

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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California's First Library

by

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(In 1849 in Monterey, several prominent citizens who longed for the amenities of intellectual life on this farthest of all American frontiers formed a public library association, collected \$1,500 and entrusted it to homeward bound Alcalde Walter Colton. He was to purchase in Philadelphia as varied a number of edifying and interesting books as the money would allow; true to their hopes, about a thousand volumes came back to them, and it was these books that made up the first established public library in California.

It was not, by any means, the first library in California, as this article by Harry Downie demonstrates. Not only was it preceded by Father Serra's books, but there were notable collections in private hands and even one college library long before 1849.

Books, as such, were not of much interest to a people generally as illiterate as the Californians. The Spanish governors brought some and the missionaries were keen for news of political, scientific and theological developments; they even traded for travel and history books with visiting ships. There were strict orders against the importation of foreign books, but more than one lonely friar, seeing the lovely French or English books, added them to his shelf.

Occasionally, daring laymen were disciplined for reading forbidden tomes. About 1836, the Carrillos, that head-strong Santa Barbara-Los Angeles clan, watched as the missionaries burned some books that they had smuggled ashore from the American bark Volunteer. In 1831, a German merchant named Virmond brought a lot of books secretly to San Francisco. Commandant Mariano G. Vallejo went aboard his ship, solemnly warned Captain Fitch that such cargo was illegal—and bought them for 400 cowhides (worth \$2.00 each) and ten skins of tallow. It was not until Vallejo loaned some of them to Jose Castro and Juan Bautista Alvarado that news of the contraband library leaked out. The padres let him off with a fine, but Vallejo kept the books.

William E. P. Hartnell's large library was an approved, not clandestine one. His duties as translator made a number of books and dictionaries in French, German, English and Russian necessary. In 1834, when he and Father Patrick Short started El Seminario de San Jose, better known as El Colegio Hartnell, he added many English and Latin books from the extensive collection brought home from England by his nephew, Juan de la Guerra.

This promising youth had died in Hartnell's home the year before, and his grieving family loaned Hartnell all the books he needed.

Francisco Pacheco had a collection of bound copies of newspapers and literary magazines and some books on Mexican history. In possession of our Association are many novels, classics and books of poetry that belonged to Escolastica Rodriguez de Dye, a wild horse-woman and belle of old Monterey. Her books, however, may have been acquired largely after 1846.

All these libraries have been widely scattered through inheritance or disaster. Father Serra's, added to by later missionaries, is now the most complete of the old collections. It is interesting to see that Carmel Mission once functioned as a sort of lending library for later missions in northern California and that so many volumes, but not all have been returned. Curious survivors of another age were found by Harrie Downie in the old missals and prayer books. In one, holy wafers lay pressed between the leaves to keep them intact while the priest visited some outlying rancho or Indian rancheria to say mass; in another, an old Spanish cigarillo, rolled very thin and with a little of the tobacco inside, still awaited the moment when the padre, his duties done, could savor its fragrance as he rode down the long valley back to the mission by the sea.)

Donald M. Craig

The library at Carmel Mission Museum dates from the year 1770. Fray Junipero Serra brought the first books from Baja California. A large number of these books came from the Jesuit missions of Baja California. It appears from notes in some of the volumes that Father Palou brought still other books with him in 1773. Specifically, there is a set of theological volumes bearing the Superior's permission for Palou's use dated 1753. There are also several books marked for the use of Padre Basterra, who left Baja California for Mexico in 1773 and never came to Alta California.

As yet no inventory of the library from the time of Serra has been brought to light. One does find, however, in his annual report of 1778, the description of a book case made of redwood having four sections in order from large to small. This case was large enough to have held a considerable number of books. The library books in Serra's time were simply arranged according to size and had no numbering.

After the death of Father Serra, a number of books were added to the library, a fact established by several dated notes in Father Lasuen's handwriting stating that the volumes had been donated to the library. There is evidence that between the years 1797 and 1803 Father Lasuen had the library catalogued, although as yet no list has appeared. He used the same method of arranging the books as Father Serra. They were in cases according to size. To keep the books in order, the top of the spine was painted white. An inked Roman numeral on this white square designated the case number, and under this an Arabic numeral marked the place of the volume in the case. This same system was used in the Mother College of San Fernando in Mexico.

