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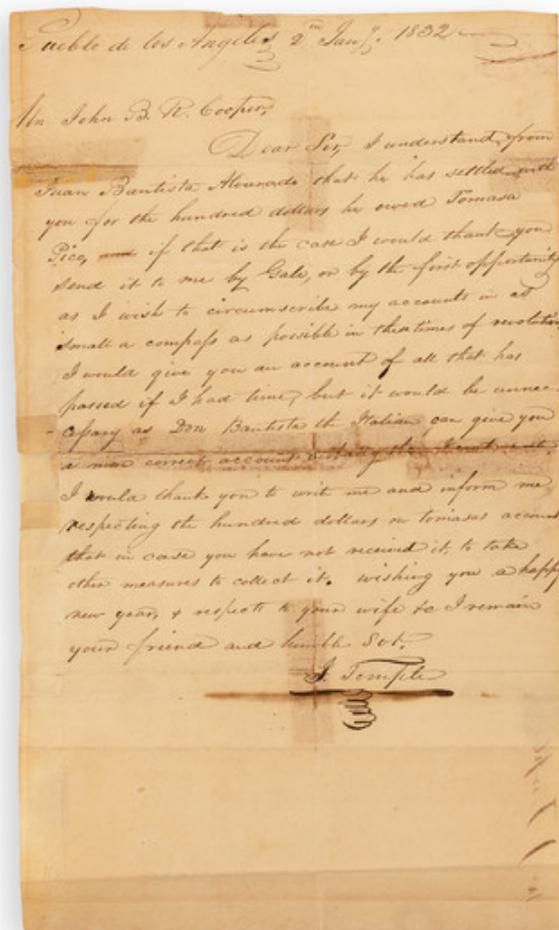
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(Los Angeles Pueblo) [Extremely early original letter by Jonathan Temple written from Pueblo de Los Angeles to fellow English-speaking Californio John B. R. Cooper]

Stock#: 92947
Map Maker: Temple - Workman Families / Temple
Date: 1832
Place: Los Angeles
Color: Pen & Ink
Condition: Good
Size: 6.75 x 11.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

One of the Earliest Extant Letters from Los Angeles: "In these times of revolution"

Two English-Speaking Californios in Mexican Alta California

Jonathan Temple to John B. R. Cooper in 1832

A remarkable and extremely early letter written from the Pueblo de Los Angeles by noted American businessman turned Californio, Jonathan Temple, to English-born Californio John B. R. Cooper of



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Monterey.

The letter includes a tantalizing reference to Juan Bautista Alvarado (future governor of California) and "these times of revolution," thus providing evidence of how Temple was affected by local politics in California, at the time still a province of Mexico. Just a day before this letter was written Pio Pico had taken over the government after a brief coup that removed Governor Manuel Victoria. This revolt has been styled the first Californio revolt against the Mexican-appointed California government.

A recently published book by Paul R. Spitzzeri on the history of the Temple and Workman families suggests that this letter is the only known record of Temple's difficulties during this first Californio revolt. Spitzzeri examined a copy of the letter shared by a surviving family member.

The text of the letter here follows:

Pueblo de los Angeles / 2nd Jany. 1832

Mr. John B. R. Cooper,

Dear Sir, I understand from Juan Bautista Alvarado that he has settled with you for the hundred dollars he owned Tomasa Pico, and if that is the case I would thank you send it to me by Gale, or by the first opportunity as I wish to circumscribe my accounts in as small as compass as possible in these times of revolution. I would give you an account of all that has passed if I had time, but it would be unnecessary as Don Bautista the Italian can give you a more correct account verbally than I care to write. I would thank you to write me and inform me respecting the hundred dollars on Tomasa's account that in case you have not received it, to take other measures to collect it. Wishing you a happy new year, & respects to your wife &c I remain your friend and humble Svt.

J. Temple

Temple Workman Families and Early Los Angeles

Jonathan Temple, the writer of this letter, a patriarch of the Temple and Workman families, was the first person from either of these two families to settle in Southern California. The Temple-Workman family played a significant role in the early history of Los Angeles and Southern California. Through their involvement in land development and through familial and business connections with other Alta California pioneers, especially Spanish-speaking Californios, the family enjoyed unique influence on the course of the region's early growth.



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Jonathan Temple (1796-1866), the first person from either of these two families to settle in Southern California, was sometimes referred to by his Californio moniker Don Juan Temple. A native of Reading, Massachusetts, he lived in San Diego for a short time before establishing an American-style store in Los Angeles in 1828. In 1843, he acquired the Rancho Los Cerritos, a 27,000-acre property in the Long Beach area - his 1844 adobe is the centerpiece of the Rancho Los Cerritos historic site. During the 1840s, Temple was active in shipping and commerce along the California and Mexican west coast. Temple was also one of the first real estate developers in L.A., having constructed the original Temple Block and the Market House, which later served as city and county administrative headquarters and the seat of the county courthouse. He would go on to serve as the first alcalde, or mayor of Los Angeles after the town was captured by the United States during the Mexican War.

Francis Pliny Fisk Temple, Jonathan's younger half brother, was another prominent figure in the early development of Southern California. The younger Temple married the daughter of William William, an English-born pioneer who arrived in Los Angeles from Santa Fe via the Old Spanish Trail route in 1841, as part of the Workman-Rowland Party - considered the first overland party of Americans to settle in Los Angeles. Through hard work and business acumen, Workman became one of the city's most successful entrepreneurs. He co-owned a store, served as a judge, and invested in real estate. His son-in-law, Francis Pliny Fisk Temple, also made a name for himself as a landowner and businessman, even branching into banking, and becoming one of the largest landowners in the area.

In summary, the Temple-Workman family were key players in the development of Los Angeles and Southern California during the second half of the 19th century. Their business ventures and land holdings helped shape the city's growth.

Rarity

Such early letters, dating from the 1830s when the Pueblo de Los Angeles was little more than a Mexican village of about 1300 people, are extremely rare. Examples this early are virtually unknown in the market. The present letter has great historical interest due to the intriguing and fascinating content, and for being written by an early American resident of Mexican Los Angeles to a fellow English-speaking Californio living in Monterey.

Even institutional holdings of such early Los Angeles letters are scanty. The Huntington Library has a letter by Jonathan Temple, dated March 23, 1838, to William Goodwin Dana, also apparently written from Los Angeles.



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Detailed Condition:

Folded lettersheet of wove paper. Age toned. Old fold marks. Older cello tape repairs along fold tears. Otherwise condition is quite good. Docketed on verso of integral blank leaf: "Mr. J. Temple / J. Temple January 2, 1832."