

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **French Pessimists**

The June Quarterly of the California Historical Society is a most fascinating number. The issue begins with an article by Clement W. Meighan and Robert F. Heizer entitled "Archaeological Exploration of Sixteenth-Century Indian Mounds at Drake's Bay," with an appendix on Stoneware Specimens by Kamer aga-Oglu. The next in the list of seven articles, is "Putting the Lid on California," an unpublished diary of the Portola Expedition by Jose de Canizares as translated and edited by two women, Virginia E. Thickens and Margaret Mollins.

"The State of Jefferson" by W. N. Davis Jr., a review of the attempt in the latter part of 1841 to form a new state from part of Northern California and parts of Southern Oregon "A French Pessimist in California" is a translation of the correspondence of J. Lombard, vice consul of France, 1850 to 1852, as translated by A.P. Nasatir, which tells of his arrival in Monterey on June 22, 1850, and subsequent events relating to the consulate in this city.

An article by Myrtle Lovdal Rosenthal discusses the life and work of George Christopher Lovdal San Diego's first harbor master and deep-sea fishing captain. A short note on "J.P. Leonard, M.D., Gold Rush Visitor" by Robert T. Legge, M.D., is followed by a continuation of the story of "California Soldiers in the Philippines from the correspondence of Howard Middleton, 1898 to 1899," edited by Harold F. Taggart.

Translations by A.P. Nasatir of the official correspondence of French consular agents in California during the middle years of the nineteenth century show the changes that have taken place in the functions and personnel of French consular agencies in California since the arrival of Louis Gasquet, the first agent, in 1845; also, the conditions that greeted Vice-Consul J. Lombard, when he reached Monterey on June 22, 1850. As to the state of mind of the French emigrants and their numbers, The Evening Picayune of San Francisco had a bit to say on November 27, 1850, about five months after Lombard reached San Francisco.

The author of "A French Pessimist in California," has made use of this news item, in discussing the subject of the French in the gold rush, stating that some tens of

thousands of citizens of France had arrived here within the previous two years.

The Lombard documents, transcribed in the Quarterly article, are part of the contents of Box Monterey in "Correspondence consulaire" archives of the French foreign office. Permission to copy and publish was obtained from the officials in charge. They are calendared in "French Activities in California ..." and were used to a slight extent in the conclusion to "Inside Story of the Gold Rush," also written by Nasatir.

All the letters used in the recent article were dated from Monterey. During the residence of the French consuls in Monterey, the consulate was in the adobe building now known as the Girl Scout House on El Estero at the foot of Pearl street. The historic building was formerly located on Fremont street between Abrego and Munras streets. When the adobe was threatened with destruction, the History and Art Association led in a program of preservation and reconstruction on city owned property was completed early in 1934. The city furnished half the needed funds and the History and Art Association the remainder of the necessary money for the restoration. The Girl Scouts have had the use of the building since March of 1935.