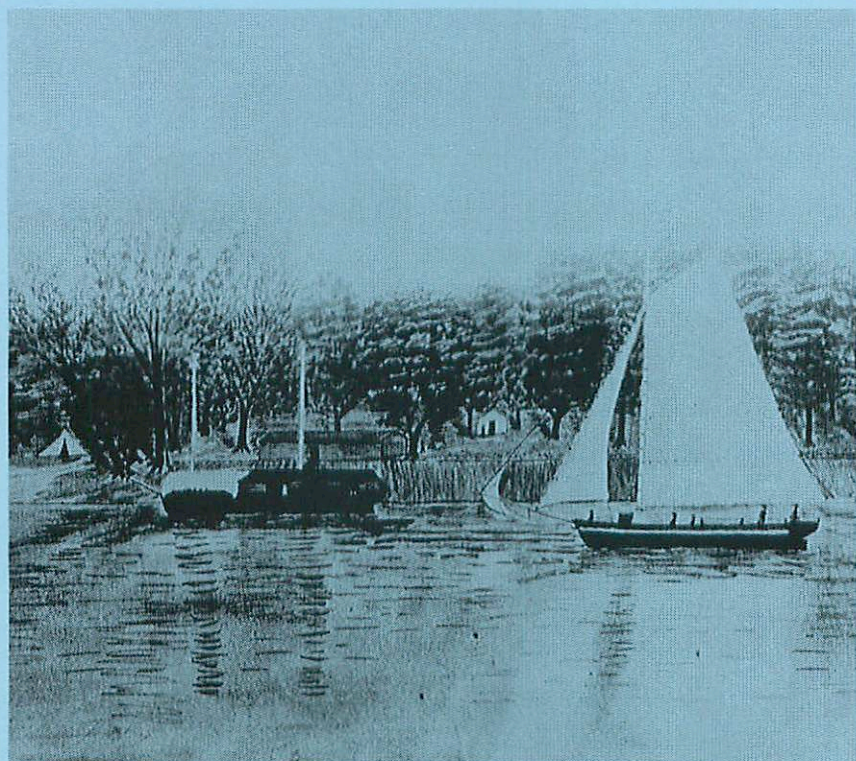


GOLDEN NOTES

Volume 40, Number 1
Spring 1994



SACRAMENTO, 1848 **THE TABER MANUSCRIPT**

Sacramento County Historical Society

GOLDEN NOTES

Volume 40, Number 1, Spring 1994
Sacramento County Historical Society
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Golden Notes is a quarterly which has been published since 1954 by the Sacramento County Historical Society. Its purpose is to preserve the history of Sacramento County and to promote public awareness of local history. Copies are available in selected bookstores or directly from the Society.

We invite manuscripts about the people, institutions and events of the Sacramento region throughout its history. To obtain a copy of the policies and procedures for the publication, or for further information about back issues still in print, write to the Editor, *Golden Notes*, Sacramento County Historical Society, P.O. Box 160065, Fort Sutter Station, Sacramento, CA 95816-0065.

On the cover: The first known pictorial image of Sacramento City. This is a black and white sketch of the Taber painting described in this article. This copy is courtesy of the California Historical Society, San Francisco, and can be found at SAMCC, catalog number 82/05/1333. A full photo of this sketch follows the prologue.

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SACRAMENTO, 1848 THE TABER MANUSCRIPT

Prologue

by Charles Duncan

Sacramento County Historical Society

A Prologue
by
Charles Duncan

Among the many treasures to be found in the Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center (SAMCC) is a manuscript describing life and conditions in central California just months after the discovery of gold in 1848. The author is Charles Austin Mendal Taber (1824-1911), a mariner from Massachusetts who embarked in June, 1847 on a voyage which brought him unexpected adventure in South America, the Galapagos, and finally, San Francisco and Sacramento City when it still was known only as "Sutter's Landing." Not once, but several times, Taber shuttled between the bay and the gateway to the northern mines with cargoes of foodstuffs, mining gear, and miners, themselves.

During one of these excursions up the Sacramento River, the captain sketched that nondescript riverbank and later rendered it in oils. This otherwise insignificant feat of artistic enterprise now is recognized as the first pictorial image of what became Sacramento City. It was to be some thirty years before Captain Taber wrote down the exciting details of that voyage from notes, business records and recollections.

