

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Monterey Seal

To continue our story on the history and meaning of the Monterey City Seal which appears on all legal documents signed by the city and upon all the motor vehicles owned by the city, we will explain other parts or the circular insignia. The story from which we acquired our knowledge appeared in the *Alta Californian* in 1870.

We quote from the June 6th issue of that year: "The knowledge of the Spanish language on the part of the common council in those days was extremely small, limited, perhaps, to such expressions as: *youstay vamos akee manyana, yo vamos tambeen akee weener.*

"It might not be out of place here to mention that the said Common Council voted Gen. Riley on the eve of his departure a massive gold medal with the city arms thereon engraved, somewhat crudely fashioned and engraved. These civic dignitaries did not, however, get as far as their venerable compeers, the city fathers of the rival commercial emporium and the City of San Francisco and vote themselves each a gold medal.

"But in spite of the rampant bull and the furious steed of the supporters, and the imperative character of the motto, Monterey would not 'Andar.' The children had grown up to be men and matrons; the young men's hair was sprinkled with gray, their steps were not as springy and elastic as they were in those days, but the wind still sighs through the pines; the surf rattles and thunders on the beach, and to all appearances the old town of Monterey is still the same."

Pertinent to the foregoing is the following excerpt from a recent bulletin of the National Council for Historic Sites and Buildings, with which the Monterey Foundation has a charter affiliation:

"Soil can be conserved, forests replanted, substitutes found for exhausted mineral resources, but once destroyed, our historic sites and structures are forever lost to the nation (not to Monterey alone).

"They are tangible reminders out of the past: they are the priceless treasures of the national wealth; they are irreplaceable, for although copies can be made, they never have the meaning of the originals.

"Monterey, capital of California under Spain and Mexico, seat of government during the American occupation from July 7, 1846. to Sept. 9, 1850, when statehood was achieved, is truly one of the historic places of the nation. This I thoroughly believe."

The 1956 edition of the *Historic American Landmarks Calendar* contains an unusually fine photograph of the Larkin House in Monterey. It was taken by Rey Ruppel and is captioned: "Larkin House, Monterey, Calif. Thomas Oliver Larkin was the first and only American consul named to serve California territory. This house was the United States consulate from 1844 to 1846."

Title to 750 acres of donated land including the site of Old Fort Union, New Mexico, has been accepted by the United States as one of the final steps toward establishment of the historic Army post area as a national monument. Acceptance of the deed from the Union Land and Grazing Co., Boston, Mass., donor of the land, paves the way for the establishment of the monument as a unit of the National Park System.

The site of Old Fort Union, which served a century ago for protection of the Santa Fe trail and for defense against the wild Indians of the Plains, lies today within the heart of a great cattle ranch, owned by the Union Land and Grazing Company. Abandoned in 1891, it reverted to private ownership. Row after row of adobe, brick, and stone walls mark the size and location of the post itself. A forest of chimneys still standing, and piles of fallen brick, mounds, and roofing tin strewn on all sides, emphasize the deterioration which has taken place since the Army moved out.

The fort was founded in 1851 and has been generally recognized as the outstanding United States military post in New Mexico. It played an important part for four decades in the establishment of permanent United States rule in the Southwest.