

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

May 14, 1952

My Washie Washie Boy

A bit of modern history today which may be of interest to the readers of the Diary and become truly historical data 100 years from this date when this unnamed war is over and, we hope permanent peace will have been made in the world.

A young 18-year-old is in Korea. He had just graduated from high school when he enlisted in the Marine Corps, took the intensive training that that branch of the service provides, and sailed away from his family and friends to do his part in the struggle that is going on in that part of the world.

This bit of a human interest story contained in two of his letters appealed to us:

"I've got a little Korean house boy working for me now. He does all my washing and cleans up around the tent. He really is a cute little guy. I guess he is about 10 or 11 years old. He doesn't know his age himself. I pay him 10 cents a week and give him some of my candy ration and extra clothes I pick up from guys leaving. I have a lot of fun teaching him how to speak English. It is rather hard trying to explain to him, so we make up expressions that are part Korean and part English like "Ichibaun" in Korean means "number one," so instead of saying "good" we say "Ichibaun" or, when we say "yes, I have something," we say "hava yes," or if we don't have something, we say "hava no." Instead of big we say "tacson," or for little we say, "scoschie." He learns pretty fast and along with it I'm learning a little Korean."

The next letter told a bit more:

"About my washie-washie boy. His name is Chan. That is all the name I know him by. He lives about a mile from us with some friends of his family. His father and mother were killed last summer. He has a brother in the Republic of Korea army. Almost everything he gets from us goes home and they trade it for more useful items, because their money has been devaluated so much. It takes 6,000 won to make a dollar here.

"Chan also sells Korean slippers and scarfs that his foster parents make. He is only one of many boys and girls who work for the Marines around here. Some of the older boys work for the officers or for the Division laundry.

"When we first arrived here Chan watched our moving in along with about three or four other little boys. We called him over to talk to him. He told us his folks washed clothes for the Army when they were here. So we sort of hired him to work for us. He started coming early in the morning with our clean clothes and talking to us about Korea and America and then he would take home his washing about 4:30 o'clock. We got food out of the mess hall for his lunch. So, in turn, he would do odd jobs around the area for us. So now he is our steady house boy. My buddy took a picture of him and a friend of his. If one is good I will send it on to you."

Now back to more than 100 years ago and the news in Monterey in 1849. I have found in a catalogue of Western Americana, which lists items from the collection in the library of the late George D. Lyman, M.D., several references to Monterey. Under early Monterey printing there appears this notation: "Larkin, Thomas O., Printed Document, dated Monterey, February 8th, 1849. A sale of a lot in Benicia by Larkin and his wife, Rachel, to C.V. Gillespie. Signed by both Larkins and witnessed by W.E.P. Hartnell and Moses Schallenberger and Florencio Serrano Alcalde of Monterey. Together with a MS deed for the same property, dated June 1st, 1849, transferring the land to DeWitt Thompson and Frederick Billings, Two pieces, \$55.

"Documents of considerable interest, bearing the signatures of several important Californians. The Larkins were one of the 'first families' of non-Spanish origin in Monterey. Hartnell came to California as early as 1822, and Schallenberger in '44. Gillespie was one of the first pioneers to introduce Chinese labor into California. The printed document is almost certainly from the Monterey press of Sam Brannan."

It would certainly be appropriate if this document could come back to Monterey.