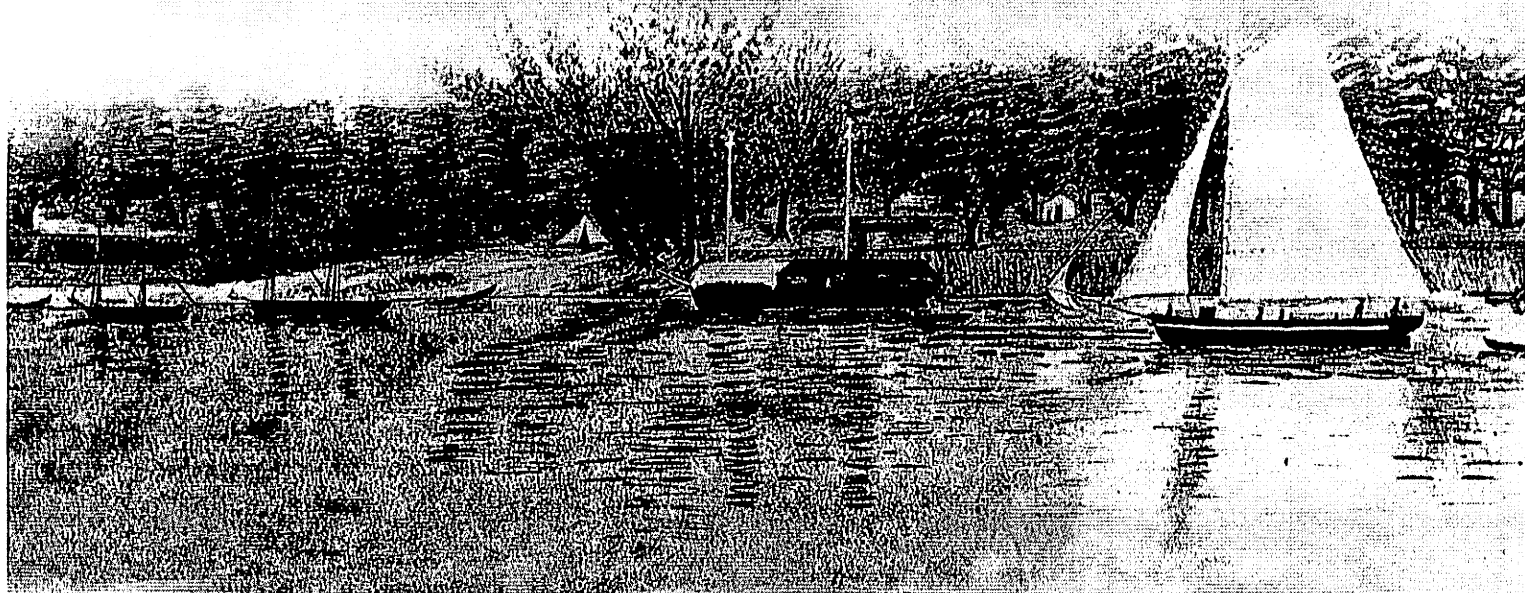
The path of the painting and the manuscript to proper homes in California's Capitol City was marked by a long period of neglect as well as a commendable sense of civic pride by a local historical organization. Once the captain had put his account on paper, he offered it for publication to the editors of a Sacramento newspaper. Initially, The Sacramento Record-Union chose not to publish the manuscript, but after the Pacific Rural Press had accepted it, The Record-Union reconsidered, and printed the entire narrative in its July 1st, 1890 edition. Then, even though the information rested in musty newspaper files, it seems, interest flagged and this historic account was forgotten for more than 75 years.

But then, in 1974, the painting, a few pages of the manuscript in Taber's original hand, and a complete transcript of the newspaper publication, were made available by Taber's great niece, Mary

Louise Evans of Miami, Florida. First offered to the California State Library, the historic items almost failed to reach the golden state because the library had no funds for making the acquisitions at that time.

The Sacramento Pioneer Association came to the rescue, however, purchasing the materials, which the association later donated to the city of Sacramento, where they remain in the care of the Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center. At the present time (1994), the painting is on loan and occupies an honored place at the Sacramento Discovery Museum of History, Science and Technology in Old Sacramento.

Captain C.A.M. Taber's narrative begins following the photo of the Taber sketch.



COPYRIGHT, 1882,

BY

W. TABER.

SACRAMENTO IN OCTOBER, 1848.

From a Pen and Ink Sketch by C. A. M. TABER,

MADE AT THE TIME.

Taber
PHOTOGRAPHER.

