

DRAFT

PRIMARY RECORD

*P1. Resource Name or #: Custom House (UPDATE)

Page 1 of 20 Other Identifier: Custom House; Old Custom House

*P2. Location: Unrestricted

*a. County Monterey

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Monterey Date 1947 PR 1983 Land Grant City Lands of Monterey; MD B.M.

c. Address 1 Custom House Plaza City Monterey Zip 93940

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Z10, E 598 957, N 4051 432

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries):

The oldest portion of the present Custom House was built in 1827 as a small one-story adobe building of two rooms. From 1841 to 1846 the Custom House took on its present shape, with a two story north wing, a long one story central portion, and the two story southern wing. As recorded by Aubrey Neasham in "New Evidence upon the Construction of the Custom House" (Berkeley, 1938):

In August 1841, Thomas O. Larkin contracted with the Mexican government to rebuild the Custom House. From the document which he presented as an estimate, and which is today in the Bancroft Library, it is seen that the structure was to be enlarged. This construction was to include what was, undoubtedly, a part of the central portion, a second story on the north end, and a portico on the side facing the sea. A summary of some of the materials given in the estimate is interesting. There were included 5000 adobe bricks, 8000 tiles, 2 large doors, five windows, and iron gratings; 100 rafters, 3 by 6 inches, were to be used for the roof and 100 joists, 4 by 8 inches, for the floors; 6000 feet of 1 inch flooring and 4300 feet of 2 inch flooring were to be put on the lower floor. Ten pillars for the portico were to be constructed. The materials of the room upstairs included 2 windows and shutter frames, a staircase, 2 lintel beams, 400 feet of flooring, and stringers or girders for the guard rail. The total cost, estimated at 2300 pesos, was to be paid to Larkin with one half in coin in advance and the other half in merchandise from the first three ships required to pay duty at the port. On the estimate, for his own record, he wrote; "Cost of Custom House, 1841 and 1842." From 1842 to 1846, Larkin's records show a continual working on the Custom House, indicating that Larkin did more work than that done by him in 1841 and 1842. That accounts, probably, for the four distinct sections showing in old photographs. Between 1843 and 1846 another section in the central part had been added, as well as the south end.

By 1846, the Custom House was a long, one-story tile roofed building, built of adobe and rock, with two-story hip roofed wings in the Monterey Colonial style at the northern and southern ends. The building, including the verandas, is 135 feet long and 34 feet wide.

The ground plan is composed of four rooms in a straight line with inter-connecting doorways, and each with doors to the exterior. The large main room is approximately 19 feet by 60 feet and contains a brick fireplace. The ground floor level of the north (original) wing is two steps higher than the main room. Interior wood stairways lead to the second floors of the north and south wings. Windows on the ground floor have interior solid paneled shutter and iron bar grills on the exterior. Restored and rehabilitated in the early twentieth century, the building is maintained in excellent condition and is open to visitors as a museum. It lies within the boundary of the Monterey Old Town Historic District, a National Historic Landmark.

P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

*P4. Resources Present: one building

P5. Photos: see pages 12 through 20

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: Historic: An inventory presented by C. Jose Maria Herrera to Jose Estrada on October 20, 1827, lists "a new building near the boat landing and consisting of two rooms, a large one that is being used as a storage room and for the convenience of the corporal of the custom house guard and the other for the guard corps. It is constructed with a peaked roof of adobe and roofed with sheet metal and tile. The two rooms aforementioned have doors fitted with lock-plates and keys." (Neasham, 1938)

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P3a. Description (continued)

Further excerpts from Aubrey Neasham's "New Evidence upon the Construction of the Custom House":

Several accounts have been published, from time to time, regarding the construction of the Custom House in Monterey. One story has it that the north wing was built by Spain in 1814, the middle section by Mexico in 1823, and the south wing by the United States about 1848. Another writer states that the middle part was constructed by Spain, the south end by Mexico, and the northern part by the United States. Still others claim that the central portion was built by Spain, the northern by Mexico, and the south by the United States. There are other versions, none of which seems to be in agreement.

This writer, desirous of getting down to the truth of the construction of Monterey's historic buildings, has new evidence to offer in the form of documents and manuscripts found in the Bancroft Library of the University of California. These documents and manuscripts, consisting of inventories, memoirs, estimates, contracts, letters, and daily ledger accounts, seem to leave no doubt as to the real story.

