

# WILLIAM B. IDE ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN

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October 2009

Northern Buttes District  
California State Parks  
State of California

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October 2009

Northern Buttes District  
California State Parks  
State of California

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## Table of Contents

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● Executive Summary	1
● Introduction	3
Plan Purpose	4
Interpretive Planning Team	4
Status of Interpretation	5
● Missions & Vision	6
California State Parks Mission	6
Park Mission	6
Mission for Interpretation	6
Vision for Interpretation	6
● Interpretive Goals and Objectives	7
● Overall Interpretive Direction	12
Park Themes	12
Interpretive Periods	13
California Educational Content Standards	14
● Content and Media	17
Exhibit Themes	17
Special Concerns	17
Visitor Circulation	18
Exhibit Space Allocation	19
Exhibit Area 1: Welcome and Introduction	23
Exhibit Area 2: The Way to California	37
Exhibit Area 3: Pioneer Skills	65
Exhibit Area 4: Transportation Nexus	81
Exhibit Area 5: The Adobe Ranch through Time	107
Exhibit Area 6: Ide's Story	141
Exhibit Area 7: The Park Today	165
Exhibit Area 8: Changing Exhibits	178
Area 9: Contact Counter & Park Interpretive Sales Area	179
● Appendices	181
The Way to California - Quotations	183
William B. Ide's Views of the Overland Journey, 1845	197
Alfred Walton Biographical Notes	203
Newspaper Account Summaries of the Court Case in the Matter of the State of California vs. George Sutton	207
● Graphics File (CD under separate cover)	





# WILLIAM B. IDE ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN

## ● Executive Summary

This Interpretive Plan for William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park's Visitor Center identifies essential elements and provides important resources and information for producing effective interpretive exhibits. New displays in the Visitor Center will replace provisional ones quickly fabricated for the opening of the building in 2006. Produced with few resources or time to do thorough research, they were intended to be temporary from the outset.

The purpose of this plan is to support the development of a new interpretive experience for visitors, docents, and staff to increase understanding of William B. Ide and the Adobe Ranch at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Exhibits will capture the industry and determination of the ranch's early settlers, who faced many challenges and adversities. William B. Ide will be featured as one of California's important figures, who personified the "pioneer spirit" typical of his time.

The January 1990 *William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park General Plan* has directed park interpretation to take two approaches:

1. Interpret the lifestyle that Ide and other California pioneers would have experienced between the years 1845 and c.1865 and
2. Present William B. Ide as an important figure in early California history and to the development of this area.

In this plan, Mission and Vision Statements (page 6) have been crafted to identify the overall interpretive direction for the park. In addition, specific Goals and Objectives (pages 7-11) refine and shape the approach for the new Visitor Center exhibits. The applicable California Department of Education's Educational Content Standards (pages 14-16) have been singled out in this document to help ensure new exhibits have real educational value, relating to schools and their uses of the park's resources.

Themes (pages 12, 13, and 17) derived and updated from the *General Plan* will serve to guide the Visitor Center's content. It will be made clear to the public through the exhibits that William B. Ide and his family never resided on this property, but rather lived down river, below present-day Red Bluff. The exhibits will emphasize the Primary Interpretive Period for the park, 1845-c.1865, while also acknowledging the years before and after to provide interpretive context.

Special concerns for the exhibits (pages 17-18) have been identified to ensure they are addressed in the development of the exhibits. These include creating accessible exhibits and media, protecting and preserving sensitive objects, and supporting hands-on learning opportunities, among others. Visitors will move counter-clockwise around the room to take advantage of the obvious path of travel upon entering the building. The arrival area near the existing fireplace will be visually connected to the exhibits. While not large, the space will provide visitors an assembly and orientation area.

An adjacent contact counter will serve several purposes, with staff providing greetings, information, park admission, and interpretive sales transactions. Criteria for this space is detailed as Area 9 in the plan (pages 155-156), following Exhibit Areas 1 through 8 addressed in the Content and Media section.

Within this plan, space has been allocated for each exhibit area as a percentage of the Visitor Center's available *interpretive floor space*—not the entire floor area. These assignments reflect the relative importance placed on the various themes. A chart reflecting them is on page 20.

Interpretive support and direction for each one of the eight exhibit areas is provided in the form of the Space Allocation percentage, relevant Theme, Interpretive Objectives, Background Information and/or Storyline (source materials are footnoted), Interpretive Design Concepts/Proposed Media, and Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics. Appendices present additional information and serve as a resource for the development of the interpretive exhibits, especially Areas 2, 5 and 6.

A comprehensive digital Graphics File, containing a significant number of images for potential use in each exhibit area, is included as a part of this Interpretive Plan as a set of CDs. Images contained in these files are for reference only. Further reproduction of them will require the permission of the copyright owner. Responsibility for obtaining all necessary permissions remains with the exhibit developer.

Information about the Adobe Ranch and William B. Ide has been gathered in this plan to satisfy not only the current needs for the Visitor Center's new interpretive exhibits, but also to support the interpretation by staff, docents, and volunteers. The park has needed a ready reference since the State of California acquired the property in 1951—just shy of the ranch's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Now nearly 60 years since it has become a public trust, the *William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park Visitor Center Interpretive Plan* offers a testament to the past and to the park's future.

## ● Introduction

In 1846 William B. Ide wrote the proclamation that established the short-lived California Bear Flag Republic, which lasted 22 days. Ide recognized the opportunities available to him in the West. As a surveyor, miner, treasurer, district attorney, deputy clerk, and judge, he provided support and leadership to this northern part of California.

While William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park memorializes Ide's role in early California, historic research has shown he never owned this property, but rather had built a home south of present-day Red Bluff. Like Ide, early settlers here at Bluffton Ranch (also called Adobe Ranch) came to California envisioning new opportunities. Facing a hardscrabble existence and taking risks, they used their pioneer skills to transform the land.

Contrary to the quiet, rural impression the park leaves today, the ranch's location near the California-Oregon Road and adjacent to the Sacramento River (important communication and transportation arteries) probably kept its residents well connected. Spanish and Mexican explorers met well-established California Indians along the valley's rivers on their journeys. Before, during, and after the Gold Rush, a succession of travelers on foot, pack-mule trains, freight wagons, herds of cattle and sheep, and stagecoaches passed through the valley, as canoes and riverboats moved up and down waterways. The influx of newcomers from around the world altered the traditional lives of California's Indians forever.

Depending upon the water's depth in the mid-1850s, steamboats transported goods and passengers to the most northerly navigable point on the river. From there, they were off-loaded and transported to nearby communities and mining camps. In the 1860s, Adobe Ranch owners made the most of their location by establishing a ferry across the Sacramento River. Travelers depended on this service as well as others up and down the river to make their crossings safe and easy. The Adobe Ranch operation was later relocated downriver to Red Bluff.

Today the park represents the hard work and skills required to maintain life away from California's urban centers in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Through new exhibits, visitors touring the park and its ranch buildings will be able to learn about and appreciate the talent and industry of the people who passed through this property during its pioneer era, and will be able to contrast them to their own abilities. William B. Ide's character and leadership will be told as a part of that interpretation.

## Plan Purpose

New exhibits in the visitor center will replace “temporary” ones quickly fabricated for the opening of the facility to the public in 2006. From the outset, they were intended to be a short-lived—just to have something on the walls. They were produced with few resources or time to do proper research. Now the temporary exhibit panels regularly fall off the walls. In addition, objects displayed in the glass cases do not correspond to the timeframe for the park. The exhibits were assembled with few resources and it shows.

This plan will offer research and thematic direction to guide the development of high-quality, professionally-produced exhibits to support the mission, vision, goals and objectives of William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park. Construction of a freeway off ramp from Interstate 5 onto Adobe Road now leads many people directly to the state historic park. This has increased visitation. New exhibits will better serve these travelers, who stop, but often are not able to go inside the adobe or other buildings because of limited park staffing. With these exhibits in place, visitors will linger longer and their interpretive and educational experiences will be enriched greatly.

The thousands of young students involved in the park’s Environmental Learning Programs will appreciate and learn more from the enhanced facilities. Development of the themes and the organization of research and information for the new exhibits, detailed in this document, also will support staff and docents well into the future by providing background materials for training and interpretive programs.

## Interpretive Planning Team

The development of this Visitor Center Interpretive Plan was a team effort. The individuals listed below contributed to the process and the product through conference calls, meetings, research and the plan’s development to establish and accomplish the team’s collective goals.

Mary A. Helmich, Associate Park and Recreation Specialist  
Ellen M. Clark, Regional Interpretive Specialist  
Raeann Bossarte, Park Interpretive Specialist  
Debbie Chakarun, State Park Interpreter I

## Status of Interpretation

The park Visitor Center building, identified in the *General Plan* as “the greatest need at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park” was constructed in 2005. As it was envisioned by the *General Plan*,

...space should be given to exhibits in the new visitor center to more fully interpret the life of William B. Ide as a pioneer leader and “president” of California, and on the historic lifestyles represented by the Bluffton Ranch. Other displays will orient visitors to the park, to its interpretive period and to the historic zone. Orientation exhibits are particularly important for those visitors unable to see active environmental studies and living history programs or demonstrations. Original artifacts and documentary materials could be displayed in formal exhibits in the new visitor center, whereas they cannot be used now. Exhibits will complement, but not duplicate, other interpretive experiences in the park.

Funding for the new Visitor Center was allocated, but none was dedicated to planning, developing and installing new exhibits. Consequently, the good orientation anticipated with a new visitor center in the park never materialized. Current exhibits are a mixture of wall-mounted displays salvaged from the old visitor center (formerly a trailer from the 1964 Squaw Valley Olympics), as well as donated and refurbished exhibit cases displaying an array of artifacts. Foam-mounted images with text have been affixed to some walls with salient interpretive messages on the history of the Adobe Ranch and river transportation. Staff uses the Visitor Center to gather school groups, visitors, and docents for park interpretive orientation and programs or training. A counter serves as a merchandise display area for sales. Items offered for sale are in keeping with the 1852 interpretive period. The Ide Adobe Interpretive Association operates the sales area.



## ● Missions and Vision

The park and its development is guided by statements that help frame the overall approach to the park and its interpretation and the intended visitor experience.

### California State Parks Mission

#### Our Mission

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

Mission and vision statements for William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park have been established to guide the park's interpretive development.

#### Park Mission

William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park recreates the Adobe Ranch environment at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, capturing the life and times of early pioneers, including William B. Ide, who played a pivotal role in California history.

#### Mission for Interpretation

Staff, docents, volunteers and community members will deliver traditional and innovative interpretive programs, offering authentic portrayals of California's colorful pioneer past to forge meaningful connections with visitors and inspire park stewardship.

#### Vision for Interpretation

Visitors to William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park can expect to experience pioneer life in the mid 1800s through interpretive exhibits, programs, and events that reflect the era's sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures.

## ● Interpretive Goals and Objectives

No goals or objectives statements were developed for interpretation in the 1990 *General Plan*. With this reexamination of the park and its resources for the production of new exhibits, the park's staff has adopted the following goals and objectives for William B. Ide Adobe's interpretive facilities and programs. The goals and objectives to be addressed through the development of the new Visitor Center exhibits are highlighted below in green.

### 1. GOAL: Provide for the appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of the park's special resources.

#### Objectives:

- Offer a variety of interpretive exhibits and programs featuring the park's cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational resources to inspire visitors and enhance their experiences.
- Tell noteworthy stories associated with California's pioneers and William B. Ide's experiences.
- Provide interpretive activities that contribute to visitor understanding of the era.
- Train park staff, docents, volunteers and concessionaires in effective interpretive techniques and sound park practices.

### 2. GOAL: Bring history alive, by recreating or interpreting the park's vital historic character.

#### Objectives:

- Interpret the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century past now missing in the park.
- Re-create/restore the park's historic environments and landscape features.
- Support and encourage appropriate activities that promote the park's history, helping to create a "living" historic environment.
- Create special activities year-round in the park tied to the park's history and cultural traditions.

### 3. GOAL: Reach out to diverse populations.

#### Objectives:

- Provide meaningful interpretation that incorporates multiple perspectives, including those of park visitors.
- Offer multi-sensory, multi-lingual interpretive opportunities in a variety of park locations and settings to engage visitors.
- Develop interpretive facilities and programs to encourage the public to share cultures, experiences, perspectives and histories related to the park.

- Establish a program to preserve and interpret the personal stories and experiences of the people associated with the area's history.
- Use discovery techniques to connect with visitors having different learning styles.
- Develop an education plan to complement the state's educational frameworks and content standards.
- Develop programs and partnerships with local schools, youth groups, colleges and universities aligned with the state's educational standards and the park's significant resources.
- Continue supporting an environmental learning program to enhance learning among school age children.
- Encourage interpretive outreach to community organizations.
- Encourage development of a strong Volunteers in Parks program.

#### 4. GOAL: Engage park visitors on a daily basis in fun, as well as education.

##### Objectives:

- Offer interpretive programming that is visible and frequent on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis.
- Provide interesting, appropriate orientation signage for park visitors that is regularly maintained, repaired, replaced, and updated.
- Make outdoor signage with current park information available to visitors all hours.
- Develop a variety of entertaining, innovative interpretive services to attract, capture, and involve visitors.
- Establish a Park Host Program to make daily interpretive connections with visitors.

#### 5. GOAL: Create accessible interpretive facilities and programs.

##### Objectives:

- Offer exhibits and programming that responds to people who have diverse learning, visual, hearing or mobility needs.
- Identify strategies and implementation methods for removing barriers to language, education, and economic classes during interpretive planning and development phases.
- Develop training programs to support "All Visitors Welcome" for park interpretive programs.

**6. GOAL: Provide up-to-date resources to support the park's interpretation.**

**Objectives:**

- Build and maintain a reference library accessible to staff, docents and volunteers.
- Create opportunities for ongoing research, capturing new information about the area's resources and historic events or traditions that might be interpreted.
- Coordinate the interpretation of local resources through collaborative partnerships.
- Place wayside exhibits at strategic points where visitors can immediately connect with significant park history or resources.
- Produce printed materials to stimulate interest in the park's natural and cultural history and interpretive programs.
- Develop interpretive resources (such as interpretive furnishing plans, with information about period furniture, merchandise, attire, and suggested programmatic elements).
- All staff and volunteers will participate in continuing education/training on cutting edge interpretive techniques.

**7. GOAL: Restore and maintain authenticity, validating the park as a valuable repository of California history and culture.**

**Objectives:**

- Interpret the cultural landscape of William B. Ide Adobe SHP as an expression of its history.
- Reduce and/or eliminate modern intrusions in the historic zone of the park.
- Use non-intrusive interpretive techniques to minimize impacts around sensitive and fragile resources, complementing the surrounding open space or cultural landscape.

**8. GOAL: Support the use and care of museum collections by using park guidelines and Department policies.**

**Objectives:**

- Review the park's Scope of Collections Statement to ensure there are clear guidelines on objects to seek, to decline, and to de-accession.
- Acquire and maintain objects for the park to: 1) preserve original elements of the cultural and natural environments; 2) preserve documentation of people, events, cultural features, or natural features central to its purpose; and 3) support the interpretation of important themes.
- Manage collections in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the Department's Operations Manual.

**9. GOAL: Create flexibility for park changes and for updating and expanding interpretation.**

**Objectives:**

- Alter the park's interpretive and educational programs to keep pace with any changes in park resources, size or facilities.
- Develop interpretive features/facilities in the park to provide permanent and temporary exhibit spaces for highlighting the park's history, themes and resources.
- Explore traditional, new, and innovative technologies and techniques for use in the park's interpretive and educational programs and facilities.
- Share resources and exchange ideas with other organizations that have related themes.

**10.GOAL: Support California State Parks' mission and policies.**

**Objectives:**

- Interpret the significance of the movement to preserve the Adobe in the 1950s.
- Interpret the continuing efforts to preserve the park's special natural and cultural resources.
- Include the State Parks Mission and logo in all training materials.
- Ensure all publication guidelines are followed.
- Follow all related policies including Equal Employment Opportunity policies.

**11.GOAL: Encourage people to recognize and preserve the park and its resources.**

**Objectives:**

- Create opportunities for visitors to learn how to help protect the natural and cultural resources of the park.
- Encourage visitors to safely pursue compatible uses in the park.
- Interpret the relationships between people and the park's listed endangered or threatened species.
- Create opportunities for public involvement in park programs.
- Build positive public recognition for the park, its ongoing activities and future development plans.
- Create opportunities for strong community partnerships.
- Continue to nurture, coach and guide the Ide Adobe Interpretive Association.

**12.GOAL: Create long-term strategies for interpretive programming.**

**Objectives:**

- Utilize interpretive planning teams to develop or update interpretive plans and historic reports.

- Develop park training manual(s) to standardize, inform, and direct staff, docents and volunteers about the park's history, sites, and significant stories, landscapes, historic crafts and trades, interpretive methods, park media, accessibility, and park values.
- Schedule regular program evaluations and interpretive training for all staff, docents and volunteers.
- Evaluate visitor and management interests for interpretive programming to determine the most effective way to allocate resources and staff.
- Periodically encourage teacher feedback and review to advise park staff on interpretive programming.
- Encourage cultural organizations to aid in development of park interpretive programs emphasizing the contributions of California's ethnic and cultural groups.
- Establish a volunteer advisory committee to encourage volunteer participation in the park.
- Evaluate new forms of interpretive media to determine the most effective methods for communicating messages.
- Encourage participation of the Ide Adobe Interpretive Association in supporting and funding interpretive programs and activities.
- Develop an endowment fund for support of interpretive efforts



## ● Overall Interpretive Direction

As stated in the *General Plan*:

This property was established as a state historic park in William B. Ide's name 40 years ago in 1951. While it is certain that he never owned the Adobe Ranch, the public has come to identify him with the park. Because of his importance to state history, and because Ide's house, located south of the city of Red Bluff, no longer exists, he will continue to be interpreted here. Interpretation will basically take two approaches. It shall:

2. Interpret the lifestyle that Ide and other California pioneers would have experienced between the years 1845 and c.1865 and
2. Present William B. Ide as an important figure in early California history and to development of this area.

## Park Themes

The Primary Themes that follow have been updated from the park's *General Plan*. They have been revised to conform to current interpretive standards. They are also identified in the park's draft Interpretation Master Plan. A new, overarching Unifying Theme has been created for the park. These themes will guide the development of the new exhibits in the Visitor Center. Park interpretation should make clear to the public that William B. Ide and his family never resided in the adobe house, but lived nearby, downriver at one time.

### Unifying Theme:

In the upper Sacramento Valley, adventurous pioneers endured a hardscrabble existence during the rough and tumble times of the California Gold Rush and the years that followed.

### Primary Theme:

Emigrants to California struggled and adapted to life on the frontier.

### Supporting Themes:

- As with today, adventurous mid-19<sup>th</sup> century inhabitants, settlers and travelers through the Adobe Ranch area represented California's rich diversity.
- Determined emigrants and gold seekers braved the hazardous journeys to come to California.
- Self-sufficient pioneers employed their skills to transform the area around the Adobe Ranch, and California's frontier.

- The Adobe Ranch and the Red Bluffs area developed into a transportation nexus for riverboats, ferries, pack teams, freighters, stage lines, and today's cars.
- The adobe ferry offered a safe and dependable river crossing.
- The Adobe Ranch changed hands many times, as settlers moved on, seeking new opportunities.

**Primary Theme:**

William B. Ide played a pivotal role in California's independence.

**Supporting Themes:**

- William B. Ide served as a leader in the Bear Flag Revolt.
- Like other pioneers, Ide took advantage of the many opportunities available to him in California and the Red Bluff area.
- The inaccurate story of William B. Ide living at the Adobe House is an example of how written history can change.

**Secondary Theme:**

The park's unique oak woodland and riparian area broadens understanding of the natural environment of the Sacramento River.

**Supporting Themes:**

- One of California's most fragile ecosystems is represented here.
- The mighty Valley Oaks are in decline and need to be preserved for future generations.

**Secondary Theme:**

Little evidence remains of the once thriving California River Nomlaki Indian communities who lived in this area.

**Supporting Themes**

- Exposure to the first Explorer's diseases caused many of the River Nomlaki to perish.
- When gold seekers came to settle, they waged a campaign of annihilation and submission on the River Nomlaki.

## Interpretive Periods

The 1990 *General Plan* set the interpretive periods. They are as follows:

**Primary Interpretive Period: 1845—c.1865**

The primary interpretive period for William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park shall be from 1845 to c.1865. This timeframe encompassed William B. Ide's arrival in California; his settlement in the northern part of the Sacramento Valley; his

involvement with the Bear Flag Revolt; his service as a treasurer, district attorney, judge and deputy clerk for historic Colusi County; his death in 1852; construction and use of the adobe house on this property; and development and operation of a ferry, until its relocation to Red Bluff.

**Secondary Interpretive Period: 1796–1856**

A secondary period encompasses the birth of William B. Ide and his life prior to his arrival in California.

**Secondary Interpretive Period: 1951–Present**

The department’s efforts to restore the property will be encompassed in this secondary interpretive period.

**Secondary Interpretive Period: 1857–1950**

New research has demonstrated that the period between 1857 and 1950 is also of importance to the Adobe Ranch’s history and to the park and should be represented as a secondary interpretive period.

## **Educational Content Standards**

Interpretive and educational exhibits will relate to many curriculum frameworks and content standards established by the California Department of Education. Exhibits will offer students informative and hands-on learning that emphasizes the experiences associated with early California settlers. Applicable standards are listed below.

### **California Social Science and History Educational Content Standards**

#### *3<sup>rd</sup> Grade*

- 3.1 Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.
  
- 3.3 Students draw from historical and community resources to organize the sequence of local historical events and describe how each period of settlement left its mark on the land.

#### *4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

- 4.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.
  
- 4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood.

- 4.3.1 Identify the locations of Mexican settlements in California and those of other settlements, including Fort Ross and Sutter’s Fort.
- 4.3.2 Compare how and why people traveled to California and the routes they traveled (e.g., James Beckwourth, John Bidwell, John C. Frémont, Pío Pico).
- 4.3.3 Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics and physical environment (e.g. using biographies of John Sutter, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Louise Clapp).
- 4.4 Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power, tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850s.
- 4.4.2 Explain how the Gold Rush transformed the economy of California, including the types of products produced and consumed, changes in towns, (e.g. Sacramento, San Francisco), and economic conflict between diverse groups of people.

*5<sup>th</sup> Grade*

- 5.8 Students trace the colonization, immigration, and settlement patterns of the American people from 1789 to the mid-1800s, with emphasis on the role of economic incentives, effects of the physical and political geography, and transportation systems.

*8<sup>th</sup> Grade*

- 8.8 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.

**Historical and Social Science Analysis Skills**

*9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grades*

*Chronological and Spatial Thinking*

1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
2. Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.
3. Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration, changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns, the frictions that develop

between population groups, and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.

### *Historical Interpretation*

2. Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitation on determining cause and effect.
3. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.
4. Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.

## California Theater Arts Educational Content Standards

### *4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

- 4.1 Dramatize events in California history

## English Educational Content Standards

### *4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

#### Listening and Speaking Strategies - *Comprehension*

- 1.1. Ask thoughtful questions and respond to relevant questions with appropriate elaboration in oral settings.

### *5<sup>th</sup> Grade*

#### *Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials) Structural Features of Informational Materials*

- 2.2 Analyze text that is organized in sequential or chronological order.

### *6<sup>th</sup> Grade*

#### Listening and Speaking Strategies - *Comprehension*

- 1.2 Identify the tone, mood, and emotion conveyed in the oral communication.

### *7<sup>th</sup> Grade*

#### *Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials) Structural Features of Informational Materials*

- 2.1 Understand and analyze the differences in structure and purpose between various categories of informational materials (e.g., textbooks, newspapers, instructional manuals, signs).

## ● Content and Media

### Exhibit Themes

The new exhibits in the Visitor Center at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park will principally feature the themes listed below. Background information and further direction for each of these exhibits follows in this section.

- Introduction: As with today, adventurous mid-19<sup>th</sup> century settlers and travelers through the Adobe Ranch area represented California's rich diversity.
- The Way to California: Determined emigrants and gold seekers braved hazardous journeys to come to California.
- Pioneer Skills: Self-sufficient pioneers employed their skills to transform the area around the Adobe Ranch, as well as California's frontier.
- Transportation Nexus: The Adobe Ranch and the Red Bluffs area evolved as a transportation nexus for riverboats, pack teams, freighters, stage lines, ferries, and today's cars.
- The Adobe Ranch Through Time: Over the years, the Adobe Ranch changed hands many times, as its owners sought different opportunities. It eventually became a state park.
- Ide's Story: William B. Ide personified the "pioneer spirit" typical of early settlers.
- The Park Today: History comes to life at William B. Ide Adobe SHP through the environmental learning program, tours, living history events and fun celebrations.

### Special Concerns

A number of special concerns will be addressed through this exhibit project's development. Many of them are listed below.

- For their protection and preservation, access to or the touching of easily damaged objects will be minimized.
- Whenever feasible, appropriate objects that may be handled by the public will be incorporated into the exhibits.
- Reproduction objects will be used in all hands-on applications.



- Historic artifacts may be incorporated into the new exhibits.
- All interpretive spaces and media shall be accessible, including video captioning.
- Additional energy-efficient interior lighting with ultraviolet and heat protection will provide a safe, inviting environment that enhances the exhibits.
- Electrical needs should be assessed as they relate to the proposed exhibits.
- Carpeting will be impacted by the relocation of the existing contact counter.
- Consideration should be given to maximizing the exhibit space by using the full height (e.g. ceiling, soffit, etc.) and depth of the room.
- Exhibits will focus on all ages, but will give special consideration to school students and the California State Educational Content Standards (noted previously). The facilities will address their level of understanding and needs.
- Visitor flow should be clearly indicated by the exhibits.
- While doors may be hidden, exhibits will not obstruct the doorways on the south and east walls or the windows of the Visitor Center.
- A larger sales counter and display area is needed for the museum store, as well as different methods for displaying merchandise.
- As the room is small, the entrance area will have to serve multiple purposes—welcoming visitors, a contact counter, as an assembly area, an orientation to the exhibits and as an entrance to the museum sales area.
- Consideration should be given to leaving the ox yoke in its current location near the entrance.

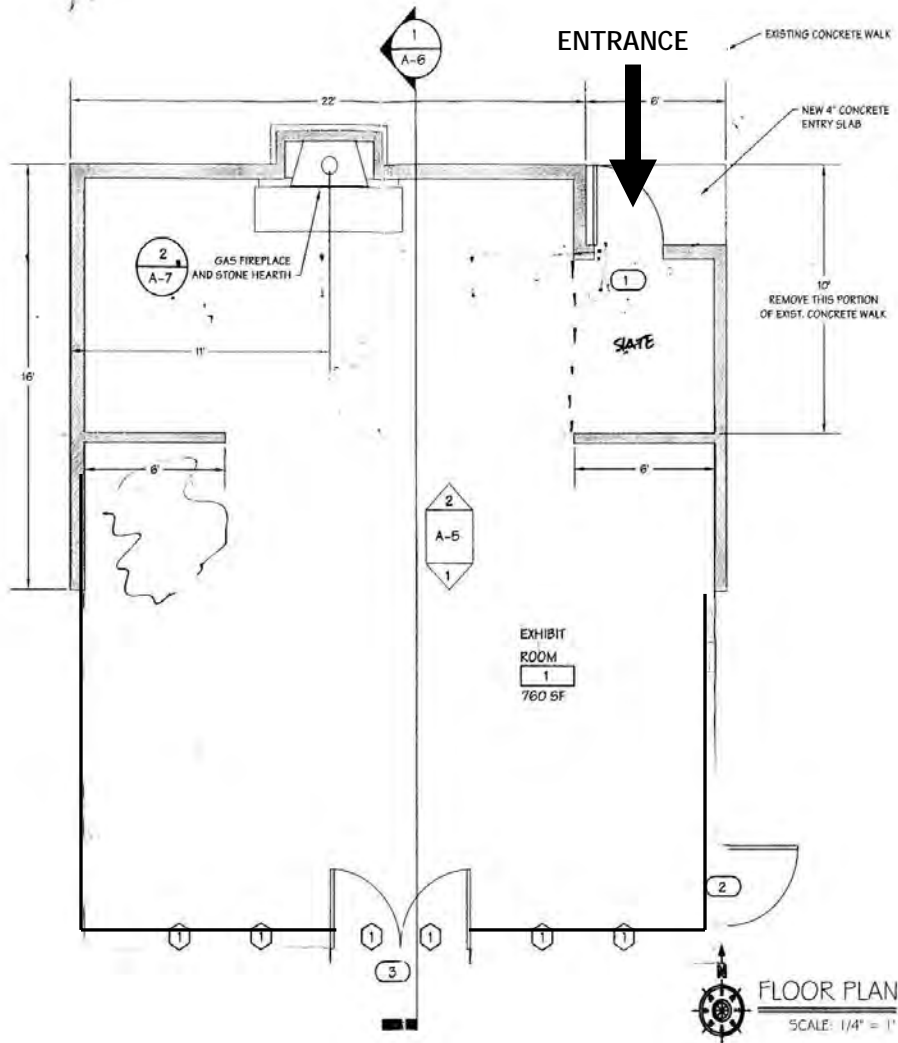
## Visitor Circulation

Due to the limited size (760 square feet) and the square shape of the building area to be used for exhibits, visitor movement will be difficult to predict. However, a counterclockwise chronological flow through the interpretive media is projected as the most obvious path. Upon entering the building, visitors must immediately turn to the right.

Controlling visitor flow will be a challenge. The center of the room should be used for the placement of freestanding exhibits, which will help to better direct visitors. It

will also enable an element of surprise, so that visitors do not see everything upon their entry to the visitor center.

Also, it is proposed that the current contact counter and interpretive sales area be relocated to the front of the building to the left of the room's fireplace. Visitors will immediately see the counter upon their entry into the room. This will allow space for the assembly of groups, as well as provide a welcoming environment for visitors.



Visitor Center Floor Plan

## Exhibit Space Allocation

The diagram on the following page indicates how themes will relate to one another and the percentages of the Visitor Center's overall space to be allocated for each of the exhibit stations. This should help determine exhibit placement and the relative importance of the stories to be represented.

Note that the areas required for visitor entry, group assembly, the contact counter and interpretive sales, and accessible walkways have not been included in this diagram. That space will be taken from the total square footage of the room at the outset of the planning, before space is assigned for each of the exhibits.

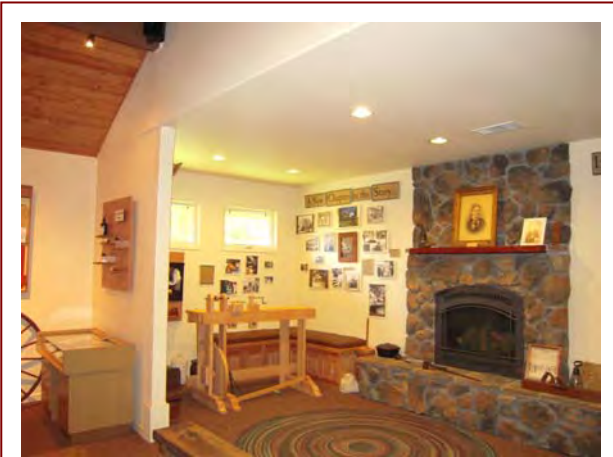


Space Allocation for the William B. Ide Adobe Visitor Center Exhibits

Recent views of the Visitor Center's interior at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park



Looking toward the entrance door (left) on the north wall



View of the fireplace and alcove on the north and west walls



A view of the southwestern corner of the building's interpretive area



The area of the room with the current contact counter (to the left). Exhibits will not be allowed to obstruct the doorways on the southern or the eastern walls of the room.



View of the existing contact counter and sales area along the eastern and southern walls of the Visitor Center



# Visitor Center Exhibit Stations

## Area 1: Welcome & Introduction

Space Allocation: 15%

### Theme:

As with today, adventurous mid-19<sup>th</sup> century inhabitants, settlers and travelers through the Adobe Ranch area represented California's rich diversity.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

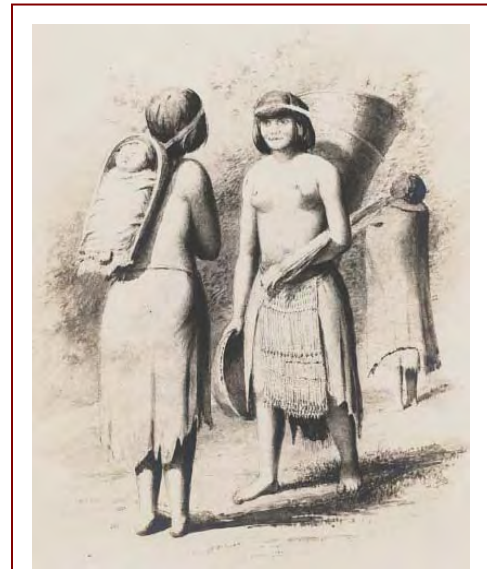
- Feel invited to explore the exhibits
- Be introduced to the area's early residents and travelers
- Relate to the diversity of California's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century population

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

The Sacramento Valley has always played host to culturally diverse, often transient populations. There is evidence of the passage and settlement of many people through the Red Bluff area before written records.

#### *Indian Explorers*

Northern California's earliest explorers and settlers, later named California Indians, came into the region in successive waves beginning perhaps 15,000 years ago. They traveled on foot over mountains, across and along rivers and through valleys. The trails they forged connected them to important natural resources—sources for their food, clothing and shelter. The routes also were used for trade, to exchange raw materials and handmade goods or for maintaining family and social relationships. Some of the most frequently traded items among California's many linguistically diverse groups included marine shells, baskets, salt, hides and pelts, bows, acorns, fish, and obsidian.<sup>1</sup>

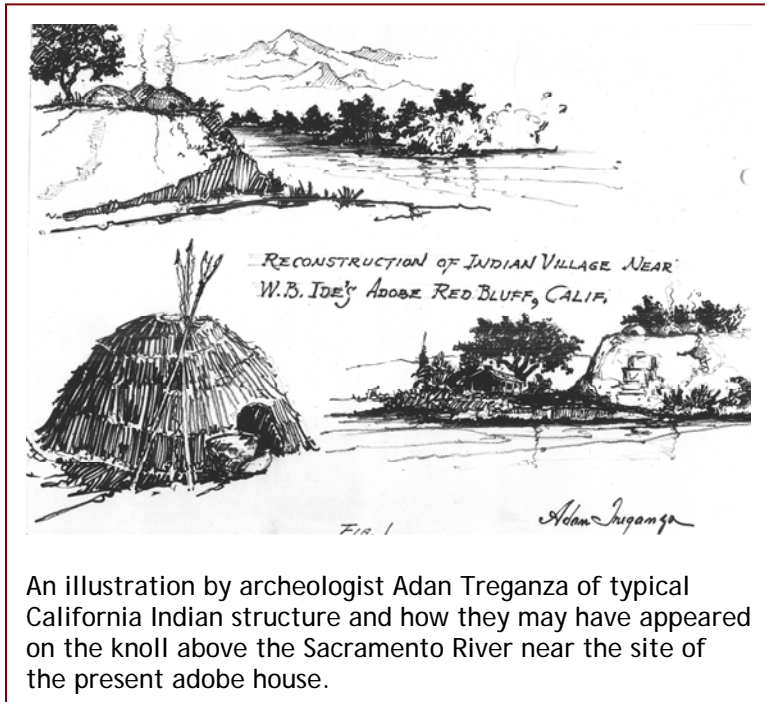


Two California Indian women meet.  
Drawn by Henry B. Brown, c.1852.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>1</sup> Robert F. Heizer, "Trade and Trails," *Handbook of North American Indians: California*. Vol. 8. Robert F. Heizer, ed. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978. P. 691.

The River Nomlaki Native Americans have lived near the Sacramento River near present-day Red Bluff for countless generations. They were organized into two groups: the northern *memwaylaka*, and the *puymok*, to the east. The term Nomlaki comes from the name *nomlaka* meaning west language, referring to the Thomas Creek Hill Nomlaki, *nomkewel*, west people. Alternative spellings include Noamlaki, Nomee Lacks, Nome Lackees, Numleki, Nomalackie, and Tehama.<sup>2</sup>

At William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park, there is evidence that the nearby oak-covered knoll above the adobe house was used by California Indians as a camp site.<sup>3</sup>



An illustration by archeologist Adan Treganza of typical California Indian structure and how they may have appeared on the knoll above the Sacramento River near the site of the present adobe house.

Archeologist Adan Treganza noted three shallow house pit depressions in a survey of the site, as well as a slight discoloration of the soil and numerous obsidian flakes. He determined the site probably had not been used for any great length of time, but may have been occupied seasonally for hunting, gathering and acorn processing.

A large fresh water clam bed lay nearby below Dibble Creek on the Sacramento River. Property owner A.R. "Bert" Mount recalled in a letter dated August 17, 1967:

...there was a sort of ridge or high spot near the river side of the flat that was covered with black broken burnt rock and lots of clam shells... Evidently the Indians went there and got clams and brought them to this high spot and got large rocks from the creek bed and heated them in the fire and dumped the hot rocks into vessels of water containing clams to cook them and the hot rocks would break when they hit the cold water.

The River Nomlaki utilized the area's abundant natural resources for survival. They traded with neighboring groups, including the Hill Nomlaki to the west, and were part of the exchange route that extended from the Oregon border to the San Francisco Bay. Their population prior to contact with white explorers is believed to have been more than 2000 individuals.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Goldschmidt, "Nomlaki," *Handbook of the North American Indians, California*. Vol. 8. Robert F. Heizer, ed. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978. Pp. 347-349.

<sup>3</sup> Adan E. Treganza, "Archeological Investigations at the William B. Ide Adobe, Red Bluff, California," MS. Berkeley: University of California, Department of Anthropology, Archeological Survey, 1958. P. 16.

Jedediah Smith's trapping expeditions of in 1828 and later Ewing Young's in 1832, traveled through the area. Young's party encountered the Nomlaki people as they moved north. They observed people curing salmon and living in villages. In 1833, upon the parties' return trip, 75% of the Nomlaki population had died from exposure to the diseases introduced by the trappers.<sup>4</sup> A malaria epidemic in 1833 was one of many devastating blows to the native population.

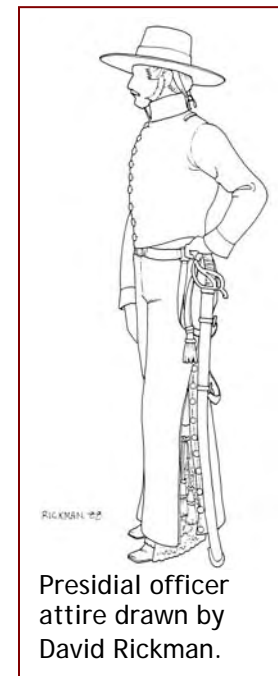
As more newcomers moved through the area, disease and displacement reduced the Nomlaki's numbers further. In 1854, the United States government established the Nome Lakee Indian Military Post Reservation near Paskenta.<sup>5</sup> It encompassed 25,000 acres and continued until 1863, when white settlers took control over the land. The Nomlaki were removed to the Mendocino County Round Valley Reservation, in Yuki territory. However, as the Yuki were a major enemy of the Nomlaki, some chose to move back to their traditional lands. They established small settlements and struggled to survive in the culture of the new populations that now occupied their homeland. They established three small rancherias: Grindstone, Newville and Paskenta.

In 1994, The Federal Government restored them to full tribal status, and in 2000, they purchased a 2000-acre reservation near Corning, California.<sup>6</sup> The Nomlaki today are the Paskenta Band of the Nomlaki Indians and they operate the Rolling Hills Casino in Corning.<sup>7</sup> Revenues from the Casino will continue to assist the Nomlaki in rebuilding their lives.

The footpaths and trails that the native people of California established became the routes followed by later explorers and the basis for many 19<sup>th</sup> century roads and the modern highways of today.

### *"The Last Spanish Expedition"*

About the time that American colonists were rebelling against England, a handful of Spaniards began to reinforce their King's claim to California by establishing missions. Each was developed to not only convert its native people to Roman Catholicism, but also to gain control over the territory's resources.<sup>8</sup> *Padres* selected sites for missions where large Indian populations already existed.



<sup>4</sup> Vestra Resources, Inc., *Tehama West Watershed Assessment Executive Summary*. Tehama County Resource Conservation District, April 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Goldschmidt, *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Tribal Information on the Paskenta Band of the Nomlaki Indians, <http://www.rollinghillscasino.com/tribal.htm>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> The first Spanish mission established in Alta California (Upper California) was begun in 1769 at San Diego.



Spanish explorers roamed the central valley looking for potential mission sites, as well as to understand the geography of Alta California. Among them, Luís Antonio Argüello was the first and last Spaniard to explore and document his experiences in the northern Central Valley area near what would become Red Bluff.<sup>9</sup> In October 1821, Argüello set out to investigate whether or not “foreigners” (most likely Russians) were settling in the territory. His party, known as “The Last Spanish Expedition in California,” consisted of 70 men and 235 animals.<sup>10</sup>



Tombstone of Luís Antonio Argüello at Mission Dolores in San Francisco.

They traveled up the valley to a point where they saw “Los Quates” or “the Twins.” Argüello stated that the Twins were “in essence very much alike in their size and form and are almost joined.”<sup>11</sup> There remains a question today about what mountains Argüello was describing. It has been speculated by historians that he was referring to the view of Mount Lassen and Brokeoff Mountain from a point near Red Bluff. Argüello’s expedition very probably traveled as far north as Cottonwood Creek.<sup>12</sup> However, no missions were established later by Spain in California’s Central Valley. This may have been because the populations of California Indians encountered by Argüello’s party were considerably smaller than before Spanish settlement.

Although the Spanish exploring party did not linger long in the area, the diseases unknowingly carried by them and others into California, including sailors, trappers and settlers, proved devastating. They created fearful

epidemics affecting countless coastal and inland communities of native people, who had little or no resistance to them. Thousands succumbed to syphilis, consumption, small pox, dysentery, pleurisy and other ailments. In the 1880s historian Hubert Howe Bancroft estimated that they had swept away three-fifths of the native population of the Sacramento Valley.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> According to James D. Hart’s *A Companion to California*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. P. 17: Luís Antonio Argüello (1784-1830) was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mexican governor of Alta California (1822-25) and the first native-born Californian to hold that office. He entered the military in San Francisco as a cadet (1799). As a young captain (1817) he succeeded his father, José Darío Argüello, as *comandante* of San Francisco, remaining in that post until he became governor. He presided during the transition from the Iturbide empire of Mexico to the new Mexican republic, of which California became a territory.

<sup>10</sup> *The Diary of Captain Luis Antonio Argüello 1821: The Last Spanish Expedition in California*, Translated by Vivian C. Fischer. Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, Friends of The Bancroft Library, 1992. <http://www.siskiyous.edu/shasta/bib/B5.htm>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Mildred Brooke Hoover, Hero Eugene Rensch & Ethel Grace Rensch, *Historic Spots in California*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962. Pp. 183-184.

<sup>13</sup> *California Pastoral, 1769-1848. The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*. Vol. XXXIV. San Francisco: The History Company, 1888. Pp. 616-617.

## *Fur Trappers*

More foreigners began trickling into the Central Valley in the late 1820s to take advantage of California's rich resources. Some came overland by way of the Rocky Mountains, where an annual "rendezvous" held between 1825 and 1840 brought together a gathering of trappers and Indians. New York-born mountain man and explorer Jedediah Strong Smith (1799-1831) and his party of 17 beaver trappers were first to open the South Pass (Wyoming) route to the Far West in 1826. At the time, he was 27 years old.

Smith had legendary courage and wilderness savvy. Unlike his boisterous companions with their long beards and drinking ways, he imagined himself as St. Paul, bringing Christianity to the frontier. He neither smoked, drank or slept with Indian women. He shaved every day and read the Bible each night by the light of the campfire.<sup>14</sup>

As a co-owner of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co., he traveled with his beaver-trapping companions from Salt Lake in 1826 and then, led by two Indians who had escaped from Mission San Gabriel in Alta California, across the Mojave Desert to California.<sup>15 16</sup>



Portrait of Jedediah Strong Smith, c. 1835, drawn after his death by a friend from memory. Courtesy of Wikimedia.

Governor Echeandía detained him and ordered him to leave California by the same route he had entered. Instead, Smith headed up the Central Valley [via the Tejon Pass] and trapped his way north. Leaving a band of his men at the Stanislaus River, he crossed the Sierra Nevada by the river's north fork [in 1827, becoming the first party of whites to traverse the Sierra Nevada], crossed the Great Basin, and arrived in the Rockies in time for the next rendezvous. He soon returned to California with a larger party and rejoined his men along the Stanislaus River. The Mojave Indians had attacked him [killing 10 of his 18 men] and seized his supplies, so he went to Mission San José in search of more.

There he was jailed and questioned by Ignacio Martínez of the San Francisco *presidio*... Smith was then sent to Monterey and questioned by a very skeptical Echeandía. He was released only when a group of Anglo-American merchants to

the town posted bond for him. Echeandía ordered that Smith be taken to Sonoma under military guard and from there escorted out of

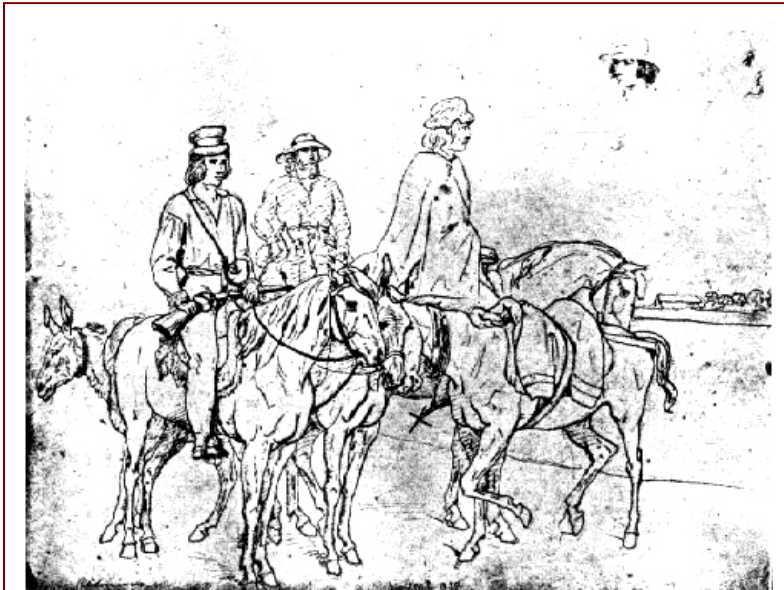
<sup>14</sup> Del Wilcox, *Voyagers to California*. Elk, Calif.: Sea Rock Press, 1991. P.109.

<sup>15</sup> James D. Hart, *A Companion to California*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. P. 410.

<sup>16</sup> Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, eds. *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846*. Berkeley: Heydey Books, 2001. P.357.

California. Former governor Luis Antonio Argüello, also at San Francisco, assisted Smith in arranging for supplies for the journey at Mission San José. When Smith expressed a desire to return through the fur-rich Central Valley, rather than on the route Echeandía had prescribed, Argüello insisted that he had to follow the governor's orders. So Smith simply snuck out of San José one night on his own.<sup>17</sup>

On December 30, 1827, Smith and his men, in his words "returned again to the woods, the river, the prairie, the Camp and the Game."<sup>18</sup> In 1828, Smith's trapping party



Trapping party drawn by Swiss artist Rudolph Friedrich Kurtz, 1851. From [www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/images/kurz/](http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/images/kurz/)

followed the Sacramento River north and made the first recorded journey by land up to the northwestern coast of California into Oregon. Smith's pioneering expeditions overland to California and within the territory made the inland valleys known to more fur trappers and through them, to American settlers.<sup>19</sup>

Hudson's Bay Company trappers from the north followed much the same general course during the years that followed from 1830 to 1845.

Americans were not the only trappers to penetrate California's borders in the 1830s. Britain's Hudson's Bay Company, enjoying a monopoly of the Canadian fur trade after merging with rival North West Company in 1821, began sending annual expeditions to hunt beaver in the streams of the Central Valley in the mid-1830s. In early 1841 it established a store and warehouse alongside William A. Richardson's trading post in Yerba Buena [later named San Francisco]. There was talk in England of a possible annexation of California.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration & Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966. P. 137.

<sup>19</sup> According to James D. Hart, *Ibid.* P. 410: "Three years later, while still a young man, he was killed by Comanches in New Mexico. The Smith River in the extreme northwest corner of California honors him, as does the Jedediah Smith State Park of the Redwood National Park."

<sup>20</sup> Joshua Paddison, ed. *A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California Before the Gold Rush*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1999. P. 220.

According to historian Dr. Joseph A. McGowan,

Hundreds of trappers moved up and down the valley in the 1830's. Hudson's Bay Company brigades came annually from the Columbia [River] as a result of Jed Smith's reports on the valley. Each of these brigades consisted of sixty to one hundred persons. The John Work party of 1832-1833, for example, had twenty-eight men, twenty-seven women, forty-four children, and six Indians, while the Lafromboise group had eighteen men, twelve women, sixteen children, and seventeen Indians... The brigades included several French-Canadian trappers who named the [Sutter] Buttes (small hills) and after whom French Camp (near Stockton) and other places were named. In 1837 an American trapper, who had finally settled in Oregon, even drove over 600 head of cattle up the valley for his new ranch, indicating how well traveled the road to the Columbia was.<sup>21</sup>

The trapper explorers forged the California and Oregon trails and revived the Old Spanish Trail in Southern California.

This old Sacramento Valley route, known at first as the California-Oregon Trail and, later, as the California-Oregon Road, was soon beaten into a well-defined path by such trappers and explorers as Ewing Young, Lieutenant Emmons of the Wilkes Expedition, Joseph Gale, and many others. Sometimes proceeding all the way down the western side of the river, and at other times crossing over to the east side somewhere between Red Bluff and Tehama (a variation used most frequently by the gold-seekers of '49 and the '50's), this historic road was traversed by a long succession of pack-mule trains, horsemen and footmen, herds of cattle and sheep, slow and cumbersome oxtams and covered wagons...<sup>22</sup>

While not interested in wagon routes or permanent settlement, the discoveries and information gained by the trapping parties found their way to the geographers, cartographers and scientists of the time. This information, in turn, was transformed into maps and written accounts of the region, providing helpful information to a growing number of foreign settlers intent on coming to California.

### *Newcomers*

American and other foreign settlers came on the heels of the mountain men, eager to make a fresh start in California. Many were not interested in becoming Mexican citizens.

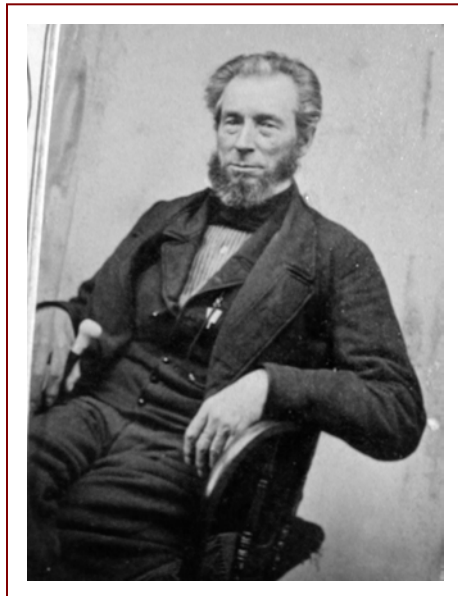
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<sup>21</sup> Joseph A. McGowan, *The Sacramento Valley: A Student's Guide to Localized History*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1967. P. 7-8.

<sup>22</sup> Hoover, Rensch & Rensch, *Ibid*. P. 184.

Like the mountain men who had forged their trails, most overland emigrants resisted integration into Spanish-speaking communities. Bringing their families and neighbors with them, these Americans created their own farm colonies segregated from Californio culture [along the coast]. In 1841 fewer than 400 foreigners from the U.S. and Europe lived in California; over the next seven years that number would steadily rise to about 7,000, outnumbering the Californio population.<sup>23</sup>

Among the newcomer settlers in the Red Bluff area was Massachusetts-born William B. Ide. In 1845, he headed west toward Oregon from Independence,



Two images—one young, the other older—reputed to be of William B. Ide

Missouri with his family. The Ide party consisted of thirteen people: William B. Ide and his wife Susan with their children James, William J., Sarah, Daniel, and Lemuel, a young boy named Thomas Crafton, and five young men who helped drive the teams for their board and passage. Their cattle numbered 165, including 28 working oxen.<sup>24</sup>

On the advice of mountain man Caleb Greenwood at Fort Hall, Ide changed his direction, deciding to travel to Alta California at the time a province of Mexico, instead of Oregon.<sup>25</sup> Daughter Sarah later wrote: “While there [at Fort Hall] Father changed his plan—concluded to go to California: but first, before definitely settling the question, put it to vote of his company, and they voted for California instead of Oregon.”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Paddison, *Ibid.* P. 259.

<sup>24</sup> Louis W. Flanders, M.D. Simeon Ide and Edith F. Dunbar, *A Genealogy of the Ide Family*. Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1931. P. 30.

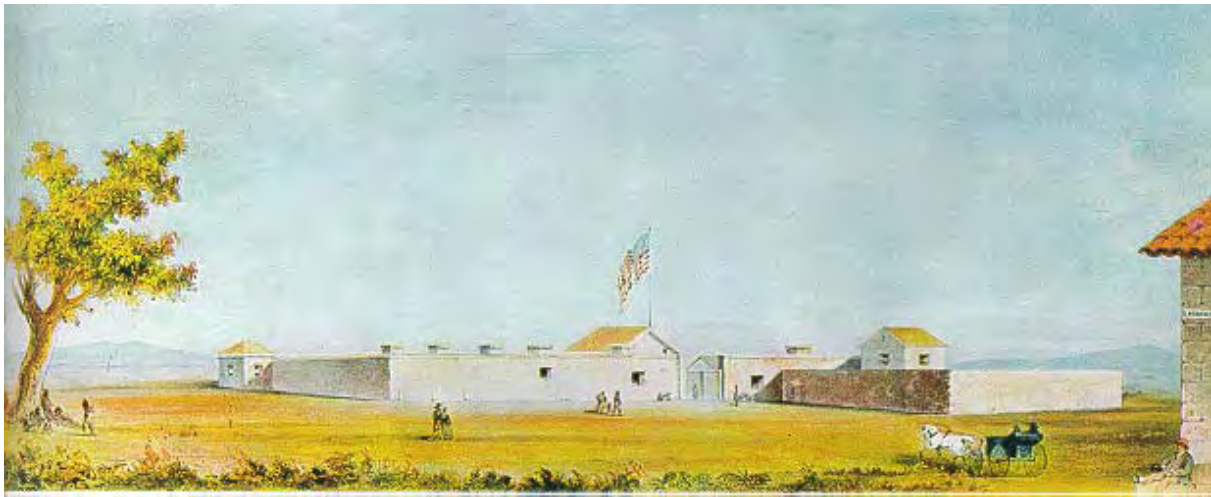
<sup>25</sup> John Sutter directed Caleb Greenwood to Fort Hall to help turn Oregon-bound immigrants toward California.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* P. 33.



After a laborious overland journey, they arrived on October 25, 1845 at Johann August Sutter's Fort in the Sacramento Valley.<sup>27</sup> Sutter's Fort became *the* destination for many overland emigrants to California. Only a few years before, German-born Sutter, who had been reared in Switzerland, had

...arrived in Monterey in 1839 and, calling himself Captain John Sutter of "the Royal Swiss Guard of France," managed to secure a gigantic, 48,000-acre grant of land in the Sacramento Valley. At the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers he established a large fort, cattle ranch, and farm he dubbed New Helvetia [New Switzerland], maintained by Hawaiian and Indian servants... Beginning with [John] Bidwell in 1841, Sutter employed a growing number of American emigrants, as well as dispatched supplies to help wagon trains in trouble in the Sierra and sold land to new settlers once they arrived.<sup>28</sup>



Sutter's Fort painted in 1847. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Sutter's Fort became *the* destination in California's interior where American explorers, soldiers, and immigrants could rest and replenish their supplies.<sup>29</sup>

New Helvetia lay at the terminus of the main westward trails. Sutter encouraged American migration along these trails and frequently sent supplies east over the Sierra to emigrant parties in trouble, receiving them with warm hospitality when they arrived. He gave them work, sold them land, leased them Indian laborers, gave them passports, and otherwise promoted the advance of the American frontier.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* P. 43.

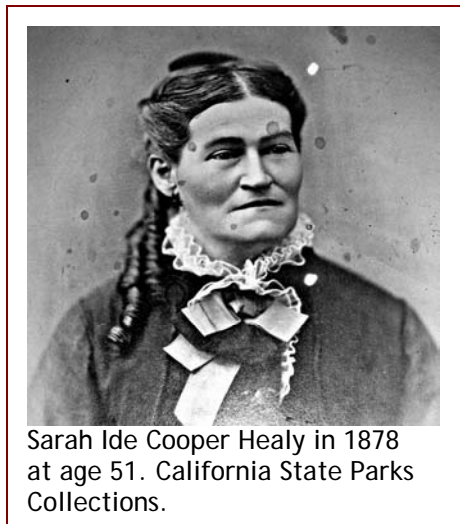
<sup>28</sup> Paddison, *Ibid.* P. 260.

<sup>29</sup> However even before the discovery of gold in 1848, Sutter was land poor and chronically had difficulty in paying his bills.

<sup>30</sup> Richard B. Rice, William A. Bullough, and Richard Orsi, *The Elusive Eden: A New History of California*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1996. P. 155.

While at Sutter's Fort, Ide met Peter Lassen, who owned a large tract of land on Deer Creek approximately 130 miles up the Sacramento Valley from the fort. Lassen offered Ide a cabin in which to spend the winter in exchange for help with building a sawmill on the property. Ide moved to the cabin, but a week later Lassen brought another family to live there, forcing Ide to leave. Sarah Ide, who was 18 years of age at the time, remembered:<sup>31</sup>

This was about the middle of November, 1845. We packed every thing into our wagons; and, getting our cattle together, started up river and forded it. After going about seven miles, we came to a camp of one family, (a Mr. Tusting)... We camped near them. They being very anxious to have us remain with them all winter. As the rainy season had already commenced, the weather was stormy. Father, with two other men, built a log-cabin. All of us lived in it until April 1846.<sup>32</sup>



Sarah Ide Cooper Healy in 1878 at age 51. California State Parks Collections.

Sarah further recalled the winter spent in the cabin:

There were eight in our family, including a Mr. Tustin, his wife and child.--Three young men—a Mr. Boker, having charge of Mr. Thome's cattle and horses—a Mr. Belden, an Eastern gentleman, and a Mr. Pitts, who were weather-bound and were of course some company to us, we all lived in a log-cabin several months. One of these men, [Josiah Belden] owned the farm now known as the "Ide Rancho".<sup>33</sup>

Josiah Belden had a Mexican land grant north of the Thomes Ranch. He offered Ide the northern half of his ranch if Ide would manage the entire grant for three years. An agreement to this effect was signed in April 1846, and the Ide family moved to a partially finished log cabin on the Rancho Las Baulinas, later called El Rancho de la Barranca Colorada. This name was derived from Red Bank Creek, which served as the northern boundary of Belden's grant.<sup>34</sup> Ide later bought a third of the southern part of Belden's rancho.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> According to Louis W. Flanders, Simeon Ide and Edith F. Dunbar, *A Genealogy of the Ide Family*. Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1931. P. 237: Sarah Elizabeth Ide was born November 1, 1827 at Newfane, Vermont and died April 1904 in California. She married William Cooper and then Lucien B. Healy.

<sup>32</sup> Flanders, Ide and Dunbar, *Ibid*. P. 46.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*. P. 48

<sup>34</sup> On page 208 of Book "A" for Butte and Colusa counties reads: "Deed to Las Baulinas Rancho." Josiah Belden and wife Sarah Margaret, sold for \$3,000.00 U.S. coin, to William B. Ide, April 12, 1849, the undivided north one half (½) 8,856 acres, of Rancho de la Baulinas, consisting of four Mexican leagues. Bounded on the north by Rio Colorado Barranca (Red Bank Creek), on the east by the Sacramento River, on the south by the land I reserve for myself, and on the west by vacant or unoccupied land."

The arrival of growing numbers of well-armed American immigrants in the interior of California was unsettling to the Mexican government. In 1846, about thirty men acting on a rumor that the Mexican government was threatening to expel all non-Mexican citizens, conducted what became known as the Bear Flag Revolt. On June 14<sup>th</sup>, William B. Ide and other recent emigrants seized the *pueblo* of Sonoma, capturing the Mexican Commandante of Northern California, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (who actually supported American annexation). On June 15<sup>th</sup>, Ide produced a proclamation he had written the night before. According to historian Walton Bean,

Ide had once been a Yankee schoolteacher, and he loved the traditions of the embattled farmers at Lexington and Concord. He wrote a flowery and somewhat eccentric proclamation, solemnly though not deliberately misrepresenting most of the circumstances. He remained under the impression that he had “conquered California.”<sup>36</sup>

By noon on June 17<sup>th</sup>, the rebels had raised a new, California Bear Flag, proclaiming the Mexican province to be the California Republic. Ide was chosen to serve as commander. The Bear Flag Republic lasted until July 9, 1846—just 25 days, when the flag of the United States was raised in the Plaza of Sonoma. Ide and the other “Bear Flaggers” joined John C. Frémont and United States armed forces in taking possession of California from Mexico.



The first California Bear Flag

The conquest over, William B. Ide returned to his cabin on the Sacramento River that November, eventually to become the owner of the Rancho La Barranca Colorado. His desire for prestige and influence was finally satisfied when Colusi County was formed in 1850 (including the present counties of Colusa, Tehama, and Glenn). In a brief but satisfying two years before his death from smallpox in 1852, Ide held, at various times, the following county positions: associate justice and member of the Court of Sessions, county judge, deputy county clerk, county treasurer, county clerk, clerk of the Ninth District Court, clerk of the County Court and the Court of Sessions, clerk of the Probate Court, county recorder, and county auditor.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *William B. Ide State Historic Park General Plan*. Sacramento, Calif.: California Department of Parks and Recreation, January, 1990. P. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978. P. 80.

<sup>37</sup> Rice, Bullough, and Orsi, *Ibid.* P. 126.



Like so many other newcomers, William B. Ide, his daughter Sarah and the rest of the family quickly adapted to California life, building a home and finding niches where they could manage their own future.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:



Full-sized, two-dimensional, free-standing figures will greet visitors as they step into the lobby leading into the exhibit area—much as they do at the Wyoming National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming (pictured to the left). The figures will represent a River Nomlaki Indian woman with a baby in a cradleboard, Spanish explorer Luís Antonio Argüello, mountain man Jedediah Smith, William B. Ide and his daughter Sarah Ide, as a young girl of 18, with possibly

an ox painted in the background. Each figure will represent a significant part of the history of the area surrounding the Adobe Ranch prior to its construction.

In addition to the life-sized figures, there will be a low-profile panel bar for text and graphics to offer information about the people represented. Text will be brief and focused to provide a quick overview, as well as a welcome to the park and to the Visitor Center. Historic images and other materials will be used to supplement and enhance the text.

### **Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:**

The historic ox yoke hanging in the entrance area will remain at its current location to help communicate the idea of early pioneer travelers who came from elsewhere and settled in the Red Bluff area.

The two-dimensional figures developed for the introductory exhibit will be based upon the best information and historic images available about what these individuals may have looked like. There are few actual portraits, if any, available of them, so artistic interpretation will be needed in their visual rendering. A graphics file under separate cover will be provided to support the development of these figures.

On the text panel bar, there will be space for a few historic images and other documents to supplement the free-standing figures and text. This material will also be available in the graphics file.





"Crossing the Plains" letter sheet printed by Barber & Baker in 1853. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.



## Area 2: The Way to California

Space Allocation: 20%

Theme:

Determined emigrants and gold seekers braved hazardous journeys to come to California.

Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about the historic lure of California for people around the world.
- Appreciate the choices confronting emigrants to California and understand the important axiom, "You live with what you do."
- Visually grasp the different routes taken across oceans, waterways and overland to reach California and some of the important landmarks along the way.
- Realize the difficulties experienced on the journeys.

Background Research and/or Storyline:

### *The Lure of California*



1657 map depicting California as an island.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library

Europeans at first believed that California was an island. Early sixteenth century Spanish author Garcí Ordoñez de Montalvo imaginatively portrayed the area in his work *Las Sergas de Esplandián*:

Know ye that at the right hand of the Indies there is an island named California, very close to that part of the Terrestrial Paradise... The island itself is one of the wildest in the world on account of the bold and craggy rocks... The island everywhere abounds with gold and precious stones, and upon it no other metal was found.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Richard B. Rice, William A. Bullough, and Richard J. Orsi, *The Elusive Eden: A New History of California*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1996. P.9.

A black Amazon queen, Calafia, ruled the mythical land that Montalvo created:

Calafia, with a sword in her hand  
Worked a great damage with her Amazon troops  
And there put to death very many persons  
From among the faithful, and more of the pagans.<sup>39</sup>

Later physical exploration proved Montalvo's 1500-era fantasy description both true and erroneous. In any event, California's actual natural environment captivated its early Spanish explorers. Pedro Fages, governor of Alta California in the early 1770s, described the San Joaquin Valley as "a labyrinth of lagoons and Tulares" with "every kind of animal, terrestrial and aerial."<sup>40</sup> Father Narciso Durán, a Franciscan missionary who made several trips into the Central Valley, described the landscape near Mission San José as "like a park because of the verdure and luxuriousness of its groves and trees."<sup>41</sup>



Missions established along the coastline of Alta California. Courtesy of <http://img84.imageshack.us/img84/9448/camission s21pp7.jpg>

Beginning in 1769, Spain, hoping to reinforce its government's claim to the land, developed a mission system along California's coastline. By establishing missions, *presidios* (forts), and *pueblos* (towns), Spain intended to permanently secure the colony for itself.<sup>42</sup> Cattle, sheep and horses became important mainstays for the 21 missions built under Spanish and later Mexican rule.<sup>43</sup>

The outside world rapidly became better acquainted with California's potential. Under Mexican rule, foreign ships were permitted greater commercial freedom. American traders purchased sea otter pelts and cattle hides from Californios. Whaling ships would stop at Pacific ports to refit and acquire provisions. Foreign agents came intent on trading for cattle hides and

<sup>39</sup> Stephen Schwartz, *From West to East: California and the Making of the American Mind*. New York: The Free Press, 1998. P.15.

<sup>40</sup> Rice, Bullough, and Orsi, *Ibid.* P.54.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Any claims to the land by the indigenous Indian people were ignored.

<sup>43</sup> Mexico and with it Alta California (Upper California) became independent of Spain in 1821.

the tallow rendered from their carcasses.<sup>44</sup> Trappers, like Jedediah Smith and William Ashley, and fur trading companies, such as the Hudson's Bay Company, promoted California to the outside world, helping to elevate it as a "land of promise."<sup>45</sup>

Among the first to respond was a Swiss immigrant, John A. Sutter. Having failed in business and marriage, he fled Europe to New York in 1834. Journeying west to St. Louis, he visited Santa Fe with a trading party, then traveled overland to Oregon, took ship for Honolulu, later Sitka, before reaching San Francisco in 1839. He prevailed on the governor to grant him eleven leagues (48,400 acres) of land in and around the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers at what is today the state's capital, Sacramento. Accompanied by some Hawaiian laborers recruited in the Islands, and guided by William Heath Davis, well-known resident American business agent in San Francisco, Sutter took possession of his land. In 1840 he began construction of Sutter's Fort. In the immediate years to come, with the advent of increased overland immigration, this would become California's first "Ellis Island."<sup>46</sup>



A lithograph of John Sutter c.1850. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

During the early 1840s, waves of hardy emigrants began staking their futures in the West in Oregon and California. Some anticipated the land ultimately would become possessions of the United States.

...the first California-bound wagon train to cross the Sierra arrived after a grueling six-month trek [in 1841]. The sixty-nine-member team had followed the Oregon Trail to present-day Idaho and split up, half going on to the Oregon territory and half—led by John Bidwell and John Bartleson—following the Humboldt River into California. Oregon was the more appealing destination and attracted the majority of settlers in the early 1840s because it featured unlimited land and no bothersome Mexican government. But glowing descriptions from Bidwell and other pioneer-cum-publicists like John Marsh and Lansford W. Hastings convinced more and more emigrants to choose California.<sup>47</sup>

John Sutter with his fort and farming and trading community in the Central Valley encouraged William B. Ide and his family and many others to come to his New

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<sup>44</sup> Hides were exported to be turned into shoes on the East Coast and tallow was used to produce candles and soap.

<sup>45</sup> Rice, Bullough, and Orsi, *Ibid.* P.153.

<sup>46</sup> *A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California Before the Gold Rush.* Joshua Paddison, ed. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1999. Pp.312-313.

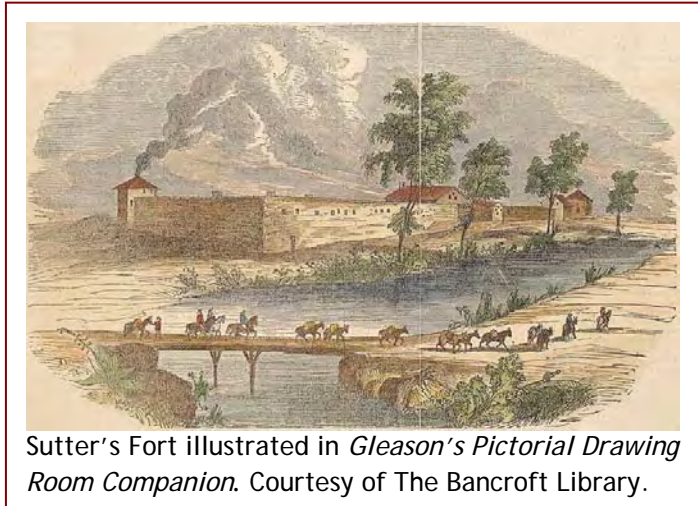
<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* P.259.



Helvetia (New Switzerland). Sutter supported the newly arrived emigrants. One of his clerks noted that he seemed to feel obligated to give employment to anyone who sought it.<sup>48</sup>

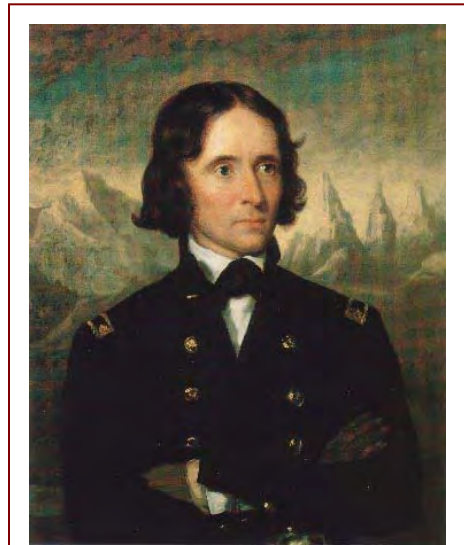
At first, more emigrants chose to settle in Oregon. From 1841 to 1848, 11,000 migrated to Oregon, with only 2,700 reaching California. But those numbers changed.

Americans began arriving in substantial numbers wanting to settle [in California], but the Mexican government was wary of their intentions. New Englanders especially tended to be haughty and Puritanical. Many were frank in revealing their conviction that California was too good to be run by Mexicans. Yankee ingenuity, industry and morality, they felt, would do wonders for



Sutter's Fort illustrated in *Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion*. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

California. The Mexicans tried to integrate the Americans by offering them huge grants of land, with two conditions: that they become naturalized Mexican citizens and be baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. Most American settlers readily agreed to these terms, but kept their private convictions.<sup>49</sup>



Capt. John Charles Frémont portrait. Courtesy of the Union League Club of Chicago.

In the United States however, some were not satisfied with Mexican hegemony over California.

In Washington, D.C. the concept of Manifest Destiny was on the rise. The American government felt an obligation to expand the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Relations between the United States and Mexico became difficult...

In 1844 a company of American explorers led by Lieutenant John Frémont,<sup>50</sup> with the famous scout Kit Carson, arrived overland

<sup>48</sup> Rice, Bullough, and Orsi, *Ibid.* Pp.154-155.

<sup>49</sup> Del Wilcox, *Voyagers to California*. Elk, California: Sea Rock Press, 1991. P.81.

<sup>50</sup> John Charles Frémont was an officer in the Topographical Corps of the U.S. Army and led several expeditions, beginning in 1843, which took him into California. He arrived at Sutter's Fort, stirred up the American settlers in the area and became a leading force in the Bear Flag Revolt in June 1846.

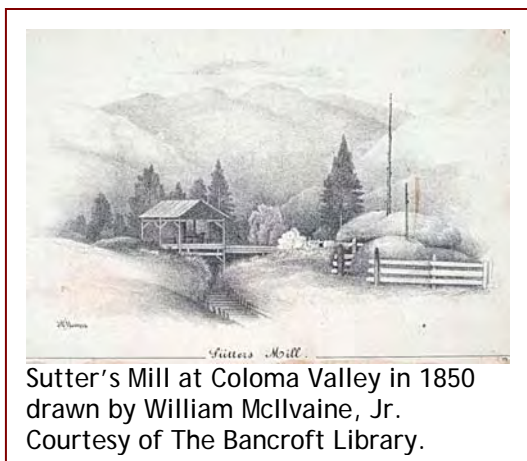
from Oregon and Nevada. Their original assignment was to find safe land routes to the West Coast.<sup>51</sup>

From 1846 to the 1850s, events rapidly altered the course of history.

Texas gained its independence from Mexico in 1836 and was annexed to the United States in 1845. This precipitated the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846-1848. President Polk had tried to buy California for \$40,000,000, but Mexico even refused to talk to his envoy. U.S. troops invaded Mexico, while Americans in California declared their independence in the Bear Flag Revolt.<sup>52</sup>

War with Mexico followed hard in California after the Bear Flag Revolt (June 10-July 9, 1846). President James Polk had signed a congressional declaration of war in Washington, D.C. on May 13<sup>th</sup>, but this was not known in California—across the continent and on the West Coast—until Commodore John D. Sloat peacefully occupied the port cities of Monterey on July 7<sup>th</sup> and San Francisco on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

Commodore Robert F. Stockton took command over the American military forces from the ailing Sloat on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Americans encountered greater resistance as the troops traveled southward. During several engagements, lives were lost on both sides. Captain José María Flores and Mexican Governor Pío Pico offered their surrender to John C. Frémont in the Cahuenga Capitulation on January 13, 1847.



Sutter's Mill at Coloma Valley in 1850 drawn by William McIlvaine, Jr. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Days before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed formally ending the hostilities between the United States and Mexico on February 2, 1848, one particular event changed everything. On January 24, 1848, James Marshall, who was overseeing the construction of a saw mill in Coloma Valley for John Sutter, reached into the tailrace and pulled out a few shiny metal flakes. While neither the first California gold strike nor the last, the lure of this discovery launched the greatest voluntary migration in human history—the California Gold Rush.

Thousands journeyed to California overland or by sea for the sake of opportunity, adventure, hope, and greed. They came by land and sea, to extract not only the gold from California, but also to develop its forest, land, and water resources. Centuries-old traditions and technologies converged here and, at times, collided. In the process these immigrants transformed—and were themselves transformed by California.

<sup>51</sup> Wilcox, *Ibid.* Pp.81-83.

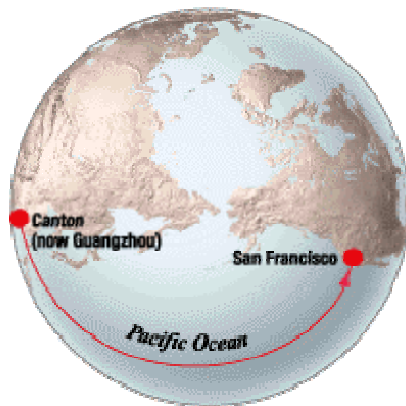
<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* The Adobe Ranch land has had an historical relationship to Frémont, being noted in early deeds as 20' above "Frémont's Old Crossing."



## *Adventurers by the Thousands*

California's gold discovery elicited great excitement. In the year after gold was discovered, close to 100,000 people descended on California from every other corner of the world.<sup>53</sup>

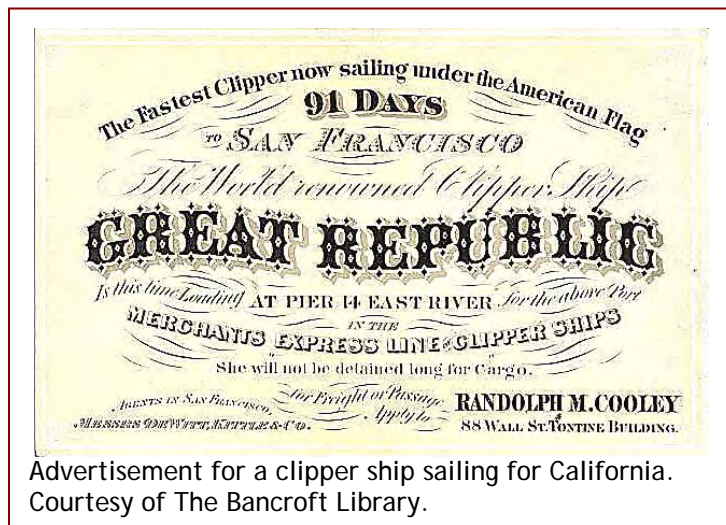
Some of the first adventurers came from the south. An estimated 7,000 Mexicans, mostly with their families, organized caravans "sometimes stretching for a mile across the horizon." A U.S. Army officer wrote in December 1848: "The whole state of Sonora is on the move, passing us in gangs daily." Chileans and Peruvians, along with native Californians, also joined the search for gold.<sup>54</sup>



After a 7,000-mile journey of about three months by sea, news reached China.<sup>55</sup> Gold-seekers soon followed from the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and China (mostly from the province of Kwangtung near Canton). They crossed the Pacific Ocean along well-established trade routes. The West Coast of North America was already familiar to Chinese sailors who had been employed on American ships or had fished off the coast of California.<sup>56</sup>

Several thousand Australian and New Zealander men, women and children responded to the lure. In 1849-1850, more than 200 hundred sailing vessels made the treacherous crossing to California's Pacific Coast. Like all voyagers to the gold fields, they sailed in anything afloat—large ocean-going ships, barques, brigs, coastal cutters and schooners.<sup>57</sup>

News, traveling by ship, took about six months to reach the Atlantic Coast of the United States. By mid-December 1848, newspapers throughout the U.S. had published editorials about the gold discovery and everywhere



Advertisement for a clipper ship sailing for California. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>53</sup> Library of Congress website. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/cbhtml/cbforty.html>

<sup>54</sup> A Calliope Fact Sheet: The Gold Rushes of North America (1847-1900). Calliope Film Resources, Inc. <http://www.calliope.org/gold/gold2.html>

<sup>55</sup> Library of Congress. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/cbhtml/cbgold.html>

<sup>56</sup> Noel Barnard, ed., *Early Chinese Art and Its Possible Influence in the Pacific Basin*. New York: Intercultural Arts Press, 1972. Vol. III. See also Edward P. Vining, *An Inglorious Columbus*. San Francisco, 1886.

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.maritimeheritage.org/PassLists/miningAustralia.html>

preparations were being made to go to California. The New York *Herald* noted on January 11, 1849:

The spirit of emigration which is carrying off thousands to California so far from dying away increases and expands every day. All classes of our citizens seem to be under the influence of this extraordinary mania... Poets, philosophers, lawyers, brokers, bankers, merchants, farmers, clergymen—all are feeling the impulse and are preparing to go and dig for gold and swell the number of adventurers to the new El Dorado.

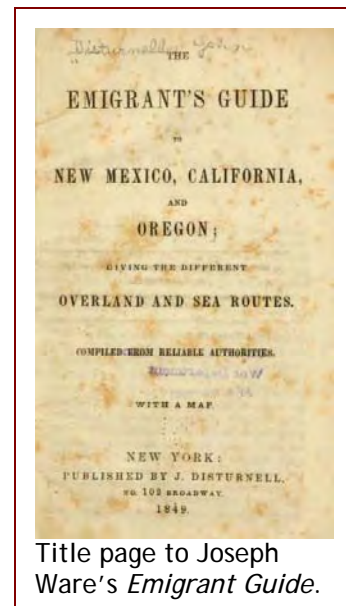
Europeans also reacted to California and the lure of gold.

Europe responded with greater numbers of sailings in 1850, when vessels hailing from Great Britain, France, the Scandinavian countries, South American ports, the German states, and Mediterranean nations embarked for San Francisco. In the first nine months of 1850, 93 ships left British ports, followed by 10 French ships, 100 vessels from the various British provinces, and 62 vessels (29 ships, 19 barks, six brigs, two schooners, and six steamers) from “other foreign ports.” The number of British gold-seekers sailing to California was probably greater, as emigrants stepping off the Liverpool packets in New York could just as easily board the San Francisco-bound ship moored alongside.<sup>58</sup>

### *Decisions, Decisions*

The way to California was difficult by any route and the adventures and hardships experienced along the way numerous. Cost factored into the choices made by many, as did the time required for the journey. Decisions had to be made about the route, when to go, what to take, and what to leave behind. And, emigrants had to live with the consequences. For all, the trip to California was the adventure of a lifetime.

Before the construction of roads, guidebooks provided the directions, noting important landmarks along the way. Maps and atlases were in high demand and eagerly studied. Books published in 1845 and 1853 by John C. Frémont with the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, Joseph Ware's 1849 book, *The Emigrants' Guide to Mexico, California, and Oregon*, Lansford W. Hastings' *Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California*, and others by Andrew Child and Hosea B. Horn proved indispensable for travelers. Even with instructions and guidebooks,



Title page to Joseph Ware's *Emigrant Guide*.

<sup>58</sup> James P. Delgado, *To California by Sea: A Maritime History of the California Gold Rush*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990. P.23.

decisions had to be made along the road or at sea and a wrong decision could be disastrous or even fatal.

Ware's guide provided information about the equipment to take, the organization of a company, travel routines, and health precautions. It also gave warning of probable congestion and delays in Panama. The overland route was recommended as the most sensible, especially for Midwesterners, who were Ware's prospective readers.<sup>59</sup>

Some emigrants traveling by sea to California had a choice of ships to take. Naval historian James Delgado observed:

Vessels of various sizes, rigs, and registries sailed to California, the majority less than full-rigged. Historian John Lyman, tabulating the numbers of vessels sailing to California from North American ports in 1849 noted that 249 ships, 218 barks, 170 brigs, 132 schooners, and 12 steamers "cleared for San Francisco" in 1849. John B. Goodman, basing his comments on research into each of these vessel's careers, notes that most "were stout vessels, a few less than stout" and while "a few had lost the bloom of youth," the majority of vessels that sailed to California in 1849 had been built between 1844 and 1849" with several sailing on their maiden voyages.<sup>60</sup>

There were four routes preferred by travelers from the eastern seaboard of the United States.

The least expensive led overland across the plains and the Rocky Mountains. The cost for four people, including provisions, a wagon, harness, and six good mules averaged \$671. Another route by ship included an overland crossing of Central America (at the Isthmus of Panama or Nicaragua), then ship's passage to California. It cost about \$300 per person. Taking a ship around the tip of South America ranged from \$100 to \$1000, depending on the accommodations and the demand. A fourth route began by ship to Vera Cruz, Mexico than continued overland through Mexico to California.<sup>61</sup>

An advertisement for the packet ship *Apollo*, bound for San Francisco in 1849. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>59</sup> Ware, *Ibid.*, Pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>60</sup> Delgado, *Ibid.* P. 24.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph E. Ware, *The Emigrants' Guide To California*. Reprint of 1849 edition. Intro. by John Caughey. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932. Pp.1, 7.



## By Way of Cape Horn

In the middle of the winter in 1848-49, overland routes to the Pacific Coast lay across the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains. Rain, mud, swollen rivers, and snow-blocked mountain passes made these routes impassable. Those anxious to embark on their journey West immediately found the only way was by sea. And for those intent on finding gold, time was of the essence!

The Cape Horn passage, though difficult, had been the traditional means for reaching the Pacific, for China traders, whalers, or those California-bound. The 15,000-mile voyage to California around the tip of South America, under the best of conditions, took three months by a fast clipper ship or from six to eighth months by other vessels.<sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup> One ill-fated voyage from New York to San Francisco took a year. Unpredictable winds and slow currents could stall and becalm a ship.



The *Seawitch* rounding Cape Horn with a Nor'easter [www.victory-cruises.com/cape\\_horn\\_passage.html](http://www.victory-cruises.com/cape_horn_passage.html)



The 700-ton *Edward Everett*, sailing from Boston on January 11, 1849 carrying 150 gold seekers to California around Cape Horn, arrived in San Francisco on July 6, 1849. The ship was more luxurious than most with good food, scheduled activities, music, lectures and Sunday church services.<sup>64</sup>

Most forty-niners traveling the 15,000-miles around Cape Horn did not have such luxuries. Passengers were often confined to their quarters—packed into tiny rooms or into the ship's hold. Historian James Delgado has noted:

Every bit of space not absolutely mandatory for sailing the ship was packed with cargo or housed over for passengers. Samuel Upham, on

<sup>62</sup> Clipper ships—new at mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, had narrow hulls and long, concave bows that cut easily through ocean waves. They carried very large sails and their captains often risked sprung masts and snapped yards in gale-force winds to achieve a swift passage. Although fast, they had a limited cargo capacity.

<sup>63</sup> H. Wilbur Hoffman, *Sagas of Old Western Travel and Transport*. San Diego, Calif.: Howell-North Books, 1980. P. 126.

<sup>64</sup> Oscar Lewis, *Sea Routes to the Gold Fields*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949. P. 33.

board the brig *Osceola* in January 1849, complained that the brig's owners had removed the table and benches for feeding the steerage passengers from the tween deck, and the space was "stowed with cases, chests and trunks... consequently the steerage passengers have been compelled to mess [dine] on chicken-coops, pig-pens, water-casks, and trunks... The brig has been a perfect Hades since she sailed."<sup>65</sup>

A majority of the Gold Rush passengers had never been upon the waters of a lake or a river, let along the ocean, so the first week at sea was a time of seasickness, despair and soul-searching.<sup>66</sup> Voyagers suffered from disagreeable and indigestible food, drunkenness, fights, and boredom. Scurvy, a disease caused by a lack of vitamin C in food was common. As on the overland route, cholera took its toll. Burial at sea was the end for some seeking their fortunes. In addition, there were other dangers: fires at sea, storms that could disable or drive a ship off course, and shipwrecks. All were possibilities.

The most dangerous leg of the route was around the very tip of Cape Horn. Monstrous waves, terrifying winds, and frigid temperatures challenged even the most experienced captains. Some captains took a short cut through the Strait of Magellan. But that passage was narrow and sometimes deadly.

The number of vessels journeying into the Pacific was phenomenal; between December 1848

and December 1849, historian John B. Goodman has accounted for at least 762 vessels that cleared North American ports for California. As early as October 31, 1849, the Boston shipping list noted that 573 vessels had departed for California, with 101 vessels advertised to sail from various ports in the immediate future... In January 1850, the editors of the San Francisco *Daily Alta California* recounted the flood tide of emigration by way of the Horn by citing the harbormaster's records: 39,888 persons had arrived in San Francisco on 805 vessels between April 1849, and January 1850... In all, as many as 1,400, perhaps more, vessels sailed to California by way of Cape Horn in 1849 and 1850.



An illustration highlighting the dangers of Cape Horn, c.1854. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>65</sup> Delgado, *Ibid.* Pp. 30-31.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* P. 32.

The greatest initial response came from New York. Already the busiest American port, New York was the most active in the Gold Rush; the majority of vessels sailed from there—some 214 clearing for California in 1849 alone. Boston, the next busiest port, had 151 clearances, followed by the whaling port of New Bedford, which sent 42 vessels, many of them whalers disrupted in the trade; Baltimore had 38 clearances; New Orleans, 32 vessels; and Philadelphia, 31. These figures add up to only 508 vessels of the 762-vessel total, “showing that virtually every seaport town had its sailings.”<sup>67</sup>

The sea route from the Midwest and East Coast of the United States and from Europe to San Francisco via Cape Horn provided passage for about 62,000 gold seekers.<sup>68</sup> With all of its risks, the route was probably the safest way to reach the gold fields. Thousands made the trip successfully. However, even after their difficult journey, forty-niners arrived in California with no guarantee of success.

### *By the Isthmus of Panama or Nicaragua*



1854 map illustrating sea routes to the Isthmus of Panama. Courtesy of UCLA Special Collections.

The second most popular way to California from the Atlantic Ocean—and the fastest—was to take a steamship to Central America. There travelers crossed the narrow, 60-mile-wide Isthmus of Panama or Nicaragua before getting on board a ship on the Pacific Coast side bound for San Francisco. In the first months of the Gold Rush, the crossing could be made in five days.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Delgado, *Ibid.* P.19.

<sup>68</sup> Trails West-Markers of the California Trail, Historical Development of the California Trail <http://www.emigranttrailswest.org.caltrail.htm>

<sup>69</sup> Lewis, *Ibid.* P. 176.



Forty-niners were not the first to use the Isthmus crossing. For three centuries—well before James Marshall’s discovery—the route evolved into an important commercial link between the oceans and the hemispheres.<sup>70</sup>

Going through Central America was much faster than traveling overland across the continent or sailing around Cape Horn. Thousands of miles could be cut from a journey and the time required for it sometimes reduced by half, that is, if everything went according to plan! Joseph Ware offered sage advice to his readers in his guidebook about the Isthmus of Panama.

This route is one that will be selected by a great number of persons... the route would be from New Orleans to Chagres, thence across the Isthmus to Panama, and from thence to San Francisco. But little difficulty would be experienced in getting to Chagres, as vessels will be constantly leaving New Orleans for that port, but then comes the tug of war!<sup>71</sup>

The “tug of war” referenced by Ware included securing a native *cayuca* (canoe) called a *bungo* to haul travelers and their gear 45 miles up the Chagres River to the head of



An 1867 painting by Charles Nahl of the *bungos* on the Chagres River, Panama. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

navigation near the town of Las Cruces. The *bungo*, a large hollowed-out log about 25 feet long and 3 feet wide, originally hauled bananas down river for trade. Its palm-leaved canopy shaded four to six passengers and three to four crewmembers.

Gold seekers disembarking from ships on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus, often overwhelmed the small fleet of *bungos*. As many as one thousand gold seekers would wait for transportation up the Chagres River. The three or four-day trip cost about \$1 per passenger

at the outset of the California Gold Rush, but quickly increased to about \$15. By November 1851, the fare was \$50 per person.

From there, travelers followed the Old Spanish Gold Road—a mule track, which crossed the divide to Panama City. They traversed it on foot, upon the back of a mule or by clutching a mule’s tail. The one-day ride could be dangerous. As late as 1853,

<sup>70</sup> Lewis, *Ibid.* P. 164.

<sup>71</sup> Ware, *Ibid.* P. 49.

after thousands of feet and hooves had ground down the road, it remained difficult. Emeline Day crossed the Isthmus that year and had few good words for it.

A description of the road bearing any resemblance to the reality is beyond any feeble powers to give. The road consists of a narrow track, in many places only wide enough for one packed mule to pass at a time...It has been traveled over by mules until they have worn a track in the earth so deep that the... level was far above our heads, and the track in the earth so narrow that we could touch each bank with our hands as we sat on our mules... For many miles together we traveled where one false step would have precipitated us down over steep and craggy rocks to a distance several hundred feet where no human being could hope to escape alive.<sup>72</sup>

Over time, changes were made to the Isthmus route with shallow-draft steamers replacing the *bungos* and improvements to the mule trail.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to the obvious dangers, travelers endured alternately blistering heat and torrential rains, swarms of mosquitoes, fleas and other insects, in addition to the



Crossing the Isthmus of Panama by mule drawn by J. Brandard in 1855. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

ever-present hazards of malaria, dysentery, cholera, and Panama fever.<sup>74</sup> They had to carry their own food and blankets and sleep out in the open or in the bamboo huts of the natives.

Once in Panama City, the last hurdle had to be negotiated, that of getting on a ship bound for San Francisco. A timely arrival did not guarantee a quick exit as many travelers became stuck in Panama sometimes for weeks.

At Panama City, gold seekers impatiently awaited passage north; until steamer schedules were better coordinated, they sometimes waited for months. Meanwhile they fretted in the unhealthy climate, unimpressed by their picturesque surroundings and intolerant of the local Hispanic culture.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> JoAnn Levy, *They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Field*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1941. P. 42.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* P. 251.

<sup>74</sup> Lewis, *Ibid.* Pp.176-177.

<sup>75</sup> A.C.W. Bethel, "The Golden Skein: California's Gold-Rush Transportation Network," *A Golden State: Mining and Economic Development in Gold Rush California*. James J. Rawls and Richard Orsi, eds.



Then, a steamship was boarded for San Francisco, arriving there 18 to 21 days later.<sup>76</sup> That time was later reduced to 13 to 14 days.

The three steamships that the Pacific Mail steamship company had built to satisfy its 1847 mail contract were inadequate for the unanticipated gold-rush traffic. *California*, built to carry 250 passengers at most, inaugurated service by steaming into San Francisco in 1849 with 365 crowded on board. Larger and faster steamers were quickly added: Pacific Mail had fourteen ships by 1851 and twenty-three by 1869.<sup>77</sup>



A painting of the US Steamer *Golden Gate* by R. Major. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Not everyone appreciated the coastal steamers. John A. Stone, who had arrived in California in 1850 was a critic of the Panama steamship companies. His satirical songs, reflected their indifferent service, poor maintenance, high fares, and disasters.

*A Ripping Trip*

by John A. Stone

San Francisco : D.E. Appleton & Co., 1858<sup>78</sup>

You go aboard of a leaky boat,  
And sail for San Francisco;  
You've got to pump to keep her afloat,  
You have *That*, by jingo.  
The engine soon begins to squeak,  
But nary a thing to oil her;  
Impossible to stop the leak—  
Rip goes the boiler!

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Berkeley: University of California Press in association with the California Historical Society, 1999. Pp. 251-252.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Bethel, *Ibid.* P.252.

