

NOTICIAS del PUERTO de MONTEREY

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ROGERIO COOPER GOES TO SCHOOL

(Note: Letters quoted are from the treasure-trove of the Bancroft Library. Some have been very slightly edited in the interest of continuity.)

In 1833, Captain J.B.R. Cooper, early American settler in Monterey, ran into frightful financial problems. Not until late 1850 with the \$55,000 sale of his Marin rancho, *Punta de Quintin Corte Madera, la Laguna y Canada de San Anselmo*, was he really out of the financial quagmire. He had managed to send his oldest son, John, to school in Hawaii. But with that school closed, by 1846 Cooper was worried about his second son, Rogerio. Seeing his nephews Oliver and Frederick, aged twelve and ten, off by ship from San Diego to go East to school, Cooper wrote their father: "Oh if I had any security of paying for Rogerios schooling. It really makes me feel disagreeable and sick when I see the two little boys going where they can get schooling and bringing up in a way they can get their living when grown up, and see my children in the way they are. There is something makes me feel as I doo not doo my duty."

One way or another, however, by early 1850, Cooper had managed finally to accumulate enough money so he could take Rogerio, now twelve years old, to Boston to school. Here Cooper had almost endless relatives to welcome him warmly after his absence of almost thirty years — and to make Rogerio feel less of a stranger in a strange land. Two households particularly would be home to Rogerio after his father's departure: that of Cooper's cousin, William M. Rogers, Congregational minister who was Rogerio's official trustee; and that of Cooper's dearly loved half-sister, Ann Rogers and her husband Otis Wright. A further comfort would be the presence in the same school (Mr. Weld's in Jamaica Plain, a Boston suburb) of three California cousins, Oliver and Frederick, now aged sixteen and fourteen, and newly arrived Francis, only ten.

Through the rest of 1850, letters from the boys and their elders from Boston to California keep us posted about Rogerio:

Cousin William to Cooper: "Rogerio is well and happy. He bore the seperation from you, better than I expected. He and the 3 boys have gone to Mr. Welds again who gives me assurances, that he will do well." Young Oliver to young John Cooper: "I know your Father was very glad to go back to California. Rogerio is getting along well. When he has been in this Country about one year he will know English. Whenever he goes with me he alway talks Spanish as in Monterey...Rogerio and I want you to send us four Lazo two for each of us. We want two made of horse hair or you know what kind to get. I have taken a common one and caught the boys and they look at me as if it was some great." To Cooper from his half-brother, temporarily

living in Boston and father of Oliver, Frederick, and Francis: "I have the four boys in from the school occasionally. Rogerio is daily making a better appearance...He still says he would not give up his chance of an education to go back, but says the U.S. is not so fine as it first appeared. This idea rises from having to study. While we was at the school, two different times, R. was very busy at play. He is perfectly at home there, well placed and happy. There is 8 or 10 boys talk Spanish."

Frederick to his cousin John: "We have three masters one of them is a very tall one and he teaches Rogerio and he dont like him he says that he asks him to spell a word and he says it is not in his lesson and he dont like him at all, and he says he likes Monterey better than this country, and he cant ride calfs here as in Monterey, and it is too hot here in summer and he all the time he sees any peice of water he wants to jump in. Our Master wont let us go into the water only when he is with us...Mr Weld has a pond on his land and when Mr Weld aint at home he goes in the pond but if Mr Weld catches him he will whip him...It is too hot for him in the summer and too cold in the winter."

By February 1851, Cousin William informs Cooper of proposed changes in Rogerio's schooling: "I had Rogerio here on Friday last. He is perfectly well, and grows stout and tall. I have just arranged to get a new outfit of clothes. With one exception he has finished his coats and pantaloons, and used up some shoe leather. He is a master hand at play, and his clothes suffer. Better a hundred times than have him a feeble ailing boy.

"I examined him in his studies and find that he writes quite well. He reads English and Spanish tolerably, while he is behind in his Arithmetic. He speaks English quite well. His studies are reading, writing, and arithmetic and the translation of Spanish into English. As soon as it is best, he will be put into Geography, Grammar etc.