SACRAMENTO, 1848

THE TABER MANUSCRIPT

In the early part of June, 1847, I sailed from the port of New Bedford on the bark *Minerva*, bound for the North Pacific Ocean, with Captain Samuel Perry in command. The main object of our voyage was to catch whales and seal, and do some trading on the then foreign coast of California, and also to follow the same calling while on our lengthy passage over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

I had engaged to serve as second officer on the *Minerva* until our arrival in some port in Chili, where I was to take charge of a vessel, if one could be purchased suitable for a tender for the bark...We pursued the usual whaleman's route over the Atlantic to Cape Horn, and visited the Azores, Madiera and Cape Verde Islands.... We doubled Cape Horn in October...

In January, we entered the port of St. Carlos, where we found a sloop of forty tons which we purchased to serve as a tender for the *Minerva*. Captain Perry soon after changed the Spanish name of the sloop for that of his daughter, Caroline....The *Minerva* and the *Caroline*, with enlarged crews soon after sailed for the coast of Peru where we had some success in whaling.

[By April, their little fleet had grown to three with the purchase of a small brig from the Governor of the Galapagos Islands.]

...About the last of July, while making slow progress because of the thick fog, we heard the seals howling on the Faralones. On the following morning, the weather was clear and the wind and tide being favorable, we soon passed inside the heads leading to San Francisco Bay, where the extensive harbor and surrounding land presented a beautiful and encouraging sight to our seaworn sailors. While sailing along the pleasant shores, we saw the American flag displayed from a signal staff at the Presidio, which informed us that our countrymen were in possession of that region.

[While on shore, Taber was hosted by Sergeant Merrill of Colonel Stevenson's regiment, from whose family, the captain gained information about this new country]

...While at teatable, I was well entertained by the remaining

members of the family who gave me much information concerning Yerba Buena and the gold region as they thought would be interesting. And withal, it seemed strange to me to be seated at the supper table of an agreeable New England family in such a remote corner of the world. But the wildness of the region was realized during the following midnight hours through the doleful howling of the coyotes...

I daily learned something pertaining to the village, which then presented a dull aspect, because of a large portion of inhabitants being at the gold mines. But several who were eager in the search for gold in the spring had returned after considerable success and because of hardships and sickness had lost much of their ardor for gold digging. This was the case with Ira Blanchard, the village blacksmith...[*who*] had worked on a claim during May and June at Mormon Island, on the south fork of the American River, where he obtained \$2,000 in gold dust, but hot weather and scanty provisions had caused him to return to his shop.

...The reception of the treaty of peace with Mexico was celebrated the eleventh of August. Cannons were fired during the day, and in the evening the stores and dwellings were illuminated. The whale ships *Euphrates* and *Minerva*, then at anchor abreast the town furnished the people a good supply of candles for the occasion.

A few days after the celebration, it was arranged with Quartermaster [*Joseph*] Folsom that I should proceed in the sloop *Caroline* to Sonoma to transport Captain Frisbie and his company of New York volunteers then in camp there to San Francisco...[*While at Sonoma*] I was introduced to General Vallejo, who seemed much pleased to learn that so large a vessel as the *Caroline* could sail to Sonoma Landing.

[*Captain Perry returned to sea, leaving Taber in command of the two remaining ships to be "employed on the bays and rivers" under an agreement that he would retain half the earnings. It is at this point in the fall of 1848 that Captain Taber made his first ascension of the Sacramento River. His account follows without interruption.*]

Mr. Blanchard, having engaged to lead a party of men to the

gold mines by the middle of September, completed the repairs on the *Caroline* previous to that date, and moved her from the beach to the anchorage, where she was put in order for her first trip to Sacramento. Blanchard's company of eight men, with their outfit, were taken on board and several other miners with the goods also took passage with us.

We sailed from San Francisco in the morning, as soon as the sea breeze began to ruffle the waters of the bay, and the wind and tide being favorable, we made good time through the lower bays, and in the early part of the afternoon passed Benicia and entered the Suisun Bay. Mr. Hunter, who acted as pilot, had, while serving in Colonel Stevenson's regiment, made a trip to Sutter's Landing on a government launch, but was ignorant of the depth of water in the lower bays or river, so we sailed directly through the middle of the Suisun, where the sloop's keel touched bottom several times.

While crossing the bay Mount Diablo bore a conspicuous feature in the landscape and relieved against the southern sky, its towering height was in strong contrast to the nearer low swampy shores. The only vessel we saw in the bay was a brig, apparently aground near the south shore, which we supposed to be the *Loui Perry*. Our sails being filled with a brisk wind, we soon passed the wide shoal waters of the Suisun, and entered the large stream which contains the united waters of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, and after passing the broad mouth of the latter river on our right we soon entered the Sacramento, which we found to be a tidal stream, its lower reaches winding through a low plain of tule.

