

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Monterey History Repeats Itself

On the 13th of May, 1834, a dispatch from San Francisco was read in the assembly at Monterey stating that "a number of foreigners were occupied within that jurisdiction destroying the forests. The jefe (judge) recommended measures to preserve the woods, and a change of the reglamento (regulations) of Aug. 17, 1830, imposing a tax on timber."

So, history repeats itself! Gov. Figueroa in his report in 1834 to the secretary of the fomento (development) said that many public works are needed. At the capitol and elsewhere casa consistoriales (judicial buildings) are in absolute necessity, and the plans and estimates which he had ordered made are in an advanced stage.

Due to the swampy condition of the road to the landing at Monterey, it is necessary to construct a paved street, he reported. As Monterey is the principal port for the dally increasing foreign commerce, a wharf is needed. The cost would not be great. The governor confided to his secretary, Capt. Zamorano, the making of a topographical plan of Monterey which approaches completion.

About the middle of 1845 a pier was constructed at Monterey, contracted for by the authorities with Larkin, according to Bancroft. Estaven de la Torre furnished 1,500 cart-loads of stone at \$1 a load; the stone was quarried by some military deserters and Indians, who were given their food and \$1 each daily. The piles were furnished by Garner at \$4 each, laid near the pier. The cost of the pier was \$8,000, more or less, and was made a preference charge on the Custom House.

Bancroft also tells in his California Pastoral that a part of the small interior trade was that from the Salinas lagoons, or salt ponds, situated between the ocean sand dunes and the Monterey River.

Salt was here obtained for the missions and the troops, some being sent to San Blas on the king's ships as early as 1770. Salt being a royal monopoly, no sooner did men begin to make it than a guard was placed over it by order of the government.

The commander of the guard would bring Indians from Soledad and Carmelo and gathering all the salt from three lagoons into one pile, covered it with sticks and branches, to which they set fire, so as to melt the

surface and form a crust over the mass, which would protect it from dampness of the ocean winds. When all was ready for its shipment, it was brought to the warehouse at Monterey, and placed in charge of the habilitado (agent or paymaster), and sent away in tanned leather bags brought by the ships for that purpose.

Thomas Oliver Larkin was appointed United States consul "for the Port of Monterey, and such other ports as shall be nearer thereto than the residence of any other consul or vice-consul of the United States within the same allegiance." Larkin began his duties April 2, 1844 and served until June 23, 1846. He was the only United States consul ever to serve in California. Larkin built a wharf with the support of the ancient rocks on the right hand side of the entrance to old wharf, which in early days was always referred to as the Larkin Wharf.