The date of building the first part of the present Custom House is difficult to ascertain. Undoubtedly, there were some structures on the site by the late 1820s. An inventory presented by C. Jose Maria Herrera to Jose Estrada on October 20, 1827, lists "a new building near the boat landing and consisting of two rooms, a large one that is being used as a storage room and for the convenience of the corporal of the custom house guard and the other for the guard corps. It is constructed with a peaked roof of adobe and roofed with sheet metal and tile. The two rooms aforementioned have doors fitted with lock-plates and keys." There are mentioned, also, a flagpole set up near the building, a hut of upright poles and tules for the use of sailors and a shed used for protecting boats from the sun.

[...]

...it seems probable, then that by the late 1820's the lower part of the north wing had been constructed; the upper story of the north wing and part of the central section had been built between 1841 and 1842; and from 1843 to 1846 the rest of the building, including another section of the central portion and the south wing, had been finished. The Custom House is then, primarily a structure of the Mexican period, if documents and manuscripts can be believed.

There has appeared no evidence that the United States did any major construction on the building. True, there were minor repairs made from time to time. In 1870, according to the *Monterey Republican* of February 3, 1870, \$250 was spent for roofing and repair work. But until the modern restorations done by the people of California and the citizens of Monterey, with possible exceptions by private parties between 1870 and 1900, the building stands much as it did when built by Mexico, between 1841 and 1846.

OLD CUSTOM HOUSE

The lower part of the north wing of this, California's oldest custom-house, was built by the late 1820's; the upper floor of the north section, the central section, and the south wing were built between 1841 and 1846. The building was Commodore Sloat's headquarters in 1846. It was closed by federal order about the year 1868. Public interest obtained gradual restoration of the structure. It is now a State Historic Monument, and has been operated as a museum, since 1929, by the State Division of Parks. (Copy of summary written by Dr. V.A. Neasham.)

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The 1968-1969 California Department of Parks and Recreation *Interpretive Prospectus, Monterey Monuments, Custom House, Pacific House* discussed historic elements of the Custom House, *Aduana* in Spanish, for interpretation:

...the building in its present state of restoration includes the long, one-story storage and inspection room which comprises the center portion of the building. The tile roof of this portion of the building is extended on the bay side to form a sort of piazza. This large central room was the scene of the banquets, balls and other social entertainments held at the Custom House. It also was the site of the inspections of cargo and manifests, and the storage or sale of imported goods. As part of the scene during the business of the Mexican period, one might have seen long tables laden with such goods as blue and white Canton ware, bales of colorful fabrics in cotton and silk. New England tools and furniture including plows, handtools, pianos, clocks, Boston rockers and mahogany chests of drawers, kegs of nails and paint, barrels of vinegar and brandy would be piled about. Even the wheels and running gear of an English carriage might be found beside a stack of dried cowhides.

The odors of the old *Aduana* would have included such scents as coffee, chocolate, rum, varnish, salt fish, tea, candlewax, spices, tobacco and, again, the ever present dried hides. At each end of this central section of this Mexican *Aduana* was located a square, two-story addition crowned with a peaked roof. The northern addition probably included the offices of the Collector of Customs and his aides as well as living quarters on the second floor. The southern addition, the last section to be built in the closing days of the Mexican era, may have been used by the custom house guard for quarters and mess. In the administrator's office would be found evidence of the business of government including not only ships' manifests, receipts, passports and letters and notes of credit but, also, since other government functions were performed here, such documents as legal briefs and appeals, land grants, and the minutes and correspondence of the *Ayuntamiento* or town council. Here would be found the paraphernalia of official activity: the seal of the *Aduana Maritima de Monterey* keys to chests and storerooms, writing equipment, books and ledgers and a brass telescope for use in observing the activities in the harbor.

The less comfortable furnishings of the guard room would include the weapons and tools of the service and perhaps several sea chests for the storage of personal belongings. It was with the Native Sons [of the Golden West (N.S.G.W.)] interest in the adobe *Aduana* that the first substantial efforts at restoring and recognizing the importance of the building commenced. The Monterey Parlor persuaded the Grand Parlor of the N.S.G.W. to lease the building from the Federal Government for \$1.00 a year. In 1903 some funds were appropriated by the State Legislature and some work was done to restore the building. In 1917 another bill provided money to continue this work. Finally in 1929, on the 83rd anniversary of the capture of Monterey, the building was opened to the public. The funding, however, was still inadequate and it was on January 1, 1930 that the Custom House was taken over by the State Park System. After lengthy negotiations the historic site was at last actually sold to the State of California by the Federal Government in 1938 for the sum of \$20,000. Through a continuous program of research and restoration by both the State of California and the people of Monterey, the Old Custom House stands restored today as one of the principal historic sites of California.

