

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The Governor's Sons

Little boys away from home were the same in 1846 as they are today we are sure when we read the letters of Frederick and Oliver Larkin in Lynn, Mass., to their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas O. Larkin in far away Monterey, Calif. The boys had been sent to relatives in the east that they might become more Americanized, we might say, for their father admits in several letters now in the Bancroft Library, that young Oliver could speak very little English because of the predominance of Spanish-speaking people in Monterey.

Oliver's spelling has not improved with time for he had already spent two years in Honolulu in school before going to Lynn. He is now 12 years of age, so he must have spent four intervening years in Monterey, having gone to the Islands at the age of six years.

Oliver writes his parents this amusing child-like letter: "My dear Paarents: I am very well at present and should be pleased to hear at this time the same from you. Frederick is in health. He is learning his books very well. I am now studying Geo, Arith Besides writing and spelling, beside Wednesday I attende A Drawing class.

"I had a very good time on our passage her. I like L. very well. Have not bee homesick yet, I think it as pleasiak here as at Monterey.

"Aunt Saphua was married a short time since I and Frederick saw them married. I have seen almost all my relations. I have been to Dorchester and Marblehead I want to see you all father and mother, brather and sister But don't expect to. I now have no more time to Write you I must leave friend for the present You dear son, Thomas Larkin."

A letter from young Oliver to his father written Dec 6, 1846 relates that they ... received news of the taking of Monterey by Commodore Sloat on the previous July 7th. He wrote: "Dear Father we have received two letters from you, the last, giving an account of the taking of Monterey. Frederic, says I have written all the news & he don't know what to tell. I hope you will come here soon & mother with you. Good-Bye my dear Father."

Oliver evidently felt on that 1846 afternoon that he should report his progress at school for he continued his letter thus: "Well are all well, and I hope you are all well. I do enjoy myself very much. I attend school and

study the following branches, Arithmetic, Gegra with the Atlas and first and 2d Mt. Vernon reader first exercise in the Morning we read the Testament Thanksgiving day, we dined at Grand-Ma Childs and in the evening at Aunt ? to a party."

In a letter to Larkin in Monterey, the boys' aunt wrote from Lynn that they had spent Thanksgiving in her home and seemed to enjoy it very much. Young Oliver had told her that they had no such Thanksgiving celebration in California but they kept the Fourth of July for a great day.

The news has spread by this time in the East that California is now a part of the United States and Oliver writes his father from Lynn: "We are thinking you are to be the first Governor of California & I should like that. Aunt Childs says we must learn faster & be industrious boys if we are to be sons of Governor Larkin. Tell Uncle Cooper I should like to know when Rogers & John are coming, they will have a better time here than they do there, tell the boys I can talk on stilts.

"The American flag was waving on Lynn Common the day we received the news of victory at Monterey."