<sup>78</sup> To the music of "Pop Goes the Weasel." From: <http://www.manifest-history.org/CaliforniaColumnResearch/music/ARippingTrip.htm>

*Humbug Steamship Companies*  
by John A. Stone

The greatest imposition  
that the public ever saw,  
Are the California steamships  
that run to Panama;  
They're a perfect set of robbers  
and accomplish their designs,  
By a general invitation  
of the people to the mines.  
Then come along, come along,  
You that want to go,  
The best accommodations,  
And the passage very low;  
Our boats they are large enough,  
Don't be afraid,  
The *Golden Gate* is going down  
to beat the *Yankee Blade*.<sup>79 80</sup>

The attractive profits made on the Isthmus of Panama crossing drew competition. In 1851, Cornelius Vanderbilt began developing another crossing in Nicaragua. While wider than Panama, the route had more navigable rivers



San Juan de Nicaragua drawn by George Cooper c.1852.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Reputedly a healthier place than Panama, Nicaragua offered an easier passage by small steamers up the San Juan River and across Lake Nicaragua, then by stagecoach to the Pacific. Between 1853 and 1855, the

Nicaragua route drew nearly as many passengers as the Panama crossing. Completion of the Panama railroad and political instability in Nicaragua combined to make the Nicaragua route unattractive after 1856, though it was operated sporadically by Vanderbilt's successors until 1868.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> The *Yankee Blade* sank months before John A. Stone wrote the song in 1855.

<sup>80</sup> Lingenfelter, Richard E., et.al.(eds.) *Songs of the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968. P. 30.

<sup>81</sup> Bethel, *Ibid*. P. 253.

It is estimated that

Between 1848 and 1869, about 600,000 passengers used the Panama route, more than 46,000 traveling in 1859, the peak year. By contrast, a total of about 156,000 went via Nicaragua. Because freight rates were high—never less than forty cents per pound—only very high priority freight went westbound via Panama: express waybills mention clothing, liquor, medicine, books, and firearms. But more than three-quarters of a billion dollars in coined gold was transported across the isthmus eastbound, nearly \$48 million in 1864, the peak year. The importance of the Panama route declined with the opening of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869...<sup>82</sup>

Bayard Taylor, a seasoned traveler, pronounced in 1849, after his five days crossing:

...the Isthmus—decidedly more novel, grotesque and adventurous than any trip of similar length in the world. It was rough enough, but had nothing that I could exactly call hardship, so much was the fatigue balanced by the enjoyment of the unsurpassed scenery and a continual sensation of novelty.<sup>83</sup>

### *By Way of Mexico*

For many gold seekers—Mexican War veterans, Southerners, Southwesterners, and even some Easterners and Midwesterners, the trail to El Dorado lay through Mexico.

They sailed across the Gulf of Mexico from Mobile, from New Orleans, and from Havana, Cuba. Their ports of call were the windswept barren Texas harbors at Galveston, Port Lavaca, Corpus Christi, and Brazos Santiago on the northern curve of the gulf shore. South from these ports, the principal starting points for the Mexico crossing were Tampico and Vera Cruz.<sup>84</sup>

The Manhattan-California Overland Association was among the first groups of gold seekers to reach California by traveling through Mexico. The group of 200 men left New York on the 200-ton brig *Mara* on January 31, 1849. According to their chronicler, A. C. Ferris, who was elected captain by the company, they intended to go by sea to Vera Cruz, buy pack animals and horses, and journey overland to the Pacific Coast to San Blas or Mazatlan “and in the absence of vessels at these ports to continue to journey two thousand miles by land through Mexico and Lower and Upper California to

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* P. 254.

<sup>83</sup> Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado, or Adventures in the Path of Empire*. Vol. I. New York: George P. Putnam, 1850. P. 25.

<sup>84</sup> Ferol Egan, *The El Dorado Trail: The Story of the Gold Rush Routes across Mexico*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970. P. 53.

the mines.”<sup>85</sup> Upon their arrival in Vera Cruz at the end of February 1849, 50 of “the gold seekers took one look at Vera Cruz, listened with horror to lurid descriptions of what *Iadrones* sometimes did to travelers on the National Road, and promptly purchased return passage on the next ship sailing back to New York.”<sup>86</sup>



Jesus Maria drawn by John Woodhouse Audubon c.1851. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Once in Vera Cruz, a number of companies followed the route to Mexico City taken by General Winfield Scott and his troops in the American invasion of Mexico. They walked, rode horseback and muleback, or traveled in stagecoaches to Mexico City. While traveling across the country, they generally brought minimal supplies. “Each man carried two blankets, mining tools, a camp kettle or frying pan dangling from saddle, plus a bag of cups, spoons and metal plates...”<sup>87</sup>

The companies experienced as many hardships as other routes taken to

California, passing through areas where battles had taken place and the bleached skeletons of soldiers lay unburied. In Jalapa, the men of the Manhattan-California Overland Association found the city so hostile that a mob tried to knock them off their horses.<sup>88</sup> Robbery and murder threatened anyone with cash or supplies. Animals could die en route. When provisions were insufficient, the animals also were eaten by the men.

Drastic changes in weather—rain, hail, snow and freezing wind affected the company. The travelers were also affected by the high altitude at the Continental Divide, where the summit was over 10,000 feet above sea level. A.C. Ferris wrote about the toll taken on his men and their animals:

We were drenched through and through, and shook as with ague, and our poor animals, used to the warm plains below, chilled with cold and in terror from fright trembled in every limb and crouched helplessly upon the ground, dazed by the lightning and shocked by the thunder which seemed to discharge at our very sides; they seemed to cling to us for safety.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Dale L. Walker, *Eldorado: The California Gold Rush*. Macmillan, 2003. P. 207.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=F2qN-Qc3ZXcC>

<sup>86</sup> Egan, *Ibid*. P. 248.

<sup>87</sup> Walker, *Ibid*.

<sup>88</sup> Egan, *Ibid*. P. 252.

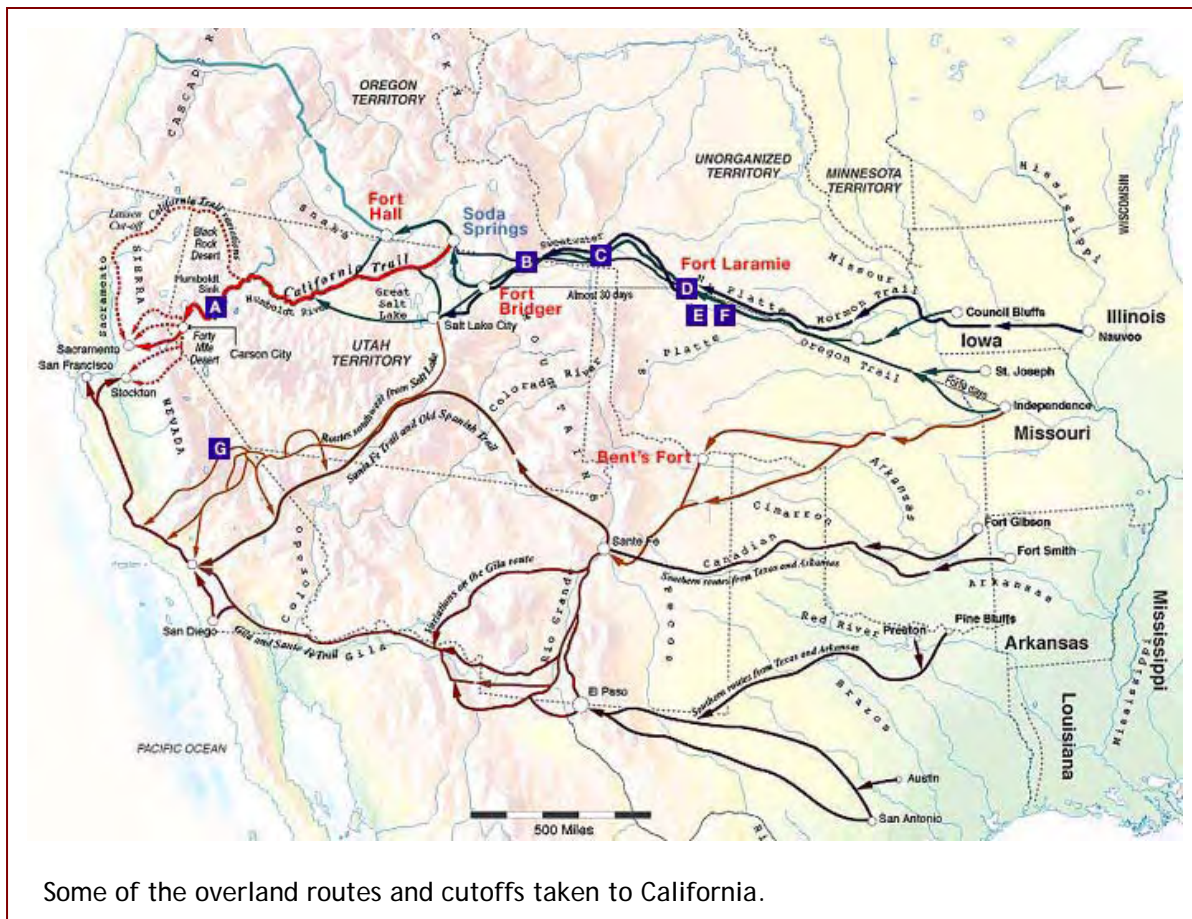
<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*. P. 258.



From Mexico City, the gold seekers could take the 283-mile China Road to Acapulco.<sup>90</sup> Other roads led to San Blas and Mazatlan on the coast. Artist John Woodhouse Audubon and his party followed a course across the northern part of Mexico.

Audubon joined Col. Henry Webb's California Company expedition as commissary, in 1849. From New Orleans the expedition sailed to the mouth of the Rio Grande; it headed west overland through northern Mexico and over the Gila Trail in Arizona to San Diego, California. Cholera and outlaws caused nearly half of the men to turn back, including the leader. Audubon assumed command of the remainder, which pressed on to California...<sup>91</sup>

Once the gold seekers reached the Pacific, if they were lucky, they boarded ships to San Francisco and then on to Sacramento. The routes through Mexico took three to six months to complete depending on conditions.



<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* P. 269.

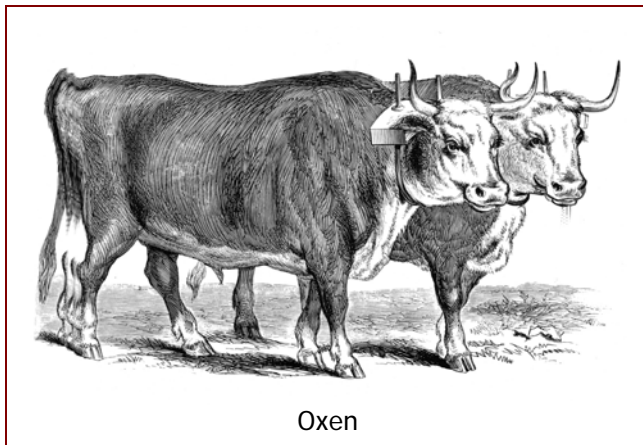
<sup>91</sup> The Handbook of Texas Online, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/AA/fau3.html>



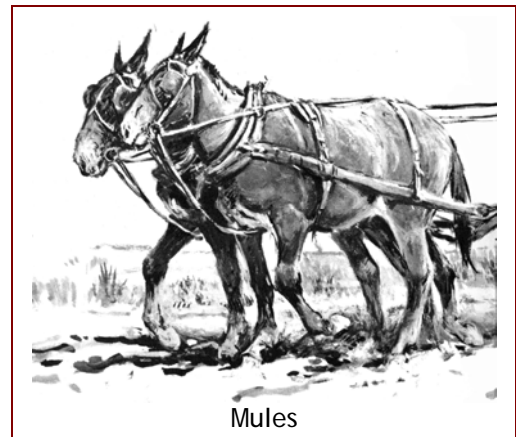
## *By the Overland Routes*

In the spring, as snows melted, grasses grew, and the weather turned warm, the movement overland to California began. Preparations for most started well before then with the gathering of provisions. It would be a long journey and the decisions about the goods packed could mean the difference between life and death. They needed to pack carefully.

One of the first decisions would have been whether to use oxen or mules for the journey. Spaniards first introduced the mule (the cross between a horse and a donkey) to America along with the horse. Mules were hardy. Trappers used them to haul furs, traders transported goods, and gold seekers moved their supplies and mining equipment using them. Pack mules could carry heavy loads weighing between 200 and 400 pounds. Loading them was an art. Crates, barrels, sacks and other gear had to be divided equally, then balanced and cinched down tightly—not always easy with a difficult animal.



Oxen



Mules

However, when it came to pulling a vehicle loaded with goods, teamsters hotly debated which were better—oxen or mules. Each had their strengths and weaknesses. Bullwhackers preferred oxen; muleskinners liked mules.

Mules were faster, but oxen were cheaper to buy and to work. When distances were less than 1,000 miles and grazing good, mules were favored. When 1,500 to 2,000 miles had to be traveled or the roads proved sandy or muddy, oxen were preferred.

### Oxen:

- A pair cost \$40 to \$160
- Ate trailside grasses, so they cost less to feed - *Poor quality forage caused them to "bloat."*
- Slower—pulled wagons at 2 miles per hour
- Hauled heavier loads
- Not likely to be stampeded
- Could be eaten in an emergency
- Averaged 10 working years

### Mules:

- A pair cost \$200 to \$400
- Sometimes feed had to be hauled with the cargo
- Faster—pulled wagons at 2½ miles an hour
- Endured heat well
- Sure-footed
- Resisted being overworked  
*Some teamsters would call them stubborn.*
- Averaged 12 to 15 working years

## *Provisions for the Journey*

Joseph Ware's guidebook advised travelers to leave by the 20<sup>th</sup> of April in a party of no more than 50 men. How many supplies should you bring? He recommended that wagons should weigh no more than 2,500 pounds and that four yoke of oxen or six mules pull them. Lansford Hastings advocated that each emigrant bring 200 pounds of flour, 150 pounds of bacon, 10 pounds of coffee, 20 pounds of sugar, and 10 pounds of salt. The Oregon California Trails Association have identified the following items as being carried on many of the early wagon trains:

### PER PERSON:

150 lbs of flour  
25 lbs of bacon  
10 lbs of rice  
15 lbs. of coffee  
2 lbs. of tea  
25 lbs. of sugar  
½ bushel dried peas  
½ bushel dried fruit  
2 lbs. saleratus (baking soda)  
10 lbs. of salt  
½ bushel corn meal  
½ small keg vinegar  
Pepper

### CLOTHING PER PERSON:

Men:  
2 wool shirts  
2 wool undershirts  
Women:  
2 wool dresses

### Both:

2 pair drawers  
4 pair wool socks  
2 pair cotton socks  
4 colored handkerchiefs  
1 pair boots and shoes  
Poncho, broad rimmed hat

### MISCELLANEOUS PER FAMILY:

Rifle, ball powder  
8-10 gallon keg for water  
1 axe  
1 hatchet  
1 space  
1 whip or cross-cut saw  
1 plow mold  
At least 2 ropes  
Mallet for driving picket pins  
Matches carried in bottles, corked

### SEWING SUPPLIES:

(Placed in buckskin or stout cloth bag)  
Stout linen thread  
Large needles, thimble  
A bit of bee's wax  
A few buttons, buckskin for patching  
Paper of pins

### PERSONAL ITMES:

1 comb and brush  
2 toothbrushes  
1 lb. castile soap  
1 belt knife  
1 flint stone

### COOKING:

Baking pan—used for baking and roasting coffee  
Mess-pan wrought iron or tin  
2 churns—one for sweet, one for sour milk  
1 coffee pot  
1 tin cup with handle  
1 tin plate, knives  
1 coffee mill  
Forks, spoons, per person  
1 camp kettle  
Fry pan  
Wooden bucket for water

### BEDDING PER PERSON:

1 canvas  
2 blankets  
1 pillow  
One tent per family

### MEDICAL SUPPLIES:

Iron rust  
Rum and cognac (both for dysentery)  
Calomel  
Quinine for ague  
Epsom salts for fever  
Castor oil capsules

Some began the journey in large groups with as many as 70 men, women and children and 15 wagons. Most brought livestock for food. Other emigrants crossed alone or in small numbers on horseback or by pulling handcarts filled with the least amount of provisions for the trip. By whatever mode of transportation, they had to be prepared to be self-sufficient for the length of the journey.<sup>92</sup> Sarah Ide Healy, daughter of William B. Ide, wrote:

We had a sale the morning we started, and sold off the greater part of our furniture. We packed our cooking utensils, tin cups, tin plates—provisions to last us six months. Mother, my little brothers—Daniel, aged 10, and Lemuel, aged 8, and Thomas Crafton (a little boy that had been given to my Mother), all rode in a wagon.

I rode horseback 3 days, to help drive the cattle riding on the side-saddle. The drove of cattle numbered 165, including 28 working oxen... Our number, all told, young and old was thirteen—five of these were young men, who drove the teams for their board and passage.<sup>93</sup>

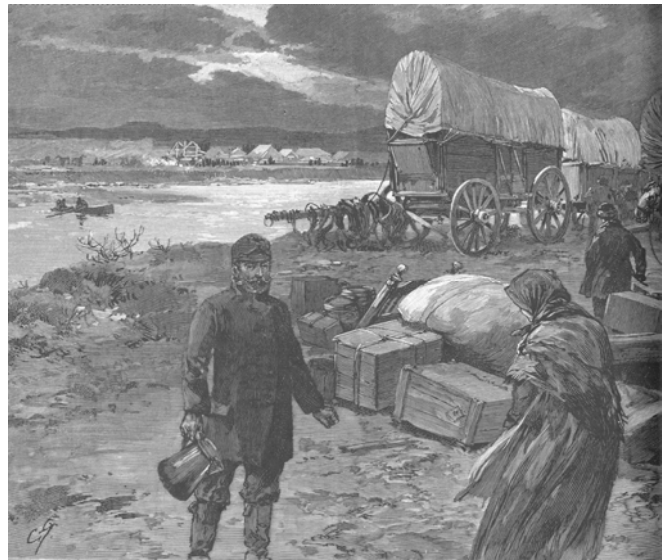


Illustration of emigrants in South Dakota beside a river with their wagon's contents. From *Harper's Weekly*, March 8, 1890.

Council Bluffs, Iowa and St. Joseph and Independence, Missouri were starting points for the overland routes that eventually led to California. Those traveling from the Midwest to California would trek almost 2,000 miles across prairies, mountains, rivers, and deserts. Like many others who followed, John Bidwell reflected his inexperience. He wrote in 1889 about being part of the Bidwell-Bartleson Party—the first organized emigrant group to travel to California in 1841:

Our ignorance of the route was complete. We knew that California lay west, and that was the extent of our knowledge.<sup>94</sup>



John Bidwell

<sup>92</sup> Refer to the Appendix in this *Interpretive Plan* for excerpts written by William B. Ide of the family's overland journey published in 1845 in the *Sangamon Journal*.

<sup>93</sup> Simeon A. Ide, *A Biographical Sketch of the Life of William B. Ide*. P. 30.

<sup>94</sup> General John Bidwell, *Echoes of the Past*, from *Century Magazine*. Sacramento, Calif.: Department of Parks and Recreation. Reprint March 1987. P. 111.

The wisest travelers hired guides with experience.

When possible, wagons traveled abreast, as dust was an ever-present problem. Advancing behind someone else's vehicle meant eating their dust. The overland parties faced extremes in weather, shortages of water and food, equipment breakdowns, cholera epidemics, and the threat of Indian attacks.

The greatest menace to early Argonauts was not Indians, as many had anticipated. That would come, but early gold-seekers were their own worst enemies. Some brought cholera up the Mississippi River from New Orleans, and it took a terrible toll. Burials occurred almost daily. So did accidental wounds from guns or axes, fractures caused by animals or wagon wheels, and injuries sustained while hauling wagons up



Covered wagons in the dust drawn by William Henry Jackson drawn in 1866. Courtesy of Scott's Bluff National Monument.

and down mountains and across rivers. Equally dangerous, perhaps, were temptations to rely on useless guidebooks published in 1849 and 1850 or to leave established routes for unproven "cut-offs" to California.<sup>95</sup>



An 1866 watercolor of Mitchell Pass painted by William Henry Jackson. Courtesy of Scott's Bluff National

Along the route, trails merged and diverged at several places. Sometimes creeks or rivers would be impassible and another trail taken.<sup>96</sup> Natural landmarks became the guideposts for travelers, who gained reassurance and comfort in seeing them along the trail. These sites included places like Mitchell Pass and Chimney Rock in Nebraska and Scott's Bluff, Independence Rock, and South Pass in Wyoming, to name a few.

There were also the much anticipated and feared places along the trail, like Nevada's Black Rock Desert and its Humboldt Sink, a vast, waterless desert, as well as

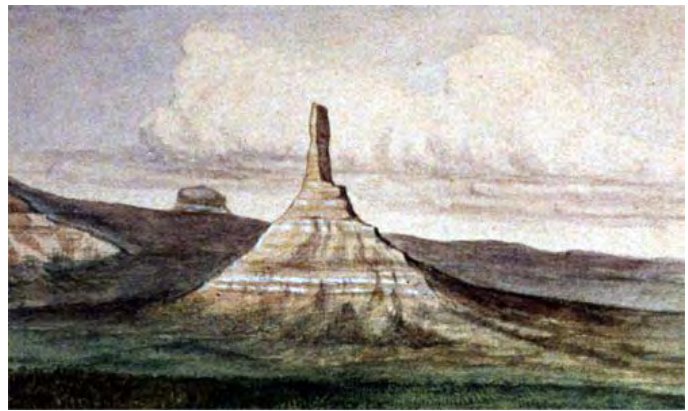
<sup>95</sup> Rice, Bullough and Orsi, *Ibid.* P. 194.

<sup>96</sup> Refer to Alfred Walton's Biography in the Appendix. Walton, one of the early owners of the Adobe Ranch, traveled overland to California and while canoeing down stream on the Green River near the mouth of the White River, lost most of his provisions when a canoe was upset.

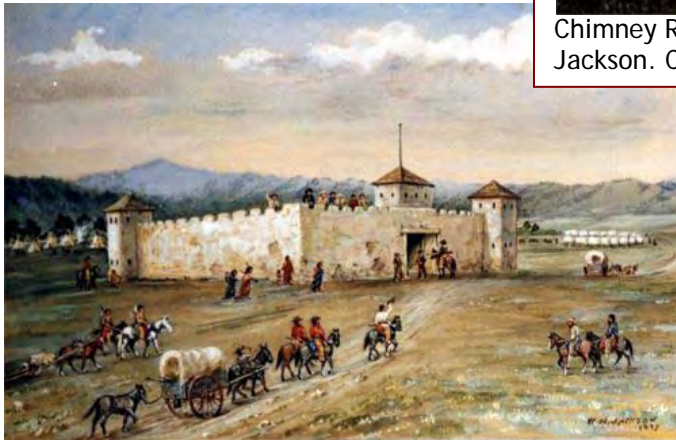


California's rugged Sierra Nevada range, which presented dangers that tested every emigrant's courage and will to go on.

Forts and communities along the way became important stopping points for overland emigrants to replenish their supplies and to relax briefly for the period in their often-arduous journeys. Fort Laramie, Fort Bridger, Fort Hall, Salt Lake City, Bent's Fort, and Santa Fe offered welcome relief for trail-weary travelers.



Chimney Rock painted in 1866 by William Henry Jackson. Courtesy of Scott's Bluff National Monument.



Fort Laramie illustrated by William Henry Jackson in 1932. Courtesy of Scott's Bluff National Monument.



Fort Bridger depicted in 1849. From the Stansbury Expedition. Courtesy of <http://www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/bridger.html>

Choices had to be made on the road and a wrong decision could be disastrous. Josiah and Sarah Royce's experience offers one example of the dangers encountered on the journeys west.

After the trek from Council Bluffs in 1849, for example, the Royce family rested at Salt Lake City, instead of joining an organized party with a guide. The decision put them far behind schedule, and following hand-written directions for crossing the Humboldt Sink cost them more time and severely fatigued their oxen. Even though Sarah Royce walked and carried her child to conserve their animals' energy, the family had to abandon its wagon and finish their journey on foot. They were among the last to cross the Sierra in the bitter winter of 1849, and only the timely arrival of a rescue party prevented another tragedy.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Rice, Bullough and Orsi, *Ibid.* P. 193





Watercolor of a family in trouble in a desert.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Sarah Royce later wrote:

We had passed the forks of the road before daylight, that morning, and were now miles out on the desert without a mouthful of food for the cattle and only two or three quarts of water in a little cask.<sup>98</sup>

Others were not as lucky.

A similar error was more costly to Roys Oatman and his family in 1851. After they left their train and set out alone on the Gila Trail, Apaches killed most of them and took a daughter, Olive into captivity for five years.<sup>99</sup>

Several years before in 1846, the Donner Party reached the foot of the Sierra Nevada too late in the year and were caught by a heavy, early snowstorm. The Donner Party experienced virtually everything that could go wrong for an emigrant party. Inexperienced in wilderness travel, they followed the directions of Lansford Hastings' *Emigrants Guide to California and Oregon*.



The Donner Party in a winter storm

Hastings suggested a shortcut he had never seen. This route extended the passage through the Nevada desert and weakened the animals. Lack of water and illness plagued the party. When they reached the base of the Sierra they were forced to cross the Truckee River at least 22 times. By the time they neared Donner Lake they were late, sick, tired, low on provisions and fighting Nature's fury. The snows did the rest. Those who survived that bitter winter did so partially by resorting to cannibalism.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Sarah Royce, *A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California*. Yale University Press, 1932. P. 40.

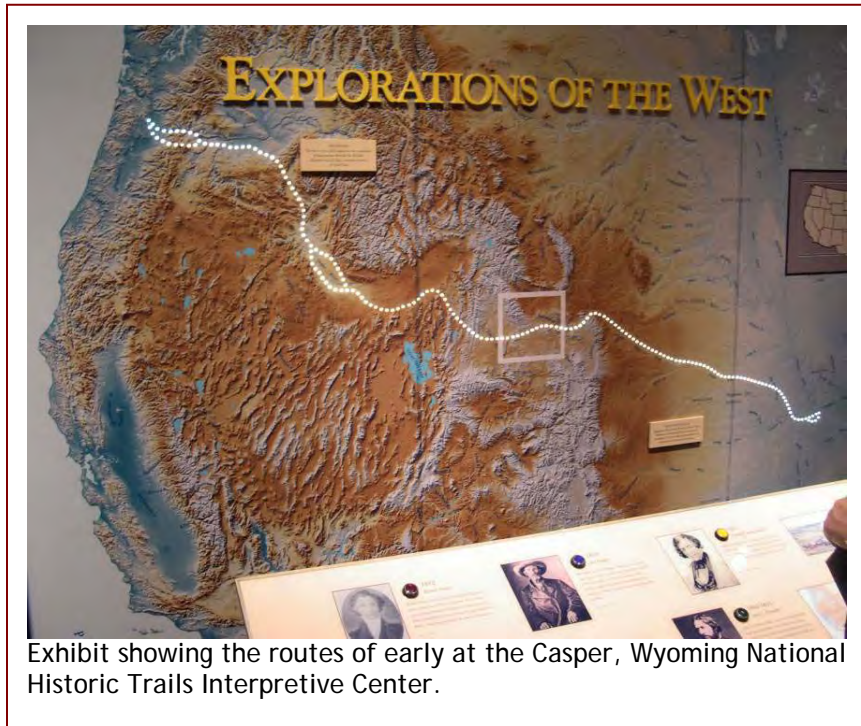
<sup>99</sup> Rice, Bullough and Orsi, *Ibid*.

<sup>100</sup> W.H. Hutchinson, *California: Two Centuries of Man, Land and Growth in the Golden State*. American West, 1969, p. 90. See also George R. Stewart, *The California Trail*, University of Nebraska Press, 1962. Pp. 167-183.

The journey generally took emigrants about five months or more from the middle of the continent traveling west. Despite the hazards, 25,000 to 30,000 crossed the Plains in 1849.<sup>101</sup>

*For more quotations taken from diaries and letters about the trails to California, consult the Appendix to this Interpretive Plan.*

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:



A small exhibit panel should precede the main exhibit, highlighting the mythic lure of California that existed for centuries. It should offer a short overview of the Spaniards, Mexicans, trappers, and other early emigrants, like John Sutter and William B. Ide, and the events that were to encourage thousands more to come.

Maps showing the various routes taken to reach California by ship around Cape Horn, by

traveling across the Isthmus of Panama and Mexico, and by going overland across the Great Plains, Rockies and Sierra Nevada will dominate the “Way to California” exhibit. These maps could be interactive with push buttons linking text and/or diary excerpts with pictures. See the Appendices of this *Interpretive Plan* for more quotes about the journeys taken to California. If possible, highlight the transportation routes with LED lights. An example from the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming is shown above.

The exhibit will feature historic images of some of the famous landmarks along the routes, in addition to historic quotes reflecting the cares and concerns of the emigrants. The exhibit may include historic images of the natural landmarks, forts, and cities seen along the different routes. The images, such as Scott’s Bluff, Chimney Rock, Sierra Nevada Mountains, Humboldt Sink, San Francisco, Chagres River, Cape

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*



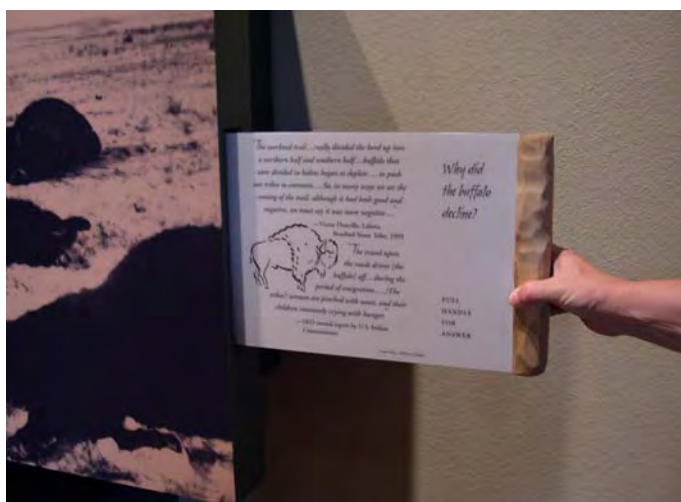
Horn, etc., might be used as backgrounds for the display. Many historic pictures are included in the graphics files associated with this Interpretive Plan.



An exhibit from the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming.

In front of the maps on a platform will be a collection of objects reflecting what the emigrants might have taken with them or elements of the transportation used (e.g. a wagon wheel, wagon jack, pack saddle, etc.). Most of these items should be reproductions as they are likely to be touched by visitors. However, some relatively indestructible historic metal objects, like an anvil, might be used. Those objects needing

protection should be secured seamlessly into the display. For example, a period-style trunk may show a doll and some clothing, but be covered and protected. Eggs (faux) might be shown in a barrel of flour with a plastic cover. Adjacent to the objects and/or on a text railing might be located flip books or pull-out panels with more information about what was taken and what was often left behind along the trail. Where possible, the exhibit should be made interactive.



An example of one style of a pull-out panel with additional information.

A small-scale model of a covered wagon will have wood items scaled to represent the provisions and personal items that many immigrants wanted to take on their journey. Obviously, some things had to be left behind, as there was insufficient space to bring everything. Visitors will have the opportunity to pack the scale-model wagon themselves, which should help them understand the sacrifices made on many of the journeys west.

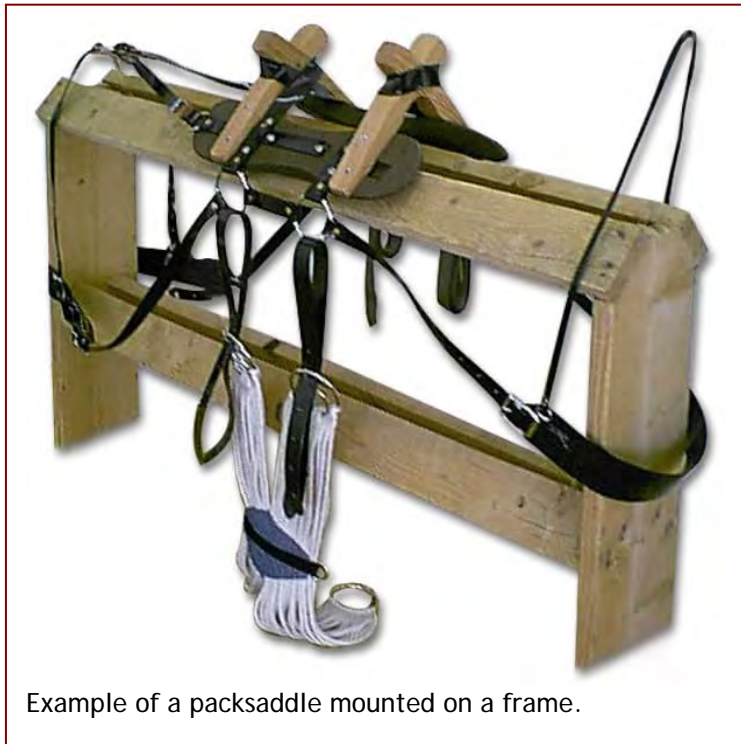
## Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:

The exhibit envisioned should consider including:

- An ox yoke mounted near the entry
- Reproductions of historical maps - refer to the Interpretive Plan's Graphics File
- 3-D topographical map(s) with various trails and routes illuminated
- Reproductions (or original if appropriate) items brought by emigrants to California - see pages 55-56
- Historical photographs of the landmarks en route to California - refer to the Interpretive Plan's Graphics File
- Whale oil or camphene-style lamp(s) - reproductions which may be lit with faux flames to enhance the ambiance
- Scale model representation of a covered wagon with wooden blocks labeled to represent potential cargo items. These items will be handled repeatedly by visitors, so should be made durable.

## Supplementary Interpretive Activities:

To expand the interpretation of the "Way to California," a handout might be developed to include lists of cargo items proposed to be carried by travelers on a covered wagon or on board ship. This list will serve as the basis for a game about choices that teachers may use in their classrooms before their planned arrival at the park.

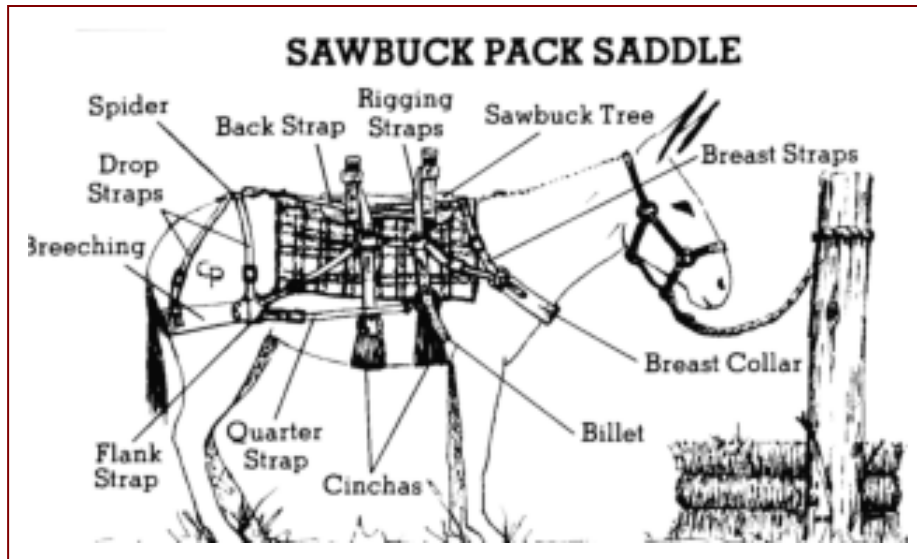


Example of a packsaddle mounted on a frame.

Another activity might include a reproduction sawbuck packsaddle, which could be mounted on a moveable frame (for use inside or outside). It would be available for students and other visitors to try loading and packing a pannier for travel.

A scale could be used to weigh the items to demonstrate load limits or, especially for heavy objects, they might be reproduced having the same bulk but made lighter with the actual weight of the original (e.g. barrels, boxes with various contents noted) written on the side.

Participants will be challenged to complete the task of loading the pack saddle quickly. Experienced muleteers could arrange a heavy load on a pack mule in three minutes!





## Area 3: Pioneer Skills at the Adobe Ranch

Space Allocation: 15%

### Theme:

Self-sufficient pioneers employed their skills to transform the area around the Adobe Ranch, as well as California's frontier.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about the 1850s-era skills needed to survive and build a new life in California.
- Recognize the meaning of “you live with what you do” as it applied to the frontier.

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

#### *Settling In*

At journeys end, emigrants realized that their hard work with its associated dangers, would continue with settlement. For most, the immediate concerns were for providing shelter and gathering the provisions necessary for sustaining life on the frontier. It would be no easy task living a distance from “civilization.” There were few places, if any, nearby to purchase building materials or to acquire other supplies, much less food!



Illustration from NPS Homestead National Monument of America brochure

Even if there had been stores, for those with no funds, things had to be made—not purchased. Settlement would not be easy in the Red Bluffs (its historic name) area.

In 1846, rancho owner Josiah Belden offered to recently arrived William B. Ide the northern half of his property, if he would manage it for three years. With an agreement signed in April, the Ide family moved into a partially finished log cabin on the *Rancho Las Baulinas*, later called *El Rancho de la Barranca Colorada*. The name was Spanish and was derived from the name Red Bank Creek, which served as the northern boundary of Belden's grant.<sup>102</sup> The Ide family made this their home one year after their arduous overland trek across the plains, mountains and deserts of North America. Here, the family occupied themselves with the work of ranching and surviving on the frontier.

In California, the Gold Rush brought many people from around the world, having an array of languages, skills, ideas and practices. Many of these newcomers readily adapted to California's environment, with some even adopting the traditional building methods used by Mexican settlers. Adobe brick was a construction medium preferred by many in early California. In 1849, John Meyers built the first adobe building in what was to become Red Bluff. It served for a short time as a hotel. Around the area, Sashel Woods and Charles L. Wilson laid out the town of Leodocia in 1850. It was called by that name, as well as Covertsburg until 1854, when maps renamed it Red Bluffs.

Between 1852 and 1854 (see Area 5 for more information), the house that now stands at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park was built. The builder (Abraham Dibble or Isaac Rand—see Exhibit Area 5)



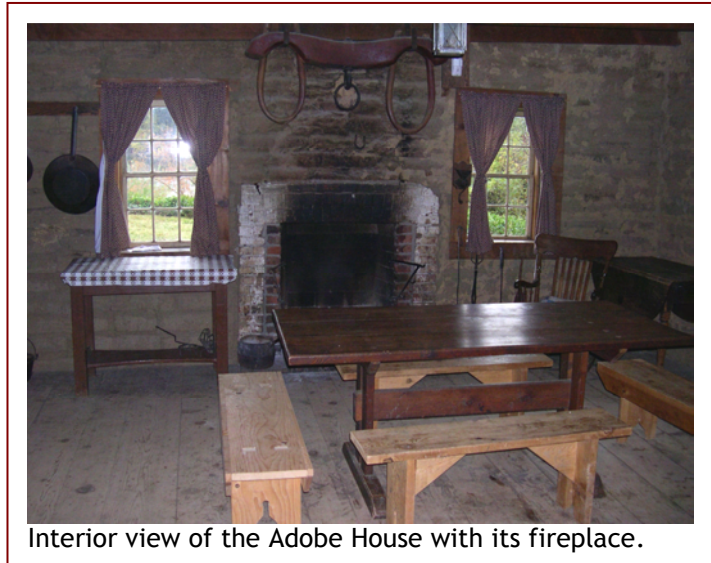
The Adobe House as it appears today

chose adobe bricks for its construction. Ide's log cabin and the Adobe House were furnished with items needed to exist on the California frontier, including tables, chairs or benches, trunks, beds, candles or whale oil lamps and cooking utensils and equipment. Simple and plain, many items probably were created on site. Like others of the era, one of the most important features of the home would have been the multi-purpose fireplace, which kept its occupants warm, provided light inside the room, and offered a place to cook indoors. (Wood-burning cast iron stoves were available during this period, but expensive and difficult to transport.) Until rural

<sup>102</sup> On page 208, Book "A" for Butte and Colusa counties reads: "Deed to *Las Baulinas Rancho*." Josiah Belden and wife Sarah Margaret, sold for \$3,000.00 U.S. coin, to William B. Ide, April 12, 1849, the undivided north one half (1/2) 8,856 acres, of *Rancho de la Baulinas*, consisting of four Mexican leagues. Bounded on the north by *Rio Colorado Barranca* (Red Bank Creek), on the east by the Sacramento River, on the south by the land I reserve for myself, and on the west by vacant or unoccupied land."

pioneers earned sufficient funds to purchase modern, 1850s-era technology, they relied on older, dependable past practices.

An 1850s-era home in the sparsely-settled Red Bluffs area would have had fenced pastures and garden(s) and possibly fields under cultivation. Outbuildings, such as a smokehouse, stable, and workshops, in addition to a water well were typical. Cattle and sheep may have grazed nearby, along with a milk cow, horses or mules, a dog to warn of strangers and a cat to keep the population of mice under control.



Interior view of the Adobe House with its fireplace.

### *Essential Frontier Skills*

Survival in California had as much to do with a person's skills and knowledge as with luck. If you came unprepared, your chances for survival were reduced. There were no guarantees on the frontier. Emigrants lived and sometimes perished by their knowledge and the choices and actions they took. Familiarity with the function of certain tools and performing certain tasks became essential for everyday existence.

### Tools and Woodworking

*Tool making and use* - On the frontier, tools produced the things people readily needed for everyday work or play. They served as extensions to the human hand. Tools could be made from natural materials such as wood, leather, and bone and/or metals, such as iron and steel. Most early tools were handmade, including hayforks and shovels, hammers and chisels. Edged tools, like knives, had to be kept sharp and in good repair to be useful.

Essential equipment, from ox yokes to boxes and dough troughs had to be produced using hand tools. There were no time- or labor-saving, electric-powered tools in the mid-1850s. On the frontier, knowledge of tools and their capabilities was an asset. Woodworkers also had to know the strengths and weaknesses of the different varieties of wood and which would be the most suitable for the objects they created.

Examples of a few commonly used woodworking tools:

*Felling axe, broadaxe* - Different axes served different purposes for chopping trees and clearing land, cutting firewood, building fences, and roughly smoothing timbers.



*Crosscut saw* - Crosscut saws cut logs into smaller pieces that were later split into firewood. Two people stood at each end of the saw and pulled it back and forth between them.

*Wooden shaving horse* - A wooden shaving horse was a carpenter's bench that enabled woodworkers to sit as they shaped a piece of wood. A pedal locked the wood securely in place under a jaw, which was released when the work was finished. The device was used to shave down handles, shingles, or tools. It was used often on farms and ranches for miscellaneous drawknife work until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



A wooden shaving horse

*Adze* - A cutting tool with a thin arched blade set at right angles to the handle, much like an ax. Round logs could be made square or hollowed out by using an adze. Floor boards also could be smoothed with an adze.

*Planes* - Wooden blocks with adjustable metal blades set at an angle shaved wood to make it smooth, leveled surfaces or chiseled wood. Special molding planes could cut plain and fancy wooden trims. Most carpenters' chests held a variety of them in different shapes and sizes. Planes performed three main functions: shaping, finishing and fitting. There were two main categories of them: planes and shaves.

There is a wide variety of planes, which can be roughly divided by size, and service, for example: jointer, trying, fore, jack, smooth, block, and molding. They can have one, two, and in rare cases, three irons. Finishing planes, jointer and jack for example, are used to remove rough saw marks, and insure boards fit together correctly. Molding planes are used to make moldings and cut joints...

Shaves also come in several categories such as: spoke shaves, cooper shaves and croze, beading tools, and scrapers. Like planes, each shave has a unique purpose, the blade and the body shaped to accomplish one primary task. A croze for example is used by coopers—barrel makers—to put a groove at the top and bottom of the staves to fit the ends of the barrel. Although all sharp edged tools need to be sharp, it is most critical with planes.<sup>103</sup>

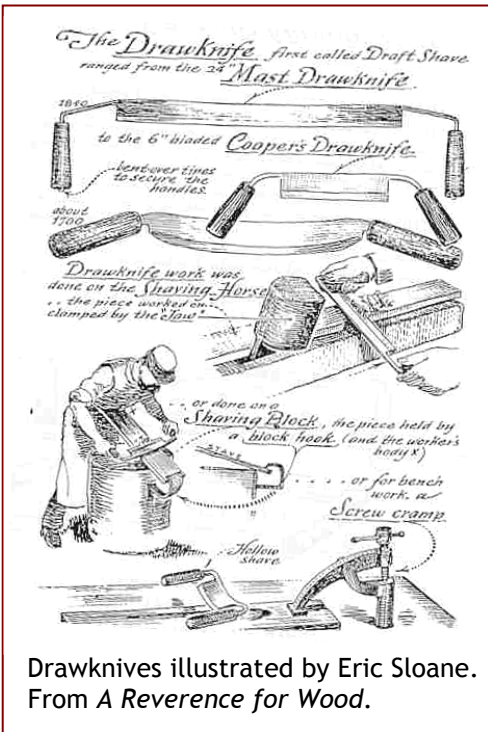
<sup>103</sup> William F. Mennell, "Tools and Materials, Now and Then, Part 6," *Cosmopolitan Chronicle*, Vol. I, No. 23. Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, August 15, 2008.

Leveling was called “trying” and “trueing.” Fitting was called “joining.”

**Brace and bit** - Holes were drilled into wood using a hand-held brace and bit.

**Froe** - Wedges or froes were hit to split logs and to make shingles from quartered logs, as well as to craft laths, staves, and clapboards.

**Mallet or maul** - A heavy club was used like a hammer on top of a froe. Before machinery was developed to reduce the handwork involved, “riving” shingles was a favorite rainy day activity in the woodshed.



**Drawknife** - Drawknives shaved thin layers from wood, shaping and giving it a smooth surface. The two-handled device was drawn toward the woodworker. The drawknife tapered the sides of shingles, shaped the edge of floorboards, as well as rough trim paneling, before being planed.

**Auger** - The long sharp point of the tool bored holes into wood.

**Chisels and gouges** - Chisels in different sizes and styles cut away “excess” wood, as with mortise and tenon construction in framing. Most were wood handled and designed to be struck by a mallet. Round chisels are called gouges.

**Lathe** - The main “power” tool for many woodworkers, the lathe, was operated by turning

a large wheel. It spun wood horizontally, allowing the piece to be shaped with special chisels while in motion.

**Coopering** - The act of making wooden containers out of staves and hoops is called coopering. It is an ancient trade with techniques and tools little changed over many centuries. Buckets and barrels were produced by skilled craftsmen called coopers, who used drawknives to carve curves into barrel staves. Straight-sided vessels, such as pails, tubs, buckets, churns and vats were also created by individuals with coopering skills. The last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the end of the traditional cooper trade with the introduction of barrel-making machinery in the 1850s.

**Wet cooper** - The most skilled of these craftsmen were the wet coopers, who made barrels to hold liquid products such as beer, wine, whiskey, molasses, pitch, tar, vinegar, etc. They were also referred to as a “tight” cooper, because



their products had to be leak proof and durable.<sup>104</sup> Oak was always used for these barrels. On the frontier, the special skills needed for this work usually required that they be purchased from a wet cooper.

*Dry cooper* - Dry coopers used less exacting techniques because their products did not have to be watertight. They created barrels to hold dry products, like chemicals, non-liquid foods, such as flour, as well as china and hardware for shipping.<sup>105</sup>

*White cooper* - White coopers produced a variety of straight-sided vessels, such as pails, tubs, buckets, churns, and vats for home use or industry.

### Framing and Construction

The construction of a home, outbuildings, fences and other structures was important for survival and productivity on the frontier. Options for how a settler might build often depended greatly upon the nearby terrain and the useable materials it provided. The Sacramento River also offered a means to transport items up river that could not be found locally. However, these often came at a considerable cost to the settler, and may have required a significant amount of waiting time for the goods to be ordered and shipped to Northern California.

Building costs in the period of the gold rush were as uncertain and inflationary as the price of an egg or a laundered shirt. Lumber sold in 1849-1850 for as high as one dollar a square foot and bricks at one dollar apiece. At that time a simple one-story house of clapboard and shingles cost approximately \$15,000 to build in San Francisco; a two-story hotel in San Jose cost \$100,000. And despite excessive costs, available building materials were often poor in quality and unsuited to the purpose for which they were contracted.<sup>106</sup>

*Adobe brick making and building* - A majority of buildings constructed for missions, *presidios* (forts), and *ranchos* (ranches) of California during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were made from *adobe* bricks. New settlers to frontier California (like John Sutter) relied on the native Indian populations, trained in building skills at the Roman Catholic missions, to help with construction. Like several other adobe buildings at mid-century, the Adobe House represented a fusion of that earlier mud-brick tradition with the incoming American settlers' knowledge of woodworking technology.

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<sup>104</sup> Marilyn Arbor, *Tools & Trades of America's Past: The Mercer Museum Collection*. Doylestown, PA: The Mercer Museum, Bucks County Historical Society, 1994. P. 26.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Harold Kirker, *California's Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*. Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973. P. 31.

To produce adobe bricks, a mixture of sand and clay, water, straw or grass, and manure was combined in a pit and trod upon to mix the ingredients. It was then pressed and tamped into large rectangular wooden forms (four or five inches thick), then leveled by hand into uniform shapes. These bricks were “turned out” to be sun dried or cured then stacked on end for a period of one to two months. The drying time contributed to their strength. The finished bricks could weigh from 30 to 60 pounds each, depending on their size.



Adobe bricks

A wide cobblestone, cut stone or brick rubble foundation served as a base for the thick adobe wall to be erected. Most adobe bricks were mortared together using the same adobe mix, but without the straw. As the adobe walls were load bearing with low structural strength, they tended to be massive. However, most seldom rose above two stories. Doors and windows were installed as the walls grew in height.

Because adobe bricks were not fired in a kiln, as with clay bricks, they did not permanently harden and could shrink or swell with added moisture, like rain. Several coats of thick mud plaster were applied to cover the completed walls. A whitewash finish coat of gypsum, water and clay or powdered lime (prepared from burning seashells), sand and water, sealed the plaster, giving the adobe walls a measure of protection from moisture. This exterior treatment was renewed periodically. Most adobes also were designed with wide overhanging roof eaves and/or verandahs to keep the rain water from running down and ruining the walls.

*Wood framing* - Wood was needed for lintels, doors, windows, and roof beams. If suitable timber was available nearby, it could be felled by an ax or cross-cut (whip) saw and hauled to the site. There it would have been turned into lumber using a broadaxe or adze. When commercially milled lumber was not available, sometimes saw-pits were used to cut planks from logs.

They were called Pit Saws because the timber being sawn was usually placed over a pit or convenient hollow in the ground, or it was extended out from the side of a hill. One sawyer (called the “pitman”) stood below, pulling the saw, which cut only on the downstroke, towards him. The other worker (known as the “tiller” or top sawyer) stood above, right on the log. He pulled the long blade up after a cut had been made. A wedge placed in the split prevented the blade from getting stuck midway through a stroke...

Pit sawing was generally used in this country only in new settlements or where it was not practical or feasible to build a sawmill. The sawmill

was essentially a pit saw heavily framed in wood and run by water instead of man power.<sup>107</sup>

Lumber would have been finished on-site using a drawknife and planes, such as the bench, jointer, or smoothing planes.

Wooden timbers on top of the adobe walls provided a long horizontal bearing plate for the roof, helping to distribute its weight along the wall. The Adobe Ranch House differed from the style of other, earlier adobe buildings. Instead of a low, relatively flat roof with clay tiles, widely popular in Southern California and along the Coast, he adopted a roof with wooden shingles. The basic joinery for framing the roofing timbers was mortise and tenon.

The tenon was easily cut with a hand saw, but the mortise required specialized tools. Short-handled mortising axes or T-shaped twibils could be expertly swung to form a rough mortise. The large firming chisel was used to square holes that had been drilled by augers. Early augers had spoon-shaped bits. The development of the spiral auger at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century eased the process of cutting mortises considerably. A more exact mortise could be produced with a mortising chisel.<sup>108</sup>

### Blacksmithing and Metallurgy



The blacksmith, a park docent, takes a break

Over the centuries, a blacksmith's function has been to make tools, weapons and to a lesser degree, works of art.<sup>109</sup> The blacksmith certainly was an indispensable craftsman on the frontier. He created and invented tools and processes that saved time and effort.

“Smith” from “smite,” “black” from “black metal” (as distinguished from silversmiths brightwork), the “blacksmith” was the Early American handyman.<sup>110</sup>

“Smithy” is the name for the building where the blacksmith worked. The tools of the trade included a forge and anvil(s), fire tools (poker, rake, shovel and watering can), tongs, fuller, swage and swage block, hardies, hammers,

sledges, punches, vises, great bellows, blower, and when performing the work of a farrier, a farrier's box, butteris, hoof parer, and hoof knife. Most ranches operated a

<sup>107</sup> Arbor, *Ibid.*, P. 78.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 119.

<sup>109</sup> Taber, *Ibid.*, P. 14.

<sup>110</sup> Eric Sloane, *Eric Sloane's Sketches of America Past*, New York: Promontory Press, 1986. P. 212.

smithy or a workshop on the property to make tools, equipment and hardware, as well as to repair them.

The blacksmith forged nails, hinges, latches, anchors, scythes, hoes, utensils, axes, hooks, branding irons, plow and harrow points, wagon hardware and wheel tires (iron outer rims)—objects essential for survival and comfort on the frontier. In the middle of the 1800's he began taking over the farrier's work of horseshoeing; till then the farrier was veterinary too.<sup>111</sup>

*Making Horseshoes* - Blacksmith-made shoes were forged and made to fit each foot of the horse exactly. Since all four feet of a horse or mule are different, the shoes varied slightly as well. Blacksmiths created custom shoes by altering the placement of nail holes, using special caulks or “corks” to provide traction in mud or snow, or making modifications to strengthen the horse's feet.

### Managing Livestock

Animals were an important part of life on the frontier. When properly managed they offered a means of transportation, sources of food, and the materials and ingredients for a host of necessary and useful products.

*Cattle ranching* - Like the Mexican citizens before them, newcomers to California, such as Abraham Dibble or Isaac Rand, would have found raising cattle less work when compared to clearing and growing crops on the land for the first time. Cattle could be moved from range to range to graze and then driven to market on the hoof. Beef was highly valued, too, and in short supply during the California Gold Rush. Cattle ranching was second only to mining in the economic life of the frontier period.<sup>112</sup>



A docent cares for a horse at the park

*Branding cattle* - Branding was the straightforward method a rancher could use for identifying ownership of cattle on the open range. After subduing a steer, a heated metal tool called a branding iron was pressed onto its hide to burn a permanent mark for identifying the animal as the property of a particular ranch. California Indians served as *vaqueros* (cowboys) on many ranches.

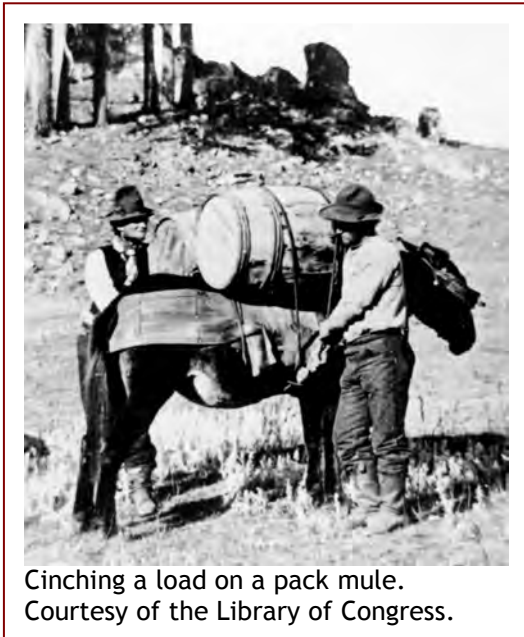
*Grooming animals* - Animals were groomed carefully. Before putting on a harness, the horse or mule's coat was cared for using a dandy brush, body brush, curry comb and a wisp. While being

<sup>111</sup> Eric Sloane, *Eric Sloane's Sketches of America Past*, New York: Promontory Press, 1986. P. 212.

<sup>112</sup> Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978. P. 166.

groomed, animals were checked for cuts, scratches, scrapes, and sores. If not tended, wounds could become infected and cause further injury. They could also affect the safe operation of a vehicle harnessed to them. Removing dirt and manure reduced the insects, parasites and worms that might irritate the animals. Grooming also helped to keep them calm and docile.

Hooves of horses and mules were cleaned and the dirt dislodged with a hoof pick. The animals' hooves were trimmed or shod every six to eight weeks. Generally a blacksmith made the iron shoes used to protect the hooves, and a farrier fitted them to the animals.



Cinching a load on a pack mule.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

*Packing a mule* - Spaniards first introduced the mule to America, along with the horse. It was hardy. Trappers hauled furs, traders transported goods, and gold seekers moved their supplies and mining equipment using them. The animals could carry heavy loads weighing between 200 and 400 pounds.

Over sheepskins and saddlecloths that reduced chafing on the mules, early Mexican packers loaded goods onto square pads of stuffed leather, called *aparejos*, and then tied them down. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, wooden packsaddles, called sawbucks or crosstrees, gained popularity. The U.S. Army employed both the *aparejo* and the sawbuck for its pack mule trains.

Packing them was an art. Crates, barrels, sacks and other gear had to be divided equally, then balanced and cinched down tightly—not always easy with a difficult animal. Experienced muleteers could arrange a heavy load on a pack mule in three minutes!

*Harnessing animals* - Frontiersmen took care to fasten a harness properly. It was vital to the safety of the animals, the driver, vehicle and its cargo. Collars, hames, traces, chains and straps, as well as single and double trees helped to spread the weight of the often heavy loads. Bits, bridles and reins connected the driver with the horses and vehicle, serving as a communication system. With a tug on the reins, the driver could tell the team to turn left, or with two short tugs to turn right.

*Shepherding* - Range sheep required constant attendance. When there was no feed for livestock, ranchers had to move their stock to other areas of the country. According to Henria Packer Compton, whose family operated a ranch along the Sacramento River in the early 1870s,



A lot of them went to Idaho and some to Nevada. At this time Henry Compton Sr. was running about 2,500 head of sheep and about 200 head of cattle. In the early spring of 1872, like the other stockmen, he had to hunt for pasture elsewhere. So he moved his family and livestock to Modoc County in the extreme northeast corner of California.

It took them twenty-eight days to make the trip. They went from Stone Valley Ranch to Red Bluff, north and east to Jelly's Ferry, then through the section of the country known as Manzanita Chutes, and by way of Hat Creek to the Pitt River area. They settled on a little creek about five miles east of Fall River Mills. All the livestock made the trip successfully, and came through in very fine condition...

They had fine grazing higher up on land that was rather like a mesa. The sheep would be taken up through the day to feed, but were brought down every night and bedded in a corral near the cabin because of danger from coyotes and other predators.<sup>113</sup>

*Sheep shearing* - The wool on sheep was removed with hand clippers, the first step in preparing it for spinning or weaving.

*Milking cows* - Many pioneer families owned cows. The milk used for cooking and baking had to be used quickly because it spoiled. Some of the milk was churned into butter, which could be held longer without refrigeration.

*Hunting* - Nearby open range lands offered deer, bear, antelope, elk, rabbits, squirrel and pigeons for the skilled hunter. Sometimes hunting was practiced for food, at other times to reduce predators or pests on the ranch.

*Butchering animals* - Butchering was an important event on farms and homesteads. Most settlers, with the help of sons, neighbors, or hired hands, did their own butchering. Slaughtering cattle, oxen, or pigs was usually done in a protected area. The carcasses were cut up into portions and the meat taken to the cellar or kitchen to be cut into smaller pieces and prepared for curing.<sup>114</sup>

*Killing and plucking chickens* - Raising and selling chickens often supplemented the ranch income. Farther south on a ranch along the Sacramento River,

Mary [Murdock Compton] often spoke of her raising chickens and making butter. She was able to sell enough of these to supply the ranch with provisions, thereby making it possible to pay their net profit on the

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<sup>113</sup> Henria Packer Compton, "Mary Murdock Compton," *Let them Speak for Themselves: Women in the American West, 1849-1900*. Christiane Fischer, ed. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978. P. 86-87.

<sup>114</sup> Arbor, *Ibid.* p. 68.

purchase of the ranch. I do not know just how much this ranch cost them, but it must have been a very good amount for those times.<sup>115</sup>

A couple of traditional methods were used to kill chickens. One approach placed the chicken on a chopping block and with the whack of an axe its head was cut off. A second method wrung the chicken's neck. Afterwards, the chicken was hung upside down to drain its blood more easily. Its feathers were plucked and any remaining feathers singed. The final steps before cooking the chicken involved dressing (taking out the internal organs) and cleaning the bird.

*Cleaning and tanning hides* - Tanning converted the skins of oxen, cows and other animals into leather to prevent their putrefaction. Without this process, exposure to moisture would cause the skin to rot. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a considerable demand for leather for use in harnesses, saddles, horse collars, farm machinery belts, shoes, etc.

Wood ashes and lime used on hides helped to remove hair as it was scraped. By using an unhairing knife on a concave beam, excess hair and flesh was removed from a hide before it was immersed in a tanning solution.

Tanning required immense quantities of oak tree bark, a principle source for the tannin, the main chemical used in tanning leather. After splitting a tree lengthwise with an axe, a bark spud was employed to remove the bark in slabs. These were then dried and ground in a bark mill for use in the solution. After being placed in a tanning vat for weeks or months, the leather became pliable enough for clothing, shoes and belts. The tanned skin was stretched flat and a head knife used by a currier to equalize the thickness of the leather.<sup>116</sup>

*Rendering tallow* - Tallow is a rendered form of beef or mutton fat, processed from suet. It is solid at room temperature. Unlike suet, tallow can be stored for extended periods without the need for refrigeration to prevent decomposition, provided it is kept in an airtight container to prevent oxidation. (Rendered fat obtained from pigs is known as *lard*.)

Rendering is the process of separating animal fat from debris and water so that it can be used in baking or soap making. The fat is placed in a large pot or kettle and melted slowly to avoid burning. It is cooled and sieved to remove any debris. Cold water is added and the mixture is reheated. After cooling and chilling overnight, the tallow becomes separated and may be used in baking or soap making.

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<sup>115</sup> Compton, *Ibid.* P. 90.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* Pp. 98-99.

## Farming and Gardening

In the first few years after California's statehood (1850), there was very little interest in agriculture.

Cultivation can barely be said to have existed at all in California during the last years under Mexico, and even after the gold rush its advance was slow and sparse. The insecurity of land titles, the lure of quicker wealth in other activities, and the unfamiliarity of such peculiar farming conditions as the rainless summers, all served to retard agricultural development. The food supply of the Argonauts was largely imported; the main exception was California beef, salted or driven to the mining camps on the hoof.<sup>117</sup>

Establishing reliable sources of food was important to frontier families living in remote parts of California. But it was hard work.

*Clearing the land* - There was so much preparation to be done before crops could be placed in the ground. Before gardens and farm fields could be cultivated, large and small stumps had to be removed, as well as rocks. In places, land had to be drained. Picks, trenching forks, shovels and spades were used to clear the land. The brute strength of mules and oxen was also employed to remove large obstacles from fields. Fences were built around plots to keep pesky wild animals and livestock out of the plots.

*Gardening* - Spring, summer and fall months were spent weeding, hoeing, watering and generally caring for the garden and field crops. Common tools used to plant, grow and pick crops included the harrow, plow, hand cradle, flail, hoe, rake and pitch fork. Fresh vegetables could be eaten out of the garden in the summer and fall months with the remainder preserved for consumption later in the winter. Common garden crops harvested included: corn, potatoes, beans, onions, squash, pumpkins, and turnips. Fruit trees were planted, but required considerable time to grow before they bore fruit.

*Cultivating and harvesting fields* - Ox-drawn or mule-drawn implements were used to plow, plant and hoe crops. Often pioneers had to use hand tools to weed between the rows. Irrigation depended on nature or canals dug to move water to the fields. The first crops sown were significant mainly for confirming the potential of California's soils and its climate.

## Food Preparation

A considerable amount of time and effort was expended in the procurement, preservation and preparation of food. One-room structures, like the Adobe Ranch

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* P.167.

House in its early years, were built around a fireplace. Early settlers depended on the fireplace. Almost all cooking was done over the fire, which was kept burning almost continuously. Long-handled tools usually made of copper, iron, and brass were used for cooking and handling food over hot coals.

The fireplace served for drying clothes, herbs, and fruits and vegetables, providing coals which were used in foot and bed warmers and to light pipes, and supplying valuable ashes for use in soap and potash making.<sup>118</sup>

*Cooking in a fire* - Day-to-day cooking was done in the fireplace. Cooking equipment included Dutch ovens, brass kettles, large and small iron pots and skillets. Many of the open-fire utensils stood on legs and/or had long handles. From an adjustable iron hook called a trammel, pots, kettles, and griddles were hung over the fire. Fresh meats were cooked by broiling, frying, boiling and roasting. Stews were common. Vegetables and fruits were cooked fresh or preserved by drying or pickling.



Drawing courtesy of John Allen

*Baking* - Hot coals from the fire were placed under and over cast iron pots to create enough heat to bake foods like bread and pies.

*Smoking meats or fish* - Before refrigeration, meat had to be cured (preserved) to prevent decay and to provide a year-round supply. It was cured in several ways.

1. **Salting:** Two methods of salt-curing were used: the dry cure, in which meat was packed in salt; and the brine-cure, in which meat was immersed in a solution of salt and water.
2. **Potting:** This method was used when salt was in short supply. The meat was first cooked, then placed in a crock and covered with a deep layer of melted fat or lard. Meat preserved in this manner was often used on long ship voyages.
3. **Drying:** The settlers learned to dry meat from the Indians. The meat was cut into thin strips and dried in the sun or hung near the fire. This produced a tough, dry meat called jerk or jerky.
4. **Smoking:** Also learned from the Indians, this was the method most widely used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More pork than beef was smoked. Pork in the form of bacon, scrapple, and sausage was a staple food in early America. The usual method of preserving pork was to salt-cure

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<sup>118</sup> Arbor, *Ibid.* P. 58.

it and hang it in the smokehouse. The smoke from the fire (usually of hickory wood) completed this process, and imparted a fine, distinctive flavor to the meat. It was then hung in the cellar or springhouse and used throughout the year.<sup>119</sup>

*Fruit Preservation* - There were two methods for preserving fruit for year-round consumption before refrigeration: drying and canning. Fruits were harvested, dried and stored to be prepared and eaten in different ways throughout the year. Commercially canned foods in tin cans became more common with the California Gold Rush. However, the process of home canning—sealing foods in glass jars using pressure and high heat—was not made practical until 1858, when John Mason invented a glass jar for home canning.



A docent churns butter

*Butter making* - Butter and cheese are milk by-products used in cooking and as foods. From the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup>, the making of butter and cheese was part of the daily routine of women on farms and ranches.

Milk was strained to remove any debris then left to cool to let the cream separate and rise to the top of the pan. The fatty cream was skimmed off the top and poured into a churn which was agitated by a wooden dasher. After it formed, the butter was lifted out into a wooden bowl and washed several times. Salt was then added as a preservative.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:

Area 3 will back up to Area 1 and will feature a large, mural-sized illustration of the Adobe Ranch House, as it may have appeared soon after construction between 1852 and 1854, with a hip roof and wide verandahs. This image will be a cutaway, showing the exterior *and* interior, modeled after the illustration shown on the first page of this section. It will highlight the labor and the important skills required to sustain life on California's frontier.

On a platform similar to Area 2 and associated with the Adobe House mural, will be a video monitor, which will show many of the daily—mid-1850s—work activities at the ranch. Divided into short video segments, the monitor will offer visitors the opportunity to touch the screen to select the demonstrations to view. The programs will utilize costumed docents representing various frontier skills. Video clips will highlight traditional activities, like plucking a chicken or harnessing a mule, which generally are not seen in the park today. Sound will be controlled either by visitors

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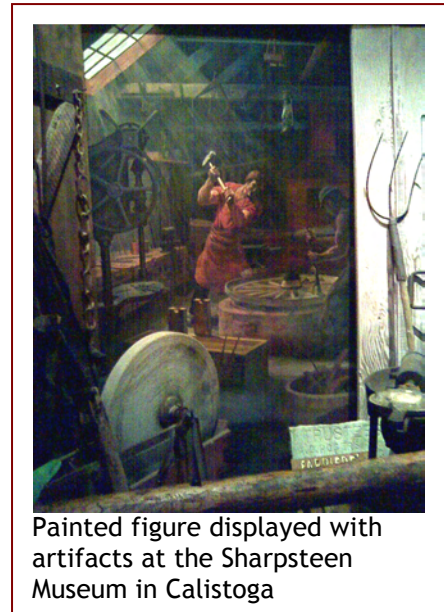
<sup>119</sup> Arbor, *Ibid.* P. 68.



using hand-held wands or a dome placed over the area to limit the sound generated in this exhibit area.

In front of the mural and near the monitor will be displayed period tools and equipment related to the videos and to the mural. These will have illustrations and text describing their use. If space allows, a “guessing game” might be developed in association with the tools. If possible, one or two tools may be set up for hands-on use for visitors. A two-dimensional, life-size figure (like the ones developed for Area 1) working with a tool and related to the background mural will be set forward on the platform to visually engage the visitor.

A bench, placed in front and to the side of the platform, will allow visitors to rest, as well as offer space for costumed docents to sit while providing period demonstrations at scheduled times.



Painted figure displayed with artifacts at the Sharpsteen Museum in Calistoga

### **Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:**

Objects to be displayed on the platform should include woodworking tools, blacksmithing tools, farm implements, and cooking utensils and equipment. Their selection will depend upon their availability, condition, and relationship to the skills shown on the video and illustrated on the mural. They should be reviewed to consider whether or not they may be touched by visitors.

The series of short video segments should be no longer than 12-15 minutes total for all of them. Each will depict people in period-attire working at ranch activities common to the era, but difficult to present in today’s programs. Videos also should reflect some of the tools that will be displayed. Here is a list of possibilities for the video segments:

- Sheep shearing
- Branding cattle
- Plucking a chicken
- Slaughtering a hog or preparing it for smoking, etc.
- Tanning hides
- Removing a stump with a horse or an ox
- Shoeing a horse
- Making or repairing a tool
- Repairing wagon wheels, shrinking hubs
- Harnessing a horse or a mule

Additional still photographs supporting this section are contained in the Graphics File.

## Area 4: Transportation Nexus

Space Allocation: 15%

### Themes:

The Adobe Ranch and the Red Bluff area evolved as a transportation nexus for riverboats, pack teams, freighters, stage lines, ferries, and today's cars.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Appreciate how river traffic connected the inland frontier with the rest of California.
- Learn more about how people and freight were transported through the Red Bluff area in the mid-1800s.
- Visualize the Adobe Ranch Ferry and recognize the importance of ferries before bridges.
- Relate yesterday's transportation routes to those of today.

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

Today, the quiet quality of William B. Ide Adobe SHP belies its historic character as a nexus of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century transportation in Northern California. The frenetic pace of the Gold Rush drew large cargoes and enterprising people to the region. They came on foot, pack animals, freight wagons, stages, riverboats, barges and ferries. Located next to the Sacramento River, the Adobe Ranch bore witness to these passages and at times facilitated them.

#### *The Great River Highway*



The Upper Sacramento River above Colusa drawn by German-born artist Edward Vischer in July 1866. Courtesy of Claremont Colleges

Gold Rush merchants at supply depots, like San Francisco, Sacramento, Marysville, and Red Bluff, depended on the Sacramento River and its tributaries for shipping goods to Northern California. With

the rush for the mines, every available floating vessel—old or new—was employed on the river highways. Schooners, sloops, whaleboats, barges, and wood- and coal-burning steamships crowded the banks of the Sacramento. Water transportation was a relatively cheap and dependable means for moving goods into California’s interior, however risky. The waterways changed constantly—no two trips were the same. Currents, channels, water depths, winds, hazards, sand bars, and debris affected navigation on the rivers, not only influencing the type of vessels used, but also their speed of delivery. Light draught vessels could travel far up the Sacramento River, as well as into the American, Feather, and Yuba Rivers.



Sacramento City, c.1851. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library

Sacramento River navigation developed rapidly. In May 1850, Pierson B. Reading’s stern-wheeler *Jack Hays* reached Trinidad City (close to Red Bluff) and Redding on May 8<sup>th</sup>.<sup>120,121</sup> The steamer *Orient* arrived in Red Bluff in November 1851 and later with the *Plumas* ran regularly up river to the Red Bluff area.<sup>122</sup> In May



The stern-wheel steamboat *Dover* on the Sacramento River, c.1910. Courtesy of Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park

1854, the *Belle* with Captain Pierce as its pilot, made her way through the treacherous Iron Canyon section of the Sacramento River above Red Bluff. Later several other boats went above the town, but only occasionally, when the river was deep enough, such as in 1859 and 1862.<sup>123</sup>

According to the *Sacramento Transcript* of January 4, 1851, California’s riverboat trade had grown to 50 steamers in the preceding year. Rivalry was intense. The newspaper reported that 15 plied the river above the City of Sacramento.

<sup>120</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. VII. Santa Barbara: The History Company, 1890. P. 133.

<sup>121</sup> Edward Galland Zelinsky and Nancy Leigh Olmsted, “Upriver Boats—When Red Bluff Was the Head of Navigation,” *California History*. Spring 1985. San Francisco: California Historical Society.

<sup>122</sup> *Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World: A Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California*, Lewis Publishing Co., 1891. Reprinted at <http://www.calarchives4u.com/history/nocal/nocal1891-266.htm>

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

As competition increased, a struggle for supremacy developed—there were no rules, no laws governing conduct and no ethic. An all-out battle to secure passengers and cargo and make time developed with accidents becoming common, slow boats zigzagged to slow down faster boats, and collided in attempting to make warf [wharf] first.

Racing became a sport as well as, an economic necessity. Captain, crew and passengers joined in and lined the decks where they shouted encouragement or invectives. Finally in desperation the principal owners formed the California Steam Navigation Co. and became one of the more powerful corporations.<sup>124</sup>

Steamboats arriving from San Francisco crowded Sacramento's landings to unload thousands of tons of foodstuffs and supplies. These were then transferred to smaller (less than 100 feet in length), shallower draft steamers that went upriver to Marysville and Red Bluff. In the competition for these secondary routes, one steamboat captain boasted that his little stern-wheeler could carry freight in ten inches of water, even "anywhere there is a little damp."<sup>125</sup>

Stern-wheelers proved to be the most suitable boats for traffic on the northern reaches of the river. Side-wheelers were all very well for unobstructed Delta and Bay travel, but stern-wheelers were narrower, of shallower draft and much more maneuverable for the upriver trade. Successful ones were called "skimmers," ... The ability of these boats to operate in very shallow water was a valuable asset, particularly during the huge flood of 1862 when the skimmers went straight out across country to rescue farm families and livestock.<sup>126</sup>

With steamboats and the growing network of roads, Red Bluff soon became the regional hub for mining endeavors extending far north into Shasta, Trinity, and Siskiyou Counties. San Francisco's *Alta California* newspaper on January 31, 1853 noted:

...we cannot but come to the conclusion that a heavy trade is springing up at this place. We counted, on our walk from the landing to Red Bluffs, 140 pack mules and 15 team loads making their way to the interior... Steamers arriving included the *Orient*, *G. Winter*, *Fashion*, *Sutter*, *Daniel Moore*, *Express* and *Gazelle*.

The census provides some insight into the growing town of 1,351 people in 1860. There were 42 carpenters, 54 teamsters (plus others on the road), 21 blacksmiths, 6

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<sup>124</sup> Mrs. Wilbur White, "Sacramento River, Its Navigation." Ms. Special Collections, Meriam Library, CSU Chico.

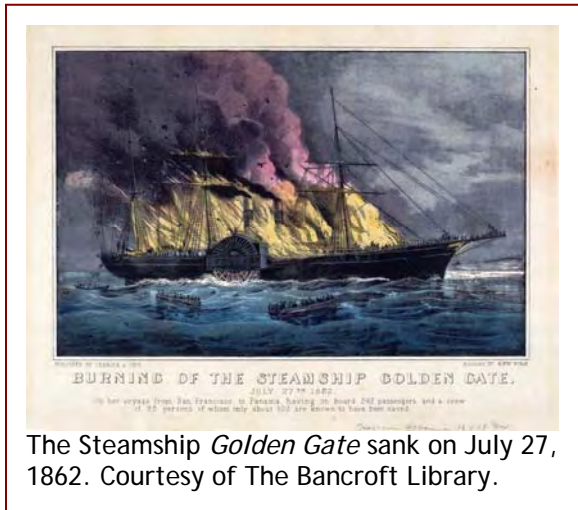
<sup>125</sup> J. S. Holliday, *Rush for Riches*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, p. 189.

<sup>126</sup> Margaret Bauer, "Sternwheelers Steamed Along the Sacramento," *Tehama County Memories*, 1996. P.13.

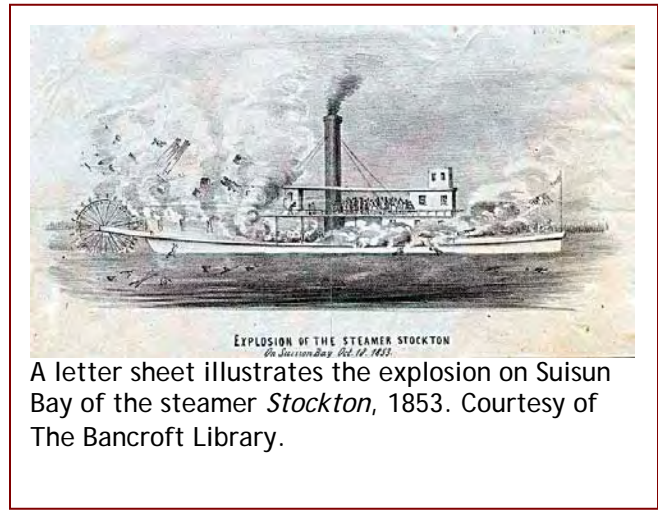


physicians, 5 lawyers, 54 packers and 5 hotelkeepers.<sup>127</sup> In Red Bluff, warehouses were stocked full of mining tools, implements, and provisions. Heavily loaded freight wagons and pack mule teams then took these supplies forty miles north to the town of Shasta or to other northern mining camps.

River travel could be risky. Wet and dry weather periods changed from year to year and with it the rivers. There were no charts in the early days to guide boats through marshlands, sand bars, and around islands on the rivers. Valley fog made navigation difficult and dangerous in the winter. The lack of regulations also contributed to accidents, such as boiler explosions, collisions, and fires—a common hazard for wooden vessels in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>128</sup>



The Steamship *Golden Gate* sank on July 27, 1862. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.



A letter sheet illustrates the explosion on Suisun Bay of the steamer *Stockton*, 1853. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Historical accounts cite numerous incidents of passengers and crews becoming casualties in ship and boat mishaps. While in Red Bluff, William H. Brewer noted one accident off the coast of California in his journal. He had just disembarked from a boat coming up the Sacramento River on August 17, 1862.

On my arrival here I found the whole city in excitement and mourning over the loss of the *Golden Gate*, a terrible calamity. Everyone has lost friends and acquaintances by that accident.<sup>129</sup>

The SS. *Golden Gate* burned at sea near Manzanillo on July 27, 1862, with a loss of 198 passengers and crew, and property estimated at \$2,000,000.

<sup>127</sup> Zelinsky and Olmsted, *Ibid.* P. 98.

<sup>128</sup> According to Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. VII. P. 135: In an 1852 U.S. law providing for steamboat inspectors, California was omitted as a district. Local inspectors had to refer their decisions to New Orleans.

<sup>129</sup> William H. Brewer, *Up and down California in 1860-1864; the Journal of William H. Brewer*. Francis P. Farquhar, ed. Reprint 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.



William Brewer's 1862 journal expanded on his travels while on board the steamboat, *Gem*. His experiences probably typified many in the Upper Sacramento Valley in the hot month of August.

Red Bluff is at the head of navigation on the river—three hundred miles above Sacramento by the river, but only half that distance by land. Stern-wheel steamers, drawing but eighteen or nineteen inches of water run up. Our boat was the *Gem*, and we towed a barge with two hundred tons of freight, quite an impediment to rapid progress. We got off at 11 A.M. I had plenty of books along, and although it was very hot, 90° to 96° every day, yet I enjoyed that trip much.

Thursday, August 14, we kept on our slow and winding way, often on bars and shoals that took long to get over. A wide plain borders the river on each side. We caught distant views of the mountains, but generally we saw only the river and its banks, which were more or less covered with trees—willows, cottonwoods, oaks, and sycamores—with wild grapevines trailing from them. Some of the views were pretty indeed. When it got dark, we tied up, it being impossible to run in the night, owing to snags, bars, and rapids.

On Friday morning, August 15, as I stood on the deck of the steamer, who should come down to the shore to see us pass but Averill.<sup>130</sup> The party were camped on the river bank, and by chance I saw them. It was a relief, for it showed that they were safe thus far.

Our progress this day was slower than before. Many bars and rapids in the crooked river were but slowly surmounted. During the day Lassen's Buttes stood out in clear outlines in the east—two majestic sharp peaks, their sides streaked with snow. Before night we saw Mount Shasta rising above the horizon, clear in outline, although its snowy crest was 150 miles distant in air line.

We tied up that night at Tehama, a little village on the bank. A circus was the excitement of the time and I attended...

Saturday we again went on and arrived here [at Red Bluff] in the afternoon. My party had arrived just before me and had encamped near town. This is a stirring little town of a few hundred inhabitants—saloons, taverns ("hotels"), and corrals being the chief features, for here pack trains and teams start for the whole northern country, Oregon, etc. But, oh, how hot it is! I am now writing at eleven o'clock at night, and it is 94° in my room—it has been 100° to 102° most of the day. I went to

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<sup>130</sup> One of Brewer's expedition party traveling overland.

church this morning—an audience of about twenty-five only—in the schoolhouse.

Here the low hills close in on the river, and here begins a most interesting country to visit. I went out to camp a little while this afternoon, but I shall stay at the hotel until we leave here, then take to camp again.<sup>131</sup>

Boats hauled passengers and every kind of freight imaginable to the towns and landings along the river. Miners, merchants and ranchers with freight could flag down boats from the banks. Colusa, Butte City, Tehama, and Red Bluff at different times, depending on river's levels, each served as the "head of navigation," when no boat could travel further up stream.<sup>132</sup>



Freight on the dock at Red Bluff.  
Courtesy of CSUC Meriam Library

There were literally hundreds of landings along the way, where a boat would stop to unload some freight or to pick up even so small a cargo as a lug of peaches right off the farm. Many of these "farm" stops were brush landings... masses of brush, tree prunings, and other waste dumped over the

bank. A steamboat would nose up to one of these landings, swing out her gangplank, lay planks across the brush, and load or deliver cargo as needed. Stories were told of new ranch hands who had no idea where they were going being ignominiously "landed" on these shaky platforms, up to their armpits in leaves and brush.<sup>133</sup>

Residents of the Adobe Ranch and others living along the Sacramento River understood the transportation network's worth for keeping them connected with the outside world. Riverboats carried everything. One resident, Mary Murdock Compton, who lived further down stream, recounted the importance of trading boats to the inland valley.

<sup>131</sup> Brewer, *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> According to Joseph A. McGowen, *The Sacramento Valley: A Student's Guide to Localized History*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1967. P. 16: "Colusa held its position [as the head of navigation] until the snags were cleared from the river immediately above the town in 1853. Thereafter steamboats could reach Red Bluff."

<sup>133</sup> Bauer, *Ibid.* P. 13, 15.

An interesting feature of the life along the river was the trading boat that made the trip up river about every two weeks. It stopped at each ranch landing along the river bank. The people from what they called "the plains" back of the river would be waiting for it. The boat signaled its approach by a long, loud blast of the whistle, and on its arrival men, women, and children would be on hand to come on board. The boat was, in fact, a floating country general merchandise store. It had everything in hardware as well as clothing bolts and shoes, groceries, millinery, ribbons, notions and everything else one could imagine; even candy and toys. The storekeeper would take orders for fence posts and wire, which he would bring up on a return trip. The ranchers could trade in their



Last run of the steamboat *San Joaquin*.  
Courtesy of the CSUC Meriam Library.

products—sometimes bacon and lard too old for their own use—or anything else they wanted to get rid of. The boats were still going up and down the river in the early 1900's. Practically all the grain, hides, wool, and so forth went by barge down the river to Sacramento or San Francisco.<sup>134</sup>

Well into the 20th century, the Sacramento River highway continued to support the interior farming and ranching communities

of Northern California. In the years after the Gold Rush, steamboats continued to transport Tehama County's agricultural products to Sacramento and the Bay Area. By 1890, barges being towed down river carried as much as 1,000 tons of cargo, helping to keep riverboat operations alive. However, competition from the railroad took its toll with steamboats disappearing from the river altogether in the 1920s.<sup>135</sup>

### *Freight Trains on the California-Oregon Road*

Predating the riverboat traffic on the Sacramento River was a north-south trail close by the Adobe Ranch that became a heavily traveled road with the Gold Rush. Freight wagons or pack mules transported whatever was needed to the towns and gold camps scattered in the hills and valleys away from the major river arteries. Often this was after the supplies had been shipped up river from San Francisco and/or Sacramento.

<sup>134</sup> Henria Packer Compton, "Mary Murdock Compton," *Let them Speak for Themselves: Women in the American West, 1849-1900*. Christiane Fischer, ed. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978. P. 91.

<sup>135</sup> "Transporting Tehama County," <http://tehamamuseum.110mb.com/tcmtransport.html>

The old River Road, following along the west bank of the Sacramento River from Colusa to Shasta City, was the only road in Colusa County in the early '50's. Its popularity rivaled that of the river steamers, which plied as far north as Red Bluff.<sup>136</sup>

This old Sacramento Valley route, known at first as the California-Oregon Trail and, later, as the California-Oregon Road, [had been]... beaten into a well-defined path by such trappers and explorers as Ewing Young, Lieutenant Emmons of the Wilkes Expedition, Joseph Gale, and many others. Sometimes proceeding all the way down the western side of the river, and at other times crossing over to the east side somewhere between Red Bluff and Tehama (a variation used most frequently by the gold-seekers of '49 and the '50's), this historic road was traversed by a long succession of pack-mule trains, horsemen and footmen, herds of cattle and sheep, slow and cumbersome ox teams and covered wagons, and finally by the stagecoach and the freighter, precursors of the modern automobile, motor truck, and "fly-by-night" busses.<sup>137</sup>



Freight wagon with William Shady.  
From: [www.owensvalleyhistory.com](http://www.owensvalleyhistory.com)

Thousands of large lumbering freight wagons were once a common sight on California's early roads. Although commercial freight wagons operated along the Santa Fe Trail in the 1820s, there is no documentation for them in California much before the Gold Rush. The influx of gold seekers changed that. Successive gold strikes produced new mining camps and encouraged town development, with stores and other businesses. Freighters hauled the materials to build the communities and the merchandise that kept them growing.

Teaming became so common before the end of 1851 that the roads between Sacramento, Marysville and the mines were crowded with heavy wagons. A notice which appeared in the *Alta California* stated that a Marysville hotel proprietor recorded 794 wagons drawn by more than two thousand horses and mules as leaving the town within a period of one week. It was estimated that each load weighed thirty-two hundred pounds.<sup>138</sup>

Freight train operators could take advantage of a new wagon road that opened in 1853.

<sup>136</sup> Mildred Brooke Hoover, Hero Eugene Rensch & Ethel Grace Rensch, *Historic Spots in California*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962. P. 81.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* P. 184.

<sup>138</sup> Oscar O. Winther, *Express and Stagecoach Days in California*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1936. P. 12.

In July of 1853, a new wagon road opened from Red Bluff north to Shasta via Lower Springs, Canyon House, Clear Creek, and Cottonwood. "This must be a fairly good road," observed the *Shasta Courier*, "for a seven-mule team hauled 9,361 pounds over it and six mules carried 8,473 pounds, an extraordinary load. Roads were planked to withstand winter storms..."<sup>139</sup>

Freight outfits, like trucking companies today, moved every object imaginable, from barrels of flour, bags of beans, delicate eggs and other provisions, to heavy pumps, wheels, and pipes for mining and agriculture, to furniture, mirrors, printing presses, iron safes, and bolts of cloth for stores.

Everything needed by a town and its occupants came by freight wagon before the construction of railroads. Frequently the cost of transporting supplies to outlying areas exceeded the original value of the freight.

The wagon boss or wagon master managed trains of as many as 25 freight wagons, pulled by teams of oxen or mules. The second-in-command rode up and down the line keeping the wagons moving.

There was always plenty to do besides the driving and the herding.

Animals lost shoes that had to be tacked on again. Wagon hubs ran hot and had to be greased. Any of a score of other contingencies could retard the train's progress and necessitate extra labor. It was tiresome work, hard, sweaty, dusty, and dull...<sup>140</sup>



By 1858, the gold mining areas and emerging agricultural communities in the Central Valley were connected by over 270 teamsters with freight wagons pulled by horses and mules. Each wagon could move up to 9,000 pounds and operated seasonally. Between thirty and forty wagons departed Sacramento each day for the mines.<sup>141</sup>

In the 1860s, companies began replacing large freight wagons with more compact vehicles that could be coupled together.

<sup>139</sup> Zelinsky and Olmsted, *Ibid.* P.97.

<sup>140</sup> Nick Eggenhofer, *Wagons, Mules and Men: How the Frontier Moved West*, Hastings House, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1961. P. 87.

<sup>141</sup> Sacramento History Online: Historic Sacramento Photograph and Document Archive [http://www.sacramentohistory.org/resources\\_essay.html](http://www.sacramentohistory.org/resources_essay.html)



There was a decided change in the appearance of the freighting outfits after the [Civil] war. The practice of coupling one wagon behind another, developed previously on the Santa Fe haul, now came into vogue elsewhere. Experience having shown that it was inviting trouble to try to negotiate hairpin turns with too long a wheelbase, however, the wagon ends were straightened, eliminating the characteristic Conestoga overhang, to permit shorter couplings. At first only the rear end of the lead wagon and front end of the trailer were altered, to make the two, linked by a short tongue, look, at a distance, like one double-length Conestoga freighter. Eventually both overhangs were done away with,



Tandem freight wagons pulled by a mule team. From California State Parks Photographic Archives.

and the straight-ended wagon became standard, with two, three, or even more making one rolling unit.<sup>142</sup>

Sometimes a two-wheeled cart would be hooked on as a tailpiece on a trailer wagon, being especially useful in desert country as support for a 500-gallon water tank. Water barrels also rode on platforms along the sides of the wagons. Firewood often was slung beneath the undercarriage for handy transport.<sup>143</sup>



A freight wagon in Red Bluff.  
Courtesy of the Tehama Museum

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* P. 91.

## Pack Mule Outfits

Red Bluff became the supply depot for the northern part of the state in 1852, when the road was built to the town of Shasta. Goods offloaded at Red Bluff were then transferred to freight wagons or mule teams. Pack mule teams brought supplies to towns and camps beyond the reach of most roads or trails too steep and rough for wagons.<sup>144</sup>

From Spanish Colonial times onward, caravans of 2 to 200 pack mules carried valuable cargoes into California's interior. Spaniards first introduced the mule to America



A pack mule train on a switchback. From California State Parks Photographic Archives.

along with the horse. They were hardy. Trappers hauled furs; traders transported goods; and gold seekers moved their supplies and mining equipment using pack mules. The animals could transport heavy loads weighing as much as 350 pounds. Packing them was an art. Crates, barrels, sacks and other gear had to be divided equally, then balanced and cinched down tightly—not always an easy task with a difficult mule.

Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft described the pack mule trains in his *History of California*:

The train numbered a score of mules and upward, each laden with from 200 to 400 pounds of merchandise, which had to be secured and balanced with great nicety to withstand the inequalities of the trail. Patient and watchful, the animal would guard his load against projecting crags and drooping branches, and signal by a stop when anything went amiss. Freight charges were regulated both by the demand and the



1850s illustration of pack train mules being loaded.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* P. 92.

<sup>144</sup> Holliday, *Ibid.* P. 186

prevailing high price for labor, so that for a time one dollar per pound for a distance of 100 miles was no uncommon rate...

...the mule train presented a striking appearance as it advanced in winding file, now climbing a ridge, now fringing some precipitous slope, now disappearing in the wood-clad vale, at its head the leader, usually an old horse, the musical tingle of whose bell found response in the pricking ears of his followers... Twenty-five miles usually intervened between the camping-grounds, which, selected on some grassy river plat, lay outlined by the unpacked loads ranged with military precision, while around browsed the liberated animals.<sup>145</sup>

The Lowden brothers operated a pack train in 1854 from Red Bluff and Shasta to all parts of the northern mines, using the Trinity Trail.<sup>146</sup> By 1857, pack mules outfitted Weaverville and other remote mining camps in northwestern California, supplying a market of ten thousand people. The terrain they traversed included narrow ridges and steep slopes in order to reach remote tents and cabins. In wet weather, pack mules were used instead of heavy wagons, which could become bogged down in the mud. The long mule trains were referred to as "the clipper ships of the mountains."<sup>147</sup>

Up in the hills miners had to put up with delays in getting their supplies for any number of reasons. They hated the inflated prices they had to pay for even the most common commodity. However, there were no other alternatives. They had to forfeit whatever the cost to ensure delivery of their mail, food, mining supplies, and other necessities.

### *Stages Take to the Roads*

As California's population grew, so did the demand for better mail and passenger service. Stagelines developed and with them improvements were made to the rough trails and roads used by pack mules and freight wagons. Stage service provided the impetus for developing many of California's early roads.

Following [stageline operator] Jim Birch's lead in improving the roads to aid his own business, the freighters improved them in order to carry heavier loads. By the spring of 1851 the Mother Lode country of California was laced with a network of roads that, though rough and often precipitous, could be traveled by wheeled vehicles.<sup>148</sup>

In Northern California, enterprising individuals began organizing stage companies. Marshal Cummings drove the first stage into Shasta in September 1851 loaded with

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<sup>145</sup> Bancroft, *Ibid.* Pp. 153-154.

<sup>146</sup> Rosena A. Giles, *Shasta County, California: A History*. Oakland: Biobooks, 1949. P. 47

<sup>147</sup> Holliday, *Ibid.* P. 140.

