

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Larkin House

AND/OR COMMON

Larkin House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 510 Calle Principale

CITY, TOWN

Monterey

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

12th

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

Monterey

CODE

053

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME California Department of Natural Resources, Division of Beaches  
and Parks

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1416 Ninth Street

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

VICINITY OF

STATE

California

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, County Recorder's Office  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

240 Church Street

CITY, TOWN

Salinas

STATE

California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

There was not a single two-storey house in all of California before Thomas Larkin began building in Monterey in 1834, nor was there a house there with a fireplace until the Larkin House. In these and many other characteristics Larkin presented new developments in building whose importance is unrivalled in California.

Thomas Larkin came from Massachusetts, and quite naturally continued to use the building techniques which had been familiar there. Most importantly, he continued to use the timber frame, and quite likely would have built the Larkin House and the others he constructed in Monterey, entirely of timber had the material been readily available. The fact is, however, that the redwood cutting industry was unable to supply the quantity of materials necessary, and so he imaginatively adopted the mud building materials indigenous to the area. The use of adobe should be viewed as more a concession than anything else. It's limitations hardly would have attracted anyone so accustomed to the durable New England frame house, capable of enduring the ravages of weather and time. The two-storey verandah is an attempt to protect the water-soluble walls of adobe, and is probably just an extension of his experience with nineteenth century New England porches.

By using the timber frame, Larkin not only was able to use a lighter shell of mud blocks, but thereby was able to expand the fenestration in a way that the earlier Spanish and Mexican users found impossible.

As has been well stated by Harold Kirker in his California's Architectural Frontier, the most prominent features of the style, of which the Larkin House is the prototype, are the horizontal mass achieved by a low, sloping roof, a long double verandah, or rarely, a cantilevered balcony, the timber frame combined with adobe shell, and the shingle roof. Symbolically, the Larkin House represents a unique compromise between alien immigrant groups....the Spanish and Mexican colonialists, and the new Americans moving in. The Larkin House was widely copied by both the settlers in Monterey, and the older Latins in the area, although much less so by the latter.

The Larkin House is surrounded on three sides by a two-storey balcony while the fourth faces a walled patio. The roof is hipped and covered with shingles, while the windows are of the small-pane sash type. Walls are of adobe, white-washed both inside and outside. The lightness of the exterior appearance is contradicted on the inside where the heavy New England type timber frame is revealed as the ceiling of the ground floor. The interior chimney of the Larkin House is probably the first of its kind in California.

(CONTINUED)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1835

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Larkin House is one of the most important of all buildings in California, for as the first residence in Monterey to use a familiar Massachusetts model as the basis of its design, as well as certain of the indigenous building skills, it established a widely-imitated prototype for what we call the "Monterey-Colonial style." Larkin's use of a timber frame to support the upper story permitted a lighter shell of adobe blocks and a greater freedom in fenestration than would be possible where the adobe material predominated structurally. The building truly marks a turning point in the development of California adobe buildings.

## HISTORY

Thomas O. Larkin, a New England merchant, arrived in Monterey in 1832 and quickly became a leading and affluent citizen, developing an important commercial and trading business along the coast. He began constructing the Larkin House in April 1835, and completed it at a cost of nearly \$5,000, in 1837. Because of his knowledge and position, he was appointed, in 1843, first U.S. Consul in California. His house, which also served as an office and store, became a gathering place for Americans. In October, 1845, Secretary of State Buchanan sent Larkin instructions appointing<sup>him</sup> Confidential agent of President Polk and giving him considerable discretion in preparing the way for the annexation of California by the United States. In the complex and often in the controversial events that followed between 1845 and 1847, Larkin was a key figure and his contribution to events leading to annexation was a major one.

In 1850, following the Mexican War, Larkin sold his Monterey house and the residence then passed through a number of hands. In 1922, Mrs. Alice Larkin Toulman, a granddaughter of Larkin, purchased the property for use as a private residence and in 1957 she donated the dwelling to the State of California.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kirker, Harold. California's Architectural Frontier (San Marino, 1960).  
 Morrison, Hugh. Early American Architecture (New York, 1952).  
 Bancroft, Hubert, History of California (San Francisco, 1884-1890).  
 Newcomb, Rex, Old Mission Churches and Historic Houses of California,  
 (Philadelphia, 1925).

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 1/2

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	0	5	9	8	7	6	0	4	0	5	0	6	0	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

C 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

D 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Continuation Sheet

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Dillon, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

9/22/76

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*James Dillon*

DATE

11/6/83

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Larkin House

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

CONDITION

The spacious two-story house is about 46 feet wide, 52 feet long, and the adobe walls are two feet thick. The absence of sawmills in the Monterey area made it impossible for Larkin to build a traditional New England frame clapboard type of house and led him to innovate: combining a wood frame with adobe construction. Larkin's use of the handhewn redwood frame to support the weight of a second story made possible not only the addition of a second floor but also a much lighter shell of adobe bricks throughout the house than otherwise would have been possible. These thinner walls, in turn, permitted a greater freedom of fenestration than had previously been possible in the traditional thick-walled Spanish Colonial adobe houses. Larkin covered his house with a New England shingled hip-roof and built a broad two-story veranda across the front and around the north end. In 1891, the veranda was extended around the south end. The porch served three purposes: it protected the adobe exterior from the elements, it shaded the house, and it also provided access to rooms on the second floor.

Unlike the Spanish-Mexican adobes, in which the rooms generally opened only out into a patio, first floor rooms in the Larkin House were intercommunicating. The first floor plan followed the traditional American Colonial scheme of two rooms opening off either side of a central hall. An interior stairway also led from the entrance hall to the second floor. On the second level, the traditional adobe floor plan was followed, as the only original access to the individual bedrooms was from the outside. Later in the 19th century, the four bedrooms were also made intercommunicating, as on the first floor. The floors of the house are of random width redwood and pine planks.

On the interior Larkin also introduced a number of features that were new to California adobe residence. These included two interior chimneys, located in the main house so that there were finished fireplaces situated in each room, interior wallpapering, and the use of milled doors and double sash windows of American design.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

<b>FOR NPS USE ONLY</b>
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

Larkin House

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Located at 510 Calle Principale, Monterey, the Larkin House occupies the southwest corner of Calle Principale and Jefferson Street. Adjacent to the garden of the Larkin House is a small adobe building once occupied by William Tecumseh Sherman, when he was a young officer occupying the California Territory. It does not contribute to the national significance of the Larkin House.

The boundary of the Larkin House National Historic Landmark consists simply of the city lot on which the building stands, fronting approximately 100 feet on Calle Principale, and 100 feet on Jefferson Street. The acreage of the site is approximately one-half.