SUMMARY

Even though Spain's domination at Monterey exceeded a half century's time, and the period of American domination approaches the century and a quarter mark [as of 1968], the brief quarter century of the Mexican era provided the background for the high tide of activity of the Custom House. During its history this building has served as Mexican *Aduana*, social hall, American customs house, storehouse, military garrison, residence, stable, curio shop, meeting hall, museum and historical monument. If the principles of highest and best use are applied, we recommend it be interpreted as a house museum reflecting its days of greatest glory as Mexican California's *Aduana Maritima de Monterey*.

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A 1982 California Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory identified the Custom House's architectural style as Early California Adobe, and described the building as follows:

A two story adobe structure started in 1827 by the province of Mexican Alta California as a one-room building. Larkin contracted to enlarge in 1841 adding a second story and a large extension on the south end. It was completed in the present form in 1846. It features a porch on three sides with second story porches at each end in typical Monterey style. Windows are six-light sash. The roofs are hip at each end with tile over all. The doors are double thick board, flush inside and out. Walls are stone base with Monterey shale above and adobe bricks to the top. Wall thickness varies from twenty-one to twenty-seven inches. Walls outside and inside are painted antique white with gray trim on wood surfaces and gray-green doors outside.

The 2011 *Monterey Custom House Historic Structure Report* outlined a chronology of construction, including the work initiated by the Native Sons of the Golden West. In 1901 the Native Sons placed a plaque at the Custom House to commemorate Commodore Sloat's landing. In 1902 they began their repairs, including removal of enclosures at the north and south ends of the building, repair and replacement of the roof using tiles from local missions, and extension of the veranda around the building. Additional work included: knee braces added to the east portico, new flooring materials and doors installed, windows replaced or reinstalled, security bars added, and walls replastered. The present-day appearance of the Custom House primarily represents the work of the Native Sons' restoration completed in 1905. Construction information was based on comparisons of historical photographs and details provided in primary source research.

***P7. Owner and Address:**

Mathew L. Fuzie, District Superintendent, California State Parks, Monterey District
2211 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940-5317

***P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)

Content from California Historical Landmark nomination, landmark report, construction analysis report, interpretive plans, National Register of Historic Places/National Historic Landmark nomination, and Historic Structure Report, consolidated, edited, and formatted for DPR 523 forms by Amy H. Crain, State Historian II, California State Office of Historic Preservation, 1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95816-7100; reviewed by Patricia L. Clark-Gray, District Interpretive Specialist, California State Parks, Monterey District, 2211 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940.

***P9. Date Recorded:** 1936, 1938, 1966, 1969, 1976, 1982, 1983, 2011

***P10. Survey Type:** (Describe) California Historical Landmark

***P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

Old Custom House at Monterey, Registered Landmark #1, 1936
New Evidence upon the Construction of the Custom House, 1938
Proposed Major Interpretive Themes of the Interpretive Plan for the Custom House State Historical Monument, 1966
Interpretive Prospectus, Monterey Monuments, Custom House, Pacific House, 1968-1969
National Historic Landmark Nomination: Old Custom House, 1976
Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory, 1982
Monterey State Historic Park General Plan, 1983
Monterey Custom House Historic Structure Report, 2011

***Attachments:**

Location Maps Continuation Sheets Building, Structure, and Object Record Photograph Record Other (List):

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

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- B1. Historic Name: Custom House
- B2. Common Name: Custom House; Old Custom House
- B3. Original Use: custom house
- B4. Present Use: museum
- *B5. **Architectural Style:** Spanish Colonial/Monterey Colonial
- *B6. **Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations) Built on site of earlier custom house 1827; enlarged under direction of Thomas O. Larkin 1841 to 1846; restored and rehabilitated early twentieth century; additional repairs made as noted in B13. Remarks.
- *B7. **Moved?** **No** **Date:** N/A **Original Location:** N/A
- *B8. **Related Features:** N/A
- B9a. Architect: unknown b. Builders: employees or contractors of Mexican Government
- *B10. **Significance: Theme** Settlement of the West **Area** Monterey
Period of Significance 1827 to 1930 **Property Type** Building
Applicable Criteria Only property of its type and time period in California; Associated with individuals having a profound influence on the history of California: Consul Thomas O. Larkin and Commodore John D. Sloat

Summary

The *Monterey Custom House Historic Structure Report* published by Garavaglia Architecture in 2011 was a collaborative effort among State Parks staff, headed by Historian Matt Bischoff, and a consultant team consisting of structural engineer Roy Tolles, ELT & Associates; adobe consultant, Anthony Crosby, Architectural Conservation, LLC; preservation architect, Michael Garavaglia; architectural historian and conservator, Becky Urbano; and job captain, Chris Lutjen of Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.

