

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 10, 1964

Larkin's Letters Perused

Volume IX of The Larkin Papers has been received by all subscribers, published for the Bancroft Library by the University of California Press in Berkeley. This publication and eight others edited by George P. Hammond, director of the library, contain the personal, business, and official correspondence of Thomas Oliver Larkin, merchant and United States consul in California.

Larkin arrived in California in 1832, early enough to observe the leisurely pastoral life of the Mexican province, where mission buildings were already crumbling, where the white sails of the Yankee ships, engaged in hide and tallow trade, moved from port to port, and where the harmless rattle of an occasional local revolution broke the quiet round of daily living.

This recently published volume of the Larkin Papers begins with May 1851, when the Gold Rush was about over. "In this new West, promotion schemes multiplied on every hand. Every city wanted to become the site of the state capitol. From its original site in Monterey, where the constitutional convention had met in 1849, it moved to San Jose, thence to Vallejo, Benicia, and finally, in 1854, to Sacramento, which had recovered from fire and flood to become a populous and progressive city," Dr. Hammond wrote in the volume preface.

Dr. Hammond also writes: "Once again I am indebted to Miss Frances Molera, granddaughter of John B. R. Cooper, for a photograph of a member of the family, the Rev. William M. Rogers, Larkin's cousin and business agent. He died in the summer of 1851, a comparatively young man." Miss Molera resides in San Francisco but owns an old adobe home in Monterey at the corner where Alvarado, Munras and Polk streets meet, with a historical marker which names it the Cooper adobe.

News from the Quarterly Newsletter published by the Book Club of California, has much of interest in the Spring issue regarding the club and recent publications.

The 1964 Keepsake series promises to be of unusual interest and charm, containing pictures of eight west coast lighthouses drawn by Hartman Bache in the 1850's and apparently never before published. Leading authorities on the Pacific Coast maritime history are contributing the texts which will describe some of the

noteworthy events in the annals of these lighthouses. The series will be under the general editorship of J. A. Hussey, regional historian for the National Park Service, and editor of several previous Book Club publications, including "The Voyage of the Raccoon" and "A Vacation Among the Sierras."

As its Spring 1964, publication the Club will issue the "Geographical Memoir Upon Upper California" written by John C. Fremont as a report of his expedition to the region in 1846. Accompanying the text but folded in as a separate item, will be a large map of California, Oregon, and the land west of the Rockies for which, as the original title page makes clear, the words were only a supporting document.