

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

September 15, 1961

City Status

On April 30, 1851, by an act of the Legislature, Monterey was made an incorporated town after a group of prominent citizens of those days had worked hard, to make the act an accomplished fact.

A petition had been drawn up on Saturday the 2nd day of February and had been signed by a large group of residents and sent to the state governing body. It was our privilege a number of years ago to see and put our hands upon the original document and signatures with their distinguishing rubrics below. It was in the private collection of the late Thomas W. Norris, former president of the Monterey History and Art Assn. and one of the most ardent collectors of Californiana on the Peninsula.

The document reads:

"To the Honorable

"The Senate and Assembly of the State of California.

"The undersigned, Citizens of Monterey, respectfully petition that your honorable body grant them the "charter of Incorporation of the City of Monterey" which was adopted by a meeting of the citizens held on Saturday, 2nd of February, in the Town Hall pursuant to public notice and which now accompany this petition.

"It is believed by the undersigned that powers asked for in the plan of the charter, presented to your Honorable Body, are such as required by our position and are such as enjoyed by our sister cities in older states.

"And they shall ever pray - signed:"

The petition is signed by 206 men, many of whose names are still familiar both in history and in everyday life in Monterey. They were: Philip A. Roche, who was the last alcalde and first mayor of Monterey; Jacinto Rodriguez, one of the signers of the state constitution; H. W. Halleck, a delegate and signer of the constitution, who had also been a military aide to President Lincoln; William G. Macy, secretary of the convention; David Spence, a prominent Scottish merchant of the old days, who was associated with William P. Hartnell; Dr. James L. Ord, who came to California in 1847, under contract with Company F, 3rd U. S. Artillery, and later married Dona Augustias Jimeno, widow of Don Manuel Jimeno

and the daughter of Don Jose de la Guerra of Santa Barbara.

Other signers were: Thomas Oliver Larkin, first and only American consul to Monterey, whose home still bears his name; Josiah Merritt, James McKinley, Salvator Osio, Rafael Sanchez, Feliciano Soberanes, and F. Serrano, all associated with old adobe homes in Monterey. Jacob Leese and Job F. Dye, both of whom were partners of Thomas O. Larkin at various times; Milton Little, pioneer merchant and owner of most of the land that is now known as New Monterey, William Curtis, an early day store owner; George Oliver, a soldier who became a coffin and church pew maker and married one of the Duarte girls, and Don Jose Amesti, a Spanish Basque whose wife was Prudencia Vallejo.

"Americana" a publication of International Bookbinders, Box 303, Beverly Hills, California, Catalogue No. 102, has just been mailed to many of those interested in purchasing books of interest on history.

One book that sounds most interesting is "75 Years in California." It is a re-issue and enlarged, illustrated, of "60 Years in California," to which much newer matter has been added by the author; edited and with historical forward and index by Douglas S. Watson, San Francisco, 1929, 422 pages, 44 maps and plates. Scarce. \$75.00.

This book is on the Zamorano 80 list. "Davis came to California by sea in 1831, became a successful merchant, and records his memories of men and events in this trustworthy book. Davis had lived in California 17 years before the Gold Rush, and he took part in the material and political changes in the country."

Walter Colton's "Three Years in California" published in New York in 1850 a first edition, fine, crisp copy, is now worth \$65.00. The material in this book all was written in Monterey when Walter Colton was the alcalde. He arrived here from the East Coast as chaplain of the Congress, one of the vessels which accompanied the USS Savannah, flagship of Commodore John D. Sloat, the USS Cyane and the USS Levant, and raised the American Flag at the Old Custom House, claiming California for the United States. He built Colton Hall during his stay in Monterey.

"Three Years in California" is also on the Zamorano 80 list.