Excerpted from the report,

SIGNIFICANCE

The Custom House in Monterey, California, often referred to as the "Old Custom House" is the first designated California Historic Landmark. It is a National Historic Landmark, and thereby listed in the National Register of Historic Places at the national level of significance. Listing in the National Register results in automatic listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. The statement of significance from 1960 states:

Erected in 1827 by the Mexican Government, this Monterey Colonial structure is the oldest public building standing on the West Coast. Until 1845, this was the only custom house north of Mexico: Every trading vessel plying the coast of California was compelled to enter its cargo at the Monterey port. It was here, on July 7, 1846, that Commodore John D. Stoa, commander of the U.S. Pacific Squadron, raised the American flag and officially proclaimed California a part of the United States.

The Custom House is the oldest public building on the west coast, and is listed as an excellent example of Monterey Colonial Style architecture. Furthermore, the building is a physical representation of an important phase in the history of California and the United States, a period of great transition. The building played a critical role in the functioning of the Mexican government, as duties from foreign commerce were the prime source of revenue. It was the site of the official takeover of California by the U.S. military in 1846, and remained an important edifice during the transition to American rule. Though its importance waned following the Gold Rush and the later moving of customs activities to San Francisco, the building became an icon or symbol of an earlier age. In this role, the building (among others) was a catalyst in the preservation movement of the late nineteenth century, led by groups such as the Native Sons of the Golden West. It can be argued that it also helped to shape attitudes towards California's Hispanic past.

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B10. Significance (continued)

From the National Register nomination:

Erected in 1827, and enlarged and remodelled in 1841-46, the Old Custom House at Monterey, California, is an excellent example of the application of the Monterey Colonial Style to public building architecture. The building is also the oldest public one still standing on the West Coast.

HISTORY

On winning its independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico repealed the Spanish laws forbidding foreign trade and the important California hide and tallow trade soon developed with New England. The Mexican Government erected the present Custom House at Monterey, then the capital of Mexican California, in 1827, and until 1845, this was the only custom house north of Mexico. Every trading vessel plying the coast of California was compelled to enter its cargo at the Monterey port. A single vessel might pay from \$5,000 to \$25,000 in duty on its cargo. The revenue collected at Monterey from the hide and tallow trade provided almost the only monetary support for the civil and military operations of the Mexican Government in California. It was here at the Custom House, on July 7, 1846, that Commodore John D. Sloat, commander of the U.S. Pacific squadron, first raised the American flag and officially proclaimed California to be a part of the United States.

The structure was utilized as a U.S. Custom House from 1848 to 1868. Then occupied as a residence until the early 1890's, the structure then became uninhabitable due to deterioration. In 1900, the Native Sons of the Golden West leased the building from the Federal Government and began restoration. In 1901, the lease was transferred to the State of California. In 1903, state funds were made available for a further modest restoration, and in 1917, additional funds to complete the restoration. From 1903 to 1929, the building was used as lodge rooms by the Native Sons, and the latter year, legislation was passed to establish the building as a State Historical Monument. On January 1, 1930, it was taken over by the Division of Beaches and Parks and opened to the public as a museum, which role it still plays today.

Historical Significance

From the 1968 *Interpretive Prospectus, Monterey Monuments*:

[I]t was in the early 1840's that the building took form more or less as we know it today. In August 1841 the Mexican government contracted with Thomas O. Larkin to make extensive repairs and remodeling at the Custom House. Larkin, a wealthy and enterprising American who also served as U.S. Consul at Monterey, continued intermittently to work on the building until March, 1846. From that time, until modern restorations were made in recent years, only minor and occasional repairs were made to the Custom House. Thus the building itself, as it stands today in its restored condition, expresses most meaningfully the architectural values in effect during the last dozen years of the Mexican period of California's history, 1835-1847. Since it found its highest and best use as a Mexican *Aduana* or Custom House of the 1830's and 1840's, it would seem most desirable to recreate here the atmosphere and events of those times.