<sup>148</sup> Ralph Moody, *Stagecoach West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967. Reprint 1998. P. 44.

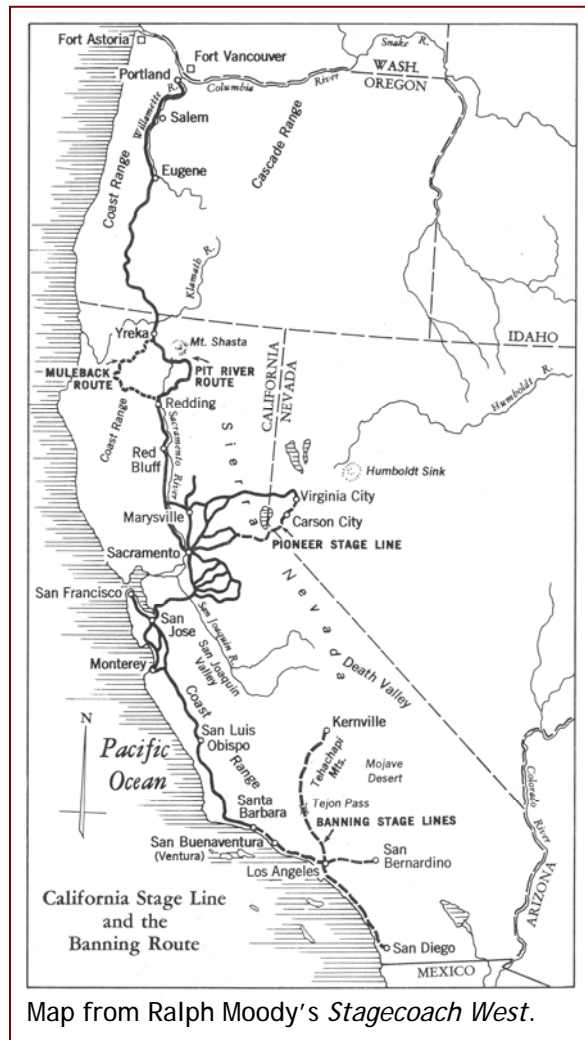


passengers and their gear.<sup>149</sup> Baxter & Co. (known later as Baxter & Noble, as well as Baxter & Monroe), followed in 1852, initiating a route up the western side of the Sacramento River from Sacramento to Shasta not far from the Adobe Ranch.

The first mail stage into Shasta was the U.S. mail stage, Baxter & Co., on May 8, 1852. By this date the roads were sufficiently dried up from the winter rains to make possible passage over the wheel ruts and bottomless mud holes. On arrival of the boats from Sacramento, this stage daily left the Colusi House, Colusi [early spelling of Colusa], at 4 p.m. for Shasta, via Placerville, Monroville, Moon's Ranch, Tehama (Red Bluffs), Cavertsberg [a trading post north of Red Bluff], Cottonwood. Returning, it left Shasta St. Charles Hotel daily for the above places, arriving in time to connect with the Sacramento Boats for San Francisco.<sup>150</sup>

Soon thereafter, the Hall & Crandall Stage Line offered competition on the eastern side of the river.<sup>151</sup> In the spring of 1852, Hall & Crandall decided to compete with Baxter & Monroe for the anticipated California-Oregon mail contract.

Hall & Crandall Company quickly followed Baxter & Company, also in May, 1852, from Sacramento and Marysville to Shasta City. Leaving Sacramento at 7 p.m., passing through Marysville, arriving in Shasta at 12 m. the following day, stopping in Shasta County at Cottonwood, Clear Creek. Offices: New Orleans Hotel, Sacramento, and U.S. Hotel, Marysville, El Dorado or Globe at Shasta. Returning, stages left Shasta daily at 6 p.m. on the 140-mile trip, arriving at Marysville at 3 a.m. the next morning, and arriving at



Map from Ralph Moody's *Stagecoach West*.

<sup>149</sup> Giles, *Ibid.* P. 63.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> McGowan, *Ibid.* P. 13: "Stages for Shasta had to pass east of Sutter and Butte basins, stopping at Nicolaus, Marysville, and Bidwell's (Chico) before cutting westward to the Sacramento River and Red Bluff."

Sacramento at 12 m., in time for the San Francisco boat. Running time: 25 hours. They touched at the following places in Shasta County: Middletown, Briggsville, One Horsetown, Cottonwood and Red Bluffs [old spelling of Red Bluff]. This line carried the mail once a week. Sacramento-Shasta fare, \$20.<sup>152</sup>

A race ensued between the rivals.



An advertisement for Hall & Crandall's Stages, 1854

...[Hall & Crandall] stocked the old Hudson's Bay trail from Colusa (the head of navigation for river steamers on the Sacramento [at the time]) to Shasta with Concord coaches and the best of their [California] mustang mares. Not to be outdone, Baxter & Monroe moved their best reinsmen and their finest eastern road horses onto the line. To no one's surprise, this resulted in the fastest long-distance race in California stage-coaching history.<sup>153</sup>

From Tehama to Shasta, a distance of 60 miles, on May 14, 1853, John Smith (Hall & Crandall) drove the course in five hours and 55 minutes.

The rival company, Baxter & Co., with W.A. Webb as whip, made it in six hours and 15 minutes, stopping 30 minutes for breakfast and 25 minutes for a

change of team. Exact driving time, five hours and 20 minutes, a gain of 35 minutes over the adversary.<sup>154</sup>

By 1853, there were a dozen small companies running stages connecting Sacramento, Stockton, Northern California and the gold fields.

They centred [sic] in Sacramento, as the chief point of distribution for the mines, and in the beginning of 1853, a dozen lines were owned there, with from three to twelve coaches each and numerous relays, valued at a third of a million dollars, and with connection to all parts of the state.<sup>155</sup>

A year later, James E. Birch had merged many of the competing stage operations into the California Stage Company. Two men from Providence, Rhode Island, Birch (who

<sup>152</sup> Giles, *Ibid.* Pp. 63-64.

<sup>153</sup> Moody, *Ibid.* Pp. 50-51.

<sup>154</sup> Giles, *Ibid.* Pp. 64-65.

<sup>155</sup> Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. VII, p. 153 notes: "Alta Cal., March 22, 1853, assigns from 35 to 150 horses to each line, and places the total value at \$335,000. *Sac. Directory*, 1853-54. The termini were Coloma, Nevada, Placerville, Georgetown, Yankee Jim's, Jackson, Stockton, Shasta, and Auburn, some with rival lines."



had established the first stageline between Coloma and Sacramento in 1849) and Frank Stevens, a hotel and tavern keeper, founded the organization.

...the California Stage Company, a joint-stock concern with a capitalization of a million dollars, was organized in December 1853 and went into operation on January 1, 1854. It combined at least five-sixths of all the stage lines in California, and had 111 stagecoaches or mud wagons operating over fourteen hundred miles of road. Birch was elected president of the new firm, and Frank Stevens vice-president.<sup>156</sup>

By 1856, Sacramento had become the largest stagecoaching center on earth and the California Stage Company the largest stagecoaching firm in the United States.<sup>157</sup> Although the company had released several of its lines to stockholders and numerous independent operators had entered the field,

It was operating twenty-eight daily stagelines over 1970 miles of road; had contracts for carrying the U.S. mail about two-thirds of that distance; owned 1500 horses and 205 Concord stagecoaches and mud wagons; and employed 300 drivers, agents, relay station keepers, hostlers, and others. The total distance traveled by the firm's stock and equipment was in excess of a million miles per year, equal to more than 250 round trips between Sacramento and St. Joseph, Missouri.<sup>158</sup>

In 1857, Birch sought to enter the nationwide stage business. That year Congress had voted a six hundred thousand dollar subsidy for semi-weekly mail and passenger service.<sup>159</sup>

Shortly after the United States took possession of the Gadsen Purchase an overland mail contract was let to a company headed by James Birch. This provided an overland service from San Antonio, Texas to San Diego. The first eastbound mail left San Diego August 9, 1857. This was known as the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line. It became known as the "Jackass Mail" [the name suggested what critics thought of it] and was ill-fated from the beginning. James Birch lost his life in a sea disaster before the route was operating. His successors only made about forty

<sup>156</sup> Moody, *Ibid.* Pp. 51-52.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* P. 58.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Moody, *Ibid.* P. 292.

**CALIFORNIA STAGE CO.**

OFFICE, ORLEANS HOTEL,  
SECOND STREET, BETWEEN J AND K,  
SACRAMENTO.

**J. BIRCH, - - - PRESIDENT.**

DAILY CONCORD COACHES  
Leave the Orleans Hotel, Sacramento, carrying the U. S. Mail, via:  
**Marysville and Shasta,**...  
Touching at  
Charley's Rancho, Bilwell's Rancho, Hamilton City, Oak Grove, Clear Creek, Lawson's, Tehama, Campbell's Rancho, Red Bluffs, Cotton Wood Creek, One Horse Town, Middletown, Coversburg, Shasta, Yreka and Pitt River Diggins.

**PLACERVILLE,**  
Diamond Springs, Biggs, Log Town, Mad Springs, Kingsville, Forty Mile House, Deer Creek, Shingle Machine, El Dorado House, Rail Road House, Carson River House, White Rock Springs, Ohio House.

**COLOMA,**  
Uniontown, Gold Springs, Gold Hill, Weber Creek, Summer House, White Oak Springs, Green Springs, Mormon Island, Negro Hill, Lexington House, Willow Springs, Abler Springs.

**MOKELUMNE HILL AND SONORA**  
Daylor's Rancho, Ion Valley, Jackson, Middle Bar Bridge, Mokelumne Hill, Frenchman's, San Andreas, Kentucky House, Farman's Rancho, Angel's Camp, Vallechi, Murphy's, Carson Hill, Robinson's Ferry, Columbus, Shaw's Flat, Springfield.

A California Stage Company advertisement from 1854

trips over the entire route prior to the inauguration of the Butterfield Overland Mail in September of 1858.<sup>160</sup>

Bancroft noted that the California Stage Company continued until the railroads took over its leading routes and relegated the stages, as well as freight wagons and mule trains, serving as tributaries to the rail routes. Before then,

The company flourished since it was better able to suppress competition; its stock paid as much as five per cent monthly dividends... In 1860 the Cal. Stage Co. controlled 8 lines northward, the longest extending 710 miles to Portland, with 60 stations, 35 drivers, and 500 horses, 11 drivers and 150 horses pertaining to the rest.<sup>161</sup>

Today the word “stagecoach” is applied almost exclusively to the classic, oval-shaped overland coach produced in Concord, New Hampshire and seen in many Western movies. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, if a vehicle carried passengers and mail, it was simply referred to as the “stage.”

Companies utilized a variety of vehicle styles in different sizes for stage travel, from passenger wagons and hacks to overland coaches and open-sided wagons, including ambulances, mud wagons and celerity wagons. The type of stages selected for use depended upon the character of the road, the distance to be traveled and the destination.



The California & Oregon Stage Company, c.1867, promoted a “classic” Concord coach. Mt. Shasta is in the distance. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

From the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century, stagecoaches were built in Albany and Troy, New York, and several New England towns.<sup>162</sup> However, Concord, New Hampshire, became *the* center for coach production, when wheelwright Lewis Downing joined his skills with expert coachbuilder J. Stephens Abbot from Maine. They took the manufacture of stagecoaches to a new level.<sup>163</sup> What separated Abbot and Downing from others of

<sup>160</sup> Dick Yale, “Transportation and Communication: The Lifeline of a Frontier.” Mss., Old Town San Diego SHP Library.

<sup>161</sup> Bancroft, *Ibid.* P. 152.

<sup>162</sup> Josiah Gregg in his *Commerce of the Prairies* published in 1884, also mentions Dearborn carriages and Jersey wagons.

<sup>163</sup> Eggenhofer, *Ibid.* P. 151.

their time were their vehicles' handsome appearance, durability, and overall quality.<sup>164</sup> These masterpieces of construction had no equal. Concord stagecoaches were first to offer the shock absorbing thorough braces—an important feature not only for passengers, but also for the animals pulling them. They allowed the coach to rock back and forth and sideways, too.

Thorough braces were strips of leather cured to the toughness of steel and strung in pairs to support the body of the coach and enable it to swing back and forth. This cradle-like motion absorbed the shocks of the road and spared the horses as well as the passengers. It also permitted the coach to work up its own assisting momentum when it was mired in a slough of bad road and beasts and driver were struggling to free it.<sup>165</sup>

Concord coaches came in three sizes. They could hold six, nine, or even twelve passengers inside. The bodies were so strong that an additional nine or twelve people could ride on top.

On rugged Western routes, like the Butterfield Overland Mail, companies frequently transferred their passengers and mail for the

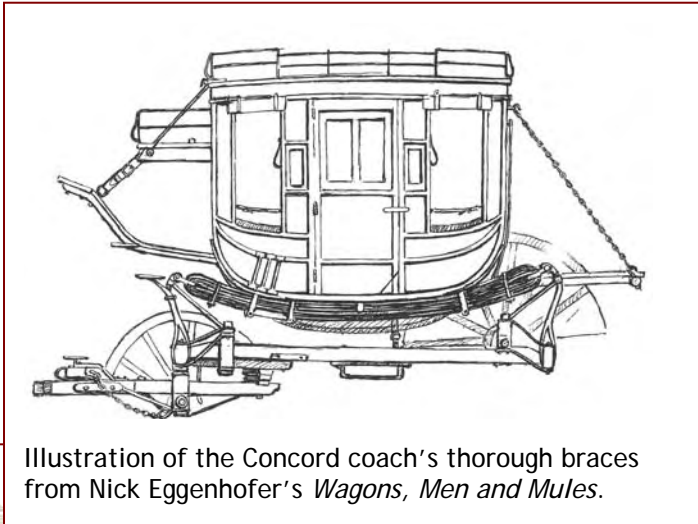
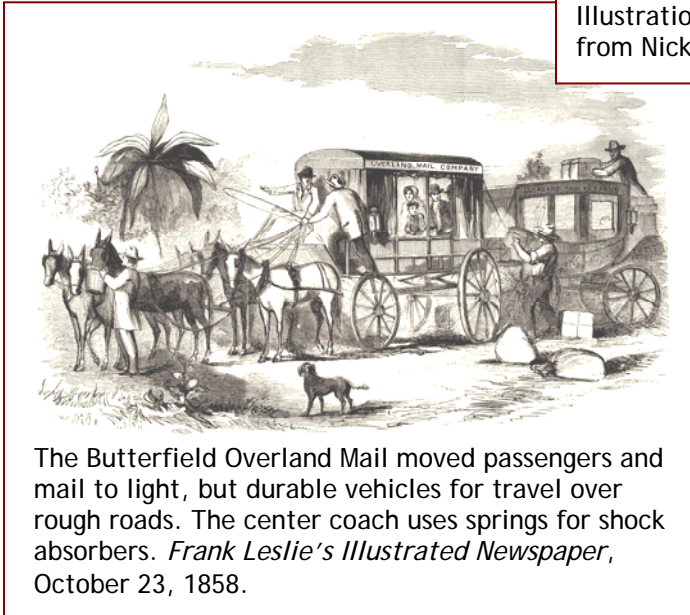


Illustration of the Concord coach's thorough braces from Nick Eggenhofer's *Wagons, Men and Mules*.



The Butterfield Overland Mail moved passengers and mail to light, but durable vehicles for travel over rough roads. The center coach uses springs for shock absorbers. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, October 23, 1858.

roughest parts of the journey to the lightweight, durable celerity wagon or to the less expensive, but also light mud wagon. Unlike the classic Concord stagecoaches, which could be mired in bad weather, mud wagons—true to their name—could travel over trails and roads during inclement weather. However, the only protection provided from the weather and dusty roads were the canvas side-curtains, which also could be rolled up and fastened.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Peter Anthony Adams, "Abbot-Downing Concord Coaches," <http://theconcordcoach.tripod.com/abbotdowning/index.html>



It was much in favor during rainy spells: sometimes a heavy Concord got mired down, but six horses (or more often mules) could pull a mud wagon through just about anything... These vehicles cost about 35% what the Concord did, but the later varieties became beautiful, with curved panels in the rove sides, sometimes solid sides and doors and/or permanent tops with railings, or curved dashes and elaborate leather trim.<sup>166</sup>

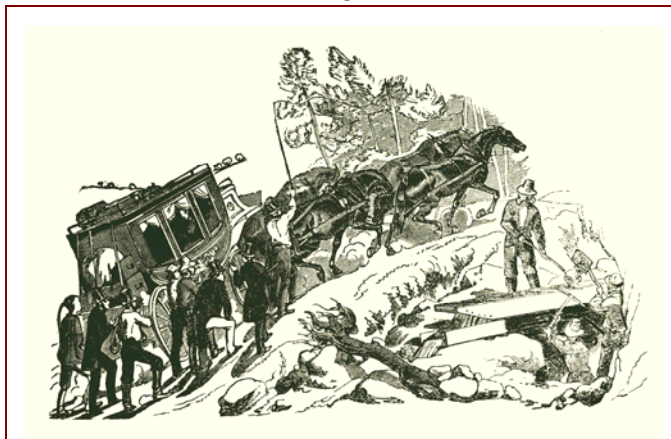


A stage in motion amid the dust. From California State Parks Photographic Archives.

Not just anybody could drive a stage. It took skill and nerve. In order to avert disaster, the “jehu” or “whip” handling a four- or six-horse team had to command instant action. There was often no room for error on narrow mountain roads or in a blinding storm.

A stage driver’s whip, although never used for punishing his horses, was the symbol of his profession, and often his most cherished personal possession. For that reason a top-flight stagecoach driver was generally called a “whip,” although in the West he was called a jehu if he was noted for particularly fast driving.<sup>167</sup>

Through choking dust, constant heat, or intense cold, passengers sat shoulder-to-shoulder, three to a bench. Each had about 15 inches to call his own. Those stuck on the center seat of a larger coach had to interweave their legs with the passengers



“Staging in the Mountains, 1853”  
from Alonzo Delano’s *Pen Knife Sketches*.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

facing them with only a leather strap supported their backs on a long journey. Coaches had a lurching, rolling motion that was increased by rough roads. Some travelers suffered from motion sickness—similar to “seasickness” but without refreshing sea breezes. With tongue in cheek, humorist Mark Twain referred to the Concord as “a cradle on wheels.” Passengers occasionally were required to get out and walk because a bridge might be too frail to handle the weight of a loaded stage. Sometimes they were asked to help push the stage up steep hills.

<sup>166</sup> Christine Jeffords, “Here She Comes! The Stagecoach,” <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~poindexterfamily/ChristinesPages/Stagecoach.htm>.

<sup>167</sup> Moody, *Ibid.* P. 28.

It took about thirty hours to cover the 140-mile distance between Sacramento and Red Bluff.<sup>168</sup> Some companies operated their stage routes 24 hours a day. Way stations were spaced from 12 to 30 miles apart and located near a well, a spring, river, or water storage tanks. Stages stopped briefly to change teams or for quick meals. With the blast of a bugle or a trumpet, guards or conductors aboard incoming stages gave warning to station keepers a mile or two out. The call prompted the harnessing of a fresh team and the preparation of food. Way stations, some without a floor or a roof, were operated for service, not comfort.

Drivers, guards, conductors, station agents, harness makers, blacksmiths, grooms, herders, and division superintendents faced daily challenges with a resolve to keep the stages moving. Stage companies had to build or repair roads and bridges, set up and staff way stations, and purchase stagecoaches and wagons, as well as buy horses, mules, and feed.



A mud wagon was used on the stage line between Redding and Shasta.  
Courtesy of CSUC Meriam Library.

Mishaps—runaway teams, injured animals, breakdowns, upset vehicles or wheels stuck in sand or mud, not to mention holdups due to bad weather and bad men—made operating a stageline a risky business.

With the arrival of the California and Oregon Railroad in the new town of Redding in 1872, stages to Shasta and other valley towns began to coordinate their schedules with them rather than the riverboats.<sup>169,170</sup> Like the freight teams, stagelines had to adapt to the changing times.

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<sup>168</sup> McGowen, *Ibid.* P. 13.

<sup>169</sup> McGowan, *Ibid.* P. 21.

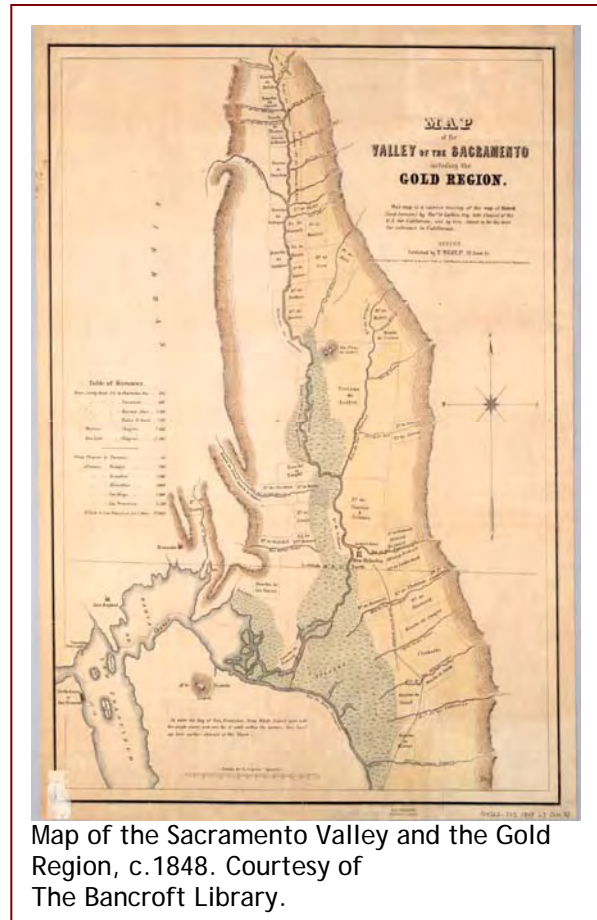
<sup>170</sup> Giles, *Ibid.* P. 70.



### The "Adobe Ferry"

When John Bidwell surveyed the valley floor in the late 1840s, the main channel for the Sacramento River lay at the foot of the Sierra Nevada range near the present-day park. Many times during dry months, it was easy to ford the river when water levels were low. In fact, the Adobe Ranch was often identified in its early years as being 20' north of "Frémont's Old Crossing." However, as gold seekers found new and better ways to "harvest the hills," debris from hydraulic and other mining methods began to wash downstream, clogging watercourses and raising streambed levels. Unusually heavy rains sometimes combined with melting snows, brought valley flooding.

In the winter months of 1861 and 1862, immense rainfall and snowmelt over a few short months caused extensive flooding in the Central Valley and in places altered the Sacramento River.



Map of the Sacramento Valley and the Gold Region, c.1848. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

...during floods in the winter of 1861-62, debris piles burst, sending giant flows of clay and rock onto valley farms along several rivers. Nearly thirty-three inches of rain fell in two-and-a-half months that winter, carrying debris down with it. According to one settler, the new lake formed in the lower valley was sixty miles wide. Steamboats moving cattle from flooded areas in the hills were able to paddle as far as fourteen miles from the riverbed. Most of the city of Sacramento was under water for three months. City levees that had remained intact trapped floodwaters that had broken through east-side levees... These events disturbed the ready assumption that mining benefited all California residents.<sup>171</sup>

On January 17, 1862, the *Independent* stated:

On the second week of January, rain and melting snow in the mountains again raised the river at Red Bluff. On Friday it was within one foot of the December flood level. Cottonwood Creek was three feet higher than

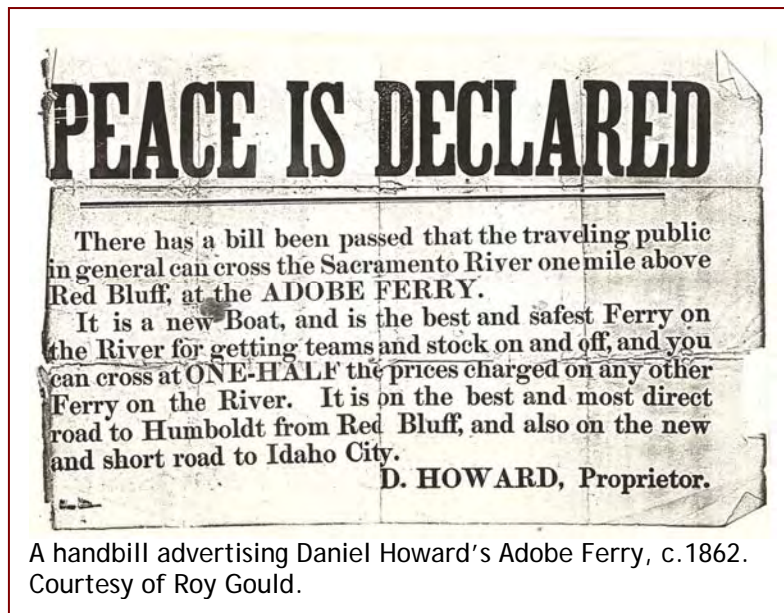
<sup>171</sup> Karen M. O'Neill, *Rivers by Design: State Power and the Origins of US Flood Control*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. P. 75.

ever. Flood waters swept away the Jackson Bridge. The Brearcliffe home on the south side of Reed's Creek burned to the ground. The flames were visible from town, but the creek so high, no one could cross to assist Mr. Brearcliffe. Thomes Creek received much damage, especially farmers. Streams cut new paths and caused much trouble. On Wednesday there was snow again, but it melted by morning.

The Independent noted in January 21<sup>st</sup>: "The rains continue on into January, floods are far worse than two weeks ago." The Red Bluff Beacon reported on March 7, 1862, "The winter floods have changed the river and made new sand bars which make navigation difficult."

As a result of these events, it appears the Sacramento River's flood waters may have deepened the river channel north of Red Bluff, beside the Adobe Ranch. Along the waterway, residents took action by providing ferry services for travelers, vehicles, and livestock wanting to cross to the other side of the river. From 1861 through to the mid-1870s, the Adobe Ferry offered an important means for getting across the river—a lifeline for many.

As with today, ferries played a critical transportation role, offering a safe and dependable means for crossing. They could make the difference in the success or failure of freight and stage lines or ranch operations. The right to run a ferry at certain locations usually was granted by local government. These rights were often bought and sold like property.



A handbill advertising Daniel Howard's Adobe Ferry, c. 1862. Courtesy of Roy Gould.

In the Red Bluff area, there were approximately half a dozen ferries at different times. Local resident and one-time owner of the Adobe Ranch, William F. Luning, noted the area's ferries for the *Red Bluff Daily News* on June 8, 1934: "Dan French established a ferry at Tehama October 1855, Job F. Dye at Red Bluff in December 1856, Andrew Jelly at his place May 1860, Francis Crosby one mile north of Tehama on January 1, 1861, D. Howard the Adobe Ferry in 1862, H. Kraft just

north of Pine Creek in August 1865, and John Lee a ferry at Allens Landing (later called Squaw Hill) October 1872."

According to one source, a ferry at Blue Tent Creek was erroneously referred to as Ide's Ferry. (William B. Ide had been dead almost 10 years at the time.) Records indicate that Alfred Walton was the first to operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch. He filed notice for a ferry on July 2, 1861. That summer and fall was marked by a bad drought, which was not broken until December 1861. It was Daniel Howard, the next owner of the ranch, who appears to have successfully operated the "Adobe Ferry." He acquired the 56.38 acres from Walton on January 3, 1862. Howard was able to take advantage of the unprecedented rain and snowfall that winter to establish a ferry service across the Sacramento River. Howard secured a ferry license from the County Board of Supervisors on November 5, 1862.<sup>172</sup>



A ferry erroneously identified as Ide's Ferry at Blue Tent Creek, c.1859. Courtesy of Ehorn's Photography

The record states:

Ferry Permit: Tehama County, book "A" & "B", page 189. Nov. 5, 1862. The Board of Supervisors met with full board present: I.M. Shackelford, P. Crumbaugh, Nathaniel Merrill, Wm. P. Mayhew, and Wm. Bofinger.

In the matter of a petition to keep and run a ferry at or near the "Old Adobe Ranch" and it being proven to the satisfaction of the Board that D. Howard has in all respects complied with the law relating to the establishment of ferries;

It is ordered by the Board of Supervisors of Tehama County that D. Howard be and he is hereby authorized to run and keep a public ferry across the Sacramento river at the point know as "the Old Adobe Ranch" about two miles above the Town of Red Bluff.

And the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors will issue a license to said Howard for the term of one year from the first day of Dec. next by his paying into the County Treasurer the sum of fifty dollars, and filing his bond in accordance with the law in the penal sum of two thousand dollars.

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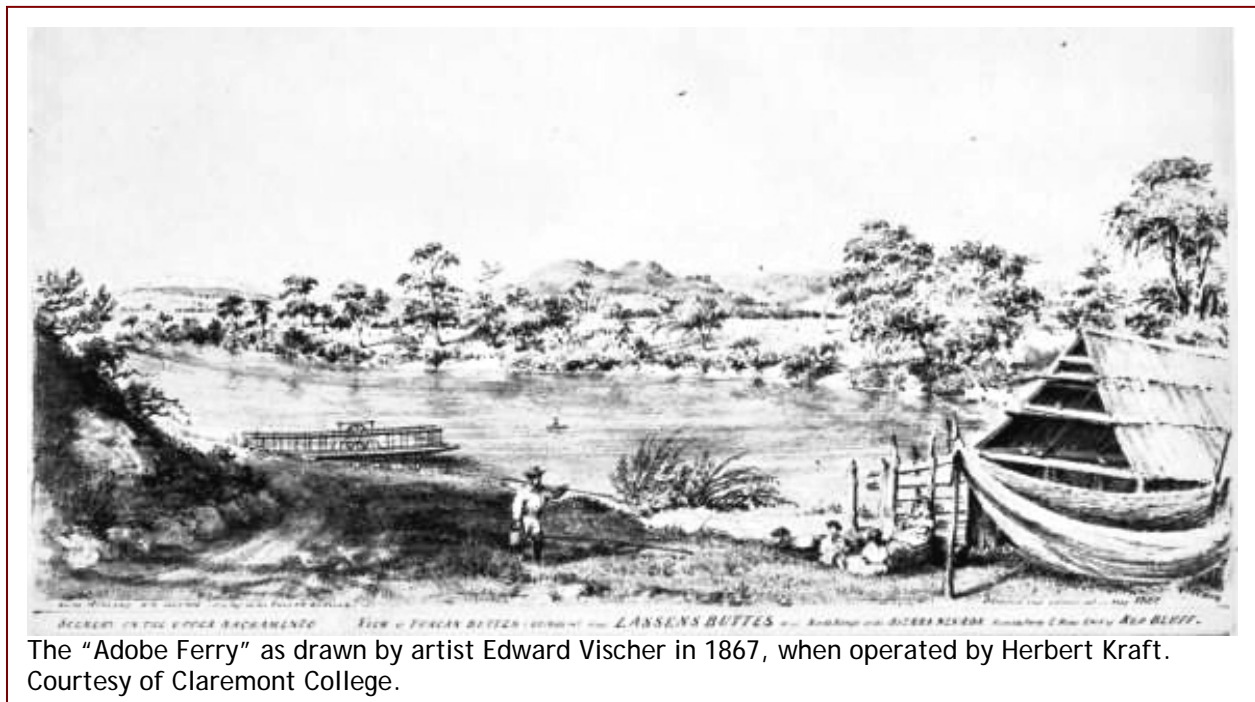
<sup>172</sup> November 5, 1862, Tehama County, Book "A" and "B." P. 89.

The rates of toll of said ferry shall be fixed as follows:

Man and horse	.25
Footman	.12
Buggy, one or two animals	.50
Wagon and two animals light,	.50
Wagon and two animals loaded,	.75
Wagon and four animals light,	.75
Wagon and four animals loaded,	1.00
Wagon and six animals light,	1.00
Wagon and six animals loaded	1.75
Pack animals per head,	.15
Hogs, sheep, and goats each	.03
Cattle and horses loose	.07

The "Adobe Ferry" license was renewed for another year from December 1, 1864 to December 1, 1865.

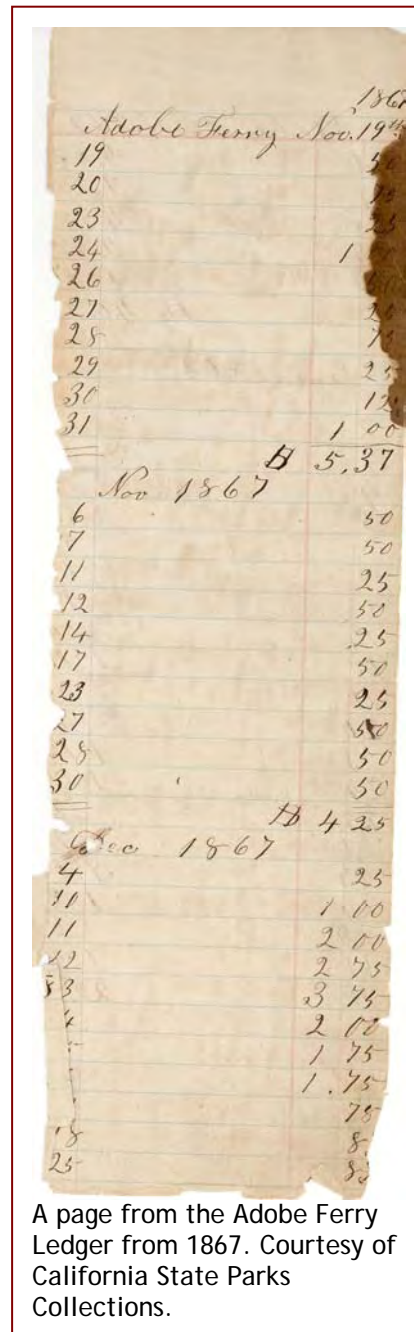
Off the main north-south wagon road, it was important to direct people to the Adobe Ferry service crossing the river. Beginning in 1863, Howard pushed for the construction of roads to connect with his ferry (see map on page 114). A road was built from Red Bluff to the Adobe Ferry and to the Humboldt Wagon Road in 1864-65.



The "Adobe Ferry" as drawn by artist Edward Vischer in 1867, when operated by Herbert Kraft. Courtesy of Claremont College.



The “Adobe Ferry Road” officially became a public way on February 11, 1865. However Daniel Howard, directed by the court, had to pay damages for having the road right of way pass over the Star Ranch (part of original Bluffton Ranch and later Rand’s Adobe Ranch) then owned by J.N.



A page from the Adobe Ferry Ledger from 1867. Courtesy of California State Parks Collections.

Williams. Tehama County Supervisors also agreed to contribute \$300 to pay for a fence to line both sides of the road through the Star Ranch.

On June 22, 1865, Herbert Kraft bought the 56.38-acre ranch plus the rights to run the ferry for \$2,000.00.<sup>173</sup> Along with the land and the buildings, he acquired the ferryboat, cables, ropes, small boats, tackle, and “appurtenances of every description” belonging to the “Adobe Ferry.” Two years later, German-born artist Edward Vischer, while traveling through the area, captured the ferry operating in May 1867 in a sketch. Kraft later moved the ferry operations south to the foot of Pine Street in Red Bluff. In January 1870, he sold the ranch to Andrew A. Brownlee for the reduced sum of \$500, but without the ferry equipment.<sup>174</sup> Anderson Finley of Niland, California remembered an incident when Kraft operated the ferry in Red Bluff (see page 115).

William F. Erwin, Andrew J. “Andy” Hammons, and George W. Hammons gained authorization to build and operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch in December 1874. William Erwin and George Hammons were equal share owners of the property at the time, and for most of 1875. The ferry operated until a new bridge was constructed across the Sacramento River at Red Bluff in the fall of 1876.

Notes from a 1957 interview with Frank Erwin, son of the ferry operator William Irwin, stated that the ferry was never a paying proposition due to its location off the main roads. The ferry, he described, was a current type, with cables anchored on both sides of the river tied to an oak and a sycamore.<sup>175</sup> The tree on the Adobe Ranch side washed away. Frank Erwin stated when he lived in the Adobe House at the time. Evidence for its

operation has not been located in the park. Later owner Willet C. Mount, wrote in a letter indicating he had removed the ferry

<sup>173</sup> June 22, 1865, Tehama County, Book “E.” Pp. 462, 463, and 464.

<sup>174</sup> January 11, 1870, Tehama County, Book “G.”P. 235.

<sup>175</sup> The cable system kept the ferry from going downstream but let it move sideways by turning a pilot wheel.



cables with a team of horses.<sup>176</sup> However, during the summer of 1987, it was reported by a professional archeological group, participating in under water research on the



Unloading a freight wagon at a ferry crossing, possibly at the Adobe Ferry. Courtesy of Ehorn's Photography.

Sacramento River, that some type of anchor or "dead man" lay under the river and opposite "Fremont's Old Landing." Further research would be useful to locate the original ferry to better interpret it in the park.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:



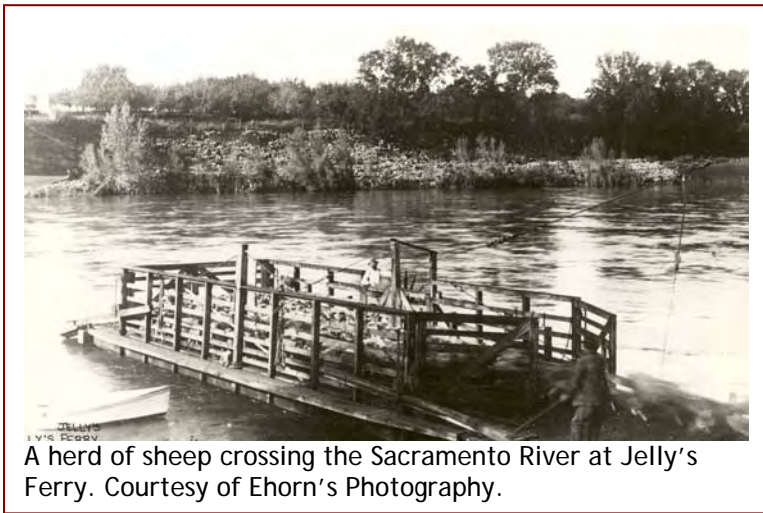
Example of a diorama from the Sharpsteen Museum, Calistoga,

A table-height diorama will depict the area around the Adobe Ranch, the Sacramento River and the Adobe Ferry crossing in the 1860s. Visitors will be able to view it through a series of small windows along an exhibit wall that surrounds it. The diorama will focus on aspects of the transportation nexus described in this section. The model will represent the ferry and its operations in the early to mid-1860s, based upon the 1867 Edward Vischer drawing, as well as photographs taken of other local ferries. The diorama should be accessible and easily viewed by grade school children, as well as individuals who use wheelchairs. The Adobe House presented in the model will have a hip roof and wide verandas, as seen in 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the place. In association with the diorama, a map will illustrate the early roads, with the Adobe

<sup>176</sup> Letter to E.E. Stevens from W.C. Mount received October 3, 1949. William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park, Park Archives

Ferry crossing and Interstate 5 shown. This will offer context for viewers of the exhibit, many of whom will be travelers unfamiliar with the area.

Exhibit panels on the face of the diorama walls, as well as inside, will highlight the different forms of transportation used in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Red Bluff area. Windows into the diorama will coordinate, complement and enhance the subject matter being interpreted by the text and graphics, highlighting in three dimensions: a pack mule train, freight wagon(s), a stage, carriage, and pedestrians waiting to cross. If space permits, a flock of sheep with a herder might be included in the diorama, possibly placed on board the ferry, as seen in an early photograph of nearby Jelly's



Ferry. Figures in the model will embody the diversity of travelers in 19<sup>th</sup> century California (e.g. Whites, Chinese, and African Americans, etc.). Another area of the ferry's interpretation related to the diorama will be an explanation of how the ferry operated on the river, using the water's current as its motive power. This may be done with diagrams showing the cables used with the river's current.

Because riverboats played such an important role in the region, with Red Bluff at the head of river navigation, a part of the exhibit will represent the river traffic and the important role it played in the transportation of people, provisions and supplies. A riverboat could be represented docked at Red Bluff with its goods arrayed on the wharf, along with freight wagons and pack mules being loaded. This might be done as an illustration or as another, but smaller diorama.

### Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:

Copies of photographs illustrating the diverse forms of 19<sup>th</sup> century transportation—pack mules, freight wagons, stages, and ferries will enhance the visiting public's understanding of the era's technology. Many period images are included in the William B. Ide Adobe SHP Interpretive Plan Graphics File. Note that most images are not owned by the department and will need to have the appropriate clearance for their use in the park's exhibits.

## AREA 5: The Adobe Ranch Through Time

Space Allocation: 10%

### Theme:

Over the years, the Adobe Ranch changed hands many times, as its owners sought different opportunities. It eventually became a park.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about the restless/wanderlust spirit that permeated California's Gold Rush society and how it may have affected the Adobe Ranch's ownership.
- Understand the property's uses over time as a ranch, ferry crossing, public thoroughfare, and state park.
- Appreciate the importance of using historic records in the preservation of architecture, like the Adobe House.

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

#### *Bluffton Ranch*

The property where the Adobe House sits today has a long and complex history of ownership. Like gold, land had become a valuable commodity when Abraham M. Dibble<sup>177</sup> filed the first claim for the property in 1852. He acquired the original homestead under California's Possessory Land Act of April 20, 1852.<sup>178</sup> Dibble was the first of many owners of the ranch with a restless, wanderlust spirit. J. Goldsborough Bruff, an amateur artist and draftsman, encountered him working as a shingle maker for Peter Lassen in December 1849.<sup>179</sup> Dibble settled in the Red Bluff area in 1851, while hauling freight from Colusa to Shasta.<sup>180</sup>

In 1852, California's newly-enacted Possessory Land Act required

Every such claim... shall not be more than one hundred and sixty acres, and the same shall be marked by metes and bounds, so that the boundaries may be readily traced, and the extent of such claim easily known...

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<sup>177</sup> "A.M. Dibble" was on the original 1852 land claim but when Dibble sold the property to Isaac H. Rand in 1853, the deed was signed "Abraham M. Dibble."

<sup>178</sup> Keith Lingenfelter, Lingenfelter Archives. Special Collections, Meriam Library. CSU Chico. <http://www.csuchico.edu/lbib/spc/iepages/lingenfelterintro.html>

<sup>179</sup> J. Goldsborough Bruff, *Gold Rush, The Journals, Drawings, and Other Papers of J. Goldsborough Bruff, captain, Washington City and California Mining Association, April 2, 1849-July 20, 1851*. Ed. Georgia Willis Read and Ruth Gaines. New York: Columbia University Press, 1944. P.254, 668.

<sup>180</sup> Lingenfelter, *Ibid*.

Any person being a citizen of the United States... shall file in the office of the Recorder of the County in which such lands are situated... [and] that he or she has taken no other claim under this Act, and to the best of his knowledge and belief, that the said lands are not claimed under any existing title...

Within ninety days after the date of said record, the party recording is hereby required to improve the land thus recorded, to the value of two hundred dollars, by putting such improvements thereon as shall partake of the realty, unless such improvements shall have been made prior to the application to record...<sup>181 182</sup>

At the time, when there were few landmarks, this area was known for its “Red Bluffs” and its historical association above “Frémont’s Old Crossing.” Abraham Dibble referred to his 160-acre claim as “Bluffton Ranch.”<sup>183</sup>

In early California, many non-professionals produced property surveys to support their claims to land. Physical landmarks—a tree, a rock, or a river were used to indicate the property’s boundary lines. In addition, footsteps or other imprecise measurements often denoted lengths.<sup>184</sup> There were also mistakes made in the text. Abraham Dibble’s 1852 land description for his claim offers an example:

I have on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of April A. D. 1852 laid claim and taken possession of the following piece of land situated in Shasta County, California. Commencing at the white Oak tree about 20 feet above Freemont’s old crossing on Sacramento River; running thence down the Sacramento River one hundred and sixty 160 rods to an old Sycamore tree; thence north West one hundred and sixty 160 rods to a white oak tree; thence parallel with said river northwest one hundred and sixty 160 rods to a White oak tree; thence Southwest to the place of the beginning. The above land herein described containing one hundred and sixty 160 acres which I claim and have plainly defined the boundaries thereof dated April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1852. This claim is not over 160 acres and I have never taken up any other land, and to the best of my knowledge and belief the land included within this boundaries is not claimed by any other person under any existing title, and the affiant has the possession thereof.<sup>185</sup>

It was later discovered that the last boundary reference on Dibble’s quarter section (160 acres), “...thence Southwest to the place of beginning” was incorrect and should

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<sup>181</sup> Laws of the State Of California, Chapter LXXXII, “An Act: Prescribing the mode of maintaining and defending possessory actions on Public Lands in this State.” P. 159.

<sup>182</sup> The requirements of the 1852 law support the view that with Dibble’s land claim, William B. Ide had no claim to the property.

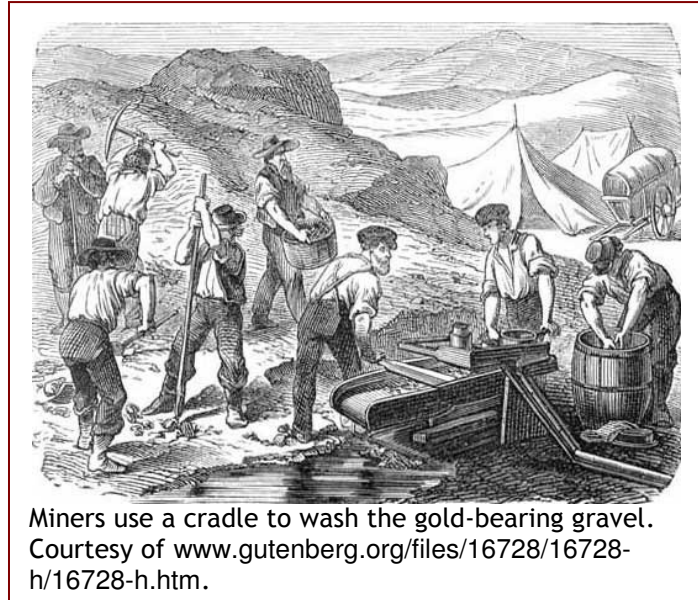
<sup>183</sup> Recorded February 1, 1853, Shasta County Book “B.” Pp. 103 and 104.

<sup>184</sup> William Wilcox Robinson, *Land in California*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1979. P. 203.

<sup>185</sup> Recorded April 10, 1852, Shasta County Book “B,” Thomas W. Thomas, Recorder. P. 103.

have been stated as Southeast. Tehama County Surveyor William Luning discovered the error.<sup>186</sup>

Within 90 days of filing—by mid-July 1852, Dibble would have had to have made improvements to the land to support his claim. Local historian and judge, H.S. Gans,



noted that Dibble was burned out and lost over \$10,000 worth of livestock in “The Indian War” of 1852.<sup>187</sup> That may have been the reason for his sale of the property to Isaac H. Rand in February 1853. The Nomlaki and other California Indians tried to oust settlers and miners from their historic territory. North of Bluffton Ranch at Jelly (or Jelly’s) Ferry gold had been discovered and the gold bearing gravels were being worked by miners. (The Chinese later employed ground sluicing in the area to find the precious metal.)

During the boom and bust years of the California Gold Rush, land values spiked and dropped. Also property frequently changed hands, as owners lost fortunes or found new investment opportunities. Land was useful. It could be sold for a profit (or sometimes at a loss), as well as mortgaged for cash, operating expenses, or to make improvements. Over the years, several owners mortgaged the Adobe Ranch. Some sold it at a loss to ease or eliminate their debt. When a landowner could not repay the money borrowed against it, a public or sheriff’s sale was held. This occurred several times over the ranch’s history.

Over the years, there has been considerable speculation about the actual construction date of the Adobe House. It may have been the original structure built to demonstrate settlement for Dibble, but that is not certain. The nearby seasonal stream identified as Dibbles Creek (later Dibble Creek) does indicate that Abraham Dibble had some durable association with the property, although not for long.<sup>188</sup> Judge H.S. Gans noted the stream formerly had been called Dry Creek before it was renamed in his honor. Less than a year later, Dibble sold Bluffton Ranch in February 1853 to Isaac H. Rand for \$1,500. That was a considerable sum for the time, supporting one theory that improvements may have been made to the property by Dibble before it was sold, however, the house may have been damaged or in ruins.

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<sup>186</sup> His brother Henry F. Luning tried to take advantage of the situation by filing a duplicate land claim in March 1859.

<sup>187</sup> Shasta County Book “B,” *Ibid.*

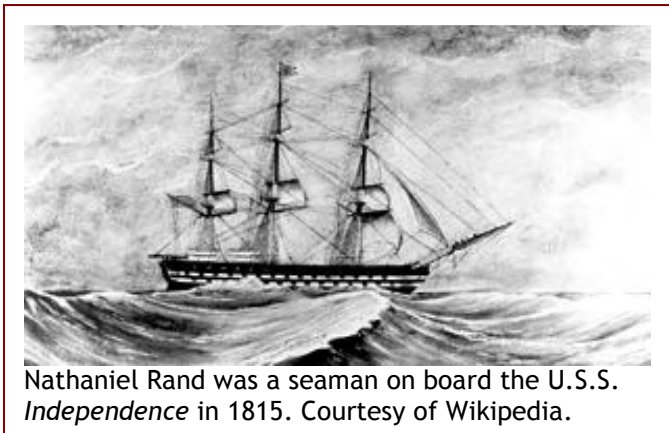
<sup>188</sup> Judge H.S. Gans Scrap Book is cited by Lingenfelter as the source of the name change.



Abraham Dibble moved back East between 1854 and 1860, but returned to California with his wife Clarissa and their two children (the couple later had two more children in California—see The Adobe Ranch Timeline in this section). They purchased 194 acres in Butte County for \$1,000 on June 16, 1868 and moved to Durham, near Chico.<sup>189</sup> Dibble also purchased three other pieces of property in Butte County in 1868.<sup>190</sup> The *Sacramento Daily Union* reported that A.M. Dibble’s leg had become badly broken and torn when it was caught in a threshing machine accident near Chico on July 22, 1870.<sup>191</sup> The family later relocated to Riley, Oregon.

### *Rand’s Adobe Ranch*

Little is known about the second owner, Isaac H. Rand, who renamed the property “Rand’s Adobe Ranch.” In 1851 Rand was cutting hay on Grand Island in the Sacramento River Delta with George Champlin. They “sold [hay] to parties all the way from there up the Sacramento River to Shasta.”<sup>192</sup> Local historian Ruth Hitchcock has indicated that Isaac Rand was an early resident of Shasta City. Historian Keith Lingenfelter noted him as being among the unmarried residents of Northern California. Rand purchased Bluffton Ranch from Abraham M. Dibble on February 1,



Nathaniel Rand was a seaman on board the U.S.S. *Independence* in 1815. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

1853. However, it was only after being sold to Nathaniel Rand (believed to be his brother), the third owner, that there is written evidence about the development of the property on the record. The December 1, 1853 deed referenced a house, outhouses, and a fence running down river 160 rods<sup>193</sup>

Nathaniel Rand had been a seaman on board the U.S. naval ship, the *Independence*, during the War with

Mexico.<sup>194,195</sup> One of Nathaniel Rand’s shipmates was William H. Meyers, a Navy gunner. (Meyers’ many water color paintings documented the Mexican War on the Pacific Coast.<sup>196</sup>) As a veteran, Rand was awarded land in Solano County.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 2, 1871, “Statistics of California-1870.” July 22d.

<sup>192</sup> *Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World: A Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California*. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1891. Reprinted at <http://files.usgarchives.org/ca/tehama/bios/champlin801gbs.text>

<sup>193</sup> Recorded December 24, 1853, Shasta County Book “B.” P. 224.

<sup>194</sup> Lingenfelter, *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> According to <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/i1/independence-ii.htm>: The *Independence* began service in the U.S. Navy on June 22, 1814 in the Boston Navy Yard. Years later, the ship was recommissioned August 4, 1846 during the War with Mexico. The *Independence* departed Boston August 29, 1846 for the coast of California. She entered Monterey Bay 22 January 1847 and became the

Nathaniel Rand transacted a mortgage loan agreement with William A. Mix eight months later, on September 1, 1854. What the funds were used for is not certain. In early California, lending money between individuals was a common practice, especially where there were no banks nearby. Nathaniel Rand retained the property until March 9-10, 1855, when the property was divided and sold.

At the time, no laws in California governed the subdivision of land. This often resulted in unregulated property divisions, leaving some ranch lands too small to be profitable. Rand sold off 103.62 acres of the original 160 acres to Dow Vincent in 1855 for \$500. George Sherman with St. Clair Jackson purchased the remaining 56.38-acre parcel, where the Adobe House sits today for \$700 in 1855. After that, the smaller acreage changed hands many times, perhaps as a result of the ranch's reduced size and the inability of its owners to earn a good living from the land.

The purchase price for the property varied with the land's usage, economic times, and the interests of its buyers. From 1852 until 1865, the 56.38 acres changed owners at least ten times! Why is not exactly clear. Very little is known at present about each of the early owners who lived here for such a short time, and how they used the land.<sup>198</sup> Indeed, some may have leased the property to others, but there are few surviving records to point out what happened on the land. Also, prices for the property vacillated greatly. Once in 1859, it sold for the very small sum of \$70.48 at a public sale. Two years later in 1860, it sold again in a court-ordered sale for \$1,034.70. Over the years, the purchase price for the land ranged up to \$2000.

One individual stands out as an example of that restless, wanderlust spirit that infused California during and after the Gold Rush. His name was Alfred J. Walton. Walton acquired the Adobe Ranch in June 1859. Born in Yorkshire, England in 1822, Walton first came to California in 1842 on board the sloop-of-war *Dale* with the US Navy expedition headed by Thomas AP Catsby Jones (Jones awkwardly captured the

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flagship of Commodore William B. Shubrick, commanding the Pacific Squadron. *Independence* assisted in the blockade of the Mexican coast, capturing Mexican ship *Correo* and a launch May 16, 1847. She was present to support the capture of Guaymas October 19<sup>th</sup> and landed blue jackets and Marines to occupy Mazatlan November 11, 1847. She later cruised as far as Hawaii, arriving in Honolulu August 12, 1848. The *Independence* returned to the East Coast at Norfolk May 23, 1849 and was decommissioned there May 30<sup>th</sup>. For more about the ship read: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_Independence\\_\(1814\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Independence_(1814))

<sup>196</sup> Many of William H. Meyers' paintings are at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park and The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

<sup>197</sup> According to Keith Lingenfelter, "Northern California Bounty Land Grantees Under Acts of 1847-1855": Bounty land grants were awarded war veterans under three Congressional Acts, February 11, 1847, September 28, 1850 and March 3, 1855. Patent books in different counties listed the U.S. Government as grantor and the veteran as the receiver of the bounty grant, including his rank, organization and war he served. The veteran was not required to settle on the land, but could assign it to a local resident who would occupy it and pay the government in full. The payment went to the veteran in the form of a pension.

<sup>198</sup> Refer to the "Adobe Ranch Timeline" in this section.

Mexican-ruled *pueblo* of Monterey in 1842, only to restore it days later!)<sup>199</sup> Walton returned to England and then immigrated to Iowa, where he farmed until 1849. He joined other '49ers traveling overland to Los Angeles. Before his acquisition of the ranch, Walton drove cattle, mined at Bidwell's Bar on the Feather River, raised cattle on Kimball's Plain in Shasta County, operated a hotel in Shasta City, and worked as a teamster and packer for six or eight years in the vicinity of Red Bluff. He also had an interest in raising sheep.

Alfred Walton gave Hiram Z. Taylor a mortgage on the 56.38-acre Adobe Ranch in June 1859, but had to foreclose on it in January 1860 for lack of payment. On the following December 18, 1860, Walton married Mrs. Mary Ann Ward Reeves, a native of Ireland. He proceeded to advertise the Adobe Ranch for sale in February 1861. It was described in a newspaper advertisement as:

...the well-known Garden Ranch, known as the "Adobe Ranch," situate[d] two miles north of Red Bluff, on the Sacramento River, and containing 56 acres of Land, Twenty of which is the finest Garden Land in this section, There are about 300 Fruit Trees besides the Buildings, on it, and the whole will be sold at a low figure to insure a quick sale. This would make one of the best Bee Ranches in Upper California.

For particulars apply to Mr. O. R. Johnson, at the Luna House, Red Bluff, or to

A. Walton,  
Corner of Madison and Walnut streets<sup>200</sup>

But his plans changed, perhaps affected by the forthcoming birth of the couple's first child (Alfred Ward Walton, born October 19, 1861). Walton ended up retaining the property and on July 2, 1861 filed to obtain a license to operate a ferry across the Sacramento River from the Adobe Ranch—probably a wise business for a former seaman with its ropes, tackle and pulleys. He proposed his ferry to connect with the Old Antelope Road. Weather probably affected its operation and its profitability. On October 4, 1861, the *Red Bluff Independent* reported:

<sup>199</sup> William H. Meyer, a gunner on the U.S. sloop *Dale*, produced twenty-six paintings depicting Navy action in the Pacific. Many include the ship. They are in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Collection at Hyde Park.

<sup>200</sup> *Red Bluff Semi-Weekly Independent*, February 22, 1860.



Six months have elapsed since rain has fallen in Red Bluff. This has been the hottest, driest season since California became a State. On Sunday something happened in Red Bluff which nobody expected or wanted. Dust blew in every crack. It came in showers, people breathed gallons of dust and grit every time they opened their mouths.

The drought grew worse. On November 7, 1860, the Red Bluff *Independent*, wrote: “The mortality rate of cattle was high, they were starving.” Clearly operating a ranch with orchards and livestock would have been hard under these conditions. Walton held title to the property until January 3, 1862, when he sold it to Daniel Howard.<sup>201</sup> In the month prior to the sale, the weather changed dramatically. The *Independent* stated on December 10<sup>th</sup>:

By the end of November winter had come to town for sure. The Sacramento River rose suddenly one night and caused considerable damage. Mr. Vigil Baker lost 16,000 feet of lumber which was lying on the bank of Ide’s Bottom. For the past two weeks, King Storm has prevailed in the North State. Nearly all bridges north of Red Bluff were washed away. Loomis Ward of Tehama lost 700 cattle by December 9. Spring Creek Mill, owned by Swinford and Enox, was swept away with a bridge and lumber amounting to \$8,000.00. Wires of communication were down between Tehama, Marysville and Oroville. Almost every bridge from Shasta to the Oregon Border was gone. Papers reported flood damage from almost the entire country from Oregon to San Francisco... Damage was exceeded only by that reported in Marysville and Sacramento. From Tehama to the other side of Sacramento, the country overflowed.

As the bad weather and flooding continued well into 1862, the Adobe Ranch owners turned the situation to good advantage.

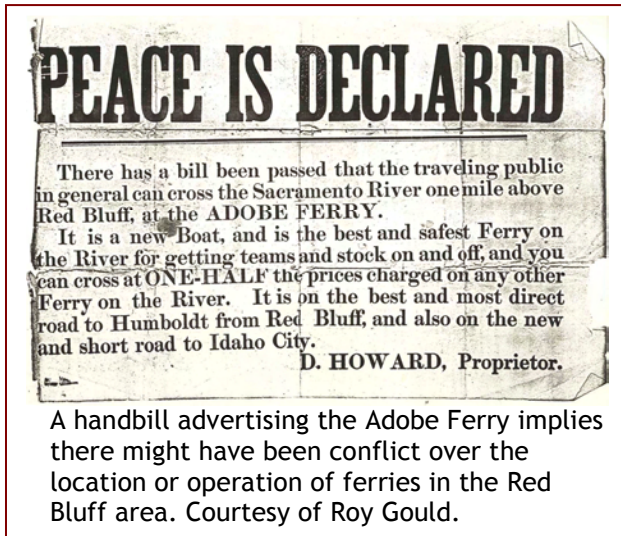
### *The “Adobe Ferry”*

While ranching and farming were typically how the area land was worked, several Adobe Ranch owners also operated a ferry service across the Sacramento River.<sup>202</sup> Alfred Walton was the first, but it was Daniel Howard who developed and promoted the business. Howard, originally from New York, acquired the 56.38 acres on January 3, 1862, then built and operated a ferry under a license granted by the County Board of Supervisors on November 5, 1862. (Howard actually appears to have begun his ferry service before then.)

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<sup>201</sup> For more information about Alfred Walton, refer to “The Adobe Ranch Timeline” in this section and the Appendix of this *Interpretive Plan*.

<sup>202</sup> There were 300 fruit trees on the Adobe Ranch, when Walton first offered the land for sale in February 1861.



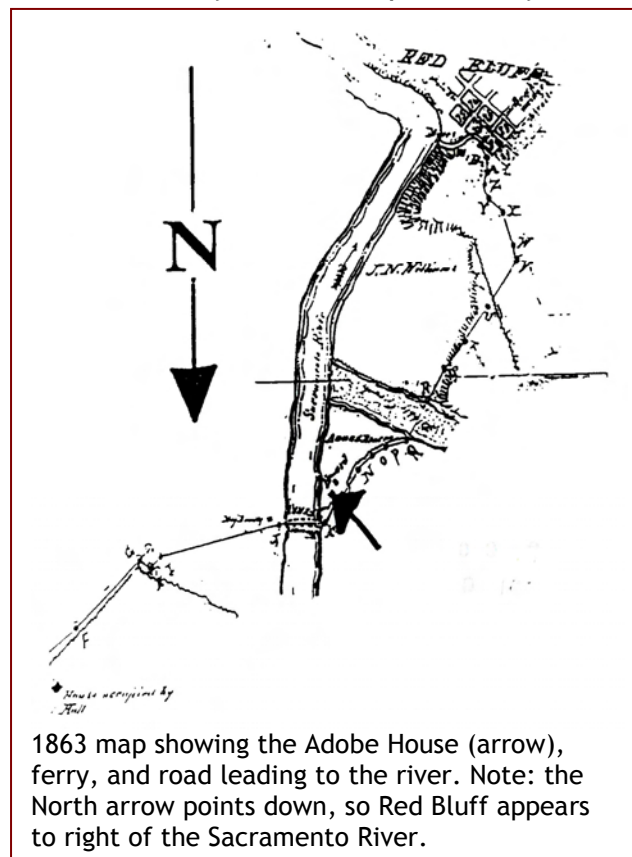
A handbill advertising the Adobe Ferry implies there might have been conflict over the location or operation of ferries in the Red Bluff area. Courtesy of Roy Gould.

A surviving handbill advertisement alludes to the fierce competition in the area for transportation services across the Sacramento River. He billed the operation as having a new boat that was the best and safest on the river. The “Adobe Ferry’s” license was renewed for one year from December 1, 1864 to December 1, 1865.

Off the main north-south wagon road, it was important to direct people to the Adobe Ferry’s service crossing the Sacramento River. Beginning in 1863, Howard pushed for the construction of

roads to connect with his ferry (see map below and “The Adobe Ranch Timeline” in this section). A road was built from Red Bluff to the Adobe Ferry and to the Humboldt Wagon Road in 1864-65. The “Adobe Ferry Road” officially became a public way on February 11, 1865. However Daniel Howard, directed by the court, had to pay damages for having the road right of way pass over the Star Ranch (part of original Bluffton Ranch and later Rand’s Adobe Ranch) then owned by J.N. Williams. Tehama County Supervisors also agreed to contribute \$300 to pay for a fence to line both sides of the road through the Star Ranch.

Herbert Kraft from Germany bought the 56.38 acres from Howard, along with the right to operate a ferry on June 22, 1865 for \$2,000.<sup>203</sup> Along with the land and the buildings, he acquired the ferryboat, cables, ropes, small boats, tackle, and “appurtenances of every description” belonging to the “Adobe Ferry.”<sup>204</sup> Two years later, German-born traveling artist Edward Vischer sketched the Adobe Ferry in operation in May 1867. It is the earliest known image of the property. Kraft moved his ferry service south to



1863 map showing the Adobe House (arrow), ferry, and road leading to the river. Note: the North arrow points down, so Red Bluff appears to right of the Sacramento River.

<sup>203</sup> June 22, 1865, Tehama County, Book “E.” Pp. 462, 463, and 464.

<sup>204</sup> Tehama County Deed Book E, pp. 462-462, June 22, 1865.





An 1867 drawing of the Adobe Ferry by Edward Vischer. Courtesy of Claremont College.

the foot of Pine Street in Red Bluff, where undoubtedly there were more customers. Anderson Finley of Niland, California, gave an early account of the ferry's operation:



Herbert Kraft used a hands-on approach to his ferry's operation, From *Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World*.

...in June 1871... We rested under some oaks on Main Street near the intersection of Main and Oak, had our lunch and journeyed on our way. We had come from the brown, hot plains of San Joaquin valley and were headed for Belle Mill. We crossed the Sacramento River on a ferry and just after the boat left the shore I saw a man grab an oil can and shin up a rope to a big pulley running on the cable overhead. After a few squirts with the can he slid down, took the wheel from the attendant and steered us across the river. I thought at the time he must be a sailor but later I learned he was no other than Herbert Kraft, the banker, who also owned the ferry.<sup>205</sup>

In January 1870, Kraft sold the 56.38 acres to Canadian-born Alexander A. Brownlee, for a reduced price of \$500 without the ferry operation.<sup>206</sup>

Four years later, the ferry service was revived north of Red Bluff. In December 1874, William F. Erwin, Andrew J. "Andy" Hammons, and George Hammons gained authorization to build and operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch. William Erwin and George Hammons each owned one-half interest in the property. The men advertised

<sup>205</sup> Red Bluff newspaper article by Anderson Findley (n.d.) of Niland, California, who spent his boyhood in the Lyonsville country. From Judge H.S. Gans Scrap Book. P. 15.

<sup>206</sup> January 11, 1870, Tehama County, Book "G." P. 235.

their ferry service on July 1, 1876 in *The People Cause* (a newspaper edited by later property owner L.D. Clark):

The Old Adobe Ferry has just been equipped and placed in running order. We can offer the best inducement to stock men as we have the largest boat on the upper Sacramento River, securing speed in transit.

Teamsters will find the roads by the Ferry in Excellent condition at all seasons of the year.

Later resident Bert Mount recalled

...there were two other big oak trees nearly as large as the one by the house. The other two were on the bank of that ravine there and the road to the ferry came through between them. The one on the northside of the road I was told was blown over and up rooted blocking the road and had to be cut up to get it off of the road. The other brok [sic] off some 10 feet or so above the ground...<sup>207</sup>



A water-damaged, undated photograph of William F. Erwin with his wife Imogene posed near their Adobe House. California State Parks Collections.

The ferry service continued well into 1875, but according to Frank, a son of William Erwin, it was not very profitable. (Two children, Edward and Charley were born to William Erwin and his wife Imogene while living at the Adobe Ranch.)

L.L. McCoy in a paper, "Land Grants and Other History" read before the Red Bluff Rotary Club, tried to determine the how long the Adobe Ferry service was in operation. He stated:

...I have learned from Gus Kauffman, Mrs. Walton and others that it [the Adobe Ferry] was operated in the sixties. Mr. Walton owned that property in the sixties. I learn from S.D. Wilcox and others that a ferry was running there in the early seventies. I crossed there in the spring of 1874 and the well known Andy Hammans [Hammons] was running the ferry. When the first bridge was opened for traffic in the fall of 1876 the ferry was abandoned.<sup>208</sup>

Construction of a wooden bridge across the Sacramento River at Red Bluff in the fall of 1876 marked the end of the Adobe Ferry's operations. The new bridge enabled

<sup>207</sup> Letter to Norma Agnew from A.R. Mount from Woodland dated Aug. 17, 1967.

<sup>208</sup> Judge H.S. Gans Scrap Book. P. 24.

traffic to cross with ease with few delays. The ferry cables, the last evidence of the ferry on the property, were removed years later by Will Mount using a team of horses.<sup>209</sup>

### *The Adobe Ranch*

In 1877, landowner William Lansdale quit claimed 40 acres of land next to the 56.38 acres (on which he held a mortgage from Erwin). William F. Erwin acquired control of this property on July 16, 1879, and combined it with the Adobe Ranch land to create a 96.38-acre property. This new, larger land configuration continued to be sold and resold many times. William and Imogene Erwin lived in the Adobe House for a time. Two of their children were born on the Adobe Ranch, a son named Edward Marlow, born November 26, 1874, and a daughter Charlene [or Charley]. Other families followed in residence.

Lorenzo D. “Lorin” Clark moved into the Adobe Ranch in 1879 with his wife Matilda and their daughter, Irene.<sup>210</sup> Later resident, Alberto R. “Bert” Mount, described the Clarks’ additions to the property in a letter dated July 9, 1967 (Note: Some of these additions could have been built by earlier Adobe Ranch tenants):

He [L.D. Clark] had been a school teacher and was also a carpenter by trade. He had built considerable of a fraim [sic] woodin [sic] addition onto the old Adobe structure which altered its original looks very much as is shown in some pictures that were taken in after years. He also dug a cellar under the addition entered by a trap door in the kitchen floor. This addition consisted of a dining room, kitchen, pantry, bedroom, and store room. The Adobe walls inside had been covered over with a cloth lining [sic] and groove lumber smooth plained [sic] but not beaded.

The sitting room was fairly large with a brick fire place and brick flue on the outside of the wall... the fire place was



Undated early photographs of the Adobe House shows the giant oak tree that continues to dominate the setting. The label misidentifies the building as General Ide’s home. Courtesy of the Department of Special Collections, University of California, Davis.

<sup>209</sup> Letter to E.E. Stevens from W.C. Mount received October 3, 1949. William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park. Park Archives.

<sup>210</sup> The Clarks had lost another daughter, Adella, months before on November 10, 1878.

on the East side and faced across towards the river with a clear view of Lassen Peak, there was a window on each side of the fireplace from which you had a clear view of Lasen [sic] Peak every clear day.

The two bed rooms on the West were divided from each other and the sitting room with cloth partitions whitewashed. The floors in the Adobe part were of 6 inch board flooring laid on oak joists which were laid directly on the ground and the front door sill was almost level with the ground.. There were som {sic} holes in the Adobe walls just above the ceiling they were about 6 inches square and some people called them portholes, but Mr. Healey when he was out and surveyed the ranch for us one time in later years that they were not but that they had been a shed on the front and these holes were where the shed rafters rested in the walls for support.

Bert Mount wrote in another letter dated July 7, 1957, the “...roof was most likely put on by Mr. L.D. Clark at the time he built on the board addition...”<sup>211</sup> He also noted there was a cloth ceiling in the wooden addition. Mount went on to write:

The roof was of split shingles and laid in the same manner as our present day shingle roofs except that they were laid about nine or ten inches to the weather instead of the four or five of the present day, and the shingles were considerable longer than our present day shingles, as they had to be in order to lay with this amount to the weather.

The long-held belief that the Adobe House was built by William B. Ide might have originated during the short period of the Clarks’ residency or soon thereafter. In the 1880 census, the next household closest to Lorenzo D. Clark’s family (very possibly the former William Lansdale property quit claimed to William Erwin in 1877, acquired by Clark, and later sold to Emory and Laura Mount for \$1 in 1882 by Ephraim Clark) was occupied by Clark’s parents, Ephraim and Harriet Clark, their son Lewis, along with John and Mattie Hays, *and William B. Ide’s son, Lemuel Ide.*<sup>212</sup> Like Ide, the Clarks and the Hays were Mormons. Lucian B. Healy, a son-in-law of William B. Ide married to his daughter, Sarah, probably contributed to the confusion. He was a surveyor, who had been involved in roadwork for the Adobe Ferry Road in the mid-1860s. Thirty-five years later, when he was in his late sixties, Healy assisted Will and Bert Mount with the survey of a boundary line for a new barbed-wire fence, Healy remembered the house as being Ide’s, but was unsure of its date of construction. The Mounts found survey marks on a tree (a witness tree), which Healy recognized as his own, but these very likely originated with the roadwork done thirty years earlier.

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<sup>211</sup> Letter to Douglas W. Metcalf from A.R. Mount, dated July 7, 1957. William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park Archives.

<sup>212</sup> In a letter dated July 17, 1967, Bert Mount recalled: “I never knew Ides Son or never met him (but now this is what we were told that Ides Son was not bright or compident [sic] of transacting business and that could account for Healey being made guardian of the estate...”

Emory and Laura Mount moved into the “Old Adobe Ferry Place” with their children in June 1882, having purchased the property May 1, 1882 from Clark. The couple had four children, the oldest being Emory H. (married in 1887) and Arvilla Jewell (married October 14, 1886) and two younger sons, Willett C. “Will” and Alberto R. “Bert” Mount. Bert recalled in a letter from Woodland dated July 3, 1967:

It was our Fathers intention at one time to start a nursery there and he set the bottom and out into orchard with various kinds of fruits to have them to graft from.

We never made a stock ranch of it but had 3 cows for our own milk and horses to do our work with.

In that same letter, Bert also noted:

When my folks bought the ranch there was no well at the house and the Clarks drew their water in an inclined wire with a bucket from the river. Father had a porch built on the West side of the framework kitchen and put an outside stairway to the cellar and dug the well and put in a pump. He also planted the olive trees which are there near the house. There was about 1½ acres of orchard on the place with several varites [sic] of fruit.

One incident of the family’s residence stood out in Bert Mount’s memory on the Adobe Ranch.

On Aug. 4<sup>th</sup> 1884 my perents [sic] returned from a trip to Klamath Co. Oregon and in the evening as we were eating supper Mother sat in her rocking chair not far from the open front door, my Sister who had been with them had finished her supper but Father, Will and my self were still at the table, Started for her room There was an extra carrage [sic] seat just inside the door against the wall, when she steped [sic] onto the floor in her room, we all heard a large loud from a rattlesnake and in just about three jumps she was clear out in the dining room and we all rushed to her room door and there it was under that seat, It huridly [sic] crawled along the wall and her beuru [sic] then under the bed and long another wall, ther [sic] was a croquet box a couple of inches out from the wall where it thought it was safe, Father and Will rushed out and got a couple of sticks. I grabed [sic] up a piece of edging that had been cut off of a board and came in with it. Mother grabed [sic] it out of my hands jerked the bed out a little from the wall and got on Father and Will each went to a different end of the box and reached under the bed with them and shoved it up to the wall pinning it in there. Mother comenced [sic] churning in that space with the edging lath and when she quit she had made a jelly of that snake which was over four feet long and had 13 rattles.



We had to get close fitting screen [sic] doors to all our outside door [sic] and keep them shut to keep them out.<sup>213</sup>

It appears the Mounts had an unhappy marriage. In 1886, the couple deeded ½ an interest in the land to their two youngest sons, Will and Bert Mount, still residing at home on April 9<sup>th</sup>—the day before the Mounts’ divorce became final on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

The divorce settlement offers clues about the Adobe Ranch’s agricultural activities. Laura Mount received the other ½ interest in the property, in addition to: one mowing machine, one rake, one blue header wagon and header box, all plows and harrows, hoes, lumber and shakes and tools in the shop, one small spring wagon, two cows known as Bell and Bube, one sow and pigs, all poultry, one gray mare, one three-year-old colt, and harness. Emory received a set of buggy harness, and two city lots in the town of Napa.



Will Mount with his sister Arvilla Mount Crews and her five sons posed in front of the Adobe House with their dogs. California State Parks Collections

Along with their mother, Laura, Will (age 15) and Bert (age 13) continued to reside on the property until their maturity. According to Bert,

...there was a mortgage on the place on which we had to pay 12% interest My brother Willett C. Mount went to work on the dairy next door [Star Dairy] seven days a

week and long hours. Salary \$25.<sup>00</sup> per month I had to quit school before I was 14 and run the ranch doing all the work in it alone doing all the selling and buying , well I got some business education out of it any way.<sup>214</sup>

Arvilla Mount Crews returned to live at the Adobe Ranch with her children soon after the birth of her fifth son. She divorced Francis Marion “Frank” Crews in 1903. (A gold miner, he died of pulmonary tuberculosis on December 21, 1907 in Red Bluff.)

In a letter, Bert recalled living in the Adobe House:

<sup>213</sup> Letter to Miss Norma Agnew from A.R. Mount dated July 3, 1967, Woodland. Park Archives.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

I believe Mr. Sutton [the next owner] told me he replaced the cloth ceiling in the bedroom in this addition with the board ceiling.

What brought this vividly to my mind was that I thought of our trouble with the Red Headed Woodpeckers which were then very plentiful in the neighborhood.

They would get acorns and come down on the roof and go to pecking



On the bluff overlooking the site of the Adobe Ferry. The open gate marks the location of the old road. Photographed in the late 1890s by San Francisco photographer W.N. Collam. Calif. State Parks Collections.

away to store the acorns in the roof and the acorns would be driven through and come down onto the ceiling with a considerable clatter [sic] and noise.

If the same ceiling is still there you probably would find quite a number of acorn up on the ceiling.

I think what they did was to drive them in under a shingle at the laping seam and they would go on through and fall on the ceiling.



Friends of the Mounts posed in front of the Adobe House in the late 1890s. Note the veranda (seen on a previous page) which once encircled the walls, has been removed. California State Parks Collections.

We would go out with the gun and try to shoot them but could [sic] not shoot until they left the roof and they were so smart they would fly right close to the roof till they reached the peak of the roof then scoop down the other side keeping the house between us and so we seldom got one of them.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>215</sup> Letter to Douglas W. Metcalf from A.R. Mount, *Ibid*.

Bert recalled that he and his brother replaced the cloth ceiling in their dining room with a “beaded board ceiling.”<sup>216</sup> Photographs demonstrate they removed some of the wooden additions to the Adobe House. The Mount brothers also altered the ranch’s landscape. They built a dam at the mouth of the nearby ravine, using a team of horses to drag logs off the hills and added rocks (including Indian mortars and pestles!) to stem the flow of drainage during rainy winter months. The dam later washed away as the timbers rotted.<sup>217</sup>

Bert moved away from the Adobe Ranch in 1897. He became a locomotive fireman and later an engineer for the Southern Pacific Railroad. From 1906 to 1910, Will hired George Brewer, originally from Texas, and his wife to operate the ranch. Peaches, pecans and dried fruit were among the crops grown and produced on the property. Will used a stump puller and removed most of the fruit trees on the property before it was sold.<sup>218</sup> Bert noted in a letter dated July 10, 1967, “My brother W.C. Mount came into full possession of the ranch before our Mother died and he sold it to Sutton...” Laura Mount passed away March 15, 1908. Arvilla Mount Crews’ sons had been grown up on the ranch and she remarried. On January 1, 1910 Will married Madge (or Marg) J. Marquis. He trained to become a veterinarian and graduated from San Francisco Veterinary College in 1914.



The Adobe House before it became a State Historic Park. From an unknown, undated newspaper article. California State Parks Collections

George E. Sutton acquired the property in 1913 for \$10. Why the Adobe Ranch sold for such a low purchase price is unknown. While Sutton and his family lived in the Adobe House, he made a number of changes to the house. Among them, according to Bert Mount, he replaced the cloth ceiling in the wooden addition with a board ceiling.

Sutton also began the process of subdividing the land into parcels, readying it for future development. Parcels 1 (on which the Adobe House rested), 1A, 2, and 3 were given to his children, George B., Alta, Gordon, and Ethel.

Aware of area stories about the Adobe being constructed by William B. Ide, he opened the house as a private memorial museum honoring William B. Ide. On June 1, 1932, Sutton received state approval for the Adobe House to be registered as a Historical Point of Interest (#12).

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> Letter to Miss Norma Agnew from A.R. Mount dated Aug. 17, 1967, Woodland. Park Archives.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

It was in the early 1930s that a group of concerned citizens put into motion a plan to acquire “William B. Ide’s Adobe,” to be made part of the State Park System. On May 1, 1935, California State Senator D. Jack Metzger, also Mayor of Red Bluff and President of the Chamber of Commerce, introduced legislation to establish the property as a state park. What stymied the effort was a disagreement over the property’s value. The California State Park Commission was in favor of the concept.

Efforts persisted into the 1940s, but funding for the purchase of the property and an agreement on its value became major obstacles to its acquisition. Preceding the state’s centennial in 1947, the Parlor No. 15 of The Native Sons of the Golden West<sup>219</sup> and the Native Daughters of the Golden West, Colusa Parlor, helped to raise community awareness and funds for the project.

In a conference held in early 1948, the then Division of Beaches and Parks reported it would be necessary for the community to raise \$4,100. This was the amount estimated to be one-half the cost of purchasing the property. George Sutton, however, valued his parcels at \$30,000 in the belief of their historical significance. It became necessary for the state to acquire title to the land through condemnation in order to reach an agreement about the price to be paid.

Proceedings began in 1949 and in March 1951 under Superior Court Judge Albert F. Ross, the matter was tried by jury. During the process, Herbert M. Cheever of Massachusetts raised questions about the validity of the claim that Ide built and lived in the house, but he was ignored. In the final settlement, the award amount was determined to be \$23,624.70 for the 3.96 acres, comprising lots 1, 1A, 2, and 3. (For more information about the court case, refer to the Appendix in this *Interpretive Plan*.) The state agreed to produce half of the acquisition money, if the remainder were raised locally. With the help of the City of Red Bluff (offering \$2211), the County of Tehama (contributing \$5199), The Native Sons, The Native Daughters, and others, resources for the acquisition were obtained. The County of Tehama and the City of Red Bluff were to have charge of the management and operation of the park for the next 20 years.

Although it was become part of the State Park System, little was done in the way of restoration until 1958 and 1959, when funds became available. Dedication of the park took place on May 1, 1960.

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<sup>219</sup> It was re-chartered in 1947 as the William B. Ide Parlor to focus efforts on the Adobe House’s acquisition



## The Adobe House “Restoration”

When the State of California acquired the Adobe House and adjacent acres in 1951, the general impression was that it had once belonged to William B. Ide. Most of that



The old Adobe House with a wooden addition on the back side facing the Sacramento River with no verandah. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections, University of California, Davis.

understanding came from local tradition.

There had obviously been a considerable number of changes made to it over the years. A frame addition along one adobe wall covered 21'11" of its 28' 6" length. Wood buried in the adobe walls indicated where the large verandah roof once encircled and shaded the adobe walls. There was a cellar with board sides and a brick floor. A large hip roof covered the house, too.

Park staff determined that the four adobe walls and the fireplace front were original. However, very little was done to preserve the newly acquired State Monument until 1957, when Rawlins Coffman and Robert D. Minch presented a color movie of “Ide Adobe” to the California Park Commissioners, who were meeting at Eureka.<sup>220</sup> The pictures portrayed the neglect and deterioration of the Adobe House.



George Sutton stands next to the house he helped make a state park. Note the attachments embedded in the adobe walls for the veranda roof—now missing. California State Parks Collections.

In 1958 and 1959, funds were made available for the restoration of the building. A considerable amount of effort was undertaken to stabilize the sagging adobe bricks walls then propped up by heavy supports and to “restore” the structure.

At the time the work was done, little was known about the property. What few photographs existed came from very late in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. “Best guesses” were made and applied as to the original building’s configuration. At the time, the interest was in restoring it to William B. Ide’s period of occupancy.

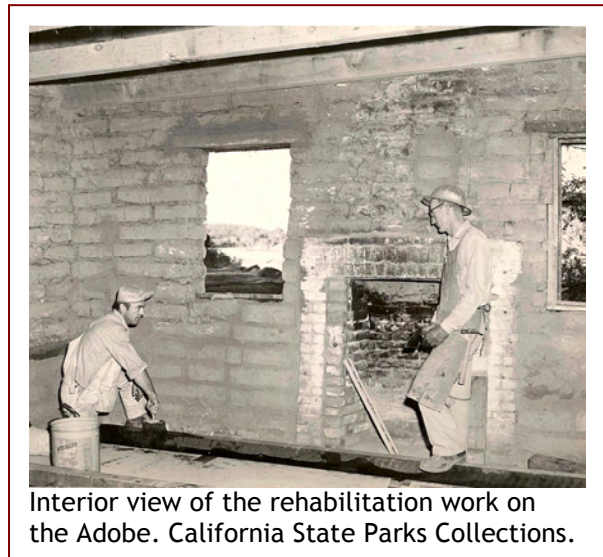
<sup>220</sup> “How Ide Adobe Became Part of Park Monuments,” *Red Bluff Daily News*, April 29, 1960. P. 1.



Subsequent research has shown that the building was constructed sometime after Ide's death and he did not have any known association with the property. In the eagerness to restore the structure to the earliest period, the hip roof was largely ignored in favor of what was considered an "appropriate" gable-ended roof, "typical" of early California adobes. All of the wood elements in the structure, including the hip roof, floors, windows and doorframes, door headers, cross-support beams, roof rafters and shingles, were removed. New gable ends above the lower



Exterior shored walls of the Adobe in July 1958. California State Parks Collections.



Interior view of the rehabilitation work on the Adobe. California State Parks Collections.

roofline were constructed from new bricks. The park's 1989 *General Plan* noted:

One of the north-facing windows is said to have been lined with blue sideboards from a covered wagon.

Many wagons in the westward movement were painted blue, but it is not known where these boards originated.<sup>221</sup>

A covered well was discovered under the porch. George Sutton, the last owner before State Parks, reportedly built it. In 1960, the well was removed. The below-ground well outside the Adobe House lined with brick was considered original and retained with the construction of an above-ground well structure. At the time



The Adobe after the roof was removed in July 1958. California State Parks Collections.

<sup>221</sup> *William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park General Plan*. Sacramento, Calif.: Department of Parks and Recreation, January 1990. P.23.



The Adobe House after rehabilitation in 1963. California State Parks Collections.



The Ide Adobe dedication ceremonies. California State Parks Collections.

a review of associated historical documents, such as photographs and historical accounts, *before* any work was undertaken to restore the building or its site. Also, the building needed to have been better documented, before “restoration” work began.

The hard lessons learned at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park should help guide future work on this and other historic sites.

the photographs, seen on pages 105 and 119, which shows a tank house on the property, were not available to staff.

A smokehouse was rebuilt on the site where adobe brick remnants were found, indicating a structure of similar size and construction. It measured 8’ by 12’ in size.<sup>222</sup> Split rail fences also were produced to enhance the “historic landscape,” although no historical research was done to demonstrate their use on the property.

The “restoration” of the Adobe House and its historic setting suffered from a lack of primary documentary research into the history of the property and its uses, and did not employ good investigative archeology about the built environment. Too much reliance on unconfirmed hearsay about the site and its relationship to William B. Ide helped misguide the park’s early efforts.

Unfortunately, original irreplaceable materials were removed in the process of restoration. A detailed examination of the structure should have been made, along with



The newly opened park in 1960. California State Parks Collections.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*



## THE ADOBE RANCH TIMELINE<sup>223</sup>

April 20, 1852 Shasta Co. Deed Bk. A, p.14	<b>A.M. Dibble</b>	Possessory Land Claim	160 acres	
	Abraham <sup>224</sup> M. Dibble - born Mar. 6, 1813, Pitcher, NY; shingle maker for Peter Lassen 1849-50; hauled freight from Colusa to Shasta in 1851; land claim 20' above "Frémont's Old Crossing" called "Bluffton Ranch"; burned out by Indians, lost \$10,000 in livestock in "Indian Wars" of 1852; moved back East 1854-1860; June 8, 1854 in Moscow, Mich. married Clarissa Moore Spencer [born Jan. 13, 1832, Canandigua, NY]; four children <sup>225</sup> ; daughter died in 1865; bought 194 acres in Butte Co. Jan. 16, 1868; moved to Chico area [Durham]; farmer; injured in threshing accident July 22, 1870; moved to Riley, Ore.; Abraham died Sept. 6, 1886 in Riley, Ore.; Clarissa died 1903			
February 1, 1853 Shasta Co. Deed Bk. A, p. 194	<b>Isaac H. Rand</b>	Deed	160 acres	\$1,500
	Isaac H. Rand - cut hay on Grand Island in the Sacramento River Delta with George Champlin in 1851; resident of Shasta City; called property "Rand's Adobe Ranch," which included a house, outhouses and fence; unmarried			
December 1, 1853 Shasta Co. Deed Bk. B, p. 224 Bk. A, pp.247-248	<b>Nathaniel G. Rand</b>	Deed	160 acres	\$1,500
	Nathaniel Garland Rand - seaman during Mexican War on board USS <i>Independence</i> —part of the Pacific Squadron; brother of Isaac Rand; resident of Shasta City; unmarried; received mortgage loan for \$456.70 on land from William A. Mix due Sept. 1, 1854; Rand received another mortgage from Dow Vincent for \$480.30 due Oct. 29, 1854			

<sup>223</sup> Information about the people and property in this timeline taken from: the Tehama County Records Office, City of Red Bluff; Keith Lingenfelter Archives in the Meriam Library, Special Collections, CSU, Chico; Herbert M. Cheever "William B. Ide and His Descendants, Records Secured in California, 1948-1949" ms. in park office; Ruth Hitchcock notes from *Leaves of the Past*; letters written by A.R. Mount and Mary Frances Keaton; and other sources noted.

<sup>224</sup> Deed records show A.M. Dibble as "Abraham," but some genealogists identify him as "Ambrose." There could be confusion, as he often used his initials, A.M., which some might translate as an abbreviation for Ambrose.

<sup>225</sup> **Dibble children:** **infant daughter** [died Feb. 23, 1855 Hillsdale Co., Mich.]; **Nathaniel Adelbert** [born Moscow, Mich. Mar. 5, 1856, married Rosette Penick on Sept. 2, 1879 in Durham, Butte Co., Calif.], **Herbert Aaron** [born Moscow, Mich. Oct. 12, 1858, died Apr. 29, 1921, Harney Co., Ore.], **Carrie Adelaide** [born Durham, Butte Co., Calif. May 15, 1865, died Aug. 4, 1868, buried Dayton Cemetery, Chico], and **Frank Cyrenus** [born Durham, Butte Co., Calif. Feb. 19, 1871, married Martha Johnson at Riley, Oregon Dec. 25, 1894, died 1939, buried at New Pine Creek Cemetery, Lake Co., Oregon]. From: <http://ca-files.biofiles.us/butte/Dayton.pdf>; [http://members.tripod.com/~gardner\\_2/dat109.htm#6](http://members.tripod.com/~gardner_2/dat109.htm#6); <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/f/o/r/Terri-Forsythe/BOOK-0001/0002-0001.html>



Party traveling thru New Mexico to Calif. 1841, at Los Angeles and Cosumnes in 1842, went to Ore. with Jacob Leese in 1843, returning in 1848<sup>228</sup>; drove an ox team to Shasta Co. in 1848; made money in the mines; among the first settlers in the Millville area; four sons and five daughters; member of IOOF; Hiram died in Millville, Shasta Co. 1883; Sarah died in Millville July 20, 1894

<p>February 19, 1859 Tehama Co. Misc. Bk. A, p. 289</p>	<p><b>Owen Riley Johnson</b></p> <p>Land claim 210, sold for \$1.25 acre + \$1.30 fees; dup. land claim—error in deed found by Tehama Co. Surveyor William Luning</p> <p>Owen Riley Johnson - born in Indiana in 1832; sheriff 1858-1859 and 1867-1868; listed as a miner in 1867 Great Register; died in Red Bluff April 6, 1893</p>	<p>Public Sale No. 10</p> <p>56.38 acres</p>	<p>\$70.48</p>
<p>March 31, 1859 Tehama Co. Misc. Bk. A, p.335 Bk. B, p.75</p>	<p><b>Henry F. Luning</b><sup>229</sup></p> <p>Henry Frank Luning - born in Ohio [or Germany] Dec. 12, 1837; brother of Tehama Co. Surveyor William Luning; unmarried; in 1870 census living with mother Catharine Luning from Bavaria [age 61, his father Joseph F. died 1869] and W.F. Luning [age 13]; Catholic; Red Bluff painter 1873, 1902, 1910; died in Red Bluff May 5, 1925—70 years in California</p>	<p>Transfer of Duplicate Land Claim No. 210 Deed</p> <p>56.38 acres</p>	<p>\$198.50</p>
<p>April 1, 1859 Tehama Co. Bk. A. p. 336 Bk. B, p. 96 Bk. B, p. 44</p>	<p><b>Hiram Z. Taylor</b></p> <p>Taylor obtained promissory note for \$367 from Thomas Hollister Apr. 1, 1859 at 5% per mo. against land [probably to settle land suit];<sup>230</sup> paid note in full June 9, 1859, but secured a new mortgage from Alfred Walton [see next]; buying land twice appears to have financially ruined Taylor</p>	<p>Transfer of Duplicate Land Claim No. 210 Deed</p> <p>56.38 acres</p>	<p>\$367</p>

<sup>227</sup><http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/l/y/n/Scott-M-Lynch/PDFGENE1.pdf>

<sup>228</sup> Bancroft Library has Hiram Taylor's original passport dated Santa Fé Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>. *California Pioneer Register and Index*. Clearfield Company. P. 353

<sup>229</sup> Henry F. Luning's brother, William, discovered the mistake in Dibble's description and through Johnson jumped Taylor's claim to the Adobe Ranch; later transferred the duplicate land title back to Hiram Taylor. It appears Taylor may have had to pay twice for the land.

