

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 18, 1951

### **Fiddlesticks in the Maze**

Mrs. Maria Antonio Thompson has shown us an interesting document which she has in her possession dated April 2, 1844, Monterey. It contains the announcement sent by Thomas Oliver Larkin to her grandfather, Rafael Sanchez y Galvan, a native of Cadiz, Spain, and one of the first lawyers in California.

The document, written in Spanish on decorated stationery, reads *"Tomas Oliverio Larkin, tiene el honor de noticiar a V. que el Eesmo Sor Presidente de los Estados-Unidos del Norte; se ha dignado conferirte el nombramiento de Consul de dicha Republica para este puerto y habiendo tomado hoy posesion de su nuevo empleo, se ofrece respetuamente a la disposicion de V."*

From the English translation, we read that Thomas Oliver Larkin has the honor to notify you that his Excellency, the President of the United States of the North has deigned to confer the appointment of Consul of this Republic for this port, and having taken today possession of his new office, he offers himself respectfully to your disposition.

The Monterey Ball Park was once known as "Lyceum Park," according to the memory of Mrs. Leonie Manuel Nutting, who with her sister, the late Charlotte Manuel, were little French peasant girls in the "Fair of the Nations," held in the park from October 10-13, 1894, as a benefit for San Carlos Catholic church.

Mrs. Thompson found a raffle ticket for the "Fair of the Nations" giving "Lyceum Park" as the location for the event, in a Chinese carved wooden writing desk belonging to her mother. The winner of the raffle was to receive an elegant Turkish sofa cushion, according to the sponsors' ticket, for on the back was the stamp of the church seal.

We have also found a small, two page folder without a date, written by Gouverneur Morris and entitled "A Great Tribute to the Monterey Peninsula."

This prophecy has almost come true. "The playground of California's future millions" but when Morris was here first Simoneau was still alive and there were more adobes than now, more red tiled roofs. In the whole of California, he wrote, there were only three or four automobiles. And the three incomparable

approaches to Monterey that from Carmel and those from Salinas and Castroville, were not desecrated by signs.

Gouverneur Morris had been loaned a gray pony in those happy dusty days, named Fiddlesticks, who could find his way blindfolded into the heart of the old maze at Del Monte and with whom he became intimately acquainted with every square foot of the beautiful land on the Peninsula.

"Now unless it be the island of Mount Desert, off the Maine coast, there is no small geographical unit in all this immense world so variedly deliciously and peacefully beautiful as the Monterey Peninsula." Morris wrote in his tiny leaflet which might well have been a Chamber of Commerce project. "Nor has any other region an air so sweet, so fresh and so compelling," he continued.

Under the subhead, "Wonderful Land," Morris declared: "If there are people still left in this restless world who care about homes which grow more beautiful through occupancy and care – people in short, who can be content to pick on some one place and live in it, I have always thought that from January round to January again there is no place in all this world that has so much to lavish as the Monterey Peninsula."

"If you love a wild coast it is here. So is the deep tranquil forest and the rolling uplands, set richly with live oaks and in the springtime exploding into flowers."

We wish we knew, or could guess, when Morris predicted this ... "The Peninsula's future is a better and a surer kind. Some day there will be twenty million people in California and this will be otherwise for there is no other region upon the whole California coast which can hold a candle to it on which for beauty of contour and vegetation and climate is fit to be mentioned in the same breath with it."

Gouverneur Morris came back to Monterey and purchased the Casa de Castro, a small adobe which had been the home of General Jose Castro. The present home, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Work, had been built around the original old adobe. Morris won fame through his writings – as a novelist and a constant contributor for many years to the Saturday Evening Post.