Since the colonists of Spanish California were compelled to trade with the military quartermasters in somewhat the same way that later residents of isolated western mining towns had to deal with the "company store" it is not surprising that the more liberal trade policies of the republic were welcomed. As an increasing number of whalers, traders and foreign naval and scientific vessels visited the California coast, trading activities were accelerated. The fur trade and the increasing commerce in hides, tallow, horses, and ships' provisions brought a new kind of prosperity to Mexican California.

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The old adobe was very much a part of the social life of the capital. By virtue of its size it was used for balls, receptions, banquets, theatrical performances and other events in which the socially prominent members of California's capital participated.

As part of the established protocol of the *Aduana Maritima* it was customary for foreign merchantmen seeking to trade on the California coast to put into Monterey for inspection, pay custom duties, and then proceed to conduct their transactions at the various landings and ports along the coast. Goods from Boston, England, South America, and China were bartered for otter and beaver furs, untanned hides, tallow, horses and provisions such as beef, vegetables, fresh water and grain. Frequently resident merchants like Thomas O. Larkin, W. E. P. Hartnell, William Gale, Alfred Robinson and others were retained to represent the cargo owners and to expedite the business arrangements with the local authorities and rancheros.

During the last decade of Mexican rule, California, and especially Monterey, prospered from foreign trade. Cowhides, dried, scraped and salted, were the chief export and under the barter system they became known as "California Banknotes." Foreign traders made frequent stops along the coastline to exchange embroidered silks and porcelains from China, New England furniture, hardware and shoes, and English textiles and manufactured goods for hides. San Diego served as the most important depot for the hide trade and the traders shuttled up and down the coast until they had accumulated a full cargo of hides. These hides, treated and stored in the hide sheds, finally were loaded and the return voyage was made around Cape Horn to Boston. From 1826 to 1848 an estimated 1,068,000 hides were exported from California ports. During the same period some 62,500,000 pounds of tallow were shipped.

With the conquest of California and the raising of the Stars and Stripes over the Old Custom House by Commodore John Drake Sloat's forces on July 7, 1846, a new era began. The first year of American occupation accelerated commercial activity in the capital. But the discovery of gold in 1848 drained Monterey of her most able-bodied men. The town was virtually deserted and by June Alcalde Walter Colton ruefully described the exodus:

All were off to the mines, some on horses, some on carts, and some on crutches, and one went in a litter. An American woman who had recently established a boarding house here, pulled up stakes, and was off before her lodgers had even time to pay their bills. Debtors ran, of course. I have only a community of women left, and a gang of prisoners, with here and there a soldier, who will give his captain the slip at the first chance...

Gen. Mason, Lieut. Lanman, and myself, form a mess;...this morning for the fortieth time, we had to take to the kitchen, and cook our own breakfast. A general of the United States Army, the commander of a man-of-war, and the Alcalde of Monterey, in a smoking kitchen, grinding coffee, toasting a herring, and peeling onions.¹

For a brief time in 1849 some attention was focused on Monterey as the first constitutional convention assembled there. But the great social and economic traffic of California's gold rush, which increased daily, continued to bypass Monterey. In addition to the drastic reduction in port activities, the status of the Custom House was changed as California achieved statehood. With the establishment of the Custom House at San Francisco in 1850 Monterey's once proud *Aduana* was reduced to the condition of a humble branch office. The capital of the new state was shifted to San Jose, Vallejo, Benicia, and finally Sacramento.

For a quarter of a century until the mid 1870's the town remained in a state of quiet, though picturesque, decay. Before 1870, however, the Custom House had ceased even to function as an inspector's office

¹ Walter Colton, *Three Years in California 1846-1849*, New York, 1850.

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and from 1869 until the 1890's was occupied by a custodian, Thomas G. Lambert, who functioned under the most casual custodianship of the San Francisco Director of Customs. Lambert used the large room on the ground floor as a barn and there the family livestock was stabled. During the half century from statehood and the establishment of the San Francisco Custom House until the Native Sons of the Golden West leased the old adobe *Aduana* a series of changes took place in the building itself. Photos from various archives and periods depict a sad spectacle of deterioration and vandalism interspersed with occasional repairs. Masonry fails, roofs fall apart and are repaired, walls and additions appear and disappear and the political and social events of the era are emblazoned on a collection of posters and bills stuck to the old adobe walls.