<sup>230</sup> Thomas Hollister born in 1829; married Elizabeth [born New Hampshire in 1841]; sons: Franklin Eugene [born 1861, died 1862], John Crittenden [born 1863, died 1864]



<p>June 9, 1859 Tehama Co. Mortgages Bk. B, p. 84-86</p>	<p>A. Walton Hiram Taylor defaulted on loan from Alfred Walton secured by the Adobe Ranch due Dec. 9, 1859 [\$600 plus 3% interest per mo.]; title was foreclosed Jan. 23, 1860 by Alfred Walton</p>	<p>Mortgage Deed 56.38 acres</p>	
<p>January 23, 1860 A. Walton vs. H. Taylor Tehama Co. Bk. C, pp. 84-86</p>	<p>A. Walton Hiram Taylor in default; Walton requested court foreclosure</p>	<p>Foreclosure of Mortgage 56.38 acres</p>	
<p>May 5, 1860 District Court Case #232</p>	<p><b>J.M. or H. Taylor</b> the judge ordered Sheriff Thomas Alpaugh to advertise and conduct a sale; Hiram Taylor's son or nephew bought the property with highest bid, but defaulted on payments Expenses for sheriff's sale of land: Sheriff's fee: \$ 5.00 Clerk's fee: 20.80 Printer's bill: 21.00 Damages to plaintiff: 744.00</p>	<p>Court-ordered Sale 56.38 acres</p>	<p>\$920         total expenses for 1st sale \$790.80</p>
<p>May 18, 1860 District Court Case #232</p>	<p><b>A. Walton</b> 2<sup>nd</sup> sale was held by Sheriff Thomas Alpaugh; Alfred Walton was given title to the property  Alfred John Walton - was born in Yorkshire, Eng. Oct. 22, 1822; came to U.S when age 14; first arrived in Calif. in 1842 on the U.S. Naval sloop <i>Dale</i>; emigrated to Iowa, farming between 1844-1849; returned to Calif. overland by southern route thru L.A., Cajon Pass, and then to S.F. in 1849; filed for land on July 3, 1851 on the Sacto. River and Oct. 20, 1852 on Cottonwood Cr.; mined at Bidwell's Bar; raised cattle on Kimball's Plain; involved in sheep raising; operated a hotel in Shasta City with John Scott; settled in Red Bluff in 1854; engaged as a teamster and mule packer; naturalized July 8, 1856 in Shasta Co.; member IOOF; Dec. 18, 1860 married Mary Ann Ward Reeves [born in Ireland Dec. 7, 1834] in Tehama Co.; Catholic; one step-son and four children, all born in Red Bluff;<sup>231</sup> member Red Bluff City Bd. of Trustees</p>	<p>Court-ordered sale 56.38 acres</p>	<p>\$933.15</p>

<sup>231</sup> **Walton children:** stepson **Joseph Henry Reeves** [born New York, 1855], **Alfred Ward** [born Oct. 19, 1861—possibly born in Adobe House, bap. Oct. 20, 1861, died July 9, 1863], **Margaret Agnes** [born Calif. Dec. 7, 1863, baptized Jan. 23, 1864, died French Gulch Dec. 2, 1949], **Thomas Richard** [born Calif. Nov. 16, 1867, bap. Dec. 24, 1867 Red Bluff, died Red Bluff Apr.13, 1844], **Alfred John** [born Calif. Feb. 16, 1870, bap. Apr. 10, 1870 Red Bluff, operated Red Bluff dairy with father, died Feb. 13, 1956]

Jan. 15, 1861 Tehama Co. Bk. C, p. 213	<b>A. Walton</b> Sheriff Thomas Alpaugh to A. Walton the acreage with buildings	Deed	56.38 acres	\$1,034.70
	Adobe Ranch advertised for sale Feb. 12 & 22, 1861 by Walton with buildings and 300 fruit trees; July 2, 1861 filed notice to operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch; Oct. 4, 1873 Walton later bought a dairy on north Main Street, Red Bluff; mined in Idaho; in 1870, 1880 Red Bluff census; Red Bluff dairy 1888, 1902; dairyman 1900, 1910; Alfred died Red Bluff July 18, 1911; Mary Ann died Sept. 13, 1927			
January 3, 1862 Tehama Co. Bk. D, p.50	<b>Daniel Howard</b>	Deed	56.38 acres	\$1,862
	Daniel Howard - born in New York in 1826; married Elizabeth H [*][born in N.Y. 1827]; 1857 Red Bluff tax roll; three children; <sup>232</sup> advertised "Adobe Ferry" Sept. 16, 1862			
November 5, 1862 Tehama Co. Bk. A & B, p. 189	Daniel Howard's petition for a Ferry Permit approved; Nov. 11, 1862 ferry toll rates noted in newspaper			
August 4, 1863	J.B. Bacon, Ephraim Clark & L.B. Healy appointed Road Viewers to layout road from Red Bluff to Howard's Ferry and to the Tehama County Wagon Road			
August 2, 1864	Daniel Howard and others petitioned for a public road to be located from the Adobe Ferry to intersect with the Red Bluff and Humboldt Wagon Road at or near J.D. Bacon's farm			
September 20, 1864	A.W. Bishop, A.H. Stout, and George R. Beardsell appointed as Road Viewers; Daniel Howard paid damages for Ferry Road passing over part of Star Ranch, owned by J.N. Williams; Tehama Co. sups. paid \$300 for a fence on both sides of road thru the Star Ranch			
December 1, 1864	Adobe Ferry license renewed for 1 year to Dec. 1, 1865			
February 11, 1865	Adobe Ferry Road designated a public right of way.			
	Howard appeared in 1870 Red Bluff census; worked at Belle Mill in 1869; owned and operated Yellow Jacket Mill in 1879; farmed 400 acres; in 1880 Sierra census			

<sup>232</sup> **Howard children:** **Ada** [born in N.Y. 1851], **Clara E.** [born in Iowa, 1861], and **Oliver B.** [born in Calif., 1870].

June 22, 1865 Tehama Co. Bk. E, pp. 462-464	<b>Herbert Kraft</b> parcel included ferry operation across river known as Adobe Ferry, as well as equipment and boats	Deed	56.38 acres	\$2,000
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Herbert Kraft - born in Mariazell, Hanover, near Wurtenburg, Germany March 15, 1831; came to U.S. at age 10 in 1841; traveled to Calif. by way of New Orleans, St. Louis, and St. Joseph; arrived in Hangtown [Placerville] August 2, 1852; worked in tin trade; in 1854 came to Red Bluff and opened a tin and plumbing business; Mar. 15, 1861 in Louisville, KY married Elizabeth Kreuth [born 1845 in KY]; Catholic; 1860s expanded Red Bluff hardware business—largest north of City of Sacramento [sold 1876]; eight children;<sup>233</sup> July 24, 1865 newspaper notice of plans to operate a ferry in Red Bluff on lots 1, 2, 3 in block 6; naturalized citizen 1866; Mar. 14, 1866 built pontoon bridge across Sacto. River; Oct. 19, 1867 gives notice he will apply for ferry franchise at Adobe Ranch; operated Adobe Ferry before moving operation south to Pine Street in Red Bluff Jan. 22, 1864; Apr. 8, 1869 near accident on ferry; in 1870 census Henry Kraft [age 28 from Prussia] resided with the Krafts, as did Theodore Menold family of Wurtenburg; wife Elizabeth baptized Catholic on Sept. 11, 1873; owned Kraft Banking House [later First National Bank then Bank of America]; director Bank of Tehama Co.; owned wood and lumberyard; 1876 bought Red Bluff Gas Works; owned Eureka Gas Plant [sold in 1883]; 1876 City Trustee; Tehama Co. supervisor 1881-1892; owned nearly 20,000 acres of Tehama Co.; will signed May 29, 1893; died in Red Bluff, Nov. 23, 1895

January 11, 1870 Tehama Co. Bk. G, p.235	<b>A. A. Brownlee</b> included acreage with buildings	Deed	56.38 acres	\$500
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Alexander Andrew “Alex” Brownlee - born in Canada in 1833; parents from Scotland; naturalized citizen in Davenport, Iowa June 28, 1857; married Cynthia [\*] [born in New York 1833]; Antelope area farmer in 1870; listed in 1879, 1886 Great Registers and 1880 Red Bluff Census; merchant in Red Bluff 1886; 3 children<sup>234</sup>

<sup>233</sup> Kraft children: **George Herbert** [born Calif. 1862, died San Diego, 1917], **Estella A.** [born Red Bluff Jan. 1862, died Red Bluff July 6, 1862], **Edward Francis** [born Calif. May 18, 1864, died Red Bluff 1920 unmarried], **Ida (or Adah) Teresa**—possibly born in Adobe House [born Red Bluff Nov. 11, 1865, bap. Feb. 4, 1866 Red Bluff, died Aug. 1869 at age 4], **Gustave [Augustus]** [born Calif. 1868, died 1922], **Albert Elmer Phillip** [born Red Bluff May 14, 1870, bap. Oct. 23, 1870, died May 30, 1914], **Anetta Elizabeth** [born Red Bluff Mar. 27, 1873, died Nov. 21, 1927], **Gertrude** [born Calif. Dec. 1, 1874, died Mar. 28, 1933]

September 15, 1873 Tehama Co. Bk. H, p. 704	<b>William Gibbon</b> property from A.A. Brownlee included acreage with buildings	Deed	56.38 acres	\$675
	William Gibbon born in England in 1831; Antelope area farmer 1871; Nov. 13, 1873 mortgage deed from George Hammons for \$641; married in Santa Clara June 15, 1885 to Mary Hazelton [born in Santa Clara July 22, 1858]; Tehama County voter in 1888; Mary died May 29, 1888			
November 13, 1873 Tehama Co. Bk. E, p. 707 Bk. I, pp. 42-43	George W. Hammons William Gibbon secured mortgage from George W. Hammons	Mortgage Deed	56.38 acres	\$641
November 13, 1873 Tehama Co. Bk. I, pp. 42-43	<b>George W. Hammons</b> William Gibbon sold property to George W. Hammons	Deed	56.38 acres	\$1,100
	George Washington Hammons - born in Iowa Oct. 30, 1846; listed in the 1870 Paynes Creek Census; 1880 Red Bluff census; married Mrs. Delia Frances Myrich St. Clair [born in Indiana, Iowa Mar. 18, 1861]; one son; Antelope [area] farmer 1863; Red Bluff laborer 1896; Riverview farmer 1908; George died in Red Bluff March 21, 1929; Delia died Sept 25, 1936			
September 14, 1874 Tehama Co. Bk. I, p. 629	<b>William F. Erwin</b> George Hammons sold William Erwin ½ interest in acreage and buildings	Deed	½ of 56.38 acres	\$600
	William Franklin Erwin - born in Ohio on June 26, 1836; married Imogene Webster [born in Burlington, Iowa Jun. 3, 1852]; purchased ½ Interest in property from George Hammons; five Children; <sup>235</sup> son [Edward Irwin] born at Adobe Ranch Nov. 29, 1874; Great Register 1875			
December 1874	William F. Erwin, Andrew J. Hammons and George W. Hammons awarded right to build and operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch			

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<sup>234</sup> **Brownlee children:** William Edward “Edwin” [born Iowa in 1858 married Alicia F. Wilson Aug. 27, 1879, Antelope area farmer], Emma [born Iowa in 1867], and Laura [born Calif. in 1872]

<sup>235</sup> **Erwin children:** Frank E. [born in Missouri Feb. 28, 1873, died Red Bluff July 17, 1962], Edward Marlow [born on Adobe Ranch Nov. 26, 1874, died Red Bluff Dec. 12, 1917], Forest Elwood [born in Calif. Oct. 6, 1881, died Red Bluff Nov. 26, 1950], Lawrence Webster [born Red Bluff Sept. 2, 1886, died Red Bluff Apr. 1, 1957], and Charlene A. or “Charley” [born on the Adobe Ranch].

Andrew Joseph “Andy” Hammons - born in Iowa on Dec. 9, 1844; married Malinda Caroline Hoffman [born in Iowa 1845]; five children; Antelope [area] teamster 1868; in Red Bluff census 1870, 1880; Red Bluff teamster 1902; Red Bluff real estate 1908, 1910; died Jan. 13, 1913

July 10, 1875	Fire spread north of Red Bluff to Dibble Creek		
November 9, 1875 Tehama Co. Bk. I, p. 630	<b>William F. Erwin</b>	Deed	½ of 56.38 acres \$575 [now owns all 56.38 acres]
	July 1, 1876 Adobe Ferry advertised in newspaper		
September 6, 1877 Tehama Co. Bk. G, p. 343	<b>William M. Lansdale</b>	Mortgage Deed	56.38 acres \$1,500
	William Erwin obtained a mortgage from William Lansdale		
	William Moody Lansdale - born in Ohio on Mar. 21, 1820; married to Lucy J. Tolls [born KY 1826]; in 1870 Red Bluff Census; ten children; <sup>236</sup> listed in 1867 Great Register age 45 as hotelkeeper from KY; in 1880 Sierra Census; July 30, 1888 married 2 <sup>nd</sup> time in Tehama Co. to Mrs. Mary W. Gaitlin [born Missouri 1831]; William died in Red Bluff Dec. 31, 1905		
September 6, 1877 Tehama Co. Bk. K, p. 182	<b>William M. Lansdale</b>	Quit Claim deed	40 acres next to 56.38 acres
	Samuel Alvord deeded in two parcels of 40 acres adjacent to the 56.38 acres north of Dibles Creek		
July 16, 1879 Tehama Co. Bk. N, p. 372	<b>William F. Erwin</b>	Deed	96.38 acres \$1,000
	William Erwin re-acquired the rights to the land and buildings from William Lansdale with the addition of the adjacent 40 acres		
	William F. Erwin - in 1880, 1910 Great Registers; a Red Bluff and Antelope area farmer 1880-1910; 1904 involved in an accident which killed B.F. Hill; William died in Red Bluff Dec. 10, 1923; Imogene died Nov. 4, 1935		

<sup>236</sup> Lansdale children: Isaac Richardson [born in Missouri 1848], Oliver Waters (born in Missouri 1851), Sarah Elizabeth [born in Missouri 1853], Eliza Ellen [born in Missouri 1858], Sarah E. [born in Calif. 1858], Susan M. [born in Calif. 1860], Kitty [born in Calif. 1861], Emmadine “Emma” [born in Calif. 1862], William Richard [born in Calif. 1866], Samuel [born in Calif. 1871]



<p>October 17, 1879 Tehama Co. Bk. N, p. 372</p>	<p><b>L. D. Clark</b></p> <p>Lorenzo Dow “Lorin”<sup>237</sup> - born in Illinois Jan. 17, 1849; trained carpenter; married Matilda Jennings [born Aug. 5, 1846 in SC] from Illinois; two children;<sup>238</sup> Lassen School teacher; moved to Oroville; in 1873 published Oroville <i>Mercury</i> newspaper; with C.B. Ashurst, L.D. Clark founded <i>People’s Cause</i> weekly newspaper in 1874;<sup>239</sup> retired 1880; Adobe House expanded with several wooden additions;<sup>240</sup> 1880 census noted close neighbors to family [on same acreage?] included L.D. Clark’s parents, Ephraim and Harriet Clark, and Lemuel Ide;<sup>241</sup> L.D. died in Red Bluff Feb. 5, 1925; Matilda died in Red Bluff on Mar. 4, 1928; she lived 60 years in Red Bluff</p>	<p>Deed</p>	<p>96.38 acres</p>	<p>\$1,100</p>
<p>May 1, 1882 Tehama Co. Bk. R, p. 425</p>	<p><b>E.A. Mount &amp; L.A. Mount</b></p> <p>Emory [or Emery] A. and Laura A. Mount moved into the “Old Adobe Ferry Place” with their children in June 1882</p> <p>Emory Augustus Mount - born Dec. 6, 1837 in Toledo, Ohio; served in Napa Guards during Civil War; Mar. 23, 1864 married in Napa Co. to Laura Anne Willett - born Pollars Corners, NY on Jan. 26, 1844 [or 1838]; four children;<sup>242</sup> owned dairy at Franklin &amp; Pine Sts, Napa; dairy ousted by new Napa City laws; employed at street work with brother Timothy N. Mount; 1879 operated team and wagons on Gerky Grant in Vina; the family</p>	<p>Deed</p>	<p>96.38 acres</p>	<p>\$1,600</p>

<sup>237</sup> Lorin may be spelled Loren. Mormon leader Brigham Young’s brother was named Lorenzo Dow Young. Lorin appears to have been named after him.

<sup>238</sup> Clark children: Irene [born Oroville Oct. 23, 1873, unmarried, died Sept. 27, 1955], Adella [born Red Bluff May 25, 1875, died Red Bluff Nov. 10, 1878]

<sup>239</sup> According to the Oct. 14, 1981 Red Bluff *Daily News*: The newspaper relocated to Main & Hickory Streets, Red Bluff. It was sold in 1877, but Clark was retained as editor. He later bought an interest in the paper, published daily beginning Mar. 18, 1878. Clark left Red Bluff to work at a Los Angeles area newspaper. The newspaper noted he left “the William B. Ide Adobe, where he was living.” This may be where confusion developed, if as noted below, Lemuel Ide [William B. Ide’s son] resided on the property.

<sup>240</sup> Later resident Alberto R. Mount stated in a letter dated July 7, 1957 from Woodland, Calif. that L.D. Clark built the board addition on the house.

<sup>241</sup> The 1880 census noted a household next to Lorin Clark [on the same property?] with his parents [Ephraim N. Clark from NY age 62 and Harriet Clark from SC age 60] and their son Lewis Clark [age 20 born in Calif.], John Hays [age 30] and Mattie Hays [age 24] from Missouri, and Lemuel Ide [age 40 from Ohio and son of William B. Ide]. The Clark family was Mormon.

<sup>242</sup> Mount children: Emory Hulsert [married Mary Melinda Davis Jun. 12, 1887 in Oakland, lived in SF 1922-1940], Arvilla [or Arvella] Jewell [born Apr. 21, 1867 Napa Co., married Francis Marion “Frank” Crews in Oct. 13, 1886, five sons—Calvin, Elmer, Laurel, Walter, and Ira, lived in Red Bluff 1901, divorced Crews in 1903; married Mr. Burke and lived in Sacramento; later married Charles Earl Parr who died 1961; Arvilla died Nov. 11, 1949], Willett Colfax “Will” [born Nov. 30, 1870], and Alberto Roberto “Bert” [born Sept. 24, 1872].

followed in Apr. 1880; rented farm on Elder Creek, Tehama Co.; planted 1½ acres of fruit trees to Build a nursery on Adobe Ranch

October 9, 1882  
Tehama Co.  
Bk. S, p. 364

**E.A. Mount & L.A. Mount** Deed 40 acres \$1.00  
Ephraim N. Clark [Lorenzo D. Clark's father] sold 40 acres [2 parcels] to Emory and Laura Mount for \$1 [probably the same 40 acres quit claimed by Samuel Alvord to William M. Lansdale on Sept. 6, 1877]

April 9, 1886  
Tehama Co.  
Bk. W, p. 433

**Willett C. Mount & Alberto R. Mount** Deed ½ interest in 96.38 acres  
parents Emory and Laura Mount gave youngest sons ½ interest in property as part of their divorce settlement; at the time Willett was age 15 and Alberto "Bert" age 13; mother Laura lived with them; boys quit school to run ranch, paying on mortgage with 12% interest; after the birth of her last child, their sister Arvilla Mount Crews, with her five sons, resided on the ranch before her divorce in 1903

Willett Colfax "Will" Mount - born Nov. 30, 1870; worked at Star Dairy [part of original Dibble grant] next door 7 days a week for \$25 mo; lived in Red Bluff 1901; on Jan. 1, 1910 married Madge J. [or Marg] Marquis [born 1888 from Oregon], a public school teacher; one daughter Berth L.; Will became an animal veterinarian, graduated from SF Veterinary College 1914; Riverview farmer 1910; in Tehama 1920; 1930 census in Sacto. Co.; Will died Sept. 23, 1951

Alberto Roberto "Bert" Mount - born Sept. 24, 1872, Napa; quit school at 14; left ranch to work for Sierra Flume and Lumber Co. at Lyonsville, Tehama Co. during the seasons of 1895, 1896, 1897; moved out of Adobe House in Nov. 1897; 1898 Southern Pacific RR fireman 1901; married Nov. 29, 1901 in Medford, Ore. to Bertie E. Webster of Ashland [born 1878]; 1901 resident of Dunsmuir; 2 sons—one died in infancy; 1904 became locomotive engineer; 1917-1918 WW I draft; 1930 census lived in Dunsmuir area; retired SPRR on Mar. 1, 1933; Bertie died 1949; Bert lived with son Robert W. Mount in Woodland; died June 10, 1968 in Woodland

George Brewer [born in Texas] and his wife hired to work the ranch 1906-1910; grew peaches, pecans, dried fruit on ranch

<p>April 10, 1886 Tehama Co. Bk. W, pp. 433-434</p>	<p><b>Laura A. Mount</b>                      Deed</p> <p>in the settlement of Laura and Emory Mount's divorce, Laura received ½ interest in property, along with farm equipment, tools, lumber, wood shakes, harness, spring wagon, header wagon and header bed, 2 cows, sow &amp; pigs, poultry, mare, colt; Laura lived with her two sons on the property; she died Mar. 15, 1908</p> <p>Emory Mount entitled to lots in the City of Napa and the buggy harness; Emory suffered a stroke; resided with brother Tim Mount in Napa; remarried 2<sup>nd</sup> time in Napa; died Red Bluff Mar. 13, 1908;</p>	<p>½ interest in 96.39 acres</p>	
<p>June 15, 1890</p>	<p>Fire on Dibble Creek burned 10,000 acres.</p>		
<p>February 13, 1913 Bk. 74, p. 153</p>	<p><b>George E. Sutton</b>                      Deed</p> <p>Sutton received the property from Willett C. Mount for \$10; acreage included 6-room Adobe House, garage and storage building, well, pump, storage tank, barns</p> <p>George Edward Sutton - born in Lee County, Illinois March 4, 1883; from Julesburg, Colo.; 1907 married Mary Elsie Peterson from Illinois [born Jan. 16, 1883]; came to Red Bluff in 1913; four children<sup>243</sup></p>	<p>96.38 acres</p>	<p>\$10</p>
<p>June 1, 1932</p>	<p>Sutton receives approval for the Adobe House to be registered as a California Historical Point of Interest #12</p>		
<p>1937</p>	<p>George Sutton began process of subdividing land; Acreage reduced to 77 acres with sale of lots; Adobe House used as a private museum; Sutton approached state to purchase only parcels 1, 1A, 2 and 3; parcel 1 included Adobe House, well, and outbuildings;</p>		
<p>May 1, 1935</p>	<p>State Senator D. Jack Metzger introduced legislation to establish property as a state park</p> <p>Mary Sutton died in Aug. 14, 1943</p>		
<p>August, 1946</p>	<p>Frederick Law Olmsted recommended acquisition of Adobe House by Calif. State Div. of Beaches and Parks<sup>244</sup></p>		

<sup>243</sup> Sutton children: **George Butte “Bud”** [born May 30, 1915, owned lots 1 & 1A, died Red Bluff Apr. 19, 1967], **Alta Ione** [married William Kestner, owned lot 2], **Gordon** [married Alyce B., owned parcel 3], **Ethel May** [married Thomas “Tommy” Zimmerman, owned parcel 4]

<sup>244</sup> Red Bluff *Daily News*, Aug. 26, 1949.

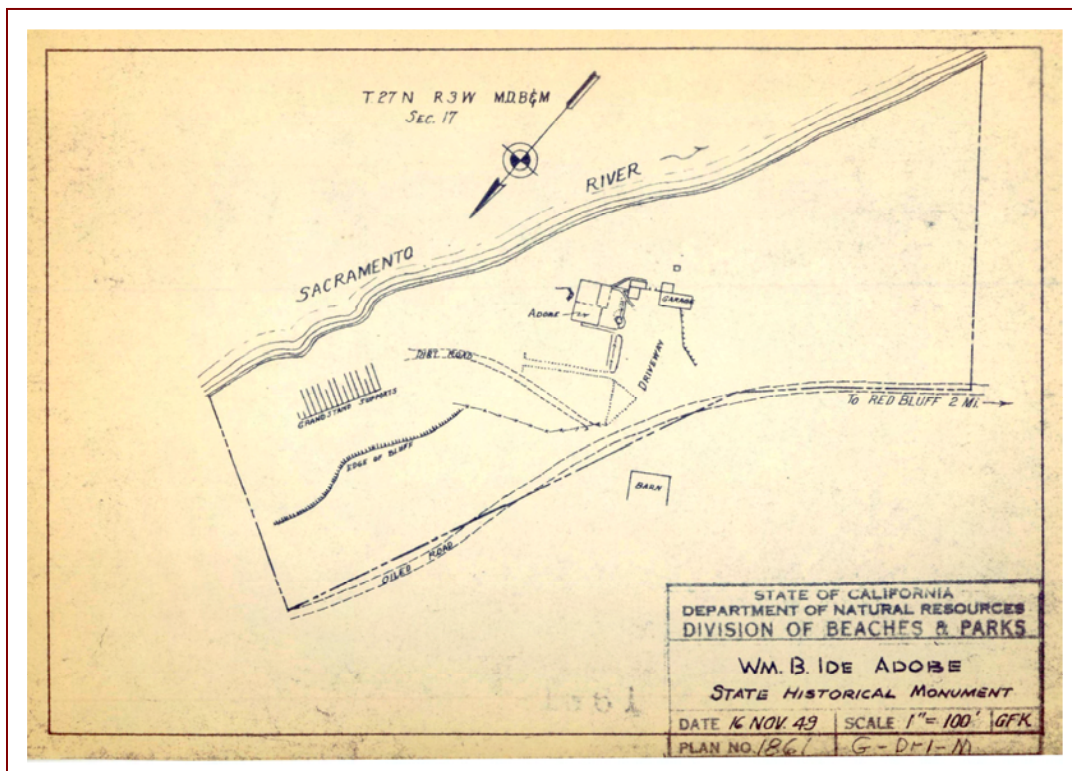
1949 State of Calif. vs. George Sutton, et al	State initiates condemnation proceedings after no agreement reached on terms to sale to Calif. State Div. of Beaches and Parks; Sutton believed Adobe House built by William B. Ide should bring higher purchase price		
July 26, 1951	local matching funds (\$11,812) raised and turned over to the state for land purchase		
August 29, 1951	Superior Court settlement Property sold to State of California	3.96 acres	\$23,624.70
	Nov. 26, 1952 Geo. Sutton took 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife, Mrs. Margaret Bagby; Geo. Sutton died in Red Bluff on May 5, 1965		
1958	State funds provided for the research, archeology and restoration of the Adobe House		
May 1, 1960	William B. Ide Adobe is dedicated as a State Historical Monument		

## Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:

For this exhibit, it will be important for visitors to locate on a map Abraham M. Dibble's original 160 acres, the reduced 56.38 acres, the later 96.38 acres, and the current acreage now set aside as a state historic park. The parcels should be shown in association with the Sacramento River and modern landmarks, like Interstate 5 and other local roads.

The Adobe Ranch's rapid changes in ownership are both amazing and mystifying. Visitors should witness these changes to the property graphically and in context with their times. A long timeline in association with the map could show the progression of ownership and the land's uses in relationship to national, state and local events—the California Gold Rush, statehood, the founding of stagelines in the north valley, droughts, the floods of 1861-1862, the Civil War, the birth of William Erwin's children on the property, completion of the California and Oregon Railroad, etc. The history noted on the timeline might be linked to the map, with push buttons to indicate the property's configuration at different times.

Photographs could illustrate the evolution of the Adobe House and its transformation after rehabilitation, when it became William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park. A drawing might be used to represent the Adobe Ranch as it might have appeared in the mid-1850s with two more large oak trees on the property.



A plan drawn in 1949 of the property.  
California State Parks Collections.



If space and funding allow, an interactive activity could be developed encouraging visitors to express their thoughts as to why the property changed hands so often. Was it because the property was too small? Owners lost it while gambling? River flooding? Hot summer temperatures? Or, ghosts? Let the visitors think and choose.

### **Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:**

There are several artifacts donated by Frank Erwin, which were used by the William Erwin family in the Adobe. They include a dresser set, drop leaf table, kitchen cabinet and flat iron. They should be considered for use in this exhibit.

Historic photographs of the Adobe Ranch from the late 1800s and early 1900s and in the process of rehabilitation are included in this *Interpretive Plan's* Graphics File. Additional research may be needed to locate appropriate maps to use as the base map called for in this exhibit, as well as to illustrate national, state, and local events on a graphic timeline. USGS maps could help designers in locating the historic and modern sites of interest.

## Area 6: William B. Ide—His Story

Space Allocation: 10%

### Theme:

William B. Ide personified the “pioneer spirit” typical of early settlers.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about William B. Ide’s immigration to California.
- Understand the role he played in California’s Bear Flag Revolt and in early California government.
- Realize how one person commonly assumed numerous roles in Ide’s time, when California’s population was small.
- Discover why William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park retains Ide’s name even though he never lived in this adobe.

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

One of the earliest settlers of the North Valley, William B. Ide, embodied what we would consider today as the true “pioneer spirit.” A self-made man, Ide met challenges head-on, was hard working, honest and civic-minded, and helped settle California. Ide was an important participant in the Bear Flag Revolt and a prominent leader of the short-lived California Republic. He held many posts for the (then) county of Colusi. He settled downriver from the Red Bluffs area (the original name) before the town was founded, well south of William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park. Due to mistaken historical information, for years it was believed that Ide lived in the Adobe House. While recent research has revealed that he did not build or ever live on the land now bearing his name, the park remains a testament to this important California pioneer.

#### *Ide’s Ancestry*

William B. Ide’s family emigrated from England shortly after the landing of the *Mayflower* in 1620 at what would become Plymouth, Massachusetts.<sup>245</sup> According to



*Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor*  
by William Halsall painted in 1882

<sup>245</sup> Simeon Ide, *Who Conquered California? The Conquest of California by the Bear Flag Party, A Biographical Sketch of the Life of William B. Ide*. Glorieta, N.M.: The Rio Grande Press, Inc. 1967.P. 9.

Simeon Ide, William's older brother, their parent's ancestry was of humble origins, depending on their daily labors for their "daily bread." Lemuel Ide, William's father, was born in Rehoboth, Massachusetts on July 22, 1770. He was a carpenter and joiner by trade, as well as a small-scale farmer throughout his life. He seems to have had an adventurous spirit, relocating his family several times over the years.<sup>246</sup> William's mother, Sarah, the daughter of Jasper and Grace Stone, was born October 16, 1767. She came from benevolent and pious people, "zealous in every good word and work."<sup>247</sup>

Lemuel and Sarah were married in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts on November 24, 1793. They had eight children—five sons and three daughters (two were twins). After their marriage, they tended to move often, settling first in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, but soon relocated to Rutland, Massachusetts, then to Clarendon, Vermont and by 1799, to Reading, Vermont.<sup>248</sup> Lemuel Ide died on September 18, 1825 in Newfane, Vermont at the age of fifty-five. His wife died January 4, 1859 in Claremont, New Hampshire at the age of ninety-one.



William's mother, Sarah (Stone) Ide, from Louis W. Flanders's *Biography of Simeon Ide*.

### *William B. Ide's Early Life*

William Brown Ide was born on March 28, 1796 in Rutland, Worcester County, Massachusetts. He was the second child and second son of Lemuel and Sarah Ide. Their first son, Simeon, was born on September 28, 1794.<sup>249</sup> Biographer Louis W. Flanders writes:

In 1802, William B.'s father, while living in Reading, VT, heard of his brother William's death, and left his wife and three of their children with her brother Zenas Stone while he attended to his brother's small estate. Lemuel was gone about one year. William B. was left, and temporarily adopted, by the Reverend Isaac Beals, the first settled minister in Clarendon, VT. He lived with Rev. Beals until about 1805. When Lemuel returned, he bought a 20-acre lot, having a hovel for a house upon it. Lemuel was now able to provide for the support of his family so his son William B. was returned from Rev. Beals, to his parents,

<sup>246</sup> Louis W. Flanders, M.D., *Simeon Ide, Yeoman, Freeman, Pioneer Printer*. Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1931. P. 17.

<sup>247</sup> Ide, *Ibid*. P. 16.

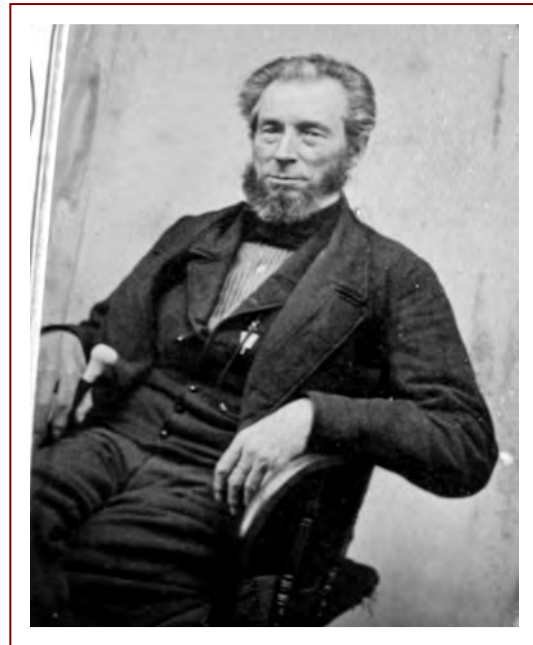
<sup>248</sup> Edith F. Dunbar, *A Genealogy of the Ide Family*. Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1931. P. 216.

<sup>249</sup> Flanders, *Ibid*.

and remained with them till “of age”. Lemuel however, continued to rove from place to place.<sup>250</sup>

According to Simeon Ide,

William’s ‘schooling’ privileges were limited to the common schools of those days, which were seldom kept in the several districts where he lived more than two months, each season, summer and winter. William B. worked at the carpenter and joiners trade with his father. He worked as a carpenter in Winchendon and Keene, New Hampshire and in Newfane and Woodstock, Vermont until 1833.<sup>251</sup>



These images are reputed to be of William B. Ide— one young, the other older, c.1850. The left one was given to William B. Ide Adobe SHP by Henry A. Schafer

### *The Ide Family and Their Restless Spirit*

William B. Ide married his cousin Susan Grout Haskell on April 17, 1820 in Northborough, Massachusetts. The Ides had a restless spirit.

William B. Ide’s adventuresome turn of mind made him a victim of the prevailing “Western fever” and in June 1833 he moved his family to Canton, Kentucky staying there only three months before moving on to Madison, Ohio.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 18.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.* P. 19.

The couple had nine children. Their birth locations help to track the family's movements.

- James Monroe, born May 2, 1822 at Keene, New Hampshire; died April 18, 1878 in Utah.
- William Haskell, born February 10, 1824 at Newfane, Vermont; died 1872 in California.
- Mary Eliza, born October 29, 1825 at Newfane, Vermont; died September 26, 1844 at Springfield, Illinois.
- Sarah Elizabeth, born November 1, 1827 at Newfane, Vermont; died April 1904 in California.
- Ellen Julia, born February 14, 1830 at Newfane Vermont; died October 4, 1833 at Canton, Kentucky.
- Susan Catherine, born August 1832 at Woodstock, Vermont; died December 1833 at Madison, Ohio.
- Daniel Webster, born March 6, 1835 at Madison, Ohio; died in 1872 in California.
- Lemuel Henry Clay, born December 24, 1837 at Madison Ohio; died in 1923 in Red Bluff, California.
- John Truman, born February 28, 1839 at or near Springfield, Illinois; died April 1839 at or near Springfield Illinois.<sup>253</sup>

Ide seems to have suffered with bouts of poor health throughout his life. During the family's several months residence in Madison, Ohio, his health did not permit him to work at his trade, except occasionally in warmer weather. He spent most of the winter months working as a teacher in the district schools. In a letter to his mother dated "*Madison, Ohio. Feb. 23, 1835,*" Ide wrote:

When I first arrived in Ohio, and commenced teaching, James [Ide's son] was sick; and I was scarcely able to walk. I could not look after and take care of my children at school—was frequently under the necessity of being carried home.

The previously quoted letter to his mother also offers a glimpse of William Ide's daily life, his parental pride, and his concerns. It continues:

So the first quarter James attended only about 25 days of school. As I was about attending my second quarter, James had the misfortune to inflict a severe wound upon the ankle of his left leg. The accident occurred as follows: I had just put a handle to, and ground very thin and sharp, an axe for my own use, and laid it on a high shelf—saying to Susan, at the same time, that I was going to a raising about a mile off, and that the boys were not to meddle with this axe, as I had made it very sharp. Scarcely had I left the house, when James came in, and began to climb up the logs of the house to get the axe. His mother told

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<sup>253</sup> Dunbar, *Ibid.* P. 237.



him he must not have it; but James answered, ‘Why, marm? Father allows *me* to use it.’ So, like a good, easy mother, she said no more, and James went out into the orchard to chop some dead peach trees.

Directly Susan heard some on hollering; but as the girls and William were playing about the house, and making much noise, she thought no harm’ when, a little while after, she discovered that James had cut his ankle [sic], and was bleeding very fast—the axe having entered nearly half of the blade, severing some of the leaders of the toes, and opening one of the arteries—His mother finding him in this situation, held the wound together, while William ran after me. Understanding about the case by William, I sent a man for a surgeon, and then hastened home. But recollecting that the man had several miles to go, and that the road was extremely bad at that time—and the wound continuing to bleed, it was evident he could not survive the loss of blood that must be occasioned by waiting for the surgeon... I went immediately about dressing it. I tied up the blood-vessels, then sewed the parts together. James fainted, and afterwards became very sick; but soon began to recover.

He is a very excellent reader—understands the English very well—has studied geography once through—has gone through Adams’ New Arithmetic, and is now engaged in defining some of the more intricate words in the English language.



Daughter Sarah Elizabeth Ide Cooper Healy in her later years from Fred B. Rogers’ *Bear Flagger & Builder*

William had about the like opportunity, but has not improved so well. He is some larger than James, and stout. He is not much troubled by care of any kind.

Mary is a good girl; helps her mother a good deal; reads and spells well; studies grammar and makes her own clothes, pretty much; is as tall as James, and generally stands at the head of the first class, of late; since each scholar has to define, as well as spell the word.

Sarah is the baby, and is therefore her father’s dear child; and, herefore. I will say but little about her—only that she reads with Mary, and thinks she can do any thing as well as she does!<sup>254</sup>

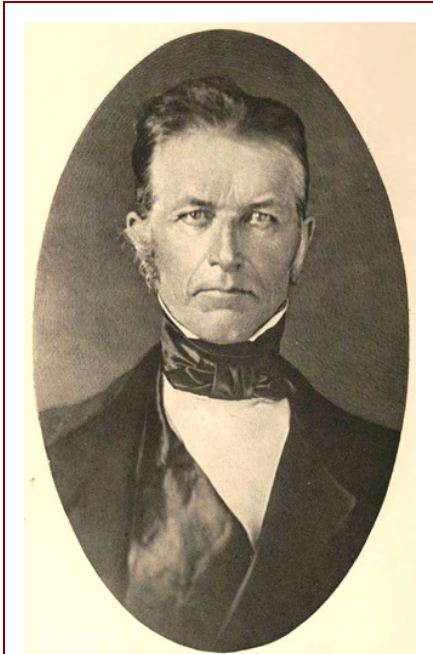
In her later years, daughter Sarah Elizabeth, who became Sarah Elizabeth Ide Cooper Healy, recollected her father for her uncle, Simeon Ide, who was

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.* P. 22.

writing *A Biographical Sketch of the Life of William B. Ide*. Sarah Elizabeth wrote about the family's farm in Madison, Ohio as:

...a very good one—having good buildings, being well fenced, and under a good state of cultivation; he paid a part down for it, and the balance in less than two years, which we made off the farm—father and brothers (as well as the rest of the family who were old enough) all working; for we did not hire any help, and were soon out of debt. This was a comfortable and pleasant home, with kind and intelligent neighbors.<sup>255</sup>



Simeon Ide, taken from Louis W. Flanders, M.D., *Simeon Ide, Yeoman, Freeman, Pioneer Printer*

### *The Ides Move West*

In 1838, Ide felt the urge to move again. He was 49 years of age when he decided to make the journey, outfitting two covered wagons with the intention of moving to Missouri. Having reached Jacksonville, Illinois, after four weeks of difficult travel, Ide decided to remain there for one winter and later settled on a farm near Springfield, Illinois. The family resided there until 1844.<sup>256</sup>

In the winter of 1844-1845, Ide made plans to travel to the Pacific Coast. At the time, all nine of their children had been born, but four had died. After selling the farm and wintering over with one of William's brothers, they set out for Oregon on April 1, 1845.

Much of what is known of the Ide family's trek to California comes from the Ide's daughter Sarah, who made the journey when she was eighteen years old. She recalled:

On that day [April 1, 1845] we bid our good friends farewell. It was a sad day to us. All our old neighbors came to help us pack our things into our three wagons and to see us off. My father selected the timber for two of these wagons, and had them made to order during the winter. He also made the beds, bows and covers at our home. Mother and I sewing the canvas covering; which, being fastened to the bows and sideboards of the wagons, were painted a light slate-color, the same as the body of the wagon. Our wagons were very neat looking, and attracted a good

<sup>255</sup> Fred Blackburn Rogers, *William Brown Ide, Bear Flagger*. San Francisco, Calif.: John Howell-Books, 1962. P. 3.

<sup>256</sup> Ide, *ibid*. P. 29.

deal of attention while passing through Illinois and Missouri. Many questions were asked as to our destination.

We had a sale the morning we started, and sold, off the greater part of our furniture. We packed our cooking utensils, tin cups, tin plates—with provisions to last us six months. Mother, my little brothers—Daniel, aged 10 and Lemuel, aged 8, and Thomas Crafton (a little boy that had been given to my mother), all rode in a wagon. I rode on horseback 3 days, to help drive the cattle; riding on a side-saddle. The drove of cattle numbered 165, including 28 working oxen. We camped the first night ten miles from our old home - cooked our supper by a camp-fire.<sup>257</sup>



"Emigration to the Western Country" from *Our Country* by B.J. Lossing

Before leaving Illinois, Ide agreed to send information back to his local newspaper, the *Sangamon Journal*. He continued his correspondence with the *Journal* during his emigration (see Appendix), but his actual personal accounts of the trek west are very minimal. It was around August 9<sup>th</sup> that Ide's wagon train arrived at Fort Hall. The travelers were approximately halfway through their journey and already the winds of change were blowing. Lansford W. Hastings had crossed the plains to Oregon in 1842

and then moved to California in 1843. He returned to the States in 1844 and to Cincinnati in 1845, where he published his *Emigrants Guide to Oregon and California*. In it, he described the superior advantages of California.<sup>258</sup>



Fort Hall, 1849. Courtesy of the Idaho Historical Society

At Fort Hall, Ide decided to head for California instead of Oregon. Daughter Sarah wrote:

While there [Fort Hall] Father changed his plan—concluded to go to California: but first, before definitely settling the question, put it to vote of his company, and they voted for California instead of Oregon.<sup>259</sup>

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.* P. 7.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.* P.18.

<sup>259</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 35.

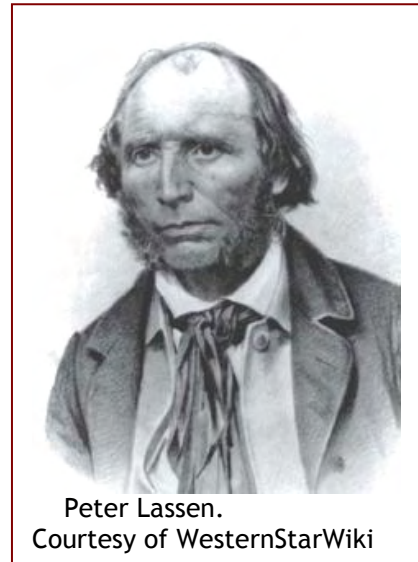
Ide's journey to California took seven months. After a laborious overland journey, the party arrived at Sutter's Fort. Sarah recalled:

On the 25<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1845, my Father drove down into the American River valley, and in a few days more we camped near Sutter's Fort, where Sacramento City is now.<sup>260</sup>

### *Settling in California*

While at Sutter's Fort Ide met Peter Lassen, who owned a large tract of land on Deer Creek approximately 130 miles up the Sacramento valley from Sutter's Fort. Lassen offered Ide a cabin to spend the winter. In exchange, Ide agreed to help Lassen build a sawmill on the property. According to Sarah Elizabeth's recollections:

Father met a Mr. Peter Lassen, who owned a large tract of land 130 miles up the Sacramento valley, on Deer Creek, who told him that he was the very man that he wanted to build him a sawmill. Lassen having the water-power, and Father a circular saw and some mil-irons which he had brought across the Plains, he told Father to go right up with his family to his Rancho, and tell Mr. Sill to clean out one of his tenements, and that he (Lassen) would be home soon, and show him the mill site and set him to work. In just one week after we had moved into this small house of one room, Mr. Lassen came home, and brought another family with him, (one of his own countrymen, a German<sup>261</sup>); and the first thing he said to Father was, that he wanted his house!



Peter Lassen.  
Courtesy of WesternStarWiki

This was about the middle of November, 1845. We packed every thing into our wagons; and, getting our cattle together, started up river and forded it. After going about seven miles, we came to a camp of one family, (a Mr. Tusting) who had bargained to take care of a Mr. Chard's cattle, and live on his Rancho—had camped near Sacramento River, on H. R. Thome's Rancho, in order to have the company of Mr. Thome's man who had charge of his (Mr. T's) cattle. We camped near them. They being very anxious to have us remain with them all winter. As the rainy season had already commenced, the weather was stormy. Father, with two other men, built a log-cabin. All of us lived in it until April 1846.

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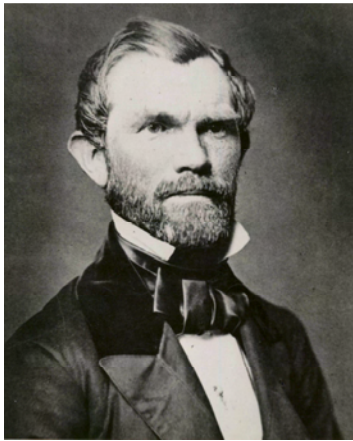
<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* P. 43.

<sup>261</sup> Sarah Ide was mistaken. Peter Lassen was actually born in Farum, Denmark on October 31, 1800.



During the winter, which was a very wet one, we were surrounded by high-water floods—our cattle swimming from one bank to another.<sup>262</sup>

Josiah Belden obtained a land grant signed by Mexican Governor Micheltorena on December 24, 1844. It consisted for four square leagues and was approved by the Departmental Assembly October 8, 1845. After obtaining the land north of the Thomes Ranch, Belden offered Ide the northern half of his ranch, if he would manage the entire grant for three years. An agreement to that effect was struck in April 1846, and the Ide family moved into a partially finished log cabin on the *Rancho Las Baulinas* (Belden’s rancho), later called *El Rancho de la Barranca Colorada*. This name was derived from Red Bank Creek, which was the northern boundary of Belden’s grant.



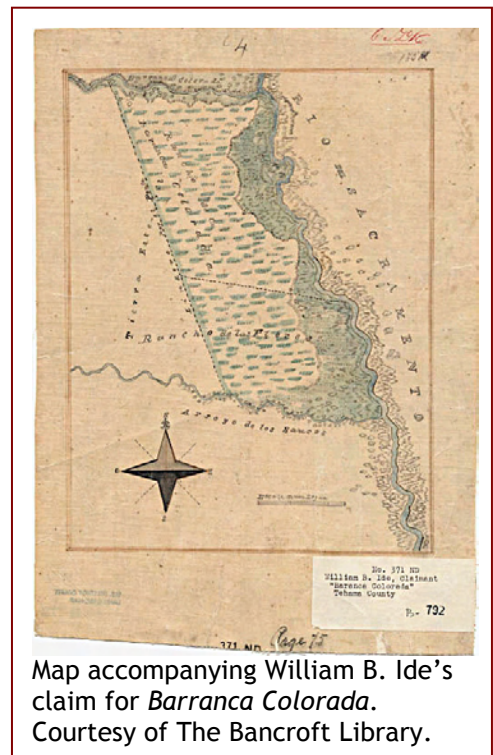
Josiah Belden. Courtesy of the Historic Landmarks Commission, San Jose.

At some time during that fall or the ensuing winter, Ide made a reconnaissance of the Belden rancho, which he was to occupy. About three miles north of the present town of Gerber, is the southeast corner of the Rancho. About 1.2 miles north of that point and near the west bank of the Sacramento River, the survey map shows Post 7. About 150 feet northwest of that post is shown an “Ide House,” not further described in the field notes. That house is presumed to have been the one, then partially completed, which the Ides occupied in April 1846.

*Barranca Colorada* contained over 17,700 acres. Extending northwest from its

southeast corner to the mouth of Red Bank Creek is a bench which rises about twenty feet above the large area to the east, which became known as “Ide’s Bottom”, and which today is practically devoid of habitations. The bench marks the beginning of extensive uplands, which continue some six miles westward within the rancho.<sup>263</sup>

After caring for Belden’s cattle for three years, Belden and his wife Sarah transferred the northern half of the rancho to Ide on April 12, 1849, as well as the southern half to Ide, James M. Ide, William C. Cooper (who married Sarah Elizabeth Ide in 1850), and William H. Ide, on May 24, 1849. The latter released his right on June 23, 1849.<sup>264</sup> Another Ide house is shown on the plat of the township adjoining Barranca



Map accompanying William B. Ide’s claim for *Barranca Colorada*. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.* P. 47.

<sup>263</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 31.

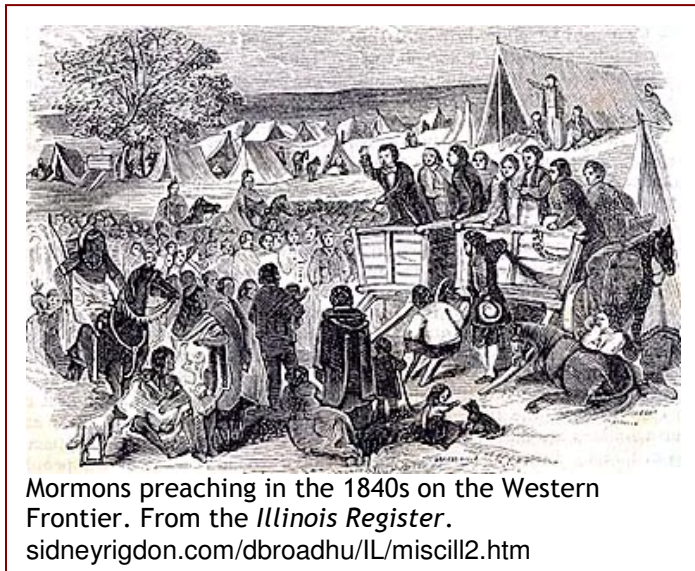
<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* P. 74.



Colorada on the north. It is plotted just south of Red Bank Creek, the north boundary of the rancho, and it seems to have been the so-called “Massachusetts House,” named in the Ide Probate case. Its location was north of the east portion of present Riverside Avenue and near the Corning Canal.

### *Was William B. Ide a Mormon?*

It is likely that William B. Ide became an adherent of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) faith. However, the exact date of his conversion was not recorded. Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft felt that conflicting charges and silence in Ide’s own statements left the question of his being Mormon in doubt.<sup>265</sup> However, Mormon records clearly indicate that Ide was, in fact, a member of the Mormon Church.



Brigham Young’s brother, Lorenzo Dow Young, visited the Ide home, in Springfield, Illinois in 1844, and later wrote, “He [Ide] joined the church in the early day but at that time was rather in the background.” Mormon Church records of August 12, 1838 list a “Brother Ide who resided near the city of Dayton [Ohio]” as a member of Zion’s Camp, and Temple records of the W. B. Ide family indicate that two of Ide’s sons were born at Madison, Ohio.<sup>266 267</sup> The *Nauvoo* [Illinois] *Neighbor* of May 22, 1844, notes:

...that Ide acted as a delegate from Sangamon County, Illinois, at the Mormon convention which nominated Joseph Smith for President of the United States and Sidney Rigdon as Vice President.<sup>268</sup>

### *The Bear Flag Revolt*

During the winter of 1845-1846, rumors had spread throughout California that the Mexican government planned to evict all the American settlers who did not hold

<sup>265</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol V., 1845-1848. San Francisco, Calif.: The History Company, 1886. Pp. 159-9.

<sup>266</sup> Allen Fifield, “Why Ide Came to California,” *The Far Westerner* July 1968, Vol 9, No.3. P.2

<sup>267</sup> Benjamin M. Hughes, “William Brown Ide, Pioneer, Bear Flagger & Builder.” *Dogtown Territorial* No. 16. Winter 1993. Paradise, Calif.: Bill and Penny Anderson, publishers. P.5.

<sup>268</sup> Rogers, *Ibid*. P. 3.

Mexican land grants. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Prefect Manuel Castro sent copies of a proclamation stating that the purchase or acquisition of land by foreigners, who had not become naturalized as Mexicans, “*will be null and void, and they will be subject (if they do not retire voluntarily from the country) to be expelled whenever the country may find it convenient*” to do so. Copies were sent to American Counsel Thomas O. Larkin and also to Vice-Consul William Leidesdorff at Yerba Buena.<sup>269</sup> According to Fred B. Rogers’ book, in *William B. Ide, Bear Flagger*:

Ide tells of having received at his cabin on the morning of June 8<sup>th</sup> the following unsigned written message, delivered by an Indian ‘agent’; “Notice is hereby given, that a large body of armed Spaniards on horseback, amounting to 250 men, have been seen on their way to the Sacramento Valley, destroying the crops, burning the houses, and driving off the cattle. Capt. Frémont invites every freeman in the valley to come to his camp at the Buttes[sic], immediately; and he hopes to stay the enemy and put a stop to his—[Here the sheet is folded and worn in-two, and no more is found]. Ide was off for Frémont’s camp without delay.”<sup>270</sup>

Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft noted: “In June ’46 he [Ide] joined the Bear party, being apparently one of the few settlers who acted in good faith and was induced to believe the false reports that the Americans were in danger.”<sup>271</sup>



Portrait of John C. Frémont by William S. Jewett. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

On June 10<sup>th</sup> the emigrants, who would become known as the Bear Flaggers, met with Capt. John Frémont and learned of, *The Plan of Conquest*, which was quite simple: First, select a dozen men who *have nothing to lose, but everything to gain*. Second, encourage them to commit depredations against Gen. Castro, the usurper, and thus supply the camp with horses *necessary for a trip to the States*. Third, to make prisoners of some of the principal men, and thus provoke Castro to *strike the first blow* in a war with the United States. This done, finish the conquest by uniting the forces, and “marching back to the States.”<sup>272</sup>

While the emigrants were on their way to Frémont’s camp, word was brought to Frémont that Lieutenants Francisco Arce and Jose Maria Alviso had arrived at Sutter’s Fort with eight men on June 8, 1846 herding 170 horses. The animals had been obtained in the Sonoma area

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.* P. 38.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.* P. 39.

<sup>271</sup> *California Pioneer Register and Index, 1542-1848*. Extracted from *The History of California, 1884-90* by Hubert Howe Bancroft. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1964. P.196.

<sup>272</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 114.

in an arrangement between General Castro and Colonel Mariano G. Vallejo, in command at Sonoma. Rumor had it these horses were to be used to drive Americans from the country.<sup>273</sup>

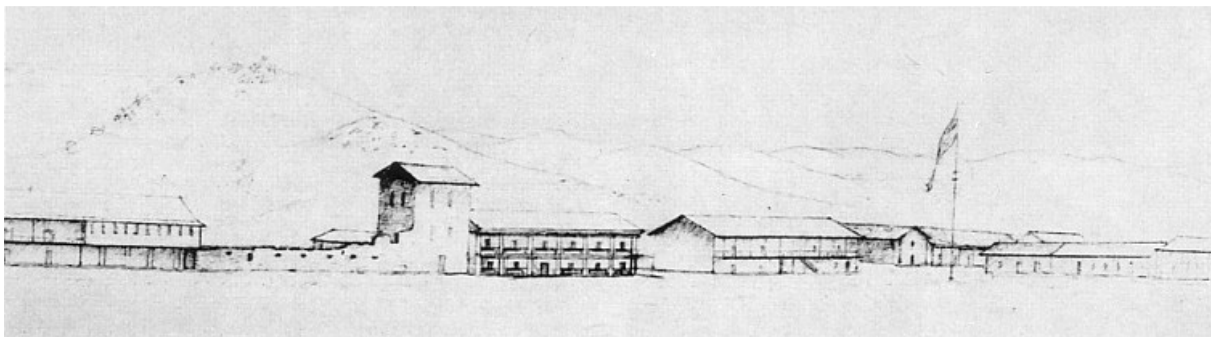
At Capt. Frémont’s urging, a group of about ten men, led by Ezekiel Merritt, caught up with the horses and their Mexican escorts at Murphy’s ranch on the Cosumnes River on June 10, 1846. During the capture, the Americans boasted that they would capture Sonoma. The horses were taken by the Americans, while Lieut. Arce and his men were sent on their way, via horseback. Arce even retained his sword. Merritt and his group returned to Frémont’s camp with the horses on June 11, 1846.<sup>274</sup>



California Landmark marking Murphy's Corral, where the Bear Flag Revolt began.

Fearing that the released men would spread word about the emigrant uprising and that it was probable the garrison at Sonoma might be alerted, rather than surprised, the “Bear Flaggers” immediately left for Sonoma under the leadership of Ezekiel Merritt. The group numbered approximately 20 men, and included Ide. They arrived in the Napa Valley on June 12<sup>th</sup>, where they stayed until late June 13<sup>th</sup>. While there, more emigrants joined the cause and by the time they departed for Sonoma, the group numbered thirty-two. They arrived in Sonoma just before dawn on June 14, 1846. At daybreak, they surrounded Mariano Vallejo’s Casa Grande on the Plaza.

When Mariano Vallejo, who served as the Mexican military commander of the northern frontier, looked out of his home on the Plaza, he found it surrounded by a rag-tag group of men that Robert Semple later described.



Sonoma Plaza drawn by George Gibbs in 1851. Courtesy of the California State Military Museum.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.* P. 41.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

Almost the whole party was dressed in leather hunting shirts, many of them greasy; taking the whole party; together, they were about as rough a looking set of men as one could well imagine. It is not to be wondered at that any one would feel some dread in falling into their hands.<sup>275</sup>

Vallejo upon meeting the visitors, was placed under house arrest. Along with Gen. Vallejo, the captured included Vallejo's brother Salvador, and Frenchman Victor Prudon. Ezekiel Merritt, Robert Semple, and William Knight began negotiations for the surrender of Mariano Vallejo and Sonoma. It was thought necessary to exchange written guaranties between the parties. There were two, one in English and the other in Spanish. Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft translated the one in Spanish:

Be it know by these presents, that, having been surprised by numerous armed force which took me prisoner, with the chief and officers belonging to the garrison of this place that said force took possession of having found absolutely defenseless, myself as well as the undersigned officers pledge our word of honor that, being under the guaranties of prisoners of war, we will not take up arms for or against said armed force, from which we have received the present intimation, and a signed writing which guarantees our lives, families, and property, and those of all the residents of this jurisdiction, so long as we make no opposition.

A second document was signed by Ezekiel Merritt, R. Semple, William Fallon and Samuel Kelsey:

We, the undersigned, having resolved to establish a government of on (upon) republican principles, in connection with others of our fellow citizens, and having taken up arms to support it, we have taken three Mexican officers as prisoners, Gen. M.G. Vallejo, Lieut-col Victor Prudon, and Capt. D. Salvador Vallejo, having formed and published to the world no regular plan of government, feel it our duty to say that it is not our intention to take or injure any person who is not found in opposition to the cause, nor will we take or destroy the property of private individuals further than is necessary for our immediate support.<sup>276</sup>

Producing these documents took so long inside Vallejo's home that the restless group outside elected John



Portrait of Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, c.1880-1885. Courtesy of Wikipedia

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<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.* P. 42.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.* P. 43.



Grigsby to investigate the cause. When Grigsby had not returned after a long while, the group called upon Ide to investigate the delays. Ide found Robert Semple still writing the articles of capitulation, while Merritt, Knight, and Grigsby appeared to have succumbed to Vallejo's generous spirits. The group was drunk. At this point, there was confusion in some of the minds of the Bear Flaggers. Authority for the revolt was questioned by some. John Grigsby, doubting their authority and thinking it rested with Capt. Frémont, said:

Gentlemen, I have been deceived; I cannot go with you; I resign and back out of the scrape. I can take my family to the mountains as cheap as any of you. He declined to retain the leadership of the party.

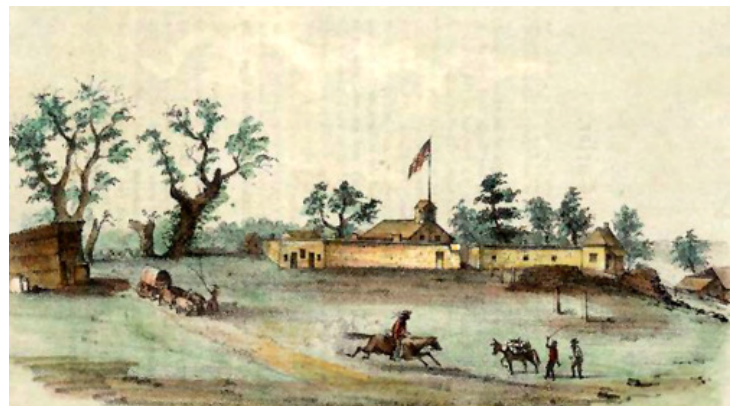
Ide, a teetotaler, responded in the confusion with:

Saddle no horse for me. I will lay my bones here, before I will take upon myself the ignominy of commencing an honorable work, and then flee like cowards, like thieves, when no enemy is in sight. In vain, will you say you had honorable motives; who will believe it? Flee this day, and the longest life cannot wear off you disgrace! Choose ye! what you will be! We are robbers, or we must be conquerors.<sup>277</sup>

It was decided to send Vallejo and his party to Sutter's Fort. Grigsby, Semple, Merritt, Hargane, Knight, and four or five others escorted the prisoners, leaving Sonoma about 11 a.m. on June 14<sup>th</sup>. They arrived at Frémont's camp on the American River late on the afternoon of June 16<sup>th</sup>. Frémont refused to free them, and sent them that same evening to Sutter's Fort.

According to Bancroft,

Ide soon came to regard himself as leader in a grand revolutionary movement, as conqueror of California; his men regarded him simply as temporary commandant of Sonora [*sic*—it should be Sonoma], chosen to that position for his zeal in the cause and some educational advantages, and they were willing to indulge him in harmless eccentricities, paying but slight attention to his grandiloquent proclamations, or his peculiar views of himself and the republic he thought he had founded.<sup>278</sup>

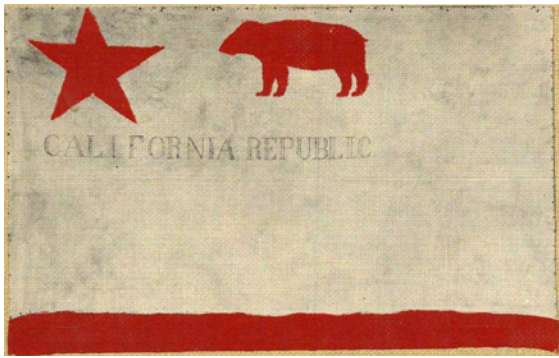


Sutter's Fort, 1849, by George Victor Cooper.  
Courtesy of [www.legendsofamerica.com](http://www.legendsofamerica.com)

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.* P. 44.

<sup>278</sup> *California Pioneer Register*, *Ibid.* P. 197.





Bear Flag sewn by William Todd, which was destroyed in the April 18, 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire.

The “revolutionists” designed and produced the new “Bear Flag.” Ide’s brother Simeon later described it as being made of plain cotton cloth, and ornamented with the red flannel of a shirt from the back of one of the men, and christened by the words “California Republic,” in red-paint letters on both sides...

William Todd of Illinois produced the flag with a grizzly bear, chosen for an emblem of strength and its unyielding resistance.<sup>279</sup>

The flag also featured a star. The elements of the design later were adopted later for California’s official state flag. It was hoisted on June 14<sup>th</sup> over the Plaza.

Ide wrote one of several Bear Flag Proclamations:

To all persons, citizens of Sonoma, requesting them to remain at peace, and to follow their rightful occupations without fear of molestation. The Commander in Chief of the troops assembled at the fortress of Sonoma, gives his inviolable pledge to all persons in California, not found under arms, that they shall not be disturbed in their persons, their property or social relations, one to another, by man under his command.

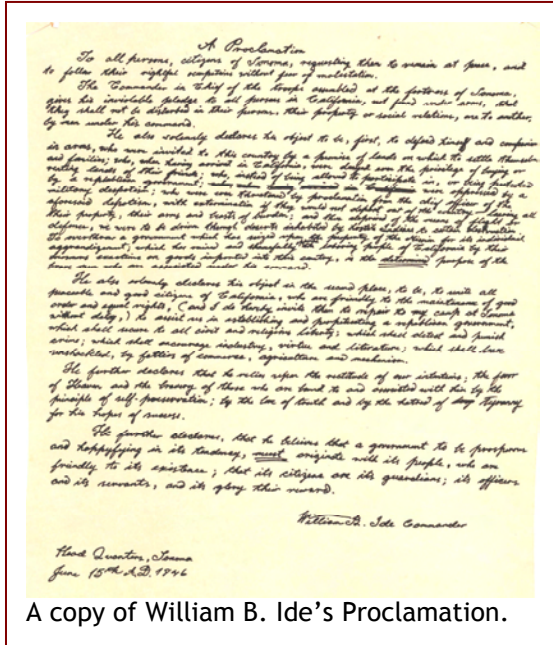
He also solemnly declares his object to be, first, to defend himself and companions in arms, who were invited to this country by a promise of lands on which to settle themselves and families; who when having arrived in California, were denied even the privilege of buying or renting lands of their friends; who instead of being allowed to participate in, or being protected by a republican government; were apprised by a military despotism; who were ever threatened by proclamation from the chief officer of the aforesaid despotism, with extermination if they would not depart out of the country—leaving all their property, their arms and beasts of burden; and thus deprived of the means of flight or defense, we were to be driven through deserts inhabited by hostile Indians to certain destruction. To overthrow a government which has seized upon the property of the Mission for its individual aggrandizement; which has ruined and shamefully oppressed the laboring people of California by their enormous exactions on goods imported into this country, is the determined purpose of the brave men who are associated under his command.

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<sup>279</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* Pp. 230-231.

He also solemnly declares his object in the second place, to be, to unite all peaceable and good citizens of California, who are friendly to the maintenance of good or and equal rights, (and I do hereby invite them to repair to my camp at Sonoma without delay,) to assist us in establishing

and perpetuating a republican government, which shall secure to all civil and religious liberty; which shall detest and punish crime; which shall encourage industry, virtue and literature; which shall leave unshackled, by fetters of commerce, agriculture and mechanism.



A copy of William B. Ide's Proclamation.

He further declares that he relies upon the rectitude of our intentions; the favor of Heaven and the bravery of those who are bound to and associated with him by the principle of self-preservation; by the love of truth and by the hatred of tyranny for his hopes of success.

He further declares, that he believes that a government to be prosperous and happyfying in its tendency, must originate with its people, who are friendly to its existence; that its citizens are its guardians and its servants, and its glory their reward.

William B. Ide Commander  
 Head Quarters, Sonoma  
 June, 15<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1846<sup>280</sup>

Two or three days later, two men who have been directed to acquire gunpowder from a ranch on the Russian River, were captured and killed by Mexicans near Santa Rosa. When word of this act reached Sonoma, a larger party was sent to retrieve the powder. On the morning of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Ide's lieutenant, Henry L. Ford, left with 17 or 18 men to catch the Mexicans. They followed the trail south toward San Rafael. Meanwhile, Mexican authorities had sent a division of militia (50-60 men) across San Pablo Bay toward San Rafael. They were joined by others from Santa Rosa, who camped at Camillo's Rancho Olompali, north of San Rafael. The Bear Flaggers located the Mexicans on June 24<sup>th</sup>. In the ensuing battle, at least one Mexican man was killed, and another wounded. The Mexicans retreated toward San Rafael and the Bear Flaggers returned to Sonoma.

<sup>280</sup>Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 46-47.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, Frémont arrived at Sonoma with 90 men, and left the next day for San Rafael, hoping to catch up with fleeing Mexicans, but they had vanished. On July 5,



One of the canons originally at the *Castillo de San Joaquin* cast in 1673. It was spiked by Frémont's men.  
Courtesy of the National Park Service.

1846, Frémont officially took command of the revolutionary forces at Sonoma. The men moved southward. Borrowing a longboat to cross the strait (which Fremont named the "Golden Gate"), they seized the deserted *Castillo de San Joaquin* (commonly known as the San Francisco

*presidio*) with its cannons, many of which were lying in the dirt because their wooden carriages had rotted away.<sup>281</sup> Frémont's men spiked the guns, driving iron files into the touchholes to render them inoperable.

On July 9<sup>th</sup> word arrived that the United States had declared war on Mexico. On that day, Capt. John B. Montgomery of the U.S. sloop *Portsmouth* landed a force of sailors and marines to officially seize Yerba Buena (later called San Francisco). The Bear Flaggers immediately struck their flag, replacing it with American colors. The short-lived Bear Flag revolt was over.

Bancroft noted: "The assumption of command by John Frémont was regarded by Ide as a grievous wrong to himself..."<sup>282</sup> At the insistence of his men, Ide's group joined Frémont's forces in the campaign against Mexico. Ide served as a private in the California Battalion and was part of the first expedition that marched south to take the rest of California.<sup>283</sup> Ide stayed with the American forces and was present at the raising of the United States flag over Los Angeles on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

Ide returned to Sonoma in September and later went home in late November.<sup>284</sup> In a letter from Vernon in the Sacramento Valley, William B. Ide wrote to one of his brothers:

Since my return from the south, they [the Mexicans] had risen up and taken all the lower country. Commodore [sic] Stockton has gone to see to it. I gathered up a few 'bears' and sent him just to frighten or catch them (He stated that the 'Spaniards' were more afraid of the Bears than they were of either the marines or the sailors.) I told the commodore that I would go myself, but he said I was an old man and had done enough; besides he wanted I should go up the Sacramento Valley, and

<sup>281</sup> California State Military Museum. [www.militarymuseum.org/CastilloSanJoaquin.html](http://www.militarymuseum.org/CastilloSanJoaquin.html)

<sup>282</sup> *California Pioneer Register*, *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>284</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* Pp. 52-57.

see to matters there, and come back to Yerba Buena, against his return, when he would find something else for me to do, not exactly of a military character.<sup>285</sup>

### *In the Aftermath of the Bear Flag Revolt*

On May 17, 1847, William B. Ide was appointed Alcalde by Col. Richard B. Mason, shortly after Mason had succeeded Gen. Stephen W. Kearney as military governor of California. At the time, there were no viable laws in California—except existing Mexican laws. Mason believed that these laws should be obeyed. Although Ide was not a Mexican citizen or a Mexican official, he did help to fill the authority gap during the transition from Mexican to American rule<sup>286</sup>

Few records exist concerning Ide’s service as Alcalde, however in the newspaper *Californian*, dated July 3, 1847, the following notice appeared:

On the 17<sup>th</sup> At Cash Creek by Wm. B. Ide, Esq., Mr. John S. Williams of Sacramento Valley, to Miss Mariah L. Gordon late of Independence, Mo.

At some point in his life, William B. Ide acquired the skills of a land surveyor. On May 18, 1847, L. W. Boggs, Henry L. Ford, R. Semple, Benj. Kelsey, and thirty-three others petitioned Gen Stephen W. Kearny to appoint Ide to an office. As Ide was a competent land surveyor and possessed the requisite instruments, the petition was successful. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, Col Richard B. Mason, military governor of California, appointed Ide to be a land surveyor for and in the Northern Department of California.<sup>287</sup> Ide placed two advertisements in the July 31<sup>st</sup> issue of *The Californian*. They read:

The undersigned will attend to such surveys as may be entrusted to his care; for \$4 per mile for horizontal line; establishing corners \$1; for recording, copies of field notes, executing maps, & etc., the customary prices. Twenty-five per cent discount for cash down. Letters addressed to W.B. Ide, Sonoma, U.C. will meet attention.

William B. Ide, Land Surveyor,  
in and for the Northern Department, U.S.  
Sonoma, July 1847



A surveyor at work.  
<http://www.nrm.gld.gov.au/museum/index.html>

<sup>285</sup> Benjamin M. Hughes, “William Brown Ide, Pioneer, Bear Flagger & Builder.” Part 5 *Dogtown Territorial*, No. 16. Winter 1994. Paradise, Calif.: Bill and Penny Anderson, publishers. P.56.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.* P. 57.

<sup>287</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 64.



WANTED. A young man acquainted with the use of the compass[sic], will find good employment by applying to W.B. Ide.  
Sonoma, July 1847<sup>288</sup>

Ide surveyed a number of large *ranchos*, including: Basquol or Lassen's Rancho, containing sixty thousand acres in 1847; part of Hyacinth Farm, comprising 2,880 acres in 1847; and Lawson Rancho, divide the four leagues of land for a property transaction between Daniel Sill and Harriet Besse.<sup>289</sup>



Placer mining at Foster's Bar, c.1851. Painting by Ernest Narjot. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

News of the gold discovery in Coloma Valley on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1848, soon reached Ide. With his sons, James M. Ide and William H. Ide, and William C. Cooper, his son-in-law, the men went in search of the precious metal, returning a few months later with \$35,000 in gold dust.<sup>290</sup> They made their fortune before thousands arrived in the Rush of '49.<sup>291</sup> Ide used his new-found wealth to travel East to visit relatives in Vermont and New Hampshire.<sup>292</sup>

By 1851, he had had enough of mining and of California. In a letter to one of his brothers, he wrote:

I do not seek more wealth; but simply wish to exchange what I have for cash, that I may leave California once and for all. I sell slowly-not half as fast as my stock increases. I have collected about \$6000.00 since I came home [from his nine-ten month stay in the east]. I have tried to sell all at once; but few persons have the means to buy 1000 head of cattle, 150 horses, and 30,000 acres of land..<sup>293</sup>

The letter illustrates Ide's desire to liquidate his assets and move out of California. Perhaps after just returning from his birthplace in the East and losing his wife Susan (she had died in Red Bluff in 1850), he was feeling no alliance to the state of California.

His disposition seems to have changed, however, when writing another letter to a brother, dated November 9, 1851, about his new place of residence:

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<sup>288</sup> Hughes, *Ibid.* P. 58.

<sup>289</sup> William B. Ide Adobe SHP Research files.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 65.

<sup>292</sup> Park Research files.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* P. 61.

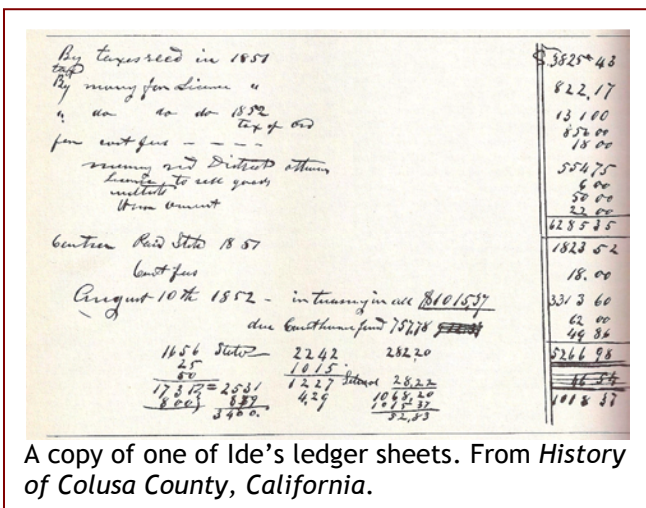


Thus and so are my public duties explained... Monroeville is in the heart of the largest valley in California, about 20 miles from my lower Rancho. It is surrounded by rich and fertile lands on all sides, extending far and wide. The little valley of the Connecticut affords no such scenery. It may be said to surpass ours in beauty... the wild geese have come from the north to feed upon our valleys, and the bears have come from the mountains to feed upon the grapes that entwine the trees along the streams of the valleys. The antelope still bounds upon the plains; the deer scud amid the foliage of leafy trees, and the elk herd in the valleys between the hills. Such are the rural scenes on this 'Pacific Slope'.<sup>294</sup>

He may have felt at peace with his new surroundings, leaving the burden of the ranch to his sons and son-in-law, but his civic duty compelled him to take on all of the duties for Colusa County, an entity that today would encompass *Butte, Colusa, Glenn*

HISTORY OF COLUSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.							193
OFFICERS OF COLUSA COUNTY FROM 1850 TO 1880.							
PREPARED FOR THE COUNTY HISTORY.							
Joint Senator.	Joint Assemblymen.	County Judge,	Sheriff.	County Clerk,	County Treasurer,	County Assessor.	Date.
James Specter	J. E. Brackett						1850
G. Vallejo	J. S. Bradford	J. S. Holland	D. G. Huntoon	Uriah P. Monroe	Wm. B. Ide		1851
Martin E. Cooke	Geo. W. Crane	Wm. B. Ide	John F. Willis	E. D. Wheatley	Wm. B. Ide	W. G. Chard	1851
M. M. Wambot	Henry L. Ford	J. F. Willis*	John F. Willis	E. D. Wheatley	Wm. B. Ide	M. Meador*	1852
M. M. Wambot	Geo. M. Carhart	J. F. Willis	H. P. Beamis*	E. D. Wheatley	Wm. Vincent*	M. Meador	1853
T. Sprague	G. W. Bowie	J. C. Huls	J. C. Johnson	J. B. Laing	G. W. L'Amoroux	Elijah Holt*	1854
T. Sprague	J. L. McCutchan	J. C. Huls	J. C. Johnson	J. B. Laing	G. W. L'Amoroux	Wm. Chapman	1855
Amel Dosh	E. J. Lewis	J. C. Huls	J. C. Johnson	J. B. Laing	G. W. L'Amoroux	N. W. Dunn	1856
Amel Dosh	H. W. Dunlan	J. C. Huls	J. C. Johnson	J. B. Laing	G. W. L'Amoroux	N. W. Dunn	1857

Note the offices of County Judge and County Treasurer for Colusa County held by William B. Ide.



A copy of one of Ide's ledger sheets. From *History of Colusa County, California*.

and Tehama Counties! —nearly as large as the state of New Hampshire! It was a period of major transition for California.<sup>295</sup> Ide was riding the tide of change during a critical time when California as a state was being defined. In December 1851, he described his work in Colusa County:

I am seated in the office of the County Clerk of Colusa County, where I am at present by virtue of the elected franchise been made Judge of the county Court,

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.* P. 74.

<sup>295</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 210.

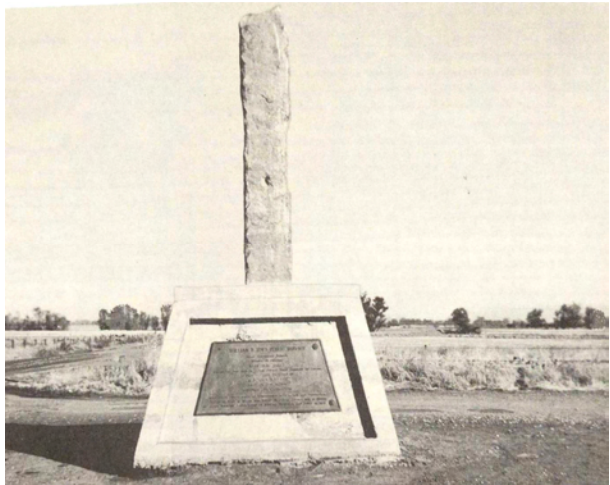
civil and criminal, President of the Commissioner’s Court or court of Sessions for said county, and Judge of Probate, and by appointment duly recorded, I am made the County Clerk—Clerk of the District Court (9th District), Clerk of the County Court and of the court of Sessions, Clerk of the Probate Court, county Recorder and county Auditor. These several offices at present limit my official duties: but I suppose I shall, just to accommodate our floating population, be compelled to serve as ‘Treasurer, Deputy Sheriff, Deputy County Surveyor’—and very probably as Coroner and Justice of the Peace—and possibly as Deputy Notary Public.

This account may excite some surprise; but I will explain: nine-tenths of our population are here today, and tomorrow are somewhere else. Our population are like birds of passage except their migrations are not exactly periodical... all the circumstances which make it difficult to obtain responsible.<sup>296</sup>

Ide took upon himself the duties of County Clerk, as he could find no one else to fill the position. He reflected:

And, there being no person willing to devote his whole time in keeping the office open, according as the law requires, at the county seat, and who was able to procure the requisite bonds, as I was bound in compliance with my official duties to be at the county seat to attend twenty-four distinct sessions of various courts, per annum, and considering I should save 2,000 miles travel, I rented out my rancho and

accepted the services as Deputy County Clerk, and am become my own clerk, in accordance with the old maxim, if you would have a good servant and one you like, serve yourself.<sup>297</sup>



A marker commemorating William Brown Ide and the town of Monroeville, California

Even while holding many positions for Colusa County, Ide felt alone. The many offices he held must have been stressful. He began a letter dated July 23, 1851 to an unknown addressee, “I am very lonely...”<sup>298</sup> Ide wrote to his mother on January 17, 1852:

I am at the county seat and not been home for three months. I

<sup>296</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 235-237.

<sup>297</sup> Justus H. Rogers, *History of Colusa County, California*. Orland, Calif. 1891. P. 43.

<sup>298</sup> Fred Blackburn Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 72.

have the whole management of our county affairs... I am regarded with all that respect I can desire-all classes pay due deference to their judge; but I have few confidential friends, and no adviser in whom I can confide.

William B. Ide contracted what is believed to have been smallpox in December 1852 and died December 19, 1852 at the age of 56 years, 7 months and 12 days at Monroe's rancho.<sup>299</sup>

Living away from his family—his wife having died two years previously and his children residing at a great distance on his Rancho, none were with him during his short confinement with smallpox...<sup>300</sup> William Brown Ide's estate was divided among his heirs. The Ide family's claim to Barranca Colorada was confirmed in 1855.<sup>301</sup>

This man, who helped shape the new state of California, was a vital part of its early history and represented its true "pioneer spirit." Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote:

In '51-'52 he seems to have held pretty nearly all the county offices in Colusa at the same time, the highest being that of county judge, and the seat of his govt being at Monroe's rancho, where he died in Dec. '52. He retained to the end his fondness for long reports and for political theorizing, but with all his eccentricity he was always a most worthy and honest man, and had somewhat remarkable tact and executive ability in several directions.<sup>302</sup>

### **Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:**

William B. Ide represents the wanderlust, as well as the "can do" spirit, of many in the mid-1800s. A map will be displayed showing the places across the continent where he and his family moved to and resided over the years, and the family's overland journey to California. The map also might indicate the sites where his nine children were born.

The same or a different map focused on California will highlight the location of his home south of the town of Red Bluff (as well as the state historic park named in his honor) and the rancho property that he and his family acquired from Josiah Belden. The map should represent the locations important to the Bear Flag Revolt, including Sutter's Fort, Sonoma, San Rafael, Olompali, the San Francisco Presidio, etc. Other sites like Mono Valley in historic Colusa County should be shown, too. A brief, graphic narrative history about Ide over the years might be integrated into the map. It should

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<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.* P. 209-210.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.* P. 212.

<sup>301</sup> *California Pioneer Register, Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

be inviting and interesting to look at with period images, as well as place names and notes of about journey undertaken over the years.

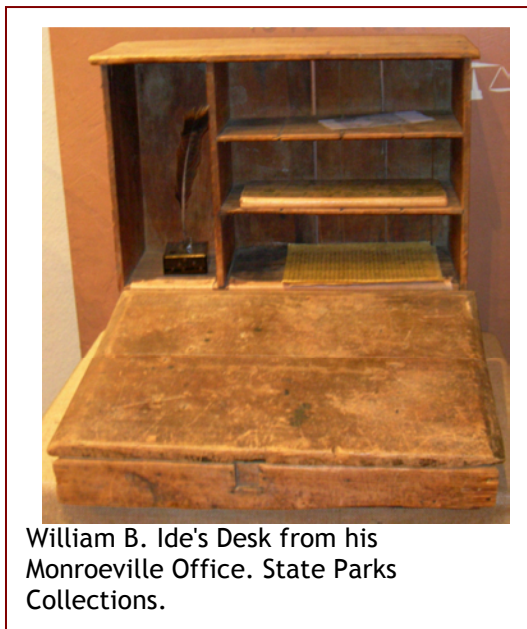
Visitors will see the two images of William B. Ide, but told that they cannot be verified as authentic. A mystery remains about the actual appearance of the man.

The original draft (in Sutter's Fort State Historic Park's collections) or a good facsimile of the draft proclamation will be a featured item in this exhibit, along with other examples of Ide's work. Extra security will be needed, if the original document is displayed.

One of the few artifacts associated with William B. Ide is a small, lift-top, counter-top desk, now owned by the park. It should be prominently displayed to support the interpretation of his many Colusi County positions after the Bear Flag Revolt, when he was a vital part of early local government.

If funds are sufficient, visitors might use push buttons to listen to recordings that reflect Ide's documented recollections of California.

### Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:



Objects and documents to be used in the exhibit will include:

- Two photographs reputed to be of William B. Ide
- Map(s) of the rancho lands that Ide acquired
- William B. Ide's lift-top desk belonging to the State Historic Park
- A copy (or the original—if security permits) of the Bear Flag Proclamation drafted by William B. Ide now in the collections of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park
- A replica Bear Flag
- A duplicate of a ledger sheet showing Ide's appointment or other Ide-related documents

As space permits, pictures of Ides' family members and his associates might be included to enhance the display. Refer to the Graphics File for this Interpretive Plan.





Clothing used by staff, docents and schoolchildren in programs at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park.



Children and adults get an outdoor "education" at the annual Adobe Day in 2008.



## Area 7: The Park Today

Space Allocation: 10%

Theme:

History comes to life at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park through its environmental studies programs, tours, living history events and fun celebrations.

Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about the many interpretive programs offered by the park.
- Feel encouraged to attend the special events.
- Discover why it is worthwhile to support the Ide Adobe Interpretive Association.
- Become interested in volunteering at the park.

Background Research and/or Storyline:

Staff and docents at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park use the park facilities to create a living historic environment that brings the past to life. All of the park's interpretive programs are based on two fundamental ideas: 1) breathe life into the area's history, bringing together the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures of the 1850s and early 1860s in a manner that feels real for visitors; and 2) immerse visitors in that first-hand reality to better understand the era.

### *Daily Activities for Living in the 1850s*

Many park activities reflect the essential chores not often described in history books. They encourage docents and visitors to experience what it might have been like to live in the early 1850s. As with most interpretive programs at the park, visitors may receive invitations to participate in many of the historic demonstrations. Below is an overview of some "living history" activities represented in the park.

### Ranch Chores & Maintenance

Frontier families devoted much of their time to household and ranch chores. Keeping a house on the frontier clean meant regularly sweeping, scrubbing, and dusting, airing mattresses, washing windows, and keeping out the mice and spiders. With no indoor plumbing or nearby places to purchase spare parts, equipment or utensils, there were many chores.

*Drawing water* - No indoor plumbing meant that water had to be drawn and then hauled into the house or to the work site, shed, stable, or garden from an outside

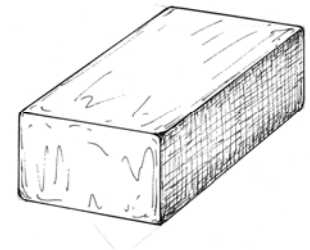
well or a pump. Before the ranch's laborsaving well was dug, water had to be carried from the river.

*Maintaining wagon wheels* - Travel along rough roads was not only wearing on drivers, passengers and the animals, but also extremely hard on wheeled vehicles. When crossing dry, arid lands, wood and leather wagon parts could shrink and crack, often pulling away from metal ones, like iron tires and axles. It was important to keep parts, especially the wheels, greased to prevent shrinkage. A grease or "tar" bucket often was slung beneath the wagon box for ready access to the material. (There are historic accounts of emigrants who suffered from extreme hunger, but survived by eating grease from the tar bucket.)

*Washing and drying dishes* - With few dishes and implements and limited indoor space, washing and drying dishes and cooking pots was essential after every meal. First water had to be hauled inside. Then it had to be heated in a cauldron over the fire before washing could begin. Docents learn the basics of pioneer housekeeping.

*Soap making* - Soap is produced by mixing water with ash (from a fireplace), then adding lard and boiling the mixture in an iron kettle for several hours.

When the mixture stiffens, it is poured into a box, where it hardens completely. The soap rests from two weeks to a month before being cut into bars. This bar soap was used for bathing, laundry and dishes. While it was available for purchase in the 1850s, the ingredients and process proved simple and inexpensive enough that many pioneers found it cheaper to produce their own.



*Laundry* - Washing was a big job. Soiled clothes were first boiled in a large kettle with soap then scrubbed on a washboard or on stones by the river to remove stains. The washing was given a final rinse in another tub to remove any soap. Starch was mixed with water and cooked on the stove then applied to collars, cuffs, doilies, and other items to add stiffness or some light body to the fabrics. Sometimes buttons were removed then re-sewn on a garment after laundry. Cleaned items were then hung on a line with wooden clothespins. Sheets often were hung as shields to keep underwear from the view of passersby.

*Ironing* - Sheets, dishtowels, aprons plus all the pioneers' apparel were pressed flat using heavy "sad" irons heated in the fire or on a cast iron stove. They were rubbed on paper or rags to remove any soot before ironing. Water also was sprinkled on the fabric to create a crisp look. The items were then folded and placed in a trunk or chest of drawers. Closets and hangers were not used except for heavy coats and most often, these were hung on pegs.

*Candle making* - Traditionally candles have been made by dipping the wicks repeatedly in a large iron pot containing melted wax made from beef fat, beeswax



Learning to make candles by dipping the wicks in melted wax.

or paraffin. In California, beef fat was cheap and available, but burned quickly. Beeswax could be added to make the candles burn longer. After each dipping, the wax was cooled. Melted wax had to be maintained at the right temperature. If too hot, it would not stick to the wick or other layers of wax; if too cold, the candle became lumpy.

Candle molds later eased the process. They were easier and quicker to use, producing a more uniform candle. A wick was placed in a tube mold that was then filled with hot wax and allowed to cool. In the early 1850s, whale

oil lamps, which offered a brighter light with less smoke, were also used, but the oil was more expensive having to be imported up river.

### Producing Clothing and Textiles

Settlers on the frontier had few stores or commercial services available to them. They had to be very self-reliant. Most learned before arriving in California, that if they needed something they would have to depend upon themselves for it. Clothing was worn until it could be mended no more. If not worn out it was altered to another style or re-sewn for someone smaller. When it could not be altered, it was often cut up for use in quilts or to make other items.

*Sewing clothes* - Most emigrants owned few clothes. Fabric sold by the yard (also called yardage), had to be purchased.<sup>303</sup> And, it was expensive! Sewing and fitting wearing apparel was time consuming, too. It had to be done by hand in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when time was precious. Other essential ranch or household tasks often would take priority for women, who produced most of the clothing. (The ready-to-wear clothing industry got a boost during the California Gold Rush in the wake of the mostly male gold seekers.) At the park, many docents choose to learn about the hand sewing skills of pioneer women, including decorative embroidery.

*Embroidering* - Embroidering a piece of linen or clothing added a decorative touch. Young girls practiced their sewing techniques and displayed their skills on simple projects like samplers, towels and fabric dolls.

Some frontier women produced woven woolen blankets, cloth or other goods. But, it was a long process and often messy!

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<sup>303</sup> As the frontier became settled, yardage could be purchased from stores in Red Bluff or from occasional riverboats, which sold goods to settlers along the riverbanks of the Sacramento River.

*Wool washing* - Newly sheared sheep's wool had to be washed in hot soapy water, then rinsed to remove grease (called lanolin), which could cause the fibers to rot. It had to be handled carefully. If too agitated, it could become felted, making it impossible for the fibers to be carded or spun.



Getting ready to clean the wool

*Carding* - Cleaned wool was combed through with wool "cards" covered in wire bristles. This process removed remaining dirt and other debris left after washing. The process also straightened the fibers of the wool for spinners to use more easily.

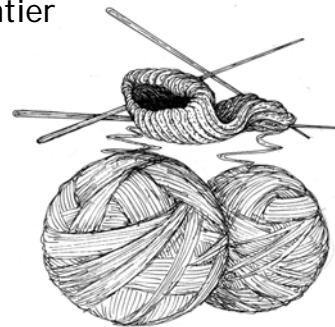
*Spinning* - Spinning pulled and twisted the fiber to a proper thickness that could be made useable for weaving or plied into yarn for knitting. The direction in which the yarn is spun is called *twist*. Yarns are characterized as S-twist or Z-

twist according to the direction of spinning. Two or more spun yarns could be twisted together or plied to form a thicker yarn. Yarns can be made of two, three, four, or more plies, or may be used as *singles* without plying. Park docents often teach visitors the art of spinning using a small drop spindle or a spinning wheel.

*Dyeing yarns and fabrics* - Dye colors were produced from bark, roots, flowers or other parts of plants or trees growing in the nearby garden, farm fields or forests. The yarn fibers were usually dyed before the fabric or garment was knitted or woven. It was a messy process.

*Weaving* - Taking the spun yarn and turning it into cloth was done on a loom. Weaving is a textile art in which two sets of yarns or threads, called the warp and the filling or weft, are interlaced with one another to form a fabric or cloth. Warp threads run lengthways through the cloth, while the weft runs across (from side to side). Cloth is woven on a loom that holds the warp threads in place, while the filling threads are woven through them. The manner in which the warp and filling threads interlace with each other is called the weave. Most looms were large and needed a considerable amount of floor area. Not all frontier families had the space or the special skills required to operate a loom.

*Knitting/crocheting* - Spun yarn, not used in weaving, was knitted or crocheted with two wooden needles into items, such as mittens, scarves, socks, baby clothing, and other warm coverings. Knitting did not require a loom or other large equipment, making it a valuable technique for pioneer women.



Drawing by John Allen



*Quilting* - From scraps of fabric—often left over from other projects, frontier women sewed quilts by hand. A quilt is composed of three layers: the top piece



A docent hand sews a quilt on a frame

made by stitching many scraps into a large, multi-color pattern; the middle section made of carded wool or cotton (called batting); and the bottom layer of fabric called a backing. All three are stitched together or “quilted” to keep the batting from shifting when used or washed. Girls as early as five years of age learned to quilt from their mothers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the time a girl was twelve, she would have had the experience of making a few quilts to use after she married and left home.

*Tatting* - Some docents demonstrate the now rare, fine art called tatting. It is a traditional way for making lace using a small shuttle to form many small knots that create lacework.

Pioneer women enjoyed having nice clothing. To embellish what otherwise might have been a plain day dress, they often would tat a fine collar or cuffs which could be added to the dress. Tatting was also done to embellish pillowcases and doll clothing.

## Grooming

Grooming methods and standards differed considerably from those of today. Pioneers did not wake up to a warm shower and clean clothes every morning. In the park’s programs, docents demonstrate or describe some of the early grooming activities.

*Bathing* - Personal bathing was not done daily. Baths may have been taken only monthly. With no indoor plumbing, buckets of water were hauled from the river or well, and then heated in a cauldron over a fire. The warm water was then poured into a larger tub. Men of the household usually bathed first. Women were next, followed by the children. Often the water was not changed between bathers, becoming quite dirty by the time the last person climbed into the tub. The old saying, “Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water,” probably originated from frontier living.