While sailing up the river the wind moderated, and at sunset we entered Merritt's Slough, a short cut from the main stream. Here our sails were becalmed by the tall sycamores and oaks which grew near the water. We then used our long oars of our whaleboat in sweeping the vessel until the turn of the tide, when we anchored. The next morning, with a fair wind and tide, we sailed out of the slough into the main river, and were enabled to arrive at Sutter's Landing in the middle of the afternoon.

The most interesting object to be seen at the landing was the old brig *Providence*, which had previously been employed in the

North Pacific trade. She was lying alongside the river bank, dismantled with her deck housed over, and a wide gangway plank extending from her side to a rough redwood shanty which stood on the edge of the bank above the river. A few yards farther upstream, where the bank of the river sloped to the water, two small launches were landing goods on a sandy beach which had formed at the mouth of the slough. The waters of the American form could be seen farther up the river where they emptied into the Sacramento.

The next day the mining parties walked to Sutter's Fort, two or three miles distant from the landing, and engaged ox teams to convey their goods to the mines.

Messrs. McDugal and Blackburn, who had stores for sale on the brig *Providence*, were the only traders nearer than Sutter's Fort to the river. The miners having departed, I left the landing with five men to grope my way back to San Francisco, and through being delayed by head winds, shoals and snags I was a week on my passage, yet the time was well spent in sounding the channel of the river and bays.

The water in the Sacramento, which moved with a sluggish motion up and down the stream with the tide, was fresh and clear and good for domestic use. The banks of the river presented a dull uniformity, the lonely reaches being hemmed by a heavy, narrow growth of oak and sycamore, which hid from view the wide, grassy plain beyond. At that time of the year few birds were seen, but the wooded banks secreted numerous deer, coyote and rabbits. In a few places the tall trees could be overlooked and the distant outlines of the Sierra Mountains could be traced in the eastern sky. On the third day of our passage, having passed Merritt's Slough, the timber which shaded the river banks gradually gave way to low shrubs and tule, which seemed to flourish until we gained the brackish waters of Suisun Bay.

The places where the work of man was visible on the route from Sutter's Landing to San Francisco at that time were few. A cluster of Indian huts and little farther down, on the opposite side, was a small house, the home of Mr. Swart, an old Dutchman, who cultivated a vegetable garden, the only head of Merritt's Slough on the east bank of the Sacramento, and about ten miles farther down the

river were two unoccupied Indian dwellings. Near the mouth of the river on the high ground to the north was a deserted adobe building. At the lower end of Suisun Bay, where its waters narrow in the Carquinez Straits, the adobe buildings of the Martinez ranch were mostly hidden by the tall trees.

This was the only dwelling to be seen for miles along the beautiful southern shore of the straits where the scattering dark green oaks dotted the oat covered hills and vales.

The sunny straw covered hills of the northern shore including Mare Island, were destitute of trees and not inhabited, excepting the settlement at Benicia, which then contained five houses, comprising the homesteads of Major Cooper and Dr. Semple, and the store of Messrs. Ricker and Evans.

An old ferry boat was nearly hidden from view in a small creek which opened in the straits. On the southern shore of San Pablo Bay, between Pinole and San Pablo Point, an adobe house was visible from the bay and while sailing past the latter point we sighted the mission building situated in the beautiful valley of San Rafael with its background of mountain scenery, which presented the most attractive landscape we had witnessed while on our passage from Sacramento.

On our arrival at San Francisco I found the bay and river fleet of launches seeking freight, the largest of them being of much less capacity than the *Loui Perry* and *Caroline*. The schooner *Edwards* of the Leidesdorff estate was a vessel of fifteen tons; Sutter's launch was two or three tons smaller; Captain Winner's decked boat was about seven tons burden and a launch called the *Rainbow* of five tons, besides two or three smaller craft. Yet this little fleet of vessels was sufficient to do the bay and river carrying through the fall of '48 and also that of the following winter. At this time provision and groceries were in great demand while importations were light. Oregon, Mexico, and the Sandwich Islands were the principal sources of supply.

The *Loui Perry* had returned from Sacramento with Captain Eastham disabled with malarial fever, and Mr. Ellis, who had remained on the sloop, was selected to take his place.