Located at 115 Alvarado Street in Monterey, the building in its present state includes the long, one-story storage and inspection room which comprises the center portion of the building. The tile roof of this portion of the building is extended on the bay side to form a sort of piazza. This large central room was the scene of the banquets, balls and other social entertainments held at the Custom House. It also was the site of the inspections of cargo and manifests, and the storage or sale of imported goods. As part of the scene during the business of the Mexican period, one might have seen long tables laden with such goods as blue and white Canton ware, bales of colorful fabrics in cotton and silk. New England tools and furniture including plows, handtools, pianos, clocks, Boston rockers and mahogany chests of drawers, kegs of nails and paint, barrels of vinegar and brandy would be piled about. Even the wheels and running gear of an English carriage might be found beside a stack of dried cowhides.

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The less comfortable furnishings of the guard room would include the weapons and tools of the service and perhaps several sea chests for the storage of personal belongings. It was with the Native Sons interest in the adobe *Aduana* that the first substantial efforts at restoring and recognizing the importance of the building commenced. The Monterey Parlor persuaded the Grand Parlor of the N.S.G.W. to lease the building from the Federal Government for \$1.00 a year. In 1903 some funds were appropriated by the State Legislature and some work was done to restore the building. In 1917 another bill provided money to continue this work. Finally in 1929, on the 83rd anniversary of the capture of Monterey, the building was opened to the public. The funding, however, was still inadequate and it was on January 1, 1930 that the

Custom House was taken over by the State Park System. After lengthy negotiations the historic site was at last actually sold to the State of California by the Federal Government in 1938 for the sum of \$20,000. Through a continuous program of research and restoration by both the State of California and the people of Monterey, the Old Custom House stands restored today as one of the principal historic sites of California.

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B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) N/A

*B12. References:

Carlson, R. *Custom House, A-1245* (Historic Resource Inventory Form). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1982. [\\mshqgeo\GIS\UDF\Park_Unit_455\Cultural\R_455_3948.pdf](#). Accessed via UDF Metadata Portal 10/18/2013.

Dillon, James. *Old Custom House - National Historic Landmark Nomination*. Washington DC: National Park Service Historic Sites Survey, 1976. [\\mshqgeo\GIS\UDF\Park_Unit_455\Cultural\Custom_House_NHL.pdf](#). Accessed via UDF Metadata Portal 10/18/2013.

Garavaglia Architecture, Inc. *Monterey Custom House Historic Structure Report*. Sacramento, CA: California State Parks, 2011. [\\mshqgeo\GIS\UDF\Park_Unit_455\Cultural\Corrected_Custom_House_HSR.pdf](#). Accessed via UDF Metadata Portal 10/18/2013.

Neasham, Aubrey. *New Evidence upon the Construction of the Custom House*. Berkeley, CA: n.p., 1938. [\\mshqgeo\GIS\UDF\Park_Unit_455\Cultural\Custom_House_Construction_1938_.pdf](#). Accessed via UDF Metadata Portal 10/18/2013.

Reese, Robert W. *Proposed Major Interpretive Themes of the Interpretive Plan for the Custom House State Historical Monument*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1966. [\\mshqgeo\GIS\UDF\Park_Unit_455\Interp\AR_455_29.pdf](#). Accessed via UDF Metadata Portal 10/18/2013.

State of California. *Interpretive Prospectus, Monterey Monuments, Custom House, Pacific House, 1968-1969*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1969. [\\mshqgeo\GIS\UDF\Park_Unit_455\Interp\AR_455_33.pdf](#). Accessed via UDF Metadata Portal 10/18/2013.

_____. *Monterey State Historic Park General Plan*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1983. [\\mshqgeo\GIS\UDF\Park_Unit_455\Plans\AR_455_19.pdf](#). Accessed via UDF Metadata Portal 10/18/2013.

Tays, George. *Old Custom House at Monterey, Registered Landmark #1*. Sacramento, CA: California Historical Landmarks Series edited by Vernon Aubrey Neasham, 1936. [\\mshqgeo\GIS\UDF\Park_Unit_455\Cultural\Historical_Landmark_1.pdf](#). Accessed via UDF Metadata Portal 10/18/2013.