*Hair curling* - Pioneer women could be quite fashion conscious on the frontier. They tried to keep up with the latest grooming styles from Europe and the East. Whether in an urban setting or on the frontier, curling hair fashionably in the 1850s was a challenge. Hair could be “set” using rag curls. These were strips of fabric that the hair was wound around and then tied. Hair could also be curled by using a heated iron, essentially a forked tong heated in a fire.



A young boy experiences a close shave at Adobe Day

*Shaving* - In the 1850s and 1860s, long beards were in fashion for men, although some chose to be clean shaven. Those that shaved used a straight-edged razor. Its edge was kept sharp and clean with a leather strap. To prepare the face for a shave, a brush was wetted and then lathered with soap before being applied to the face. If they could afford it, and there was one nearby, men would visit a tonsorial parlor or barbershop for a good shave and haircut. Barber shops became gathering places for men.

Some barbers provided minor medical treatments—what we might consider first aid. The red and white of the barber pole symbolized the red of blood and the white of bandages, an emblem dating back to the middle ages. A few barbers offered baths.

*Getting dressed* - Men and women's clothing has changed considerably over the years. Participants in programs at the park are provided reproduction clothing to enhance their own and the visitors' experiences.

In the 1850s, women dressed in many more layers of heavy clothing than worn today. Undergarments included pantaloons, a chemise, multiple petticoats, and a stay or corset. A dress was then placed over these layers. A detachable collar and cuffs sometimes were added to embellish the outfit. Women donned bonnets when outside and, oftentimes, while inside wore a day cap or hair netting.

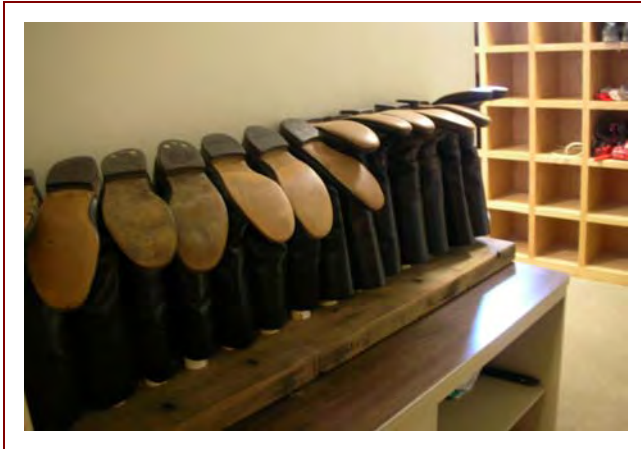


Clothing layers worn by women in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Drawings by John Allen

Men wore drawers and an undershirt or long johns followed by a pair of trousers, shirt, braces or suspenders (the trousers of the 1850s had no belt loops), and a vest with a collar. Jackets were donned as work attire, as well as for special

occasions, like visits to town. A cravat (a type of neckwear) and hat completed the outfit. Men always wore hats. Clothing was more formal than worn today.



Boots and hats are provided docents to suit nearly every interpretive occasion in the park



### Home Entertainment and Other Recreation

Far from sources of recreation available in cities, frontier families entertained themselves and friends through a variety of indoor and outdoor games and activities. Most made their own fun. Games were handmade from objects found on the ranch. They played traditional, simple string games such as Cat's Cradle and Hunt the Ring, as well as Hunker Down, Hassle the Hawser, and Teirza. Docents at the park demonstrate many of the traditional forms of recreation enjoyed on the frontier. Here are a few examples:

*Hide the Thimble* - Hide the Thimble is an example of an early pioneer game played with an everyday object. Players are sent out of a room while someone hides a thimble in a place where it can be seen. The players are then called back, and as each discover the thimble, sits down in silence. The individual who saw it first, hides it in the next round.

*Hunt the Ring* - A ring is threaded on a long piece of string with its ends joined together. Players standing in a closed circle, grasp the string with their palms down. The ring circulates from one to another, while a player in the center tries to find it. After its discovery, the one in whose hand it was found takes the place in the center of the circle.

Many blindfold games were played. They were known as "buff" games.

*Pointer's Buff* - One person is blindfolded with a stick placed in his/her hand. The other players then dance in a circle around the individual until he/she points the stick at one of the players. The person immediately grabs hold of it and the blindfolded individual asks a question that has to be answered in a disguised voice. The blindfolded one has three chances to guess who it is. If he or she cannot correctly identify the person, the game begins again. If correct, the other takes the place in the center and the game starts anew.

*Ruth and Jacob* - One player is blindfolded as the rest dance in a circle around him. When he points at someone, that person enters the ring and the blind man calls out "Ruth." She (or he) answers "Jacob" and moves about within the circle to elude the blind man, calling out "Jacob" as often as the blind man calls out "Ruth." This continues until "Ruth" is caught. Then "Ruth" takes the place of "Jacob."



Visitors make cornhusk dolls at Adobe Day.



A docent creates a wooden puzzle, as visitors look on.

*Pioneer toys* - Many frontier children's toys were handmade. Children themselves made some. Typical toys included horseshoes, stilts, and the game of Graces. Cornhusk, rag, and wool batting dolls were often made and cherished by young girls. Boys produced wooden tops, puzzles, stilts and other games. Docents at the park demonstrate or teach simple toy making skills to schoolchildren and other visitors.



The Ide Adobe Players perform period music during a special event.

*Music and Dancing* - Like today, settlers enjoyed music and dance. Although large gatherings of people in one place were not frequent, when they occurred, there was a great deal of news sharing, camaraderie, music, and dancing. Californians were a diverse lot, with people from all over the world and all walks of life. The music and dance of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century reflected this. Park staff and docents take pride in learning, performing and sharing music of the era with others.



*Games of chance* - Gambling was everywhere during the California Gold Rush, from the plush palaces of Sacramento and San Francisco to the hastily erected tent towns of the mining camps. It flourished on blankets, rough boards, wagon seats, and barrel heads—wherever there was the desire to play. It was even played among friends on ranches.



Are you feeling lucky? A docent explains a game during a special event.

A number of games were popular: Monte, Faro, Vingt-et-Un (Twenty-one), Lansquenet, Wheel of Fortune, Chuck-a-Luck (Sweat), Shut The Box, and Over And Under. Although California society was dominated by men, women occasionally would be found counting case in Faro games, dealing Lansquenet or Vingt-et-Un.

Miners, settlers, and merchants on the frontier—many away from home and family for the first time during the Gold Rush, were easy prey for professional gamblers.

Regardless of their backgrounds—pious or sinner, married or single, thoughtful or careless—thousands of unfortunate individuals lost their fortunes or lifesavings at the gaming.

### Frontier Schooling

There were few schools in rural areas away from towns and cities. It was challenging for parents on the frontier to provide a basic education for their children. At critical times, children were needed to ensure that all the chores considered necessary for survival on the frontier were done.

If there were no nearby schools, some parents taught their children to read and write at home. In instances, an educated adult in the community (like William B. Ide at one point in his life), provided services as the teacher. The family offered goods or services they could easily provide as compensation for the teacher. At the park today, high school students help to teach grade school students in the traditional areas of learning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Special Events*

Each year, many quality special events and programs are offered to the public at William B. Ide Adobe SHP. They enrich park experiences and help to convey in a three-dimensional understanding of the frontier past. The activities and demonstrations reflect ones traditionally practiced in the mid 1800s. Many offer hands-on learning focused on the daily life of people in frontier California. An overview of park events follows.

*Adobe Day* - Each year the park's biggest event is Adobe Day. This event is traditionally held the third Saturday in August, from Noon until 4:00 p.m. 2009



Adobe Day each August brings crowds of interested visitors from near and far.

marked the event's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This special day offers living history and a wide variety of hands-on activities. They may include candle making, adobe brick making, blacksmithing, traditional woodworking, vignettes on attitudes of the 1850s, and many others. Home baked breads, jerky from the park's smokehouse and other period refreshments are produced in the kitchen of the Adobe House. Live music of the Gold Rush era is provided by the Ide Adobe Players.



The annual Horseshoe Pitchers Contest.

*Adobe Ferry Champion Horseshoe Pitchers Contest* - A different approach to making "sports history" is represented by the Adobe Ferry Champion Horseshoe Pitchers Contest. This event is held the second Saturday in October, starting at 10:00 a.m. and continuing until a winner is determined.

The contest is a double-elimination doubles tournament, rekindling the excitement of a Gold Rush pitch-off. Rules of the 1850s are used and

number 8 draft shoes are "straight from the hoof." Participants wear period attire provided by the park, and the champions are awarded gold-filled pocket watches or similar prizes.

*Pioneer Christmas Party* - Early Christmas celebrations of the North Valley are re-created for the Pioneer Christmas Party. This event is held the third Saturday in December, from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Its centerpiece is a tree traditionally trimmed with fruit, nuts, sweetmeats and strings of popcorn. Featured activities include tin-punching, toy making, cookie decorating and caroling. Sweetmeats and cookies are served along with wassail and hot cider.

*Pioneer Craft Demonstrations* - A wide variety of Gold Rush-era crafts are demonstrated, usually by interpreters wearing period attire in June, July and

August, and occasionally on weekends from September through May. Visitors are encouraged to try their hand at crafts, which often include quilting, period woodworking, blacksmithing, spinning, candle making and a wide variety of other pioneer activities. Demonstrations are dependent upon park staffing.



Students participating in the ESP and ELP programs have the use of period-appropriate clothing for their activities.

*Life in the 1850s* - "Life in the 1850s," an environmental studies program (ESP) at the park, targets school grades 4 - 6, recapturing for students a day in the lives of Northern California's early pioneers. Programs are held most Tuesdays and Thursdays from late February through May. Children spend the entire day at the park immersed in rope making, candle making, blacksmithing, adobe brick making, woodworking, "schooling," quilting, pioneer games and cooking in the Adobe House's kitchen. Docents from Salisbury and Red Bluff High schools serve as group leaders.

*Mini-ESPs/Group Tours* - Mini-ESPs are shortened programs of up to two hours containing elements of the *Life in the 1850s* ESP. They include a tour and one or more pioneer activities. Conventional group tours and first person tours are also offered. These are currently available by advanced arrangement depending upon staffing.

### *Volunteers in the Park*

William B. Ide Adobe SHP involves volunteers, ranging in age from toddlers to octogenarians. Each volunteer commits from one day to over 200 hours a year. They assist in everything from offering interpretive programming and park cleanup to washing laundry and ordering costumes.

Teenagers make up a majority of the park volunteers. As an elective in their history classes, students from both Salisbury and Red Bluff high schools may become Ide Adobe docents. The park traditionally hosts approximately sixty-five high school volunteers each year. After attending more than forty hours of training in area history, period clothing, speech and manners, as well as pioneer crafts and leadership skills, they present the park's environmental studies program (ESP), *Life in the 1850s*. They also volunteer at the park, helping with other interpretive programs on and off-site, special events, general housekeeping and other activities, as needed.



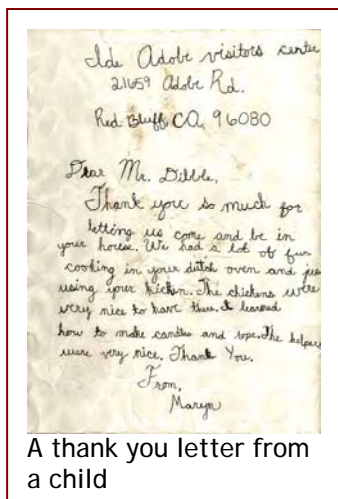
Other trained docents are utilized in sewing and maintaining period costumes, keeping open the Visitor Center and Adobe House, wood shop and blacksmith shop, as well as setting up and cleaning after school programs and ESPs. Some offer to share their specialized skills as period woodworkers, blacksmiths, spinners, quilters and Dutch oven cooks, while others come to learn these skills. Docents are especially helpful in the planning, training, development and presentation of all the park's special events.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:

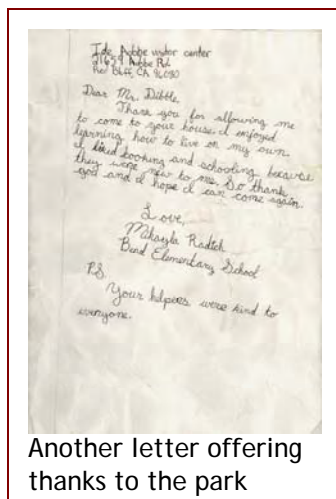
Docents bring the William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park to life. They should be featured prominently in this exhibit area. A large photomural of the Adobe Ranch buildings coming to life during Adobe Day (or another special event during the year) will set the scene. This image should be produced as a backdrop for large (life-sized or close to that) two-dimensional cutouts of docents dressed in period attire performing activities in the park. Placed on a platform, the 2-D figures should have a similar look and feel to the other 2-D figures used in Areas 1 and 3.

A touch screen monitor on the platform will enable visitors to view several video clips highlighting the park's annual special events—Adobe Day, the Adobe Ferry Champion Horseshoe Pitchers Contest, Pioneer Christmas Party and some of the Pioneer Craft Demonstrations, as well as other programs offered, such as the “Life in the 1850s” educational activities provided for school children. Several of the video segments will focus on people dressed in period attire performing typical tasks demonstrated at the park. They may include, among others:

- Log sawing
- Making or repairing a tool
- Using a shaving horse
- Stringing a rope bed or stuffing ticking churning butter
- Quilting
- Spinning
- Making Toys



A thank you letter from a child



Another letter offering thanks to the park

Music in the video's background will be performed by the Ide Adobe Players. (The Ide Adobe Players' *Mining is a Hard Kind of Labor* CD will be a resource for the videos.) As with all other videos in the Visitor Center, voices in the videos will be captioned.

Part of the exhibit space should enable the staff to highlight docents or outstanding students in the



park's programs as a rotating feature. This may involve photographs and short interviews of the individuals being honored. A few of the letters written by schoolchildren after their experiences in the park's ESP programs also should be featured.

Text will promote and encourage visitors to become a volunteer in the park. Examples of craftwork created by park docents will also be featured. These might include samples of carpentry, blacksmithing products, needlework, handmade toys, etc.

#### **Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:**

Existing film footage and photographs of park activities and special events may be available, but more may be needed to satisfy this exhibit station. Photographs of schoolchildren and docents in the park participating in programs will also need written releases.

A number of thank you notes and pictures drawn by children who have attended school programs in the past are in the park's files and should be considered for use in the exhibit.

Staff should be consulted on the reproduction objects made by volunteers for use as display items.

## Area 8: Space for Changing Exhibits

Space Allocation: 5%

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about new acquisitions, events and programs, research, and other news involving William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park.
- Become more acquainted with selected items/topics depicted in permanent exhibits.
- Experience something new in the Visitor Center upon return visits.

### Background Information:

As much as the park looks backwards in time for its interpretive focus, often there is a need to present new research or recently acquired artifacts or forthcoming events and programs. This exhibit area, while not large, will offer park staff the opportunity to showcase information, as well as objects. It is envisioned as a changing display area, drawing attention to new acquisitions, promoting new programs, presenting ongoing research, highlighting historical events, promoting contributions of California's ethnic and cultural groups, and providing a more in-depth exploration of ideas and events presented in the permanent exhibits of the Visitor Center. Having a place to share this information with visitors, as well as docents, is vital.

The exhibit case will enable new materials to be presented on a regular basis. It might also allow park staff, college interns, docents, volunteers and others the regular opportunity to develop a series of high quality changing displays. It might also showcase collaborative partnerships featuring local resources and events.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:

The space, while small, should offer maximum flexibility. Criteria for the exhibit space are described below. It must:

- Be able to accommodate the display of both flat and three-dimensional objects.
- Offer flexibility for a variety of sizes and shapes of exhibit materials.
- Provide security and protection for displayed items.
- Use lighting that illuminates, but does not harm the materials on display.
- Allow visitors the possibility of getting close to the objects on exhibit.
- Be accessible in height for park visitors.
- Offer relative ease for opening and changing its contents.

## Area 9: Contact Counter & Park Interpretive Sales Area

Space Allocation: As indicated on below on map

### Interpretive Objectives:

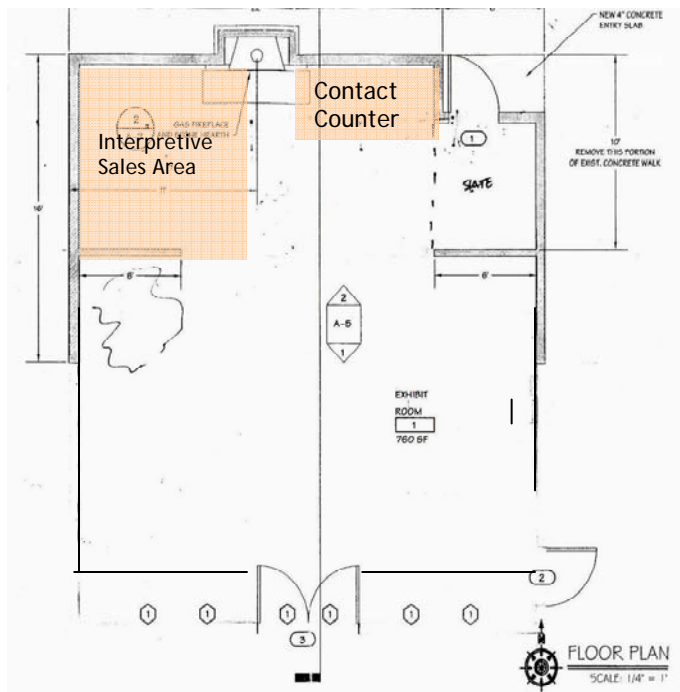
Visitors will:

- Have a quality experience from their initial contact with staff at the Visitor Center.
- Know where to find information and how to begin their park experience.
- See a contact counter and sales area that complements the exhibits.
- Find a space that encourages their thoughtful exploration of the park themes through other interpretive media available for sale in the park Visitor Center.

### Background Information:

Upon their arrival inside the Visitor Center, it should be obvious to visitors where they can seek information and purchase admission to the park. Entry areas are sensitive, as they usually are good indicators of the experiences to follow. If the initial view is not inviting, visitors may prefer to leave before touring the facilities. Therefore, the contact counter and the interpretive sales area must reflect the same thoughtful

design and quality of craftsmanship that is employed in the interpretive exhibits. They should complement one another.



### Interpretive Design Concepts:

The contact counter, which will also handle sales transactions, should visually flow into the interpretive sales area tucked into the alcove area along the north wall and to the east of the fireplace (see floor plan to the left). The counter should be designed to maximize working space behind it for staff people. Its design will allow for a low profile, modern cash register that does not impede the initial view of staff by visitors

upon entering the building. The counter should include a locked glass cabinet, where valuable or delicate interpretive sales items may be displayed.

The interpretive sales space, while small, will operate with maximum display flexibility. Shelving should be moveable. Back stock storage for books and other interpretive sales items will be kept low, beneath the shelving in securable cabinets.

Criteria for the contact counter and interpretive sales area are described below. It must:

- Accommodate the display of both flat and three-dimensional sales objects in a variety of sizes and shapes.
- Provide security and protection for some displayed and stored items.
- Offer relative ease when opening, removing and changing cabinet contents.
- Use lighting that illuminates, but does not harm the materials on display.
- Be accessible in height for park visitors.

Consideration may be given to remodeling and adapting the existing Visitor Center contact counter cabinet, if it fits the space and can be made to complement the new interpretive exhibits. However, using the existing counter is not required.



The existing Visitor Center contact counter now used for admission and interpretive sales.



**WILLIAM B. IDE ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK  
VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

**APPENDICES**

- **The Way to California – Quotations** 183
- **William B. Ide’s Views of the Overland Journey, 1845** 197
- **Alfred Walton Biographical Notes** 203
- **Newspaper Account Summaries of the Court Case in the  
Matter of the State of California vs. George Sutton** 207



## ● The Way to California – Quotations

Quotations from first-hand accounts of the journeys to California are presented here to support the interpretation of Exhibit Area 2: The Way to California. They are broadly organized by the categories listed below with sources indicated for each.

Getting Started  
On the Trail  
Dangers and Mishaps  
Sickness and Death  
Entertainment  
Landmarks along the Trail  
Ocean Travel

### Getting Started

No one of the party knew anything about mountaineering and scarcely anyone had ever been into the Indian Territory, yet a large majority felt that we were fully competent to go anywhere no matter what the difficulties might be or how numerous and warlike the Indians.

*John Bidwell, 1841*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pp. 79-80.

Our ignorance of the route was complete. We knew that California lay west, and that was the extent of our knowledge. Some of the maps consulted, supposed of course to be correct, showed a lake in the vicinity of where Salt Lake now is; it was represented as a long lake, three or four hundred miles in extent, narrow and with two outlets, both running into the Pacific Ocean, either apparently larger than the Mississippi River.

*John Bidwell*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pg. 102.

Independence, Missouri: There were 250 wagons in rendezvous at Independence, Missouri, ready to start for California on April 1, 1846. In

order to guard against Indian raids we organized into companies of 25 to 50 wagons, each company electing its own captain... We aimed to travel 12 miles each day stopping when a good camping place was found. There were a great many buffaloes on the Plains at that time. We would hardly ever be out of sight of a band of from 100 to 1000 of the magnificent animals.

*David Campbell, 1846*

*Account of Travels West in 1846* from Campbell's articles in *The Weekly Review* (Porterville, CA) published July 14, 18 and 21, 1899 and reprinted in 1934 book by Ina H Steiner, *Porterville Genealogies*, pp. 304-310. <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and <http://www.cagenweb.com/cpl/bios2.htm>

St. Joseph, Missouri: Father & mother went into St. Joseph's bought another tent, heavy canvas for the boys and men to sleep in, using the other tent for an eating place. They also bought a small sheet iron stove, cut a hole in the tent for the pipe, then when it was raining, we could warm up a pot of beans, make a kettle of soup or a pot of coffee, sometimes a pot of mush.

*Mary Hite, age 13½, 1853*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992

## On the Trail

Mud: Saturday morning, though the weather still continued cloudy, we attempted to proceed, but the rain had softened the ground so much that we found ourselves "stuck" almost every half mile. After a hard day's work we succeeded in reaching the little town of Tipton, only three miles from where we started in the morning.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, July 4, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

Herds of Buffalo: I think I can truly say that I saw in that region [Platte River] in one day more buffaloes than I have seen of cattle in all my life. I have seen the plain black with them for several days' journey as far as they eye could reach. They seemed to be coming northward continually from the distant plains to the Platte to get water, and would plunge in

and swim across by the thousands—so numerous were they that they changed not only the color of the water, but its taste, until it was unfit to drink; but we had to use it.

*John Bidwell*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pg. 107.

Abandoned Goods: Letters were received in this city yesterday from emigrating parties to California, dated as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> of May... These letters also speak of the reckless conduct of some of the emigrants in throwing away their double and single trees, and other necessary conveniences for all traveling. Some have left large wagons on the road-side, with cards on them intimating that those who came after may take them, if they wanted them. So eager are they to get along, that all surplus weight—stoves, pots, boxes, tobacco, bacon, &c., may be found scattered along the road, in the general rush towards the end of their journey. Poor fellows! They may want the provisions before they reach California.

June 18, 1849, *Cleveland Plains Dealer*.

Reproduced in *To the Golden Shore: America goes to California—1849.* Ed., Peter Browning. Lafayette, Calif.: Great Wet Books, 1995. P.245

“Lone Tree”: ...for several days we went on, with nothing special to mark our progress, except passing the “Lone Tree,” which I made into an event to myself, by straining my eyes to get the first glimpse of it, watching its change from the first dim uncertainty, till it stood distinct in the distance, awaiting our approach; then mentally holding converse with it, as I drew near; questioning how it felt, standing there all alone, not one of its kindred within sight? How long it had thus stood? What strange cause had led to its life of isolation? Had the thousands of human beings who had passed it before us this season, cheered its old lone heart as their voices vibrated among its branches? Had any of them been cheered by observing its greenness, or resting in its shade?

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, June 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977. Pg. 21.



Council Bluffs waiting to cross the Missouri: And, where bushes, trees or logs formed partial enclosures, a kitchen or sitting room quite easily suggested itself to a feminine heart, yearning for home. The few women who caught glimpses of each other, or, in some cases, were thrown nearer together in this motley gathering were in general very kind to each other, and to each other's children.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

Sublett's Cutoff (Green River), Wyoming: We are much wearied by the toils & fatigues of the long journey, and the immense numbers of emigrants who are upon the road makes it doubly tiresome from the fact that they are constantly in each others' way and more particularly at the crossing of rivers and difficult places on the road; here at this time are two or three hundred wagons with their accompanying teams and men, and the ground is covered with a coat of light dust two inches in depth which the wind is constantly carrying to and from, whilst the sun is pouring down his hottest rays upon us, and the wonder is that some of us only and not all of us are sick.

*Alexander Ramsay, July 4, 1849*

*The California Trail* by George R. Stewart. Lincoln, Neb.: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press.

Desert Crossing: The hot earth scorched our feet; the grayish dust hung about us like a cloud, making our eyes red, and tongues parched, and our thousand bruises and scratches smart like burns. The road was lined with the skeletons of the poor beasts who had died in the struggle. Sometimes we found the bones of men bleaching beside their broken-down and abandoned wagons. The buzzards and coyotes, driven away by our presence from their horrible feasting, hovered just out of reach.

*Luzena Stanley Wilson, 1849*

*My Checkered Life: Luzena Stanley Wilson in Early California* by Fern L. Henry. With reprint of Luzena Stanley Wilson: '49er published by Eucalyptus Press, 1937. Carl Mautz Publishing, 2003. P. 27.

Desert - Truckee Route: When we got to the 'sink' of this river we found that we had a desert of 35 miles to cross without water or grass. We started in the evening and traveled all night reaching the Truckee river the next evening...We traveled down the river for two days and crossed and recrossed it 25 times... When we came to the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mts. It looked as though we could not get any further; but as we had no time to lose we doubled-teamed and took one wagon at a time up to the summit.

*David Campbell, 1846*

*Account of Travels West in 1846* from Campbell's articles in *The Weekly Review* (Porterville, CA) published July 14, 18 and 21, 1899 and reprinted in 1934 book by Ina H Steiner, *Porterville Genealogies*, pp. 304-310. <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and <http://www.cagenweb.com/cpl/bios2.htm>

Death Valley, California: Many accounts have been given to the world as to the origin of the name [Death Valley] and by whom it was thus first designated but ours were the first visible footsteps, and we the party which named it the saddest and most dreadful name that came to us first from its memories.

*William Lewis Manly, November 1849*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992

## **Dangers and Mishaps**

Buffalo Stampede: One night when we were camped on the South Fork of the Platte they [buffalo] came in such droves that we had to sit up and fire guns and make what fires we could to keep them from running over us and trampling us into the dust. We were obliged to go out some distance from camp to turn them: Captain Fitzpatrick told us that if we did not do this the buffaloes in front could not turn aside for the pressure of those behind. We could hear them thundering all night long; the ground fairly trembled with vast approaching bands; and if they had not been diverted, wagons, animals, and emigrants would have been trodden under their feet. One cannot nowadays describe the rush and wildness of the thing.

*John Bidwell*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pp. 107.

Storms: I recall but one real storm. It was on the Platte River in Nebraska. We were in camp on the bank of the river when it came on. The wind blew a hurricane! Thunder roared and lightening flashed!... Every tent was blown down. No one was seriously hurt, though a babe was narrowly missed by a falling tent pole... Our camp belongings were blown helter skelter over the country around about and our stock was stampeded 'till it took all the next day to get them rounded up...

*Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Munkers Estes, 1846*

*Crossing the Plains in 1846* as told by Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Munkers Estes in 1916. <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html>  
[http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cchouk/oregon\\_trail/crossing/munkers.htm](http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cchouk/oregon_trail/crossing/munkers.htm)

Winds: ...some time in the night the wind arose to a hericane direct from the north and we had Keep awake and hold on to our blankets and robes to keep them from flying away in the morning we gathered a large pile of dry pine logs and fixed up our blankets against the wind but the back current brought the smoke and ashes into our faces in fifteen or twenty minuets after taking down our Screen our fire blew intirely away and left the wood but no fire we then cleared away the snow under the lea of a clump of willows fixed ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit laid to sleep the wind still blowing all day and night without abatement... [NOTE: spelling and breaks in sentence quoted exactly as written in the source]

*James Clyman*

*Narrative, by James Clyman.* Original in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/clyman.html>

Dust on the Lassen Route: The alkali dust of this territory was suffocating, irritating our throats and clouds of it often blinded us. The mirages tantalized us; the water was unfit to drink or to use in any way; animals often perished or were so overcome by heat and exhaustion that they had to be abandoned, or in case of human hunger, the poor jaded creatures were killed and eaten...

*Catherine Haun, 1849*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Crossing the Sierra Nevada range: One old man gave out, and we had to threaten to shoot him before he would attempt to descend the mountains. At one place four pack animals fell over a bluff, and they went so far that we never attempted to recover the packs. We were then out of provisions, having killed and eaten all our cattle. I walked barefooted until my feet were blistered. We lived on roasted acorns for two days.

*Nancy Kelsey*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pg. 198.

Quicksand: The Platte was the first great water-course we crossed. It is a peculiar, wide, shallow stream, with a quicksand bed...The water poured into the wagon in spite of our precautions and floated off some of our few movables; but we landed safely on the other side, and turned to see the team behind us stop in mid-stream. The frantic driver shouted, whipped, belabored the stubborn animals in vain, and the treacherous sand gave way under their feet. They sank slowly, gradually, but surely...In a little while the broad South Platte swept on its way, sunny, sparkling, placid, without a ripple to mark where a lonely man parted with all his fortune.

*Luzena Stanley Wilson, 1849*

Her Memoirs as Taken Down by her Daughter in 1881.  
<http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html>  
<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/three/luzena.htm>

Accidents: A few casualties have occurred on the road—a team ran away, (not in our train,) which passed over the body of the teamster and killed him. Another person was accidentally shot dead by the discharge of a rifle; several have been wounded by carelessness with revolvers, and some two or three have died from sickness.

*A.W. Wright, June 16, 1849*

Letter reprinted in *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Reproduced in *To the Golden Shore: America goes to California—1849*. Ed. Peter Browning. Lafayette, Calif.: Great Wet Books, 1995. P.245

Stampeding Cattle: The cattle must have been frightened by the flash of lightning. Those [cattle] near the entrance to the corral instinctively tried to escape, others near, pressed upon them, the panic grew, till, in their frantic struggles, they overturned the two chained wagons... There were some unimportant injuries done to both the wagons and to some of their contents; but the grand calamity was the breaking of three wheels... the Captain of the company came near, and, after gazing a moment in speechless consternation, exclaimed, "Three wheels broke all to smash, and fifty miles from timber!" It was true, and the fact was a hard one, yet, strange elasticity of mind, we laughed heartily at the grotesque speech.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, June 20, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977. Pg. 20.

## Sickness and Death

Trailside Burials: Everything was at first weird and strange in those days, but custom made us regard the most unnatural events as usual. I remember even yet with a shiver first time I saw a man buried without the formality of a funeral and the ceremony of coffining. We were sitting by the camp fire, eating breakfast, when I saw two men digging and watched them with interest, never dreaming their melancholy object until I saw them bear from their tent the body of their comrade, wrapped in a soiled gray blanket, and lay it on the ground. Ten minutes later the soil was asleep in the silent wilderness, with only the winds, the owls, and coyotes to chant a dirge.

*Luzena Stanley Wilson, 1849*

*My Checkered Life: Luzena Stanley Wilson in Early California* by Fern L. Henry. With reprint of Luzena Stanley Wilson: '49er published by Eucalyptus Press, 1937. Carl Mautz Publishing, 2003. P. 14.

There were nine of us children, ranging from four years to my eldest sister about 19. My mother kept the two youngest with her always in 'Mother's wagon.' Her health was not very good... and being frail and weary with the long journey, she fell a victim to the cholera, so



prevalent that year on the plains, leaving her sorrowing family to grieve for her... The rolling hills were ablaze with beautiful wild roses—it was the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, and we heaped and covered mother’s grave with the roses so the cruel stones were hid from view.

*Harriet Palmer, 1852*

*Crossing the Great Plains by Ox-Wagon by Harriet Palmer.* The Oregon Trail. <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and <http://www.iisu.edu/~trinmich/00.ar.palmer.html>

## Entertainment

The most pleasant part of the trip across the plains in '49-'50 was around the camp-fire. Supper over, dishes and pots out of the way, we would gather around the camp-fire and relate the scenes of the day, and spin long yarns. Some played the violin, others the accordion. A few would play cards, while the young men would sing their favorite California songs... 'O Susanna, Don't you cry for me, I'm going to California, some gold dust for to see.'

*George W. Thissell*

*Crossing the Plains in '49* by G.W. Thissell, Oakland, Calif., 1903. Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing, 2008.

In the afternoon we halted to celebrate the day. In one tent, a few gathered for a dance; in another several of us old fashioned people enjoyed a cheerful 'sing'.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, July 4, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

## Landmarks along the Trail

Council Bluffs, Iowa: Here we found a city of wagons, some of which had been there many days waiting their turn to cross the great river. But we were consoled by being assured that the ferrymen were working as fast as possible, and that probably in a week or so, all now camped ready for crossing, would be over the Missouri.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, June 4, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

Fort Kearney: All pass through Fort Kearney...It is a military post & quite a stirring place the government built up. The residences of the officers are very fine, some small framed building, others built of sod or turf laid up like brick, with windows & doors... We went into the register office & I looked over the names of those who had passed before us. Some 20,000 men, 6,000 women, besides cattle & horses, mules & sheep to almost any amount.

*Mary Bailey, 1852*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Chimney Rock, Nebraska: On the morning of July 4<sup>th</sup> we passed some remarkable rocks called Ancient Bluff ruins (probably Court House Rock) and came within sight of Chimney Rock, an immense natural tower visible for many miles, before, and after, we passed it.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

Chimney Rock, Nebraska: Camped opposite Chimney Rock... Here the scenery is remarkable, interesting and romantic. It produces an impression as if we were bordering on a large and antiquated city.

*Richard Ballantyne, age 15, July 1848*

*Journal of Richard Ballantyne, 1847-1848*. 2 Vols. 15 July 1848, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [microfilm], 2:15.  
[http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary/pioneer/20\\_Chimney\\_Rock.html](http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary/pioneer/20_Chimney_Rock.html)

Scott's Bluff, Nebraska: Passed Bluff Ruins, most beautiful, too. I made a rough draft then I was so charmed that I could not gaze enough. Made our noon halt opposite Scott's Bluff, altogether the most symmetrical in

form and the most stupendous in size of any we have yet seen. One of them is close in its resemblance to the dome of the Capitol at Washington.

*Mariett Cummings, 1852*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Independence Rock, Wyoming: May the 26<sup>th</sup>, 1850. We were at the Rock Independence resting are mules as it was the saboth day, The Rock Independence is a very Larg Rock with, perhaps 5 Thousand or more names on it. I took a Cold Chisel and hatchet then Engraved my name on the south side, as it is such a noted Place for names to stand For Ever. [NOTE: spelling and language quoted exactly as written in diary]

*John App, 1850*

*John App Diary (1850)*, Larry App, Bristol, Indiana, June 1995.  
<http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and  
<http://www.skyenet.net/~larrya/jal850.htm>

Devil's Gate, Wyoming: It is a grand sight! Surely worth the whole distance of travel. The 'Sweetwater' rushes through an opening in the rock, the walls on each side rising several hundred feet perpendicularly, and as though driven in two by some great convulsion of nature...

*Lucy Cooke, 1852*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

South Pass, Wyoming: Ate luncheon on the south pass of the Rocky mountains. Altitude seven thousand, four hundred feet, but the ascent is so gradual, that one scarcely knows when one is at the summit. The headwaters of the streams flowing eastward to the Mississippi and those flowing westward to the Pacific are but a few feet apart.

*Eliza Ann McAuley, 1852*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

North Platte River crossing: In strange contrast was the North Platte which we next crossed, a boiling, seething, turbulent stream, which foamed and whirled as if enraged at the imprisoning banks. Two days we spent at its edge, devising ways and means. Finally huge sycamore trees were felled and pinned with wooden pins into the semblance of a raft, on which we were floated across where an eddy in the current touched the opposite banks.

*Luzena Stanley Wilson, 1849*

Her Memoirs as Taken Down by her Daughter in 1881.

<http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and

<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/three/luzena.htm>

Salt Lake City, Utah: For the last 10 days there has been a great deal of dissatisfaction in our company & private talk about a division at Salt Lake which I have no doubt will be done from the fact of some having a severe quarrel this evening immediately after arriving in camp—Some wished a division here but did not get it—I am as anxious as any for a division thinking it will benefit all—In fact some are so disagreeable & insulting that I will go no further with them.

*Cyrus Phillips, July 3, 1852*

Cyrus Phillips Pp 53, 54. <http://overlandtrails.lib.byu.edu/ctrail.html>

Platte River tributary: We now moved over a low ridge and Struck on Sweet Water Since ascertained to be a tributary of the Platte river it was cold and clear the evening that we encamped on Sweet water many of South sides of the hills were bare of Snow Buffalo scarce and rations limited... [NOTE: spelling and breaks in sentence quoted exactly as written in the source]

*James Clyman*

*Narrative, by James Clyman.* Original in the State Historical Society of

Wisconsin <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and

<http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/clyman.html>

Soda Springs, Idaho: The soda Springs are on the right of the road and boil up from the ground in many places, forming mounds of earth with a little cup or hollow on the top. Some of the mounds are several feet in height, the water bubbling over the top on all sides. By some they are called Beer Springs, from their peculiar taste.

*Margaret Fink, 1850*

*Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & Letters from the Western Trails* by Kenneth L. Holmes, David Duniway, and Lillian Schlissel. University of Nebraska Press, 1995. Pg. 114.

Fort Hall, Idaho: When we arrived at Fort Hall we found about 500 Indians of the Flathead tribe who had come in to trade. They had buffalo hides and deer skins and would pay any price for beads and tobacco. We bought some buffalo robes and I bought a horse for five pounds of tobacco and a pound of beads. I afterwards sold this horse to the Government for \$50.00. We found this tribe of Indians very friendly.

*David Campbell, 1846*

*Sketch of Hardships Endured by Those Who Crossed The Plains in '46.* Written for the Review by David Campbell of Porterville, Cal.  
<http://lib-operations.sonoma.edu/fin/aaa-0712.html>

Fort Bridger, Wyoming: August 12 Still at Fort Bridger. Here we have a good time for washing, which we women deem a great privilege.

*Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, 1847*

[http://www.theragens.com/fifty\\_years/fifty\\_years\\_in\\_oregon\\_18-19.htm](http://www.theragens.com/fifty_years/fifty_years_in_oregon_18-19.htm)

Raft River, Idaho: We followed up the Raft River, as we supposed it to be, this forenoon past a small spring on the side of the mountain and came to where Hudspeth's Cut-Off came into this road again. The cut-off took out soon after we left Beer Springs; those who took it have not gained very much on us. The road today has been tolerable and we have not been troubled so much with dust. This afternoon the wind was blown very hard and the dust consequently bad in proportion to the wind.

*Israel Hale, 1849*

*The Great Western Migration to the Gold Fields of California, 1849-1850* by Robert J. Willoughby, published by McFarland, 2003. Pg. 202.

Humboldt River, Nevada: Away from the river, the soil is hard and dry, void of any vegetation except sage-brush... Much of the level land of this valley is bare, from the salt and alkali in it... The dust is intolerable.



Many wear silk handkerchiefs over their faces; others wear goggles. It is a strange-looking army.

*Margaret Frink, 1850*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

## Ocean Travel

Heavy Seas: We passed Cape Pillow on Monday April 9, 2 A.M., with a heavy gale of wind and an awful sea, the ship pitching very much; the passengers generally, fore-and-aft, were much frightened. At 4 A.M. she pitched her head clear under, when the bolt which holds the bobstay was drawn and the bowsprit carried short off by the head. I have been at sea, off-and-on, twenty years, and I assure you I never saw it blow harder, nor a worse cross sea on.

*New York Tribune correspondent, April 1849*

Printed in the June 19, 1849 *Philadelphia Public Ledger and Daily Transcript*. Reproduced in *To the Golden Shore: America goes to California—1849*. Ed. Peter Browning. Lafayette, Calif.: Great Wet Books, 1995. P.247.

On Board Ship: Our whole passage, a period of 95 days, was the most unpleasant imaginable, and all were glad when it terminated. Our food was all of the most wretched character, and full of worms, and for thirteen days we were on a very short allowance of this. They were obliged to put into Monterey for water, wood, and provisions, where we remained six days; but as I was confined below, I did not see the town...

*Cleveland Plains Dealer* Correspondent, September 29, 1849

Reprinted on December 13, 1849 by the *Cleveland Plains Dealer*.  
Reproduced in *To the Golden Shore: America goes to California—1849*.  
Ed. Peter Browning. Lafayette, Calif.: Great Wet Books, 1995. P.400.

## ● William B. Ide's Views of the Overland Journey, 1845

William B. Ide wrote the following descriptions for the *Sangamon Journal* published on June 5, 1845. Ide was the newspaper's "Oregon Correspondent."

My teams, waggons, cattle, and all concerned, have stood the trip, so far, (all things considered) better than I expected. My cattle are thriving. I kill all my calves.

The present emigrating party consists of about five hundred wagons—one hundred and seven are in our company—thirty-five are a few miles ahead, and some seventy are a few days behind. But it is impossible to speak definitely as regards the number of teams. The number of souls is said to be between six and seven thousand. The number of cattle is immense—exceeding in all probability ten thousand head. Our teams, horses, mules ponies, cattle and waggons, stretched out in procession some three miles in length on the broad prairies, present a grand spectacle. The Caw Indians flock around us like crows. Their business is to 'swap' ostensibly, but in reality it is begging and stealing. More or less cattle are stolen every night. These Indians are great cowards, poor and faithless. They meet you with an air of courtesy, extend the hand of friendship in graceful waving circles to all, and shake hands most heartily with any one of the company, who notices them most; and the next business is 'swap', 'swap.' In this traffic the supplying of their present want is the standard value they attach to their money. To all appearances these Indians are in a wretched, starving, condition.

Ide described the scenery for those back East who might be contemplating the journey.

The soil and face of the country from Independence to the Nebraska river, is equal in point of beauty and fertillity [sic] to any I have seen. Timber is very scarce. Small groves, however, of an excellent quality, are found along the streams. The prairies are beautifully rolling—the soil rich and deep. The Nebraska river has shallow banks, and its bottom is quick-sand. The creeks which we have crossed, however, that empty into the Nebraska, have deep banks and muddy bottoms—on some the soil is more than fifteen feet in depth. These deep channels and muddy bottoms, have given us much trouble. Quite a number of cattle in crossing them, got mired, and sometimes we have had to haul from fifteen to twenty out by their horns.

Gentlemen and ladies, too, of liberal minds and means are in the midst of our social circle. Finally, there is something ennobling in the very idea of

an expedition so fraught with consequences, so self-devoting in its effect. No narrow-minded soul is fit for Oregon. If such embark, discord and confusion follow—they will shrink from the undertaking and escape to the States. But those whose minds are congenial to the enterprise, present their shoulders to its hardships, their breasts to its dangers, and their means and talents to the accomplishment of its purposes, will, I doubt not, be well rewarded.

I have written this in a great hurry. The country as we advance becomes more interesting, and in my next I hope to be able to give more information in regard to '*fitting out*' I fear we have more cattle than we can protect. We are now obliged to have one hand to every twelve head.

The emigrants are still in good health and spirits.

Respectfully yours, W.B. Ide<sup>212</sup>

*Best Waggons.* — Strong two horse waggons capable of bearing three thousand pounds on common roads, wide track, block tongue, coupled twenty inches back of the forward axle, body 15 to 18 feet long, straight: bed 14 to 16 inches high in the clear—2 partitions across 18 inches each way from the middle (having a space for the ladies Parlors) the two ends covered with half inch linn plank, the alternate plank hung on butt hinges, and supported on a slight stringer passing from the hind gate to one of the partitions. Under these decks pack your provisions, either in bags or boxes—if in boxes, let the deck form the covers, resting on each side at the sides of the bed—at the top of the bed, let the sides project 6 inches, above which, put side boards 18 inches wide, one half inch thick, riveted to ten standards on each side 4 ½ feet high, leaving the middle space open for a door on each side: on the top of each pair of standards rivet an elliptic to bow, rising 8 inches higher than the standards (making the inside of the bed 5 feet two inches high)—at the same time rivet a strip of half inch plank 3 inches wide firmly to the top of the standards on each side—leaving an open space of 15 or 18 inches wide between the side boards and said 3 inch strips, which may be stopped by a curtain, nailed to the outside of the strip above, and buttoned to the outside of the board below- on the center of the bow rivet a slender ridgepole, let the ends boards of gates be firmly fixed and extended from the under side of the bottom plank of the bed to top of the side boards, so tight as to exclude rain in a driving storm; let the top be covered with Osnaburg [coarse, cotton fabric] drawn on as tight as may be, and sized and painted with 3 coats of oil paint—the curtains and doors to be made of the same, and sized and painted one coat; the center support underneath the bed may be 4 or 5 inches wide, and

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<sup>212</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 10.

extend 6 or 8 inches from the sides of the bed, to form a step, another iron step between it and the ground, will make it convenient for ladies to descend to and from the parlor. The inside upon the deck, may be fitted with shelves and racks to suit the fancy or convenience of the 'lady of the house'. With slight strips of half inch plank fastened in front of the shelf there would be little danger of dishes falling, after one leaves Fort Leavenworth: such is the evenness of the road.

*Best Route* – From Springfield to Hannibal on the Mississippi River, to Paris, to Huntsville, to Fort Leavenworth—take the trail to the Kaw village on the North side of the Kansas river, thence the left hand trail to the Platte river—(there are three right hand trails falling off one after another, less travelled than the best route) thence up the South Fork to the ford, thence up the North side of the of the same—the left hand trail up to the North Fork, thence up the South side to Scott's Bluff, eighteen miles above steeple tower, or the 'Chimney'-which is situated about three miles from the River, on the top of a conical bluff elevated some 150 or 200 feet above the river bank. The Steeple or 'chimney', is a pillar of hardened clay, about 60 feet by 30 feet in diameter, rising out of the top of the cone some 200 or 250 feet retaining its full size to the top—which is covered with rock of very curious dimensions, and formed of clay—thence take the left hand twelve miles, to Cole Springs—thence twelve miles to Horse Creek—thence down the west side of said creek, and up the North Fork to Laramie. Here my way-bill must end for the present.

*Amount of Loading* – Twenty or thirty hundred pounds to one team of eight oxen, or four oxen and eight cows—one half should be worked every other day.

*Out-Fit* – One waggon for four to six persons—team as above. Stout young cows are preferable to oxen; Horses are of little service, except to collect cattle of morning. They need to be exchanged once in seven or eight hundred miles for others if much used. One hundred pounds hard biscuit; 150 pounds of flower; 20 pounds lard, 50 pounds corn-meal sifted, 75 pounds bacon: 5 pounds coffee, ten pounds sugar: one peck of beans: 50 pounds dried fruit: 5 pounds of salt: one half pound pepper: 7 pounds hard soap: 2 pounds salartus: one half pounds of spice: one half pound cinnamon: 2 pounds ginger—a little castor oil: a little rhubarb: peppermint and camphor: —and some other things such as a dry body needs—but rarely thinks of beforehand—to each person full grown. Fifteen pounds of tar and two pounds of rosin to each wagon: 65 feet of 1 inch rope, one set of spare shoes and a hundred horseshoes nails to

each horse: four ox shoes to each work ox or cow, and nails: one years clothing: tarpolin hats: one water proof cloak: one rifle 32 balls to the pound: ten pounds of powder: ten pounds of lead: one thousand percussion caps: one belt, butcher knife, scabbard, shot pouch and powder horn: one canteen or tin cup, and two whips to each man: five pounds of salt to each head of cattle. One axe, three augers: one drawing knife, and two chisels to each family, and one tent made of stout Osnaburg.

*Best Fashion for a Tent* – Set up one pole in the centre, from the top of which, on the outside, extend three guys, or stay cords, which make fast to three strong stakes, then pin down the bottom once in 18 inches, let the entrance be low and make to close tight by a piece of the same buttoned over on the inside.

*Best Method of Traveling* – and Remarks on Traveling. –Twenty waggons with forty men are amply sufficient for the purpose of protection, or rendering assistance to each other. ‘Large bodies move slow.’ It is easier forming connections, than it is dissolving them. More servants than are needed, breed confusion in a camp away from established governments, –where from humanity, one is compelled to retain a disagreeable servant. It is easier purchasing cattle than it is driving them to Oregon. Cattle and horses should be guarded day and night from Fort Leavenworth to Platte river. Men who have large herds of cattle, and those who have but few, will seldom long agree to travel together.

Mutual interests and mutual necessities, from the strongest bonds of unions, with some few honorable exceptions. No company of forty waggons have ever traveled to Oregon without dividing.

The less emigrants depend on each other the more quietly they proceed on their way. A selfish, narrow-minded man is not likely to enjoy a trip to Oregon. Emigrants are generally too impatient, and over-drive their teams and cattle. They often neglect the concerns of the present in consequence of the great anticipations of the future—they long to see what the next elevation hides from their view. Millions of the acres on our route, which usually produce a tolerable crop of hay, are now entirely destitute of grass. Emigrants should not depend on the last port, for their out-fit. I think the trail from Springfield to Vancouver, in Oregon is twenty-six hundred long miles, if the balance of the road is as crooked as the past.



*Trade* – We purchased buffalo robes for from six to ten pounds of flour, or from three to six pints of sugar or coffee. We can get an ox, or horse shod, at Fort Laramie for one dollar per foot. We hire a smith’s shop for \$6 per day. Three bars of lead will buy a buffalo robe; salt 50 cents a pint.

*Prospect Ahead* – We expect hard times, in consequence of the scarcity of grass for the next three hundred miles. Oregon brightens the nearer we approach. A Frenchman who has resided there five years, and now travels in our company, often makes comparison between the most beautiful prairies we pass over—always giving the Prairies of Oregon the preference—saying, ‘suppose this prairie you now see, was always clad in green , as you now see it, —such is Oregon!’ But I must close.

Respectfully yours. “William B. Ide”



## ● Alfred Walton Biographical Notes

Excerpts from: *A Memorial & Biographical History of Northern California Illustrated*.  
Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1891.

File contributed for use in USGenWeb Archives by Joy Fisher sdgenweb@yahoo.com  
February 17, 2007, 11:56 pm

ALFRED WALTON came to California with the Jones expedition in 1842 in the United States sloop Dale. He has seen much of the world, and ranks among the pioneers of this great State. A sketch of his life is as follows:

Mr. Walton was born in Walton, England, October 22, 1822. He served in the navy for three years as a volunteer, and two years more after his first term had expired. He returned to Philadelphia and was there discharged, after which he went back to England. He then emigrated to Iowa, and there carried on farming from 1844 to 1849.

In the latter year he joined a company, under command of George M. Dallas, to come to California. When they reached the Green River, they attempted to go down the stream with canoes, and, after passing the mouth of the White River, they were upset and lost their provisions, being able to save only a sack of flour and some bacon. Nothing daunted, however, they continued their way westward and fell in with a friendly Indian, who explained to them, with a stick, the trail across the desert. Thirteen of them started across the trail for Fort Utah. They packed water and had for their daily rations a spoonful of flour mixed with water. As a relish with this they ate crickets and grasshoppers, and sometimes got a rabbit away from the buzzards. They made the journey to Fort Utah in safety and started for Los Angeles with wagons. At Desert Spring, Colorado Desert, they left the wagons and continued their way on foot, going through Cajon Pass.

At Los Angeles he made an arrangement with a man who was buying cattle, whereby he, Mr. Walton, was to drive a team to a place near San Francisco, and was to get his board for services rendered. The stock-dealer provided the men with a gun and told them to kill the Spanish cattle to subsist on; and that was the way he furnished board!

In San Francisco Mr. Walton worked at whatever he could get to do for awhile, and was paid six dollars per day. From there he went to the mines at Bidwell's Bar on Feather River. On the North Fork of that river he got plenty of gold; took out as high as \$500 in a single pan, but had to

dig several days to get down to it. He exhausted that claim and afterward went on a prospecting tour.

In Shasta County he took a ranch at what is now Kimball's Plain and engaged in raising cattle. After being thus engaged for a time, he went to the town of Shasta, and, with John Scott, conducted a hotel. He subsequently engaged in mule teaming and packing, and came to Red Bluff, where he followed that business six or eight years. He was also interested in the sheep business.

In Red Bluff he purchased lots five and six, block fifty-two, near where the railroad has since been built, and there erected a home, lived and reared his family. Misfortune overtook him; he trusted too much; sold stock and teams on time; hard times came on and the parties left the country and Mr. Walton was financially ruined.

During the mining excitement in Idaho, he went all through that country and tried to recover some of his bad debts, but was unsuccessful, and came back to Red Bluff a poor man. He then turned his attention to any kind of work he could get to do. In 1874 he purchased a dairy and engaged in the milk business, which he has since followed. In this he has been very successful. Their present house was built in 1876.

December 18, 1860, Mr. Walton married Mrs. Mary Ann Reeves, a native of Ireland. She came to the United States when she was fourteen years of age. They have had five children, three sons and two daughters, all born in Red Bluff, viz: Agnes, now Mrs. Henry Frank; Thomas, Alfred and Mollie. One of the children is deceased. The family are members of the Catholic Church. Mr. Walton was reared an Episcopalian. He is a lively old gentleman who has seen a great deal of pioneer life.

From the Native Daughters of the Golden West (NDGW) files:

A submission by George D. WALTON, grandson and great granddaughter Dorothy REEVES JOHNSON which gives much the same information but notes children as Agnes, Alfred, Margaret Mary and stepson Joseph REEVES

From the Tehama County Historical Society's *Leaves of the Past*:

Alfred WALTON died Red Bluff, July 18, 1911  
married Tehama County (not San Francisco) December 18, 1860

Mary Ann WARD REEVES born Ireland December 7, 1834, daughter of Timothy WARD and Bridget JONSON, natives of Ireland; Mary married 1st (\*) REEVES.

Children:

Joseph Henry REEVES (Stepson) born New York 1855; married Julia Wentz, born California 1859

Margaret Agnes WALTON born December 7, 1863; died French Gulch December 2, 1949; married Henry FRANCK

Alfred Ward WALTON born Oct 19 1861; died Red Bluff July 9, 1893

Thomas Richard WALTON born California Nov 16 1867; died Red Bluff April 13, 1944; married Anetta Elizabeth KRAFT

Alfred John WALTON born California February 16, 1870; died February 23 1965 (see below); married Susan Iren BREARCLIFFE;

Children:

Alfred WALTON

George Dorian WALTON born CALIFORNIA Sep 17 1895; died Red Bluff July 25 1960; married Dorothy HUSON; children: June WALTON and Dan WALTON

Stephen WALTON

Jane Ann WALTON

Mary Ann WALTON born Sep 24 1872; died July 6 1949; married Milton Gordon GILL; child: Walton W. GILL

From the *Sacramento Bee*:

Alfred John WALTON died Feb 13 1956 Red Bluff, wife Susan; sons Alfred & Stephen; age 85





## ● Newspaper Account Summaries of the Court Case in the Matter of the State of California vs. George Sutton

Re: William B. Ide Adobe and Four Adjacent Parcel's Property Value and State Acquisition

Red Bluff Daily News, March 7, 1951

### **Witnesses Testify In State Park Row Over Ide Property**

A court battle is ongoing about the value of 3.96 acres of land along the Sacramento River, which includes the historic adobe said to have been built by Wm. B. Ide. George E. Sutton owns the land, which is separated into five small parcels. Negotiations for the purchase of the property have been in progress since 1935 but the parties failed to agree on a price for the land. The state filed condemnation proceedings in the summer of 1949 to acquire the historically significant land. Sutton wants \$34,000.00, which he still considers a low number, especially for the adobe land.

Witnesses were called and a listing of the jurors was published. The Native Sons of the Golden West raised \$7410.00 to cover the cost of the land, and with state matching money, the total available is \$14,820.00.

Red Bluff Daily News, March 8, 1951

### **Jurors View Park Site to Determine Value of Property**

Jurors were lead by deputy sheriffs on a tour of the proposed State Park. They viewed the Ide adobe and were accompanied by Judge Albert F. Ross, who is presiding over the case, and attorneys for both sides. George Sutton's value for the property is \$37,500.00 and he is asking for \$7500.00 severance damages. Milton Hull appraised the property at \$25,000.00 and Chauncey T. Burgess (county deputy assessor) appraised the property at \$34,000.00.

Red Bluff Daily News, March 9, 1951

### **Testimony Ending In the Ide Park Case to Establish Price**

Various witnesses testified today on the value of the adobe and the other parcels. The state witnesses placed a much lower value on the property than witnesses for G. Sutton, the landowner.

Red Bluff Daily News, March 12, 1951

**Value of \$25,000 Put on Park Site By Jury's Verdict**

The jury verdict came out late Friday as \$15,000.00 for the land the adobe sits on, \$3000.00 for another parcel, \$2000.00 for another and two others at \$1250.00 each, for a total of \$25,000.00. Funds have been raised by Tehama county and the City of Red Bluff with matching funds by the state for a total of \$14,800.00.

Red Bluff Daily News, May 9, 1951

**Chamber Directors Will Borrow \$2340 For Ide State Park**

“Red Bluff Chamber of Commerce directors went on record Tuesday to borrow \$2340.00 to assist in the acquisition of the Ide Adobe property as a state park following a request by Red Bluff attorney Rawlins Coffman. The money will be borrowed following the budgeting of that amount by the board of Supervisors next month to be repaid out of county funds late this year”.

Corning Daily Observer, July 26, 1951

**Ide Park Fund Paid to State, Project Nears**

The William B. Ide Parlor No. 15 Native Sons of the Golden West mailed checks to the State Attorney General today. The amount totals \$4402.35 from the City of Red Bluff and Tehama County. The judgment for condemnation determined the total amount to be paid to owner George Sutton was set at \$23,624.70. The state is obligated to pay half, at \$11,812.35 with the city and county matching the amount.

The next step will be to ask the Legislature to appropriate funds for restoration of the adobe and begin operating the property as a park. Under terms of the contract, the City of Red Bluff and the County of Tehama will manage and operate the park for twenty years.

This last funding amount marks the culmination of 16 years of effort by various groups and individuals working to make the area at the adobe a park. The local parlor of Native Sons was formed in 1947 with its main objective to have a state park made in honor of the man who built the adobe and was a key figure in the Bear Flag Republic.

Red Bluff Daily News, August 22, 1956

**Funds to Restore Ide Adobe Sought**

Rawlins Coffman, a local attorney, with Robert Minch, local Red Bluff citizen, attended a State Park Commission hearing in Eureka and did a presentation featuring

the neglected condition of the adobe and surrounding park area. The east wall of the adobe is sagging and is held up by heavy supports from the outside.

Commission members will give next years State Legislature a budget request for forty to fifty thousand dollars to cover the restoration and establish a parking lot large enough to handle thirty cars.

# WILLIAM B. IDE ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN

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October 2009

Northern Buttes District  
California State Parks  
State of California



## Area 7: The Park Today

Space Allocation: 10%

Theme:

History comes to life at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park through its environmental studies programs, tours, living history events and fun celebrations.

Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about the many interpretive programs offered by the park.
- Feel encouraged to attend the special events.
- Discover why it is worthwhile to support the Ide Adobe Interpretive Association.
- Become interested in volunteering at the park.

Background Research and/or Storyline:

Staff and docents at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park use the park facilities to create a living historic environment that brings the past to life. All of the park's interpretive programs are based on two fundamental ideas: 1) breathe life into the area's history, bringing together the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures of the 1850s and early 1860s in a manner that feels real for visitors; and 2) immerse visitors in that first-hand reality to better understand the era.

### *Daily Activities for Living in the 1850s*

Many park activities reflect the essential chores not often described in history books. They encourage docents and visitors to experience what it might have been like to live in the early 1850s. As with most interpretive programs at the park, visitors may receive invitations to participate in many of the historic demonstrations. Below is an overview of some "living history" activities represented in the park.

### Ranch Chores & Maintenance

Frontier families devoted much of their time to household and ranch chores. Keeping a house on the frontier clean meant regularly sweeping, scrubbing, and dusting, airing mattresses, washing windows, and keeping out the mice and spiders. With no indoor plumbing or nearby places to purchase spare parts, equipment or utensils, there were many chores.

*Drawing water* - No indoor plumbing meant that water had to be drawn and then hauled into the house or to the work site, shed, stable, or garden from an outside

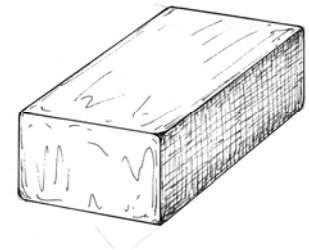
well or a pump. Before the ranch's laborsaving well was dug, water had to be carried from the river.

*Maintaining wagon wheels* - Travel along rough roads was not only wearing on drivers, passengers and the animals, but also extremely hard on wheeled vehicles. When crossing dry, arid lands, wood and leather wagon parts could shrink and crack, often pulling away from metal ones, like iron tires and axles. It was important to keep parts, especially the wheels, greased to prevent shrinkage. A grease or "tar" bucket often was slung beneath the wagon box for ready access to the material. (There are historic accounts of emigrants who suffered from extreme hunger, but survived by eating grease from the tar bucket.)

*Washing and drying dishes* - With few dishes and implements and limited indoor space, washing and drying dishes and cooking pots was essential after every meal. First water had to be hauled inside. Then it had to be heated in a cauldron over the fire before washing could begin. Docents learn the basics of pioneer housekeeping.

*Soap making* - Soap is produced by mixing water with ash (from a fireplace), then adding lard and boiling the mixture in an iron kettle for several hours.

When the mixture stiffens, it is poured into a box, where it hardens completely. The soap rests from two weeks to a month before being cut into bars. This bar soap was used for bathing, laundry and dishes. While it was available for purchase in the 1850s, the ingredients and process proved simple and inexpensive enough that many pioneers found it cheaper to produce their own.



*Laundry* - Washing was a big job. Soiled clothes were first boiled in a large kettle with soap then scrubbed on a washboard or on stones by the river to remove stains. The washing was given a final rinse in another tub to remove any soap. Starch was mixed with water and cooked on the stove then applied to collars, cuffs, doilies, and other items to add stiffness or some light body to the fabrics. Sometimes buttons were removed then re-sewn on a garment after laundry. Cleaned items were then hung on a line with wooden clothespins. Sheets often were hung as shields to keep underwear from the view of passersby.

*Ironing* - Sheets, dishtowels, aprons plus all the pioneers' apparel were pressed flat using heavy "sad" irons heated in the fire or on a cast iron stove. They were rubbed on paper or rags to remove any soot before ironing. Water also was sprinkled on the fabric to create a crisp look. The items were then folded and placed in a trunk or chest of drawers. Closets and hangers were not used except for heavy coats and most often, these were hung on pegs.

*Candle making* - Traditionally candles have been made by dipping the wicks repeatedly in a large iron pot containing melted wax made from beef fat, beeswax



Learning to make candles by dipping the wicks in melted wax.

or paraffin. In California, beef fat was cheap and available, but burned quickly. Beeswax could be added to make the candles burn longer. After each dipping, the wax was cooled. Melted wax had to be maintained at the right temperature. If too hot, it would not stick to the wick or other layers of wax; if too cold, the candle became lumpy.

Candle molds later eased the process. They were easier and quicker to use, producing a more uniform candle. A wick was placed in a tube mold that was then filled with hot wax and allowed to cool. In the early 1850s, whale

oil lamps, which offered a brighter light with less smoke, were also used, but the oil was more expensive having to be imported up river.

### Producing Clothing and Textiles

Settlers on the frontier had few stores or commercial services available to them. They had to be very self-reliant. Most learned before arriving in California, that if they needed something they would have to depend upon themselves for it. Clothing was worn until it could be mended no more. If not worn out it was altered to another style or re-sewn for someone smaller. When it could not be altered, it was often cut up for use in quilts or to make other items.

*Sewing clothes* - Most emigrants owned few clothes. Fabric sold by the yard (also called yardage), had to be purchased.<sup>303</sup> And, it was expensive! Sewing and fitting wearing apparel was time consuming, too. It had to be done by hand in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when time was precious. Other essential ranch or household tasks often would take priority for women, who produced most of the clothing. (The ready-to-wear clothing industry got a boost during the California Gold Rush in the wake of the mostly male gold seekers.) At the park, many docents choose to learn about the hand sewing skills of pioneer women, including decorative embroidery.

*Embroidering* - Embroidering a piece of linen or clothing added a decorative touch. Young girls practiced their sewing techniques and displayed their skills on simple projects like samplers, towels and fabric dolls.

Some frontier women produced woven woolen blankets, cloth or other goods. But, it was a long process and often messy!

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<sup>303</sup> As the frontier became settled, yardage could be purchased from stores in Red Bluff or from occasional riverboats, which sold goods to settlers along the riverbanks of the Sacramento River.

*Wool washing* - Newly sheared sheep's wool had to be washed in hot soapy water, then rinsed to remove grease (called lanolin), which could cause the fibers to rot. It had to be handled carefully. If too agitated, it could become felted, making it impossible for the fibers to be carded or spun.



Getting ready to clean the wool

*Carding* - Cleaned wool was combed through with wool "cards" covered in wire bristles. This process removed remaining dirt and other debris left after washing. The process also straightened the fibers of the wool for spinners to use more easily.

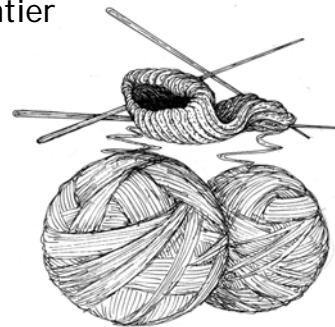
*Spinning* - Spinning pulled and twisted the fiber to a proper thickness that could be made useable for weaving or plied into yarn for knitting. The direction in which the yarn is spun is called *twist*. Yarns are characterized as S-twist or Z-

twist according to the direction of spinning. Two or more spun yarns could be twisted together or plied to form a thicker yarn. Yarns can be made of two, three, four, or more plies, or may be used as *singles* without plying. Park docents often teach visitors the art of spinning using a small drop spindle or a spinning wheel.

*Dyeing yarns and fabrics* - Dye colors were produced from bark, roots, flowers or other parts of plants or trees growing in the nearby garden, farm fields or forests. The yarn fibers were usually dyed before the fabric or garment was knitted or woven. It was a messy process.

*Weaving* - Taking the spun yarn and turning it into cloth was done on a loom. Weaving is a textile art in which two sets of yarns or threads, called the warp and the filling or weft, are interlaced with one another to form a fabric or cloth. Warp threads run lengthways through the cloth, while the weft runs across (from side to side). Cloth is woven on a loom that holds the warp threads in place, while the filling threads are woven through them. The manner in which the warp and filling threads interlace with each other is called the weave. Most looms were large and needed a considerable amount of floor area. Not all frontier families had the space or the special skills required to operate a loom.

*Knitting/crocheting* - Spun yarn, not used in weaving, was knitted or crocheted with two wooden needles into items, such as mittens, scarves, socks, baby clothing, and other warm coverings. Knitting did not require a loom or other large equipment, making it a valuable technique for pioneer women.



Drawing by John Allen

*Quilting* - From scraps of fabric—often left over from other projects, frontier women sewed quilts by hand. A quilt is composed of three layers: the top piece



A docent hand sews a quilt on a frame

made by stitching many scraps into a large, multi-color pattern; the middle section made of carded wool or cotton (called batting); and the bottom layer of fabric called a backing. All three are stitched together or “quilted” to keep the batting from shifting when used or washed. Girls as early as five years of age learned to quilt from their mothers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the time a girl was twelve, she would have had the experience of making a few quilts to use after she married and left home.

*Tatting* - Some docents demonstrate the now rare, fine art called tatting. It is a traditional way for making lace using a small shuttle to form many small knots that create lacework.

Pioneer women enjoyed having nice clothing. To embellish what otherwise might have been a plain day dress, they often would tat a fine collar or cuffs which could be added to the dress. Tatting was also done to embellish pillowcases and doll clothing.

## Grooming

Grooming methods and standards differed considerably from those of today. Pioneers did not wake up to a warm shower and clean clothes every morning. In the park’s programs, docents demonstrate or describe some of the early grooming activities.

*Bathing* - Personal bathing was not done daily. Baths may have been taken only monthly. With no indoor plumbing, buckets of water were hauled from the river or well, and then heated in a cauldron over a fire. The warm water was then poured into a larger tub. Men of the household usually bathed first. Women were next, followed by the children. Often the water was not changed between bathers, becoming quite dirty by the time the last person climbed into the tub. The old saying, “Don’t throw the baby out with the bath water,” probably originated from frontier living.

*Hair curling* - Pioneer women could be quite fashion conscious on the frontier. They tried to keep up with the latest grooming styles from Europe and the East. Whether in an urban setting or on the frontier, curling hair fashionably in the 1850s was a challenge. Hair could be “set” using rag curls. These were strips of fabric that the hair was wound around and then tied. Hair could also be curled by using a heated iron, essentially a forked tong heated in a fire.





A young boy experiences a close shave at Adobe Day

*Shaving* - In the 1850s and 1860s, long beards were in fashion for men, although some chose to be clean shaven. Those that shaved used a straight-edged razor. Its edge was kept sharp and clean with a leather strap. To prepare the face for a shave, a brush was wetted and then lathered with soap before being applied to the face. If they could afford it, and there was one nearby, men would visit a tonsorial parlor or barbershop for a good shave and haircut. Barber shops became gathering places for men.

Some barbers provided minor medical treatments—what we might consider first aid. The red and white of the barber pole symbolized the red of blood and the white of bandages, an emblem dating back to the middle ages. A few barbers offered baths.

*Getting dressed* - Men and women's clothing has changed considerably over the years. Participants in programs at the park are provided reproduction clothing to enhance their own and the visitors' experiences.

In the 1850s, women dressed in many more layers of heavy clothing than worn today. Undergarments included pantaloons, a chemise, multiple petticoats, and a stay or corset. A dress was then placed over these layers. A detachable collar and cuffs sometimes were added to embellish the outfit. Women donned bonnets when outside and, oftentimes, while inside wore a day cap or hair netting.



Clothing layers worn by women in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Drawings by John Allen

Men wore drawers and an undershirt or long johns followed by a pair of trousers, shirt, braces or suspenders (the trousers of the 1850s had no belt loops), and a vest with a collar. Jackets were donned as work attire, as well as for special

occasions, like visits to town. A cravat (a type of neckwear) and hat completed the outfit. Men always wore hats. Clothing was more formal than worn today.



Boots and hats are provided docents to suit nearly every interpretive occasion in the park



### Home Entertainment and Other Recreation

Far from sources of recreation available in cities, frontier families entertained themselves and friends through a variety of indoor and outdoor games and activities. Most made their own fun. Games were handmade from objects found on the ranch. They played traditional, simple string games such as Cat's Cradle and Hunt the Ring, as well as Hunker Down, Hassle the Hawser, and Teirza. Docents at the park demonstrate many of the traditional forms of recreation enjoyed on the frontier. Here are a few examples:

*Hide the Thimble* - Hide the Thimble is an example of an early pioneer game played with an everyday object. Players are sent out of a room while someone hides a thimble in a place where it can be seen. The players are then called back, and as each discover the thimble, sits down in silence. The individual who saw it first, hides it in the next round.

*Hunt the Ring* - A ring is threaded on a long piece of string with its ends joined together. Players standing in a closed circle, grasp the string with their palms down. The ring circulates from one to another, while a player in the center tries to find it. After its discovery, the one in whose hand it was found takes the place in the center of the circle.

Many blindfold games were played. They were known as "buff" games.

*Pointer's Buff* - One person is blindfolded with a stick placed in his/her hand. The other players then dance in a circle around the individual until he/she points the stick at one of the players. The person immediately grabs hold of it and the blindfolded individual asks a question that has to be answered in a disguised voice. The blindfolded one has three chances to guess who it is. If he or she cannot correctly identify the person, the game begins again. If correct, the other takes the place in the center and the game starts anew.

*Ruth and Jacob* - One player is blindfolded as the rest dance in a circle around him. When he points at someone, that person enters the ring and the blind man calls out "Ruth." She (or he) answers "Jacob" and moves about within the circle to elude the blind man, calling out "Jacob" as often as the blind man calls out "Ruth." This continues until "Ruth" is caught. Then "Ruth" takes the place of "Jacob."



Visitors make cornhusk dolls at Adobe Day.



A docent creates a wooden puzzle, as visitors look on.

*Pioneer toys* - Many frontier children's toys were handmade. Children themselves made some. Typical toys included horseshoes, stilts, and the game of Graces. Cornhusk, rag, and wool batting dolls were often made and cherished by young girls. Boys produced wooden tops, puzzles, stilts and other games. Docents at the park demonstrate or teach simple toy making skills to schoolchildren and other visitors.



The Ide Adobe Players perform period music during a special event.

*Music and Dancing* - Like today, settlers enjoyed music and dance. Although large gatherings of people in one place were not frequent, when they occurred, there was a great deal of news sharing, camaraderie, music, and dancing. Californians were a diverse lot, with people from all over the world and all walks of life. The music and dance of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century reflected this. Park staff and docents take pride in learning, performing and sharing music of the era with others.

*Games of chance* - Gambling was everywhere during the California Gold Rush, from the plush palaces of Sacramento and San Francisco to the hastily erected tent towns of the mining camps. It flourished on blankets, rough boards, wagon seats, and barrel heads—wherever there was the desire to play. It was even played among friends on ranches.



Are you feeling lucky? A docent explains a game during a special event.

A number of games were popular: Monte, Faro, Vingt-et-Un (Twenty-one), Lansquenet, Wheel of Fortune, Chuck-a-Luck (Sweat), Shut The Box, and Over And Under. Although California society was dominated by men, women occasionally would be found counting case in Faro games, dealing Lansquenet or Vingt-et-Un.

Miners, settlers, and merchants on the frontier—many away from home and family for the first time during the Gold Rush, were easy prey for professional gamblers.

Regardless of their backgrounds—pious or sinner, married or single, thoughtful or careless—thousands of unfortunate individuals lost their fortunes or lifesavings at the gaming.

### Frontier Schooling

There were few schools in rural areas away from towns and cities. It was challenging for parents on the frontier to provide a basic education for their children. At critical times, children were needed to ensure that all the chores considered necessary for survival on the frontier were done.

If there were no nearby schools, some parents taught their children to read and write at home. In instances, an educated adult in the community (like William B. Ide at one point in his life), provided services as the teacher. The family offered goods or services they could easily provide as compensation for the teacher. At the park today, high school students help to teach grade school students in the traditional areas of learning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Special Events*

Each year, many quality special events and programs are offered to the public at William B. Ide Adobe SHP. They enrich park experiences and help to convey in a three-dimensional understanding of the frontier past. The activities and demonstrations reflect ones traditionally practiced in the mid 1800s. Many offer hands-on learning focused on the daily life of people in frontier California. An overview of park events follows.



*Adobe Day* - Each year the park's biggest event is Adobe Day. This event is traditionally held the third Saturday in August, from Noon until 4:00 p.m. 2009



Adobe Day each August brings crowds of interested visitors from near and far.

marked the event's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This special day offers living history and a wide variety of hands-on activities. They may include candle making, adobe brick making, blacksmithing, traditional woodworking, vignettes on attitudes of the 1850s, and many others. Home baked breads, jerky from the park's smokehouse and other period refreshments are produced in the kitchen of the Adobe House. Live music of the Gold Rush era is provided by the Ide Adobe Players.



The annual Horseshoe Pitchers Contest.

*Adobe Ferry Champion Horseshoe Pitchers Contest* - A different approach to making "sports history" is represented by the Adobe Ferry Champion Horseshoe Pitchers Contest. This event is held the second Saturday in October, starting at 10:00 a.m. and continuing until a winner is determined.

The contest is a double-elimination doubles tournament, rekindling the excitement of a Gold Rush pitch-off. Rules of the 1850s are used and

number 8 draft shoes are "straight from the hoof." Participants wear period attire provided by the park, and the champions are awarded gold-filled pocket watches or similar prizes.

*Pioneer Christmas Party* - Early Christmas celebrations of the North Valley are re-created for the Pioneer Christmas Party. This event is held the third Saturday in December, from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Its centerpiece is a tree traditionally trimmed with fruit, nuts, sweetmeats and strings of popcorn. Featured activities include tin-punching, toy making, cookie decorating and caroling. Sweetmeats and cookies are served along with wassail and hot cider.

*Pioneer Craft Demonstrations* - A wide variety of Gold Rush-era crafts are demonstrated, usually by interpreters wearing period attire in June, July and



August, and occasionally on weekends from September through May. Visitors are encouraged to try their hand at crafts, which often include quilting, period woodworking, blacksmithing, spinning, candle making and a wide variety of other pioneer activities. Demonstrations are dependent upon park staffing.



Students participating in the ESP and ELP programs have the use of period-appropriate clothing for their activities.

*Life in the 1850s* - "Life in the 1850s," an environmental studies program (ESP) at the park, targets school grades 4 - 6, recapturing for students a day in the lives of Northern California's early pioneers. Programs are held most Tuesdays and Thursdays from late February through May. Children spend the entire day at the park immersed in rope making, candle making, blacksmithing, adobe brick making, woodworking, "schooling," quilting, pioneer games and cooking in the Adobe House's kitchen. Docents from Salisbury and Red Bluff High schools serve as group leaders.

*Mini-ESPs/Group Tours* - Mini-ESPs are shortened programs of up to two hours containing elements of the *Life in the 1850s* ESP. They include a tour and one or more pioneer activities. Conventional group tours and first person tours are also offered. These are currently available by advanced arrangement depending upon staffing.

### *Volunteers in the Park*

William B. Ide Adobe SHP involves volunteers, ranging in age from toddlers to octogenarians. Each volunteer commits from one day to over 200 hours a year. They assist in everything from offering interpretive programming and park cleanup to washing laundry and ordering costumes.

Teenagers make up a majority of the park volunteers. As an elective in their history classes, students from both Salisbury and Red Bluff high schools may become Ide Adobe docents. The park traditionally hosts approximately sixty-five high school volunteers each year. After attending more than forty hours of training in area history, period clothing, speech and manners, as well as pioneer crafts and leadership skills, they present the park's environmental studies program (ESP), *Life in the 1850s*. They also volunteer at the park, helping with other interpretive programs on and off-site, special events, general housekeeping and other activities, as needed.

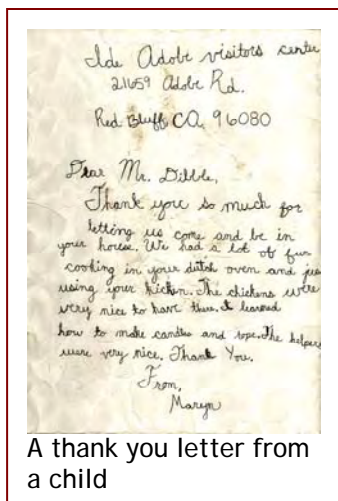
Other trained docents are utilized in sewing and maintaining period costumes, keeping open the Visitor Center and Adobe House, wood shop and blacksmith shop, as well as setting up and cleaning after school programs and ESPs. Some offer to share their specialized skills as period woodworkers, blacksmiths, spinners, quilters and Dutch oven cooks, while others come to learn these skills. Docents are especially helpful in the planning, training, development and presentation of all the park's special events.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:

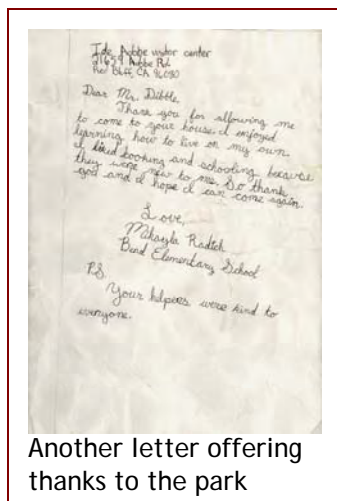
Docents bring the William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park to life. They should be featured prominently in this exhibit area. A large photomural of the Adobe Ranch buildings coming to life during Adobe Day (or another special event during the year) will set the scene. This image should be produced as a backdrop for large (life-sized or close to that) two-dimensional cutouts of docents dressed in period attire performing activities in the park. Placed on a platform, the 2-D figures should have a similar look and feel to the other 2-D figures used in Areas 1 and 3.

A touch screen monitor on the platform will enable visitors to view several video clips highlighting the park's annual special events—Adobe Day, the Adobe Ferry Champion Horseshoe Pitchers Contest, Pioneer Christmas Party and some of the Pioneer Craft Demonstrations, as well as other programs offered, such as the “Life in the 1850s” educational activities provided for school children. Several of the video segments will focus on people dressed in period attire performing typical tasks demonstrated at the park. They may include, among others:

- Log sawing
- Making or repairing a tool
- Using a shaving horse
- Stringing a rope bed or stuffing ticking churning butter
- Quilting
- Spinning
- Making Toys



A thank you letter from a child



Another letter offering thanks to the park

Music in the video's background will be performed by the Ide Adobe Players. (The Ide Adobe Players' *Mining is a Hard Kind of Labor* CD will be a resource for the videos.) As with all other videos in the Visitor Center, voices in the videos will be captioned.

Part of the exhibit space should enable the staff to highlight docents or outstanding students in the

park's programs as a rotating feature. This may involve photographs and short interviews of the individuals being honored. A few of the letters written by schoolchildren after their experiences in the park's ESP programs also should be featured.

Text will promote and encourage visitors to become a volunteer in the park. Examples of craftwork created by park docents will also be featured. These might include samples of carpentry, blacksmithing products, needlework, handmade toys, etc.

#### **Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:**

Existing film footage and photographs of park activities and special events may be available, but more may be needed to satisfy this exhibit station. Photographs of schoolchildren and docents in the park participating in programs will also need written releases.

A number of thank you notes and pictures drawn by children who have attended school programs in the past are in the park's files and should be considered for use in the exhibit.

Staff should be consulted on the reproduction objects made by volunteers for use as display items.

## Area 8: Space for Changing Exhibits

Space Allocation: 5%

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about new acquisitions, events and programs, research, and other news involving William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park.
- Become more acquainted with selected items/topics depicted in permanent exhibits.
- Experience something new in the Visitor Center upon return visits.

### Background Information:

As much as the park looks backwards in time for its interpretive focus, often there is a need to present new research or recently acquired artifacts or forthcoming events and programs. This exhibit area, while not large, will offer park staff the opportunity to showcase information, as well as objects. It is envisioned as a changing display area, drawing attention to new acquisitions, promoting new programs, presenting ongoing research, highlighting historical events, promoting contributions of California's ethnic and cultural groups, and providing a more in-depth exploration of ideas and events presented in the permanent exhibits of the Visitor Center. Having a place to share this information with visitors, as well as docents, is vital.

The exhibit case will enable new materials to be presented on a regular basis. It might also allow park staff, college interns, docents, volunteers and others the regular opportunity to develop a series of high quality changing displays. It might also showcase collaborative partnerships featuring local resources and events.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:

The space, while small, should offer maximum flexibility. Criteria for the exhibit space are described below. It must:

- Be able to accommodate the display of both flat and three-dimensional objects.
- Offer flexibility for a variety of sizes and shapes of exhibit materials.
- Provide security and protection for displayed items.
- Use lighting that illuminates, but does not harm the materials on display.
- Allow visitors the possibility of getting close to the objects on exhibit.
- Be accessible in height for park visitors.
- Offer relative ease for opening and changing its contents.

## Area 9: Contact Counter & Park Interpretive Sales Area

Space Allocation: As indicated on below on map

### Interpretive Objectives:

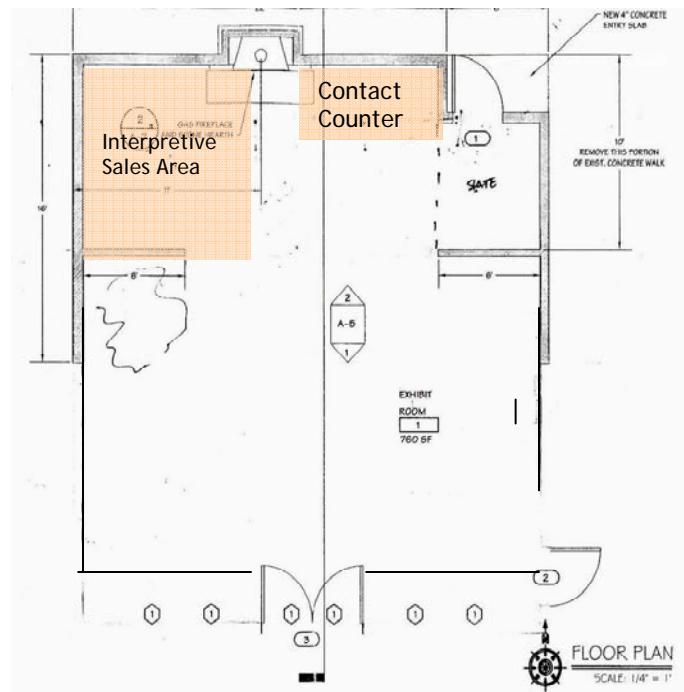
Visitors will:

- Have a quality experience from their initial contact with staff at the Visitor Center.
- Know where to find information and how to begin their park experience.
- See a contact counter and sales area that complements the exhibits.
- Find a space that encourages their thoughtful exploration of the park themes through other interpretive media available for sale in the park Visitor Center.

### Background Information:

Upon their arrival inside the Visitor Center, it should be obvious to visitors where they can seek information and purchase admission to the park. Entry areas are sensitive, as they usually are good indicators of the experiences to follow. If the initial view is not inviting, visitors may prefer to leave before touring the facilities. Therefore, the contact counter and the interpretive sales area must reflect the same thoughtful

design and quality of craftsmanship that is employed in the interpretive exhibits. They should complement one another.



### Interpretive Design Concepts:

The contact counter, which will also handle sales transactions, should visually flow into the interpretive sales area tucked into the alcove area along the north wall and to the east of the fireplace (see floor plan to the left). The counter should be designed to maximize working space behind it for staff people. Its design will allow for a low profile, modern cash register that does not impede the initial view of staff by visitors

upon entering the building. The counter should include a locked glass cabinet, where valuable or delicate interpretive sales items may be displayed.

The interpretive sales space, while small, will operate with maximum display flexibility. Shelving should be moveable. Back stock storage for books and other interpretive sales items will be kept low, beneath the shelving in securable cabinets.



Criteria for the contact counter and interpretive sales area are described below. It must:

- Accommodate the display of both flat and three-dimensional sales objects in a variety of sizes and shapes.
- Provide security and protection for some displayed and stored items.
- Offer relative ease when opening, removing and changing cabinet contents.
- Use lighting that illuminates, but does not harm the materials on display.
- Be accessible in height for park visitors.

Consideration may be given to remodeling and adapting the existing Visitor Center contact counter cabinet, if it fits the space and can be made to complement the new interpretive exhibits. However, using the existing counter is not required.



The existing Visitor Center contact counter now used for admission and interpretive sales.

## Area 6: William B. Ide—His Story

Space Allocation: 10%

### Theme:

William B. Ide personified the “pioneer spirit” typical of early settlers.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about William B. Ide’s immigration to California.
- Understand the role he played in California’s Bear Flag Revolt and in early California government.
- Realize how one person commonly assumed numerous roles in Ide’s time, when California’s population was small.
- Discover why William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park retains Ide’s name even though he never lived in this adobe.

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

One of the earliest settlers of the North Valley, William B. Ide, embodied what we would consider today as the true “pioneer spirit.” A self-made man, Ide met challenges head-on, was hard working, honest and civic-minded, and helped settle California. Ide was an important participant in the Bear Flag Revolt and a prominent leader of the short-lived California Republic. He held many posts for the (then) county of Colusi. He settled downriver from the Red Bluffs area (the original name) before the town was founded, well south of William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park. Due to mistaken historical information, for years it was believed that Ide lived in the Adobe House. While recent research has revealed that he did not build or ever live on the land now bearing his name, the park remains a testament to this important California pioneer.

#### *Ide’s Ancestry*

William B. Ide’s family emigrated from England shortly after the landing of the *Mayflower* in 1620 at what would become Plymouth, Massachusetts.<sup>245</sup> According to

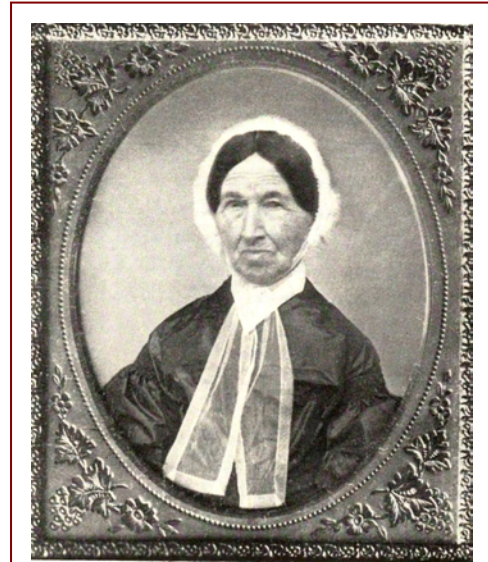


*Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor*  
by William Halsall painted in 1882

<sup>245</sup> Simeon Ide, *Who Conquered California? The Conquest of California by the Bear Flag Party, A Biographical Sketch of the Life of William B. Ide*. Glorieta, N.M.: The Rio Grande Press, Inc. 1967.P. 9.

Simeon Ide, William's older brother, their parent's ancestry was of humble origins, depending on their daily labors for their "daily bread." Lemuel Ide, William's father, was born in Rehoboth, Massachusetts on July 22, 1770. He was a carpenter and joiner by trade, as well as a small-scale farmer throughout his life. He seems to have had an adventurous spirit, relocating his family several times over the years.<sup>246</sup> William's mother, Sarah, the daughter of Jasper and Grace Stone, was born October 16, 1767. She came from benevolent and pious people, "zealous in every good word and work."<sup>247</sup>

Lemuel and Sarah were married in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts on November 24, 1793. They had eight children—five sons and three daughters (two were twins). After their marriage, they tended to move often, settling first in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, but soon relocated to Rutland, Massachusetts, then to Clarendon, Vermont and by 1799, to Reading, Vermont.<sup>248</sup> Lemuel Ide died on September 18, 1825 in Newfane, Vermont at the age of fifty-five. His wife died January 4, 1859 in Claremont, New Hampshire at the age of ninety-one.



William's mother, Sarah (Stone) Ide, from Louis W. Flanders's *Biography of Simeon Ide*.

### *William B. Ide's Early Life*

William Brown Ide was born on March 28, 1796 in Rutland, Worcester County, Massachusetts. He was the second child and second son of Lemuel and Sarah Ide. Their first son, Simeon, was born on September 28, 1794.<sup>249</sup> Biographer Louis W. Flanders writes:

In 1802, William B.'s father, while living in Reading, VT, heard of his brother William's death, and left his wife and three of their children with her brother Zenas Stone while he attended to his brother's small estate. Lemuel was gone about one year. William B. was left, and temporarily adopted, by the Reverend Isaac Beals, the first settled minister in Clarendon, VT. He lived with Rev. Beals until about 1805. When Lemuel returned, he bought a 20-acre lot, having a hovel for a house upon it. Lemuel was now able to provide for the support of his family so his son William B. was returned from Rev. Beals, to his parents,

<sup>246</sup> Louis W. Flanders, M.D., *Simeon Ide, Yeoman, Freeman, Pioneer Printer*. Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1931. P. 17.

<sup>247</sup> Ide, *Ibid*. P. 16.

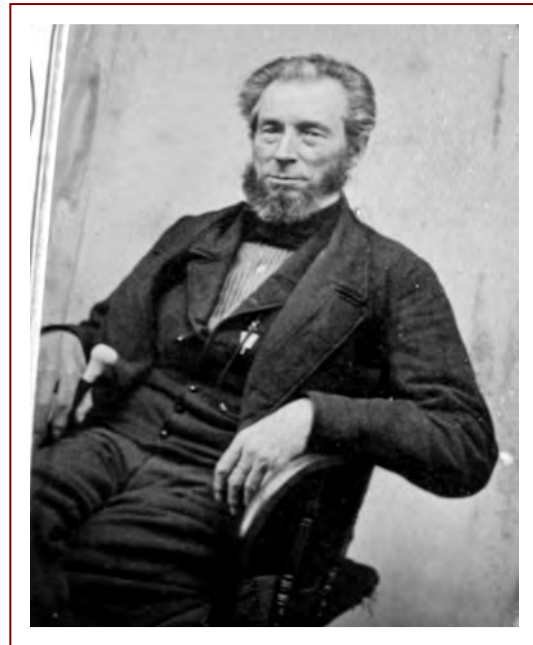
<sup>248</sup> Edith F. Dunbar, *A Genealogy of the Ide Family*. Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1931. P. 216.

<sup>249</sup> Flanders, *Ibid*.

and remained with them till “of age”. Lemuel however, continued to rove from place to place.<sup>250</sup>

According to Simeon Ide,

William’s ‘schooling’ privileges were limited to the common schools of those days, which were seldom kept in the several districts where he lived more than two months, each season, summer and winter. William B. worked at the carpenter and joiners trade with his father. He worked as a carpenter in Winchendon and Keene, New Hampshire and in Newfane and Woodstock, Vermont until 1833.<sup>251</sup>



These images are reputed to be of William B. Ide— one young, the other older, c.1850. The left one was given to William B. Ide Adobe SHP by Henry A. Schafer

### *The Ide Family and Their Restless Spirit*

William B. Ide married his cousin Susan Grout Haskell on April 17, 1820 in Northborough, Massachusetts. The Ides had a restless spirit.

William B. Ide’s adventuresome turn of mind made him a victim of the prevailing “Western fever” and in June 1833 he moved his family to Canton, Kentucky staying there only three months before moving on to Madison, Ohio.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 18.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.* P. 19.

The couple had nine children. Their birth locations help to track the family's movements.