"I have made an arrangement, by wh. at the close of this quarter, I propose to place Rogerio at Newport R.I. under the care of a private tutor Mr. La Fayette Burr with some of Oliver's boys. One object I propose is to have more direct attention paid to him in his studies, another is to regulate his vacations so that he can spend them with my boy and myself in travelling etc. which I cannot do at the Plains. Mr. Burr will not have a larger number than six boys, and will devote himself exclusively to them...I do this, from no complaint of Mr. Weld's school, but from the belief it will be for his advantage...Rogerio is hearty and well. He is a noble looking boy. He has improved, but in writing more than in reading...Say to his Mother I will allow no one to interfere with his religion, I mean, I will allow no one openly or covertly to assail his confidence in the R.C. faith. When he goes to Newport, he can attend the Catholic ch. there. But I object to our Catholic schools, not because they are Catholic but because they do not furnish as good an education as others."

The scene shifts to Newport and the new school. As it turns out, only one of the cousins (Oliver) is going to school with Rogerio. With their parents now living in New York, Frederick and Francis are attending day school there.

Rogerio to Cousin William: "I write you a few lines and I want you to send my books and I want you to ask Uncle Wright to tell Dan. Hill to give my Spannish books to Russel and send them with the rest of my books. I should like to go to New York in vacation with Oliver...If you please to write to my father & mother and ask them to send me two lassoss and give my love to Uncle Wright. I like Newport very much but I can't tell much about it yet. When you write to my father tell him that I get a long pretty well and send my love to all the family...Last Sunday a boy went to a lumber yard near a mill and He fell down and broke his leg between his ankle and his knee. Mr. Burr and we went out one Saturday — we row to the fort and look round and when we came back I tried to jump across a corner of the boat house and I fell right in the water and I came home and took my clothes off and changed them and about a week after Oliver and myself went out in a skiff and Oliver went over board...I think it better to get a sail boat because in a row boat we have to row all the time and in a sail boat

dont have to row any and go a great deal faster."

Cousin William to Cooper: "You will see that Rogerio's expenses have risen but I shall make them as small as consistent with his comfort and improvement. His bills for clothes are very large — particularly in shoes. He has robust health, and nothing would stand with him but clothes of Cal. bull's hide...I send you a letter of Rogerio's to me. I require him and Oliver both to write me once a month. I think he has done well for a beginner. He is pleasantly situated at Newport...He requires drilling, and Mr. Burr, a gentleman for whom I will answer, will give it to him. I have written to Rogerio, that of course, he will attend church somewhere, and he is perfectly at liberty to attend the Catholic ch. During the next vacation, I expect to travel with the boys...I shall take Rogerio with me. I want to see more of him."

Tragically, unexpectedly, the young minister died of a stroke on 11 August 1851, less than seven weeks after writing this letter. From now on, Alpheus Hardy, a business associate of Reverend Rogers, and Uncle Otis Wright would take over the close attention he had given to Rogerio. Meanwhile, Mr. Burr has written to Oliver's father concerning William Roger's death and including a not very encouraging report concerning Oliver and Rogerio: "With regard to Oliver, you may expect me to say a word. I am sorry to say that I cannot find a great deal of satisfaction in the progress he has made thus far...If I could succeed in convincing him, that a knowledge of the English tongue, & the elements of book knowledge, were of more importance than skill in rowing, sculling & managing a boat, or the most successful prosecution of pleasure, I should then have more pleasure, I think in faithfully communicating to you results. I have found a competent instructor in Spanish & the boys will commence that study the coming term.

"Rogerio makes very slow progress — his education must be a work of time & patience. He seems to lack that power of concentrating his thoughts, as well as Oliver, so necessary to rapid progress in any pursuit. His faculties have never to any extent been brought out, by diligent and close study, & his memory, if I may so speak is singularly *unretentive*. They are both apparently well contented here, though they undoubtedly complain at times, at what may appear to them unnecessary exercise of authority, when I am compelled in my anxiety to have them make progress, to debar them for a time, from their amusements, that more time may be given to their studies. We have an excellent boarding place...we are very near the water, & the boys are thus little inclined to seek their pleasures in the streets, in the company of those I might not like to have them associate with."

