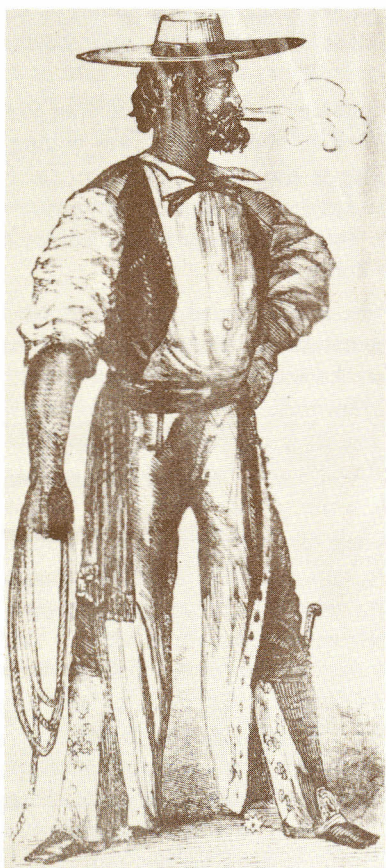


NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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The Monterey History and Art Association

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DECEMBER, 1960



A Native Californian, according to the Americans
(courtesy Monterey Public Library)

Carried Off In Chains

JAMES MEADOWS STORY

Every Seventh of July the historic occupation of Monterey by the American naval forces is observed with fitting ceremony. The Bear Flag Revolt is recalled and its part in pushing the reluctant Commodore Sloat into the capture of California receives honorable mention. But who now remembers what event pushed the Bear Flaggers? Fear, solid well-grounded fear that history would repeat itself caused the hasty gathering of that ill-prepared band of frontiersmen that seized General Mariano Vallejo at unsuspecting Sonoma in June, 1846.

For the last few months the American settlers in the Sacramento and Napa valleys had watched apprehensively as Fremont and General Castro challenged and counter-challenged each other safely out of bullet range in the Monterey area. In May, when Fremont had returned from the Klamath and camped near the Sutter Buttes, wild rumors flew on the wind that General Castro had decreed the banishment of all illegal immigrants (and there were precious few legal ones), that he had ordered under arms a

force of 500 to 600 native Californians to effect this purpose, and that an advance guard was even now advancing up the Sacramento River looting American property, rounding up livestock and inciting the Indians to burn the crops.¹

If the settlers had not been frightened they would have checked these rumors and discovered their falsity, but they were fearful, for five years is too short a time for a bitter memory to fade. Riding under the Bear Flag among the group in the greasy buckskin hunting-shirts was at least one man who had seen and felt how the Californians could put the drastic threat of exile into action. Peter Storm had made one of those 100 or so foreigners who had been arrested and confined in Monterey in the spring of 1840 for just that program, and although many who could prove their Mexican citizenship or legal responsibility were excused, he and 46 other Americans and Englishmen were shipped in chains to Mexico.

It was not until July, 1841, after they had won their release, that 20 of the exiles returned, vowing vengeance against Castro and letting it be known among their friends that they would make another Texas of California as soon as they were strong enough. (Their fellow ex-prisoners had simply shaken the dust of California from their garments and departed elsewhere.)

If Storm chilled the blood of his Bear Flag companions with tales of Mexican atrocities, we can pardon him, perhaps, for he certainly had an audience that was willing to believe anything that would testify to the skullduggery of the present owners of the fair land of California. From this point of view it was no long step to considering themselves the instruments of Providence and that their plain duty lay in overthrowing the slack government that had allowed them to settle within its borders.

What the returned exile actually said, of course, is unrecorded, but the stories of several other deportees is on record, thanks to the extraordinary Hubert Howe Bancroft, the historian of the West. In 1877 this San Francisco bookseller was engaged in getting first-hand reports on early California from those eye-witnesses who still lived in every town and village. There were hundreds of them and their memories were prodigious. Many were humble people who read and wrote only with difficulty; all had grown up in a time when a tenacious memory was a necessity.