We know that Serra did not number the volumes, for we note a set of nine volumes, **Espiritu de los Mejores Diarios**, published in 1790 bearing the numbers II/97-105. This set was presented to the library by Governor Diego Borica,

as shown by a note in Volume I in Lasuen's handwriting. Then following these there is a set of eleven volumes, **Cartas Edificantes, y Curiosas . . . de la Compania de Jesus**, numbered II/108-121. These books with publication dates from 1753 to 1756 must have been brought here by Serra or Palou before 1774 from among the books of the Jesuit fathers of Baja California, because after 1773, and following the transfer of these Baja California missions to the Dominicans, no further goods or articles from there were sent to the Franciscan missions of Alta California. If the books had been numbered at any time prior to the last years of Lasuen, these Jesuit volumes would have had lower numbers than those volumes acquired after 1791.

Considering the highest originally numbered volumes in each of the cases in the present arrangement of the restored library, it seems certain that there were three hundred and two, and undoubtedly more, volumes here in 1800. Of these, eighty titles consisting of one hundred and sixty-one volumes are presently here. There are several libraries in California which possess a number of these missing volumes. A great service to history would be served if sometime they were returned to the original Carmel Mission Library.

In the year 1834 Padre Jose Maria Suarez del Real, who served the San Carlos Mission from 1833 to 1844, inventoried the library at Carmel in preparation for the secularization of the Mission. He lists the library as having two stands 9'7" high and 8'3" wide of ordinary wood each one made of three sections with separate doors and keys. Thirty pesos was the value he set on each. One small additional case without a door was valued at seven pesos. He listed one hundred seventy-nine titles making up four hundred and four volumes. These included most of the volumes in the 1800 arrangement.

From a chart prepared in 1966 it would appear that thirty-five volumes bearing the 1800 mark, missing in 1834, have been returned and are here now. These thirty-five volumes had been loaned or given to other missions. In 1932, fifty-three volumes from Santa Cruz Mission were brought to Carmel. Among these were six volumes which bear the 1800 Carmel mark but do not appear on either the 1834 inventory or the later one of 1842. Taking into account the thirty-five volumes loaned or given to other missions between 1800 and 1834 as mentioned above, the fact is that one hundred thirty-seven new volumes were added to the library between these years. Of the 1934 inventory there are now at Carmel one hundred eighty-eight volumes including those with the 1800 marking. No volumes added to the library after the time of Lasuen were marked.

In the year 1842 Padre Real again inventoried the library at the request of Bishop Garcia Diego. In this inventory there are listed one hundred fifty-six titles consisting of three hundred fifteen volumes; a loss of twenty-three titles and eighty-nine volumes since the 1834 inventory.

The Library was housed at Carmel Mission from the year 1771. After secularization, Padre Real served the Pueblo of Monterey and in 1842 became the pastor of both places. He purchased the adobe that later became the Sherman

Rose House in Monterey. During this time he probably took some books to Monterey. By 1850 all the books remaining at Carmel were taken to Monterey and kept by the pastor in the various houses used as rectories.

Following the death in 1883 of Padre Doroteo Ambris, the last priest to reside at San Antonio Mission, Father Casanova, then pastor of Monterey, went to San Antonio and secured many useful objects from the church and house. The moveable property of the former Mission of Soledad, at that time, was stored at San Antonio. Few of the missions marked their books. Only occasionally does one find a written note identifying a volume as belonging to a certain mission or for the use of a particular padre or as having come from the Mother College of San Fernando. So, although one can find only five volumes actually marked as belonging to San Antonio and one to Soledad, it would seem reasonable to assume that many of the volumes now here, which do not appear on the earlier inventories, were brought to Monterey by Father Casanova in 1883.

At present there are five hundred seventy-nine volumes in the Carmel Mission Library, two hundred and twenty-nine of which are from the original inventories between 1771 and 1842. This means that three hundred and fifty volumes have been added since 1842.

There is a plausible explanation to account for these additions. It has been mentioned that fifty-three books were brought from Santa Cruz in 1932. Six bore the Carmel mark of 1800; seven matched titles of the 1834 or 1842 inventories; so that forty volumes were additions.

Likewise in 1932, five books were brought from San Juan Bautista Mission. One bore the Carmel mark of 1800; three matched titles of the 1834 or 1842 inventories so that one was an addition. This leaves three hundred and nine volumes to be accounted for.