Perhaps Otis Wright was correct about the problems he described when he wrote to Cooper in October 1851: "Rogerio spent his vacation here with us, and I found that he was not satisfied with his school, and that he was not learning as much as when he was at Jamaica Plains. Mr Hardy and I think it best for him to go to another school but his teacher (mr Burr) says Mr Rogers engaged to have them stay a year with him, and if he leaves him, he shall expect pay for the whole year. Last week I went to Newport to see him. I spent two days with him. I found him very well, but do not think Mr Burr is a fit teacher for him, he is young and he does not fear him much. He thinks more of boating and gunning I think he would do better if he were at another school and away from Oliver. Mr Burr has only they two, with one day scholar, so they are left alone good deal of the time. he wants to go back to Mr Welds school again. I think he would do well there. We have always seen to his clothes, and he has made his home here by request of Mr Rogers but since he has been at Newport, Mr Burr has got clothes as he thought best...He is comeing here to spend the Thanksgiving with us. I think he might go to some other school where it would be less expense and learn more than he does now."

The boys, nevertheless, were concentrating more on boats than changing schools. Eventually, it appears, Capt. and Mrs. Cooper must have become some-

what alarmed over tales of broken legs, falls into the water, and stranding on islands and suggested the boys be forbidden to go boating at all. Then we see Oliver and Rogerio really launched into a pro-boat sales talk to the Coopers!

Rogerio to his father, a month after William Roger's death: "Mr Rogers bought us a very fine little row boat about twenty feet long that will beat any other row boat in the harbor of Newport...all the family went to Niagara Falls in our vacation and the day after we got there a man went over the Falls and was killed. We staid at Niagara three days and then we came back to New York and Oliver and myself went to Neponset Village...and we had a first rate time[with Otis Wright]...Afterwards we came back to Newport to the school. I want you to send me a California bow and some arrows and I want you to send my lassos I asked you for before, as quick as you can...One day we went a fishing and we caught two tubs full of fishes and we cleaned half of them and we had them for breakfast, dinner and supper and we had some for the next day for breakfast too...Mr Burr Oliver and myself went to Bristol in our row boat last Saturday and we staid there until Monday morning...We cleaned our boat and then went off rowing in her and afterwards we found a skiff and we tow her to a stake and anchor her out and we went up to the school. I received your letter and I saw in the letter that you want me to go to St. John's college but I think it is best for me to go to any other school that is better than that...Uncle Wright sends his love to you and all the family."

Though Rogerio and Oliver seem to have expected him, young John Cooper never went East to school. Very possibly, at age twenty-one, he felt far too adult to do so.

Rogerio to his father: "Oliver had a letter from his father to day and he said that John and Andronico were coming...I am very glad to hear it and I hope to see him in December. That lasso that you sent me is lost I think, because I have not received it...If you will tell me how it was sent I will try to get it...I suppose when John comes he will have a long story to tell me and I hope that you will come here in about two years or sooner if you can. Uncle Wright came to Newport to see us last week...We asked him if he wanted to go sailing in the row boat and it was rough and he was afraid to go but he thought he would get in and at last he got in and we took him to the Fort and water would come in the boat a little but it was in no danger. Uncle Wright said "come boys pull steady and hard but the water would come in and he says how wet you have got me and the water will spoil my coat and he got out of the boat and said you dont catch me in that again...I hear that John in coming to New York. I suppose when winter comes he will be frozen to death and I dont know whether he will stand this weather. I hear that you want me to go to the Catholic chirch if you knew what kind of people went to that chirch here you would not like to go yourself. When John comes, he will see some of the horses they have here some of the slowest horses you have ever seen. Half of the horses have no tail and some are all bones and when John comes here he will try to get a good horse and he will go to a stable and they will give him a horse without any tail and all bones, and John will try to make the old nag go and he will go as fast as an all frog on one leg. He will find some difference between the horses here and those in Monterey. I have as lives ride on a hog, they make you hop about two inches off the saddle."

