

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Early Architecture

Mexican Monterey may be divided into two periods, architecturally. The first period, from 1822 to about 1835, had for its example that which had evolved in Spanish Monterey; and the second period, from 1835 to 1846, in turn utilized not only the architecture and materials already there, but those of New England as well.

Dr. Aubrey Neasham in an article written in 1938 explains that during the early part of Mexican Monterey, in the building of individual houses, many innovations came into being.

Having as examples the few houses of Spanish periods built outside the Presidio—those especially of Boronda, Armenta, Gonzaga, Rodriguez and Buelna—a distinct type of Monterey architecture evolved. Pitched roofs, balconies, enclosed patios in the rear, and individual houses of one or more rooms became the custom. The walled-in patio with surrounding rooms on three sides never became popular in Monterey.

Fireplaces built inside came into being in the 1820's. It is said that the first one to be built was that constructed in Munras house in 1824.

Other innovations came into being. William Hartnell was the first person in California to use wallpaper, which he put into his newly constructed house 1825, as recorded in Vallejo documents in the Bancroft Library, Spence wrote:

“Since I put on the paper, I have a great many visitors from the Presidio and I would like you to return as soon as possible in case they should take it off again—for they do nothing but rub, rub with their hands, saying to one another “Que es este-papel, no!”

Hartnell was responsible, also, for a much greater use of lumber in Monterey. It was he who shipped lumber from Lima, Peru, in 1824. At that time according to his records, he shipped some lumber to Monterey, including 18 planks 3 inches by 18 feet, and 1,000 white oak pipe staves. By 1827, he was able to buy lumber in Monterey at 90 dollars per thousand feet.

A new trend in building in Monterey began in the 1830's when a definite New England influence was added to the picture. With the building of Thomas O. Larkin's

two story house in 1835 came the real impetus, not only to that New England influence, but to the development of the lumber industry, according to the article written by R.J.Parker, “Building the Larkin House” published in the California Historical quarterly which gives full details for that building. From that time on lumber took its place with adobe as an important building material in Monterey.

The records of the later Mexican period are very voluminous, thanks to the saving of the accounts of Larkin and others. It was Larkin who sold or controlled much of the building materials in Monterey during the late 1830's and 1840's. Many of the building of Monterey for that period were either built by or for Larkin, or were constructed with materials bought from him.

Lumber, as such, was of redwood gradually taking precedence over pine. The opening up the great redwood areas near Santa Cruz in the 1830's, and in the regions above Carmel and the Sur to a lesser degree, was responsible for the increase redwood popularity. Most of the pine came from near Monterey, especially from Point Pinos. Besides Larkin, those who bought and sold lumber were William Hartnell, Nathan Spear, and Joe Albrego. Of those who cut lumber, such names as West, Duckworth, Garcia, Rainsford, Saunders, Barker, Fippard, Forsythe, Bourn, Webb, Whiton, Gorman, Jones, Black, Price, Hays, Fuller, Garner, Trevethen, Buelna, Castro, Perez, Henry, Cooper, Rodriguez, Daly and Bee are important.

In Larkin's papers and accounts he relates that several loads of redwood went as far as Hawaii in the 1840's

Redwood and pine lumber were priced about the same at Monterey, according to scarcity, quality and size. In 1834, for instance, lumber cost as much as \$100 per 1,000 feet, and varied during the period 1834 to 1846 from \$40 to \$100 per 1,000. The usual cost of hewing was from \$1.50 to \$6 per 1,000, sawing from \$20 to \$60 per 1,000, and hauling to Monterey as much as \$10 per 1000.