- James Monroe, born May 2, 1822 at Keene, New Hampshire; died April 18, 1878 in Utah.
- William Haskell, born February 10, 1824 at Newfane, Vermont; died 1872 in California.
- Mary Eliza, born October 29, 1825 at Newfane, Vermont; died September 26, 1844 at Springfield, Illinois.
- Sarah Elizabeth, born November 1, 1827 at Newfane, Vermont; died April 1904 in California.
- Ellen Julia, born February 14, 1830 at Newfane Vermont; died October 4, 1833 at Canton, Kentucky.
- Susan Catherine, born August 1832 at Woodstock, Vermont; died December 1833 at Madison, Ohio.
- Daniel Webster, born March 6, 1835 at Madison, Ohio; died in 1872 in California.
- Lemuel Henry Clay, born December 24, 1837 at Madison Ohio; died in 1923 in Red Bluff, California.
- John Truman, born February 28, 1839 at or near Springfield, Illinois; died April 1839 at or near Springfield Illinois.<sup>253</sup>

Ide seems to have suffered with bouts of poor health throughout his life. During the family's several months residence in Madison, Ohio, his health did not permit him to work at his trade, except occasionally in warmer weather. He spent most of the winter months working as a teacher in the district schools. In a letter to his mother dated "*Madison, Ohio. Feb. 23, 1835,*" Ide wrote:

When I first arrived in Ohio, and commenced teaching, James [Ide's son] was sick; and I was scarcely able to walk. I could not look after and take care of my children at school—was frequently under the necessity of being carried home.

The previously quoted letter to his mother also offers a glimpse of William Ide's daily life, his parental pride, and his concerns. It continues:

So the first quarter James attended only about 25 days of school. As I was about attending my second quarter, James had the misfortune to inflict a severe wound upon the ankle of his left leg. The accident occurred as follows: I had just put a handle to, and ground very thin and sharp, an axe for my own use, and laid it on a high shelf—saying to Susan, at the same time, that I was going to a raising about a mile off, and that the boys were not to meddle with this axe, as I had made it very sharp. Scarcely had I left the house, when James came in, and began to climb up the logs of the house to get the axe. His mother told

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<sup>253</sup> Dunbar, *Ibid.* P. 237.



him he must not have it; but James answered, ‘Why, marm? Father allows *me* to use it.’ So, like a good, easy mother, she said no more, and James went out into the orchard to chop some dead peach trees.

Directly Susan heard some on hollering; but as the girls and William were playing about the house, and making much noise, she thought no harm’ when, a little while after, she discovered that James had cut his ankle [sic], and was bleeding very fast—the axe having entered nearly half of the blade, severing some of the leaders of the toes, and opening one of the arteries—His mother finding him in this situation, held the wound together, while William ran after me. Understanding about the case by William, I sent a man for a surgeon, and then hastened home. But recollecting that the man had several miles to go, and that the road was extremely bad at that time—and the wound continuing to bleed, it was evident he could not survive the loss of blood that must be occasioned by waiting for the surgeon... I went immediately about dressing it. I tied up the blood-vessels, then sewed the parts together. James fainted, and afterwards became very sick; but soon began to recover.

He is a very excellent reader—understands the English very well—has studied geography once through—has gone through Adams’ New Arithmetic, and is now engaged in defining some of the more intricate words in the English language.



Daughter Sarah Elizabeth Ide Cooper Healy in her later years from Fred B. Rogers’ *Bear Flagger & Builder*

William had about the like opportunity, but has not improved so well. He is some larger than James, and stout. He is not much troubled by care of any kind.

Mary is a good girl; helps her mother a good deal; reads and spells well; studies grammar and makes her own clothes, pretty much; is as tall as James, and generally stands at the head of the first class, of late; since each scholar has to define, as well as spell the word.

Sarah is the baby, and is therefore her father’s dear child; and, herefore. I will say but little about her—only that she reads with Mary, and thinks she can do any thing as well as she does!<sup>254</sup>

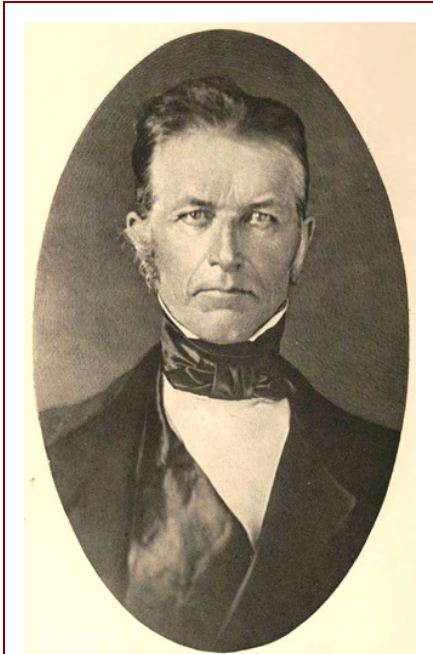
In her later years, daughter Sarah Elizabeth, who became Sarah Elizabeth Ide Cooper Healy, recollected her father for her uncle, Simeon Ide, who was

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.* P. 22.

writing *A Biographical Sketch of the Life of William B. Ide*. Sarah Elizabeth wrote about the family's farm in Madison, Ohio as:

...a very good one—having good buildings, being well fenced, and under a good state of cultivation; he paid a part down for it, and the balance in less than two years, which we made off the farm—father and brothers (as well as the rest of the family who were old enough) all working; for we did not hire any help, and were soon out of debt. This was a comfortable and pleasant home, with kind and intelligent neighbors.<sup>255</sup>



Simeon Ide, taken from Louis W. Flanders, M.D., *Simeon Ide, Yeoman, Freeman, Pioneer Printer*

### *The Ides Move West*

In 1838, Ide felt the urge to move again. He was 49 years of age when he decided to make the journey, outfitting two covered wagons with the intention of moving to Missouri. Having reached Jacksonville, Illinois, after four weeks of difficult travel, Ide decided to remain there for one winter and later settled on a farm near Springfield, Illinois. The family resided there until 1844.<sup>256</sup>

In the winter of 1844-1845, Ide made plans to travel to the Pacific Coast. At the time, all nine of their children had been born, but four had died. After selling the farm and wintering over with one of William's brothers, they set out for Oregon on April 1, 1845.

Much of what is known of the Ide family's trek to California comes from the Ide's daughter Sarah, who made the journey when she was eighteen years old. She recalled:

On that day [April 1, 1845] we bid our good friends farewell. It was a sad day to us. All our old neighbors came to help us pack our things into our three wagons and to see us off. My father selected the timber for two of these wagons, and had them made to order during the winter. He also made the beds, bows and covers at our home. Mother and I sewing the canvas covering; which, being fastened to the bows and sideboards of the wagons, were painted a light slate-color, the same as the body of the wagon. Our wagons were very neat looking, and attracted a good

<sup>255</sup> Fred Blackburn Rogers, *William Brown Ide, Bear Flagger*. San Francisco, Calif.: John Howell-Books, 1962. P. 3.

<sup>256</sup> Ide, *ibid*. P. 29.

deal of attention while passing through Illinois and Missouri. Many questions were asked as to our destination.

We had a sale the morning we started, and sold, off the greater part of our furniture. We packed our cooking utensils, tin cups, tin plates—with provisions to last us six months. Mother, my little brothers—Daniel, aged 10 and Lemuel, aged 8, and Thomas Crafton (a little boy that had been given to my mother), all rode in a wagon. I rode on horseback 3 days, to help drive the cattle; riding on a side-saddle. The drove of cattle numbered 165, including 28 working oxen. We camped the first night ten miles from our old home - cooked our supper by a camp-fire.<sup>257</sup>



"Emigration to the Western Country" from *Our Country* by B.J. Lossing

Before leaving Illinois, Ide agreed to send information back to his local newspaper, the *Sangamon Journal*. He continued his correspondence with the *Journal* during his emigration (see Appendix), but his actual personal accounts of the trek west are very minimal. It was around August 9<sup>th</sup> that Ide's wagon train arrived at Fort Hall. The travelers were approximately halfway through their journey and already the winds of change were blowing. Lansford W. Hastings had crossed the plains to Oregon in 1842

and then moved to California in 1843. He returned to the States in 1844 and to Cincinnati in 1845, where he published his *Emigrants Guide to Oregon and California*. In it, he described the superior advantages of California.<sup>258</sup>



Fort Hall, 1849. Courtesy of the Idaho Historical Society

At Fort Hall, Ide decided to head for California instead of Oregon. Daughter Sarah wrote:

While there [Fort Hall] Father changed his plan—concluded to go to California: but first, before definitely settling the question, put it to vote of his company, and they voted for California instead of Oregon.<sup>259</sup>

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.* P. 7.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.* P.18.

<sup>259</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 35.

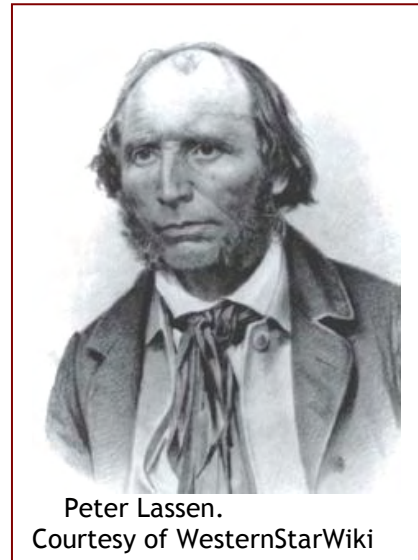
Ide's journey to California took seven months. After a laborious overland journey, the party arrived at Sutter's Fort. Sarah recalled:

On the 25<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1845, my Father drove down into the American River valley, and in a few days more we camped near Sutter's Fort, where Sacramento City is now.<sup>260</sup>

### *Settling in California*

While at Sutter's Fort Ide met Peter Lassen, who owned a large tract of land on Deer Creek approximately 130 miles up the Sacramento valley from Sutter's Fort. Lassen offered Ide a cabin to spend the winter. In exchange, Ide agreed to help Lassen build a sawmill on the property. According to Sarah Elizabeth's recollections:

Father met a Mr. Peter Lassen, who owned a large tract of land 130 miles up the Sacramento valley, on Deer Creek, who told him that he was the very man that he wanted to build him a sawmill. Lassen having the water-power, and Father a circular saw and some mil-irons which he had brought across the Plains, he told Father to go right up with his family to his Rancho, and tell Mr. Sill to clean out one of his tenements, and that he (Lassen) would be home soon, and show him the mill site and set him to work. In just one week after we had moved into this small house of one room, Mr. Lassen came home, and brought another family with him, (one of his own countrymen, a German<sup>261</sup>); and the first thing he said to Father was, that he wanted his house!



Peter Lassen.  
Courtesy of WesternStarWiki

This was about the middle of November, 1845. We packed every thing into our wagons; and, getting our cattle together, started up river and forded it. After going about seven miles, we came to a camp of one family, (a Mr. Tusting) who had bargained to take care of a Mr. Chard's cattle, and live on his Rancho—had camped near Sacramento River, on H. R. Thome's Rancho, in order to have the company of Mr. Thome's man who had charge of his (Mr. T's) cattle. We camped near them. They being very anxious to have us remain with them all winter. As the rainy season had already commenced, the weather was stormy. Father, with two other men, built a log-cabin. All of us lived in it until April 1846.

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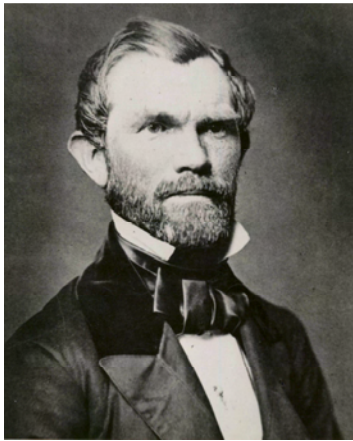
<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* P. 43.

<sup>261</sup> Sarah Ide was mistaken. Peter Lassen was actually born in Farum, Denmark on October 31, 1800.



During the winter, which was a very wet one, we were surrounded by high-water floods—our cattle swimming from one bank to another.<sup>262</sup>

Josiah Belden obtained a land grant signed by Mexican Governor Micheltorena on December 24, 1844. It consisted for four square leagues and was approved by the Departmental Assembly October 8, 1845. After obtaining the land north of the Thomes Ranch, Belden offered Ide the northern half of his ranch, if he would manage the entire grant for three years. An agreement to that effect was struck in April 1846, and the Ide family moved into a partially finished log cabin on the *Rancho Las Baulinas* (Belden’s rancho), later called *El Rancho de la Barranca Colorada*. This name was derived from Red Bank Creek, which was the northern boundary of Belden’s grant.



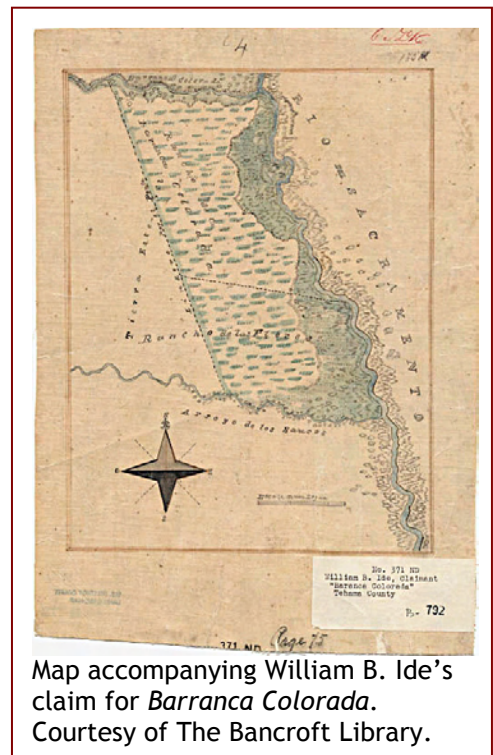
Josiah Belden. Courtesy of the Historic Landmarks Commission, San Jose.

At some time during that fall or the ensuing winter, Ide made a reconnaissance of the Belden rancho, which he was to occupy. About three miles north of the present town of Gerber, is the southeast corner of the Rancho. About 1.2 miles north of that point and near the west bank of the Sacramento River, the survey map shows Post 7. About 150 feet northwest of that post is shown an “Ide House,” not further described in the field notes. That house is presumed to have been the one, then partially completed, which the Ides occupied in April 1846.

*Barranca Colorada* contained over 17,700 acres. Extending northwest from its

southeast corner to the mouth of Red Bank Creek is a bench which rises about twenty feet above the large area to the east, which became known as “Ide’s Bottom”, and which today is practically devoid of habitations. The bench marks the beginning of extensive uplands, which continue some six miles westward within the rancho.<sup>263</sup>

After caring for Belden’s cattle for three years, Belden and his wife Sarah transferred the northern half of the rancho to Ide on April 12, 1849, as well as the southern half to Ide, James M. Ide, William C. Cooper (who married Sarah Elizabeth Ide in 1850), and William H. Ide, on May 24, 1849. The latter released his right on June 23, 1849.<sup>264</sup> Another Ide house is shown on the plat of the township adjoining Barranca



Map accompanying William B. Ide’s claim for *Barranca Colorada*. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.* P. 47.

<sup>263</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 31.

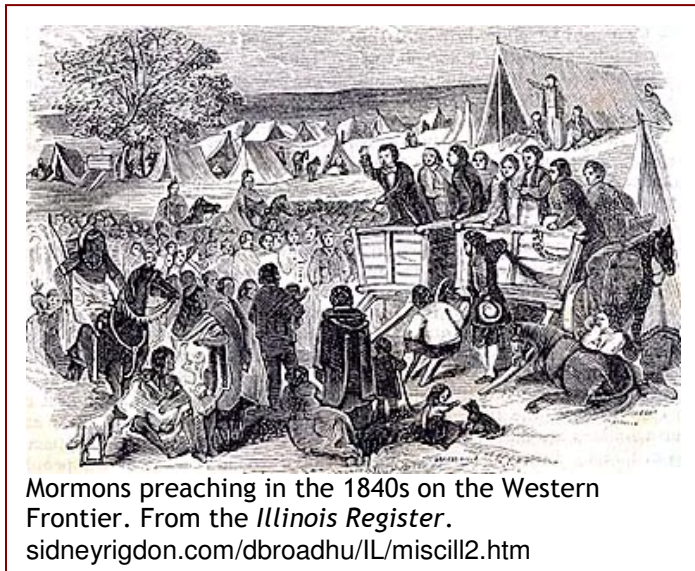
<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* P. 74.



Colorada on the north. It is plotted just south of Red Bank Creek, the north boundary of the rancho, and it seems to have been the so-called “Massachusetts House,” named in the Ide Probate case. Its location was north of the east portion of present Riverside Avenue and near the Corning Canal.

### *Was William B. Ide a Mormon?*

It is likely that William B. Ide became an adherent of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) faith. However, the exact date of his conversion was not recorded. Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft felt that conflicting charges and silence in Ide’s own statements left the question of his being Mormon in doubt.<sup>265</sup> However, Mormon records clearly indicate that Ide was, in fact, a member of the Mormon Church.



Brigham Young’s brother, Lorenzo Dow Young, visited the Ide home, in Springfield, Illinois in 1844, and later wrote, “He [Ide] joined the church in the early day but at that time was rather in the background.” Mormon Church records of August 12, 1838 list a “Brother Ide who resided near the city of Dayton [Ohio]” as a member of Zion’s Camp, and Temple records of the W. B. Ide family indicate that two of Ide’s sons were born at Madison, Ohio.<sup>266 267</sup> The *Nauvoo* [Illinois] *Neighbor* of May 22, 1844, notes:

...that Ide acted as a delegate from Sangamon County, Illinois, at the Mormon convention which nominated Joseph Smith for President of the United States and Sidney Rigdon as Vice President.<sup>268</sup>

### *The Bear Flag Revolt*

During the winter of 1845-1846, rumors had spread throughout California that the Mexican government planned to evict all the American settlers who did not hold

<sup>265</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol V., 1845-1848. San Francisco, Calif.: The History Company, 1886. Pp. 159-9.

<sup>266</sup> Allen Fifield, “Why Ide Came to California,” *The Far Westerner* July 1968, Vol 9, No.3. P.2

<sup>267</sup> Benjamin M. Hughes, “William Brown Ide, Pioneer, Bear Flagger & Builder.” *Dogtown Territorial* No. 16. Winter 1993. Paradise, Calif.: Bill and Penny Anderson, publishers. P.5.

<sup>268</sup> Rogers, *Ibid*. P. 3.

Mexican land grants. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Prefect Manuel Castro sent copies of a proclamation stating that the purchase or acquisition of land by foreigners, who had not become naturalized as Mexicans, “*will be null and void, and they will be subject (if they do not retire voluntarily from the country) to be expelled whenever the country may find it convenient*” to do so. Copies were sent to American Counsel Thomas O. Larkin and also to Vice-Consul William Leidesdorff at Yerba Buena.<sup>269</sup> According to Fred B. Rogers’ book, in *William B. Ide, Bear Flagger*:

Ide tells of having received at his cabin on the morning of June 8<sup>th</sup> the following unsigned written message, delivered by an Indian ‘agent’; “Notice is hereby given, that a large body of armed Spaniards on horseback, amounting to 250 men, have been seen on their way to the Sacramento Valley, destroying the crops, burning the houses, and driving off the cattle. Capt. Frémont invites every freeman in the valley to come to his camp at the Buttes[sic], immediately; and he hopes to stay the enemy and put a stop to his—[Here the sheet is folded and worn in two, and no more is found]. Ide was off for Frémont’s camp without delay.”<sup>270</sup>

Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft noted: “In June ’46 he [Ide] joined the Bear party, being apparently one of the few settlers who acted in good faith and was induced to believe the false reports that the Americans were in danger.”<sup>271</sup>



Portrait of John C. Frémont by William S. Jewett. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution.

On June 10<sup>th</sup> the emigrants, who would become known as the Bear Flaggers, met with Capt. John Frémont and learned of, *The Plan of Conquest*, which was quite simple: First, select a dozen men who *have nothing to lose, but everything to gain*. Second, encourage them to commit depredations against Gen. Castro, the usurper, and thus supply the camp with horses *necessary for a trip to the States*. Third, to make prisoners of some of the principal men, and thus provoke Castro to *strike the first blow* in a war with the United States. This done, finish the conquest by uniting the forces, and “marching back to the States.”<sup>272</sup>

While the emigrants were on their way to Frémont’s camp, word was brought to Frémont that Lieutenants Francisco Arce and Jose Maria Alviso had arrived at Sutter’s Fort with eight men on June 8, 1846 herding 170 horses. The animals had been obtained in the Sonoma area

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.* P. 38.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.* P. 39.

<sup>271</sup> *California Pioneer Register and Index, 1542-1848*. Extracted from *The History of California, 1884-90* by Hubert Howe Bancroft. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1964. P.196.

<sup>272</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 114.

in an arrangement between General Castro and Colonel Mariano G. Vallejo, in command at Sonoma. Rumor had it these horses were to be used to drive Americans from the country.<sup>273</sup>

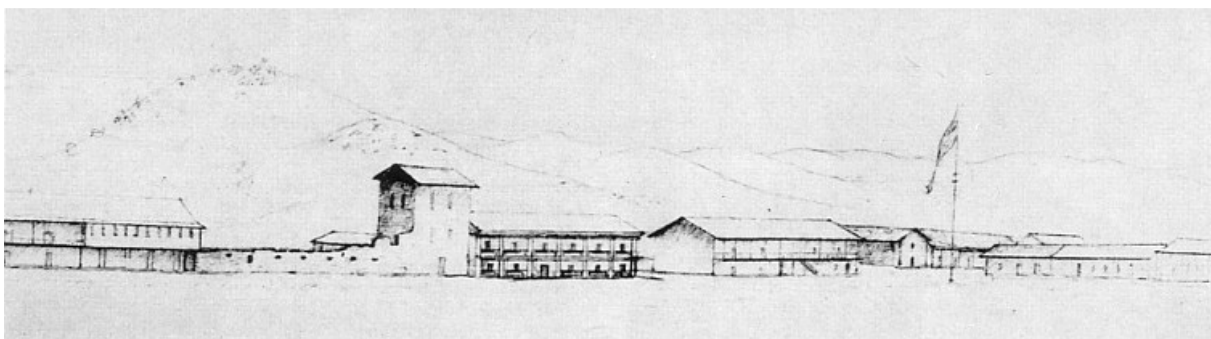
At Capt. Frémont’s urging, a group of about ten men, led by Ezekiel Merritt, caught up with the horses and their Mexican escorts at Murphy’s ranch on the Cosumnes River on June 10, 1846. During the capture, the Americans boasted that they would capture Sonoma. The horses were taken by the Americans, while Lieut. Arce and his men were sent on their way, via horseback. Arce even retained his sword. Merritt and his group returned to Frémont’s camp with the horses on June 11, 1846.<sup>274</sup>



California Landmark marking Murphy's Corral, where the Bear Flag Revolt began.

Fearing that the released men would spread word about the emigrant uprising and that it was probable the garrison at Sonoma might be alerted, rather than surprised, the “Bear Flaggers” immediately left for Sonoma under the leadership of Ezekiel Merritt. The group numbered approximately 20 men, and included Ide. They arrived in the Napa Valley on June 12<sup>th</sup>, where they stayed until late June 13<sup>th</sup>. While there, more emigrants joined the cause and by the time they departed for Sonoma, the group numbered thirty-two. They arrived in Sonoma just before dawn on June 14, 1846. At daybreak, they surrounded Mariano Vallejo’s Casa Grande on the Plaza.

When Mariano Vallejo, who served as the Mexican military commander of the northern frontier, looked out of his home on the Plaza, he found it surrounded by a rag-tag group of men that Robert Semple later described.



Sonoma Plaza drawn by George Gibbs in 1851. Courtesy of the California State Military Museum.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.* P. 41.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

Almost the whole party was dressed in leather hunting shirts, many of them greasy; taking the whole party; together, they were about as rough a looking set of men as one could well imagine. It is not to be wondered at that any one would feel some dread in falling into their hands.<sup>275</sup>

Vallejo upon meeting the visitors, was placed under house arrest. Along with Gen. Vallejo, the captured included Vallejo's brother Salvador, and Frenchman Victor Prudon. Ezekiel Merritt, Robert Semple, and William Knight began negotiations for the surrender of Mariano Vallejo and Sonoma. It was thought necessary to exchange written guaranties between the parties. There were two, one in English and the other in Spanish. Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft translated the one in Spanish:

Be it know by these presents, that, having been surprised by numerous armed force which took me prisoner, with the chief and officers belonging to the garrison of this place that said force took possession of having found absolutely defenseless, myself as well as the undersigned officers pledge our word of honor that, being under the guaranties of prisoners of war, we will not take up arms for or against said armed force, from which we have received the present intimation, and a signed writing which guarantees our lives, families, and property, and those of all the residents of this jurisdiction, so long as we make no opposition.

A second document was signed by Ezekiel Merritt, R. Semple, William Fallon and Samuel Kelsey:

We, the undersigned, having resolved to establish a government of on (upon) republican principles, in connection with others of our fellow citizens, and having taken up arms to support it, we have taken three Mexican officers as prisoners, Gen. M.G. Vallejo, Lieut-col Victor Prudon, and Capt. D. Salvador Vallejo, having formed and published to the world no regular plan of government, feel it our duty to say that it is not our intention to take or injure any person who is not found in opposition to the cause, nor will we take or destroy the property of private individuals further than is necessary for our immediate support.<sup>276</sup>

Producing these documents took so long inside Vallejo's home that the restless group outside elected John



Portrait of Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, c.1880-1885. Courtesy of Wikipedia

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<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.* P. 42.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.* P. 43.



Grigsby to investigate the cause. When Grigsby had not returned after a long while, the group called upon Ide to investigate the delays. Ide found Robert Semple still writing the articles of capitulation, while Merritt, Knight, and Grigsby appeared to have succumbed to Vallejo's generous spirits. The group was drunk. At this point, there was confusion in some of the minds of the Bear Flaggers. Authority for the revolt was questioned by some. John Grigsby, doubting their authority and thinking it rested with Capt. Frémont, said:

Gentlemen, I have been deceived; I cannot go with you; I resign and back out of the scrape. I can take my family to the mountains as cheap as any of you. He declined to retain the leadership of the party.

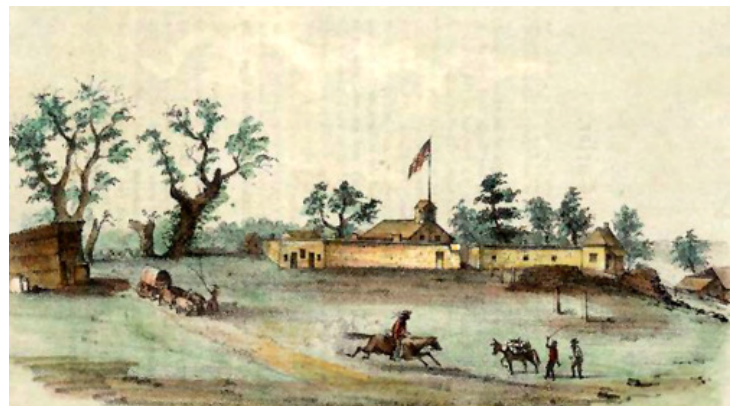
Ide, a teetotaler, responded in the confusion with:

Saddle no horse for me. I will lay my bones here, before I will take upon myself the ignominy of commencing an honorable work, and then flee like cowards, like thieves, when no enemy is in sight. In vain, will you say you had honorable motives; who will believe it? Flee this day, and the longest life cannot wear off you disgrace! Choose ye! what you will be! We are robbers, or we must be conquerors.<sup>277</sup>

It was decided to send Vallejo and his party to Sutter's Fort. Grigsby, Semple, Merritt, Hargane, Knight, and four or five others escorted the prisoners, leaving Sonoma about 11 a.m. on June 14<sup>th</sup>. They arrived at Frémont's camp on the American River late on the afternoon of June 16<sup>th</sup>. Frémont refused to free them, and sent them that same evening to Sutter's Fort.

According to Bancroft,

Ide soon came to regard himself as leader in a grand revolutionary movement, as conqueror of California; his men regarded him simply as temporary commandant of Sonora [*sic*—it should be Sonoma], chosen to that position for his zeal in the cause and some educational advantages, and they were willing to indulge him in harmless eccentricities, paying but slight attention to his grandiloquent proclamations, or his peculiar views of himself and the republic he thought he had founded.<sup>278</sup>

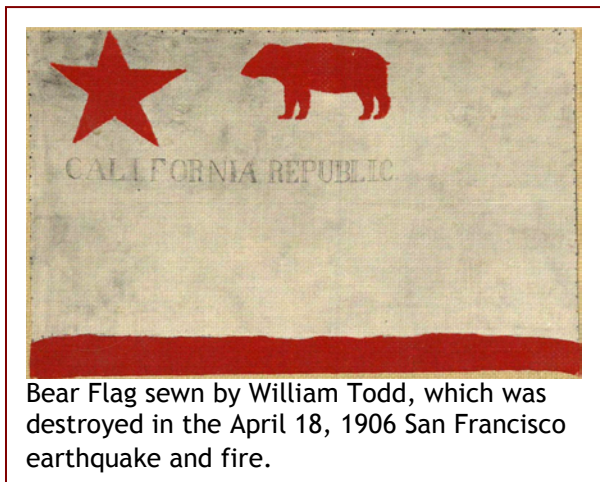


Sutter's Fort, 1849, by George Victor Cooper.  
Courtesy of [www.legendsofamerica.com](http://www.legendsofamerica.com)

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.* P. 44.

<sup>278</sup> *California Pioneer Register, Ibid.* P. 197.





The “revolutionists” designed and produced the new “Bear Flag.” Ide’s brother Simeon later described it as being made of plain cotton cloth, and ornamented with the red flannel of a shirt from the back of one of the men, and christened by the words “California Republic,” in red-paint letters on both sides...

William Todd of Illinois produced the flag with a grizzly bear, chosen for an emblem of strength and its unyielding resistance.<sup>279</sup>

The flag also featured a star. The elements of the design later were adopted later for California’s official state flag. It was hoisted on June 14<sup>th</sup> over the Plaza.

Ide wrote one of several Bear Flag Proclamations:

To all persons, citizens of Sonoma, requesting them to remain at peace, and to follow their rightful occupations without fear of molestation. The Commander in Chief of the troops assembled at the fortress of Sonoma, gives his inviolable pledge to all persons in California, not found under arms, that they shall not be disturbed in their persons, their property or social relations, one to another, by man under his command.

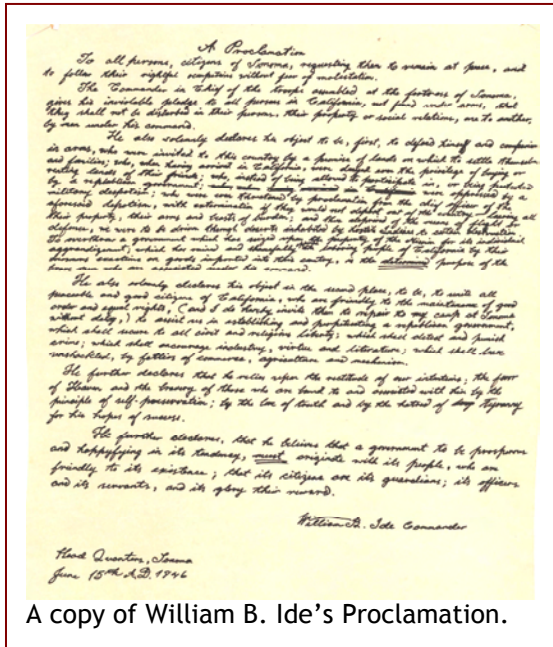
He also solemnly declares his object to be, first, to defend himself and companions in arms, who were invited to this country by a promise of lands on which to settle themselves and families; who when having arrived in California, were denied even the privilege of buying or renting lands of their friends; who instead of being allowed to participate in, or being protected by a republican government; were apprised by a military despotism; who were ever threatened by proclamation from the chief officer of the aforesaid despotism, with extermination if they would not depart out of the country—leaving all their property, their arms and beasts of burden; and thus deprived of the means of flight or defense, we were to be driven through deserts inhabited by hostile Indians to certain destruction. To overthrow a government which has seized upon the property of the Mission for its individual aggrandizement; which has ruined and shamefully oppressed the laboring people of California by their enormous exactions on goods imported into this country, is the determined purpose of the brave men who are associated under his command.

<sup>279</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* Pp. 230-231.

He also solemnly declares his object in the second place, to be, to unite all peaceable and good citizens of California, who are friendly to the maintenance of good or and equal rights, (and I do hereby invite them to repair to my camp at Sonoma without delay,) to assist us in establishing

and perpetuating a republican government, which shall secure to all civil and religious liberty; which shall detest and punish crime; which shall encourage industry, virtue and literature; which shall leave unshackled, by fetters of commerce, agriculture and mechanism.

He further declares that he relies upon the rectitude of our intentions; the favor of Heaven and the bravery of those who are bound to and associated with him by the principle of self-preservation; by the love of truth and by the hatred of tyranny for his hopes of success.



A copy of William B. Ide's Proclamation.

He further declares, that he believes that a government to be prosperous and happyfying in its tendency, must originate with its people, who are friendly to its existence; that its citizens are its guardians and its servants, and its glory their reward.

William B. Ide Commander  
 Head Quarters, Sonoma  
 June, 15<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1846<sup>280</sup>

Two or three days later, two men who have been directed to acquire gunpowder from a ranch on the Russian River, were captured and killed by Mexicans near Santa Rosa. When word of this act reached Sonoma, a larger party was sent to retrieve the powder. On the morning of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Ide's lieutenant, Henry L. Ford, left with 17 or 18 men to catch the Mexicans. They followed the trail south toward San Rafael. Meanwhile, Mexican authorities had sent a division of militia (50-60 men) across San Pablo Bay toward San Rafael. They were joined by others from Santa Rosa, who camped at Camillo's Rancho Olompali, north of San Rafael. The Bear Flaggers located the Mexicans on June 24<sup>th</sup>. In the ensuing battle, at least one Mexican man was killed, and another wounded. The Mexicans retreated toward San Rafael and the Bear Flaggers returned to Sonoma.

<sup>280</sup>Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 46-47.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, Frémont arrived at Sonoma with 90 men, and left the next day for San Rafael, hoping to catch up with fleeing Mexicans, but they had vanished. On July 5,



One of the canons originally at the *Castillo de San Joaquin* cast in 1673. It was spiked by Frémont's men.  
Courtesy of the National Park Service.

1846, Frémont officially took command of the revolutionary forces at Sonoma. The men moved southward. Borrowing a longboat to cross the strait (which Fremont named the "Golden Gate"), they seized the deserted *Castillo de San Joaquin* (commonly known as the San Francisco

*presidio*) with its cannons, many of which were lying in the dirt because their wooden carriages had rotted away.<sup>281</sup> Frémont's men spiked the guns, driving iron files into the touchholes to render them inoperable.

On July 9<sup>th</sup> word arrived that the United States had declared war on Mexico. On that day, Capt. John B. Montgomery of the U.S. sloop *Portsmouth* landed a force of sailors and marines to officially seize Yerba Buena (later called San Francisco). The Bear Flaggers immediately struck their flag, replacing it with American colors. The short-lived Bear Flag revolt was over.

Bancroft noted: "The assumption of command by John Frémont was regarded by Ide as a grievous wrong to himself..."<sup>282</sup> At the insistence of his men, Ide's group joined Frémont's forces in the campaign against Mexico. Ide served as a private in the California Battalion and was part of the first expedition that marched south to take the rest of California.<sup>283</sup> Ide stayed with the American forces and was present at the raising of the United States flag over Los Angeles on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

Ide returned to Sonoma in September and later went home in late November.<sup>284</sup> In a letter from Vernon in the Sacramento Valley, William B. Ide wrote to one of his brothers:

Since my return from the south, they [the Mexicans] had risen up and taken all the lower country. Commodore [sic] Stockton has gone to see to it. I gathered up a few 'bears' and sent him just to frighten or catch them (He stated that the 'Spaniards' were more afraid of the Bears than they were of either the marines or the sailors.) I told the commodore that I would go myself, but he said I was an old man and had done enough; besides he wanted I should go up the Sacramento Valley, and

<sup>281</sup> California State Military Museum. [www.militarymuseum.org/CastilloSanJoaquin.html](http://www.militarymuseum.org/CastilloSanJoaquin.html)

<sup>282</sup> *California Pioneer Register*, *Ibid.*

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>284</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* Pp. 52-57.

see to matters there, and come back to Yerba Buena, against his return, when he would find something else for me to do, not exactly of a military character.<sup>285</sup>

### *In the Aftermath of the Bear Flag Revolt*

On May 17, 1847, William B. Ide was appointed Alcalde by Col. Richard B. Mason, shortly after Mason had succeeded Gen. Stephen W. Kearney as military governor of California. At the time, there were no viable laws in California—except existing Mexican laws. Mason believed that these laws should be obeyed. Although Ide was not a Mexican citizen or a Mexican official, he did help to fill the authority gap during the transition from Mexican to American rule<sup>286</sup>

Few records exist concerning Ide's service as Alcalde, however in the newspaper *Californian*, dated July 3, 1847, the following notice appeared:

On the 17<sup>th</sup> At Cash Creek by Wm. B. Ide, Esq., Mr. John S. Williams of Sacramento Valley, to Miss Mariah L. Gordon late of Independence, Mo.

At some point in his life, William B. Ide acquired the skills of a land surveyor. On May 18, 1847, L. W. Boggs, Henry L. Ford, R. Semple, Benj. Kelsey, and thirty-three others petitioned Gen Stephen W. Kearny to appoint Ide to an office. As Ide was a competent land surveyor and possessed the requisite instruments, the petition was successful. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, Col Richard B. Mason, military governor of California, appointed Ide to be a land surveyor for and in the Northern Department of California.<sup>287</sup> Ide placed two advertisements in the July 31<sup>st</sup> issue of *The Californian*. They read:

The undersigned will attend to such surveys as may be entrusted to his care; for \$4 per mile for horizontal line; establishing corners \$1; for recording, copies of field notes, executing maps, & etc., the customary prices. Twenty-five per cent discount for cash down. Letters addressed to W.B. Ide, Sonoma, U.C. will meet attention.

William B. Ide, Land Surveyor,  
in and for the Northern Department, U.S.  
Sonoma, July 1847



A surveyor at work.  
<http://www.nrm.gld.gov.au/museum/index.html>

<sup>285</sup> Benjamin M. Hughes, "William Brown Ide, Pioneer, Bear Flagger & Builder." Part 5 *Dogtown Territorial*, No. 16. Winter 1994. Paradise, Calif.: Bill and Penny Anderson, publishers. P.56.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.* P. 57.

<sup>287</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 64.



WANTED. A young man acquainted with the use of the compass[sic], will find good employment by applying to W.B. Ide.  
Sonoma, July 1847<sup>288</sup>

Ide surveyed a number of large *ranchos*, including: Basquol or Lassen's Rancho, containing sixty thousand acres in 1847; part of Hyacinth Farm, comprising 2,880 acres in 1847; and Lawson Rancho, divide the four leagues of land for a property transaction between Daniel Sill and Harriet Besse.<sup>289</sup>



Placer mining at Foster's Bar, c.1851. Painting by Ernest Narjot. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

News of the gold discovery in Coloma Valley on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1848, soon reached Ide. With his sons, James M. Ide and William H. Ide, and William C. Cooper, his son-in-law, the men went in search of the precious metal, returning a few months later with \$35,000 in gold dust.<sup>290</sup> They made their fortune before thousands arrived in the Rush of '49.<sup>291</sup> Ide used his new-found wealth to travel East to visit relatives in Vermont and New Hampshire.<sup>292</sup>

By 1851, he had had enough of mining and of California. In a letter to one of his brothers, he wrote:

I do not seek more wealth; but simply wish to exchange what I have for cash, that I may leave California once and for all. I sell slowly-not half as fast as my stock increases. I have collected about \$6000.00 since I came home [from his nine-ten month stay in the east]. I have tried to sell all at once; but few persons have the means to buy 1000 head of cattle, 150 horses, and 30,000 acres of land..<sup>293</sup>

The letter illustrates Ide's desire to liquidate his assets and move out of California. Perhaps after just returning from his birthplace in the East and losing his wife Susan (she had died in Red Bluff in 1850), he was feeling no alliance to the state of California.

His disposition seems to have changed, however, when writing another letter to a brother, dated November 9, 1851, about his new place of residence:

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<sup>288</sup> Hughes, *Ibid.* P. 58.

<sup>289</sup> William B. Ide Adobe SHP Research files.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 65.

<sup>292</sup> Park Research files.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* P. 61.

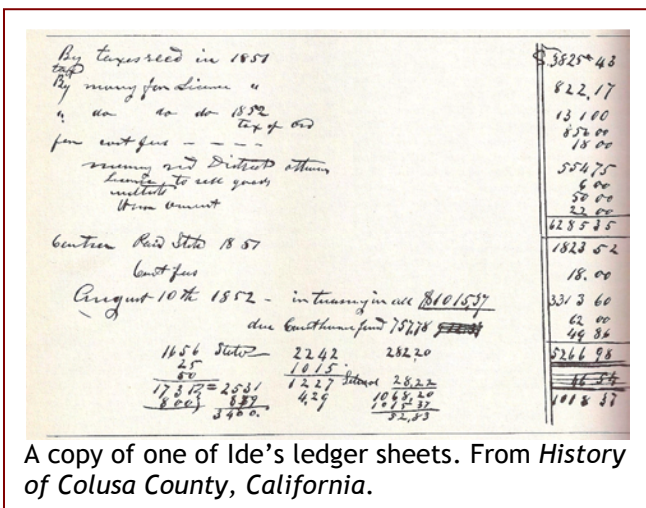


Thus and so are my public duties explained... Monroeville is in the heart of the largest valley in California, about 20 miles from my lower Rancho. It is surrounded by rich and fertile lands on all sides, extending far and wide. The little valley of the Connecticut affords no such scenery. It may be said to surpass ours in beauty... the wild geese have come from the north to feed upon our valleys, and the bears have come from the mountains to feed upon the grapes that entwine the trees along the streams of the valleys. The antelope still bounds upon the plains; the deer scud amid the foliage of leafy trees, and the elk herd in the valleys between the hills. Such are the rural scenes on this 'Pacific Slope'.<sup>294</sup>

He may have felt at peace with his new surroundings, leaving the burden of the ranch to his sons and son-in-law, but his civic duty compelled him to take on all of the duties for Colusa County, an entity that today would encompass *Butte, Colusa, Glenn*

HISTORY OF COLUSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.							193
OFFICERS OF COLUSA COUNTY FROM 1850 TO 1880.							
PREPARED FOR THE COUNTY HISTORY.							
Joint Senator.	Joint Assemblymen.	County Judge,	Sheriff.	County Clerk,	County Treasurer,	County Assessor.	Date.
James Specter	J. E. Brackett						1850
G. Vallejo	J. S. Bradford	J. S. Holland	D. G. Huntoon	Uriah P. Monroe	Wm. B. Ide		1851
Martin E. Cooke	Geo. W. Crane	Wm. B. Ide	John F. Willis	E. D. Wheatley	Wm. B. Ide	W. G. Chard	1851
M. M. Wambot	Henry L. Ford	J. F. Willis*	John F. Willis	E. D. Wheatley	Wm. B. Ide	M. Meador*	1852
M. M. Wambot	Geo. M. Carhart	J. F. Willis	H. P. Beamis*	E. D. Wheatley	Wm. Vincent*	M. Meador	1853
T. Sprague	G. W. Bowie	J. C. Huls	J. C. Johnson	J. B. Laing	G. W. L'Amoroux	Elijah Holt*	1854
T. Sprague	J. L. McCutchan	J. C. Huls	J. C. Johnson	J. B. Laing	G. W. L'Amoroux	Wm. Chapman	1855
Amel Dosh	E. J. Lewis	J. C. Huls	J. C. Johnson	J. B. Laing	G. W. L'Amoroux	N. W. Dunn	1856
Amel Dosh	H. W. Dunlan	J. C. Huls	J. C. Johnson	J. B. Laing	G. W. L'Amoroux	N. W. Dunn	1857

Note the offices of County Judge and County Treasurer for Colusa County held by William B. Ide.



A copy of one of Ide's ledger sheets. From *History of Colusa County, California*.

and Tehama Counties! —nearly as large as the state of New Hampshire! It was a period of major transition for California.<sup>295</sup> Ide was riding the tide of change during a critical time when California as a state was being defined. In December 1851, he described his work in Colusa County:

I am seated in the office of the County Clerk of Colusa County, where I am at present by virtue of the elected franchise been made Judge of the county Court,

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.* P. 74.

<sup>295</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 210.

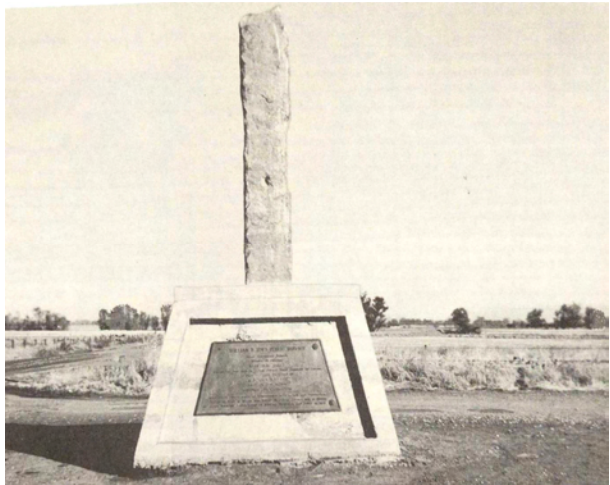
civil and criminal, President of the Commissioner’s Court or court of Sessions for said county, and Judge of Probate, and by appointment duly recorded, I am made the County Clerk—Clerk of the District Court (9th District), Clerk of the County Court and of the court of Sessions, Clerk of the Probate Court, county Recorder and county Auditor. These several offices at present limit my official duties: but I suppose I shall, just to accommodate our floating population, be compelled to serve as ‘Treasurer, Deputy Sheriff, Deputy County Surveyor’—and very probably as Coroner and Justice of the Peace—and possibly as Deputy Notary Public.

This account may excite some surprise; but I will explain: nine-tenths of our population are here today, and tomorrow are somewhere else. Our population are like birds of passage except their migrations are not exactly periodical... all the circumstances which make it difficult to obtain responsible.<sup>296</sup>

Ide took upon himself the duties of County Clerk, as he could find no one else to fill the position. He reflected:

And, there being no person willing to devote his whole time in keeping the office open, according as the law requires, at the county seat, and who was able to procure the requisite bonds, as I was bound in compliance with my official duties to be at the county seat to attend twenty-four distinct sessions of various courts, per annum, and considering I should save 2,000 miles travel, I rented out my rancho and

accepted the services as Deputy County Clerk, and am become my own clerk, in accordance with the old maxim, if you would have a good servant and one you like, serve yourself.<sup>297</sup>



A marker commemorating William Brown Ide and the town of Monroeville, California

Even while holding many positions for Colusa County, Ide felt alone. The many offices he held must have been stressful. He began a letter dated July 23, 1851 to an unknown addressee, “I am very lonely...”<sup>298</sup> Ide wrote to his mother on January 17, 1852:

I am at the county seat and not been home for three months. I

<sup>296</sup> Ide, *Ibid.* P. 235-237.

<sup>297</sup> Justus H. Rogers, *History of Colusa County, California*. Orland, Calif. 1891. P. 43.

<sup>298</sup> Fred Blackburn Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 72.

have the whole management of our county affairs... I am regarded with all that respect I can desire-all classes pay due deference to their judge; but I have few confidential friends, and no adviser in whom I can confide.

William B. Ide contracted what is believed to have been smallpox in December 1852 and died December 19, 1852 at the age of 56 years, 7 months and 12 days at Monroe's rancho.<sup>299</sup>

Living away from his family—his wife having died two years previously and his children residing at a great distance on his Rancho, none were with him during his short confinement with smallpox...<sup>300</sup> William Brown Ide's estate was divided among his heirs. The Ide family's claim to Barranca Colorada was confirmed in 1855.<sup>301</sup>

This man, who helped shape the new state of California, was a vital part of its early history and represented its true "pioneer spirit." Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote:

In '51-'52 he seems to have held pretty nearly all the county offices in Colusa at the same time, the highest being that of county judge, and the seat of his govt being at Monroe's rancho, where he died in Dec. '52. He retained to the end his fondness for long reports and for political theorizing, but with all his eccentricity he was always a most worthy and honest man, and had somewhat remarkable tact and executive ability in several directions.<sup>302</sup>

### **Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:**

William B. Ide represents the wanderlust, as well as the "can do" spirit, of many in the mid-1800s. A map will be displayed showing the places across the continent where he and his family moved to and resided over the years, and the family's overland journey to California. The map also might indicate the sites where his nine children were born.

The same or a different map focused on California will highlight the location of his home south of the town of Red Bluff (as well as the state historic park named in his honor) and the rancho property that he and his family acquired from Josiah Belden. The map should represent the locations important to the Bear Flag Revolt, including Sutter's Fort, Sonoma, San Rafael, Olompali, the San Francisco Presidio, etc. Other sites like Mono Valley in historic Colusa County should be shown, too. A brief, graphic narrative history about Ide over the years might be integrated into the map. It should

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<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.* P. 209-210.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.* P. 212.

<sup>301</sup> *California Pioneer Register, Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

be inviting and interesting to look at with period images, as well as place names and notes of about journey undertaken over the years.

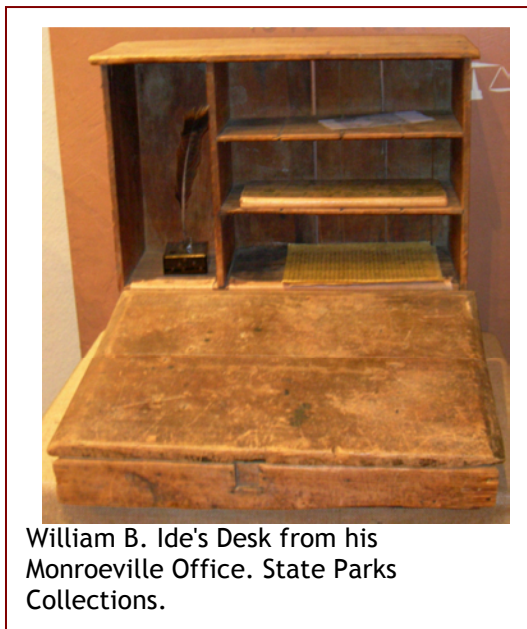
Visitors will see the two images of William B. Ide, but told that they cannot be verified as authentic. A mystery remains about the actual appearance of the man.

The original draft (in Sutter's Fort State Historic Park's collections) or a good facsimile of the draft proclamation will be a featured item in this exhibit, along with other examples of Ide's work. Extra security will be needed, if the original document is displayed.

One of the few artifacts associated with William B. Ide is a small, lift-top, counter-top desk, now owned by the park. It should be prominently displayed to support the interpretation of his many Colusi County positions after the Bear Flag Revolt, when he was a vital part of early local government.

If funds are sufficient, visitors might use push buttons to listen to recordings that reflect Ide's documented recollections of California.

#### Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:



Objects and documents to be used in the exhibit will include:

- Two photographs reputed to be of William B. Ide
- Map(s) of the rancho lands that Ide acquired
- William B. Ide's lift-top desk belonging to the State Historic Park
- A copy (or the original—if security permits) of the Bear Flag Proclamation drafted by William B. Ide now in the collections of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park
- A replica Bear Flag
- A duplicate of a ledger sheet showing Ide's appointment or other Ide-related documents

As space permits, pictures of Ides' family members and his associates might be included to enhance the display. Refer to the Graphics File for this Interpretive Plan.





Clothing used by staff, docents and schoolchildren in programs at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park.



Children and adults get an outdoor "education" at the annual Adobe Day in 2008.



## AREA 5: The Adobe Ranch Through Time

Space Allocation: 10%

### Theme:

Over the years, the Adobe Ranch changed hands many times, as its owners sought different opportunities. It eventually became a park.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about the restless/wanderlust spirit that permeated California's Gold Rush society and how it may have affected the Adobe Ranch's ownership.
- Understand the property's uses over time as a ranch, ferry crossing, public thoroughfare, and state park.
- Appreciate the importance of using historic records in the preservation of architecture, like the Adobe House.

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

#### *Bluffton Ranch*

The property where the Adobe House sits today has a long and complex history of ownership. Like gold, land had become a valuable commodity when Abraham M. Dibble<sup>177</sup> filed the first claim for the property in 1852. He acquired the original homestead under California's Possessory Land Act of April 20, 1852.<sup>178</sup> Dibble was the first of many owners of the ranch with a restless, wanderlust spirit. J. Goldsborough Bruff, an amateur artist and draftsman, encountered him working as a shingle maker for Peter Lassen in December 1849.<sup>179</sup> Dibble settled in the Red Bluff area in 1851, while hauling freight from Colusa to Shasta.<sup>180</sup>

In 1852, California's newly-enacted Possessory Land Act required

Every such claim... shall not be more than one hundred and sixty acres, and the same shall be marked by metes and bounds, so that the boundaries may be readily traced, and the extent of such claim easily known...

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<sup>177</sup> "A.M. Dibble" was on the original 1852 land claim but when Dibble sold the property to Isaac H. Rand in 1853, the deed was signed "Abraham M. Dibble."

<sup>178</sup> Keith Lingenfelter, Lingenfelter Archives. Special Collections, Meriam Library. CSU Chico. <http://www.csuchico.edu/lbib/spc/iepages/lingenfelterintro.html>

<sup>179</sup> J. Goldsborough Bruff, *Gold Rush, The Journals, Drawings, and Other Papers of J. Goldsborough Bruff, captain, Washington City and California Mining Association, April 2, 1849-July 20, 1851*. Ed. Georgia Willis Read and Ruth Gaines. New York: Columbia University Press, 1944. P.254, 668.

<sup>180</sup> Lingenfelter, *Ibid*.

Any person being a citizen of the United States... shall file in the office of the Recorder of the County in which such lands are situated... [and] that he or she has taken no other claim under this Act, and to the best of his knowledge and belief, that the said lands are not claimed under any existing title...

Within ninety days after the date of said record, the party recording is hereby required to improve the land thus recorded, to the value of two hundred dollars, by putting such improvements thereon as shall partake of the realty, unless such improvements shall have been made prior to the application to record...<sup>181 182</sup>

At the time, when there were few landmarks, this area was known for its “Red Bluffs” and its historical association above “Frémont’s Old Crossing.” Abraham Dibble referred to his 160-acre claim as “Bluffton Ranch.”<sup>183</sup>

In early California, many non-professionals produced property surveys to support their claims to land. Physical landmarks—a tree, a rock, or a river were used to indicate the property’s boundary lines. In addition, footsteps or other imprecise measurements often denoted lengths.<sup>184</sup> There were also mistakes made in the text. Abraham Dibble’s 1852 land description for his claim offers an example:

I have on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of April A. D. 1852 laid claim and taken possession of the following piece of land situated in Shasta County, California. Commencing at the white Oak tree about 20 feet above Freemont’s old crossing on Sacramento River; running thence down the Sacramento River one hundred and sixty 160 rods to an old Sycamore tree; thence north West one hundred and sixty 160 rods to a white oak tree; thence parallel with said river northwest one hundred and sixty 160 rods to a White oak tree; thence Southwest to the place of the beginning. The above land herein described containing one hundred and sixty 160 acres which I claim and have plainly defined the boundaries thereof dated April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1852. This claim is not over 160 acres and I have never taken up any other land, and to the best of my knowledge and belief the land included within this boundaries is not claimed by any other person under any existing title, and the affiant has the possession thereof.<sup>185</sup>

It was later discovered that the last boundary reference on Dibble’s quarter section (160 acres), “...thence Southwest to the place of beginning” was incorrect and should

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<sup>181</sup> Laws of the State Of California, Chapter LXXXII, “An Act: Prescribing the mode of maintaining and defending possessory actions on Public Lands in this State.” P. 159.

<sup>182</sup> The requirements of the 1852 law support the view that with Dibble’s land claim, William B. Ide had no claim to the property.

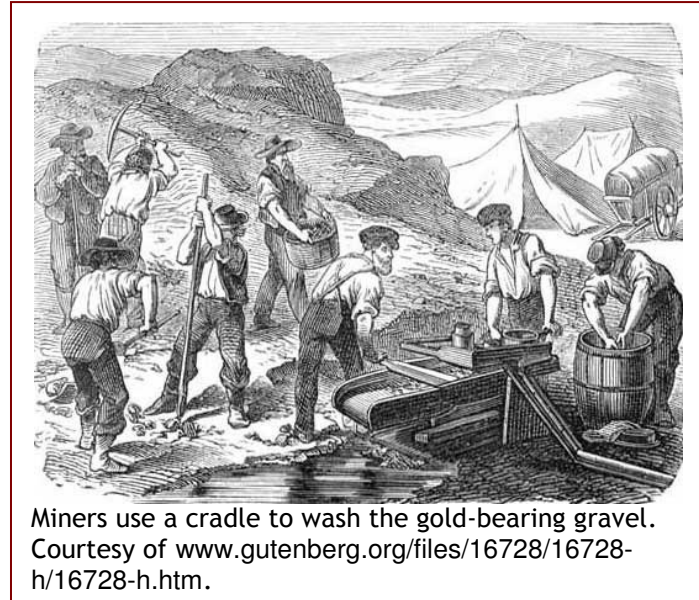
<sup>183</sup> Recorded February 1, 1853, Shasta County Book “B.” Pp. 103 and 104.

<sup>184</sup> William Wilcox Robinson, *Land in California*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1979. P. 203.

<sup>185</sup> Recorded April 10, 1852, Shasta County Book “B,” Thomas W. Thomas, Recorder. P. 103.

have been stated as Southeast. Tehama County Surveyor William Luning discovered the error.<sup>186</sup>

Within 90 days of filing—by mid-July 1852, Dibble would have had to have made improvements to the land to support his claim. Local historian and judge, H.S. Gans,



Miners use a cradle to wash the gold-bearing gravel.  
Courtesy of [www.gutenberg.org/files/16728/16728-h/16728-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16728/16728-h/16728-h.htm).

noted that Dibble was burned out and lost over \$10,000 worth of livestock in “The Indian War” of 1852.<sup>187</sup> That may have been the reason for his sale of the property to Isaac H. Rand in February 1853. The Nomlaki and other California Indians tried to oust settlers and miners from their historic territory. North of Bluffton Ranch at Jelly (or Jelly’s) Ferry gold had been discovered and the gold bearing gravels were being worked by miners. (The Chinese later employed ground sluicing in the area to find the precious metal.)

During the boom and bust years of the California Gold Rush, land values spiked and dropped. Also property frequently changed hands, as owners lost fortunes or found new investment opportunities. Land was useful. It could be sold for a profit (or sometimes at a loss), as well as mortgaged for cash, operating expenses, or to make improvements. Over the years, several owners mortgaged the Adobe Ranch. Some sold it at a loss to ease or eliminate their debt. When a landowner could not repay the money borrowed against it, a public or sheriff’s sale was held. This occurred several times over the ranch’s history.

Over the years, there has been considerable speculation about the actual construction date of the Adobe House. It may have been the original structure built to demonstrate settlement for Dibble, but that is not certain. The nearby seasonal stream identified as Dibbles Creek (later Dibble Creek) does indicate that Abraham Dibble had some durable association with the property, although not for long.<sup>188</sup> Judge H.S. Gans noted the stream formerly had been called Dry Creek before it was renamed in his honor. Less than a year later, Dibble sold Bluffton Ranch in February 1853 to Isaac H. Rand for \$1,500. That was a considerable sum for the time, supporting one theory that improvements may have been made to the property by Dibble before it was sold, however, the house may have been damaged or in ruins.

<sup>186</sup> His brother Henry F. Luning tried to take advantage of the situation by filing a duplicate land claim in March 1859.

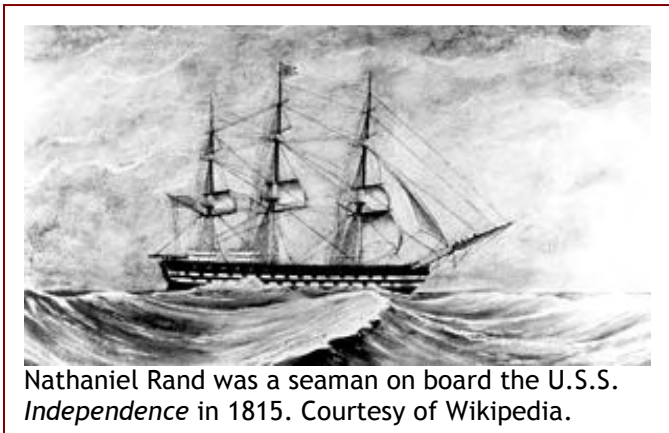
<sup>187</sup> Shasta County Book “B,” *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> Judge H.S. Gans Scrap Book is cited by Lingenfelter as the source of the name change.

Abraham Dibble moved back East between 1854 and 1860, but returned to California with his wife Clarissa and their two children (the couple later had two more children in California—see The Adobe Ranch Timeline in this section). They purchased 194 acres in Butte County for \$1,000 on June 16, 1868 and moved to Durham, near Chico.<sup>189</sup> Dibble also purchased three other pieces of property in Butte County in 1868.<sup>190</sup> The *Sacramento Daily Union* reported that A.M. Dibble’s leg had become badly broken and torn when it was caught in a threshing machine accident near Chico on July 22, 1870.<sup>191</sup> The family later relocated to Riley, Oregon.

### *Rand’s Adobe Ranch*

Little is known about the second owner, Isaac H. Rand, who renamed the property “Rand’s Adobe Ranch.” In 1851 Rand was cutting hay on Grand Island in the Sacramento River Delta with George Champlin. They “sold [hay] to parties all the way from there up the Sacramento River to Shasta.”<sup>192</sup> Local historian Ruth Hitchcock has indicated that Isaac Rand was an early resident of Shasta City. Historian Keith Lingenfelter noted him as being among the unmarried residents of Northern California. Rand purchased Bluffton Ranch from Abraham M. Dibble on February 1,



Nathaniel Rand was a seaman on board the U.S.S. *Independence* in 1815. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

1853. However, it was only after being sold to Nathaniel Rand (believed to be his brother), the third owner, that there is written evidence about the development of the property on the record. The December 1, 1853 deed referenced a house, outhouses, and a fence running down river 160 rods<sup>193</sup>

Nathaniel Rand had been a seaman on board the U.S. naval ship, the *Independence*, during the War with

Mexico.<sup>194,195</sup> One of Nathaniel Rand’s shipmates was William H. Meyers, a Navy gunner. (Meyers’ many water color paintings documented the Mexican War on the Pacific Coast.<sup>196</sup>) As a veteran, Rand was awarded land in Solano County.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 2, 1871, “Statistics of California-1870.” July 22d.

<sup>192</sup> *Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World: A Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California*. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1891. Reprinted at <http://files.usgarchives.org/ca/tehama/bios/champlin801gbs.text>

<sup>193</sup> Recorded December 24, 1853, Shasta County Book “B.” P. 224.

<sup>194</sup> Lingenfelter, *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> According to <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/i1/independence-ii.htm>: The *Independence* began service in the U.S. Navy on June 22, 1814 in the Boston Navy Yard. Years later, the ship was recommissioned August 4, 1846 during the War with Mexico. The *Independence* departed Boston August 29, 1846 for the coast of California. She entered Monterey Bay 22 January 1847 and became the

Nathaniel Rand transacted a mortgage loan agreement with William A. Mix eight months later, on September 1, 1854. What the funds were used for is not certain. In early California, lending money between individuals was a common practice, especially where there were no banks nearby. Nathaniel Rand retained the property until March 9-10, 1855, when the property was divided and sold.

At the time, no laws in California governed the subdivision of land. This often resulted in unregulated property divisions, leaving some ranch lands too small to be profitable. Rand sold off 103.62 acres of the original 160 acres to Dow Vincent in 1855 for \$500. George Sherman with St. Clair Jackson purchased the remaining 56.38-acre parcel, where the Adobe House sits today for \$700 in 1855. After that, the smaller acreage changed hands many times, perhaps as a result of the ranch's reduced size and the inability of its owners to earn a good living from the land.

The purchase price for the property varied with the land's usage, economic times, and the interests of its buyers. From 1852 until 1865, the 56.38 acres changed owners at least ten times! Why is not exactly clear. Very little is known at present about each of the early owners who lived here for such a short time, and how they used the land.<sup>198</sup> Indeed, some may have leased the property to others, but there are few surviving records to point out what happened on the land. Also, prices for the property vacillated greatly. Once in 1859, it sold for the very small sum of \$70.48 at a public sale. Two years later in 1860, it sold again in a court-ordered sale for \$1,034.70. Over the years, the purchase price for the land ranged up to \$2000.

One individual stands out as an example of that restless, wanderlust spirit that infused California during and after the Gold Rush. His name was Alfred J. Walton. Walton acquired the Adobe Ranch in June 1859. Born in Yorkshire, England in 1822, Walton first came to California in 1842 on board the sloop-of-war *Dale* with the US Navy expedition headed by Thomas AP Catsby Jones (Jones awkwardly captured the

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flagship of Commodore William B. Shubrick, commanding the Pacific Squadron. *Independence* assisted in the blockade of the Mexican coast, capturing Mexican ship *Correo* and a launch May 16, 1847. She was present to support the capture of Guaymas October 19<sup>th</sup> and landed blue jackets and Marines to occupy Mazatlan November 11, 1847. She later cruised as far as Hawaii, arriving in Honolulu August 12, 1848. The *Independence* returned to the East Coast at Norfolk May 23, 1849 and was decommissioned there May 30<sup>th</sup>. For more about the ship read: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_Independence\\_\(1814\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Independence_(1814))

<sup>196</sup> Many of William H. Meyers' paintings are at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park and The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

<sup>197</sup> According to Keith Lingenfelter, "Northern California Bounty Land Grantees Under Acts of 1847-1855": Bounty land grants were awarded war veterans under three Congressional Acts, February 11, 1847, September 28, 1850 and March 3, 1855. Patent books in different counties listed the U.S. Government as grantor and the veteran as the receiver of the bounty grant, including his rank, organization and war he served. The veteran was not required to settle on the land, but could assign it to a local resident who would occupy it and pay the government in full. Their payment went to the veteran in the form of a pension.

<sup>198</sup> Refer to the "Adobe Ranch Timeline" in this section.



Mexican-ruled *pueblo* of Monterey in 1842, only to restore it days later!)<sup>199</sup> Walton returned to England and then immigrated to Iowa, where he farmed until 1849. He joined other '49ers traveling overland to Los Angeles. Before his acquisition of the ranch, Walton drove cattle, mined at Bidwell's Bar on the Feather River, raised cattle on Kimball's Plain in Shasta County, operated a hotel in Shasta City, and worked as a teamster and packer for six or eight years in the vicinity of Red Bluff. He also had an interest in raising sheep.

Alfred Walton gave Hiram Z. Taylor a mortgage on the 56.38-acre Adobe Ranch in June 1859, but had to foreclose on it in January 1860 for lack of payment. On the following December 18, 1860, Walton married Mrs. Mary Ann Ward Reeves, a native of Ireland. He proceeded to advertise the Adobe Ranch for sale in February 1861. It was described in a newspaper advertisement as:

...the well-known Garden Ranch, known as the "Adobe Ranch," situate[d] two miles north of Red Bluff, on the Sacramento River, and containing 56 acres of Land, Twenty of which is the finest Garden Land in this section, There are about 300 Fruit Trees besides the Buildings, on it, and the whole will be sold at a low figure to insure a quick sale. This would make one of the best Bee Ranches in Upper California.

For particulars apply to Mr. O. R. Johnson, at the Luna House, Red Bluff, or to

A. Walton,  
Corner of Madison and Walnut streets<sup>200</sup>

But his plans changed, perhaps affected by the forthcoming birth of the couple's first child (Alfred Ward Walton, born October 19, 1861). Walton ended up retaining the property and on July 2, 1861 filed to obtain a license to operate a ferry across the Sacramento River from the Adobe Ranch—probably a wise business for a former seaman with its ropes, tackle and pulleys. He proposed his ferry to connect with the Old Antelope Road. Weather probably affected its operation and its profitability. On October 4, 1861, the *Red Bluff Independent* reported:

<sup>199</sup> William H. Meyer, a gunner on the U.S. sloop *Dale*, produced twenty-six paintings depicting Navy action in the Pacific. Many include the ship. They are in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Collection at Hyde Park.

<sup>200</sup> *Red Bluff Semi-Weekly Independent*, February 22, 1860.



Six months have elapsed since rain has fallen in Red Bluff. This has been the hottest, driest season since California became a State. On Sunday something happened in Red Bluff which nobody expected or wanted. Dust blew in every crack. It came in showers, people breathed gallons of dust and grit every time they opened their mouths.

The drought grew worse. On November 7, 1860, the Red Bluff *Independent*, wrote: “The mortality rate of cattle was high, they were starving.” Clearly operating a ranch with orchards and livestock would have been hard under these conditions. Walton held title to the property until January 3, 1862, when he sold it to Daniel Howard.<sup>201</sup> In the month prior to the sale, the weather changed dramatically. The *Independent* stated on December 10<sup>th</sup>:

By the end of November winter had come to town for sure. The Sacramento River rose suddenly one night and caused considerable damage. Mr. Vigil Baker lost 16,000 feet of lumber which was lying on the bank of Ide’s Bottom. For the past two weeks, King Storm has prevailed in the North State. Nearly all bridges north of Red Bluff were washed away. Loomis Ward of Tehama lost 700 cattle by December 9. Spring Creek Mill, owned by Swinford and Enox, was swept away with a bridge and lumber amounting to \$8,000.00. Wires of communication were down between Tehama, Marysville and Oroville. Almost every bridge from Shasta to the Oregon Border was gone. Papers reported flood damage from almost the entire country from Oregon to San Francisco... Damage was exceeded only by that reported in Marysville and Sacramento. From Tehama to the other side of Sacramento, the country overflowed.

As the bad weather and flooding continued well into 1862, the Adobe Ranch owners turned the situation to good advantage.

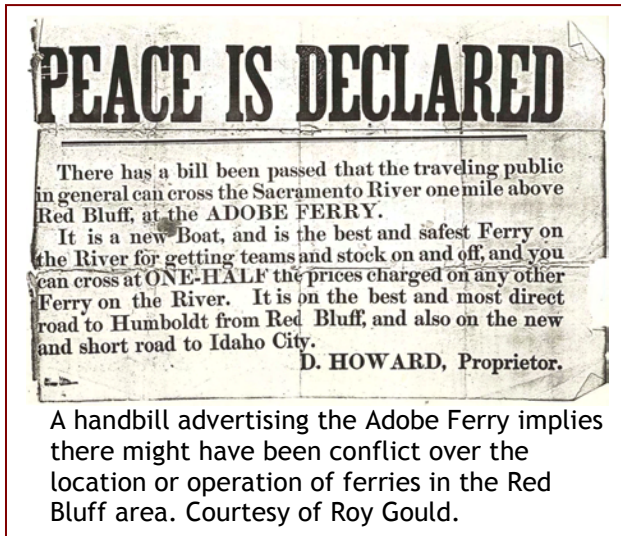
### *The “Adobe Ferry”*

While ranching and farming were typically how the area land was worked, several Adobe Ranch owners also operated a ferry service across the Sacramento River.<sup>202</sup> Alfred Walton was the first, but it was Daniel Howard who developed and promoted the business. Howard, originally from New York, acquired the 56.38 acres on January 3, 1862, then built and operated a ferry under a license granted by the County Board of Supervisors on November 5, 1862. (Howard actually appears to have begun his ferry service before then.)

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<sup>201</sup> For more information about Alfred Walton, refer to “The Adobe Ranch Timeline” in this section and the Appendix of this *Interpretive Plan*.

<sup>202</sup> There were 300 fruit trees on the Adobe Ranch, when Walton first offered the land for sale in February 1861.



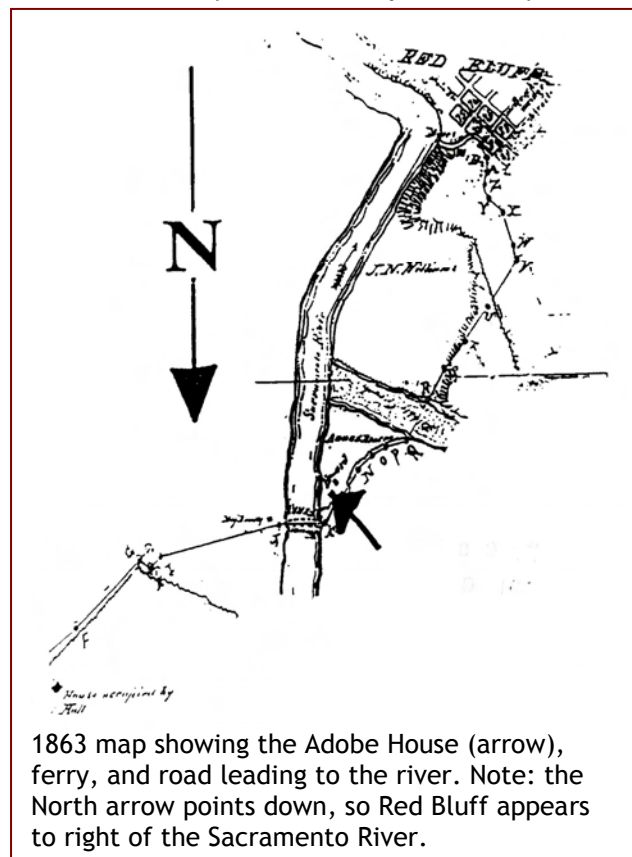
A handbill advertising the Adobe Ferry implies there might have been conflict over the location or operation of ferries in the Red Bluff area. Courtesy of Roy Gould.

A surviving handbill advertisement alludes to the fierce competition in the area for transportation services across the Sacramento River. He billed the operation as having a new boat that was the best and safest on the river. The “Adobe Ferry’s” license was renewed for one year from December 1, 1864 to December 1, 1865.

Off the main north-south wagon road, it was important to direct people to the Adobe Ferry’s service crossing the Sacramento River. Beginning in 1863, Howard pushed for the construction of

roads to connect with his ferry (see map below and “The Adobe Ranch Timeline” in this section). A road was built from Red Bluff to the Adobe Ferry and to the Humboldt Wagon Road in 1864-65. The “Adobe Ferry Road” officially became a public way on February 11, 1865. However Daniel Howard, directed by the court, had to pay damages for having the road right of way pass over the Star Ranch (part of original Bluffton Ranch and later Rand’s Adobe Ranch) then owned by J.N. Williams. Tehama County Supervisors also agreed to contribute \$300 to pay for a fence to line both sides of the road through the Star Ranch.

Herbert Kraft from Germany bought the 56.38 acres from Howard, along with the right to operate a ferry on June 22, 1865 for \$2,000.<sup>203</sup> Along with the land and the buildings, he acquired the ferryboat, cables, ropes, small boats, tackle, and “appurtenances of every description” belonging to the “Adobe Ferry.”<sup>204</sup> Two years later, German-born traveling artist Edward Vischer sketched the Adobe Ferry in operation in May 1867. It is the earliest known image of the property. Kraft moved his ferry service south to



1863 map showing the Adobe House (arrow), ferry, and road leading to the river. Note: the North arrow points down, so Red Bluff appears to right of the Sacramento River.

<sup>203</sup> June 22, 1865, Tehama County, Book “E.” Pp. 462, 463, and 464.

<sup>204</sup> Tehama County Deed Book E, pp. 462-462, June 22, 1865.



An 1867 drawing of the Adobe Ferry by Edward Vischer. Courtesy of Claremont College.

the foot of Pine Street in Red Bluff, where undoubtedly there were more customers. Anderson Finley of Niland, California, gave an early account of the ferry's operation:



Herbert Kraft used a hands-on approach to his ferry's operation, From *Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World*.

...in June 1871... We rested under some oaks on Main Street near the intersection of Main and Oak, had our lunch and journeyed on our way. We had come from the brown, hot plains of San Joaquin valley and were headed for Belle Mill. We crossed the Sacramento River on a ferry and just after the boat left the shore I saw a man grab an oil can and shin up a rope to a big pulley running on the cable overhead. After a few squirts with the can he slid down, took the wheel from the attendant and steered us across the river. I thought at the time he must be a sailor but later I learned he was no other than Herbert Kraft, the banker, who also owned the ferry.<sup>205</sup>

In January 1870, Kraft sold the 56.38 acres to Canadian-born Alexander A. Brownlee, for a reduced price of \$500 without the ferry operation.<sup>206</sup>

Four years later, the ferry service was revived north of Red Bluff. In December 1874, William F. Erwin, Andrew J. "Andy" Hammons, and George Hammons gained authorization to build and operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch. William Erwin and George Hammons each owned one-half interest in the property. The men advertised

<sup>205</sup> Red Bluff newspaper article by Anderson Findley (n.d.) of Niland, California, who spent his boyhood in the Lyonsville country. From Judge H.S. Gans Scrap Book. P. 15.

<sup>206</sup> January 11, 1870, Tehama County, Book "G." P. 235.



their ferry service on July 1, 1876 in *The People Cause* (a newspaper edited by later property owner L.D. Clark):

The Old Adobe Ferry has just been equipped and placed in running order. We can offer the best inducement to stock men as we have the largest boat on the upper Sacramento River, securing speed in transit.

Teamsters will find the roads by the Ferry in Excellent condition at all seasons of the year.

Later resident Bert Mount recalled

...there were two other big oak trees nearly as large as the one by the house. The other two were on the bank of that ravine there and the road to the ferry came through between them. The one on the northside of the road I was told was blown over and up rooted blocking the road and had to be cut up to get it off of the road. The other brok [sic] off some 10 feet or so above the ground...<sup>207</sup>



A water-damaged, undated photograph of William F. Erwin with his wife Imogene posed near their Adobe House. California State Parks Collections.

The ferry service continued well into 1875, but according to Frank, a son of William Erwin, it was not very profitable. (Two children, Edward and Charley were born to William Erwin and his wife Imogene while living at the Adobe Ranch.)

L.L. McCoy in a paper, "Land Grants and Other History" read before the Red Bluff Rotary Club, tried to determine the how long the Adobe Ferry service was in operation. He stated:

...I have learned from Gus Kauffman, Mrs. Walton and others that it [the Adobe Ferry] was operated in the sixties. Mr. Walton owned that property in the sixties. I learn from S.D. Wilcox and others that a ferry was running there in the early seventies. I crossed there in the spring of 1874 and the well known Andy Hammans [Hammons] was running the ferry. When the first bridge was opened for traffic in the fall of 1876 the ferry was abandoned.<sup>208</sup>

Construction of a wooden bridge across the Sacramento River at Red Bluff in the fall of 1876 marked the end of the Adobe Ferry's operations. The new bridge enabled

<sup>207</sup> Letter to Norma Agnew from A.R. Mount from Woodland dated Aug. 17, 1967.

<sup>208</sup> Judge H.S. Gans Scrap Book. P. 24.



traffic to cross with ease with few delays. The ferry cables, the last evidence of the ferry on the property, were removed years later by Will Mount using a team of horses.<sup>209</sup>

### *The Adobe Ranch*

In 1877, landowner William Lansdale quit claimed 40 acres of land next to the 56.38 acres (on which he held a mortgage from Erwin). William F. Erwin acquired control of this property on July 16, 1879, and combined it with the Adobe Ranch land to create a 96.38-acre property. This new, larger land configuration continued to be sold and resold many times. William and Imogene Erwin lived in the Adobe House for a time. Two of their children were born on the Adobe Ranch, a son named Edward Marlow, born November 26, 1874, and a daughter Charlene [or Charley]. Other families followed in residence.

Lorenzo D. “Lorin” Clark moved into the Adobe Ranch in 1879 with his wife Matilda and their daughter, Irene.<sup>210</sup> Later resident, Alberto R. “Bert” Mount, described the Clarks’ additions to the property in a letter dated July 9, 1967 (Note: Some of these additions could have been built by earlier Adobe Ranch tenants):

He [L.D. Clark] had been a school teacher and was also a carpenter by trade. He had built considerable of a fraim [sic] woodin [sic] addition onto the old Adobe structure which altered its original looks very much as is shown in some pictures that were taken in after years. He also dug a cellar under the addition entered by a trap door in the kitchen floor. This addition consisted of a dining room, kitchen, pantry, bedroom, and store room. The Adobe walls inside had been covered over with a cloth lining [sic] and groove lumber smooth plained [sic] but not beaded.

The sitting room was fairly large with a brick fire place and brick flue on the outside of the wall... the fire place was



Undated early photographs of the Adobe House shows the giant oak tree that continues to dominate the setting. The label misidentifies the building as General Ide’s home. Courtesy of the Department of Special Collections, University of California, Davis.

<sup>209</sup> Letter to E.E. Stevens from W.C. Mount received October 3, 1949. William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park. Park Archives.

<sup>210</sup> The Clarks had lost another daughter, Adella, months before on November 10, 1878.

on the East side and faced across towards the river with a clear view of Lassen Peak, there was a window on each side of the fireplace from which you had a clear view of Lasen [sic] Peak every clear day.

The two bed rooms on the West were divided from each other and the sitting room with cloth partitions whitewashed. The floors in the Adobe part were of 6 inch board flooring laid on oak joists which were laid directly on the ground and the front door sill was almost level with the ground.. There were som {sic} holes in the Adobe walls just above the ceiling they were about 6 inches square and some people called them portholes, but Mr. Healey when he was out and surveyed the ranch for us one time in later years that they were not but that they had been a shed on the front and these holes were where the shed rafters rested in the walls for support.

Bert Mount wrote in another letter dated July 7, 1957, the “...roof was most likely put on by Mr. L.D. Clark at the time he built on the board addition...”<sup>211</sup> He also noted there was a cloth ceiling in the wooden addition. Mount went on to write:

The roof was of split shingles and laid in the same manner as our present day shingle roofs except that they were laid about nine or ten inches to the weather instead of the four or five of the present day, and the shingles were considerable longer than our present day shingles, as they had to be in order to lay with this amount to the weather.

The long-held belief that the Adobe House was built by William B. Ide might have originated during the short period of the Clarks’ residency or soon thereafter. In the 1880 census, the next household closest to Lorenzo D. Clark’s family (very possibly the former William Lansdale property quit claimed to William Erwin in 1877, acquired by Clark, and later sold to Emory and Laura Mount for \$1 in 1882 by Ephraim Clark) was occupied by Clark’s parents, Ephraim and Harriet Clark, their son Lewis, along with John and Mattie Hays, *and William B. Ide’s son, Lemuel Ide.*<sup>212</sup> Like Ide, the Clarks and the Hays were Mormons. Lucian B. Healy, a son-in-law of William B. Ide married to his daughter, Sarah, probably contributed to the confusion. He was a surveyor, who had been involved in roadwork for the Adobe Ferry Road in the mid-1860s. Thirty-five years later, when he was in his late sixties, Healy assisted Will and Bert Mount with the survey of a boundary line for a new barbed-wire fence, Healy remembered the house as being Ide’s, but was unsure of its date of construction. The Mounts found survey marks on a tree (a witness tree), which Healy recognized as his own, but these very likely originated with the roadwork done thirty years earlier.

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<sup>211</sup> Letter to Douglas W. Metcalf from A.R. Mount, dated July 7, 1957. William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park Archives.

<sup>212</sup> In a letter dated July 17, 1967, Bert Mount recalled: “I never knew Ides Son or never met him (but now this is what we were told that Ides Son was not bright or compident [sic] of transacting business and that could account for Healey being made guardian of the estate...”

Emory and Laura Mount moved into the “Old Adobe Ferry Place” with their children in June 1882, having purchased the property May 1, 1882 from Clark. The couple had four children, the oldest being Emory H. (married in 1887) and Arvilla Jewell (married October 14, 1886) and two younger sons, Willett C. “Will” and Alberto R. “Bert” Mount. Bert recalled in a letter from Woodland dated July 3, 1967:

It was our Fathers intention at one time to start a nursery there and he set the bottom and out into orchard with various kinds of fruits to have them to graft from.

We never made a stock ranch of it but had 3 cows for our own milk and horses to do our work with.

In that same letter, Bert also noted:

When my folks bought the ranch there was no well at the house and the Clarks drew their water in an inclined wire with a bucket from the river. Father had a porch built on the West side of the framework kitchen and put an outside stairway to the cellar and dug the well and put in a pump. He also planted the olive trees which are there near the house. There was about 1½ acres of orchard on the place with several varites [sic] of fruit.

One incident of the family’s residence stood out in Bert Mount’s memory on the Adobe Ranch.

On Aug. 4<sup>th</sup> 1884 my perents [sic] returned from a trip to Klamath Co. Oregon and in the evening as we were eating supper Mother sat in her rocking chair not far from the open front door, my Sister who had been with them had finished her supper but Father, Will and my self were still at the table, Started for her room There was an extra carrage [sic] seat just inside the door against the wall, when she steped [sic] onto the floor in her room, we all heard a large loud from a rattlesnake and in just about three jumps she was clear out in the dining room and we all rushed to her room door and there it was under that seat, It huridly [sic] crawled along the wall and her beuru [sic] then under the bed and long another wall, ther [sic] was a croquet box a couple of inches out from the wall where it thought it was safe, Father and Will rushed out and got a couple of sticks. I grabed [sic] up a piece of edging that had been cut off of a board and came in with it. Mother grabed [sic] it out of my hands jerked the bed out a little from the wall and got on Father and Will each went to a different end of the box and reached under the bed with them and shoved it up to the wall pinning it in there. Mother comenced [sic] churning in that space with the edging lath and when she quit she had made a jelly of that snake which was over four feet long and had 13 rattles.

We had to get close fitting screen [sic] doors to all our outside door [sic] and keep them shut to keep them out. <sup>213</sup>

It appears the Mounts had an unhappy marriage. In 1886, the couple deeded ½ an interest in the land to their two youngest sons, Will and Bert Mount, still residing at home on April 9<sup>th</sup>—the day before the Mounts’ divorce became final on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

The divorce settlement offers clues about the Adobe Ranch’s agricultural activities. Laura Mount received the other ½ interest in the property, in addition to: one mowing machine, one rake, one blue header wagon and header box, all plows and harrows, hoes, lumber and shakes and tools in the shop, one small spring wagon, two cows known as Bell and Bube, one sow and pigs, all poultry, one gray mare, one three-year-old colt, and harness. Emory received a set of buggy harness, and two city lots in the town of Napa.



Will Mount with his sister Arvilla Mount Crews and her five sons posed in front of the Adobe House with their dogs. California State Parks Collections

Along with their mother, Laura, Will (age 15) and Bert (age 13) continued to reside on the property until their maturity. According to Bert,

...there was a mortgage on the place on which we had to pay 12% interest My brother Willett C. Mount went to work on the dairy next door [Star Dairy] seven days a

week and long hours. Salary \$25.<sup>00</sup> per month I had to quit school before I was 14 and run the ranch doing all the work in it alone doing all the selling and buying , well I got some business education out of it any way. <sup>214</sup>

Arvilla Mount Crews returned to live at the Adobe Ranch with her children soon after the birth of her fifth son. She divorced Francis Marion “Frank” Crews in 1903. (A gold miner, he died of pulmonary tuberculosis on December 21, 1907 in Red Bluff.)

In a letter, Bert recalled living in the Adobe House:

<sup>213</sup> Letter to Miss Norma Agnew from A.R. Mount dated July 3, 1967, Woodland. Park Archives.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

I believe Mr. Sutton [the next owner] told me he replaced the cloth ceiling in the bedroom in this addition with the board ceiling.

What brought this vividly to my mind was that I thought of our trouble with the Red Headed Woodpeckers which were then very plentiful in the neighborhood.

They would get acorns and come down on the roof and go to pecking



On the bluff overlooking the site of the Adobe Ferry. The open gate marks the location of the old road. Photographed in the late 1890s by San Francisco photographer W.N. Collam. Calif. State Parks Collections.

away to store the acorns in the roof and the acorns would be driven through and come down onto the ceiling with a considerable clatter [sic] and noise.

If the same ceiling is still there you probably would find quite a number of acorn up on the ceiling.

I think what they did was to drive them in under a shingle at the laping seam and they would go on through and fall on the ceiling.



Friends of the Mounts posed in front of the Adobe House in the late 1890s. Note the veranda (seen on a previous page) which once encircled the walls, has been removed. California State Parks Collections.

We would go out with the gun and try to shoot them but could [sic] not shoot until they left the roof and they were so smart they would fly right close to the roof till they reached the peak of the roof then scoop down the other side keeping the house between us and so we seldom got one of them.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>215</sup> Letter to Douglas W. Metcalf from A.R. Mount, *Ibid*.



Bert recalled that he and his brother replaced the cloth ceiling in their dining room with a “beaded board ceiling.”<sup>216</sup> Photographs demonstrate they removed some of the wooden additions to the Adobe House. The Mount brothers also altered the ranch’s landscape. They built a dam at the mouth of the nearby ravine, using a team of horses to drag logs off the hills and added rocks (including Indian mortars and pestles!) to stem the flow of drainage during rainy winter months. The dam later washed away as the timbers rotted.<sup>217</sup>

Bert moved away from the Adobe Ranch in 1897. He became a locomotive fireman and later an engineer for the Southern Pacific Railroad. From 1906 to 1910, Will hired George Brewer, originally from Texas, and his wife to operate the ranch. Peaches, pecans and dried fruit were among the crops grown and produced on the property. Will used a stump puller and removed most of the fruit trees on the property before it was sold.<sup>218</sup> Bert noted in a letter dated July 10, 1967, “My brother W.C. Mount came into full possession of the ranch before our Mother died and he sold it to Sutton...” Laura Mount passed away March 15, 1908. Arvilla Mount Crews’ sons had been grown up on the ranch and she remarried. On January 1, 1910 Will married Madge (or Marg) J. Marquis. He trained to become a veterinarian and graduated from San Francisco Veterinary College in 1914.



The Adobe House before it became a State Historic Park. From an unknown, undated newspaper article. California State Parks Collections

George E. Sutton acquired the property in 1913 for \$10. Why the Adobe Ranch sold for such a low purchase price is unknown. While Sutton and his family lived in the Adobe House, he made a number of changes to the house. Among them, according to Bert Mount, he replaced the cloth ceiling in the wooden addition with a board ceiling.

Sutton also began the process of subdividing the land into parcels, readying it for future development. Parcels 1 (on which the Adobe House rested), 1A, 2, and 3 were given to his children, George B., Alta, Gordon, and Ethel.

Aware of area stories about the Adobe being constructed by William B. Ide, he opened the house as a private memorial museum honoring William B. Ide. On June 1, 1932, Sutton received state approval for the Adobe House to be registered as a Historical Point of Interest (#12).

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> Letter to Miss Norma Agnew from A.R. Mount dated Aug. 17, 1967, Woodland. Park Archives.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

It was in the early 1930s that a group of concerned citizens put into motion a plan to acquire “William B. Ide’s Adobe,” to be made part of the State Park System. On May 1, 1935, California State Senator D. Jack Metzger, also Mayor of Red Bluff and President of the Chamber of Commerce, introduced legislation to establish the property as a state park. What stymied the effort was a disagreement over the property’s value. The California State Park Commission was in favor of the concept.

Efforts persisted into the 1940s, but funding for the purchase of the property and an agreement on its value became major obstacles to its acquisition. Preceding the state’s centennial in 1947, the Parlor No. 15 of The Native Sons of the Golden West<sup>219</sup> and the Native Daughters of the Golden West, Colusa Parlor, helped to raise community awareness and funds for the project.

In a conference held in early 1948, the then Division of Beaches and Parks reported it would be necessary for the community to raise \$4,100. This was the amount estimated to be one-half the cost of purchasing the property. George Sutton, however, valued his parcels at \$30,000 in the belief of their historical significance. It became necessary for the state to acquire title to the land through condemnation in order to reach an agreement about the price to be paid.

Proceedings began in 1949 and in March 1951 under Superior Court Judge Albert F. Ross, the matter was tried by jury. During the process, Herbert M. Cheever of Massachusetts raised questions about the validity of the claim that Ide built and lived in the house, but he was ignored. In the final settlement, the award amount was determined to be \$23,624.70 for the 3.96 acres, comprising lots 1, 1A, 2, and 3. (For more information about the court case, refer to the Appendix in this *Interpretive Plan*.) The state agreed to produce half of the acquisition money, if the remainder were raised locally. With the help of the City of Red Bluff (offering \$2211), the County of Tehama (contributing \$5199), The Native Sons, The Native Daughters, and others, resources for the acquisition were obtained. The County of Tehama and the City of Red Bluff were to have charge of the management and operation of the park for the next 20 years.

Although it was become part of the State Park System, little was done in the way of restoration until 1958 and 1959, when funds became available. Dedication of the park took place on May 1, 1960.

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<sup>219</sup> It was re-chartered in 1947 as the William B. Ide Parlor to focus efforts on the Adobe House’s acquisition

## The Adobe House “Restoration”

When the State of California acquired the Adobe House and adjacent acres in 1951, the general impression was that it had once belonged to William B. Ide. Most of that



The old Adobe House with a wooden addition on the back side facing the Sacramento River with no verandah. Courtesy of Department of Special Collections, University of California, Davis.

understanding came from local tradition.

There had obviously been a considerable number of changes made to it over the years. A frame addition along one adobe wall covered 21'11" of its 28' 6" length. Wood buried in the adobe walls indicated where the large verandah roof once encircled and shaded the adobe walls. There was a cellar with board sides and a brick floor. A large hip roof covered the house, too.

Park staff determined that the four adobe walls and the fireplace front were original. However, very little was done to preserve the newly acquired State Monument until 1957, when Rawlins Coffman and Robert D. Minch presented a color movie of “Ide Adobe” to the California Park Commissioners, who were meeting at Eureka.<sup>220</sup> The pictures portrayed the neglect and deterioration of the Adobe House.



George Sutton stands next to the house he helped make a state park. Note the attachments embedded in the adobe walls for the veranda roof—now missing. California State Parks Collections.

In 1958 and 1959, funds were made available for the restoration of the building. A considerable amount of effort was undertaken to stabilize the sagging adobe bricks walls then propped up by heavy supports and to “restore” the structure.

At the time the work was done, little was known about the property. What few photographs existed came from very late in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. “Best guesses” were made and applied as to the original building’s configuration. At the time, the interest was in restoring it to William B. Ide’s period of occupancy.

<sup>220</sup> “How Ide Adobe Became Part of Park Monuments,” *Red Bluff Daily News*, April 29, 1960. P. 1.