Oliver to his Uncle Cooper: "I am very glad that John is coming and I hope he will come to school where Rogerio and myself are. I think Mr Burr will learn him English very soon...I suppose that when John comes he will feel the cold more than Rogerio did, because he will come in the winter...Rogerio likes the winter very well, and he likes to snowball, tell John that Rogerio will snowball him...Now I will tell you all about boat. I will tell the First thing that is in your letter to Mr Rogers it seems to me that you are afraid to have us go in a boat well I suppose I would if I was you as you do not know about this harbor. There is no danger in our going in a row boat in this harbor...Rogerio and I can pull very well and we can manage the Ripple. Since I

have been here I have not seen the wind strong enough to stop me from going round this Harbor. Rogerio has learned to scull a boat...The Harbor is surrounded by land with a small place for vessels to come in from the sea...Mr Burr took Rogerio and me down to a wharf, and took us in a sail boat with a man, and that man showed me about jibing and putting the boat about and all the marks in the Harbor...An old fisherman said that I could sail a boat very well, and that proves it that I can, he said that he has seen boys older than I who taken sailboats more than I and they could not sail a boat so well as I could...When Father comes, I am going to talk to him about this, and I shall try to get him to see how well I can sail a boat that he will not be a afraid and then he can tell you about it. I think that Rogerio is doing very well in his studies, I hope that he will do better after a while. When a boy go to school they do not learn very fast at first."

Rogerio to his mother and father: "It has been very cold in Newport this winter...I wrote a letter to Uncle Wright last week and he has not answered as yet...Oliver's father is coming to Newport in about two weeks to see what kind of a place it is. I heard that you dont want us to go in a boat any more. I wish you would come here and see what kind of a place it is. I suppose my Mother thinks that the harbour of Newport is like the harbour of Monterey very rough and dangerous but it is one of the safest to be found. One day during vacation when Mr Burr went a way, Oliver and Joe Peckham a young man that lives in the same house with us and my self went to get a sail boat a few wharfs from our home and...we went to an island where were lots of field mice and I took off my shoses and went on shore and then Oliver and then Joe Peckham. We got on shore and we caught a dozen field mice and put them into my handkerchief and when we got back the tide went down and left the boat on ground and we could not shove the boat off. it grow very cold and we had no fire. so we began to rub two shingles together but we could not get a fire. We did not get off till twelve o'clock at night and the people thought that we were drowned. When we got home we were very hungry and we eat every thing we could find."

A month later, the problem of the boat has been solved — for one reason or another Mr. Burr has decided to close his school. On 24 April 1852, Alpheus Hardy writes: "I have seen Mr. Wright & we have concluded to have Rogerio come here & then send him to a good school, say Andover, where he will learn twice as much as with Mr. Burr & cost half the sum. We will see him well cared for."

Perhaps if Cousin William had been around, Cooper would have trusted him over this decision, but as it was he immediately took off for Boston. Transporation had improved constantly, thanks to the Gold Rush — but Cooper must have made a record round trip. It is obvious that it was only his concern for Rogerio that prompted the quick visit.

On 1 July 1852, Hardy reported to Cooper: "I have been to Andover once since you sailed. Your son is well contented."

A short ime before, Oliver's father had written: "Oliver, Rogerio & Andronico...were a rude and noisy set when all together. Andronico is in a school in Baltimore. Your son is learning, looks and dresses well, is healthy, stout, and very contented. He would not, he says himself, return to California at present with his own will."

Rogerio to Cooper, from Andover: "I have to study very hard here. all I have to do is study all the time as hard as hard as I can put in. I have to come up in my room at six o clock and stay till the bell rings to go to school that is at half past eight o clock and then I have to go to resite at half past ten and that takes all the morning till about twelve o clock and then I come up to the house and dont have diner till one o clock and then I have to go to Resite and when I get thru a bout half past two o clock I have to come in the house and do my soms to the next day and I have to go with out my diner but that is nothing. I wish John was here in Andover to school. I guess he would have

to stare round some. I like the school very and the teachers are very kind and they are most all the time behind you and making the Boys study. I wish when you write me a letter again and write to Mr. Hardy to get me a watch because I want one to tell what time to go to school. because the rule of the school is if you do not come in at Half past Eight they turn the Boys out of the school and I do not wish to get turned out of the school."

