

copious effusion of blood, if the officer in question is attacked, and there would result from a step of such a nature, not only, that many lives would be lost on both sides, but it would be the origin of great expenses, considerable damages, and perhaps a greater flow of blood in the future, between the citizens of our respective nations. Finally, intimately convinced I am, that forcible measures will not produce a single good, but evils of great magnitude now and in the time to come.

I have powerful motives for believing that Captain Frémont yet remains where he is, with the sole end of affording his horses some rest (since he has already bought his provisions), and immediately afterwards, he will go out of the Department of California. But he cannot verify this, inasmuch as he sees himself surrounded by people in whom he observes decided intentions of hostility.

I beg you to send a copy of this note to the Commandant General D. José Castro, and I have the honor to subscribe myself with the greatest respect,

(Signed) THOMAS O. LARKIN.

*To Don Manuel Diaz, Alcalde of Monterey.*

CAPTAIN FRÉMONT: I direct this with the correspondence of the Alcalde to the General, I know not, if it will arrive or not in your possession. By the Blacksmith Joseph who formerly belonged to that Company under your command, I remit the original of the letter that I received.

LETTER FROM THE CONSUL, THOMAS O. LARKIN, TO CAPTAIN FRÉMONT.

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA, March 10, 1846.

SIR: Your letter of yesterday I received last night at eight o'clock; I thank you for the same; it took from me a weight of uneasiness concerning your situation. The alcalde of Monterey has requested of me a copy in Spanish of your letter. Not knowing what you might approve of in the case, I had some objection; on second thoughts I considered that the alcalde, having given the courier a passport (without which he would not go) for carrying of the letters both ways, were made public, and people might put a wrong construction on our correspondence, I gave it to him with the following additions. I also considered the letter contained nothing of importance to keep secret, and now annex my letter of this morning to the alcalde. As you may not have a copy of your letter, I send one. My native courier said he was well treated by you—that *two thousand men could not drive you*. In all cases of couriers, order your men to have no words or hints with them, as it is magnified. This one said a man pointed

to a tree and said, "There's your life;" he expected to be led to you blindfolded; says you have sixty-two men, well armed, etc., etc., etc.

You will, without thought of expense or trouble, call on me, or send to me, in every case of need, not only as your consul, but as your friend and countryman.

I am yours, truly,

(Signed) THOMAS O. LARKIN.

*To Captain J. C. Frémont, United States Army.*

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF CONSUL LARKIN TO THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE.

CONSULATE OF THE U. S. OF AMERICA,  
MONTEREY, March 27, 1846.

SIR: Captain J. C. Frémont, of the United States Army, arrived at this United States consular house in Monterey, on the 27th of January, 1846. Being very anxious to join his party of fifty men at the second place of rendezvous, without the settlement, they having missed the first place by mistake, he remained but two days; in which time, with myself, he visited the commandant general, prefecto, alcalde, and Colonel Alvarado, informing them that he was surveying the nearest route from the United States to the Pacific Ocean. This information, and that his men were not United States soldiers, was also, by myself, officially given to the prefecto. Having obtained funds and supplies from myself, he returned to his camp; it being well known in Monterey that he was to return, when he collected his men. Some fifteen or twenty days after this, Captain Frémont, with his party, encamped at a vacant rancho belonging to Captain Fisher (about ninety miles from here), to recruit his men and animals. From there he proceeded towards Santa Cruz, making short journeys. On the 3d of March he encamped on the rancho of Mr. E. P. Hartnell, where he received letters from the general and prefecto, ordering him out of the country, and to obey the order without any pretext whatever, or immediate measures would be taken to compel him to do so. This, not corresponding with assurances received at Monterey, it was not answered, and he gave orders to hoist the United States flag the next morning, as the only protection his men were to look to. From the 7th to the 10th of March, they fortified their camp with a breastwork of logs. Encamped on a high hill, which commanded a view of the surrounding country, they could see (with the use of spy-glasses) the general and his troops, numbering about two hundred men, at their camp, in the Mission of St. John's, preparing their cannon. On the 9th inst., I sent duplicate letters; one by an American, who lost his papers, and the other by a Californian, to Captain Frémont, informing him of the movements of the Californians. The California courier returned to the consulate in about nine or ten hours, bringing a letter from Captain Frémont having travelled