Two hundred forty-nine volumes appear only in 1834 and/or 1842. Some of these are no doubt here at Carmel now, but because of the very fragmentary nature of these two inventories (ten titles in the 1842 are completely illegible, for instance) it is impossible to determine the number with any certainty at all, still one can be sure that many of the three hundred and nine volumes mentioned above can be accounted for in this way. The balance would have come from San Antonio or Soledad in 1883, and it might safely be concluded that a number of these would have originally come from other missions.

In 1949 the restoration on the Carmel Mission itself had progressed to the point where the library area was completed. A request was made to Monsignor John Ryan for the return of the books which had been housed in Monterey since the 1850s. This was most graciously granted with the approbation of Bishop Willinger.

The library is now in its original place in the restored Padre's Quarters. It has recently been fully catalogued. New numbers have been placed on the bottom of the spine indicating case number and position in the case. This was the system used by Father Lasuen. His original marks fall into their proper positions. A chart has been prepared showing in which inventory list each book

appeared and from which Mission it came. There are now two card files. One is arranged in sequence, listing the books as they are arranged on the present shelves. These cards also contain other pertinent information regarding whether the book was for the use of a particular padre, for example, or from what other mission it was returned to Carmel. The other file is arranged alphabetically according to titles.

In addition to the Old Mission Library at Carmel, there is a fifth case containing one hundred sixty-eight volumes belonging to the several pastors of Monterey from 1858 until 1928.

There are also ninety-six other volumes in their seven original cases. These constitute a small part of the library that belonged to William Edward Petty Hartnell. This was probably the largest private library in California during the Mexican period. It was Hartnell who with Father Patrick Short, an Irish Picpus father stationed at Carmel, founded the first college in California on the Rancho Alisal near Salinas. It was called the Patricino de San Jose. These volumes were obtained from Nathaniel Soberanes who was a great-grandson of W. E. P. Hartnell.

It is of particular interest that so much of this first library in California has been preserved despite the vicissitudes suffered at the time of secularization and during the transition from an Hispanic culture to an Anglo-Saxon one.

NOTHING BUT TROUBLE, TROUBLE, TROUBLE

(Continued from the December issue)

(It is a shame to have to give such snippets as this from the recollections of Don Florencio Serrano, who came to Monterey in 1834 with the Hajar-Padres colony, but the next episode is truly engrossing and we could not squeeze it all in unless we crossed this present word-bridge first.)

The carts were sold in Guadalajara, for they would be useless on the rest of the road. Once the expedition had reassembled at Tepic, it underwent another delay of more than a month, and then the scarcity of supplies truly began to be felt, for many of the colonists had to live on credit, for which reason several of them deserted and returned as best they could. Senor Hajar, a native of the state of Jalisco, a rich landowner and highly esteemed for his excellent character and civic virtues, had to make the sacrifice of mortgaging his beautiful hacienda of San Felipe for some thousands of pesos in order to succor the colony and insure its march to the port of San Blas. The colonists straggled into this port in small groups and immediately embarked in order to avoid the sweltering heat and the plague of mosquitos and gnats that tormented them with their stinging.

In this port were found anchored the corvette **Morelos**, of the national navy, under the command of Frigate Captain Don Lucas Manso, and the brigantine **Natalia**, the property of the colony, captained by Don Juan Gomez. These two ships hoisted anchor on August 3 at 3 p.m., but the brigantine was

extremely fast, while the corvette was too sluggish, so that after three hours of sailing the brigantine lost sight of her flagship and it became necessary for her to lie to and wait for the **Morelos**.

In the last of the afternoon twilight, the two ships found themselves close enough together to hail each other through the speaking-trumpet. Then Senor Gomez asked permission of Senor Manso to let his ship run free, since it was not possible for him to sail in convoy. Once he succeeded in getting this permission, the brigantine shook out all sails and never saw the corvette again. On the **Natalia** were Senor Hjar, an officer of the Mexican navy named Don Buenaventura Araujo (a very clever man in his profession which he had learned in the naval service of England), his rank was that of frigate-captain, and Don Juan Bandini, a landowner of San Diego, who was returning after having represented California in the national congress.