I remained in San Francisco a week, and then with a small freight sailed with a few passengers on my second voyage to

Sacramento, and from that time through the remainder of the year I made two or three trips monthly.

The Government maintained a battalion of soldiers in the mining region, under the command of Lieutenant Sherman and a considerable portion of my freight at that time consisted of military stores for Sherman's command.

I have retained a bill of lading made out by Captain Folsom, Assistant Quartermaster of the United States Army, which gives a list of goods shipped by him on the sloop *Caroline*. This bill bears the signature of Lieutenant W.T. Sherman, Third United States Army, which gives a list of goods shipped by him on the sloop *Caroline*, Taber, master, at the port of San Francisco, and bound to the Sacramento River, October 18, 1848. The bill certifies that Sherman received the goods in good order and condition on October 23, 1848. At times, I could not obtain a full cargo and always returned with an empty hold, which afforded shelter under the deck for such passengers as were returning from the mines to San Francisco, they being more numerous during that season than persons bound to the gold region. But a portion of the down passengers were people who came overland from the Western states and with the exception of those who came by way of Oregon, had never seen the Pacific Ocean.

Early in October two families of emigrants from Missouri, headed by Hitchcock and Sinclair, arrived at Sutter's Landing with the wives and children, besides two men who were relatives of the Sinclair family. Their train of six covered ox wagons was placed in a circle around a campfire which blazed under the large trees.

The women were preparing supper when I visited the camp and the children were at play on the green sward while the unyoked oxen were getting their fill of rich green grass. Mr. Hitchcock, who headed the party, said it was the most satisfactory encampment they had made since they first started on their overland journey. He also said that he was anxious to select some place to spend the winter, and inquired of me about the region around San Francisco. I advised him to secure rooms at Sutter's Fort, which at that time were partly vacant, and the surrounding lands would afford good grazing for his cattle. The next morning he engaged rooms at the fort, and then took

passage on the *Caroline* to San Francisco, in order to purchase stores and learn what he could of the country. He returned with me on the sloop, and soon after hired the two story building in the fort, where he kept a boarding house until the following summer.

In the early part of November , the Blanchard party left the mines and were waiting to take passage on the sloop to San Francisco. They had secured something over \$2,000 in gold dust per man, and one of the company had died from overwork and exposure.

On that return trip I took as many passengers as could well find shelter under deck. Some of the men were ill, and two of them died on reaching the bay, and were buried on Pinole Point. Old Mr. Pach, formerly a Methodist preacher in Connecticut, and then a Mormon elder, conducted the burial service. Mr. Pach owned a house in San Francisco, on the outskirts of the village, near the head of Sacramento Street, where his wife and daughter resided.

Business continued dull in San Francisco all through the fall, but carpenters found employment in November on Robert Parker's hotel, then building on the east side of the plaza. As the wet season advanced many people left the mines for the settlements and consequently house room was in demand in the villages near the coast. Before Captain Perry sailed for Valparaiso he equipped the *Caroline* with an iron safe and two blunderbusses. The latter were of little use, yet were always loaded with buckshot, in case of need. Besides, I had a good supply of rifles and pistols but the safe proved to be the most useful. It was strongly secured to the sloop's transoms and was a receptacle for passenger and freight money, which was mostly paid in gold dust on the vessel. It also became a place of deposit for gold belonging to sailor miners who had taken passage or served as seamen on the *Caroline*.

My rule was that the depositor should have his name, with a private mark, plainly written on the package, and also its weight copied in a notebook which was kept in the safe. There were no charges made nor receipts given for such deposits.

And all through the winter and spring I conveyed packages of gold dust from Sutter's Landing to San Francisco free of charge for such traders as had shipped goods on the *Caroline*, and receipts were

never given for such packages, but I was careful to have them plainly directed, and a trusty man to assist in their delivery. After the rainy season set in I could always hire sailors for low wages to serve on the *Caroline*, her accommodations being comfortable and the food as good as the market could furnish. Before sailing on a trip to Sacramento the cook in company with the crew visited the market and selected from such provisions as were for sale. This privilege was never abused and always proved satisfactory.

At that time there was plenty of wild game to be had in the Sacramento Valley, but the crew were soon cloyed with such food which was shot in unwonted quantities by the passengers so that we often exchanged venison for beef at the San Francisco market.