Bancroft wasted no time. He sent energetic young men who spoke perfect Spanish and were adepts at stenography into the hamlets to seek out these old-timers and take down their statements. Among the men of Monterey who gave their reminiscences was a Carmel Valley settler, James Meadows, who had also suffered exile in 1840.

James Meadows is perhaps better known to modern readers as the husband of that charming and appealing Carmel Indian girl, Loreta Onesimo, who speaks to us through Anne Benson Fisher's historical novel, *CATHEDRAL IN THE SUN*. Several of the Onesimo family still live in the Carmel Valley, and through the kindness of a descendent of James Meadows, Mr. Walter Collison, and the Bancroft Library of the University of California we have permission to publish this document that describes so vividly the stirring 1840's and the fear that pushed the Bear Flaggers into their 27 day Republic of California.

—Donald M. Craig

1—Bancroft, H. H. *HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA*, (S.F., 1886) Vol. V, pgs 94-96.

Statement of James Meadows Respecting the Graham Affair of 1840

James Meadows, an Englishman by birth, and naturalized American citizen — living on his own ranch named the Palo Escrito, 7½ miles S. of Monterey town.

During my visit to Mont. in May 1877, to collect data on Cal. hist. for Mr. H. H. Bancroft, I learned of Meadows being in that dist. and that he had been one of the prisoners sent to Mex. by the Authorities of Cal. in 1840, on the charge of having plotted agt. the Govt.

I visited Meadows at his ranch, and he cheerfully complied with any request giving the accompanying information on the arrest of foreigners that year, and their treatment here, on the voyage and in Mex. — and also on other events in which he took some part.

The whole was narrated by him and written down by me on the 14 of May.

Mr. Meadows felt much interest in the success of Mr. Bancroft's labors.

Respectable persons in Mont. spoke well of Meadows' character — he certainly treated me well & obligingly.



JAMES MEADOWS, taken about 1880
(Anne Benson Fisher Collection,
Monterey History and Art
Association.)

Thos Savage

JAMES MEADOWS

I came to Monterey from London in a London whale ship in Sept.m 1837 — Left the ship at Monterey, and lived here all that winter — in the spring of 1838 the country was in a state of revolution — John B. Alvarado was then Gov.r and Carlos Antonio Carillo, supported by the people of the South claimed the office of Gov.r

There was a foreign company that went as Alvarado's body-guard (as he could not trust his own people) to the place called Las Flores — I was one of the privates, & the company was commanded by Lieut. John Coppinger. (This Coppinger I know had been at one time a lieutenant in the British Navy. I ascertained this fact from himself, and I know that once there was a Brit. man of war in San Francisco whose Purser had served in the same ship with Coppinger & wanted him to go home with him — the reason of his leaving his ship was a breach of discipline in insulting his Captain — & he ran away rather than be tried by a Court-martial & disgraced.)

Alvarado & Jose Castro's army surrounded the enemy at Las Flores, on the sea-coast, this side of San Luis Rey — We had been pursuing the enemy, who had all along kept one day ahead of us till they made a stand at Las Flores. There had been no fighting except a few shots at San Buenaventura, where one man was killed on the Carillo side, by a rifle shot fired by a New-Mexican. The New-Mexican ran great risk of being shot by Castro's side, because the man who was killed was a *compadre* of said Castro — Said Castro had given a general order to all of us to shoot the largest man they could see in the enemy's crowd, who was understood to be Carlos Ant.º Carillo, & the New-Mexican shot another man believing him to be the biggest of the enemy's party. Finally, after a long consultation in Santa Barb.a he was released.

