

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Early Monterey Printing**

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Fahey of San Francisco were visitors in Monterey in December of 1949, and presented me with a very small red book which completely as far as he knew, covered the history of early printing in California. It was this hobby that brought him to Monterey, to search for old newspapers and to call on old timers.

He left me a copy of the tiny booklet but some one evidently liked it as well as I did and the book disappeared from my bookshelves, autograph and all. But fortunately I had written the story which appears below and saved it for these nineteen years and I offer it to readers of this column today.

Mr. Fahey is the author of a miniature book entitled "Early Printing in California," dedicated to 30th annual convention of the International Association of Printing House Craftsmen, Inc., which was held in San Francisco in September, 1949. The tiny book is two and one-half inches by four inches, with bright red binding, and is perfect in every detail, throughout the 64 pages of type. The booklet was published by the San Francisco Club of Printing Craftsmen and presented to the craftsmen who attended the convention.

Most of the text of the book concerns the early history of Monterey, for it was here that the first newspaper in California was published and named the "Californian." An original issue of this paper can be seen at the Old Custom House, where it is always on display.

Mr. Fahey's book begins with the arrival of Agustin Vicente Zamorano, who established the earliest California printing press at Monterey in 1834. Previous to the Zamorano press, impressions had been taken from wood blocks and later from type, but who the printers were has not been discovered. In 1825 Zamorano came from Mexico as the executive secretary of the Territory of Alta California and served 11 years as a second executive officer. In addition he commanded for six years the most important military post within the Territory, the Presidio at Monterey.

Zamorano imported the first printing press to set up west of the Rocky Mountains and on it printed a series of small books and official proclamations that are the rarest of California imprints. No record was left of his

work, according to Mr. Fahey, or any reference made to the press in the papers preserved today that are known to have passed through his hands.

The archives of the provincial, territorial and departmental governments of Alta California containing specimens of nearly every piece the press produced, which reposed for many years in the Surveyor General's office in San Francisco, were completely destroyed by the fire of April, 1906.

Mr. Fahey writes that Zamorano may have brought with him from Mexico only the wood blocks mentioned, while a small type outfit was evidently delivered to Monterey in 1829 or early in 1830. The new material consisted of a small font of type and a few ornaments. Their impressions or "press-work" being extremely uneven and varying widely between the individual pieces, likely no press was available and impressions were taken in a manner similar to the way in which a printer takes a proof.

The first letterhead printed from type in California was dated Monterey, August 25, 1830. Letterheads and sealed-paper, which gave formality and validity to all legal documents, were printed with the outfit.

Two other items only are now known to have been printed with the above equipment. First was Governor Figueroa's announcement of his arrival January 16, 1833. The second piece consists of a heading and closing impressed on a proclamation that was previously printed in Mexico. This was imprinted in May, 1834.

The little book continues to tell the story of early printing in Monterey, as follows:

Late in the month of May, 1833, the ship Lagoda sailed from Boston Harbor, bound for the Sandwich Islands and the coast of California. A copy of the invoice of the ship's cargo and outfit supplied to one of her owners, James Hunnewell, is preserved among the papers of this New England maritime merchant in the Hunnewell Papers, Harvard College Library. The article of greatest interest on the invoice of the Lagoda's cargo was the entry: One case printing press, type and apparatus complete. The Lagoda was bringing the first printing press to California where its earliest use was in printing a sealed-paper heading which read, Sello Cuarto De Oficio-Habilitado provincinoalmentos por la Administracion de la Aduana martitima de Monterey de la alta California para los anos demil ocho cientos

trienta y cinco—Figueroa A Ramirez; This document dated July 28, 1834, is in the Bancroft Library.

Therefore the new equipment was set up and in used by that date at the latest.