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B13. Remarks:

Further information from the *Monterey Custom House Historic Structure Report* (Garavaglia Architecture, 2011):

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Monterey Custom House is a nationally significant landmark and one of the longest-held properties in the California State Parks system. It was recognized as an important piece of the collective heritage of Monterey, the state and the nation early on, and therefore saved from total ruin by the Native Sons of the Golden West at the beginning of the 20th century. Transferred to the management and ownership by State Parks in 1930, it has been open to the public for 80 years. During that time, no major changes have been made to the structure and it has been continually maintained.

However, to continue the legacy of sound and responsible stewardship, State Parks has received funding to undertake a detailed analysis of the Custom House. This Historic Structure Report (HSR) attempts to pull together a comprehensive summary of the known history of the site with material investigations to better understand the construction chronology of the building. From there, the existing conditions of the building's structure, materials and systems have been included to provide a whole picture of the resource's health.

SUMMARY

In summary, the Custom House was constructed in phases beginning in 1827 by the Mexican government, and expanded with Mexican authorization by Thomas Larkin between 1841 and 1847. It is possible that remnants of an earlier Spanish period building remain and have been incorporated into the Mexican period structure. The Native Sons of the Golden West undertook a major restoration from 1902-1905, after which the building was operated as a museum by the organization. In 1930, it was purchased by the State of California and became part of the newly formed State Park System.

Conditions assessments concentrated on the structural systems of the building as well as on finish materials. The goal was to both determine the state of these materials and systems as well as to provide improved clarity on the relative dates of these items. Structurally the building does require intervention but is not suffering from any immediate issues of concern. Analysis of the historical record, photographs and the material evidence, dates many of the visible building finishes to c.1905. However, several areas of the building, most notably Rooms 103, 105 and 202, do exhibit an extensive history of finishes. This is in keeping with the traditional use of these rooms as living quarters up until the 1960s.

While a detailed recommendations section is included, the most immediate needs are summarized here:

- Further study is necessary to determine an appropriate method to address the deteriorated ridge beam. It appears to be original to Larkin's period of occupation but is compromised by insect damage.
- The tile roof is in poor condition with many loose and broken tiles. Organic material has built up in several areas and currently support plant growth both on the roof and in the gutters. The universal coverage of the roof with clay tiles appears to date to c. 1914 and was not an original condition. The roof structure does not appear to be properly sized or constructed to support this weight and will require structural modification if the roofing materials are not replaced with lighter alternatives.
- Windows 2, 3, 10 and 11 (or portions thereof) appear to pre-date the c.1905 restoration.
- Doors 7, 8, 9 and 10 appear to pre-date the c.1905 restoration.
- There is chronic material failure along the northern half of the east and west walls in Room 102.
- There is chronic material failure in the southwest corner of Room 101.

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT APPROACH

Goals of project

The Custom House in Monterey State Historic Park, Monterey, California, is a National Historic Landmark, and an iconic building in Monterey. Though much has been written about the Custom House, the building has never been thoroughly documented and evaluated. The current Historic Structure Report (HSR) was written in order to fill that gap as well as provide direction for future management of the building. Prior to the beginning of this project, and due to many years of deferred maintenance, a variety of repairs and upgrades appeared to be needed for the building. These included:

- Arrest and repair pest damage, particularly from termites
- Provide for seismic strengthening
- Repair and/or replace roof
- Repair exterior and interior plaster and stucco
- Repair porch and balconies
- Investigate and repair cause of continued spalling and flaking of plaster on interior
- Repair dry rot at several beams
- Repair and/or upgrade the plumbing system
- Repair and/or upgrade the electrical system
- Replace and/or upgrade heating system
- Provide for accessibility upgrades in order to better meet the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To date, repairs and replacements include: repaired exterior and interior plaster and stucco; replaced second story beam on south side; replaced redwood deck; replaced a portion of the gas line.

The Custom House is open for public tours any time by special request and on a regular schedule of four days per week. One of those days is dedicated to school classes studying California history. The building is also a regular stop during walking tours of the Monterey wharf area. It is open to the public during special events including Whale Fest in January, July 4th Living History Day and Sloat Landing Reenactment in July, History Fest in October, and Christmas in the Adobes in December. Nearly 18,000 visitors came to the Custom House during the previous fiscal year.

Interpretation at the Custom House includes the history of California's transition from an agrarian economy to the introduction of seafaring international trade during the Mexican period, the rise of the hide and tallow trade, and changes that took place to the state under American governance.