At Las Flores we surrounded the enemy during 2 or 3 days — cut off his supplies, and without firing a shot they surrendered. Carillo & his partisans & head men were

taken prisoners. After that we all came to Santa Barbara, had a big dance, and that ended the war. The foreign company were told at Santa Barbara that their services were no longer required, but they should be paid to the time they were mustered out & paid in Monterey. The military authorities gave us our arrears in scrip which Thomas O. Larkin cashed, at a big share — I don't remember what the per-centage was. The pay of this foreign company was — Lt Coppinger (the only officer) 5\$ per day — as well as I can remember — Luis Pomber (a Canadian Frenchman whose sons live now in Castroville) was the Sergeant, & his pay was 3\$ per day. I don't recollect what the corporal's pay was — the privates had 2\$ per day each.

The company consisted of about 25 men, as far as I can remember. The few names I can recollect besides the above mentioned were Bill Anderson, Thomas Cole, Bob King, McFarland, Mountain Bill, a negro called Black Jack, Bill Warren, Hopping Jack, myself. I can't remember the names of the others.

After that campaign I went to live with Coppinger in Las Pulgas redwoods in the San Jose district. The ranch we lived on belonged to Maxinio Martinez. I remained there till the spring of 1839, & then came to Monterey, and was engaged together with Wm Anderson in sawing lumber here by the Carmel river in a little canyon. We were thus engaged when one evening in the spring 1840, some 5 or 6 horsemen came and told me I was wanted by the Authorities in Monterey. They made me go with them — one of those men let his pistol go off, and the ball passed so close to me that it deafened me for some time — he said it was accidental, but I believe he did it purposely.

Before my arrest Anderson had gone to town on the Sunday (2 or 3 days before I was taken) to ascertain what the news were. We had heard from the only two Mexican or Californian families living near us — Antonio & Mariano Romero — that the Authorities had information of a plot by foreigners to seize the country, & were arresting all the foreigners — & that such as proved to be innocent were released, & the others kept in confinement. Anderson went by the back of the town with Mariano Romero, & the latter reported his arrival. Anderson was then put into the calaboose. The same Romero sold me and another by the name of John Higgins for the sake of getting a rifle from each of us.

This Higgins was an old Rocky Mountain hunter — one of the first that came thru the mountains into this country. The Californians were afraid to arrest him, & resorted to treachery to accomplish their object. He was a quiet, unoffensive, but very cool & brave man, whom they never could have taken alive had he not been at the time with a very sore hand, owing to his having, whilst pursuing a deer that he had shot, fallen down in the Chamizal, & a stick got into his hand between the two bones. The stick broke in the hand, & crippled it up completely, & made it a running sore. He could not use the hand — he had been some time living with us.

We were not taken together. The way my arrest was effected was by sending me a message to come to Romero's house that he wanted to see me — when I was abt halfway down the canyon, the soldiers that were posted there surrounded me. As soon as I found myself thus captured, I sent word to Higgins to go away, or the soldiers would have him — he left & went to stop at San Francisquito ranch, he being acquainted with the people that lived there.

After a few days Mariano Romero went there & coaxed Higgins to come to his house assuring him that nothing would be done to him, as he was known to be a crippled and harmless man — and that his (Romero's) wife would attend to the cure of his hand. Higgins after hesitating some time, allowed himself to accompany Romero, whom he had intimately known before. When in the house, Romero borrowed his gun to go & kill a deer as they had (he said) no meat in the premises — at that time there were deer all around the spot — Romero took the gun, & went down to the brush where he had some soldiers stationed, & told them to go & seize Higgins, for he was entirely unarmed.

Higgins was then captured, & brought to Monterey & put in the same calaboose where I & 110 more were at the time. The room was abt 18 by 20 or 24 — we were so crowded that no more prisoners could be shoved in without first putting in their bayonets & pricking us to drive us back. If any one complained the soldiers said *it made no difference, as we were going to die anyhow*. There was no room for any man to lay or sit down, or even to fall "down." In each corner of the room was a barrel to answer for a privy, but those standing at a distance could not get to it. When a barrel was full two prisoners were made to take it out to be emptied. We were (after I was put in) two or three days in that condition, & then a portion were transferred to another small room.