in that time sixty miles. He reported being well treated by Captain Frémont and his men; *and that two thousand of his countrymen would not be sufficient to compel him to leave the country, although his party was so small.* At the earnest request of the alcalde for a translation of Captain Frémont's letter, it was given, and immediately despatched to the general at St. John's; and one also to the governor of the Puebla of Los Angeles. The general informed the alcalde on the night of the 10th instant, that Captain Frémont had left his encampment, and that he (the general) would pursue and attack him the first opportunity, and chastise him for hoisting a foreign flag in California. In the postscript of the same letter, the general stated that Captain Frémont had crossed a small river, and was then about three miles distant from them; but the general made no preparation to follow him. On the morning of the 11th, General Castro sent John Gilroy, an Englishman, long resident in this country, to make offers of arrangement to Captain Frémont. On his arrival at the campground, he found Captain Frémont had left that morning with his party; the camp-fires were still burning. He found in the camp the staff used for the flag, tent-poles (cut on the spot), some old clothes, and two old and useless pack-saddles which the Californians have magnified into munitions of war. General Castro informed his party that he had received various messages from the camp of Captain Frémont, threatening to exterminate the Californians, etc. (but will hardly name his messengers, nor did they put any confidence in it themselves). From the 11th to the 13th, the natives had returned to their respective homes, to resume their customary occupation. A few people that were ordered to march from San Francisco to join the general at his camp, returned to their homes. On the 12th, a proclamation was put up by the general in the billiard-room (not the usual place), informing the inhabitants that a band of highwaymen ("*bandoleros*") under Captain Frémont, of the United States Army, had come within the towns of this department; and that he, with two hundred patriots, had driven them out, and sent them into the back country. Some of the officers of the two hundred patriots (and more were expected to join them) arrived in Monterey, and reported that the cowards had run, and that they had driven them to the Sacramento River; some added that they drove them into the bullrushes, on the plains of the Sacramento; and that, in their haste, they had left some of their best horses behind. The horses proved to be those belonging to the Californians themselves, and had strayed into Captain Frémont's band (being an every-day occurrence in California), and on raising camp, they were turned out and left behind. Instead of the Americans being driven out of the country, they travelled less distance, for three or four days, than the natives did in returning to Monterey; moving from four to six miles per day, in order to recruit.

CONSULATE OF THE U. S. OF AMERICA,  
MONTEREY, April 2, 1846.

SIR: In giving my first information to the department respecting Captain Frémont's arrival in California, I did not anticipate such an extensive correspondence as it has now reached. Captain Frémont was well received in this place, and to the last day we heard of him, by the natives individually, who sold him provisions, and liked his presence. During his encampment, thirty or forty miles from here, despatches were received by the commandant, General José Castro (a native of Monterey), from Mexico, ordering him to drive Captain Frémont out of this department; which order, with one hundred and seventy or two hundred men present, and over one hundred more daily expected, he pretended to execute. Captain Frémont left his camp a few hours after he received the undersigned's letter of the 9th of March (not from fright of General Castro), as he had been preparing the week before to travel. It is supposed he has gone to Santa Barbara, where an American was sent by the undersigned in February, with funds and provisions for his use. From there he proceeds on his journey, according to his instructions from his department in Washington. Although from the correspondence it may appear that in the centre of a strange country, among a whole people with real or apparent hostile intentions towards him, that Captain Frémont was in much danger, it can be believed that he was only annoyed. Whether he will visit Monterey after this unexpected affair or not, is uncertain.

The undersigned has not supposed, during the whole affair, that General Castro wished to go after Captain Frémont, and was very confident that with all California he would not have attacked him, even had he been sure of destroying the whole party, as five times their number could have taken their place before the expected battle. Captain Frémont received verbal applications from English and Americans to join his party, and could have mustered as many men as the natives. He was careful not to do so. Although he discharged five or six of his men, he took no others in their place. On the return of General Castro, he published a flaming proclamation to the citizens, informing them that a band of *bandoleros* (highwaymen or freebooters), under Captain Frémont of the United States Army, had come into this district; but with the company of two hundred patriots he had driven them away, and exhorted his companions and countrymen to be always ready to repel others of the same class. This proclamation was missing, from the place it was put up, on the third day.

From the foregoing series of letters it appears that under date of March 9th Mr. Larkin addressed a letter to the commander of any American ship of war in San Blas or Mazatlan; setting out the existing circumstances at



that date, and asking that a sloop of war be despatched to Monterey from Mazatlan on the receipt of his letter, which was sent open to Mr. Parrott, our Consul at Mazatlan.

