

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 27, 1951

The Noblest Feelings Of a Sailor's Heart

The first edition of the Californian was issued in Monterey on August 15, 1846, a month and a week after the raising of the Stars and Stripes over the Custom House. A facsimile reproduction of this first newspaper printed in California was sponsored by the California Newspaper Publishers Association when that organization held the Newspaper Centennial at Monterey, August 15, 1946.

It is believed the newspaper was printed in the Cuartel, a government building and barracks that once stood on Munras avenue on the site now occupied by the Monterey Chamber of Commerce building. Part of that first issue was printed in Spanish and part in English. The subscription price was \$5.00 per year.

W.E.P. Hartnell has an advertisement in this first issue which reads: "Notice: The subscriber offers his services to the public as a general translator of all languages spoken and written in California. Office at his house in Monterey. Signed W.E.P. Hartnell." The Hartnell home was an adobe structure standing where the Monterey Hospital now is.

In the naval news of 1846, the Californian reporter writes: "The U.S. sloop of war *Levant*, Capt. Page with Commodore Sloat on board, sailed for the United States on the 21st of July. The U.S. sloop of war *Cyane*, Capt. Dupont, with Capt. Fremont, Capt. Ford and Capt. Swift. With their companions on board, sailed on the 21st of July, for Pt. San Pedro, where they will land their forces to attack the combined party of the Governor and General Castro, which was supposed to be at the pueblo.

'Commodore Stockton, with the frigate *Congress*, sailed on the 26th of July, with the intention of taking such a position as to place Castro between himself and Fremont. The U.S. sloop of war *Portsmouth* is still in the Bay of San Francisco, and the frigate *Savannah* here in Monterey."

In No. 11 of Volume 1, the editors of the Californian give a detailed account of the reception to Commodore Robert F. Stockton, commander of the Pacific Squadron and governor-general of California, on October 5, 1846, at Yerba Buena (San Francisco). The citizens gathered at Portsmouth Square to hear the introductory address by

William H. Russell, orator of the day, and applauded when Commodore Stockton declared in reply:

"I would, sir, be recreant to the noblest feelings of a sailor's heart if I were not in the frankest and most explicit manner to acknowledge my indebtedness for so great an honor and kindness." Then in the flowery speech of his day, Stockton went on to "contrast the conduct of the enemy" and that of his men on the occasion when they marched to the Camp of the Mesa, above San Pedro, where Governor Pico and General Castro awaited "with seven pieces of artillery and 500 men, well mounted and armed."

The report continues: "When the commander-in-chief had closed his reply the procession soon moved through the principal streets and halted in front of Capt. Leidesdorff's residence, where the governor and suit[?] entered and were presented to a number of ladies, who welcomed them to the shores of California. After which, a large portion of the procession accompanied the governor on horseback to the mission, several miles in the country (Mission Dolores) and returned to an excellent collation. After the cloth was removed the following toasts were drunk." The edition of the Californian on that date could not find room in the 8x12 pages to print the toasts so the editors suggested that those interested buy the next issue in order to read these important items.

In this issue of the eleventh week of publication the Californian editors promise a society page. They write: "We are in hopes we shall be able to notice some social gatherings in this place, which will bring the old and the new citizens together, and probably be productive of a better state of feeling."

Another item warns: "That all persons coming into Monterey must report themselves at the chief magistrate's office, and all leaving the town must have passports. Also from October 17, 1846, no person would be able or permitted to pass in the streets of this town on horseback, after sunset, or to pass on foot after drum beat, at 8 o'clock p.m., till sunrise, without the written permission of William A. Maddux, military commandant of the middle department of California."