Isaac Graham & several others — Shard, Majors, Daly, Morris — 14 all together — were kept in another room, in the old Malarin house, in front of the Cuartel.

Whilst we were in the calaboose the soldiers came & took Morris out, carried him to the square & sat him in a chair in front of the Governor's house. The priest was there and performed all the rites of religion outside, as if they were on the point of shooting Morris. At this moment, Mr. Farnham, who had arrived here in a ship with Capt. Paty, as soon as he learned of the state of things in Monterey, sent the ship's boat back, & made his way to where Morris was sitting. He asked Rafael Pinto, the officer of the day, what he was going to do with Morris, and was answered that it was none of his business. Pinto then asked him who he was, and where he had come from, but Farnham refused to answer his questions. He told Pinto if they shot Morris it would be the worst job they had ever done — that he would wrap the Am. flag around him, and if they wanted to shoot, they would have to shoot Morris thro' the flag, or shoot him, Farnham — to send Morris back to the prison. Pinto sent a message to the Gov.r detailing what had happened. The conversation between Farnham & Pinto had been carried on thro' an interpreter, George Allen. The prisoner was not shot but sent back to the calaboose. Farnham was not allowed to speak to us except thro' Mr. David Spence — he visited us several days till one or two days before we were ready to sail, when he went down to Sta Barbara. He always told us to keep up our courage, make no resistance, & we should be paid for all our sufferings — that he would follow us to the end of our journey. We had, the last day that he came to see us, removed the hinges from the calaboose door, & were about to run away that night; but owing to his persuasion abt one half or more would not allow the other portion to run away — and so we all remained, & finally were shipped on the Mex.n Bark Guipuzcoana (at one time the Am. ship John Rogers of Boston) Previous to this we went thro' a mock trial at the Governor's house, Pablo de la Guerra acting as interpreter for such as did not understand Spanish. They called us in one at a time — the questions asked me were: how long I had been in the country? — how I came here? — if I knew anything of the intended revolution? what my occupation was? I answered every thing, and assured them that I had no information about the supposed plot. The next day they put us all on board of that ship.

What first gave rise to the difficulty between Graham and Jose Castro was a horse race. Graham had an American horse, and had been winning the money of the Californians — for the latter were very fond of horseracing (as well as of other gambling) and would bet every thing they had in the world. This gave rise to the quarrels, which were often made up, but left a rancor in the breasts of these head men of the Californians. One of the principal men was Jose Castro.

I don't know now & never knew whether there was any foundation for the charge that was preferred by the Gov.t here agt Graham & other foreigners. I had nothing to do with any plotting against the Gov.t, and knew no one that had. I had heard nothing abt such business except from the Romeroes before I was arrested, and afterwards from the conversations in the calaboose.

Graham & other prisoners assured me when we were in Mexico, and subsequently on our return to Cal. that they had entered into no conspiracies to upset the Gov.t and that the story had been manufactured out of whole cloth.

Upon being told of the story gotten up to bring about the arrest of foreigners in the country, to wit: "that a man named Tomas, married to Jesusa Bernal, had confessed to Father Real that Graham, Garner & other foreigners, himself included, had prepared a plot to seize the country, call for American protectorate, and if this was not granted, then pillage all they could find, and get themselves away." About this I have to say that the whole story is false. The only men named Thomas among the foreigners were Tom Bowen, & a Welshman who went to Mex. with us. There was another called Tom the Boatswain who cut his leg badly in the redwoods working for Coppingier. This Tom went to Oregon in 1838 with a party of trappers of the N. W. Company.*

The only foreigners in San Jose from 1838 to 1840 were: Capt. Burton, Wm Gulnac (?), Weeks, Geo. Ferguson, Tom Bowen, Jim an Irishman, James Pease, Wm Daly, Frazier, Mathews an old carpenter, Robert Livermore, Alexn Forbes, Welch, brother in law to Forbes, & Travis — there were also a Dutchman named Pete, and a Portuguese negro, called Manuel. Pete is still living somewhere in Sonoma. Pease lives in Spanishtown (Pescadero). I cannot trace any foundation for the story of the confession to Padre Real, and I believe to this day that the whole thing was gotten up for effect in Mexico.