In it he mentions my arrival in California, and my visit with himself to the commanding general and other authorities at Monterey with the object of obtaining permission to recruit my party and purchase supplies in the settlements—that the permission applied for was granted, but that afterward General Castro had received from Mexico, by the "Hannah," positive orders to drive Captain Frémont from the country—that at the time of his writing I was encamped about eight leagues from Monterey, resting my animals—that three hundred men would be ready on the day following to drive me out of the department, and should this intention be carried out there would be much bloodshed, as my party consisted of well-armed and determined men, having every confidence in themselves and in their commander. And further, that I had intended to leave during the week, but might not now be willing, as the people wish to force me, and that if there should be a fight between the Californians and myself, the American residents were under apprehensions for their safety afterward.

Subsequently to these proceedings I learned through the Prussian Minister at Washington, Baron Gerolt, of this intended hostile action against me by the Mexican Government.

Descending the southeastern side of the ridge we halted for the night on a stream about three miles from the camp of General Castro, a few miles from our fort. The next day we resumed our route, and emerging into the valley of the San Joaquin on the 11th we found almost a summer temperature, and the country clothed in the floral beauty of spring. Travelling by short stages we reached the Towalumne River on the evening of the 14th. By observation, in latitude  $37^{\circ} 25' 53''$ , and longitude  $120^{\circ} 35' 55''$ .

On the 21st we entered the Sacramento valley, and on the 22d encamped at a favorite spot opposite the house of Mr. Grimes. As already mentioned, his house was not far from Sutter's Fort. We remained several days here on the American River, to recruit our animals on the abundant range between the Sacramento and the hills.

On the 24th we broke up camp with the intention of making an examination of the lower Sacramento valley, of which I had seen but little above Sutter's Fort. I left the American River ten miles above its mouth; travelling a little east of north in the direction of the Bear River settlements. The road led among oak timber, over ground slightly undulating, covered with grass intermingled with flowers.

At sunrise on the 25th the temperature was a few degrees above the freezing point with an easterly wind and a clear sky.

In about thirty miles' travel to the north, we reached the Keyser rancho, on Bear River; an affluent to *Feather* River, the largest tributary of the Sacramento. The route lay over an undulating country—more so as our course brought us nearer the mountains—wooded with oaks and shrubbery in blossom, with small prairies intervening. Many plants were in flower, and among them the California poppy, unusually magnificent. It is the characteristic bloom of *California* at this season, and the Bear River bottoms, near the hills, were covered with it. The blue fields of the nemophyla and this golden poppy represent fairly the skies and gold of California.

I was riding quietly along with Godey through the oak groves, the party being several miles off higher to the hills, when we discovered two Indian women busily occupied among the trees on the top of a hill, gathering plants or clover-grass into their conical baskets. Taking advantage of the trees we had nearly reached the top of the hill, thinking to surprise these quick-eyed beings. Reaching the top we found nothing there except the baskets—apparently suddenly dropped and the grass spilled out. There were several bushes of a long-stemmed, grass-like shrub, and searching around to see what had become of them, we discovered two pairs of naked feet sticking out just above the top of the bushes.

At the shout we raised two girls to whom the feet belonged rolled out of the bushes into which they had only time to dive as we neared the top of the hill, thinking perhaps that we had not seen them. They were but little alarmed and joined in the laugh we had at their ostrich-like idea of hiding. It appeared that they belonged to a village not far away towards the hills. Ranging around in that beautiful climate, gathering where they had not the trouble to sow, these people had at that time their life of thorough enjoyment. The oaks and pines and grasses gave them abundant vegetable food, and game was not shy.

We crossed several small streams, and found the ground miry from the recent rains. The temperature at four in the afternoon was  $70^{\circ}$ , and at sunset  $58^{\circ}$ , with an easterly wind, and the night bright and clear.

The morning of the 26th was clear, and warmer than usual; the wind southeasterly, and the temperature  $40^{\circ}$ . We travelled across the valley plain, and in about sixteen miles reached Feather River at twenty miles from its junction with the Sacramento, near the mouth of the *Yuba*, so called from a village of Indians who live on it. The river has high banks—twenty or thirty feet—and was here one hundred and fifty yards wide, a deep, navigable stream. The Indians aided us across the river with canoes and small rafts. Extending along the bank in front of the village was a range of wicker cribs, about twelve feet high, partly filled with what is there the Indians' staff of life—acorns. A collection of huts, shaped like



bee-hives, with naked Indians sunning themselves on the tops, and these acorn cribs, are the prominent objects in an Indian village.

There is a fine farm, or rancho, on the Yuba, stocked with about three thousand head of cattle, and cultivated principally in wheat, with some other grains and vegetables, which are caried by means of the river to a market at San Francisco. Mr. Cordua, a native of Germany, who is proprietor of the place, informed me that his average harvest of wheat was twenty-five bushels to the acre, which he supposed would be about the product of the wheat lands in the Sacramento valley. The labor on this and other farms in the valley is performed by Indians.

