

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Larkin's Papers – 1845

Volume III of the Larkin Papers, published by the University of California Press and the University's Bancroft Library, are being received by subscribers and collectors of Californiana. Only 1,000 volumes of the papers are being published and the edition contains the personal, business, and official correspondence of Thomas Oliver Larkin, merchant and United States Consul in California. George P. Hammond, the director of the Bancroft Library, is the editor.

Volume I was Larkin's correspondence during 1822-1842; Volume II, papers from 1843-1844; and Volume III contains only his correspondence during 1845 most of which are dated from Monterey.

The first illustration in Volume I was a reproduction of an oil painting of Thomas Oliver Larkin, as painted by Charles Nahl – an early day portrait painter.

The original hangs in the Larkin House, the home of Larkin's granddaughter, Mrs. Harry Toulmin, in Monterey. Mrs. Toulmin has given, in past years, a reproduction of the portrait to the Thomas Oliver Larkin School, and to the Colton Hall.

Volume II opens with an illustration of the "Harbor and City of Monterey, California, in 1842," taken from an early day drawing.

Volume III has for its frontispiece, an etching of the "City of Monterey, California, 1842." This beautiful frontispiece, Dr. Hammond explains, is from one of the water color sketches that Larkin had made in 1842, at the time of Commodore Catesby Jones' visit to Monterey, perhaps by one of his sailors. The original has disappeared, but Larkin had it lithographed on stone in New York, by Gildermeister, in 1850. Of this lithograph, Miss Frances M. Molera of Monterey and San Francisco, granddaughter of Juan Bautista Rogers Cooper, is the fortunate owner of a copy in excellent condition. It is reproduced in the latest volume with Miss Molera's permission.

As Dr. Hammond wrote the preface to Volume III, he relates that he is sitting in the old office, or library, of Consul Larkin, on Calle Principal, in Monterey, looking through the deep set windows upon the patio and garden.

"The building has been kept in its original historic condition by his granddaughter, Alice Larkin Toulmin," writes Dr. Hammond, "who, has made it her home for many years. Within a stone's throw are the houses of Cooper (preserved by Miss Molera), Stokes, Gutierrez, Amesti, Munras and other adobes built by Larkin's friends and neighbors. The presidio chapel, founded by Fray Junipero Serra, and the Old Custom House stand only a little farther off. The Spanish plaza has long since been swallowed up by a modern city, but tradition and historical romance are strong in Monterey, where these monuments to the founding of California and the achievements of the pioneers are proudly maintained by its citizens."

In the present volume, covering most of the year 1845, the jacket cover relates, Governor Micheltorena's expulsion and Pio Pico's selection as governor, figure as the outstanding domestic happenings. International events grew more tense from January to September. Texas was on the point of being annexed to the United States; Mexico unwilling to give up her claims to the region, prepared for war. Santa Ana kept Mexico in a turmoil with his political schemes.

Dr. Hammond wrote as a conclusion: "Larkin maintained friendly relations with both Mexicans and Californians and reported to his government on the mounting tension. He reported, too, the increasing number of immigrants, and the growing spirit of independence evident in California."