Wm Garner came one day at abt 11 A.M. to Graham's still house. Graham asked him, "What is all this traveling backwards & forwards for?" Garner replied he dared not tell him — he could not tell him, adding these words: "If you hear tell of my falling from my horse between here & San Juan, then look out for yourselves" — that afternoon a man came along and said that Garner had fallen off from his horse & hurt himself very badly. Graham paid no regard to it. That night, at some time, the Gov't troops with Jose Castro at their head came to Graham's house, demanded to be let in, and on being refused entrance, burst open the door, and began shouting. Graham was in bed with nothing but his underclothes on—he seized his cloak and ran out of the house—the cloak was riddled with balls, & one ball went thro' the handkerchief that he had round his neck. Graham fell into a hole, where they had been burning charcoal near the brush. Eusebio Boronda lassoed him, & gave one turn to the other end of the rope around the horn of the saddle—then several other men pulled his arms apart, and tried to drag his limbs from his body. I forgot to state that when Graham was in the hole Joaquin de la Torre thrust his sword between Graham's arm & body, slightly cutting either the arm or the body — I don't remember which.

At the same time that Graham ran out from the house, Henry Niel did the same, and one of the Californians hamstringing him, completely cutting his leg clean to the bone.

Morris and Jack Smith lived in the still house.

Two or three days previous to all this two Californians came to Fling, the blacksmith, to get some irons fixed up — after this had been done, they came to the still house, & stated that they had to go somewhere and left the irons there. On the night of the arrest, one of those two Californians came in the early part of the evening, and asked permission to sleep in the still house, & he was there asleep when the soldiers came. A party of the soldiers came to the still house, demanded admittance, and upon being refused, made such a noise that it frightened the Californian inside, who jumped out of the house. Smith shot at him & Morris shot at the other fellows thro' the door. He & Smith jumped out at the other end of the house (where the Californian had got out) & went over to Santa Cruz. The above was communicated to me by Graham & others who were captured at Graham's place in Natividad. I don't know where Smith finally fetched up, & don't believe he was taken up at all. Morris went to David Littlejohn's house that night — next day night a Californian took him over to Major's ranch where a still house was kept. By some foul play of a Frenchman Morris was delivered to the Authorities & brought into Monterey.

(To be continued)

* Meadows some days later sent me word that he had thought over the matter, & remembered there was a man called *Tom the Napper*. I believe this man's surname was Tomlinson — he was husband of Jesusa Bernal. —Savage.

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

On this date the Monterey History and Art Association numbers 666 members paid for 1960. The new members include Mr. and Mrs. Walter L. Stevens, Mrs. Margaret M. Ryan, Alyce Law, Mrs. Yvonne E. Costigan, Dr. and Mrs. Dubrasich, Mrs. Dorothy C. Constans, Mrs. Frank De Amaral, Major General and Mrs. W. E. R. Covell, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Thomas, Mrs. Lewis Smith, Mrs. West Champion, Mrs. Ruth Galvin Thornburg. Among the Life Members is Myron Oliver, distinguished Peninsula artist. There is one Junior member, Miss Yvonne Costigan.



Mrs. Ella Hill Fitch, widow of the late Colonel Roger S. Fitch, died since the publication of our previous quarterly. Both Colonel and Mrs. Fitch were life members of the History and Art Association. A memorial garden will be established at Casa Serrano using memorial gifts sent by friends of Mrs. Fitch to the Association. The Association last year erected a fountain in the Friendly Plaza to Colonel Fitch, the founder of our Association.