The temperature here was 74° at two in the afternoon, 71° at four, and 69° at sunset, with a northeasterly wind and a clear sky.

At sunrise of the 27th the temperature was 42°, clear, with a northeasterly wind. We travelled northwardly, up the right bank of the river, which was wooded with large white and evergreen oaks, interspersed with thickets of shrubbery in full bloom. This was a pleasant journey of twenty-seven miles, and we encamped at the bend of the river, where it turns from the course across the valley to run southerly to its junction with the Sacramento. The thermometer at sunset was 67°, sky partially clouded, with southerly wind.

The thermometer at sunrise on the 28th was at 45° 5', with a northeasterly wind. The road was over an open plain, with a few small sloughs or creeks that do not reach the river. After travelling about fifteen miles, we encamped on *Butte* Creek, a beautiful stream of clear water about fifty yards wide, with a bold current running all the year. It has large, fertile bottoms, wooded with open groves, and having a luxuriant growth of pea vine among the grass. The oaks here were getting into general bloom. Fine ranchos have been selected on both sides of the stream, and stocked with cattle, some of which were now very fat. A rancho here is owned by Neal, who formerly belonged to my exploring party. It may be remembered that in my last expedition I had acceded to his request to be left at Sutter's, where he was offered high wages, with a certain prospect of betterment, where good mechanics were in great request. He was a skilful blacksmith, and had been and was very useful to me, as our horses' feet were one of the first cares. But his uniform good conduct rendered him worthy of any favor I could grant, and he was accordingly left at Sutter's when we resumed our march homeward. In the brief time which had elapsed he had succeeded in becoming a prospering stockman, with a good rancho. There is a *rancheria* (Indian village) near by, and some of the Indians gladly ran races for the head and offals of a fat cow which had been presented to us. They were *entirely* naked. The thermometer at two in the afternoon was at 70°, two hours later at 74°, and 65° at sunset; the wind east, and the sky clear only in the west.

The temperature at sunrise the next day was 50°, with cumuli in the south and west, which left a clear sky at nine, with a northwest wind, and temperature of 64°. We travelled twenty miles, and encamped on Pine Creek, another fine stream, with bottoms of fertile land, wooded with groves of large and handsome oaks, some attaining to six feet in diameter, and forty to seventy feet in height. At four in the afternoon the thermometer showed 74° and 64° at sunset; and the sky clear, except in the horizon.

MARCH 30.—The sun rose in masses of clouds over the eastern mountains. A pleasant morning, with a sunrise temperature of 46° 5', and some *mosquitoes*—never seen, it is said, in the coast country; but at seasons of high water abundant and venomous in the bottoms of the Joaquin and Sacramento. On the tributaries nearer the mountains but few are seen, and those go with the sun. Continuing up the valley, we crossed in a short distance a large wooded creek, having now about thirty-five feet breadth of water. Our road was over an upland prairie of the Sacramento, having a yellowish, gravelly soil, generally two or three miles from the river, and twelve or fifteen from the foot of the eastern mountains. On the west it was twenty-five or thirty miles to the foot of the mountains, which here make a bed of high and broken ranges. In the afternoon, about half a mile above its mouth, we encamped on Deer Creek, another of these beautiful tributaries to the Sacramento. It has the usual broad and fertile bottom-lands common to these streams, wooded with groves of oak and a large sycamore (*platanus occidentalis*), distinguished by bearing its balls in strings of three to five, and peculiar to California. Mr. Lassen, a native of Germany, has established a rancho here, which he has stocked, and is gradually bringing into cultivation. Wheat, as generally throughout the north country, gives large returns; cotton, planted in the way of experiment, was not injured by frost, and succeeded well; and he has lately planted a vineyard, for which the Sacramento valley is considered to be singularly well adapted. The seasons are not yet sufficiently understood, and too little has been done in agriculture, to afford certain knowledge of the capacities of the country. This farm is in the 40th degree of latitude; our position on the river being in 39° 57' 00", and longitude 121° 56' 44" west from Greenwich, and elevation above the sea five hundred and sixty feet. About three miles above the mouth of this stream are the first rapids—the present head of navigation—in the Sacramento River, which, from the rapids to its mouth in the bay, is more than two hundred miles long, and increasing in breadth from one hundred and fifty yards to six hundred yards in the lower part of its course.

During six days that we remained here, from the 30th March to the 5th April, the mean temperature was 40° at sunrise, 52°.5 at nine in the morning, 57°.2 at noon, 59°.4 at two in the afternoon, 58°.8 at four, and 52° at sunset;