The first fall of rain happened in November, and in a few weeks the hills which bordered on the upper bays were green with new growth of grass and wild oats, which attracted the wild geese in great numbers. Especially was this the case on the oat grown hills bordering on the Carquinez Straits. The Sacramento waters were also much frequented by them but they gathered in Suisun Bay in still greater numbers, where they covered large areas of water, while the air over the water was darkened by the noisy birds. The sloughs of the Sacramento River and portions of the main stream were alive with several species of wild ducks and the wooded banks of the river, as well as the tules, were the winter home of large bands of elk and deer. Grizzly bears were often seen foraging for acorns in the oak groves near the river, but they were shy and would disappear in the thick tule when we attempted to shoot them. The only one killed was shot while swimming the river a short distance from the vessel.

The old Western hunters, who at times took passage on the sloop, were astonished to see game so plentiful and acknowledged that it surpassed all they had ever seen elsewhere.

The traders who did business at Sutter's Fort during the fall and winter months were Samuel Brannon & Co., Ellis & Pettit (Mr. Pettit is now the guardian of Sutter's Fort), Lappias & Murry, Mr. Picket & Priest, and Lee & Company. Dr. Bates, the Alcalde, also did some trading and Mr. Norris kept a provision store in a building a few yards from the fort. Mr. Fowler, the principal teamster, lived with his

family in the fort.

Through the fall of 1848 and the following winter the gold hunters and traders were honest and peaceable, only two cases of fatal strife happening during that time. A German trader was killed near Coloma by a drunken sailor, who fled the country and escaped punishment and at Sutter's Fort an Oregon man, a partner of Dr. Bates, was shot and killed by Pickett for persistent trespass on his premises. Pickett was tried and justified by a jury of disinterested men.

During the early gathering of strangers in San Francisco the people were in a peaceful mood. The first murderous assault that came to my notice happened in the early part of 1849. Mr. Taylor, a resident of Sutter's Fort, took passage on the *Caroline* for San Francisco, in company with Peter Burnett, who was subsequently selected to the first State Governorship of California. They were to return to Sacramento whenever the sloop was ready to sail. Mr. Taylor had purchased goods, which were being shipped on the *Caroline*, when I was told that he had been stabbed while engaged in a quarrel in front of the Parker House.

At first it was thought that Taylor's wounds would prove fatal, so the goods he shipped on the sloop were returned to their former owners, but with good nursing for which he was largely indebted to Mr. Burnett, at the end of two weeks he was considered out of danger.

I never had any trouble with navigating the bay and river, the sailors and passengers generally being well disposed. Still one of the requirements exacted of them before setting sail was that they should all agree to keep the peace while on the vessel, and assist with maintaining it, if necessary, which they always agreed to do. As I could accommodate only eight persons in the cabin the remainder of the passengers had to supply themselves with food and sleep in their blankets on deck, should there be a lack of space for them in the hold.

The cook house, when not in use for the sloop's crew, was free for the deck passengers to prepare whatever provisions they had provided for the trip, or such game as they were able to secure when the vessel was detained by wind and tide.

The brig *Loui Perry* was sold in January to Perry McCoon, a ranchman from the mining region, who had employed the Indians to assist him in securing a large amount of gold. He and his family were passengers on the *Caroline* when bound to San Francisco in midwinter and while sailing down the river six inches of snow fell in one night. The next morning his children and wife, who were destitute of shoes, were walking the snow covered deck with bare feet, when I managed to furnish the wife with seamen's shoes.

McCoon, who had formerly been a sailor, was planning how to enjoy his newly acquired wealth and informed me of his intentions of buying a vessel suitable for a yacht. I suggested that the *Loui Perry* would be a good for such use, and soon after our arrival at San Francisco he became her owner. Thus the *Loui Perry* was probably the first seagoing vessel used in California entirely for yachting.

Although, as I have before mentioned, the miners, who were made up of many nations, with American predominating, were generally well disposed and peaceful, during the winter of '49 they were forced into a war with the American River Indians, who had for some time been regarded with suspicion, as several miners were missing. Their hostility was at length made certain by a band of them having surprised a mining camp of three Oregon men, and succeeded in getting possession of their tent, which contained their firearms. The miners at the time were engaged in washing gold at the river, a few rods away.

The appearance of the ground, as seen by a prospecting party a few days after, showed that the miners made a desperate defense with stones before being killed. News of the tragedy spread quickly through the mining camps, and in a few days forty men were equipped to retaliate on the Indians.

One of the murdered men, Richard Johnson, had served several weeks on the *Caroline*, and was much liked by his acquaintances. Consequently the crew of the sloop fitted out one of Johnson's friends with a horse and rifle to join the avenging party, who soon drove the Indians from their camping place.