A gift of a handsome brown silk dress aged about 96 years has been given to the Association by Col. Charles R. Blood, 847 Ocean View Blvd., Pacific Grove. The dress was worn by Minerva Reader Blood when she married Donie Needham Blood on February 16, 1876 in Henry, Illinois. It was last worn by her on her 50th wedding anniversary, Feb. 16, 1926, at Los Gatos, California.

Col. Blood was a State Highway Engineer for many years. He laid out or helped to lay out the first highway into Yosemite Valley. The road ended at Merced.

The Colonel also gave an old iron muffin pan used by his mother for many years.



Another valuable and interesting gift came from Mrs. Kate C. Woods in the form of a tea set of early Rose Canton china which was the property of the Misses Mary and Ann Grant of Hatton Field, Carmel. The set includes a tea pot, cream pitcher, sugar bowl, seven plates, four cups and saucers, two cake plates, one waste bowl, and an odd plate and bowl.

The set is either Chia Ching, 1796-1820 or Tao Kwong, 1821-1850. The father of the Misses Grant was interested in the China trade when that was an important part of life on the west coast. Miss Ann Grant had been governess to Mrs. Woods, who was her guardian until Miss Grant's death at the age of 94 in 1954.



Mrs. Raymond Spangler has given two oriental rugs and a handsome old mahogany rocker with the original horsehair upholstery.



Mrs. G. T. McCready has given the Association an antique hand-woven blue and white coverlet. Admiral and Mrs. McCready were formerly stationed at the U. S. Navy Postgraduate School in Monterey and now live in San Jose. They still keep up their membership and interest in our History and Art Association.



The 30th annual meeting of the Monterey History and Art Association will be held on Monday, January 16, 1961, at 8 p.m. in the members' clubhouse, Casa Serrano, 412 Pacific St., Monterey. There will be annual reports and the election of directors.

The program planned for the evening should be of exceptional interest. Mr. Charles St. George Pope, A.I.A. will speak on early California buildings and will illustrate his talk by slides showing unusual architectural features.

As usual there will be a brimming punchbowl and plates of delectable cakes.



We have to thank our good friends of the Monterey Foundation for a most generous act. It happened a couple of months ago, too late for inclusion in our September NOTICIAS, but "time



(Continued on Page Eight)

THE EDITORS
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HONORARY DIRECTORS: Miss Margaret Jacks, Carmel Martin, Sr., Mrs. W. M. O'Donnell.



COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

(Continued from Page Seven)

cannot wither" our appreciation of their kindness. At a meeting on September 26, their directors voted to cancel the \$2,000 loan they had made to us when we were gathering funds to save the Serrano Adobe from the bulldozer. The money has been devoted to the purpose for which the Monterey Foundation was organized, and now the loan has become an outright gift. We thank them again from the bottom of our heart.



Claude Faw, our tireless vice president, arranged for a tour of the beautiful and historic parts of the Monterey Peninsula for the wives of the Steel Fabricators conventioners at Del Monte Lodge and made a gift of the \$125 profit to our treasury. Thank you, Claude, for your generosity and deep interest in our Association.



The December meeting of the directors, with President Allen Knight back from his world cruise and presiding, was held in the De la Torre Adobe, California's first Federal courthouse, which has been restored, landscaped and fitted out as law offices by County Supervisor Thomson Hudson. The work on the Adobe has been carried out with great taste and is a testimony to the modern uses which our old buildings can be adapted. We congratulate Mr. Hudson on his choice of an office which is redolent of the history of Monterey County.



On November 30, the General Service Administration of the United States placed a valuation of \$9,180 on the threatened Fremont Adobe. According to previous talks, the federal government is willing to sell this 43 x 27 foot plot of ground with the clapboard covered adobe to the city, and the city in turn would be repaid by the Association on a long term lease. The directors are not happy at the price asked, and President Knight has asked a committee to check on means of acquiring the adobe without going into deep debt. (We still owe \$15,000 on the Serrano Adobe.)