When the ship was already very near Point Concepcion, Bandini and Araujo, through self-interest, put their heads together to oblige Captain Gomez to turn back and enter the port of San Diego and not continue his course for Monterey. The captain was opposed to this, declaring he should proceed to Monterey as his sailing orders specified. Bandini argued with him, telling him that no responsibility would fall upon him as he himself was the Port Captain of San Diego. Senor Hjar was quite ill, and they took advantage of this to get him to give Gomez the order to take the ship to San Diego. Among the arguments they used on Senor Hjar was that there were many sick aboard and that three persons had already died. Thus it was that the ship changed course, and on September 3, 1834, between two and three in the afternoon, it anchored in that port.

All were eager to leave the cramped space of the ship; they all wanted to jump on land right away. And they did that, the majority being put on the beach with their baggage and their families, without food and with no more shelter than the blue bowl of heaven. Senor Hjar and some other persons stayed aboard; these later were transferred to the Mexican brigantine-schooner called the **Leonidas**, the property of Don Jose Antonio Aguirre, (her captain; Don Juan Malarin), which carried them to the port of San Pedro; that is, all except Hjar, Araujo and Bandini, who immediately left for the small town of San Diego, a short distance from the port.

By good fortune, there were at the bay of San Diego several American mariners belonging to the ships that trade between California and the ports of the United States. These sailors had two great wooden sheds and they busied themselves salting hides and making bundles of them for the cargo of the said ships. These good men, seeing the straits in which these poor families were left, gave them shelter under their roofs and provided them with food for two days until bullock carts came from San Diego to carry the families and their goods. The men marched on foot.

Having arrived at the town, they were apportioned among the families resident there who freely and with a very good will gave them lodging and furnished their tables. He who dictates this was lodged in the house of a native

son of California named Don Joaquin Carrillo. After about a week, Director Hajar began to dispatch small parties to continue their march to the mission of San Gabriel, where Lieut-Colonel Don Nicolas Gutierrez, the military commander of the southern line and administrator of the said mission, was. Senor Hajar had already established communications with him.

(To be continued in Next issue)

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

GIFTS:

A great variety of items has been received since December. Mrs. Ted Durein gave us a handmade silk patchwork quilt and Mrs. Evelyn Le Roi has added a red Spanish shawl to our collection. Col. William McC. Chapman continues his gift-giving with a gold-miner's pan, and Mrs. Dorothy Bell has sent many curious nineteenth century items: a square brass sundial, an early American footwarmer with its liner, brass and iron trivets, an early American handwoven coverlet, a linen and lace bed spread and pillow sham, an early Paisley white-center shawl and many miscellaneous things.

The most gorgeous gift was a six piece sterling tea and coffee set and a large two-handled sterling silver tray with grape and acanthus leaf border from Mrs. Rush R. Wallace. Since our membership has grown so rapidly and our functions increased, we are particularly grateful for such sets.

* * *

Robert Littlefield, our new Membership Chairman, has checked our membership by computer and finds it to stand at 1,114 active and associate members, 58 junior members and 62 lifetime members. It is very heartening to know that so many are with us when we have to take a stand for the objectives that have guided the Association for thirty-eight years.

* * *

The Adobe Tour Committee is off and running! Mrs. LaMothe states that prices this year will remain the same: \$3.50 for general and \$1.50 for military and students. Tea will be served at the Casa Serrano from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and the Paisano Luncheon in Memory Garden from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The official date? Oh, April 27, of course.

* * *

President Mewborn created a special **Doud House Project Committee** with Robert Ross and Architect Francis Palms to check restoration and landscaping costs of the old building. They figure that about \$33,320 would do it. That is a big sum, but restoration and maintenance of the tradition and atmosphere of historic Monterey is our principal reason for existence as an Association. We have done a good job lately in alerting others to the values of preservation and conservation; perhaps this is the time for us to do something big on our own. (The last building we saved and restored was the Fremont Headquarters in 1961).

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* * *

We are sorry to announce the passing of these valued old friends: Joan Simpson, daughter of Charlie Simpson, Bernice Brooks Sargent, and Mrs. Settemo (Angela Ferrante) Lucido. Last October, at a general meeting, Mrs. Lucido gave us a most interesting talk on the foundation of the Italian colony in Monterey and its place in Monterey's once booming sardine fishery. We will greatly miss these friends.