***B14. Evaluators:** Amy H. Crain, State Historian II, California State Office of Historic Preservation;
Patricia L. Clark Gray, District Interpretive Specialist, California State Parks, Monterey District

***Date of Evaluation:** October 2013 - February 2014

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Oldest known photograph of the Custom House showing the west side, undated, believed to be circa 1867. A Customs Service flag appears to be flying at the flagpole on the northwest corner. Weatherboard siding installed in the 1850s is evident. Southern end has been boarded up to provide additional living space for the caretaker. Note also shingle roofs except for southern portion of central section. Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey.



East side of the Custom House, circa 1886 showing beach at foot of the building. Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey.

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"Custom House with Judge and Mrs. Lambert, ca. 1888." Morgan Collection.
Photograph #MO-928-H, Courtesy, California History Room Archives, Monterey Public Library.



Custom House decorated for visit of President Harrison, August 1, 1891.
Photograph #HPF-893, April 1891. Courtesy, California History Room Archives, Monterey Public Library.

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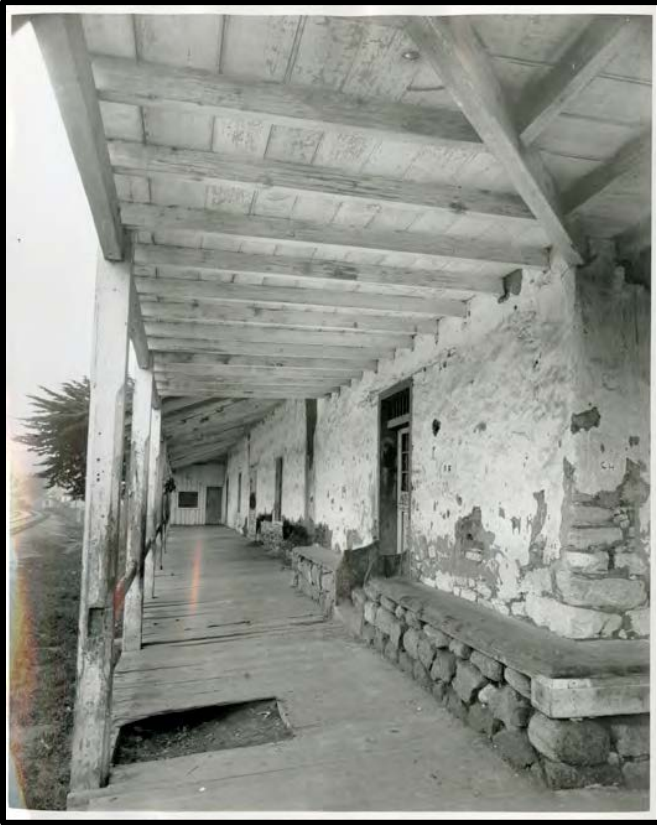
East side of the Custom House following the construction of the railroad, circa 1890s. Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey



"Custom House, about 1903, with reconstruction scaffolding." J.K. Oliver, photographer. Oliver Collection. Photograph #HPF-4476. Courtesy, California History Room Archives, Monterey Public Library.

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Porch on the east side of the Custom House prior to work by the Native Sons of the Golden West, showing benches on the north end. Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey.



"Custom House." 1951. Ansel Adams, photographer. Photograph # HPF-2211. Courtesy, California History Room Archives, Monterey Public Library.

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West side of Custom House in 1905 showing newly reconstructed middle section in stone. Note also that roof appears to be in process of being replaced. Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey.



West side of Custom House for plaque dedication, 1905. Note tile roof in middle section is complete, as are new windows and doors on this same section. Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey.

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Custom House in 1909 showing completed repairs on the east side. Middle section roof is tile, while north and south ends remain wood shingle. Gift of Mary Holmgren, Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey.



"Custom House, 1924" Julian P. Graham. Graham Collection. Photograph # GRA-0436. Courtesy, California History Room Archives, Monterey Public Library.

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"Custom House, May 26, 1940. William L. Morgan, photographer. Morgan Collection. Photograph # MO-517-G. Courtesy California History Room Archives, Monterey Public Library. Note Alvarado Street on right and Fisherman's Wharf driveway north of the Custom House.



Plaza adjacent to Custom House, early 1960s. Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey.

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Custom House Plaza in the late 1960s, soon after its completion. The Custom House is visible at the upper left. Monterey District, California State Parks, Monterey.



South elevation. Photograph by Garavaglia Architecture, Inc., May 2010 for *Monterey Custom House Historic Structure Report*.

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