July 7. The destroyers *Edson* and *Preston*, the refrigerator ship *Regulus*, and the landing ship, dock, *Alamos*, under Captain Fox, commanding, will permit the citizens of Monterey on July 4 to inspect their weapons and facilities, an invitation which was not extended to the Montereños of 1846 by Commodore Sloat.

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## COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

**The Merienda:** On June 3, 1770, Father Junipero Serra held services under a great oak in a ravine near the landing place in Monterey. Present were Don Gaspar de Portola and his leather-jacketed soldiers, and Captain Juan Pérez and his sailors from the *San Antonio*. They were honoring the founding of the Mission San Carlos de Borromeo and the Presidio of Monterey.

In commemoration of that event, the association held its annual *Merienda* in the garden of the Pacific Building on June 6th with our president, Allen Knight, introducing the many honored guests. Alcalde Russo of Monterey was there, dignitaries of the army and navy, the Hon. Joseph Knowland and Mrs. Knowland, and the retiring chief of the Division of Beaches and Parks, Newton Drury. We will miss Mr. Drury; he had a real interest in preserving the historic values of Monterey. The *Favorita* was charming Miss Phyllis Burnette, escorted by her gracious duena, Mrs. William Hatton, and her attendants, Anne Petersen and Elizabeth van Loben Sels. The Reverend Leon Darkowski, U. S. N., gave the benediction.

The chairmen for the *Merienda* were Mr. Claude Faw, tickets, tables and programs; Mr. Henry Jones, barbecue; and Mrs. Henry Jones, hostesses. The association wishes to thank Nutting & Co. for the lettuce, Mr. Wm. J. Redding for the beans, Estrada Restaurant for cooking the beans in the old Spanish manner, and Galletin's Restaurant for preparing the salad. Miss Margaret Jacks, as is her custom, presented the huge birthday cake, and Mrs. Yeomans, wife of Admiral Elmer Yeomans, cut it with the saber of the association's former president, Col. Roger Fitch. Strolling musicians, soloists and refreshments added to the gaiety of the afternoon. In the evening, the *Merienda* guests attended a special performance of "Bertha, the Sewing Machine Girl" at the First Theater.



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Monterey, California

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## COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

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**New Junior Members:** Margaret Helen Collison, Elizabeth Kathleen Collison, Catherine Dorcas Faliano, Linda Lou McHarry, and John C. Krotcher.

**Gifts:** Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hitchcock presented items for the kitchen and other rooms at the Stevenson House. Several early photographs of old adobes were given by Mr. and Mrs. Guy Curtis. The six rosewood chairs and settee with caned back and seats, given by Mrs. Florence Juvinall of Napa, have been beautifully repaired under the direction of Mr. Hitchcock and are now on display in the sala of the Stevenson House. Mrs. Peg Murray gave a chair with needlepoint and beadwork which had been owned by her grandmother, Fidelia School Ballard, over 100 years ago.

Mrs. William O'Donnell received a key to the City of Monterey for submitting the winning name for the new police and fire headquarters. The official name is now El Cuartel, and we suggest that all remember to pronounce it as though it were spelled with a "q."

Mrs. William O'Donnell gave talks on "Old Monterey" to the Rotary Club and the P. E. O., and Mrs. William Kneass spoke before the Navy Wives, the Exchange Club and several smaller groups.