

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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More Larkin Papers

Volume V of the Larkin Papers has been received by all subscribers from the Bancroft Library of the University of California. This and the preceding volumes have been edited by George P. Hammond, director of the library, and printed by the University of California Press.

The information contained in the papers is from the personal, business, and official correspondence of Thomas Oliver Larkin, merchant and United States Consul in California, whose consulate was the Larkin House in Monterey. Mrs. Harry Toulmin, Larkin's granddaughter is the owner of the house at the corner of Calle Principal and Jefferson streets, and is in residence there most of the year.

There is but one illustration in this volume—a picture of the Larkin House as it appeared in the 1880's. At that time there was a two story adobe building between the Consulate and the Sherman Headquarters. The House of Four Winds is next and then the large white house which stood where the Frances Elkins Memorial Park (next to the County building) is now. A carriage with a team of two white horses stands in front of the house. The photograph is from the collection of Mrs. Toulmin.

Vol. V, June to December 1846, opens with the dramatic Bear Flag Revolt, which upset Larkin's plans for peaceful annexation, endangered the friendships he had formed with prominent Californians, and led to bloodshed at Natividad (near Salinas), San Pasqual, and elsewhere. Larkin would have preferred to let immigration from the United States determine California's destiny—according to Dr. Hammond's theory after reviewing his personal letters and manuscripts.

Volume V contains Larkin's observations, addressed to family, friends, and government officials, concerning the fast-moving events that made the latter half of 1846 a turning point in the history of California. This volume of The Larkin Papers brings the documentary story to the end of December 1846. Subsequent volumes will chronicle the stormy days of the discovery of gold and the resulting Gold Rush.

We were happy to see that Dr. Hammond has revived the life of other members of the Larkin family in Massachusetts. He states in the introduction: "the part Thomas O. Larkin played in the history of California is

reminiscent of what other Larkins had done in the American Revolution 75 years earlier. At that time, the Larkins lived in Charlestown, Mass. Several had been active against the importation of foreign tea. On November 24, 1873, five Larkins, together with 39 other Charlestown residents, signed a resolution, calling for a committee of correspondence to oppose the importation of tea by the East India Company.

The tea party and Paul Revere's ride appears to have to have a connection with Monterey—at least through Thomas Oliver Larkin—so we will repeat this fact: "The Larkins were also connected with the Colonial cause. Indeed, the horse ridden by Paul Revere on that fateful night of April 18, 1775, on his ride to warn the minutemen of Middlesex, belonged to Dean John Larkin."

The losses incurred by Thomas Oliver Larkin of Monterey after the conquest of California offer an interesting parallel to those of his forebearers in the winning of independence for the United States.

The first call has been sent out by the officers of the California History Foundation announcing the Eighth Annual meeting of the Foundation to be held at the College of the Pacific in Stockton on Friday evening and Saturday, March 18 and 19. The Monterey History and Art Association are members of this organization. Top speakers at the meetings will be Vierling Kersey, former state superintendent of Instruction; Donald C. Cutter, University of Southern California; and A. P. Nasatir, San Diego State College. In the evening there will be a dramatic production "The Snow Covered Wagons" by Julia Cooley Altrocchi. Exhibits, Foundation luncheon and banquet are also on the agenda.