

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 5, 1950

The Pacific Building

Perhaps the most complex and revealing contract entered into by Thomas Oliver Larkin in Monterey was that of 1847 for the construction of what is known today as the Old Pacific Building. The building was to be of adobe brick, 72 feet by 42 feet, to be plastered and whitewashed. Details provided for three sets of joists, with the middle set planed; three sets of flooring, planed, tongued and grooved, with the middle floor planed on both sides; the plates for joist, roof and lintels to be spliced together and pinned; and the lintels to be planed where exposed to view.

The corridor was to be 10 feet wide, pillars eight inches square, with one floor well laid in the second story, with bannisters and railing. The roof was to be well framed and fastened; the shingles to show 5 inches; there were to be gutters; and on the south end and the roof was to be hipped or cottage style. The corridor was to have one wide pair of stairs, with partition to debar entrance to the corral. Inside the house there were to be three pairs of stairs, with bannisters and closets.

The adobe walls, within and without, were to have 34 door and window frames with door and window shutters, the latter in pairs to be made of one-inch boards not more than six inches doubled and nailed with wrought nails. The six rooms in the building were to have two-inch partitions, planed on both sides, tongue and grooved, and each partition to have a door with its facing; the window seats, were to be of two-inch planks; the base boards were to be eight inches high or more all around the rooms and nailed to blocks well built in the wall; all door frames were to be of wood at least three inches by 10 inches; the windows above were to be made for weights and pulleys; and the doors and windows in the front were to be furnished with architectural plates outside.

The contract provided further that Wright was to direct the erection of the adobe walls by the masons, Larkin, on his part, was to supply all materials and pay Wright the sum of \$1,500 in full for his work, one-third in advance one-third by the time the work was done, and one-third four months after the work was finished.

Later in August of 1847, a further agreement was made to put in three sash panel doors in the back instead of

three double doors in the second story; and by the front part of the second story, instead of putting in three windows and three sash panel doors, those last six doors were to be made with sash and panel with panel shutters, and 16 panes of glass, nine inches by 12 inches or 10 inches by 12 inches each.

The Pacific Building, including the grounds, covers approximately one-third of a modern city block. It is long – two-story adobe, with a balcony which still remains. At the rear of the building is Memory Garden, so named about 1931 when the Monterey History and Art Association was first organized and when the Meriendas, which celebrate Monterey's birthday on the third of June each year, were first inaugurated. It seems most appropriate that that name be used for this charming, typical Spanish garden, because certainly the very soil there has memories. History relates that the garden was once an arena, where bull and bear fights were held and seats for the event were sold at an exorbitant price, but that may be another romantic tale of Old Monterey.

When the 100th anniversary of the raising of the American flag over the Old Custom House was celebrated here in 1946, Miss Margaret Jacks, the present owner, had the building repaired and painted. At that time one could plainly see that at an early date the building had probably been two buildings, the dividing line seemed so plainly visible. As research goes on we discover that besides the record in the Bancroft Library at the University of California concerning Larkin's contract for the building of the Pacific Building, as it is now known, there is also in the Monterey city recorder's office the record of at least part of it having been built by James McKinley in 1835.

The building has been named the oldest hotel building in California but that is also disputed, for the first hotel is said to have been in San Francisco and the second was the Washington Hotel in Monterey. When it was a hotel it was mostly occupied by seafaring men.

In 1851, the assessed value was \$7,000. It had increased to \$8,000 in 1855, and shortly after that date McKinley sold his part of the property to David Jacks. In 1923, the heirs of Mr. Jacks had the building thoroughly repaired, both inside and out. At this time the overhanging balconies, both at the front and rear of the building were rebuilt, with the result, the old two-story adobe presents something of its original appearance.