On this Dickensian note of boyish martyrdom, the saga is pretty well closed. No other letters from Rogerio have so far turned up to let us know more of his two years at Andover.

On 1 Oct 1852, Hardy told Cooper: "Your son has continued at Andover and has done well. I am yet strongly of the opinion that he is in the right place. He is well and happy so far as I can see."

On 17 Oct 1854, Hardy wrote: "Young Cooper is soon to return home."

On 16 June 1855, Cooper said in a letter to his old friend Abel Stearns, "My boy Rogerio arrived here from the States a short time ago well." — H.B.

FUTURE MARITIME MUSEUM A BUILDING FUND ESTABLISHED

Rear Admiral Earl E. Stone, Museum Director

The Board of Directors of the Monterey History and Art Association, at its regular meeting in July, 1977, voted unanimously to create a "Building Fund" for the specific purpose of helping to finance a new museum building in Monterey at such future time as may be feasible. The Association accordingly earmarked \$50,000.00 from funds currently available to be called the "Maritime Museum Building Fund." It is hoped that bequests from individuals will be forthcoming to augment this fund, as well as contributions from other private sources with an interest in this worthwhile project.

In his Annual Report dated 1 July 1977, the Museum Director, Rear Admiral Earl E. Stone, stated:

"(a) The present space utilized by the Maritime Museum is already inadequate for our fine nautical Collection. Monterey should always have a Maritime Museum, considering its old whaling and fishing days, its many ties to the sea in its Naval historical background, and to the old sailing ship era. We have made an excellent beginning in our present cramped quarters. A new and larger Museum building should be an important future objective of the Association. Mr. Ted Minnis, Architect, has done considerable preliminary planning for such a building.

"(b) While it has been determined that the San Francisco Foundation will not normally provide a financial grant for new construction, we have been told that the Foundation will consider a substantial grant to the Monterey History and Art Association from the Mewborn Trust for the proposed Maritime Museum when a "full proposal" is submitted to them. A new, and completely revised, proposal has been prepared in draft form by the Director and Deputy Director of the Museum. This draft proposal has as its basic premise the establishment of a substantial "Maritime Museum Building Fund" by the Association, and, in consideration of this action, requests the San Francisco Foundation to make a substantial grant from the Mewborn Estates Trust to add to this building fund to help offset the cost of designing and constructing a new Museum building in Monterey when this is possible."

COSAS DE INTERES PARA LOS SOCIOS

DO YOU HAVE? Martha Bentley, Chairman of our Mayo Hayes O'Donnell library is looking for certain items to complete our file at the library. She is looking for issues of the California Historical Society Quarterly prior to June 1950, and also for issues of the American Heritage from 1972 to date. If you are willing to contribute any of these issues please call our office, 372-2608, and leave a message.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, MONTEREY: Through the co-operation of our association and the labor of love of Nelle Currie, a room at the old Rodriguez-Osio adobe, Alvarado street, Monterey has been furnished in period. Now the Chamber of Commerce has a fine V.I.P. or conference room. Our thanks to the members who contributed furniture, and to Nelle for her time.

GIFTS: The Maritime Museum has received a reproduction of a naval carrier battle action from Vice Admiral Goodwin; other gifts to the association include a Chinese scroll, a Japanese scroll and kimono from Mrs. Leighton Phillips; wrought iron andirons from Miss Winona Love; interesting clothes hanger from Mrs. Virginia Klemme; a walnut towel rack, Victorian chair, and floral needlework from Mr. and Mrs. R.W. Scheffler. For the association library Mrs. Harold McLean has given a group of old photographs, and the precious personal diary of her grandfather Frank Gilbert Anthony who was part of the Clarence King survey of California.

EDITOR CHANGE: Amelie Elkinton, who has served as an editor of the Noticias since the first issue has decided "the time has come." Twenty-one years is sufficient. Thus this issue is a joint venture of Hazel Dittmer and Amelie Elkinton. Hopefully Hazel will carry on. It is a labor of love, and time consuming. We have been rewarded with twenty one years of friendships.

IN MEMORIAM: Col. William B. Moore, James van Loben Sels.

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