The miners being largely reinforced, the whole Indian tribe, consisting of about 500 men, women and children, were driven into

Green Spring Valley. Captain Sutter, fearing that the tribe would be exterminated, interceded for those who could prove that they were not of the murdering party, and succeeded in having them set free, while the guilty Indians were executed.

In the latter part of the winter, while in San Francisco, I fell in with John Davis, who in boyhood had been my playmate and schoolmate. He had lately arrived from a Pacific seaport, and was in search of employment. Wishing to assist him, I suggested that a provision store opened near Sutter's Landing could be made profitable and as Mr. Davis was without funds I proposed to build the store and stock it, and share with him whatever profit he could make in the business.

With this in view, I bought of C.L. Ross a redwood frame that was completed for a building and lumber sufficient to floor and cover it. I then transported it on the *Caroline* to Sutter's Landing. Although Sacramento City had been surveyed by Lieutenant Sherman, we selected a lot on the old wagon trail which led to the fort, without regard to the city layout as there were at that time no visible street lines or buildings, with the exception of the McDugal shanty at the landing, then standing on the site of Sacramento City, nearer than Sutter's Fort.

With the sloop's crew and the passengers assisting, the frame was soon raised and boarded, but I was careful to place it on firm oak blocks above the high water mark left by the clay colored waters of a former freshet, on the rough bark of some of the large trees. A few days later, Priest, Lee & Co. raised the frame of a building on J Street, but it remained unfinished for some time. William Joy, in the employ of C.L. Ross, was one of the first to erect a frame building in that vicinity.

The settlement of the town made good progress through the spring and summer so that my store, which at first stood alone in the wilderness, was surrounded by new buildings in the summer of 1849.

According to "Bancroft's History": "At the end of June, 1849, the embarcadero contained eleven wholesale houses--Priest, Lee & Co., Hensley, Reading & Co., Sam Brannan, Whitlock & Jilson, Sam Norris, Gillespie, Ingersoll, Robinson, D. Hanna, R. Jilson ,Taber."

My partner, Mr. Davis, was married during the latter part of March. This was the first marriage contracted on the present site of Sacramento. The marriage of Alfred Greeve to Miss Sinclair, which took place a few weeks previous at Sutter's Fort, was probably the first contracted by American parties in the district. In April, Mr. Davis, with my consent, sold out his portion of our business to George W. Rider, a relative of Colonel Stevenson. Mr. Rider with his family came from Valparaiso with Captain Perry on the bark *Minerva*, which arrived in San Francisco in February.

Captain Perry soon after his return to California, bought land at Benicia and built a house on it, and was elected Alcalde of the district, and a year later exchanged his Benicia property for a plantation in the Sandwich Islands.

In the spring of 1849 Governor Mason was in San Francisco with other government officials, making preparations to embark for Oregon. Everything was in readiness for the voyage with the important exception of a reliable Columbia pilot. Captain Folsom referred them to me as having a wide acquaintance with the seafaring men of that coast, but I knew of only one man, F. Coats, that could be well recommended for the position, and was doubtful of obtaining his services, as he was then mining on the North Fork of the American River.

So, under the circumstances, I was persuaded to visit him at his camp although the country at that time was almost impassable on account of clayey mud and overflowing streams. However, I made a successful journey, and returned to San Francisco with Mr. Coats in two weeks, half of the time having been spent in warping the *Caroline* against the swift currents of the spring freshet, which then overflowed the wide tule lands and filled the higher banks of the Sacramento to the brim.

The following summer the vessels that were fitted out from the Eastern states for San Francisco, because of the discovery of gold began to arrive, while every week added to their number. Many of them were owned and navigated by mining companies who were anxious to proceed on their vessels as near to the mining region as possible, therefore the bay and river navigators were in great demand

to pilot them over the inland waters.

The bark *Sterling* of Salem, Mass., was the first vessel that I guided to Sacramento. My plan was to secure freight and passengers for the *Caroline* and have her accompany the vessel that I was piloting. Among the several vessels that I conducted up the Sacramento was the United States brig *General Patterson*, having a battalion of troops on board, commanded by Major Pillsbury, who was to proceed up the Sacramento River and camp near Sutter's Fort. The crew of the *General Patterson* having deserted in San Francisco, I selected one of the *Caroline's* men for steersman, while the soldiers were stationed at the braces. After having entered the Sacramento River, John McDugal, who subsequently served as the second State Governor of California, came on board and persuaded Major Kingsbury to camp at Sutterville, the McDugal firm having moved their business there from Sutter's Landing.

