

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Old Custom House

AND/OR COMMON
Old Custom House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 115 Alvarado Street

CITY, TOWN Monterey ___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 12th

STATE California ___ VICINITY OF CODE 06 COUNTY Monterey CODE 053

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input 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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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 & NUMBER 1416 9th Street

CITY, TOWN Sacramento ___ VICINITY OF STATE California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, COUNTY RECORDER'S OFFICE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. County Recorder's Office

STREET & 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

The oldest portion of the present Custom House was built in 1827 as a small one-story adobe structure of two rooms. This section forms a part of the first story of the present north two-story wing. In 1841-42, under contract with the Mexican Government, Thomas O. Larkin, an American merchant and master-builder, enlarged the original Custom House by adding the present second story to the north wing, a portion of the present central one-story section, and a porch on the east or ocean side of the one-story wing. Between 1843 and 1846, Larkin did further work, adding the final section to the present one-story portion erecting the present two-story wing at the southern end of the one-story center. Two-story verandas were added on the ocean side and ends of each wing. In its final form, in 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 located 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. The restored building is maintained in excellent condition and is open to visitors as a museum.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1827, 1841-42

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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 in 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.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

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The Old Custom House, in Monterey, at 115 Alvarado Street, is a building owned by the State of California and open to the public as a museum. It lies within the boundary of the Monterey Old Town District (a national historic landmark). Beneath the Custom House Plaza run several lanes of a modern highway. Immediately east of the house is a railway spur. Immediately south of the 135 X 34 foot building is an open space also controlled by the State of California, and called the Custom House Plaza.

The boundary of the Old Custom House consists of all the land currently owned by the State of California at that site, east of Oliver Street, and south of a line drawn directly east into Monterey Bay from the south side of that part of Oliver Street which turns to run east-west. This will include approximately two acres of land around the house, and is known as Custom House Plaza.