Subsequent research has shown that the building was constructed sometime after Ide's death and he did not have any known association with the property. In the eagerness to restore the structure to the earliest period, the hip roof was largely ignored in favor of what was considered an "appropriate" gable-ended roof, "typical" of early California adobes. All of the wood elements in the structure, including the hip roof, floors, windows and doorframes, door headers, cross-support beams, roof rafters and shingles, were removed. New gable ends above the lower



Exterior shored walls of the Adobe in July 1958. California State Parks Collections.



Interior view of the rehabilitation work on the Adobe. California State Parks Collections.

roofline were constructed from new bricks. The park's 1989 *General Plan* noted:

One of the north-facing windows is said to have been lined with blue sideboards from a covered wagon.

Many wagons in the westward movement were painted blue, but it is not known where these boards originated.<sup>221</sup>

A covered well was discovered under the porch. George Sutton, the last owner before State Parks, reportedly built it. In 1960, the well was removed. The below-ground well outside the Adobe House lined with brick was considered original and retained with the construction of an above-ground well structure. At the time



The Adobe after the roof was removed in July 1958. California State Parks Collections.

<sup>221</sup> *William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park General Plan*. Sacramento, Calif.: Department of Parks and Recreation, January 1990. P.23.



The Adobe House after rehabilitation in 1963. California State Parks Collections.

the photographs, seen on pages 105 and 119, which shows a tank house on the property, were not available to staff.

A smokehouse was rebuilt on the site where adobe brick remnants were found, indicating a structure of similar size and construction. It measured 8' by 12' in size.<sup>222</sup> Split rail fences also were produced to enhance the “historic landscape,” although no historical research was done to demonstrate their use on the property.

The “restoration” of the Adobe House and its historic setting suffered from a lack of primary documentary research into the history of the property and its uses, and did not employ good investigative archeology about the built environment. Too much reliance on unconfirmed hearsay about the site and its relationship to William B. Ide helped misguide the park’s early efforts.



The Ide Adobe dedication ceremonies. California State Parks Collections.

Unfortunately, original irreplaceable materials were removed in the process of restoration. A detailed examination of the structure should have been made, along with

a review of associated historical documents, such as photographs and historical accounts, *before* any work was undertaken to restore the building or its site. Also, the building needed to have been better documented, before “restoration” work began.

The hard lessons learned at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park should help guide future work on this and other historic sites.



The newly opened park in 1960. California State Parks Collections.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*



## THE ADOBE RANCH TIMELINE<sup>223</sup>

<p>April 20, 1852 Shasta Co. Deed Bk. A, p.14</p>	<p><b>A.M. Dibble</b> Abraham<sup>224</sup> M. Dibble - born Mar. 6, 1813, Pitcher, NY; shingle maker for Peter Lassen 1849-50; hauled freight from Colusa to Shasta in 1851; land claim 20' above "Frémont's Old Crossing" called "Bluffton Ranch"; burned out by Indians, lost \$10,000 in livestock in "Indian Wars" of 1852; moved back East 1854-1860; June 8, 1854 in Moscow, Mich. married Clarissa Moore Spencer [born Jan. 13, 1832, Canandigua, NY]; four children<sup>225</sup>; daughter died in 1865; bought 194 acres in Butte Co. Jan. 16, 1868; moved to Chico area [Durham]; farmer; injured in threshing accident July 22, 1870; moved to Riley, Ore.; Abraham died Sept. 6, 1886 in Riley, Ore.; Clarissa died 1903</p>	<p>Possessory Land Claim</p>	<p>160 acres</p>	
<p>February 1, 1853 Shasta Co. Deed Bk. A, p. 194</p>	<p><b>Isaac H. Rand</b> Isaac H. Rand - cut hay on Grand Island in the Sacramento River Delta with George Champlin in 1851; resident of Shasta City; called property "Rand's Adobe Ranch," which included a house, outhouses and fence; unmarried</p>	<p>Deed</p>	<p>160 acres</p>	<p>\$1,500</p>
<p>December 1, 1853 Shasta Co. Deed Bk. B, p. 224 Bk. A, pp.247-248</p>	<p><b>Nathaniel G. Rand</b> Nathaniel Garland Rand - seaman during Mexican War on board USS <i>Independence</i>—part of the Pacific Squadron; brother of Isaac Rand; resident of Shasta City; unmarried; received mortgage loan for \$456.70 on land from William A. Mix due Sept. 1, 1854; Rand received another mortgage from Dow Vincent for \$480.30 due Oct. 29, 1854</p>	<p>Deed</p>	<p>160 acres</p>	<p>\$1,500</p>

<sup>223</sup> Information about the people and property in this timeline taken from: the Tehama County Records Office, City of Red Bluff; Keith Lingenfelter Archives in the Meriam Library, Special Collections, CSU, Chico; Herbert M. Cheever "William B. Ide and His Descendants, Records Secured in California, 1948-1949" ms. in park office; Ruth Hitchcock notes from *Leaves of the Past*; letters written by A.R. Mount and Mary Frances Keaton; and other sources noted.

<sup>224</sup> Deed records show A.M. Dibble as "Abraham," but some genealogists identify him as "Ambrose." There could be confusion, as he often used his initials, A.M., which some might translate as an abbreviation for Ambrose.

<sup>225</sup> **Dibble children:** **infant daughter** [died Feb. 23, 1855 Hillsdale Co., Mich.]; **Nathaniel Adelbert** [born Moscow, Mich. Mar. 5, 1856, married Rosette Penick on Sept. 2, 1879 in Durham, Butte Co., Calif.], **Herbert Aaron** [born Moscow, Mich. Oct. 12, 1858, died Apr. 29, 1921, Harney Co., Ore.], **Carrie Adelaide** [born Durham, Butte Co., Calif. May 15, 1865, died Aug. 4, 1868, buried Dayton Cemetery, Chico], and **Frank Cyrenus** [born Durham, Butte Co., Calif. Feb. 19, 1871, married Martha Johnson at Riley, Oregon Dec. 25, 1894, died 1939, buried at New Pine Creek Cemetery, Lake Co., Oregon]. From: <http://ca-files.biofiles.us/butte/Dayton.pdf>; [http://members.tripod.com/~gardner\\_2/dat109.htm#6](http://members.tripod.com/~gardner_2/dat109.htm#6); <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/f/o/r/Terri-Forsythe/BOOK-0001/0002-0001.html>



Party traveling thru New Mexico to Calif. 1841, at Los Angeles and Cosumnes in 1842, went to Ore. with Jacob Leese in 1843, returning in 1848<sup>228</sup>; drove an ox team to Shasta Co. in 1848; made money in the mines; among the first settlers in the Millville area; four sons and five daughters; member of IOOF; Hiram died in Millville, Shasta Co. 1883; Sarah died in Millville July 20, 1894

February 19, 1859 Tehama Co. Misc. Bk. A, p. 289	<b>Owen Riley Johnson</b>	Public Sale No. 10 Land claim 210, sold for \$1.25 acre + \$1.30 fees; dup. land claim—error in deed found by Tehama Co. Surveyor William Luning	56.38 acres	\$70.48
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Owen Riley Johnson - born in Indiana in 1832; sheriff 1858-1859 and 1867-1868; listed as a miner in 1867 Great Register; died in Red Bluff April 6, 1893

March 31, 1859 Tehama Co. Misc. Bk. A, p.335 Bk. B, p.75	<b>Henry F. Luning</b> <sup>229</sup>	Transfer of Duplicate Land Claim No. 210 Deed	56.38 acres	\$198.50
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Henry Frank Luning - born in Ohio [or Germany] Dec. 12, 1837; brother of Tehama Co. Surveyor William Luning; unmarried; in 1870 census living with mother Catharine Luning from Bavaria [age 61, his father Joseph F. died 1869] and W.F. Luning [age 13]; Catholic; Red Bluff painter 1873, 1902, 1910; died in Red Bluff May 5, 1925—70 years in California

April 1, 1859 Tehama Co. Bk. A. p. 336 Bk. B, p. 96 Bk. B, p. 44	<b>Hiram Z. Taylor</b>	Transfer of Duplicate Land Claim No. 210 Deed	56.38 acres	\$367
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Taylor obtained promissory note for \$367 from Thomas Hollister Apr. 1, 1859 at 5% per mo. against land [probably to settle land suit];<sup>230</sup> paid note in full June 9, 1859, but secured a new mortgage from Alfred Walton [see next]; buying land twice appears to have financially ruined Taylor

<sup>227</sup><http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/l/y/n/Scott-M-Lynch/PDFGENE1.pdf>

<sup>228</sup> Bancroft Library has Hiram Taylor's original passport dated Santa Fé Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>. *California Pioneer Register and Index*. Clearfield Company. P. 353

<sup>229</sup> Henry F. Luning's brother, William, discovered the mistake in Dibble's description and through Johnson jumped Taylor's claim to the Adobe Ranch; later transferred the duplicate land title back to Hiram Taylor. It appears Taylor may have had to pay twice for the land.

<sup>230</sup> Thomas Hollister born in 1829; married Elizabeth [born New Hampshire in 1841]; sons: Franklin Eugene [born 1861, died 1862], John Crittenden [born 1863, died 1864]

<p>June 9, 1859 Tehama Co. Mortgages Bk. B, p. 84-86</p>	<p>A. Walton Hiram Taylor defaulted on loan from Alfred Walton secured by the Adobe Ranch due Dec. 9, 1859 [\$600 plus 3% interest per mo.]; title was foreclosed Jan. 23, 1860 by Alfred Walton</p>	<p>Mortgage Deed 56.38 acres</p>	
<p>January 23, 1860 A. Walton vs. H. Taylor Tehama Co. Bk. C, pp. 84-86</p>	<p>A. Walton Hiram Taylor in default; Walton requested court foreclosure</p>	<p>Foreclosure of Mortgage 56.38 acres</p>	
<p>May 5, 1860 District Court Case #232</p>	<p><b>J.M. or H. Taylor</b> the judge ordered Sheriff Thomas Alpaugh to advertise and conduct a sale; Hiram Taylor's son or nephew bought the property with highest bid, but defaulted on payments Expenses for sheriff's sale of land: Sheriff's fee: \$ 5.00 Clerk's fee: 20.80 Printer's bill: 21.00 Damages to plaintiff: 744.00</p>	<p>Court-ordered Sale 56.38 acres</p>	<p>\$920         total expenses for 1st sale \$790.80</p>
<p>May 18, 1860 District Court Case #232</p>	<p><b>A. Walton</b> 2<sup>nd</sup> sale was held by Sheriff Thomas Alpaugh; Alfred Walton was given title to the property  Alfred John Walton - was born in Yorkshire, Eng. Oct. 22, 1822; came to U.S when age 14; first arrived in Calif. in 1842 on the U.S. Naval sloop <i>Dale</i>; emigrated to Iowa, farming between 1844-1849; returned to Calif. overland by southern route thru L.A., Cajon Pass, and then to S.F. in 1849; filed for land on July 3, 1851 on the Sacto. River and Oct. 20, 1852 on Cottonwood Cr.; mined at Bidwell's Bar; raised cattle on Kimball's Plain; involved in sheep raising; operated a hotel in Shasta City with John Scott; settled in Red Bluff in 1854; engaged as a teamster and mule packer; naturalized July 8, 1856 in Shasta Co.; member IOOF; Dec. 18, 1860 married Mary Ann Ward Reeves [born in Ireland Dec. 7, 1834] in Tehama Co.; Catholic; one step-son and four children, all born in Red Bluff;<sup>231</sup> member Red Bluff City Bd. of Trustees</p>	<p>Court-ordered sale 56.38 acres</p>	<p>\$933.15</p>

<sup>231</sup> **Walton children:** stepson **Joseph Henry Reeves** [born New York, 1855], **Alfred Ward** [born Oct. 19, 1861—possibly born in Adobe House, bap. Oct. 20, 1861, died July 9, 1863], **Margaret Agnes** [born Calif. Dec. 7, 1863, baptized Jan. 23, 1864, died French Gulch Dec. 2, 1949], **Thomas Richard** [born Calif. Nov. 16, 1867, bap. Dec. 24, 1867 Red Bluff, died Red Bluff Apr.13, 1844], **Alfred John** [born Calif. Feb. 16, 1870, bap. Apr. 10, 1870 Red Bluff, operated Red Bluff dairy with father, died Feb. 13, 1956]

Jan. 15, 1861 Tehama Co. Bk. C, p. 213	<b>A. Walton</b> Sheriff Thomas Alpaugh to A. Walton the acreage with buildings	Deed	56.38 acres	\$1,034.70
	Adobe Ranch advertised for sale Feb. 12 & 22, 1861 by Walton with buildings and 300 fruit trees; July 2, 1861 filed notice to operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch; Oct. 4, 1873 Walton later bought a dairy on north Main Street, Red Bluff; mined in Idaho; in 1870, 1880 Red Bluff census; Red Bluff dairy 1888, 1902; dairyman 1900, 1910; Alfred died Red Bluff July 18, 1911; Mary Ann died Sept. 13, 1927			
January 3, 1862 Tehama Co. Bk. D, p.50	<b>Daniel Howard</b>	Deed	56.38 acres	\$1,862
	Daniel Howard - born in New York in 1826; married Elizabeth H [*][born in N.Y. 1827]; 1857 Red Bluff tax roll; three children; <sup>232</sup> advertised "Adobe Ferry" Sept. 16, 1862			
November 5, 1862 Tehama Co. Bk. A & B, p. 189	Daniel Howard's petition for a Ferry Permit approved; Nov. 11, 1862 ferry toll rates noted in newspaper			
August 4, 1863	J.B. Bacon, Ephraim Clark & L.B. Healy appointed Road Viewers to layout road from Red Bluff to Howard's Ferry and to the Tehama County Wagon Road			
August 2, 1864	Daniel Howard and others petitioned for a public road to be located from the Adobe Ferry to intersect with the Red Bluff and Humboldt Wagon Road at or near J.D. Bacon's farm			
September 20, 1864	A.W. Bishop, A.H. Stout, and George R. Beardsell appointed as Road Viewers; Daniel Howard paid damages for Ferry Road passing over part of Star Ranch, owned by J.N. Williams; Tehama Co. sups. paid \$300 for a fence on both sides of road thru the Star Ranch			
December 1, 1864	Adobe Ferry license renewed for 1 year to Dec. 1, 1865			
February 11, 1865	Adobe Ferry Road designated a public right of way.			
	Howard appeared in 1870 Red Bluff census; worked at Belle Mill in 1869; owned and operated Yellow Jacket Mill in 1879; farmed 400 acres; in 1880 Sierra census			

<sup>232</sup> **Howard children:** **Ada** [born in N.Y. 1851], **Clara E.** [born in Iowa, 1861], and **Oliver B.** [born in Calif., 1870].



June 22, 1865 Tehama Co. Bk. E, pp. 462-464	<b>Herbert Kraft</b> parcel included ferry operation across river known as Adobe Ferry, as well as equipment and boats	Deed	56.38 acres	\$2,000
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Herbert Kraft - born in Mariazell, Hanover, near Wurtenburg, Germany March 15, 1831; came to U.S. at age 10 in 1841; traveled to Calif. by way of New Orleans, St. Louis, and St. Joseph; arrived in Hangtown [Placerville] August 2, 1852; worked in tin trade; in 1854 came to Red Bluff and opened a tin and plumbing business; Mar. 15, 1861 in Louisville, KY married Elizabeth Kreuth [born 1845 in KY]; Catholic; 1860s expanded Red Bluff hardware business—largest north of City of Sacramento [sold 1876]; eight children;<sup>233</sup> July 24, 1865 newspaper notice of plans to operate a ferry in Red Bluff on lots 1, 2, 3 in block 6; naturalized citizen 1866; Mar. 14, 1866 built pontoon bridge across Sacto. River; Oct. 19, 1867 gives notice he will apply for ferry franchise at Adobe Ranch; operated Adobe Ferry before moving operation south to Pine Street in Red Bluff Jan. 22, 1864; Apr. 8, 1869 near accident on ferry; in 1870 census Henry Kraft [age 28 from Prussia] resided with the Krafts, as did Theodore Menold family of Wurtenburg; wife Elizabeth baptized Catholic on Sept. 11, 1873; owned Kraft Banking House [later First National Bank then Bank of America]; director Bank of Tehama Co.; owned wood and lumberyard; 1876 bought Red Bluff Gas Works; owned Eureka Gas Plant [sold in 1883]; 1876 City Trustee; Tehama Co. supervisor 1881-1892; owned nearly 20,000 acres of Tehama Co.; will signed May 29, 1893; died in Red Bluff, Nov. 23, 1895

January 11, 1870 Tehama Co. Bk. G, p.235	<b>A. A. Brownlee</b> included acreage with buildings	Deed	56.38 acres	\$500
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Alexander Andrew “Alex” Brownlee - born in Canada in 1833; parents from Scotland; naturalized citizen in Davenport, Iowa June 28, 1857; married Cynthia [\*] [born in New York 1833]; Antelope area farmer in 1870; listed in 1879, 1886 Great Registers and 1880 Red Bluff Census; merchant in Red Bluff 1886; 3 children<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Kraft children: **George Herbert** [born Calif. 1862, died San Diego, 1917], **Estella A.** [born Red Bluff Jan. 1862, died Red Bluff July 6, 1862], **Edward Francis** [born Calif. May 18, 1864, died Red Bluff 1920 unmarried], **Ida (or Adah) Teresa**—possibly born in Adobe House [born Red Bluff Nov. 11, 1865, bap. Feb. 4, 1866 Red Bluff, died Aug. 1869 at age 4], **Gustave [Augustus]** [born Calif. 1868, died 1922], **Albert Elmer Phillip** [born Red Bluff May 14, 1870, bap. Oct. 23, 1870, died May 30, 1914], **Anetta Elizabeth** [born Red Bluff Mar. 27, 1873, died Nov. 21, 1927], **Gertrude** [born Calif. Dec. 1, 1874, died Mar. 28, 1933]

September 15, 1873 Tehama Co. Bk. H, p. 704	<b>William Gibbon</b> property from A.A. Brownlee included acreage with buildings	Deed	56.38 acres	\$675
	William Gibbon born in England in 1831; Antelope area farmer 1871; Nov. 13, 1873 mortgage deed from George Hammons for \$641; married in Santa Clara June 15, 1885 to Mary Hazelton [born in Santa Clara July 22, 1858]; Tehama County voter in 1888; Mary died May 29, 1888			
November 13, 1873 Tehama Co. Bk. E, p. 707 Bk. I, pp. 42-43	George W. Hammons William Gibbon secured mortgage from George W. Hammons	Mortgage Deed	56.38 acres	\$641
November 13, 1873 Tehama Co. Bk. I, pp. 42-43	<b>George W. Hammons</b> William Gibbon sold property to George W. Hammons	Deed	56.38 acres	\$1,100
	George Washington Hammons - born in Iowa Oct. 30, 1846; listed in the 1870 Paynes Creek Census; 1880 Red Bluff census; married Mrs. Delia Frances Myrich St. Clair [born in Indiana, Iowa Mar. 18, 1861]; one son; Antelope [area] farmer 1863; Red Bluff laborer 1896; Riverview farmer 1908; George died in Red Bluff March 21, 1929; Delia died Sept 25, 1936			
September 14, 1874 Tehama Co. Bk. I, p. 629	<b>William F. Erwin</b> George Hammons sold William Erwin ½ interest in acreage and buildings	Deed	½ of 56.38 acres	\$600
	William Franklin Erwin - born in Ohio on June 26, 1836; married Imogene Webster [born in Burlington, Iowa Jun. 3, 1852]; purchased ½ Interest in property from George Hammons; five Children; <sup>235</sup> son [Edward Irwin] born at Adobe Ranch Nov. 29, 1874; Great Register 1875			
December 1874	William F. Erwin, Andrew J. Hammons and George W. Hammons awarded right to build and operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch			

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<sup>234</sup> **Brownlee children:** William Edward “Edwin” [born Iowa in 1858 married Alicia F. Wilson Aug. 27, 1879, Antelope area farmer], Emma [born Iowa in 1867], and Laura [born Calif. in 1872]

<sup>235</sup> **Erwin children:** Frank E. [born in Missouri Feb. 28, 1873, died Red Bluff July 17, 1962], Edward Marlow [born on Adobe Ranch Nov. 26, 1874, died Red Bluff Dec. 12, 1917], Forest Elwood [born in Calif. Oct. 6, 1881, died Red Bluff Nov. 26, 1950], Lawrence Webster [born Red Bluff Sept. 2, 1886, died Red Bluff Apr. 1, 1957], and Charlene A. or “Charley” [born on the Adobe Ranch].

Andrew Joseph “Andy” Hammons - born in Iowa on Dec. 9, 1844; married Malinda Caroline Hoffman [born in Iowa 1845]; five children; Antelope [area] teamster 1868; in Red Bluff census 1870, 1880; Red Bluff teamster 1902; Red Bluff real estate 1908, 1910; died Jan. 13, 1913

July 10, 1875	Fire spread north of Red Bluff to Dibble Creek		
November 9, 1875 Tehama Co. Bk. I, p. 630	<b>William F. Erwin</b>	Deed	½ of 56.38 acres \$575 [now owns all 56.38 acres]
	July 1, 1876 Adobe Ferry advertised in newspaper		
September 6, 1877 Tehama Co. Bk. G, p. 343	<b>William M. Lansdale</b>	Mortgage Deed	56.38 acres \$1,500
	William Erwin obtained a mortgage from William Lansdale		
	William Moody Lansdale - born in Ohio on Mar. 21, 1820; married to Lucy J. Tolls [born KY 1826]; in 1870 Red Bluff Census; ten children; <sup>236</sup> listed in 1867 Great Register age 45 as hotelkeeper from KY; in 1880 Sierra Census; July 30, 1888 married 2 <sup>nd</sup> time in Tehama Co. to Mrs. Mary W. Gaitlin [born Missouri 1831]; William died in Red Bluff Dec. 31, 1905		
September 6, 1877 Tehama Co. Bk. K, p. 182	<b>William M. Lansdale</b>	Quit Claim deed	40 acres next to 56.38 acres
	Samuel Alvord deeded in two parcels of 40 acres adjacent to the 56.38 acres north of Dibles Creek		
July 16, 1879 Tehama Co. Bk. N, p. 372	<b>William F. Erwin</b>	Deed	96.38 acres \$1,000
	William Erwin re-acquired the rights to the land and buildings from William Lansdale with the addition of the adjacent 40 acres		
	William F. Erwin - in 1880, 1910 Great Registers; a Red Bluff and Antelope area farmer 1880-1910; 1904 involved in an accident which killed B.F. Hill; William died in Red Bluff Dec. 10, 1923; Imogene died Nov. 4, 1935		

<sup>236</sup> Lansdale children: Isaac Richardson [born in Missouri 1848], Oliver Waters (born in Missouri 1851), Sarah Elizabeth [born in Missouri 1853], Eliza Ellen [born in Missouri 1858], Sarah E. [born in Calif. 1858], Susan M. [born in Calif. 1860], Kitty [born in Calif. 1861], Emmadine “Emma” [born in Calif. 1862], William Richard [born in Calif. 1866], Samuel [born in Calif. 1871]

<p>October 17, 1879 Tehama Co. Bk. N, p. 372</p>	<p><b>L. D. Clark</b></p> <p>Lorenzo Dow “Lorin”<sup>237</sup> - born in Illinois Jan. 17, 1849; trained carpenter; married Matilda Jennings [born Aug. 5, 1846 in SC] from Illinois; two children;<sup>238</sup> Lassen School teacher; moved to Oroville; in 1873 published Oroville <i>Mercury</i> newspaper; with C.B. Ashurst, L.D. Clark founded <i>People’s Cause</i> weekly newspaper in 1874;<sup>239</sup> retired 1880; Adobe House expanded with several wooden additions;<sup>240</sup> 1880 census noted close neighbors to family [on same acreage?] included L.D. Clark’s parents, Ephraim and Harriet Clark, and Lemuel Ide;<sup>241</sup> L.D. died in Red Bluff Feb. 5, 1925; Matilda died in Red Bluff on Mar. 4, 1928; she lived 60 years in Red Bluff</p>	<p>Deed</p>	<p>96.38 acres</p>	<p>\$1,100</p>
<p>May 1, 1882 Tehama Co. Bk. R, p. 425</p>	<p><b>E.A. Mount &amp; L.A. Mount</b></p> <p>Emory [or Emery] A. and Laura A. Mount moved into the “Old Adobe Ferry Place” with their children in June 1882</p> <p>Emory Augustus Mount - born Dec. 6, 1837 in Toledo, Ohio; served in Napa Guards during Civil War; Mar. 23, 1864 married in Napa Co. to Laura Anne Willett - born Pollars Corners, NY on Jan. 26, 1844 [or 1838]; four children;<sup>242</sup> owned dairy at Franklin &amp; Pine Sts, Napa; dairy ousted by new Napa City laws; employed at street work with brother Timothy N. Mount; 1879 operated team and wagons on Gerky Grant in Vina; the family</p>	<p>Deed</p>	<p>96.38 acres</p>	<p>\$1,600</p>

<sup>237</sup> Lorin may be spelled Loren. Mormon leader Brigham Young’s brother was named Lorenzo Dow Young. Lorin appears to have been named after him.

<sup>238</sup> Clark children: Irene [born Oroville Oct. 23, 1873, unmarried, died Sept. 27, 1955], Adella [born Red Bluff May 25, 1875, died Red Bluff Nov. 10, 1878]

<sup>239</sup> According to the Oct. 14, 1981 Red Bluff *Daily News*: The newspaper relocated to Main & Hickory Streets, Red Bluff. It was sold in 1877, but Clark was retained as editor. He later bought an interest in the paper, published daily beginning Mar. 18, 1878. Clark left Red Bluff to work at a Los Angeles area newspaper. The newspaper noted he left “the William B. Ide Adobe, where he was living.” This may be where confusion developed, if as noted below, Lemuel Ide [William B. Ide’s son] resided on the property.

<sup>240</sup> Later resident Alberto R. Mount stated in a letter dated July 7, 1957 from Woodland, Calif. that L.D. Clark built the board addition on the house.

<sup>241</sup> The 1880 census noted a household next to Lorin Clark [on the same property?] with his parents [Ephraim N. Clark from NY age 62 and Harriet Clark from SC age 60] and their son Lewis Clark [age 20 born in Calif.], John Hays [age 30] and Mattie Hays [age 24] from Missouri, and Lemuel Ide [age 40 from Ohio and son of William B. Ide]. The Clark family was Mormon.

<sup>242</sup> Mount children: Emory Hulsert [married Mary Melinda Davis Jun. 12, 1887 in Oakland, lived in SF 1922-1940], Arvilla [or Arvella] Jewell [born Apr. 21, 1867 Napa Co., married Francis Marion “Frank” Crews in Oct. 13, 1886, five sons—Calvin, Elmer, Laurel, Walter, and Ira, lived in Red Bluff 1901, divorced Crews in 1903; married Mr. Burke and lived in Sacramento; later married Charles Earl Parr who died 1961; Arvilla died Nov. 11, 1949], Willett Colfax “Will” [born Nov. 30, 1870], and Alberto Roberto “Bert” [born Sept. 24, 1872].

followed in Apr. 1880; rented farm on Elder Creek, Tehama Co.; planted 1½ acres of fruit trees to Build a nursery on Adobe Ranch

October 9, 1882  
Tehama Co.  
Bk. S, p. 364

**E.A. Mount & L.A. Mount** Deed 40 acres \$1.00  
Ephraim N. Clark [Lorenzo D. Clark's father] sold 40 acres [2 parcels] to Emory and Laura Mount for \$1 [probably the same 40 acres quit claimed by Samuel Alvord to William M. Lansdale on Sept. 6, 1877]

April 9, 1886  
Tehama Co.  
Bk. W, p. 433

**Willett C. Mount & Alberto R. Mount** Deed ½ interest in 96.38 acres  
parents Emory and Laura Mount gave youngest sons ½ interest in property as part of their divorce settlement; at the time Willett was age 15 and Alberto "Bert" age 13; mother Laura lived with them; boys quit school to run ranch, paying on mortgage with 12% interest; after the birth of her last child, their sister Arvilla Mount Crews, with her five sons, resided on the ranch before her divorce in 1903

Willett Colfax "Will" Mount - born Nov. 30, 1870; worked at Star Dairy [part of original Dibble grant] next door 7 days a week for \$25 mo; lived in Red Bluff 1901; on Jan. 1, 1910 married Madge J. [or Marg] Marquis [born 1888 from Oregon], a public school teacher; one daughter Berth L.; Will became an animal veterinarian, graduated from SF Veterinary College 1914; Riverview farmer 1910; in Tehama 1920; 1930 census in Sacto. Co.; Will died Sept. 23, 1951

Alberto Roberto "Bert" Mount - born Sept. 24, 1872, Napa; quit school at 14; left ranch to work for Sierra Flume and Lumber Co. at Lyonsville, Tehama Co. during the seasons of 1895, 1896, 1897; moved out of Adobe House in Nov. 1897; 1898 Southern Pacific RR fireman 1901; married Nov. 29, 1901 in Medford, Ore. to Bertie E. Webster of Ashland [born 1878]; 1901 resident of Dunsmuir; 2 sons—one died in infancy; 1904 became locomotive engineer; 1917-1918 WW I draft; 1930 census lived in Dunsmuir area; retired SPRR on Mar. 1, 1933; Bertie died 1949; Bert lived with son Robert W. Mount in Woodland; died June 10, 1968 in Woodland

George Brewer [born in Texas] and his wife hired to work the ranch 1906-1910; grew peaches, pecans, dried fruit on ranch



<p>April 10, 1886 Tehama Co. Bk. W, pp. 433-434</p>	<p><b>Laura A. Mount</b>                      Deed</p> <p>in the settlement of Laura and Emory Mount's divorce, Laura received ½ interest in property, along with farm equipment, tools, lumber, wood shakes, harness, spring wagon, header wagon and header bed, 2 cows, sow &amp; pigs, poultry, mare, colt; Laura lived with her two sons on the property; she died Mar. 15, 1908</p> <p>Emory Mount entitled to lots in the City of Napa and the buggy harness; Emory suffered a stroke; resided with brother Tim Mount in Napa; remarried 2<sup>nd</sup> time in Napa; died Red Bluff Mar. 13, 1908;</p>	<p>½ interest in 96.39 acres</p>	
<p>June 15, 1890</p>	<p>Fire on Dibble Creek burned 10,000 acres.</p>		
<p>February 13, 1913 Bk. 74, p. 153</p>	<p><b>George E. Sutton</b>                      Deed</p> <p>Sutton received the property from Willett C. Mount for \$10; acreage included 6-room Adobe House, garage and storage building, well, pump, storage tank, barns</p> <p>George Edward Sutton - born in Lee County, Illinois March 4, 1883; from Julesburg, Colo.; 1907 married Mary Elsie Peterson from Illinois [born Jan. 16, 1883]; came to Red Bluff in 1913; four children<sup>243</sup></p>	<p>96.38 acres</p>	<p>\$10</p>
<p>June 1, 1932</p>	<p>Sutton receives approval for the Adobe House to be registered as a California Historical Point of Interest #12</p>		
<p>1937</p>	<p>George Sutton began process of subdividing land; Acreage reduced to 77 acres with sale of lots; Adobe House used as a private museum; Sutton approached state to purchase only parcels 1, 1A, 2 and 3; parcel 1 included Adobe House, well, and outbuildings;</p>		
<p>May 1, 1935</p>	<p>State Senator D. Jack Metzger introduced legislation to establish property as a state park</p> <p>Mary Sutton died in Aug. 14, 1943</p>		
<p>August, 1946</p>	<p>Frederick Law Olmsted recommended acquisition of Adobe House by Calif. State Div. of Beaches and Parks<sup>244</sup></p>		

<sup>243</sup> Sutton children: **George Butte "Bud"** [born May 30, 1915, owned lots 1 & 1A, died Red Bluff Apr. 19, 1967], **Alta Ione** [married William Kestner, owned lot 2], **Gordon** [married Alyce B., owned parcel 3], **Ethel May** [married Thomas "Tommy" Zimmerman, owned parcel 4]

<sup>244</sup> Red Bluff *Daily News*, Aug. 26, 1949.

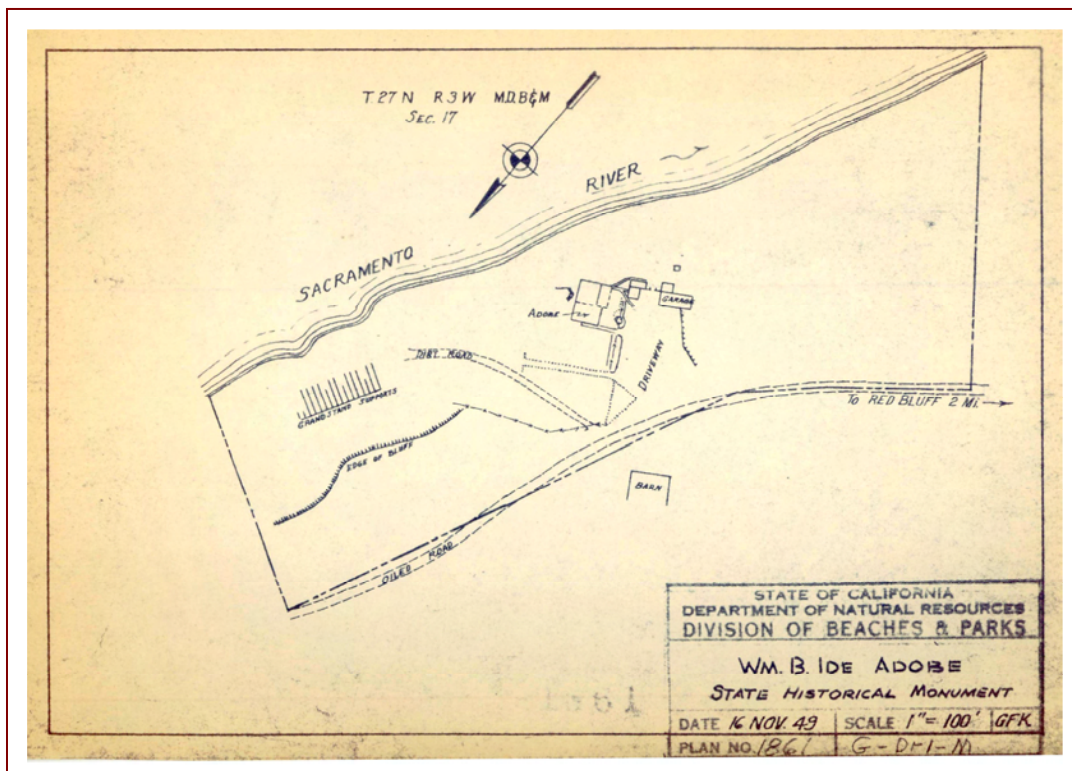
1949 State of Calif. vs. George Sutton, et al	State initiates condemnation proceedings after no agreement reached on terms to sale to Calif. State Div. of Beaches and Parks; Sutton believed Adobe House built by William B. Ide should bring higher purchase price		
July 26, 1951	local matching funds (\$11,812) raised and turned over to the state for land purchase		
August 29, 1951	Superior Court settlement Property sold to State of California	3.96 acres	\$23,624.70
	Nov. 26, 1952 Geo. Sutton took 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife, Mrs. Margaret Bagby; Geo. Sutton died in Red Bluff on May 5, 1965		
1958	State funds provided for the research, archeology and restoration of the Adobe House		
May 1, 1960	William B. Ide Adobe is dedicated as a State Historical Monument		

## Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:

For this exhibit, it will be important for visitors to locate on a map Abraham M. Dibble's original 160 acres, the reduced 56.38 acres, the later 96.38 acres, and the current acreage now set aside as a state historic park. The parcels should be shown in association with the Sacramento River and modern landmarks, like Interstate 5 and other local roads.

The Adobe Ranch's rapid changes in ownership are both amazing and mystifying. Visitors should witness these changes to the property graphically and in context with their times. A long timeline in association with the map could show the progression of ownership and the land's uses in relationship to national, state and local events—the California Gold Rush, statehood, the founding of stagelines in the north valley, droughts, the floods of 1861-1862, the Civil War, the birth of William Erwin's children on the property, completion of the California and Oregon Railroad, etc. The history noted on the timeline might be linked to the map, with push buttons to indicate the property's configuration at different times.

Photographs could illustrate the evolution of the Adobe House and its transformation after rehabilitation, when it became William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park. A drawing might be used to represent the Adobe Ranch as it might have appeared in the mid-1850s with two more large oak trees on the property.



A plan drawn in 1949 of the property.  
California State Parks Collections.

If space and funding allow, an interactive activity could be developed encouraging visitors to express their thoughts as to why the property changed hands so often. Was it because the property was too small? Owners lost it while gambling? River flooding? Hot summer temperatures? Or, ghosts? Let the visitors think and choose.

### **Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:**

There are several artifacts donated by Frank Erwin, which were used by the William Erwin family in the Adobe. They include a dresser set, drop leaf table, kitchen cabinet and flat iron. They should be considered for use in this exhibit.

Historic photographs of the Adobe Ranch from the late 1800s and early 1900s and in the process of rehabilitation are included in this *Interpretive Plan's* Graphics File. Additional research may be needed to locate appropriate maps to use as the base map called for in this exhibit, as well as to illustrate national, state, and local events on a graphic timeline. USGS maps could help designers in locating the historic and modern sites of interest.

## Area 4: Transportation Nexus

Space Allocation: 15%

### Themes:

The Adobe Ranch and the Red Bluff area evolved as a transportation nexus for riverboats, pack teams, freighters, stage lines, ferries, and today's cars.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Appreciate how river traffic connected the inland frontier with the rest of California.
- Learn more about how people and freight were transported through the Red Bluff area in the mid-1800s.
- Visualize the Adobe Ranch Ferry and recognize the importance of ferries before bridges.
- Relate yesterday's transportation routes to those of today.

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

Today, the quiet quality of William B. Ide Adobe SHP belies its historic character as a nexus of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century transportation in Northern California. The frenetic pace of the Gold Rush drew large cargoes and enterprising people to the region. They came on foot, pack animals, freight wagons, stages, riverboats, barges and ferries. Located next to the Sacramento River, the Adobe Ranch bore witness to these passages and at times facilitated them.

#### *The Great River Highway*



The Upper Sacramento River above Colusa drawn by German-born artist Edward Vischer in July 1866. Courtesy of Claremont Colleges

Gold Rush merchants at supply depots, like San Francisco, Sacramento, Marysville, and Red Bluff, depended on the Sacramento River and its tributaries for shipping goods to Northern California. With



the rush for the mines, every available floating vessel—old or new—was employed on the river highways. Schooners, sloops, whaleboats, barges, and wood- and coal-burning steamships crowded the banks of the Sacramento. Water transportation was a relatively cheap and dependable means for moving goods into California’s interior, however risky. The waterways changed constantly—no two trips were the same. Currents, channels, water depths, winds, hazards, sand bars, and debris affected navigation on the rivers, not only influencing the type of vessels used, but also their speed of delivery. Light draught vessels could travel far up the Sacramento River, as well as into the American, Feather, and Yuba Rivers.



Sacramento City, c.1851. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library

Sacramento River navigation developed rapidly. In May 1850, Pierson B. Reading’s stern-wheeler *Jack Hays* reached Trinidad City (close to Red Bluff) and Redding on May 8<sup>th</sup>.<sup>120,121</sup> The steamer *Orient* arrived in Red Bluff in November 1851 and later with the *Plumas* ran regularly up river to the Red Bluff area.<sup>122</sup> In May



The stern-wheel steamboat *Dover* on the Sacramento River, c.1910. Courtesy of Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park

1854, the *Belle* with Captain Pierce as its pilot, made her way through the treacherous Iron Canyon section of the Sacramento River above Red Bluff. Later several other boats went above the town, but only occasionally, when the river was deep enough, such as in 1859 and 1862.<sup>123</sup>

According to the *Sacramento Transcript* of January 4, 1851, California’s riverboat trade had grown to 50 steamers in the preceding year. Rivalry was intense. The newspaper reported that 15 plied the river above the City of Sacramento.

<sup>120</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. VII. Santa Barbara: The History Company, 1890. P. 133.

<sup>121</sup> Edward Galland Zelinsky and Nancy Leigh Olmsted, “Upriver Boats—When Red Bluff Was the Head of Navigation,” *California History*. Spring 1985. San Francisco: California Historical Society.

<sup>122</sup> *Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World: A Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California*, Lewis Publishing Co., 1891. Reprinted at <http://www.calarchives4u.com/history/nocal/nocal1891-266.htm>

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

As competition increased, a struggle for supremacy developed—there were no rules, no laws governing conduct and no ethic. An all-out battle to secure passengers and cargo and make time developed with accidents becoming common, slow boats zigzagged to slow down faster boats, and collided in attempting to make warf [wharf] first.

Racing became a sport as well as, an economic necessity. Captain, crew and passengers joined in and lined the decks where they shouted encouragement or invectives. Finally in desperation the principal owners formed the California Steam Navigation Co. and became one of the more powerful corporations.<sup>124</sup>

Steamboats arriving from San Francisco crowded Sacramento's landings to unload thousands of tons of foodstuffs and supplies. These were then transferred to smaller (less than 100 feet in length), shallower draft steamers that went upriver to Marysville and Red Bluff. In the competition for these secondary routes, one steamboat captain boasted that his little stern-wheeler could carry freight in ten inches of water, even "anywhere there is a little damp."<sup>125</sup>

Stern-wheelers proved to be the most suitable boats for traffic on the northern reaches of the river. Side-wheelers were all very well for unobstructed Delta and Bay travel, but stern-wheelers were narrower, of shallower draft and much more maneuverable for the upriver trade. Successful ones were called "skimmers," ... The ability of these boats to operate in very shallow water was a valuable asset, particularly during the huge flood of 1862 when the skimmers went straight out across country to rescue farm families and livestock.<sup>126</sup>

With steamboats and the growing network of roads, Red Bluff soon became the regional hub for mining endeavors extending far north into Shasta, Trinity, and Siskiyou Counties. San Francisco's *Alta California* newspaper on January 31, 1853 noted:

...we cannot but come to the conclusion that a heavy trade is springing up at this place. We counted, on our walk from the landing to Red Bluffs, 140 pack mules and 15 team loads making their way to the interior... Steamers arriving included the *Orient*, *G. Winter*, *Fashion*, *Sutter*, *Daniel Moore*, *Express* and *Gazelle*.

The census provides some insight into the growing town of 1,351 people in 1860. There were 42 carpenters, 54 teamsters (plus others on the road), 21 blacksmiths, 6

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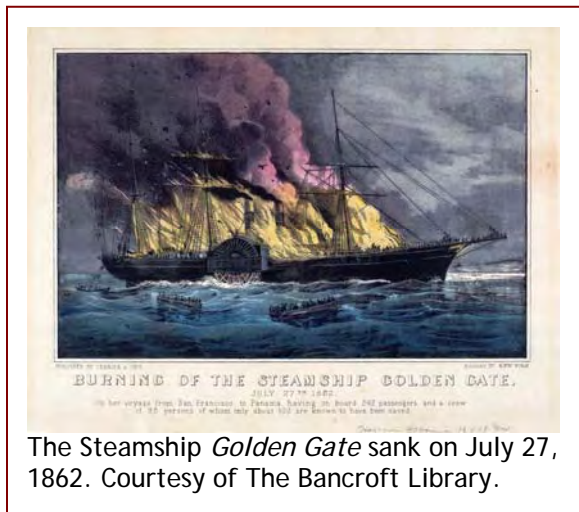
<sup>124</sup> Mrs. Wilbur White, "Sacramento River, Its Navigation." Ms. Special Collections, Meriam Library, CSU Chico.

<sup>125</sup> J. S. Holliday, *Rush for Riches*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, p. 189.

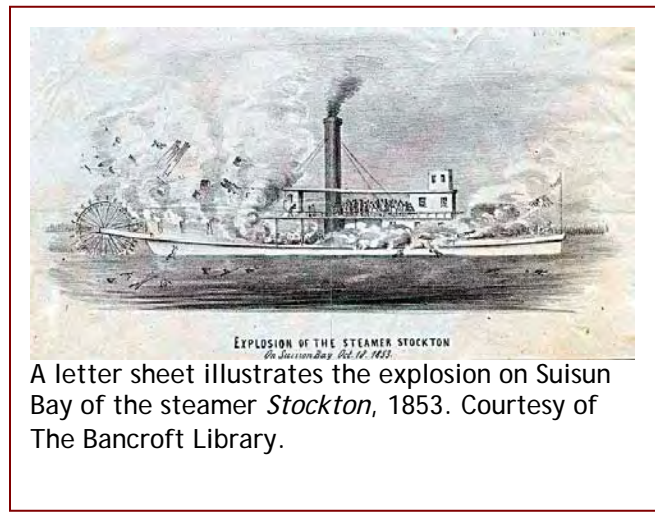
<sup>126</sup> Margaret Bauer, "Sternwheelers Steamed Along the Sacramento," *Tehama County Memories*, 1996. P.13.

physicians, 5 lawyers, 54 packers and 5 hotelkeepers.<sup>127</sup> In Red Bluff, warehouses were stocked full of mining tools, implements, and provisions. Heavily loaded freight wagons and pack mule teams then took these supplies forty miles north to the town of Shasta or to other northern mining camps.

River travel could be risky. Wet and dry weather periods changed from year to year and with it the rivers. There were no charts in the early days to guide boats through marshlands, sand bars, and around islands on the rivers. Valley fog made navigation difficult and dangerous in the winter. The lack of regulations also contributed to accidents, such as boiler explosions, collisions, and fires—a common hazard for wooden vessels in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>128</sup>



The Steamship *Golden Gate* sank on July 27, 1862. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.



A letter sheet illustrates the explosion on Suisun Bay of the steamer *Stockton*, 1853. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Historical accounts cite numerous incidents of passengers and crews becoming casualties in ship and boat mishaps. While in Red Bluff, William H. Brewer noted one accident off the coast of California in his journal. He had just disembarked from a boat coming up the Sacramento River on August 17, 1862.

On my arrival here I found the whole city in excitement and mourning over the loss of the *Golden Gate*, a terrible calamity. Everyone has lost friends and acquaintances by that accident.<sup>129</sup>

The *SS. Golden Gate* burned at sea near Manzanillo on July 27, 1862, with a loss of 198 passengers and crew, and property estimated at \$2,000,000.

<sup>127</sup> Zelinsky and Olmsted, *Ibid.* P. 98.

<sup>128</sup> According to Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. VII. P. 135: In an 1852 U.S. law providing for steamboat inspectors, California was omitted as a district. Local inspectors had to refer their decisions to New Orleans.

<sup>129</sup> William H. Brewer, *Up and down California in 1860-1864; the Journal of William H. Brewer*. Francis P. Farquhar, ed. Reprint 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

William Brewer's 1862 journal expanded on his travels while on board the steamboat, *Gem*. His experiences probably typified many in the Upper Sacramento Valley in the hot month of August.

Red Bluff is at the head of navigation on the river—three hundred miles above Sacramento by the river, but only half that distance by land. Stern-wheel steamers, drawing but eighteen or nineteen inches of water run up. Our boat was the *Gem*, and we towed a barge with two hundred tons of freight, quite an impediment to rapid progress. We got off at 11 A.M. I had plenty of books along, and although it was very hot, 90° to 96° every day, yet I enjoyed that trip much.

Thursday, August 14, we kept on our slow and winding way, often on bars and shoals that took long to get over. A wide plain borders the river on each side. We caught distant views of the mountains, but generally we saw only the river and its banks, which were more or less covered with trees—willows, cottonwoods, oaks, and sycamores—with wild grapevines trailing from them. Some of the views were pretty indeed. When it got dark, we tied up, it being impossible to run in the night, owing to snags, bars, and rapids.

On Friday morning, August 15, as I stood on the deck of the steamer, who should come down to the shore to see us pass but Averill.<sup>130</sup> The party were camped on the river bank, and by chance I saw them. It was a relief, for it showed that they were safe thus far.

Our progress this day was slower than before. Many bars and rapids in the crooked river were but slowly surmounted. During the day Lassen's Buttes stood out in clear outlines in the east—two majestic sharp peaks, their sides streaked with snow. Before night we saw Mount Shasta rising above the horizon, clear in outline, although its snowy crest was 150 miles distant in air line.

We tied up that night at Tehama, a little village on the bank. A circus was the excitement of the time and I attended...

Saturday we again went on and arrived here [at Red Bluff] in the afternoon. My party had arrived just before me and had encamped near town. This is a stirring little town of a few hundred inhabitants—saloons, taverns ("hotels"), and corrals being the chief features, for here pack trains and teams start for the whole northern country, Oregon, etc. But, oh, how hot it is! I am now writing at eleven o'clock at night, and it is 94° in my room—it has been 100° to 102° most of the day. I went to

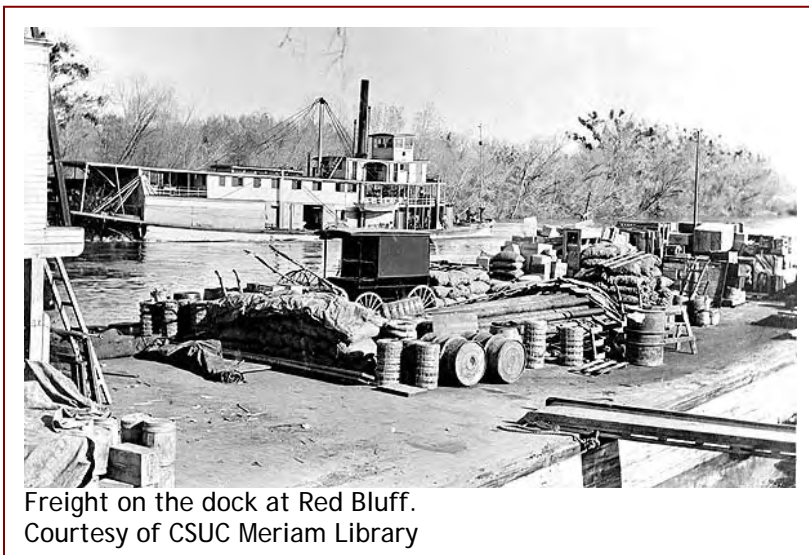
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<sup>130</sup> One of Brewer's expedition party traveling overland.

church this morning—an audience of about twenty-five only—in the schoolhouse.

Here the low hills close in on the river, and here begins a most interesting country to visit. I went out to camp a little while this afternoon, but I shall stay at the hotel until we leave here, then take to camp again.<sup>131</sup>

Boats hauled passengers and every kind of freight imaginable to the towns and landings along the river. Miners, merchants and ranchers with freight could flag down boats from the banks. Colusa, Butte City, Tehama, and Red Bluff at different times, depending on river's levels, each served as the "head of navigation," when no boat could travel further up stream.<sup>132</sup>



Freight on the dock at Red Bluff.  
Courtesy of CSUC Meriam Library

There were literally hundreds of landings along the way, where a boat would stop to unload some freight or to pick up even so small a cargo as a lug of peaches right off the farm. Many of these "farm" stops were brush landings... masses of brush, tree prunings, and other waste dumped over the

bank. A steamboat would nose up to one of these landings, swing out her gangplank, lay planks across the brush, and load or deliver cargo as needed. Stories were told of new ranch hands who had no idea where they were going being ignominiously "landed" on these shaky platforms, up to their armpits in leaves and brush.<sup>133</sup>

Residents of the Adobe Ranch and others living along the Sacramento River understood the transportation network's worth for keeping them connected with the outside world. Riverboats carried everything. One resident, Mary Murdock Compton, who lived further down stream, recounted the importance of trading boats to the inland valley.

<sup>131</sup> Brewer, *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> According to Joseph A. McGowen, *The Sacramento Valley: A Student's Guide to Localized History*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1967. P. 16: "Colusa held its position [as the head of navigation] until the snags were cleared from the river immediately above the town in 1853. Thereafter steamboats could reach Red Bluff."

<sup>133</sup> Bauer, *Ibid.* P. 13, 15.



An interesting feature of the life along the river was the trading boat that made the trip up river about every two weeks. It stopped at each ranch landing along the river bank. The people from what they called "the plains" back of the river would be waiting for it. The boat signaled its approach by a long, loud blast of the whistle, and on its arrival men, women, and children would be on hand to come on board. The boat was, in fact, a floating country general merchandise store. It had everything in hardware as well as clothing bolts and shoes, groceries, millinery, ribbons, notions and everything else one could imagine; even candy and toys. The storekeeper would take orders for fence posts and wire, which he would bring up on a return trip. The ranchers could trade in their



Last run of the steamboat *San Joaquin*.  
Courtesy of the CSUC Meriam Library.

products—sometimes bacon and lard too old for their own use—or anything else they wanted to get rid of. The boats were still going up and down the river in the early 1900's. Practically all the grain, hides, wool, and so forth went by barge down the river to Sacramento or San Francisco.<sup>134</sup>

Well into the 20th century, the Sacramento River highway continued to support the interior farming and ranching communities

of Northern California. In the years after the Gold Rush, steamboats continued to transport Tehama County's agricultural products to Sacramento and the Bay Area. By 1890, barges being towed down river carried as much as 1,000 tons of cargo, helping to keep riverboat operations alive. However, competition from the railroad took its toll with steamboats disappearing from the river altogether in the 1920s.<sup>135</sup>

### *Freight Trains on the California-Oregon Road*

Predating the riverboat traffic on the Sacramento River was a north-south trail close by the Adobe Ranch that became a heavily traveled road with the Gold Rush. Freight wagons or pack mules transported whatever was needed to the towns and gold camps scattered in the hills and valleys away from the major river arteries. Often this was after the supplies had been shipped up river from San Francisco and/or Sacramento.

<sup>134</sup> Henria Packer Compton, "Mary Murdock Compton," *Let them Speak for Themselves: Women in the American West, 1849-1900*. Christiane Fischer, ed. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978. P. 91.

<sup>135</sup> "Transporting Tehama County," <http://tehamamuseum.110mb.com/tcmtransport.html>

The old River Road, following along the west bank of the Sacramento River from Colusa to Shasta City, was the only road in Colusa County in the early '50's. Its popularity rivaled that of the river steamers, which plied as far north as Red Bluff.<sup>136</sup>

This old Sacramento Valley route, known at first as the California-Oregon Trail and, later, as the California-Oregon Road, [had been]... beaten into a well-defined path by such trappers and explorers as Ewing Young, Lieutenant Emmons of the Wilkes Expedition, Joseph Gale, and many others. Sometimes proceeding all the way down the western side of the river, and at other times crossing over to the east side somewhere between Red Bluff and Tehama (a variation used most frequently by the gold-seekers of '49 and the '50's), this historic road was traversed by a long succession of pack-mule trains, horsemen and footmen, herds of cattle and sheep, slow and cumbersome ox teams and covered wagons, and finally by the stagecoach and the freighter, precursors of the modern automobile, motor truck, and "fly-by-night" busses.<sup>137</sup>



Freight wagon with William Shady.  
From: [www.owensvalleyhistory.com](http://www.owensvalleyhistory.com)

Thousands of large lumbering freight wagons were once a common sight on California's early roads. Although commercial freight wagons operated along the Santa Fe Trail in the 1820s, there is no documentation for them in California much before the Gold Rush. The influx of gold seekers changed that. Successive gold strikes produced new mining camps and encouraged town development, with stores and other businesses. Freighters hauled the materials to build the communities and the merchandise that kept them growing.

Teaming became so common before the end of 1851 that the roads between Sacramento, Marysville and the mines were crowded with heavy wagons. A notice which appeared in the *Alta California* stated that a Marysville hotel proprietor recorded 794 wagons drawn by more than two thousand horses and mules as leaving the town within a period of one week. It was estimated that each load weighed thirty-two hundred pounds.<sup>138</sup>

Freight train operators could take advantage of a new wagon road that opened in 1853.

<sup>136</sup> Mildred Brooke Hoover, Hero Eugene Rensch & Ethel Grace Rensch, *Historic Spots in California*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962. P. 81.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* P. 184.

<sup>138</sup> Oscar O. Winther, *Express and Stagecoach Days in California*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1936. P. 12.

In July of 1853, a new wagon road opened from Red Bluff north to Shasta via Lower Springs, Canyon House, Clear Creek, and Cottonwood. "This must be a fairly good road," observed the *Shasta Courier*, "for a seven-mule team hauled 9,361 pounds over it and six mules carried 8,473 pounds, an extraordinary load. Roads were planked to withstand winter storms..."<sup>139</sup>

Freight outfits, like trucking companies today, moved every object imaginable, from barrels of flour, bags of beans, delicate eggs and other provisions, to heavy pumps, wheels, and pipes for mining and agriculture, to furniture, mirrors, printing presses, iron safes, and bolts of cloth for stores.

Everything needed by a town and its occupants came by freight wagon before the construction of railroads. Frequently the cost of transporting supplies to outlying areas exceeded the original value of the freight.

The wagon boss or wagon master managed trains of as many as 25 freight wagons, pulled by teams of oxen or mules. The second-in-command rode up and down the line keeping the wagons moving.

There was always plenty to do besides the driving and the herding.

Animals lost shoes that had to be tacked on again. Wagon hubs ran hot and had to be greased. Any of a score of other contingencies could retard the train's progress and necessitate extra labor. It was tiresome work, hard, sweaty, dusty, and dull...<sup>140</sup>



By 1858, the gold mining areas and emerging agricultural communities in the Central Valley were connected by over 270 teamsters with freight wagons pulled by horses and mules. Each wagon could move up to 9,000 pounds and operated seasonally. Between thirty and forty wagons departed Sacramento each day for the mines.<sup>141</sup>

In the 1860s, companies began replacing large freight wagons with more compact vehicles that could be coupled together.

<sup>139</sup> Zelinsky and Olmsted, *Ibid.* P.97.

<sup>140</sup> Nick Eggenhofer, *Wagons, Mules and Men: How the Frontier Moved West*, Hastings House, Publishers, Inc., New York, 1961. P. 87.

<sup>141</sup> Sacramento History Online: Historic Sacramento Photograph and Document Archive [http://www.sacramentohistory.org/resources\\_essay.html](http://www.sacramentohistory.org/resources_essay.html)



There was a decided change in the appearance of the freighting outfits after the [Civil] war. The practice of coupling one wagon behind another, developed previously on the Santa Fe haul, now came into vogue elsewhere. Experience having shown that it was inviting trouble to try to negotiate hairpin turns with too long a wheelbase, however, the wagon ends were straightened, eliminating the characteristic Conestoga overhang, to permit shorter couplings. At first only the rear end of the lead wagon and front end of the trailer were altered, to make the two, linked by a short tongue, look, at a distance, like one double-length Conestoga freighter. Eventually both overhangs were done away with,



Tandem freight wagons pulled by a mule team. From California State Parks Photographic Archives.

and the straight-ended wagon became standard, with two, three, or even more making one rolling unit.<sup>142</sup>

Sometimes a two-wheeled cart would be hooked on as a tailpiece on a trailer wagon, being especially useful in desert country as support for a 500-gallon water tank. Water barrels also rode on platforms along the sides of the wagons. Firewood often was slung beneath the undercarriage for handy transport.<sup>143</sup>



A freight wagon in Red Bluff.  
Courtesy of the Tehama Museum

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* P. 91.

## Pack Mule Outfits

Red Bluff became the supply depot for the northern part of the state in 1852, when the road was built to the town of Shasta. Goods offloaded at Red Bluff were then transferred to freight wagons or mule teams. Pack mule teams brought supplies to towns and camps beyond the reach of most roads or trails too steep and rough for wagons.<sup>144</sup>

From Spanish Colonial times onward, caravans of 2 to 200 pack mules carried valuable cargoes into California's interior. Spaniards first introduced the mule to America



A pack mule train on a switchback. From California State Parks Photographic Archives.

along with the horse. They were hardy. Trappers hauled furs; traders transported goods; and gold seekers moved their supplies and mining equipment using pack mules. The animals could transport heavy loads weighing as much as 350 pounds. Packing them was an art. Crates, barrels, sacks and other gear had to be divided equally, then balanced and cinched down tightly—not always an easy task with a difficult mule.

Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft described the pack mule trains in his *History of California*:

The train numbered a score of mules and upward, each laden with from 200 to 400 pounds of merchandise, which had to be secured and balanced with great nicety to withstand the inequalities of the trail. Patient and watchful, the animal would guard his load against projecting crags and drooping branches, and signal by a stop when anything went amiss. Freight charges were regulated both by the demand and the



1850s illustration of pack train mules being loaded.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* P. 92.

<sup>144</sup> Holliday, *Ibid.* P. 186



prevailing high price for labor, so that for a time one dollar per pound for a distance of 100 miles was no uncommon rate...

...the mule train presented a striking appearance as it advanced in winding file, now climbing a ridge, now fringing some precipitous slope, now disappearing in the wood-clad vale, at its head the leader, usually an old horse, the musical tingle of whose bell found response in the pricking ears of his followers... Twenty-five miles usually intervened between the camping-grounds, which, selected on some grassy river plat, lay outlined by the unpacked loads ranged with military precision, while around browsed the liberated animals.<sup>145</sup>

The Lowden brothers operated a pack train in 1854 from Red Bluff and Shasta to all parts of the northern mines, using the Trinity Trail.<sup>146</sup> By 1857, pack mules outfitted Weaverville and other remote mining camps in northwestern California, supplying a market of ten thousand people. The terrain they traversed included narrow ridges and steep slopes in order to reach remote tents and cabins. In wet weather, pack mules were used instead of heavy wagons, which could become bogged down in the mud. The long mule trains were referred to as "the clipper ships of the mountains."<sup>147</sup>

Up in the hills miners had to put up with delays in getting their supplies for any number of reasons. They hated the inflated prices they had to pay for even the most common commodity. However, there were no other alternatives. They had to forfeit whatever the cost to ensure delivery of their mail, food, mining supplies, and other necessities.

### *Stages Take to the Roads*

As California's population grew, so did the demand for better mail and passenger service. Stagelines developed and with them improvements were made to the rough trails and roads used by pack mules and freight wagons. Stage service provided the impetus for developing many of California's early roads.

Following [stageline operator] Jim Birch's lead in improving the roads to aid his own business, the freighters improved them in order to carry heavier loads. By the spring of 1851 the Mother Lode country of California was laced with a network of roads that, though rough and often precipitous, could be traveled by wheeled vehicles.<sup>148</sup>

In Northern California, enterprising individuals began organizing stage companies. Marshal Cummings drove the first stage into Shasta in September 1851 loaded with

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<sup>145</sup> Bancroft, *Ibid.* Pp. 153-154.

<sup>146</sup> Rosena A. Giles, *Shasta County, California: A History*. Oakland: Biobooks, 1949. P. 47

<sup>147</sup> Holliday, *Ibid.* P. 140.

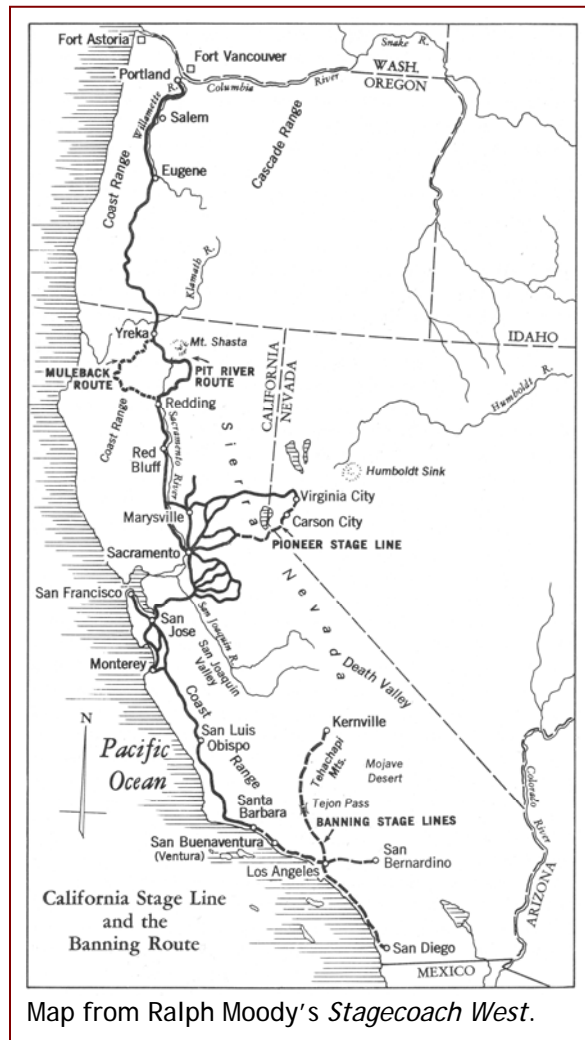
<sup>148</sup> Ralph Moody, *Stagecoach West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967. Reprint 1998. P. 44.

passengers and their gear.<sup>149</sup> Baxter & Co. (known later as Baxter & Noble, as well as Baxter & Monroe), followed in 1852, initiating a route up the western side of the Sacramento River from Sacramento to Shasta not far from the Adobe Ranch.

The first mail stage into Shasta was the U.S. mail stage, Baxter & Co., on May 8, 1852. By this date the roads were sufficiently dried up from the winter rains to make possible passage over the wheel ruts and bottomless mud holes. On arrival of the boats from Sacramento, this stage daily left the Colusi House, Colusi [early spelling of Colusa], at 4 p.m. for Shasta, via Placerville, Monroville, Moon's Ranch, Tehama (Red Bluffs), Cavertsberg [a trading post north of Red Bluff], Cottonwood. Returning, it left Shasta St. Charles Hotel daily for the above places, arriving in time to connect with the Sacramento Boats for San Francisco.<sup>150</sup>

Soon thereafter, the Hall & Crandall Stage Line offered competition on the eastern side of the river.<sup>151</sup> In the spring of 1852, Hall & Crandall decided to compete with Baxter & Monroe for the anticipated California-Oregon mail contract.

Hall & Crandall Company quickly followed Baxter & Company, also in May, 1852, from Sacramento and Marysville to Shasta City. Leaving Sacramento at 7 p.m., passing through Marysville, arriving in Shasta at 12 m. the following day, stopping in Shasta County at Cottonwood, Clear Creek. Offices: New Orleans Hotel, Sacramento, and U.S. Hotel, Marysville, El Dorado or Globe at Shasta. Returning, stages left Shasta daily at 6 p.m. on the 140-mile trip, arriving at Marysville at 3 a.m. the next morning, and arriving at



Map from Ralph Moody's *Stagecoach West*.

<sup>149</sup> Giles, *Ibid.* P. 63.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> McGowan, *Ibid.* P. 13: "Stages for Shasta had to pass east of Sutter and Butte basins, stopping at Nicolaus, Marysville, and Bidwell's (Chico) before cutting westward to the Sacramento River and Red Bluff."

Sacramento at 12 m., in time for the San Francisco boat. Running time: 25 hours. They touched at the following places in Shasta County: Middletown, Briggsville, One Horsetown, Cottonwood and Red Bluffs [old spelling of Red Bluff]. This line carried the mail once a week. Sacramento-Shasta fare, \$20.<sup>152</sup>

A race ensued between the rivals.



An advertisement for Hall & Crandall's Stages, 1854

...[Hall & Crandall] stocked the old Hudson's Bay trail from Colusa (the head of navigation for river steamers on the Sacramento [at the time]) to Shasta with Concord coaches and the best of their [California] mustang mares. Not to be outdone, Baxter & Monroe moved their best reinsmen and their finest eastern road horses onto the line. To no one's surprise, this resulted in the fastest long-distance race in California stage-coaching history.<sup>153</sup>

From Tehama to Shasta, a distance of 60 miles, on May 14, 1853, John Smith (Hall & Crandall) drove the course in five hours and 55 minutes.

The rival company, Baxter & Co., with W.A. Webb as whip, made it in six hours and 15 minutes, stopping 30 minutes for breakfast and 25 minutes for a

change of team. Exact driving time, five hours and 20 minutes, a gain of 35 minutes over the adversary.<sup>154</sup>

By 1853, there were a dozen small companies running stages connecting Sacramento, Stockton, Northern California and the gold fields.

They centred [sic] in Sacramento, as the chief point of distribution for the mines, and in the beginning of 1853, a dozen lines were owned there, with from three to twelve coaches each and numerous relays, valued at a third of a million dollars, and with connection to all parts of the state.<sup>155</sup>

A year later, James E. Birch had merged many of the competing stage operations into the California Stage Company. Two men from Providence, Rhode Island, Birch (who

<sup>152</sup> Giles, *Ibid.* Pp. 63-64.

<sup>153</sup> Moody, *Ibid.* Pp. 50-51.

<sup>154</sup> Giles, *Ibid.* Pp. 64-65.

<sup>155</sup> Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. VII, p. 153 notes: "*Alta Cal.*, March 22, 1853, assigns from 35 to 150 horses to each line, and places the total value at \$335,000. *Sac. Directory*, 1853-54. The termini were Coloma, Nevada, Placerville, Georgetown, Yankee Jim's, Jackson, Stockton, Shasta, and Auburn, some with rival lines."

had established the first stageline between Coloma and Sacramento in 1849) and Frank Stevens, a hotel and tavern keeper, founded the organization.

...the California Stage Company, a joint-stock concern with a capitalization of a million dollars, was organized in December 1853 and went into operation on January 1, 1854. It combined at least five-sixths of all the stage lines in California, and had 111 stagecoaches or mud wagons operating over fourteen hundred miles of road. Birch was elected president of the new firm, and Frank Stevens vice-president.<sup>156</sup>

By 1856, Sacramento had become the largest stagecoaching center on earth and the California Stage Company the largest stagecoaching firm in the United States.<sup>157</sup> Although the company had released several of its lines to stockholders and numerous independent operators had entered the field,

It was operating twenty-eight daily stagelines over 1970 miles of road; had contracts for carrying the U.S. mail about two-thirds of that distance; owned 1500 horses and 205 Concord stagecoaches and mud wagons; and employed 300 drivers, agents, relay station keepers, hostlers, and others. The total distance traveled by the firm's stock and equipment was in excess of a million miles per year, equal to more than 250 round trips between Sacramento and St. Joseph, Missouri.<sup>158</sup>

In 1857, Birch sought to enter the nationwide stage business. That year Congress had voted a six hundred thousand dollar subsidy for semi-weekly mail and passenger service.<sup>159</sup>

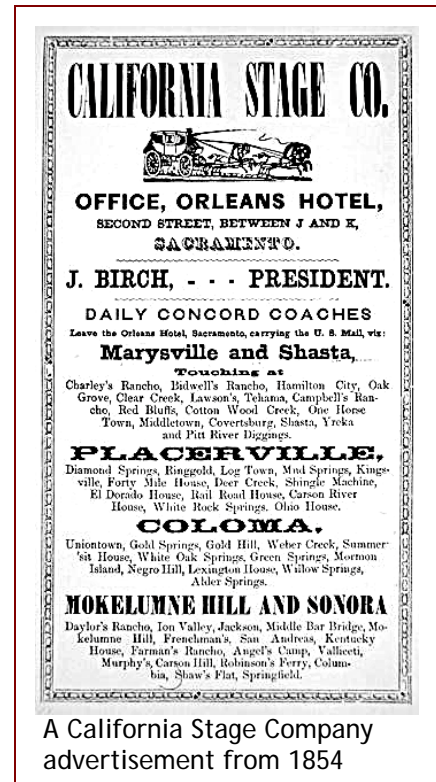
Shortly after the United States took possession of the Gadsen Purchase an overland mail contract was let to a company headed by James Birch. This provided an overland service from San Antonio, Texas to San Diego. The first eastbound mail left San Diego August 9, 1857. This was known as the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line. It became known as the "Jackass Mail" [the name suggested what critics thought of it] and was ill-fated from the beginning. James Birch lost his life in a sea disaster before the route was operating. His successors only made about forty

<sup>156</sup> Moody, *Ibid.* Pp. 51-52.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* P. 58.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Moody, *Ibid.* P. 292.



trips over the entire route prior to the inauguration of the Butterfield Overland Mail in September of 1858.<sup>160</sup>

Bancroft noted that the California Stage Company continued until the railroads took over its leading routes and relegated the stages, as well as freight wagons and mule trains, serving as tributaries to the rail routes. Before then,

The company flourished since it was better able to suppress competition; its stock paid as much as five per cent monthly dividends... In 1860 the Cal. Stage Co. controlled 8 lines northward, the longest extending 710 miles to Portland, with 60 stations, 35 drivers, and 500 horses, 11 drivers and 150 horses pertaining to the rest.<sup>161</sup>

Today the word “stagecoach” is applied almost exclusively to the classic, oval-shaped overland coach produced in Concord, New Hampshire and seen in many Western movies. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, if a vehicle carried passengers and mail, it was simply referred to as the “stage.”

Companies utilized a variety of vehicle styles in different sizes for stage travel, from passenger wagons and hacks to overland coaches and open-sided wagons, including ambulances, mud wagons and celerity wagons. The type of stages selected for use depended upon the character of the road, the distance to be traveled and the destination.



The California & Oregon Stage Company, c.1867, promoted a “classic” Concord coach. Mt. Shasta is in the distance. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

From the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century, stagecoaches were built in Albany and Troy, New York, and several New England towns.<sup>162</sup> However, Concord, New Hampshire, became *the* center for coach production, when wheelwright Lewis Downing joined his skills with expert coachbuilder J. Stephens Abbot from Maine. They took the manufacture of stagecoaches to a new level.<sup>163</sup> What separated Abbot and Downing from others of

<sup>160</sup> Dick Yale, “Transportation and Communication: The Lifeline of a Frontier.” Mss., Old Town San Diego SHP Library.

<sup>161</sup> Bancroft, *Ibid.* P. 152.

<sup>162</sup> Josiah Gregg in his *Commerce of the Prairies* published in 1884, also mentions Dearborn carriages and Jersey wagons.

<sup>163</sup> Eggenhofer, *Ibid.* P. 151.



their time were their vehicles' handsome appearance, durability, and overall quality.<sup>164</sup> These masterpieces of construction had no equal. Concord stagecoaches were first to offer the shock absorbing thorough braces—an important feature not only for passengers, but also for the animals pulling them. They allowed the coach to rock back and forth and sideways, too.

Thorough braces were strips of leather cured to the toughness of steel and strung in pairs to support the body of the coach and enable it to swing back and forth. This cradle-like motion absorbed the shocks of the road and spared the horses as well as the passengers. It also permitted the coach to work up its own assisting momentum when it was mired in a slough of bad road and beasts and driver were struggling to free it.<sup>165</sup>

Concord coaches came in three sizes. They could hold six, nine, or even twelve passengers inside. The bodies were so strong that an additional nine or twelve people could ride on top.

On rugged Western routes, like the Butterfield Overland Mail, companies frequently transferred their passengers and mail for the

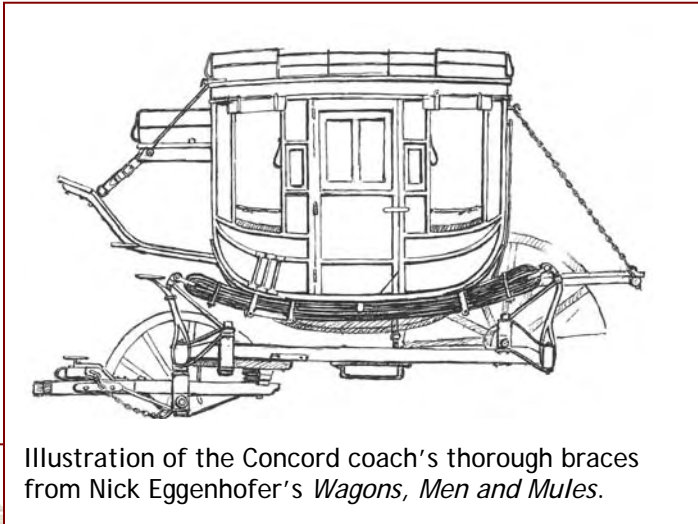
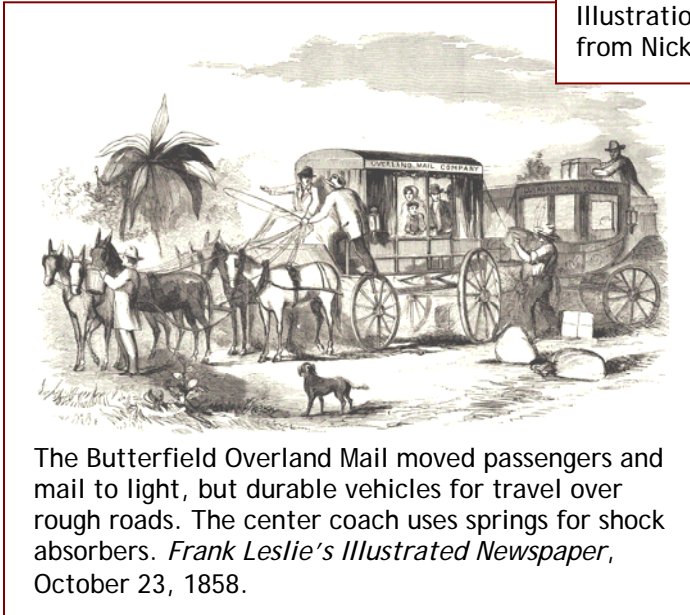


Illustration of the Concord coach's thorough braces from Nick Eggenhofer's *Wagons, Men and Mules*.



The Butterfield Overland Mail moved passengers and mail to light, but durable vehicles for travel over rough roads. The center coach uses springs for shock absorbers. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, October 23, 1858.

roughest parts of the journey to the lightweight, durable celerity wagon or to the less expensive, but also light mud wagon. Unlike the classic Concord stagecoaches, which could be mired in bad weather, mud wagons—true to their name—could travel over trails and roads during inclement weather. However, the only protection provided from the weather and dusty roads were the canvas side-curtains, which also could be rolled up and fastened.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Peter Anthony Adams, "Abbot-Downing Concord Coaches," <http://theconcordcoach.tripod.com/abbotdowning/index.html>

It was much in favor during rainy spells: sometimes a heavy Concord got mired down, but six horses (or more often mules) could pull a mud wagon through just about anything... These vehicles cost about 35% what the Concord did, but the later varieties became beautiful, with curved panels in the rove sides, sometimes solid sides and doors and/or permanent tops with railings, or curved dashes and elaborate leather trim.<sup>166</sup>

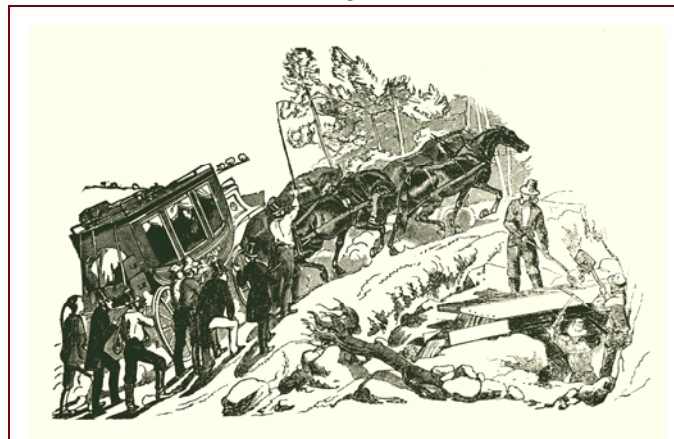


A stage in motion amid the dust. From California State Parks Photographic Archives.

Not just anybody could drive a stage. It took skill and nerve. In order to avert disaster, the “jehu” or “whip” handling a four- or six-horse team had to command instant action. There was often no room for error on narrow mountain roads or in a blinding storm.

A stage driver’s whip, although never used for punishing his horses, was the symbol of his profession, and often his most cherished personal possession. For that reason a top-flight stagecoach driver was generally called a “whip,” although in the West he was called a jehu if he was noted for particularly fast driving.<sup>167</sup>

Through choking dust, constant heat, or intense cold, passengers sat shoulder-to-shoulder, three to a bench. Each had about 15 inches to call his own. Those stuck on the center seat of a larger coach had to interweave their legs with the passengers



“Staging in the Mountains, 1853”  
from Alonzo Delano’s *Pen Knife Sketches*.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

facing them with only a leather strap supported their backs on a long journey. Coaches had a lurching, rolling motion that was increased by rough roads. Some travelers suffered from motion sickness—similar to “seasickness” but without refreshing sea breezes. With tongue in cheek, humorist Mark Twain referred to the Concord as “a cradle on wheels.” Passengers occasionally were required to get out and walk because a bridge might be too frail to handle the weight of a loaded stage. Sometimes they were asked to help push the stage up steep hills.

<sup>166</sup> Christine Jeffords, “Here She Comes! The Stagecoach,” <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~poindexterfamily/ChristinesPages/Stagecoach.htm>.

<sup>167</sup> Moody, *Ibid.* P. 28.

It took about thirty hours to cover the 140-mile distance between Sacramento and Red Bluff.<sup>168</sup> Some companies operated their stage routes 24 hours a day. Way stations were spaced from 12 to 30 miles apart and located near a well, a spring, river, or water storage tanks. Stages stopped briefly to change teams or for quick meals. With the blast of a bugle or a trumpet, guards or conductors aboard incoming stages gave warning to station keepers a mile or two out. The call prompted the harnessing of a fresh team and the preparation of food. Way stations, some without a floor or a roof, were operated for service, not comfort.

Drivers, guards, conductors, station agents, harness makers, blacksmiths, grooms, herders, and division superintendents faced daily challenges with a resolve to keep the stages moving. Stage companies had to build or repair roads and bridges, set up and staff way stations, and purchase stagecoaches and wagons, as well as buy horses, mules, and feed.



A mud wagon was used on the stage line between Redding and Shasta.  
Courtesy of CSUC Meriam Library.

Mishaps—runaway teams, injured animals, breakdowns, upset vehicles or wheels stuck in sand or mud, not to mention holdups due to bad weather and bad men—made operating a stageline a risky business.

With the arrival of the California and Oregon Railroad in the new town of Redding in 1872, stages to Shasta and other valley towns began to coordinate their schedules with them rather than the riverboats.<sup>169,170</sup> Like the freight teams, stagelines had to adapt to the changing times.

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<sup>168</sup> McGowen, *Ibid.* P. 13.

<sup>169</sup> McGowan, *Ibid.* P. 21.

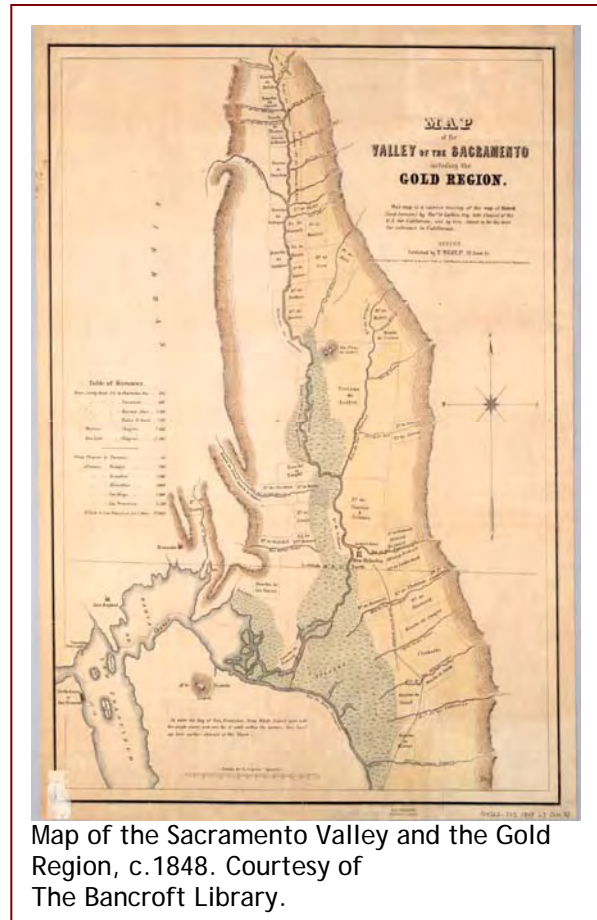
<sup>170</sup> Giles, *Ibid.* P. 70.



### The "Adobe Ferry"

When John Bidwell surveyed the valley floor in the late 1840s, the main channel for the Sacramento River lay at the foot of the Sierra Nevada range near the present-day park. Many times during dry months, it was easy to ford the river when water levels were low. In fact, the Adobe Ranch was often identified in its early years as being 20' north of "Frémont's Old Crossing." However, as gold seekers found new and better ways to "harvest the hills," debris from hydraulic and other mining methods began to wash downstream, clogging watercourses and raising streambed levels. Unusually heavy rains sometimes combined with melting snows, brought valley flooding.

In the winter months of 1861 and 1862, immense rainfall and snowmelt over a few short months caused extensive flooding in the Central Valley and in places altered the Sacramento River.



Map of the Sacramento Valley and the Gold Region, c.1848. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

...during floods in the winter of 1861-62, debris piles burst, sending giant flows of clay and rock onto valley farms along several rivers. Nearly thirty-three inches of rain fell in two-and-a-half months that winter, carrying debris down with it. According to one settler, the new lake formed in the lower valley was sixty miles wide. Steamboats moving cattle from flooded areas in the hills were able to paddle as far as fourteen miles from the riverbed. Most of the city of Sacramento was under water for three months. City levees that had remained intact trapped floodwaters that had broken through east-side levees... These events disturbed the ready assumption that mining benefited all California residents.<sup>171</sup>

On January 17, 1862, the *Independent* stated:

On the second week of January, rain and melting snow in the mountains again raised the river at Red Bluff. On Friday it was within one foot of the December flood level. Cottonwood Creek was three feet higher than

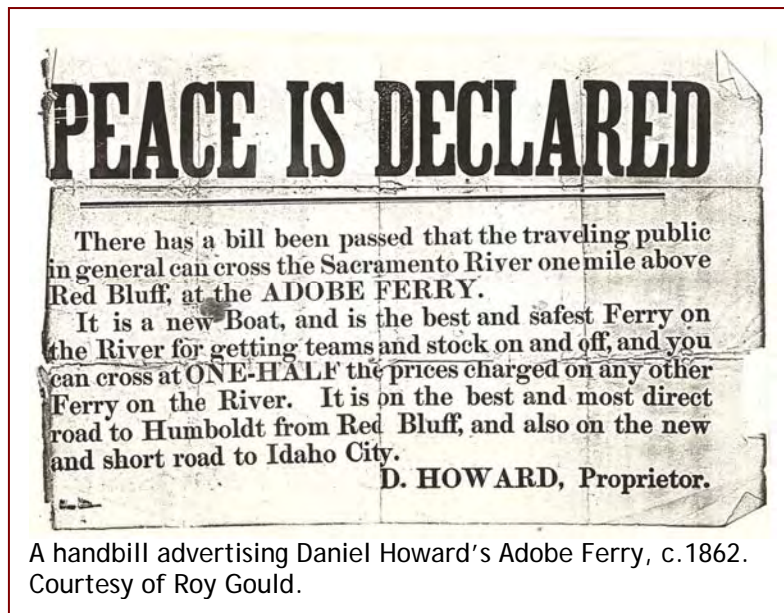
<sup>171</sup> Karen M. O'Neill, *Rivers by Design: State Power and the Origins of US Flood Control*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. P. 75.

ever. Flood waters swept away the Jackson Bridge. The Brearcliffe home on the south side of Reed's Creek burned to the ground. The flames were visible from town, but the creek so high, no one could cross to assist Mr. Brearcliffe. Thomes Creek received much damage, especially farmers. Streams cut new paths and caused much trouble. On Wednesday there was snow again, but it melted by morning.

The Independent noted in January 21<sup>st</sup>: "The rains continue on into January, floods are far worse than two weeks ago." The Red Bluff Beacon reported on March 7, 1862, "The winter floods have changed the river and made new sand bars which make navigation difficult."

As a result of these events, it appears the Sacramento River's flood waters may have deepened the river channel north of Red Bluff, beside the Adobe Ranch. Along the waterway, residents took action by providing ferry services for travelers, vehicles, and livestock wanting to cross to the other side of the river. From 1861 through to the mid-1870s, the Adobe Ferry offered an important means for getting across the river—a lifeline for many.

As with today, ferries played a critical transportation role, offering a safe and dependable means for crossing. They could make the difference in the success or failure of freight and stage lines or ranch operations. The right to run a ferry at certain locations usually was granted by local government. These rights were often bought and sold like property.



A handbill advertising Daniel Howard's Adobe Ferry, c. 1862. Courtesy of Roy Gould.

In the Red Bluff area, there were approximately half a dozen ferries at different times. Local resident and one-time owner of the Adobe Ranch, William F. Luning, noted the area's ferries for the *Red Bluff Daily News* on June 8, 1934: "Dan French established a ferry at Tehama October 1855, Job F. Dye at Red Bluff in December 1856, Andrew Jelly at his place May 1860, Francis Crosby one mile north of Tehama on January 1, 1861, D. Howard the Adobe Ferry in 1862, H. Kraft just

north of Pine Creek in August 1865, and John Lee a ferry at Allens Landing (later called Squaw Hill) October 1872."



According to one source, a ferry at Blue Tent Creek was erroneously referred to as Ide's Ferry. (William B. Ide had been dead almost 10 years at the time.) Records indicate that Alfred Walton was the first to operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch. He filed notice for a ferry on July 2, 1861. That summer and fall was marked by a bad drought, which was not broken until December 1861. It was Daniel Howard, the next owner of the ranch, who appears to have successfully operated the "Adobe Ferry." He acquired the 56.38 acres from Walton on January 3, 1862. Howard was able to take advantage of the unprecedented rain and snowfall that winter to establish a ferry service across the Sacramento River. Howard secured a ferry license from the County Board of Supervisors on November 5, 1862.<sup>172</sup>



A ferry erroneously identified as Ide's Ferry at Blue Tent Creek, c.1859. Courtesy of Ehorn's Photography

The record states:

Ferry Permit: Tehama County, book "A" & "B", page 189. Nov. 5, 1862. The Board of Supervisors met with full board present: I.M. Shackelford, P. Crumbaugh, Nathaniel Merrill, Wm. P. Mayhew, and Wm. Bofinger.

In the matter of a petition to keep and run a ferry at or near the "Old Adobe Ranch" and it being proven to the satisfaction of the Board that D. Howard has in all respects complied with the law relating to the establishment of ferries;

It is ordered by the Board of Supervisors of Tehama County that D. Howard be and he is hereby authorized to run and keep a public ferry across the Sacramento river at the point know as "the Old Adobe Ranch" about two miles above the Town of Red Bluff.

And the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors will issue a license to said Howard for the term of one year from the first day of Dec. next by his paying into the County Treasurer the sum of fifty dollars, and filing his bond in accordance with the law in the penal sum of two thousand dollars.

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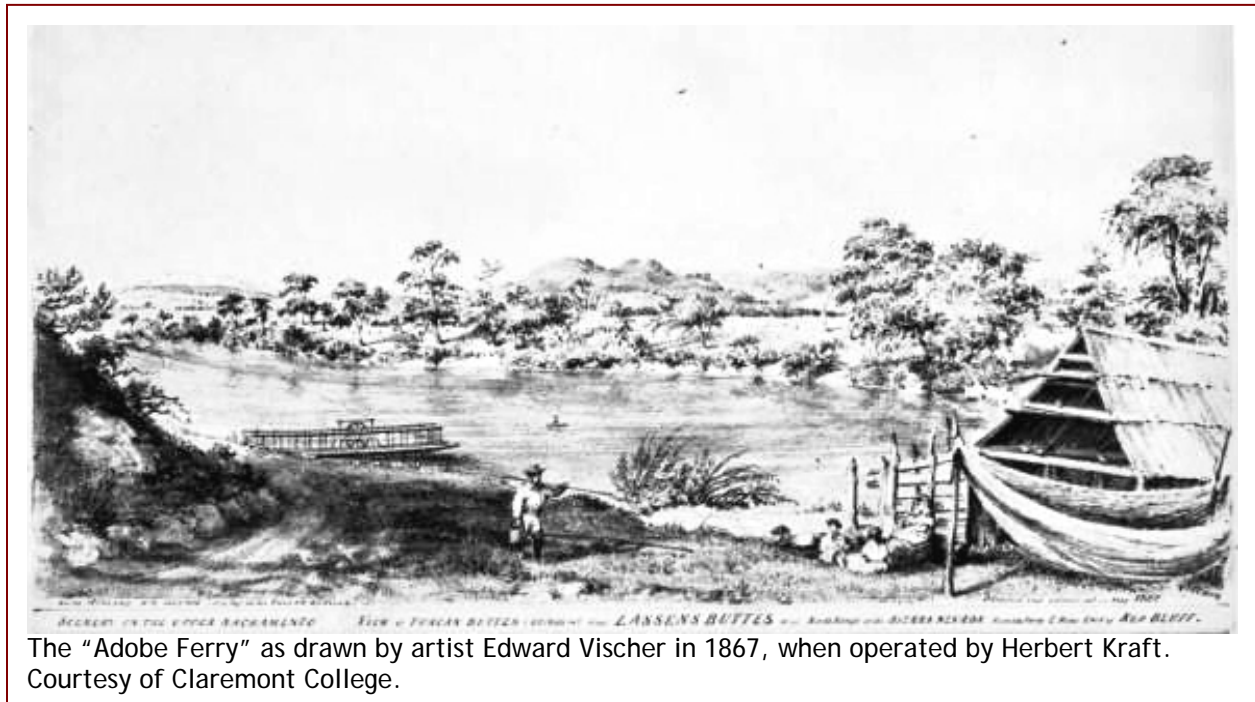
<sup>172</sup> November 5, 1862, Tehama County, Book "A" and "B." P. 89.