In the early part of the summer on account of the great gathering of strangers in the country, I felt that there was an increased risk in using the *Caroline's* safe as a security deposit for the mining sailors' gold, consequently I stopped receiving more gold packages and was put to considerable trouble in seeing each depositor in possession of his property, who in many instances seemed reluctant to receive it, from a feeling that it would be unsafe in the owner's hands.

In August I was suffering from malaria, and in September was forced to relinquish my bay and river business and in consequence Mr. Rider and myself sold out our Sacramento property and sometime about the first of October I took passage on the steamship *Oregon* to go to the Eastern States by the way of Panama. When off the coast of Mexico, we experienced a severe hurricane which so frightened a portion of the passengers who were bound to the Western States, that they left the ship at Acapulco and started for home overland.

I remained on the *Oregon* until her arrival at Panama, and thence followed the steamship route to New York. I remained East through the winter and spring of 1850, and regained my health sufficient to return to California, in the early part of the following summer over the Isthmus route.

On my arrival at San Francisco I found that the people who had been busy in building stores and dwellings sufficient to accomodate three times the number of inhabitants that found shelter there the previous October, although their efforts had been severely checked by the great fire in June. They were also making considerable progress towards filling up the flats in front of the town and extending wharves out to deep water. Steamboats had taken the place of sailing craft on the bays and rivers, but life and property were less safe than during the previous year.

A small gang of unruly sailors, called "The Hounds" had banded together as early as the summer of 1849 to commit depredations on the Kanakas and Chinamen, yet they were considered of little account by the people generally, but they had increased so much during the following year as to become a dangerous band of outlaws.

I remained in San Francisco a few days and then took passage on the steamboat *Gold Hunter* for Sacramento City where my old partner, Mr. Rider, had again started in business and was keeping house with his family, where I was fortunate to find a home during my stay in the city. I was told that the spring freshet had retarded building for a while but I found that the place had made rapid growth since fall when I last saw it.

Soon after my arrival in the early part of August a launch from the lower bay was reported in the bend of the river below town with several of her passengers stricken down with the cholera. This report caused considerable excitement among the people of Sacramento, but it was not then known that cholera was a germ disease and mostly communicated through drinking water. So to prevent its spreading, the launch, with its diseased crew, was towed up the river and anchored abreast the mouth of the American, and supposed to be sufficiently isolated for safety.

The river at that time being at a low stage, its sluggish waters moved slowly past the quarantined launch down stream to the town landings where they were freely used by the people. So after a few days there were many cases of cholera in Sacramento.

The contagion spread rapidly, and proved so deadly that most

of the inhabitants became panic stricken, and soon fled from the town into the surrounding country. Consequently the disease soon abated for the want of material to feed on.

Early in October I returned to San Francisco, being in poor health. I found the cholera raging in some portions of the city and it continued to prevail moderately throughout the fall months of 1850.

About the middle of October, the pleasing news of the admission of California in to the Union was received, and on the 29th of the month the celebration of that event took place. The ships in the harbor made a great display of bunting, while guns were fired on the men of war and at the Presidio, and bonfires blazed on the hills in the evening. But the greatest excitement occurred in the afternoon when the boilers of the steamer *Sagamore* exploded while she was leaving the wharf. The boat being loaded with passengers many were killed or badly scalded. At the time of the accident I was in the vicinity of the wharf and so happened to be a near spectator.

The new city at this time was suffering distressing losses from fires which were frequently breaking out among the combustible buildings. One of the largest that I witnessed destroyed in a single night one third of the town. Still the people were not discouraged, and quickly commenced to rebuild the burned district.

As I did not gain my wonted health in San Francisco, I accepted my doctor's advice to return to the Eastern States. So, in the early part of November, I left California on the steamship *Northerner*, then bound to Panama with over 600 passengers. On the second day out of port one of the passengers died with cholera and the next day six more deaths were reported, and at the end of a week, four times that number were on the daily death list.

We anchored in Mazatan Roads and buried a number of the deceased on an island near the mouth of the harbor. Mr. Hunt, the pioneer clergyman of San Francisco, being on board, conducted a funeral service every afternoon, previous to the daily launching of the dead from the afterguards of the wheelhouse, where they were placed for burial.

At the end of 17 days the *Northern* arrived in Panama, when nearly half her passengers had died, and when those who remained

alive left the pestilential ship they parted with the cholera also, as the disease did not make its appearance on the Atlantic steamship that carried the survivors to New York.

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