

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### Early California Printing

"The Early Printing of California" written by Herbert Fahey, proved so interesting and of such importance to the history of Monterey and California.

The Ramage press, with master wooden uprights and a stone bed, had a heavy iron screw to bring the platen down upon the type, Mr. Fahey relates. Zamorano printed a notice announcing the press ready for public service in Monterey. This was the first piece of California printing to carry its printer's name. The imprint read: "Monterey 1834, Imprenta de Zamorano y Co". In part, this historic announcement is here translated:

#### "NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

"At the printing office of Citizen Augustin Z. Zamorano & Company, established in this Capital, service is offered to the public with the greatest punctuality and care, receiving all sorts of writings under the rules established by the laws, for the liberty of the press, subjecting separate impression to the following rates and agreeing to more equitable prices with gentlemen who may wish to establish any periodical."

Zamorano's new type was a modern roman, Small Pica No. 1, of Boston Foundry. With the exception of two or three variations of small decorative units, the entire typographic resources of the office were shown in the announcement. There was available, but one size of text letter, with capitals and figures of the same size. No italic or accented letters came with the shipment.

An unusual, printed piece was an invitation to a ball given by the governor on November 1, 1834, to welcome the Hajar and Padres colonists. A booklet in the Bancroft, according to Mr. Fahey, giving the rules and regulations adopted by the territorial legislature for the government of its organizations and deliberations, consists of 16 pages plus a titlepage on separate leaf.

Three broadside proclamations by Governor Figueroa were printed. The first concerned taxes and other public financial matters. Second was the Regalant Provincial for the secularization and administration of the missions. The third was an address to the people of the Territory, issued immediately after Figueroa ordered Ensign Vallejo to conduct Hajar and Padres to the ship Rosa for deportation.

The governor's vindication of his policies regarding the activities of Hajar and Padres took the form of a book. This volume, the only book of size and importance to be produced in Alta California before the American occupation, was easily the most extensive and most important product of the press during the time Don Augustin, controlled its operations. Also produced was a small arithmetic, the first schoolbook to be printed in California.

After the fall of the Presidio of Monterey on November 6th, 1836, the printing press, according to the little booklet, passed by either purchase or confiscation, to the new revolutionary government and was operated by various persons at Monterey and Sonoma until March 1845.

The press was then put in storage in a room in the government building in Monterey where Semple and Colton discovered it.

Twelve volumes in all were printed by the Spanish press, nine of which were printed in Monterey, and three in Sonoma. Of these twelve books, four are of a political or military nature, one of a medical work, one devotional in character, and six are schoolbooks. Four of the latter bear no imprint, other than that of Monterey and the date. The schoolbooks are small, and to find more wretched specimens of printing would be difficult.

The local output of the press in the eleven years of its existence, in books and broadsides, consisted of seventy-seven items, according to the research done by the author of "Early Printing in California."

In the transitional period between Spanish printing and the time that Americans took over California to begin the era of American printing, a letter was sent East by Thomas Oliver Larkin, trader, developer, promoter, and the only American consul in California. The letter follows, verbatim:

Monterey, May 31, 1845

There is a printing press here belonging to the Govmt. As it was old when imported ten or twelve years back, it has not improved since — therefore have no newspapers in California for which I attribute four reasons—either one may suffice.

First, there is no printer — second, no press, three, no editor, fourth none to take the paper.