

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

February 20, 1968

California Letter, 1846

In addition to the copies and orders from Thomas O. Larkin for furnishings for the Larkin House and clothing suitable for a United States consul, presented to History and Art Association by Dr. Boyd E. Huff of the University of California, is a photostat negative of a letter written on June 14th, 1846, concerning shipment from Monterey of hides and tallow of that day.

Henry Mellus is the writer of the letter, which follows:

San Francisco, June 14, 1846

William Appleton & Co.

Gentlemen:

Herewith please receive a copy of my letter via Mexico. The ship Barnstable arrived in Monterey May 7th where I had no difficulty in entering the cargo; the duties amounted to \$19,258, payment in four month 1/3 cash and 2/3 in hides. I had a government debt of \$11,000 which was deducted and I had no difficulty in arranging for the pay't of the balance.

I now owe \$5,000 in cash, \$2,000 of which is at 2 percent monthly interest. I can pay my whole cash debts in three months. And the amount due on the hide duties was settled before I left Monterey.

The cargo of the B. is very good and I only regret the return cargoes are so small as not to warrant a large invoice from home. The small amount more invested there gives so much more variety here, that the demand is much increased for the whole cargo...

We have now on hand six thousand hides and the season is good throughout the coast. There will be no difficulty in loading the Tasso by the 1st of March if this country is not too much troubled by the revolutions.

This country is at present in a truly lamentable state, there are three native parties all striving for dominion and the one American party just coming into the field. The latter are not inclined to suffer any more outrage on their persons and property.

A law has just been issued indicating an intention of again expelling them from the country, and not being inclined to go as amicably as formerly eighty of them have banded themselves and proceeding to Sonoma have taken possession of the person of the two Vallejos

and Victor Prudin, a Frenchman, and Lieut. Col. in the Mexican army. Saying if they are sent from the country they will not go alone.

This same gang of lawless fellows have also lately seized on a fine band of five hundred horses belonging to gov't. All this must bring trouble and at present no one can force the end.

I think that in two mos. all San Francisco will be taken by them. They are about 500 able men in number and many more are daily expected. I am also informed that there is a large vessel entering Monterey with large cargo. Who she is or where from we have not yet been informed.

There is good demand for almost all kinds of goods and I shall sell as little as possible and only to those who hold land or cattle. This system of credit must be continued or there will be no chance of collecting a cargo. All follow it and as long as we continue the trade we must do the same.

I am still of the opinion that a good business can be done on the coast and if you think it advisable to send a vessel in place of the Admitter I will accept the consignment.

Very many valuable mines are being daily discovered and they must call many people to the country.

In the jurisdiction of this place more than seventy have been opened in the last three months consisting of quicksilver, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, saltpeter and one entire mountain of brimstone, coal is also to be had probably in any quantity. All is well on board the B. and the duties are carried on in fair style. Expecting soon to have another opportunity, I remain Respectfully,

(signed)

Henry Mellus.