The rates of toll of said ferry shall be fixed as follows:

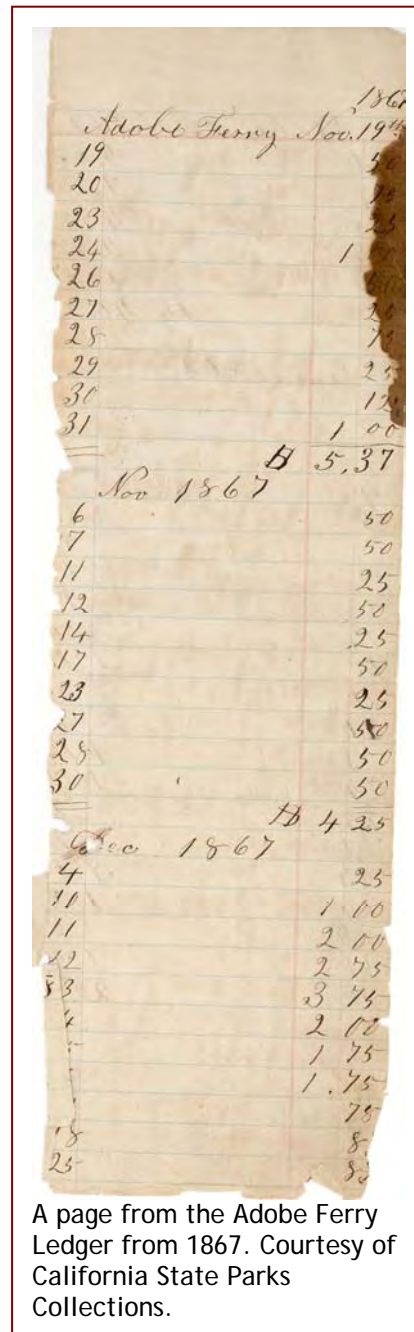
Man and horse	.25
Footman	.12
Buggy, one or two animals	.50
Wagon and two animals light,	.50
Wagon and two animals loaded,	.75
Wagon and four animals light,	.75
Wagon and four animals loaded,	1.00
Wagon and six animals light,	1.00
Wagon and six animals loaded	1.75
Pack animals per head,	.15
Hogs, sheep, and goats each	.03
Cattle and horses loose	.07

The "Adobe Ferry" license was renewed for another year from December 1, 1864 to December 1, 1865.

Off the main north-south wagon road, it was important to direct people to the Adobe Ferry service crossing the river. Beginning in 1863, Howard pushed for the construction of roads to connect with his ferry (see map on page 114). A road was built from Red Bluff to the Adobe Ferry and to the Humboldt Wagon Road in 1864-65.



The “Adobe Ferry Road” officially became a public way on February 11, 1865. However Daniel Howard, directed by the court, had to pay damages for having the road right of way pass over the Star Ranch (part of original Bluffton Ranch and later Rand’s Adobe Ranch) then owned by J.N.



A page from the Adobe Ferry Ledger from 1867. Courtesy of California State Parks Collections.

Williams. Tehama County Supervisors also agreed to contribute \$300 to pay for a fence to line both sides of the road through the Star Ranch.

On June 22, 1865, Herbert Kraft bought the 56.38-acre ranch plus the rights to run the ferry for \$2,000.00.<sup>173</sup> Along with the land and the buildings, he acquired the ferryboat, cables, ropes, small boats, tackle, and “appurtenances of every description” belonging to the “Adobe Ferry.” Two years later, German-born artist Edward Vischer, while traveling through the area, captured the ferry operating in May 1867 in a sketch. Kraft later moved the ferry operations south to the foot of Pine Street in Red Bluff. In January 1870, he sold the ranch to Andrew A. Brownlee for the reduced sum of \$500, but without the ferry equipment.<sup>174</sup> Anderson Finley of Niland, California remembered an incident when Kraft operated the ferry in Red Bluff (see page 115).

William F. Erwin, Andrew J. “Andy” Hammons, and George W. Hammons gained authorization to build and operate a ferry at the Adobe Ranch in December 1874. William Erwin and George Hammons were equal share owners of the property at the time, and for most of 1875. The ferry operated until a new bridge was constructed across the Sacramento River at Red Bluff in the fall of 1876.

Notes from a 1957 interview with Frank Erwin, son of the ferry operator William Irwin, stated that the ferry was never a paying proposition due to its location off the main roads. The ferry, he described, was a current type, with cables anchored on both sides of the river tied to an oak and a sycamore.<sup>175</sup> The tree on the Adobe Ranch side washed away. Frank Erwin stated when he lived in the Adobe House at the time. Evidence for its

operation has not been located in the park. Later owner Willet C. Mount, wrote in a letter indicating he had removed the ferry

<sup>173</sup> June 22, 1865, Tehama County, Book “E.” Pp. 462, 463, and 464.

<sup>174</sup> January 11, 1870, Tehama County, Book “G.”P. 235.

<sup>175</sup> The cable system kept the ferry from going downstream but let it move sideways by turning a pilot wheel.



cables with a team of horses.<sup>176</sup> However, during the summer of 1987, it was reported by a professional archeological group, participating in under water research on the



Unloading a freight wagon at a ferry crossing, possibly at the Adobe Ferry. Courtesy of Ehorn's Photography.

Sacramento River, that some type of anchor or "dead man" lay under the river and opposite "Fremont's Old Landing." Further research would be useful to locate the original ferry to better interpret it in the park.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:



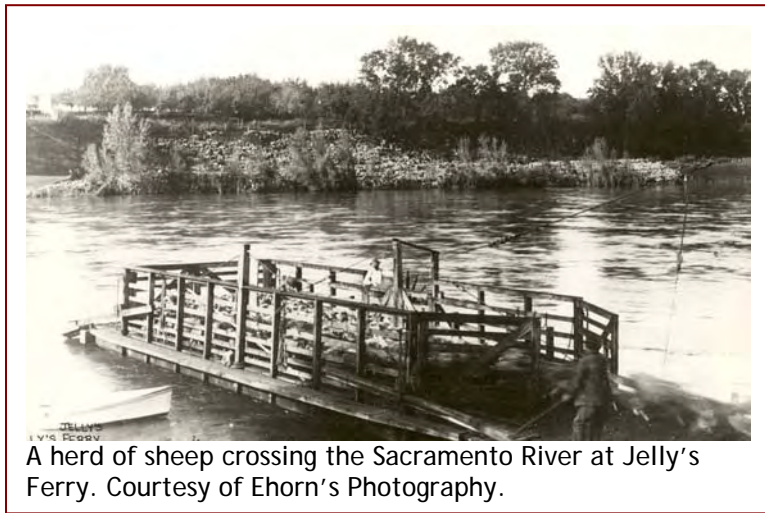
Example of a diorama from the Sharpsteen Museum, Calistoga,

A table-height diorama will depict the area around the Adobe Ranch, the Sacramento River and the Adobe Ferry crossing in the 1860s. Visitors will be able to view it through a series of small windows along an exhibit wall that surrounds it. The diorama will focus on aspects of the transportation nexus described in this section. The model will represent the ferry and its operations in the early to mid-1860s, based upon the 1867 Edward Vischer drawing, as well as photographs taken of other local ferries. The diorama should be accessible and easily viewed by grade school children, as well as individuals who use wheelchairs. The Adobe House presented in the model will have a hip roof and wide verandas, as seen in 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the place. In association with the diorama, a map will illustrate the early roads, with the Adobe

<sup>176</sup> Letter to E.E. Stevens from W.C. Mount received October 3, 1949. William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park, Park Archives

Ferry crossing and Interstate 5 shown. This will offer context for viewers of the exhibit, many of whom will be travelers unfamiliar with the area.

Exhibit panels on the face of the diorama walls, as well as inside, will highlight the different forms of transportation used in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Red Bluff area. Windows into the diorama will coordinate, complement and enhance the subject matter being interpreted by the text and graphics, highlighting in three dimensions: a pack mule train, freight wagon(s), a stage, carriage, and pedestrians waiting to cross. If space permits, a flock of sheep with a herder might be included in the diorama, possibly placed on board the ferry, as seen in an early photograph of nearby Jelly's



Ferry. Figures in the model will embody the diversity of travelers in 19<sup>th</sup> century California (e.g. Whites, Chinese, and African Americans, etc.). Another area of the ferry's interpretation related to the diorama will be an explanation of how the ferry operated on the river, using the water's current as its motive power. This may be done with diagrams showing the cables used with the river's current.

Because riverboats played such an important role in the region, with Red Bluff at the head of river navigation, a part of the exhibit will represent the river traffic and the important role it played in the transportation of people, provisions and supplies. A riverboat could be represented docked at Red Bluff with its goods arrayed on the wharf, along with freight wagons and pack mules being loaded. This might be done as an illustration or as another, but smaller diorama.

### Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:

Copies of photographs illustrating the diverse forms of 19<sup>th</sup> century transportation—pack mules, freight wagons, stages, and ferries will enhance the visiting public's understanding of the era's technology. Many period images are included in the William B. Ide Adobe SHP Interpretive Plan Graphics File. Note that most images are not owned by the department and will need to have the appropriate clearance for their use in the park's exhibits.



## Area 3: Pioneer Skills at the Adobe Ranch

Space Allocation: 15%

### Theme:

Self-sufficient pioneers employed their skills to transform the area around the Adobe Ranch, as well as California's frontier.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about the 1850s-era skills needed to survive and build a new life in California.
- Recognize the meaning of “you live with what you do” as it applied to the frontier.

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

#### *Settling In*

At journeys end, emigrants realized that their hard work with its associated dangers, would continue with settlement. For most, the immediate concerns were for providing shelter and gathering the provisions necessary for sustaining life on the frontier. It would be no easy task living a distance from “civilization.” There were few places, if any, nearby to purchase building materials or to acquire other supplies, much less food!



Illustration from NPS Homestead National Monument of America brochure

Even if there had been stores, for those with no funds, things had to be made—not purchased. Settlement would not be easy in the Red Bluffs (its historic name) area.

In 1846, rancho owner Josiah Belden offered to recently arrived William B. Ide the northern half of his property, if he would manage it for three years. With an agreement signed in April, the Ide family moved into a partially finished log cabin on the *Rancho Las Baulinas*, later called *El Rancho de la Barranca Colorada*. The name was Spanish and was derived from the name Red Bank Creek, which served as the northern boundary of Belden's grant.<sup>102</sup> The Ide family made this their home one year after their arduous overland trek across the plains, mountains and deserts of North America. Here, the family occupied themselves with the work of ranching and surviving on the frontier.

In California, the Gold Rush brought many people from around the world, having an array of languages, skills, ideas and practices. Many of these newcomers readily adapted to California's environment, with some even adopting the traditional building methods used by Mexican settlers. Adobe brick was a construction medium preferred by many in early California. In 1849, John Meyers built the first adobe building in what was to become Red Bluff. It served for a short time as a hotel. Around the area, Sashel Woods and Charles L. Wilson laid out the town of Leodocia in 1850. It was called by that name, as well as Covertsburg until 1854, when maps renamed it Red Bluffs.

Between 1852 and 1854 (see Area 5 for more information), the house that now stands at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park was built. The builder (Abraham Dibble or Isaac Rand—see Exhibit Area 5)



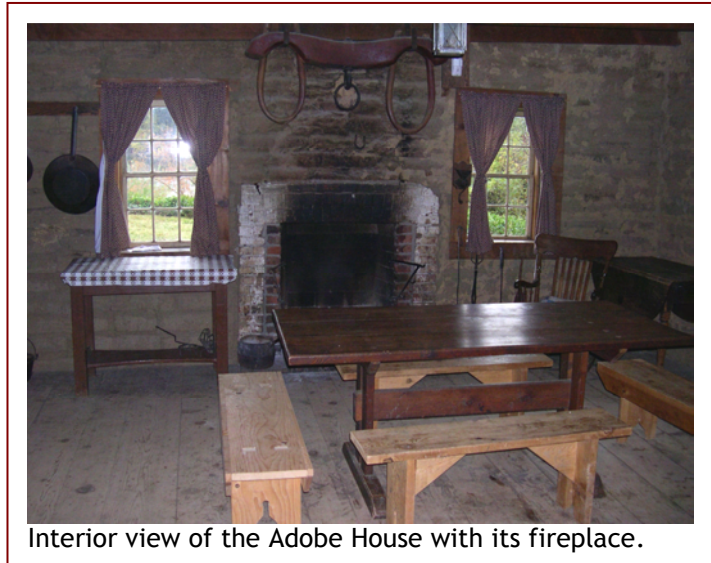
The Adobe House as it appears today

chose adobe bricks for its construction. Ide's log cabin and the Adobe House were furnished with items needed to exist on the California frontier, including tables, chairs or benches, trunks, beds, candles or whale oil lamps and cooking utensils and equipment. Simple and plain, many items probably were created on site. Like others of the era, one of the most important features of the home would have been the multi-purpose fireplace, which kept its occupants warm, provided light inside the room, and offered a place to cook indoors. (Wood-burning cast iron stoves were available during this period, but expensive and difficult to transport.) Until rural

<sup>102</sup> On page 208, Book "A" for Butte and Colusa counties reads: "Deed to *Las Baulinas Rancho*." Josiah Belden and wife Sarah Margaret, sold for \$3,000.00 U.S. coin, to William B. Ide, April 12, 1849, the undivided north one half (1/2) 8,856 acres, of *Rancho de la Baulinas*, consisting of four Mexican leagues. Bounded on the north by *Rio Colorado Barranca* (Red Bank Creek), on the east by the Sacramento River, on the south by the land I reserve for myself, and on the west by vacant or unoccupied land."

pioneers earned sufficient funds to purchase modern, 1850s-era technology, they relied on older, dependable past practices.

An 1850s-era home in the sparsely-settled Red Bluffs area would have had fenced pastures and garden(s) and possibly fields under cultivation. Outbuildings, such as a smokehouse, stable, and workshops, in addition to a water well were typical. Cattle and sheep may have grazed nearby, along with a milk cow, horses or mules, a dog to warn of strangers and a cat to keep the population of mice under control.



Interior view of the Adobe House with its fireplace.

### *Essential Frontier Skills*

Survival in California had as much to do with a person's skills and knowledge as with luck. If you came unprepared, your chances for survival were reduced. There were no guarantees on the frontier. Emigrants lived and sometimes perished by their knowledge and the choices and actions they took. Familiarity with the function of certain tools and performing certain tasks became essential for everyday existence.

### Tools and Woodworking

*Tool making and use* - On the frontier, tools produced the things people readily needed for everyday work or play. They served as extensions to the human hand. Tools could be made from natural materials such as wood, leather, and bone and/or metals, such as iron and steel. Most early tools were handmade, including hayforks and shovels, hammers and chisels. Edged tools, like knives, had to be kept sharp and in good repair to be useful.

Essential equipment, from ox yokes to boxes and dough troughs had to be produced using hand tools. There were no time- or labor-saving, electric-powered tools in the mid-1850s. On the frontier, knowledge of tools and their capabilities was an asset. Woodworkers also had to know the strengths and weaknesses of the different varieties of wood and which would be the most suitable for the objects they created.

Examples of a few commonly used woodworking tools:

*Felling axe, broadaxe* - Different axes served different purposes for chopping trees and clearing land, cutting firewood, building fences, and roughly smoothing timbers.



*Crosscut saw* - Crosscut saws cut logs into smaller pieces that were later split into firewood. Two people stood at each end of the saw and pulled it back and forth between them.

*Wooden shaving horse* - A wooden shaving horse was a carpenter's bench that enabled woodworkers to sit as they shaped a piece of wood. A pedal locked the wood securely in place under a jaw, which was released when the work was finished. The device was used to shave down handles, shingles, or tools. It was used often on farms and ranches for miscellaneous drawknife work until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



A wooden shaving horse

*Adze* - A cutting tool with a thin arched blade set at right angles to the handle, much like an ax. Round logs could be made square or hollowed out by using an adze. Floor boards also could be smoothed with an adze.

*Planes* - Wooden blocks with adjustable metal blades set at an angle shaved wood to make it smooth, leveled surfaces or chiseled wood. Special molding planes could cut plain and fancy wooden trims. Most carpenters' chests held a variety of them in different shapes and sizes. Planes performed three main functions: shaping, finishing and fitting. There were two main categories of them: planes and shaves.

There is a wide variety of planes, which can be roughly divided by size, and service, for example: jointer, trying, fore, jack, smooth, block, and molding. They can have one, two, and in rare cases, three irons. Finishing planes, jointer and jack for example, are used to remove rough saw marks, and insure boards fit together correctly. Molding planes are used to make moldings and cut joints...

Shaves also come in several categories such as: spoke shaves, cooper shaves and croze, beading tools, and scrapers. Like planes, each shave has a unique purpose, the blade and the body shaped to accomplish one primary task. A croze for example is used by coopers—barrel makers—to put a groove at the top and bottom of the staves to fit the ends of the barrel. Although all sharp edged tools need to be sharp, it is most critical with planes.<sup>103</sup>

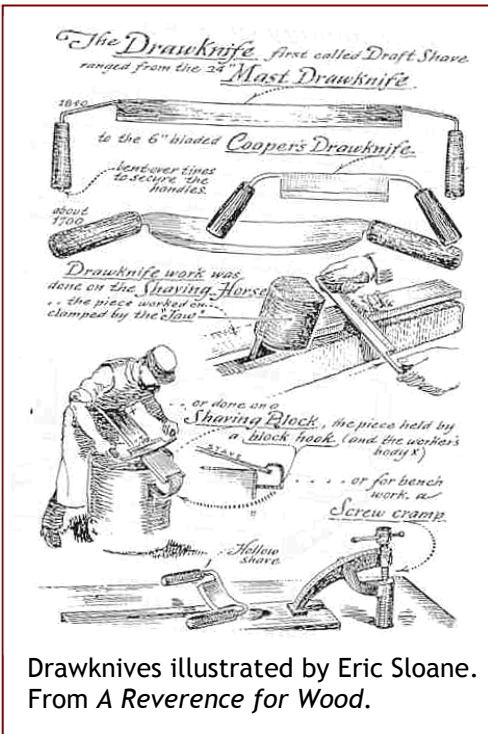
<sup>103</sup> William F. Mennell, "Tools and Materials, Now and Then, Part 6," *Cosmopolitan Chronicle*, Vol. I, No. 23. Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, August 15, 2008.

Leveling was called “trying” and “trueing.” Fitting was called “joining.”

**Brace and bit** - Holes were drilled into wood using a hand-held brace and bit.

**Froe** - Wedges or froes were hit to split logs and to make shingles from quartered logs, as well as to craft laths, staves, and clapboards.

**Mallet or maul** - A heavy club was used like a hammer on top of a froe. Before machinery was developed to reduce the handwork involved, “riving” shingles was a favorite rainy day activity in the woodshed.



**Drawknife** - Drawknives shaved thin layers from wood, shaping and giving it a smooth surface. The two-handled device was drawn toward the woodworker. The drawknife tapered the sides of shingles, shaped the edge of floorboards, as well as rough trim paneling, before being planed.

**Auger** - The long sharp point of the tool bored holes into wood.

**Chisels and gouges** - Chisels in different sizes and styles cut away “excess” wood, as with mortise and tenon construction in framing. Most were wood handled and designed to be struck by a mallet. Round chisels are called gouges.

**Lathe** - The main “power” tool for many woodworkers, the lathe, was operated by turning

a large wheel. It spun wood horizontally, allowing the piece to be shaped with special chisels while in motion.

**Coopering** - The act of making wooden containers out of staves and hoops is called coopering. It is an ancient trade with techniques and tools little changed over many centuries. Buckets and barrels were produced by skilled craftsmen called coopers, who used drawknives to carve curves into barrel staves. Straight-sided vessels, such as pails, tubs, buckets, churns and vats were also created by individuals with coopering skills. The last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the end of the traditional cooper trade with the introduction of barrel-making machinery in the 1850s.

**Wet cooper** - The most skilled of these craftsmen were the wet coopers, who made barrels to hold liquid products such as beer, wine, whiskey, molasses, pitch, tar, vinegar, etc. They were also referred to as a “tight” cooper, because



their products had to be leak proof and durable.<sup>104</sup> Oak was always used for these barrels. On the frontier, the special skills needed for this work usually required that they be purchased from a wet cooper.

*Dry cooper* - Dry coopers used less exacting techniques because their products did not have to be watertight. They created barrels to hold dry products, like chemicals, non-liquid foods, such as flour, as well as china and hardware for shipping.<sup>105</sup>

*White cooper* - White coopers produced a variety of straight-sided vessels, such as pails, tubs, buckets, churns, and vats for home use or industry.

### Framing and Construction

The construction of a home, outbuildings, fences and other structures was important for survival and productivity on the frontier. Options for how a settler might build often depended greatly upon the nearby terrain and the useable materials it provided. The Sacramento River also offered a means to transport items up river that could not be found locally. However, these often came at a considerable cost to the settler, and may have required a significant amount of waiting time for the goods to be ordered and shipped to Northern California.

Building costs in the period of the gold rush were as uncertain and inflationary as the price of an egg or a laundered shirt. Lumber sold in 1849-1850 for as high as one dollar a square foot and bricks at one dollar apiece. At that time a simple one-story house of clapboard and shingles cost approximately \$15,000 to build in San Francisco; a two-story hotel in San Jose cost \$100,000. And despite excessive costs, available building materials were often poor in quality and unsuited to the purpose for which they were contracted.<sup>106</sup>

*Adobe brick making and building* - A majority of buildings constructed for missions, *presidios* (forts), and *ranchos* (ranches) of California during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were made from *adobe* bricks. New settlers to frontier California (like John Sutter) relied on the native Indian populations, trained in building skills at the Roman Catholic missions, to help with construction. Like several other adobe buildings at mid-century, the Adobe House represented a fusion of that earlier mud-brick tradition with the incoming American settlers' knowledge of woodworking technology.

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<sup>104</sup> Marilyn Arbor, *Tools & Trades of America's Past: The Mercer Museum Collection*. Doylestown, PA: The Mercer Museum, Bucks County Historical Society, 1994. P. 26.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Harold Kirker, *California's Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century*. Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973. P. 31.

To produce adobe bricks, a mixture of sand and clay, water, straw or grass, and manure was combined in a pit and trod upon to mix the ingredients. It was then pressed and tamped into large rectangular wooden forms (four or five inches thick), then leveled by hand into uniform shapes. These bricks were “turned out” to be sun dried or cured then stacked on end for a period of one to two months. The drying time contributed to their strength. The finished bricks could weigh from 30 to 60 pounds each, depending on their size.



Adobe bricks

A wide cobblestone, cut stone or brick rubble foundation served as a base for the thick adobe wall to be erected. Most adobe bricks were mortared together using the same adobe mix, but without the straw. As the adobe walls were load bearing with low structural strength, they tended to be massive. However, most seldom rose above two stories. Doors and windows were installed as the walls grew in height.

Because adobe bricks were not fired in a kiln, as with clay bricks, they did not permanently harden and could shrink or swell with added moisture, like rain. Several coats of thick mud plaster were applied to cover the completed walls. A whitewash finish coat of gypsum, water and clay or powdered lime (prepared from burning seashells), sand and water, sealed the plaster, giving the adobe walls a measure of protection from moisture. This exterior treatment was renewed periodically. Most adobes also were designed with wide overhanging roof eaves and/or verandahs to keep the rain water from running down and ruining the walls.

*Wood framing* - Wood was needed for lintels, doors, windows, and roof beams. If suitable timber was available nearby, it could be felled by an ax or cross-cut (whip) saw and hauled to the site. There it would have been turned into lumber using a broadaxe or adze. When commercially milled lumber was not available, sometimes saw-pits were used to cut planks from logs.

They were called Pit Saws because the timber being sawn was usually placed over a pit or convenient hollow in the ground, or it was extended out from the side of a hill. One sawyer (called the “pitman”) stood below, pulling the saw, which cut only on the downstroke, towards him. The other worker (known as the “tiller” or top sawyer) stood above, right on the log. He pulled the long blade up after a cut had been made. A wedge placed in the split prevented the blade from getting stuck midway through a stroke...

Pit sawing was generally used in this country only in new settlements or where it was not practical or feasible to build a sawmill. The sawmill

was essentially a pit saw heavily framed in wood and run by water instead of man power.<sup>107</sup>

Lumber would have been finished on-site using a drawknife and planes, such as the bench, jointer, or smoothing planes.

Wooden timbers on top of the adobe walls provided a long horizontal bearing plate for the roof, helping to distribute its weight along the wall. The Adobe Ranch House differed from the style of other, earlier adobe buildings. Instead of a low, relatively flat roof with clay tiles, widely popular in Southern California and along the Coast, he adopted a roof with wooden shingles. The basic joinery for framing the roofing timbers was mortise and tenon.

The tenon was easily cut with a hand saw, but the mortise required specialized tools. Short-handled mortising axes or T-shaped twibils could be expertly swung to form a rough mortise. The large firming chisel was used to square holes that had been drilled by augers. Early augers had spoon-shaped bits. The development of the spiral auger at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century eased the process of cutting mortises considerably. A more exact mortise could be produced with a mortising chisel.<sup>108</sup>

### Blacksmithing and Metallurgy



Over the centuries, a blacksmith's function has been to make tools, weapons and to a lesser degree, works of art.<sup>109</sup> The blacksmith certainly was an indispensable craftsman on the frontier. He created and invented tools and processes that saved time and effort.

“Smith” from “smite,” “black” from “black metal” (as distinguished from silversmiths brightwork), the “blacksmith” was the Early American handyman.<sup>110</sup>

“Smithy” is the name for the building where the blacksmith worked. The tools of the trade included a forge and anvil(s), fire tools (poker, rake, shovel and watering can), tongs, fuller, swage and swage block, hardies, hammers,

sledges, punches, vises, great bellows, blower, and when performing the work of a farrier, a farrier's box, butteris, hoof parer, and hoof knife. Most ranches operated a

<sup>107</sup> Arbor, *Ibid.*, P. 78.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 119.

<sup>109</sup> Taber, *Ibid.*, P. 14.

<sup>110</sup> Eric Sloane, *Eric Sloane's Sketches of America Past*, New York: Promontory Press, 1986. P. 212.

smithy or a workshop on the property to make tools, equipment and hardware, as well as to repair them.

The blacksmith forged nails, hinges, latches, anchors, scythes, hoes, utensils, axes, hooks, branding irons, plow and harrow points, wagon hardware and wheel tires (iron outer rims)—objects essential for survival and comfort on the frontier. In the middle of the 1800's he began taking over the farrier's work of horseshoeing; till then the farrier was veterinary too.<sup>111</sup>

*Making Horseshoes* - Blacksmith-made shoes were forged and made to fit each foot of the horse exactly. Since all four feet of a horse or mule are different, the shoes varied slightly as well. Blacksmiths created custom shoes by altering the placement of nail holes, using special caulks or "corks" to provide traction in mud or snow, or making modifications to strengthen the horse's feet.

### Managing Livestock

Animals were an important part of life on the frontier. When properly managed they offered a means of transportation, sources of food, and the materials and ingredients for a host of necessary and useful products.

*Cattle ranching* - Like the Mexican citizens before them, newcomers to California, such as Abraham Dibble or Isaac Rand, would have found raising cattle less work when compared to clearing and growing crops on the land for the first time. Cattle could be moved from range to range to graze and then driven to market on the hoof. Beef was highly valued, too, and in short supply during the California Gold Rush. Cattle ranching was second only to mining in the economic life of the frontier period.<sup>112</sup>



A docent cares for a horse at the park

*Branding cattle* - Branding was the straightforward method a rancher could use for identifying ownership of cattle on the open range. After subduing a steer, a heated metal tool called a branding iron was pressed onto its hide to burn a permanent mark for identifying the animal as the property of a particular ranch. California Indians served as *vaqueros* (cowboys) on many ranches.

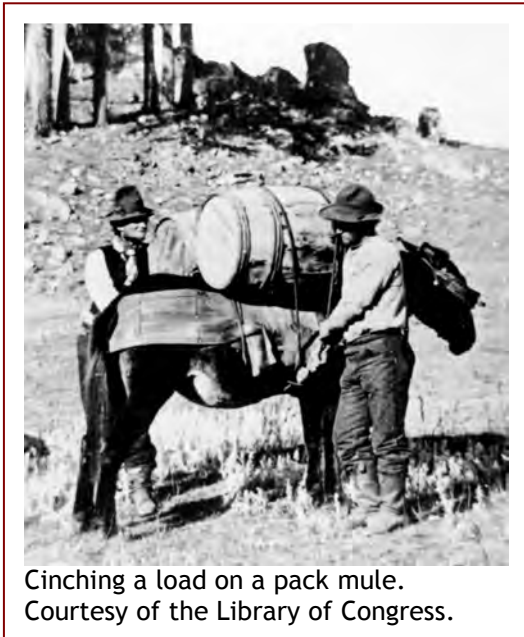
*Grooming animals* - Animals were groomed carefully. Before putting on a harness, the horse or mule's coat was cared for using a dandy brush, body brush, curry comb and a wisp. While being

<sup>111</sup> Eric Sloane, *Eric Sloane's Sketches of America Past*, New York: Promontory Press, 1986. P. 212.

<sup>112</sup> Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978. P. 166.

groomed, animals were checked for cuts, scratches, scrapes, and sores. If not tended, wounds could become infected and cause further injury. They could also affect the safe operation of a vehicle harnessed to them. Removing dirt and manure reduced the insects, parasites and worms that might irritate the animals. Grooming also helped to keep them calm and docile.

Hooves of horses and mules were cleaned and the dirt dislodged with a hoof pick. The animals' hooves were trimmed or shod every six to eight weeks. Generally a blacksmith made the iron shoes used to protect the hooves, and a farrier fitted them to the animals.



Cinching a load on a pack mule.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

*Packing a mule* - Spaniards first introduced the mule to America, along with the horse. It was hardy. Trappers hauled furs, traders transported goods, and gold seekers moved their supplies and mining equipment using them. The animals could carry heavy loads weighing between 200 and 400 pounds.

Over sheepskins and saddlecloths that reduced chafing on the mules, early Mexican packers loaded goods onto square pads of stuffed leather, called *aparejos*, and then tied them down. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, wooden packsaddles, called sawbucks or crosstrees, gained popularity. The U.S. Army employed both the *aparejo* and the sawbuck for its pack mule trains.

Packing them was an art. Crates, barrels, sacks and other gear had to be divided equally, then balanced and cinched down tightly—not always easy with a difficult animal. Experienced muleteers could arrange a heavy load on a pack mule in three minutes!

*Harnessing animals* - Frontiersmen took care to fasten a harness properly. It was vital to the safety of the animals, the driver, vehicle and its cargo. Collars, hames, traces, chains and straps, as well as single and double trees helped to spread the weight of the often heavy loads. Bits, bridles and reins connected the driver with the horses and vehicle, serving as a communication system. With a tug on the reins, the driver could tell the team to turn left, or with two short tugs to turn right.

*Shepherding* - Range sheep required constant attendance. When there was no feed for livestock, ranchers had to move their stock to other areas of the country. According to Henria Packer Compton, whose family operated a ranch along the Sacramento River in the early 1870s,



A lot of them went to Idaho and some to Nevada. At this time Henry Compton Sr. was running about 2,500 head of sheep and about 200 head of cattle. In the early spring of 1872, like the other stockmen, he had to hunt for pasture elsewhere. So he moved his family and livestock to Modoc County in the extreme northeast corner of California.

It took them twenty-eight days to make the trip. They went from Stone Valley Ranch to Red Bluff, north and east to Jelly's Ferry, then through the section of the country known as Manzanita Chutes, and by way of Hat Creek to the Pitt River area. They settled on a little creek about five miles east of Fall River Mills. All the livestock made the trip successfully, and came through in very fine condition...

They had fine grazing higher up on land that was rather like a mesa. The sheep would be taken up through the day to feed, but were brought down every night and bedded in a corral near the cabin because of danger from coyotes and other predators.<sup>113</sup>

*Sheep shearing* - The wool on sheep was removed with hand clippers, the first step in preparing it for spinning or weaving.

*Milking cows* - Many pioneer families owned cows. The milk used for cooking and baking had to be used quickly because it spoiled. Some of the milk was churned into butter, which could be held longer without refrigeration.

*Hunting* - Nearby open range lands offered deer, bear, antelope, elk, rabbits, squirrel and pigeons for the skilled hunter. Sometimes hunting was practiced for food, at other times to reduce predators or pests on the ranch.

*Butchering animals* - Butchering was an important event on farms and homesteads. Most settlers, with the help of sons, neighbors, or hired hands, did their own butchering. Slaughtering cattle, oxen, or pigs was usually done in a protected area. The carcasses were cut up into portions and the meat taken to the cellar or kitchen to be cut into smaller pieces and prepared for curing.<sup>114</sup>

*Killing and plucking chickens* - Raising and selling chickens often supplemented the ranch income. Farther south on a ranch along the Sacramento River,

Mary [Murdock Compton] often spoke of her raising chickens and making butter. She was able to sell enough of these to supply the ranch with provisions, thereby making it possible to pay their net profit on the

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<sup>113</sup> Henria Packer Compton, "Mary Murdock Compton," *Let them Speak for Themselves: Women in the American West, 1849-1900*. Christiane Fischer, ed. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978. P. 86-87.

<sup>114</sup> Arbor, *Ibid.* p. 68.

purchase of the ranch. I do not know just how much this ranch cost them, but it must have been a very good amount for those times.<sup>115</sup>

A couple of traditional methods were used to kill chickens. One approach placed the chicken on a chopping block and with the whack of an axe its head was cut off. A second method wrung the chicken's neck. Afterwards, the chicken was hung upside down to drain its blood more easily. Its feathers were plucked and any remaining feathers singed. The final steps before cooking the chicken involved dressing (taking out the internal organs) and cleaning the bird.

*Cleaning and tanning hides* - Tanning converted the skins of oxen, cows and other animals into leather to prevent their putrefaction. Without this process, exposure to moisture would cause the skin to rot. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a considerable demand for leather for use in harnesses, saddles, horse collars, farm machinery belts, shoes, etc.

Wood ashes and lime used on hides helped to remove hair as it was scraped. By using an unhairing knife on a concave beam, excess hair and flesh was removed from a hide before it was immersed in a tanning solution.

Tanning required immense quantities of oak tree bark, a principle source for the tannin, the main chemical used in tanning leather. After splitting a tree lengthwise with an axe, a bark spud was employed to remove the bark in slabs. These were then dried and ground in a bark mill for use in the solution. After being placed in a tanning vat for weeks or months, the leather became pliable enough for clothing, shoes and belts. The tanned skin was stretched flat and a head knife used by a currier to equalize the thickness of the leather.<sup>116</sup>

*Rendering tallow* - Tallow is a rendered form of beef or mutton fat, processed from suet. It is solid at room temperature. Unlike suet, tallow can be stored for extended periods without the need for refrigeration to prevent decomposition, provided it is kept in an airtight container to prevent oxidation. (Rendered fat obtained from pigs is known as *lard*.)

Rendering is the process of separating animal fat from debris and water so that it can be used in baking or soap making. The fat is placed in a large pot or kettle and melted slowly to avoid burning. It is cooled and sieved to remove any debris. Cold water is added and the mixture is reheated. After cooling and chilling overnight, the tallow becomes separated and may be used in baking or soap making.

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<sup>115</sup> Compton, *Ibid.* P. 90.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* Pp. 98-99.

## Farming and Gardening

In the first few years after California's statehood (1850), there was very little interest in agriculture.

Cultivation can barely be said to have existed at all in California during the last years under Mexico, and even after the gold rush its advance was slow and sparse. The insecurity of land titles, the lure of quicker wealth in other activities, and the unfamiliarity of such peculiar farming conditions as the rainless summers, all served to retard agricultural development. The food supply of the Argonauts was largely imported; the main exception was California beef, salted or driven to the mining camps on the hoof.<sup>117</sup>

Establishing reliable sources of food was important to frontier families living in remote parts of California. But it was hard work.

*Clearing the land* - There was so much preparation to be done before crops could be placed in the ground. Before gardens and farm fields could be cultivated, large and small stumps had to be removed, as well as rocks. In places, land had to be drained. Picks, trenching forks, shovels and spades were used to clear the land. The brute strength of mules and oxen was also employed to remove large obstacles from fields. Fences were built around plots to keep pesky wild animals and livestock out of the plots.

*Gardening* - Spring, summer and fall months were spent weeding, hoeing, watering and generally caring for the garden and field crops. Common tools used to plant, grow and pick crops included the harrow, plow, hand cradle, flail, hoe, rake and pitch fork. Fresh vegetables could be eaten out of the garden in the summer and fall months with the remainder preserved for consumption later in the winter. Common garden crops harvested included: corn, potatoes, beans, onions, squash, pumpkins, and turnips. Fruit trees were planted, but required considerable time to grow before they bore fruit.

*Cultivating and harvesting fields* - Ox-drawn or mule-drawn implements were used to plow, plant and hoe crops. Often pioneers had to use hand tools to weed between the rows. Irrigation depended on nature or canals dug to move water to the fields. The first crops sown were significant mainly for confirming the potential of California's soils and its climate.

## Food Preparation

A considerable amount of time and effort was expended in the procurement, preservation and preparation of food. One-room structures, like the Adobe Ranch

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* P.167.

House in its early years, were built around a fireplace. Early settlers depended on the fireplace. Almost all cooking was done over the fire, which was kept burning almost continuously. Long-handled tools usually made of copper, iron, and brass were used for cooking and handling food over hot coals.

The fireplace served for drying clothes, herbs, and fruits and vegetables, providing coals which were used in foot and bed warmers and to light pipes, and supplying valuable ashes for use in soap and potash making.<sup>118</sup>

*Cooking in a fire* - Day-to-day cooking was done in the fireplace. Cooking equipment included Dutch ovens, brass kettles, large and small iron pots and skillets. Many of the open-fire utensils stood on legs and/or had long handles. From an adjustable iron hook called a trammel, pots, kettles, and griddles were hung over the fire. Fresh meats were cooked by broiling, frying, boiling and roasting. Stews were common. Vegetables and fruits were cooked fresh or preserved by drying or pickling.



Drawing courtesy of John Allen

*Baking* - Hot coals from the fire were placed under and over cast iron pots to create enough heat to bake foods like bread and pies.

*Smoking meats or fish* - Before refrigeration, meat had to be cured (preserved) to prevent decay and to provide a year-round supply. It was cured in several ways.

1. **Salting:** Two methods of salt-curing were used: the dry cure, in which meat was packed in salt; and the brine-cure, in which meat was immersed in a solution of salt and water.
2. **Potting:** This method was used when salt was in short supply. The meat was first cooked, then placed in a crock and covered with a deep layer of melted fat or lard. Meat preserved in this manner was often used on long ship voyages.
3. **Drying:** The settlers learned to dry meat from the Indians. The meat was cut into thin strips and dried in the sun or hung near the fire. This produced a tough, dry meat called jerk or jerky.
4. **Smoking:** Also learned from the Indians, this was the method most widely used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. More pork than beef was smoked. Pork in the form of bacon, scrapple, and sausage was a staple food in early America. The usual method of preserving pork was to salt-cure

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<sup>118</sup> Arbor, *Ibid.* P. 58.

it and hang it in the smokehouse. The smoke from the fire (usually of hickory wood) completed this process, and imparted a fine, distinctive flavor to the meat. It was then hung in the cellar or springhouse and used throughout the year.<sup>119</sup>

*Fruit Preservation* - There were two methods for preserving fruit for year-round consumption before refrigeration: drying and canning. Fruits were harvested, dried and stored to be prepared and eaten in different ways throughout the year. Commercially canned foods in tin cans became more common with the California Gold Rush. However, the process of home canning—sealing foods in glass jars using pressure and high heat—was not made practical until 1858, when John Mason invented a glass jar for home canning.



A docent churns butter

*Butter making* - Butter and cheese are milk by-products used in cooking and as foods. From the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup>, the making of butter and cheese was part of the daily routine of women on farms and ranches.

Milk was strained to remove any debris then left to cool to let the cream separate and rise to the top of the pan. The fatty cream was skimmed off the top and poured into a churn which was agitated by a wooden dasher. After it formed, the butter was lifted out into a wooden bowl and washed several times. Salt was then added as a preservative.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:

Area 3 will back up to Area 1 and will feature a large, mural-sized illustration of the Adobe Ranch House, as it may have appeared soon after construction between 1852 and 1854, with a hip roof and wide verandahs. This image will be a cutaway, showing the exterior *and* interior, modeled after the illustration shown on the first page of this section. It will highlight the labor and the important skills required to sustain life on California's frontier.

On a platform similar to Area 2 and associated with the Adobe House mural, will be a video monitor, which will show many of the daily—mid-1850s—work activities at the ranch. Divided into short video segments, the monitor will offer visitors the opportunity to touch the screen to select the demonstrations to view. The programs will utilize costumed docents representing various frontier skills. Video clips will highlight traditional activities, like plucking a chicken or harnessing a mule, which generally are not seen in the park today. Sound will be controlled either by visitors

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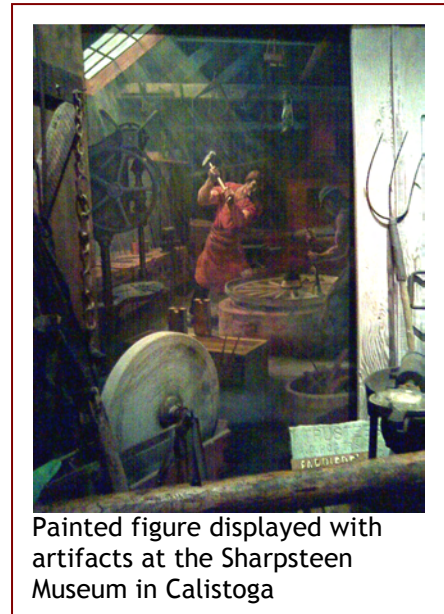
<sup>119</sup> Arbor, *Ibid.* P. 68.



using hand-held wands or a dome placed over the area to limit the sound generated in this exhibit area.

In front of the mural and near the monitor will be displayed period tools and equipment related to the videos and to the mural. These will have illustrations and text describing their use. If space allows, a “guessing game” might be developed in association with the tools. If possible, one or two tools may be set up for hands-on use for visitors. A two-dimensional, life-size figure (like the ones developed for Area 1) working with a tool and related to the background mural will be set forward on the platform to visually engage the visitor.

A bench, placed in front and to the side of the platform, will allow visitors to rest, as well as offer space for costumed docents to sit while providing period demonstrations at scheduled times.



Painted figure displayed with artifacts at the Sharpsteen Museum in Calistoga

### Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:

Objects to be displayed on the platform should include woodworking tools, blacksmithing tools, farm implements, and cooking utensils and equipment. Their selection will depend upon their availability, condition, and relationship to the skills shown on the video and illustrated on the mural. They should be reviewed to consider whether or not they may be touched by visitors.

The series of short video segments should be no longer than 12-15 minutes total for all of them. Each will depict people in period-attire working at ranch activities common to the era, but difficult to present in today’s programs. Videos also should reflect some of the tools that will be displayed. Here is a list of possibilities for the video segments:

- Sheep shearing
- Branding cattle
- Plucking a chicken
- Slaughtering a hog or preparing it for smoking, etc.
- Tanning hides
- Removing a stump with a horse or an ox
- Shoeing a horse
- Making or repairing a tool
- Repairing wagon wheels, shrinking hubs
- Harnessing a horse or a mule

Additional still photographs supporting this section are contained in the Graphics File.

## Area 2: The Way to California

Space Allocation: 20%

Theme:

Determined emigrants and gold seekers braved hazardous journeys to come to California.

Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

- Learn about the historic lure of California for people around the world.
- Appreciate the choices confronting emigrants to California and understand the important axiom, "You live with what you do."
- Visually grasp the different routes taken across oceans, waterways and overland to reach California and some of the important landmarks along the way.
- Realize the difficulties experienced on the journeys.

Background Research and/or Storyline:

### *The Lure of California*



1657 map depicting California as an island.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library

Europeans at first believed that California was an island. Early sixteenth century Spanish author Garcí Ordoñez de Montalvo imaginatively portrayed the area in his work *Las Sergas de Esplandián*:

Know ye that at the right hand of the Indies there is an island named California, very close to that part of the Terrestrial Paradise... The island itself is one of the wildest in the world on account of the bold and craggy rocks... The island everywhere abounds with gold and precious stones, and upon it no other metal was found.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Richard B. Rice, William A. Bullough, and Richard J. Orsi, *The Elusive Eden: A New History of California*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1996. P.9.

A black Amazon queen, Calafia, ruled the mythical land that Montalvo created:

Calafia, with a sword in her hand  
Worked a great damage with her Amazon troops  
And there put to death very many persons  
From among the faithful, and more of the pagans.<sup>39</sup>

Later physical exploration proved Montalvo's 1500-era fantasy description both true and erroneous. In any event, California's actual natural environment captivated its early Spanish explorers. Pedro Fages, governor of Alta California in the early 1770s, described the San Joaquin Valley as "a labyrinth of lagoons and Tulares" with "every kind of animal, terrestrial and aerial."<sup>40</sup> Father Narciso Durán, a Franciscan missionary who made several trips into the Central Valley, described the landscape near Mission San José as "like a park because of the verdure and luxuriousness of its groves and trees."<sup>41</sup>



Missions established along the coastline of Alta California. Courtesy of <http://img84.imageshack.us/img84/9448/camission s21pp7.jpg>

Beginning in 1769, Spain, hoping to reinforce its government's claim to the land, developed a mission system along California's coastline. By establishing missions, *presidios* (forts), and *pueblos* (towns), Spain intended to permanently secure the colony for itself.<sup>42</sup> Cattle, sheep and horses became important mainstays for the 21 missions built under Spanish and later Mexican rule.<sup>43</sup>

The outside world rapidly became better acquainted with California's potential. Under Mexican rule, foreign ships were permitted greater commercial freedom. American traders purchased sea otter pelts and cattle hides from Californios. Whaling ships would stop at Pacific ports to refit and acquire provisions. Foreign agents came intent on trading for cattle hides and

<sup>39</sup> Stephen Schwartz, *From West to East: California and the Making of the American Mind*. New York: The Free Press, 1998. P.15.

<sup>40</sup> Rice, Bullough, and Orsi, *Ibid.* P.54.

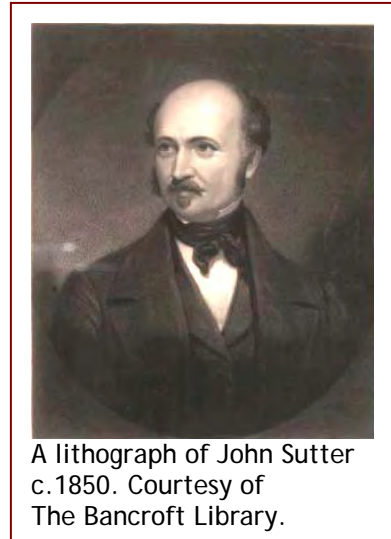
<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Any claims to the land by the indigenous Indian people were ignored.

<sup>43</sup> Mexico and with it Alta California (Upper California) became independent of Spain in 1821.

the tallow rendered from their carcasses.<sup>44</sup> Trappers, like Jedediah Smith and William Ashley, and fur trading companies, such as the Hudson's Bay Company, promoted California to the outside world, helping to elevate it as a "land of promise."<sup>45</sup>

Among the first to respond was a Swiss immigrant, John A. Sutter. Having failed in business and marriage, he fled Europe to New York in 1834. Journeying west to St. Louis, he visited Santa Fe with a trading party, then traveled overland to Oregon, took ship for Honolulu, later Sitka, before reaching San Francisco in 1839. He prevailed on the governor to grant him eleven leagues (48,400 acres) of land in and around the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers at what is today the state's capital, Sacramento. Accompanied by some Hawaiian laborers recruited in the Islands, and guided by William Heath Davis, well-known resident American business agent in San Francisco, Sutter took possession of his land. In 1840 he began construction of Sutter's Fort. In the immediate years to come, with the advent of increased overland immigration, this would become California's first "Ellis Island."<sup>46</sup>



During the early 1840s, waves of hardy emigrants began staking their futures in the West in Oregon and California. Some anticipated the land ultimately would become possessions of the United States.

...the first California-bound wagon train to cross the Sierra arrived after a grueling six-month trek [in 1841]. The sixty-nine-member team had followed the Oregon Trail to present-day Idaho and split up, half going on to the Oregon territory and half—led by John Bidwell and John Bartleson—following the Humboldt River into California. Oregon was the more appealing destination and attracted the majority of settlers in the early 1840s because it featured unlimited land and no bothersome Mexican government. But glowing descriptions from Bidwell and other pioneer-cum-publicists like John Marsh and Lansford W. Hastings convinced more and more emigrants to choose California.<sup>47</sup>

John Sutter with his fort and farming and trading community in the Central Valley encouraged William B. Ide and his family and many others to come to his New

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<sup>44</sup> Hides were exported to be turned into shoes on the East Coast and tallow was used to produce candles and soap.

<sup>45</sup> Rice, Bullough, and Orsi, *Ibid.* P.153.

<sup>46</sup> *A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California Before the Gold Rush.* Joshua Paddison, ed. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1999. Pp.312-313.

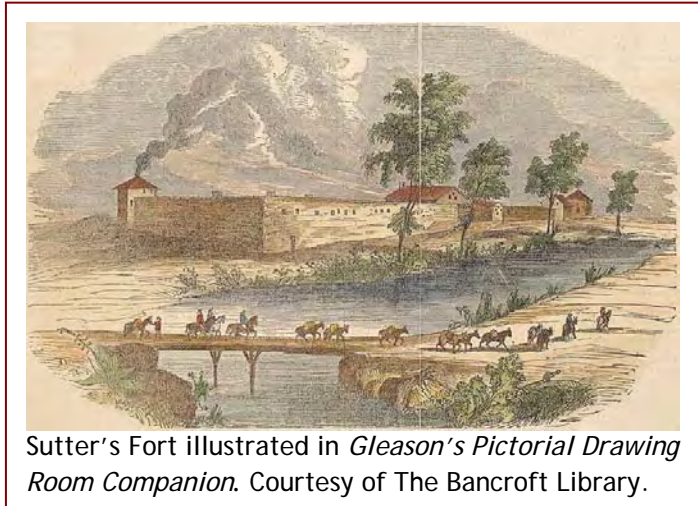
<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* P.259.



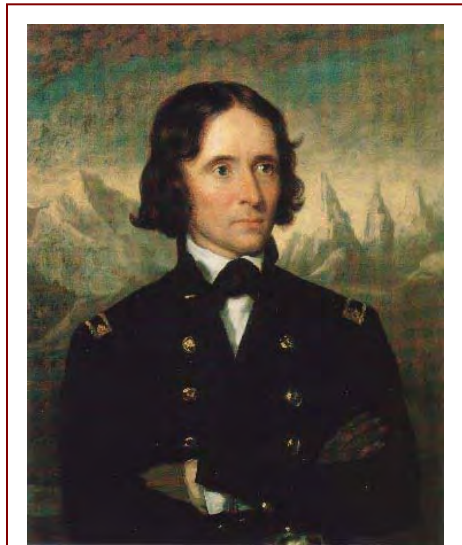
Helvetia (New Switzerland). Sutter supported the newly arrived emigrants. One of his clerks noted that he seemed to feel obligated to give employment to anyone who sought it.<sup>48</sup>

At first, more emigrants chose to settle in Oregon. From 1841 to 1848, 11,000 migrated to Oregon, with only 2,700 reaching California. But those numbers changed.

Americans began arriving in substantial numbers wanting to settle [in California], but the Mexican government was wary of their intentions. New Englanders especially tended to be haughty and Puritanical. Many were frank in revealing their conviction that California was too good to be run by Mexicans. Yankee ingenuity, industry and morality, they felt, would do wonders for



California. The Mexicans tried to integrate the Americans by offering them huge grants of land, with two conditions: that they become naturalized Mexican citizens and be baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. Most American settlers readily agreed to these terms, but kept their private convictions.<sup>49</sup>



Capt. John Charles Frémont portrait. Courtesy of the Union League Club of Chicago.

In the United States however, some were not satisfied with Mexican hegemony over California.

In Washington, D.C. the concept of Manifest Destiny was on the rise. The American government felt an obligation to expand the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Relations between the United States and Mexico became difficult...

In 1844 a company of American explorers led by Lieutenant John Frémont,<sup>50</sup> with the famous scout Kit Carson, arrived overland

<sup>48</sup> Rice, Bullough, and Orsi, *Ibid.* Pp.154-155.

<sup>49</sup> Del Wilcox, *Voyagers to California*. Elk, California: Sea Rock Press, 1991. P.81.

<sup>50</sup> John Charles Frémont was an officer in the Topographical Corps of the U.S. Army and led several expeditions, beginning in 1843, which took him into California. He arrived at Sutter's Fort, stirred up the American settlers in the area and became a leading force in the Bear Flag Revolt in June 1846.



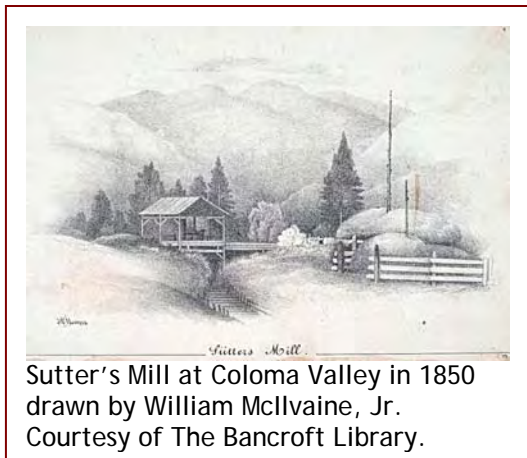
from Oregon and Nevada. Their original assignment was to find safe land routes to the West Coast.<sup>51</sup>

From 1846 to the 1850s, events rapidly altered the course of history.

Texas gained its independence from Mexico in 1836 and was annexed to the United States in 1845. This precipitated the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846-1848. President Polk had tried to buy California for \$40,000,000, but Mexico even refused to talk to his envoy. U.S. troops invaded Mexico, while Americans in California declared their independence in the Bear Flag Revolt.<sup>52</sup>

War with Mexico followed hard in California after the Bear Flag Revolt (June 10-July 9, 1846). President James Polk had signed a congressional declaration of war in Washington, D.C. on May 13<sup>th</sup>, but this was not known in California—across the continent and on the West Coast—until Commodore John D. Sloat peacefully occupied the port cities of Monterey on July 7<sup>th</sup> and San Francisco on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

Commodore Robert F. Stockton took command over the American military forces from the ailing Sloat on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Americans encountered greater resistance as the troops traveled southward. During several engagements, lives were lost on both sides. Captain José María Flores and Mexican Governor Pío Pico offered their surrender to John C. Frémont in the Cahuenga Capitulation on January 13, 1847.



Sutter's Mill at Coloma Valley in 1850 drawn by William McIlvaine, Jr. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Days before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed formally ending the hostilities between the United States and Mexico on February 2, 1848, one particular event changed everything. On January 24, 1848, James Marshall, who was overseeing the construction of a saw mill in Coloma Valley for John Sutter, reached into the tailrace and pulled out a few shiny metal flakes. While neither the first California gold strike nor the last, the lure of this discovery launched the greatest voluntary migration in human history—the California Gold Rush.

Thousands journeyed to California overland or by sea for the sake of opportunity, adventure, hope, and greed. They came by land and sea, to extract not only the gold from California, but also to develop its forest, land, and water resources. Centuries-old traditions and technologies converged here and, at times, collided. In the process these immigrants transformed—and were themselves transformed by California.

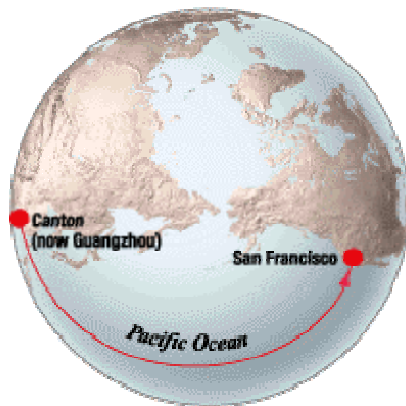
<sup>51</sup> Wilcox, *Ibid.* Pp.81-83.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* The Adobe Ranch land has had an historical relationship to Frémont, being noted in early deeds as 20' above "Frémont's Old Crossing."

## *Adventurers by the Thousands*

California's gold discovery elicited great excitement. In the year after gold was discovered, close to 100,000 people descended on California from every other corner of the world.<sup>53</sup>

Some of the first adventurers came from the south. An estimated 7,000 Mexicans, mostly with their families, organized caravans "sometimes stretching for a mile across the horizon." A U.S. Army officer wrote in December 1848: "The whole state of Sonora is on the move, passing us in gangs daily." Chileans and Peruvians, along with native Californians, also joined the search for gold.<sup>54</sup>



After a 7,000-mile journey of about three months by sea, news reached China.<sup>55</sup> Gold-seekers soon followed from the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and China (mostly from the province of Kwangtung near Canton). They crossed the Pacific Ocean along well-established trade routes. The West Coast of North America was already familiar to Chinese sailors who had been employed on American ships or had fished off the coast of California.<sup>56</sup>

Several thousand Australian and New Zealander men, women and children responded to the lure. In 1849-1850, more than 200 hundred sailing vessels made the treacherous crossing to California's Pacific Coast. Like all voyagers to the gold fields, they sailed in anything afloat—large ocean-going ships, barques, brigs, coastal cutters and schooners.<sup>57</sup>

News, traveling by ship, took about six months to reach the Atlantic Coast of the United States. By mid-December 1848, newspapers throughout the U.S. had published editorials about the gold discovery and everywhere



Advertisement for a clipper ship sailing for California. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>53</sup> Library of Congress website. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/cbhtml/cbforty.html>

<sup>54</sup> A Calliope Fact Sheet: The Gold Rushes of North America (1847-1900). Calliope Film Resources, Inc. <http://www.calliope.org/gold/gold2.html>

<sup>55</sup> Library of Congress. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/cbhtml/cbgold.html>

<sup>56</sup> Noel Barnard, ed., *Early Chinese Art and Its Possible Influence in the Pacific Basin*. New York: Intercultural Arts Press, 1972. Vol. III. See also Edward P. Vining, *An Inglorious Columbus*. San Francisco, 1886.

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.maritimeheritage.org/PassLists/miningAustralia.html>

preparations were being made to go to California. The New York *Herald* noted on January 11, 1849:

The spirit of emigration which is carrying off thousands to California so far from dying away increases and expands every day. All classes of our citizens seem to be under the influence of this extraordinary mania... Poets, philosophers, lawyers, brokers, bankers, merchants, farmers, clergymen—all are feeling the impulse and are preparing to go and dig for gold and swell the number of adventurers to the new El Dorado.

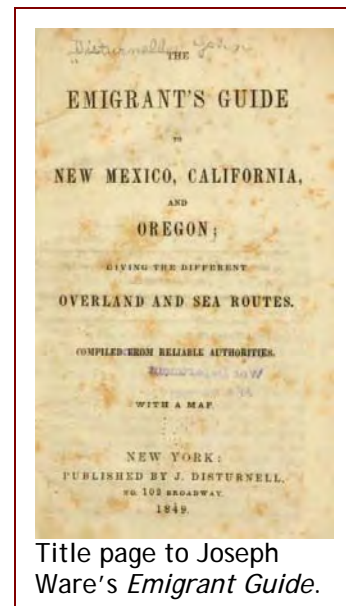
Europeans also reacted to California and the lure of gold.

Europe responded with greater numbers of sailings in 1850, when vessels hailing from Great Britain, France, the Scandinavian countries, South American ports, the German states, and Mediterranean nations embarked for San Francisco. In the first nine months of 1850, 93 ships left British ports, followed by 10 French ships, 100 vessels from the various British provinces, and 62 vessels (29 ships, 19 barks, six brigs, two schooners, and six steamers) from “other foreign ports.” The number of British gold-seekers sailing to California was probably greater, as emigrants stepping off the Liverpool packets in New York could just as easily board the San Francisco-bound ship moored alongside.<sup>58</sup>

### *Decisions, Decisions*

The way to California was difficult by any route and the adventures and hardships experienced along the way numerous. Cost factored into the choices made by many, as did the time required for the journey. Decisions had to be made about the route, when to go, what to take, and what to leave behind. And, emigrants had to live with the consequences. For all, the trip to California was the adventure of a lifetime.

Before the construction of roads, guidebooks provided the directions, noting important landmarks along the way. Maps and atlases were in high demand and eagerly studied. Books published in 1845 and 1853 by John C. Frémont with the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, Joseph Ware's 1849 book, *The Emigrants' Guide to Mexico, California, and Oregon*, Lansford W. Hastings' *Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California*, and others by Andrew Child and Hosea B. Horn proved indispensable for travelers. Even with instructions and guidebooks,



Title page to Joseph Ware's *Emigrant Guide*.

<sup>58</sup> James P. Delgado, *To California by Sea: A Maritime History of the California Gold Rush*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990. P.23.

decisions had to be made along the road or at sea and a wrong decision could be disastrous or even fatal.

Ware's guide provided information about the equipment to take, the organization of a company, travel routines, and health precautions. It also gave warning of probable congestion and delays in Panama. The overland route was recommended as the most sensible, especially for Midwesterners, who were Ware's prospective readers.<sup>59</sup>

Some emigrants traveling by sea to California had a choice of ships to take. Naval historian James Delgado observed:

Vessels of various sizes, rigs, and registries sailed to California, the majority less than full-rigged. Historian John Lyman, tabulating the numbers of vessels sailing to California from North American ports in 1849 noted that 249 ships, 218 barks, 170 brigs, 132 schooners, and 12 steamers "cleared for San Francisco" in 1849. John B. Goodman, basing his comments on research into each of these vessel's careers, notes that most "were stout vessels, a few less than stout" and while "a few had lost the bloom of youth," the majority of vessels that sailed to California in 1849 had been built between 1844 and 1849" with several sailing on their maiden voyages.<sup>60</sup>

There were four routes preferred by travelers from the eastern seaboard of the United States.

The least expensive led overland across the plains and the Rocky Mountains. The cost for four people, including provisions, a wagon, harness, and six good mules averaged \$671. Another route by ship included an overland crossing of Central America (at the Isthmus of Panama or Nicaragua), then ship's passage to California. It cost about \$300 per person. Taking a ship around the tip of South America ranged from \$100 to \$1000, depending on the accommodations and the demand. A fourth route began by ship to Vera Cruz, Mexico than continued overland through Mexico to California.<sup>61</sup>

A PASSAGE TO THE GOLD REGION FOR \$75!

FOR SAN FRANCISCO DIRECT.

THE SPLENDID & NO. 1 NEWLY COPPERED  
PACKET SHIP APOLLO.

recently to the European trade, having most of her freight engaged, will sail for  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA,  
and the gold region in that vicinity, from the  
Foot of Chambers Street, North River,  
WHERE SHE NOW LIES, ON THE SECOND OF JANUARY NEXT.

Passengers will be taken on the following terms:

Steerage Passage - - - - - \$ 75.  
Cabin Passage - - - - - 150.  
Ditto out and home - - - - - 200-  
Ditto with board while there 250.

Several Families can be accommodated.

The advantages offered to passengers by this conveyance cannot be surpassed.  
The APOLLO is one of the swiftest and most airy ships in New York, and has for  
years made a coast. She is destined to sail directly, not only for San Francisco, but  
if it can be done as is expected, she is to be taken up the Sacramento river thirty  
or forty miles, into the very heart of the Gold Region, where she is to remain  
a few days.

The voyage each way, it is reported will be made in about four months.  
Persons desiring to take passage by this vessel will do well to secure their  
berths at the earliest possible moment, as the ship will, in a day or two be completely  
engaged by Europeans, Americans and other passengers, besides being fitted  
up with, showing freight, taking in a supply of provisions, and making other  
preparations for the voyage. Copies of berths will be given to passengers in the  
order of the numbers upon their passage tickets.

Freight taken on engagement or otherwise, at the lowest rates.

No Passage secured until paid for.

An advertisement for the packet ship *Apollo*, bound for San Francisco in 1849. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>59</sup> Ware, *Ibid.*, Pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>60</sup> Delgado, *Ibid.* P. 24.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph E. Ware, *The Emigrants' Guide To California*. Reprint of 1849 edition. Intro. by John Caughey. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932. Pp.1, 7.



## By Way of Cape Horn

In the middle of the winter in 1848-49, overland routes to the Pacific Coast lay across the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains. Rain, mud, swollen rivers, and snow-blocked mountain passes made these routes impassable. Those anxious to embark on their journey West immediately found the only way was by sea. And for those intent on finding gold, time was of the essence!

The Cape Horn passage, though difficult, had been the traditional means for reaching the Pacific, for China traders, whalers, or those California-bound. The 15,000-mile voyage to California around the tip of South America, under the best of conditions, took three months by a fast clipper ship or from six to eighth months by other vessels.<sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup> One ill-fated voyage from New York to San Francisco took a year. Unpredictable winds and slow currents could stall and becalm a ship.



The *Seawitch* rounding Cape Horn with a Nor'easter [www.victory-cruises.com/cape\\_horn\\_passage.html](http://www.victory-cruises.com/cape_horn_passage.html)



The 700-ton *Edward Everett*, sailing from Boston on January 11, 1849 carrying 150 gold seekers to California around Cape Horn, arrived in San Francisco on July 6, 1849. The ship was more luxurious than most with good food, scheduled activities, music, lectures and Sunday church services.<sup>64</sup>

Most forty-niners traveling the 15,000-miles around Cape Horn did not have such luxuries. Passengers were often confined to their quarters—packed into tiny rooms or into the ship's hold. Historian James Delgado has noted:

Every bit of space not absolutely mandatory for sailing the ship was packed with cargo or housed over for passengers. Samuel Upham, on

<sup>62</sup> Clipper ships—new at mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, had narrow hulls and long, concave bows that cut easily through ocean waves. They carried very large sails and their captains often risked sprung masts and snapped yards in gale-force winds to achieve a swift passage. Although fast, they had a limited cargo capacity.

<sup>63</sup> H. Wilbur Hoffman, *Sagas of Old Western Travel and Transport*. San Diego, Calif.: Howell-North Books, 1980. P. 126.

<sup>64</sup> Oscar Lewis, *Sea Routes to the Gold Fields*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949. P. 33.



board the brig *Osceola* in January 1849, complained that the brig's owners had removed the table and benches for feeding the steerage passengers from the tween deck, and the space was "stowed with cases, chests and trunks... consequently the steerage passengers have been compelled to mess [dine] on chicken-coops, pig-pens, water-casks, and trunks... The brig has been a perfect Hades since she sailed."<sup>65</sup>

A majority of the Gold Rush passengers had never been upon the waters of a lake or a river, let alone the ocean, so the first week at sea was a time of seasickness, despair and soul-searching.<sup>66</sup> Voyagers suffered from disagreeable and indigestible food, drunkenness, fights, and boredom. Scurvy, a disease caused by a lack of vitamin C in food was common. As on the overland route, cholera took its toll. Burial at sea was the end for some seeking their fortunes. In addition, there were other dangers: fires at sea, storms that could disable or drive a ship off course, and shipwrecks. All were possibilities.

The most dangerous leg of the route was around the very tip of Cape Horn. Monstrous waves, terrifying winds, and frigid temperatures challenged even the most experienced captains. Some captains took a short cut through the Strait of Magellan. But that passage was narrow and sometimes deadly.

The number of vessels journeying into the Pacific was phenomenal; between December 1848

and December 1849, historian John B. Goodman has accounted for at least 762 vessels that cleared North American ports for California. As early as October 31, 1849, the Boston shipping list noted that 573 vessels had departed for California, with 101 vessels advertised to sail from various ports in the immediate future... In January 1850, the editors of the San Francisco *Daily Alta California* recounted the flood tide of emigration by way of the Horn by citing the harbormaster's records: 39,888 persons had arrived in San Francisco on 805 vessels between April 1849, and January 1850... In all, as many as 1,400, perhaps more, vessels sailed to California by way of Cape Horn in 1849 and 1850.



An illustration highlighting the dangers of Cape Horn, c.1854. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>65</sup> Delgado, *Ibid.* Pp. 30-31.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* P. 32.

The greatest initial response came from New York. Already the busiest American port, New York was the most active in the Gold Rush; the majority of vessels sailed from there—some 214 clearing for California in 1849 alone. Boston, the next busiest port, had 151 clearances, followed by the whaling port of New Bedford, which sent 42 vessels, many of them whalers disrupted in the trade; Baltimore had 38 clearances; New Orleans, 32 vessels; and Philadelphia, 31. These figures add up to only 508 vessels of the 762-vessel total, “showing that virtually every seaport town had its sailings.”<sup>67</sup>

The sea route from the Midwest and East Coast of the United States and from Europe to San Francisco via Cape Horn provided passage for about 62,000 gold seekers.<sup>68</sup> With all of its risks, the route was probably the safest way to reach the gold fields. Thousands made the trip successfully. However, even after their difficult journey, forty-niners arrived in California with no guarantee of success.

### *By the Isthmus of Panama or Nicaragua*



1854 map illustrating sea routes to the Isthmus of Panama. Courtesy of UCLA Special Collections.

The second most popular way to California from the Atlantic Ocean—and the fastest—was to take a steamship to Central America. There travelers crossed the narrow, 60-mile-wide Isthmus of Panama or Nicaragua before getting on board a ship on the Pacific Coast side bound for San Francisco. In the first months of the Gold Rush, the crossing could be made in five days.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Delgado, *Ibid.* P.19.

<sup>68</sup> Trails West-Markers of the California Trail, Historical Development of the California Trail <http://www.emigranttrailswest.org.caltrail.htm>

<sup>69</sup> Lewis, *Ibid.* P. 176.

Forty-niners were not the first to use the Isthmus crossing. For three centuries—well before James Marshall’s discovery—the route evolved into an important commercial link between the oceans and the hemispheres.<sup>70</sup>

Going through Central America was much faster than traveling overland across the continent or sailing around Cape Horn. Thousands of miles could be cut from a journey and the time required for it sometimes reduced by half, that is, if everything went according to plan! Joseph Ware offered sage advice to his readers in his guidebook about the Isthmus of Panama.

This route is one that will be selected by a great number of persons... the route would be from New Orleans to Chagres, thence across the Isthmus to Panama, and from thence to San Francisco. But little difficulty would be experienced in getting to Chagres, as vessels will be constantly leaving New Orleans for that port, but then comes the tug of war!<sup>71</sup>

The “tug of war” referenced by Ware included securing a native *cayuca* (canoe) called a *bungo* to haul travelers and their gear 45 miles up the Chagres River to the head of



An 1867 painting by Charles Nahl of the *bungos* on the Chagres River, Panama. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

navigation near the town of Las Cruces. The *bungo*, a large hollowed-out log about 25 feet long and 3 feet wide, originally hauled bananas down river for trade. Its palm-leaved canopy shaded four to six passengers and three to four crewmembers.

Gold seekers disembarking from ships on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus, often overwhelmed the small fleet of *bungos*. As many as one thousand gold seekers would wait for transportation up the Chagres River. The three or four-day trip cost about \$1 per passenger

at the outset of the California Gold Rush, but quickly increased to about \$15. By November 1851, the fare was \$50 per person.

From there, travelers followed the Old Spanish Gold Road—a mule track, which crossed the divide to Panama City. They traversed it on foot, upon the back of a mule or by clutching a mule’s tail. The one-day ride could be dangerous. As late as 1853,

<sup>70</sup> Lewis, *Ibid.* P. 164.

<sup>71</sup> Ware, *Ibid.* P. 49.



after thousands of feet and hooves had ground down the road, it remained difficult. Emeline Day crossed the Isthmus that year and had few good words for it.

A description of the road bearing any resemblance to the reality is beyond any feeble powers to give. The road consists of a narrow track, in many places only wide enough for one packed mule to pass at a time...It has been traveled over by mules until they have worn a track in the earth so deep that the... level was far above our heads, and the track in the earth so narrow that we could touch each bank with our hands as we sat on our mules... For many miles together we traveled where one false step would have precipitated us down over steep and craggy rocks to a distance several hundred feet where no human being could hope to escape alive.<sup>72</sup>

Over time, changes were made to the Isthmus route with shallow-draft steamers replacing the *bungos* and improvements to the mule trail.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to the obvious dangers, travelers endured alternately blistering heat and torrential rains, swarms of mosquitoes, fleas and other insects, in addition to the



Crossing the Isthmus of Panama by mule drawn by J. Brandard in 1855. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

ever-present hazards of malaria, dysentery, cholera, and Panama fever.<sup>74</sup> They had to carry their own food and blankets and sleep out in the open or in the bamboo huts of the natives.

Once in Panama City, the last hurdle had to be negotiated, that of getting on a ship bound for San Francisco. A timely arrival did not guarantee a quick exit as many travelers became stuck in Panama sometimes for weeks.

At Panama City, gold seekers impatiently awaited passage north; until steamer schedules were better coordinated, they sometimes waited for months. Meanwhile they fretted in the unhealthy climate, unimpressed by their picturesque surroundings and intolerant of the local Hispanic culture.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> JoAnn Levy, *They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Field*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1941. P. 42.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* P. 251.

<sup>74</sup> Lewis, *Ibid.* Pp.176-177.

<sup>75</sup> A.C.W. Bethel, "The Golden Skein: California's Gold-Rush Transportation Network," *A Golden State: Mining and Economic Development in Gold Rush California*. James J. Rawls and Richard Orsi, eds.

Then, a steamship was boarded for San Francisco, arriving there 18 to 21 days later.<sup>76</sup> That time was later reduced to 13 to 14 days.

The three steamships that the Pacific Mail steamship company had built to satisfy its 1847 mail contract were inadequate for the unanticipated gold-rush traffic. *California*, built to carry 250 passengers at most, inaugurated service by steaming into San Francisco in 1849 with 365 crowded on board. Larger and faster steamers were quickly added: Pacific Mail had fourteen ships by 1851 and twenty-three by 1869.<sup>77</sup>



A painting of the US Steamer *Golden Gate* by R. Major. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Not everyone appreciated the coastal steamers. John A. Stone, who had arrived in California in 1850 was a critic of the Panama steamship companies. His satirical songs, reflected their indifferent service, poor maintenance, high fares, and disasters.

*A Ripping Trip*

by John A. Stone

San Francisco : D.E. Appleton & Co., 1858<sup>78</sup>

You go aboard of a leaky boat,  
And sail for San Francisco;  
You've got to pump to keep her afloat,  
You have *That*, by jingo.  
The engine soon begins to squeak,  
But nary a thing to oil her;  
Impossible to stop the leak—  
Rip goes the boiler!

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Berkeley: University of California Press in association with the California Historical Society, 1999. Pp. 251-252.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Bethel, *Ibid.* P.252.

<sup>78</sup> To the music of "Pop Goes the Weasel." From: <http://www.manifest-history.org/CaliforniaColumnResearch/music/ARippingTrip.htm>



*Humbug Steamship Companies*  
by John A. Stone

The greatest imposition  
that the public ever saw,  
Are the California steamships  
that run to Panama;  
They're a perfect set of robbers  
and accomplish their designs,  
By a general invitation  
of the people to the mines.  
Then come along, come along,  
You that want to go,  
The best accommodations,  
And the passage very low;  
Our boats they are large enough,  
Don't be afraid,  
The *Golden Gate* is going down  
to beat the *Yankee Blade*.<sup>79 80</sup>

The attractive profits made on the Isthmus of Panama crossing drew competition. In 1851, Cornelius Vanderbilt began developing another crossing in Nicaragua. While wider than Panama, the route had more navigable rivers



San Juan de Nicaragua drawn by George Cooper c.1852.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Reputedly a healthier place than Panama, Nicaragua offered an easier passage by small steamers up the San Juan River and across Lake Nicaragua, then by stagecoach to the Pacific. Between 1853 and 1855, the

Nicaragua route drew nearly as many passengers as the Panama crossing. Completion of the Panama railroad and political instability in Nicaragua combined to make the Nicaragua route unattractive after 1856, though it was operated sporadically by Vanderbilt's successors until 1868.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> The *Yankee Blade* sank months before John A. Stone wrote the song in 1855.

<sup>80</sup> Lingenfelter, Richard E., et.al.(eds.) *Songs of the American West*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968. P. 30.

<sup>81</sup> Bethel, *Ibid*. P. 253.

It is estimated that

Between 1848 and 1869, about 600,000 passengers used the Panama route, more than 46,000 traveling in 1859, the peak year. By contrast, a total of about 156,000 went via Nicaragua. Because freight rates were high—never less than forty cents per pound—only very high priority freight went westbound via Panama: express waybills mention clothing, liquor, medicine, books, and firearms. But more than three-quarters of a billion dollars in coined gold was transported across the isthmus eastbound, nearly \$48 million in 1864, the peak year. The importance of the Panama route declined with the opening of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869...<sup>82</sup>

Bayard Taylor, a seasoned traveler, pronounced in 1849, after his five days crossing:

...the Isthmus—decidedly more novel, grotesque and adventurous than any trip of similar length in the world. It was rough enough, but had nothing that I could exactly call hardship, so much was the fatigue balanced by the enjoyment of the unsurpassed scenery and a continual sensation of novelty.<sup>83</sup>

### *By Way of Mexico*

For many gold seekers—Mexican War veterans, Southerners, Southwesterners, and even some Easterners and Midwesterners, the trail to El Dorado lay through Mexico.

They sailed across the Gulf of Mexico from Mobile, from New Orleans, and from Havana, Cuba. Their ports of call were the windswept barren Texas harbors at Galveston, Port Lavaca, Corpus Christi, and Brazos Santiago on the northern curve of the gulf shore. South from these ports, the principal starting points for the Mexico crossing were Tampico and Vera Cruz.<sup>84</sup>

The Manhattan-California Overland Association was among the first groups of gold seekers to reach California by traveling through Mexico. The group of 200 men left New York on the 200-ton brig *Mara* on January 31, 1849. According to their chronicler, A. C. Ferris, who was elected captain by the company, they intended to go by sea to Vera Cruz, buy pack animals and horses, and journey overland to the Pacific Coast to San Blas or Mazatlan “and in the absence of vessels at these ports to continue to journey two thousand miles by land through Mexico and Lower and Upper California to

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* P. 254.

<sup>83</sup> Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado, or Adventures in the Path of Empire*. Vol. I. New York: George P. Putnam, 1850. P. 25.

<sup>84</sup> Ferol Egan, *The El Dorado Trail: The Story of the Gold Rush Routes across Mexico*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970. P. 53.

the mines.”<sup>85</sup> Upon their arrival in Vera Cruz at the end of February 1849, 50 of “the gold seekers took one look at Vera Cruz, listened with horror to lurid descriptions of what *ladrones* sometimes did to travelers on the National Road, and promptly purchased return passage on the next ship sailing back to New York.”<sup>86</sup>



Jesus Maria drawn by John Woodhouse Audubon c.1851. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Once in Vera Cruz, a number of companies followed the route to Mexico City taken by General Winfield Scott and his troops in the American invasion of Mexico. They walked, rode horseback and muleback, or traveled in stagecoaches to Mexico City. While traveling across the country, they generally brought minimal supplies. “Each man carried two blankets, mining tools, a camp kettle or frying pan dangling from saddle, plus a bag of cups, spoons and metal plates...”<sup>87</sup>

The companies experienced as many hardships as other routes taken to

California, passing through areas where battles had taken place and the bleached skeletons of soldiers lay unburied. In Jalapa, the men of the Manhattan-California Overland Association found the city so hostile that a mob tried to knock them off their horses.<sup>88</sup> Robbery and murder threatened anyone with cash or supplies. Animals could die en route. When provisions were insufficient, the animals also were eaten by the men.

Drastic changes in weather—rain, hail, snow and freezing wind affected the company. The travelers were also affected by the high altitude at the Continental Divide, where the summit was over 10,000 feet above sea level. A.C. Ferris wrote about the toll taken on his men and their animals:

We were drenched through and through, and shook as with ague, and our poor animals, used to the warm plains below, chilled with cold and in terror from fright trembled in every limb and crouched helplessly upon the ground, dazed by the lightning and shocked by the thunder which seemed to discharge at our very sides; they seemed to cling to us for safety.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Dale L. Walker, *Eldorado: The California Gold Rush*. Macmillan, 2003. P. 207.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=F2qN-Qc3ZXcC>

<sup>86</sup> Egan, *Ibid*. P. 248.

<sup>87</sup> Walker, *Ibid*.

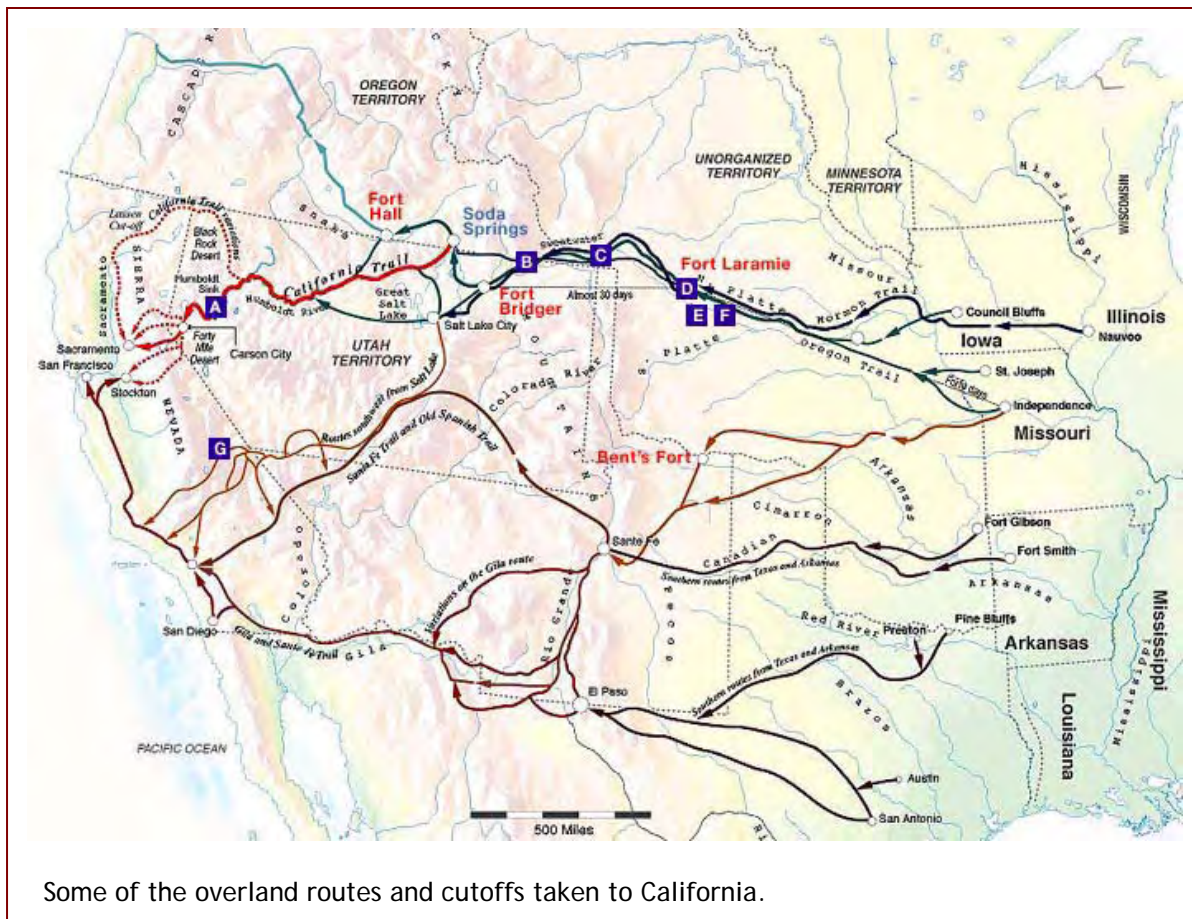
<sup>88</sup> Egan, *Ibid*. P. 252.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*. P. 258.

From Mexico City, the gold seekers could take the 283-mile China Road to Acapulco.<sup>90</sup> Other roads led to San Blas and Mazatlan on the coast. Artist John Woodhouse Audubon and his party followed a course across the northern part of Mexico.

Audubon joined Col. Henry Webb's California Company expedition as commissary, in 1849. From New Orleans the expedition sailed to the mouth of the Rio Grande; it headed west overland through northern Mexico and over the Gila Trail in Arizona to San Diego, California. Cholera and outlaws caused nearly half of the men to turn back, including the leader. Audubon assumed command of the remainder, which pressed on to California...<sup>91</sup>

Once the gold seekers reached the Pacific, if they were lucky, they boarded ships to San Francisco and then on to Sacramento. The routes through Mexico took three to six months to complete depending on conditions.



<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* P. 269.

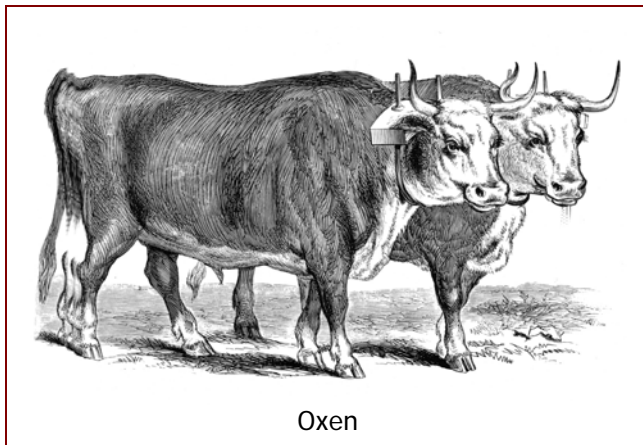
<sup>91</sup> The Handbook of Texas Online, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/AA/fau3.html>



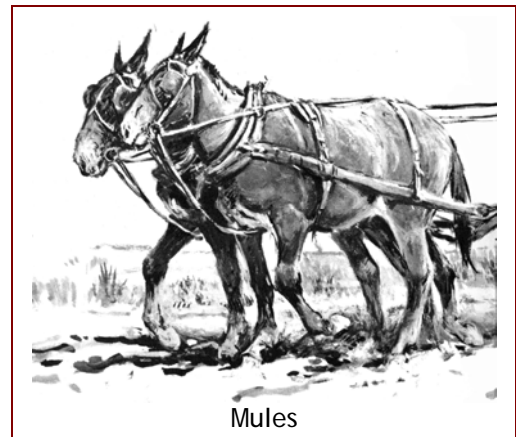
## *By the Overland Routes*

In the spring, as snows melted, grasses grew, and the weather turned warm, the movement overland to California began. Preparations for most started well before then with the gathering of provisions. It would be a long journey and the decisions about the goods packed could mean the difference between life and death. They needed to pack carefully.

One of the first decisions would have been whether to use oxen or mules for the journey. Spaniards first introduced the mule (the cross between a horse and a donkey) to America along with the horse. Mules were hardy. Trappers used them to haul furs, traders transported goods, and gold seekers moved their supplies and mining equipment using them. Pack mules could carry heavy loads weighing between 200 and 400 pounds. Loading them was an art. Crates, barrels, sacks and other gear had to be divided equally, then balanced and cinched down tightly—not always easy with a difficult animal.



Oxen



Mules

However, when it came to pulling a vehicle loaded with goods, teamsters hotly debated which were better—oxen or mules. Each had their strengths and weaknesses. Bullwhackers preferred oxen; muleskinners liked mules.

Mules were faster, but oxen were cheaper to buy and to work. When distances were less than 1,000 miles and grazing good, mules were favored. When 1,500 to 2,000 miles had to be traveled or the roads proved sandy or muddy, oxen were preferred.

### Oxen:

- A pair cost \$40 to \$160
- Ate trailside grasses, so they cost less to feed - *Poor quality forage caused them to "bloat."*
- Slower—pulled wagons at 2 miles per hour
- Hauled heavier loads
- Not likely to be stampeded
- Could be eaten in an emergency
- Averaged 10 working years

### Mules:

- A pair cost \$200 to \$400
- Sometimes feed had to be hauled with the cargo
- Faster—pulled wagons at 2½ miles an hour
- Endured heat well
- Sure-footed
- Resisted being overworked  
*Some teamsters would call them stubborn.*
- Averaged 12 to 15 working years



## *Provisions for the Journey*

Joseph Ware's guidebook advised travelers to leave by the 20<sup>th</sup> of April in a party of no more than 50 men. How many supplies should you bring? He recommended that wagons should weigh no more than 2,500 pounds and that four yoke of oxen or six mules pull them. Lansford Hastings advocated that each emigrant bring 200 pounds of flour, 150 pounds of bacon, 10 pounds of coffee, 20 pounds of sugar, and 10 pounds of salt. The Oregon California Trails Association have identified the following items as being carried on many of the early wagon trains:

### PER PERSON:

150 lbs of flour  
25 lbs of bacon  
10 lbs of rice  
15 lbs. of coffee  
2 lbs. of tea  
25 lbs. of sugar  
½ bushel dried peas  
½ bushel dried fruit  
2 lbs. saleratus (baking soda)  
10 lbs. of salt  
½ bushel corn meal  
½ small keg vinegar  
Pepper

### CLOTHING PER PERSON:

Men:  
2 wool shirts  
2 wool undershirts  
Women:  
2 wool dresses

### Both:

2 pair drawers  
4 pair wool socks  
2 pair cotton socks  
4 colored handkerchiefs  
1 pair boots and shoes  
Poncho, broad rimmed hat

### MISCELLANEOUS PER FAMILY:

Rifle, ball powder  
8-10 gallon keg for water  
1 axe  
1 hatchet  
1 space  
1 whip or cross-cut saw  
1 plow mold  
At least 2 ropes  
Mallet for driving picket pins  
Matches carried in bottles, corked

### SEWING SUPPLIES:

(Placed in buckskin or stout cloth bag)  
Stout linen thread  
Large needles, thimble  
A bit of bee's wax  
A few buttons, buckskin for patching  
Paper of pins

### PERSONAL ITMES:

1 comb and brush  
2 toothbrushes  
1 lb. castile soap  
1 belt knife  
1 flint stone

### COOKING:

Baking pan—used for baking and roasting coffee  
Mess-pan wrought iron or tin  
2 churns—one for sweet, one for sour milk  
1 coffee pot  
1 tin cup with handle  
1 tin plate, knives  
1 coffee mill  
Forks, spoons, per person  
1 camp kettle  
Fry pan  
Wooden bucket for water

### BEDDING PER PERSON:

1 canvas  
2 blankets  
1 pillow  
One tent per family

### MEDICAL SUPPLIES:

Iron rust  
Rum and cognac (both for dysentery)  
Calomel  
Quinine for ague  
Epsom salts for fever  
Castor oil capsules

Some began the journey in large groups with as many as 70 men, women and children and 15 wagons. Most brought livestock for food. Other emigrants crossed alone or in small numbers on horseback or by pulling handcarts filled with the least amount of provisions for the trip. By whatever mode of transportation, they had to be prepared to be self-sufficient for the length of the journey.<sup>92</sup> Sarah Ide Healy, daughter of William B. Ide, wrote:

We had a sale the morning we started, and sold off the greater part of our furniture. We packed our cooking utensils, tin cups, tin plates—provisions to last us six months. Mother, my little brothers—Daniel, aged 10, and Lemuel, aged 8, and Thomas Crafton (a little boy that had been given to my Mother), all rode in a wagon.

I rode horseback 3 days, to help drive the cattle riding on the side-saddle. The drove of cattle numbered 165, including 28 working oxen... Our number, all told, young and old was thirteen—five of these were young men, who drove the teams for their board and passage.<sup>93</sup>

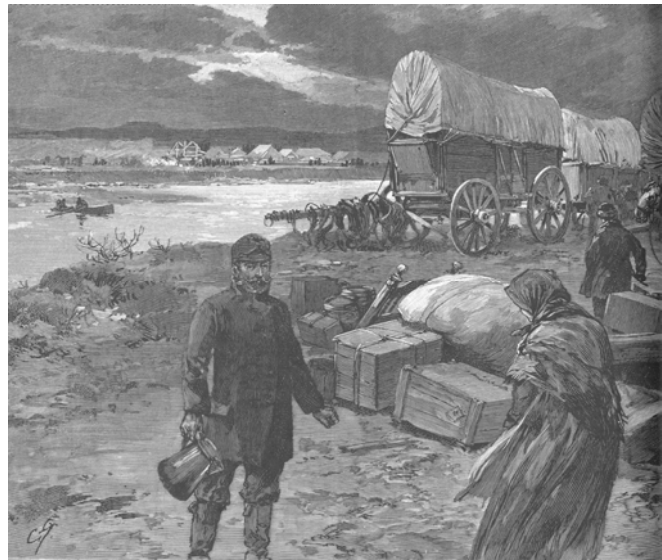


Illustration of emigrants in South Dakota beside a river with their wagon's contents. From *Harper's Weekly*, March 8, 1890.

Council Bluffs, Iowa and St. Joseph and Independence, Missouri were starting points for the overland routes that eventually led to California. Those traveling from the Midwest to California would trek almost 2,000 miles across prairies, mountains, rivers, and deserts. Like many others who followed, John Bidwell reflected his inexperience. He wrote in 1889 about being part of the Bidwell-Bartleson Party—the first organized emigrant group to travel to California in 1841:

Our ignorance of the route was complete. We knew that California lay west, and that was the extent of our knowledge.<sup>94</sup>



John Bidwell

<sup>92</sup> Refer to the Appendix in this *Interpretive Plan* for excerpts written by William B. Ide of the family's overland journey published in 1845 in the *Sangamon Journal*.

<sup>93</sup> Simeon A. Ide, *A Biographical Sketch of the Life of William B. Ide*. P. 30.

<sup>94</sup> General John Bidwell, *Echoes of the Past*, from *Century Magazine*. Sacramento, Calif.: Department of Parks and Recreation. Reprint March 1987. P. 111.

The wisest travelers hired guides with experience.

When possible, wagons traveled abreast, as dust was an ever-present problem. Advancing behind someone else's vehicle meant eating their dust. The overland parties faced extremes in weather, shortages of water and food, equipment breakdowns, cholera epidemics, and the threat of Indian attacks.

The greatest menace to early Argonauts was not Indians, as many had anticipated. That would come, but early gold-seekers were their own worst enemies. Some brought cholera up the Mississippi River from New Orleans, and it took a terrible toll. Burials occurred almost daily. So did accidental wounds from guns or axes, fractures caused by animals or wagon wheels, and injuries sustained while hauling wagons up



Covered wagons in the dust drawn by William Henry Jackson drawn in 1866. Courtesy of Scott's Bluff National Monument.

and down mountains and across rivers. Equally dangerous, perhaps, were temptations to rely on useless guidebooks published in 1849 and 1850 or to leave established routes for unproven "cut-offs" to California.<sup>95</sup>



An 1866 watercolor of Mitchell Pass painted by William Henry Jackson. Courtesy of Scott's Bluff National

Along the route, trails merged and diverged at several places. Sometimes creeks or rivers would be impassible and another trail taken.<sup>96</sup> Natural landmarks became the guideposts for travelers, who gained reassurance and comfort in seeing them along the trail. These sites included places like Mitchell Pass and Chimney Rock in Nebraska and Scott's Bluff, Independence Rock, and South Pass in Wyoming, to name a few.

There were also the much anticipated and feared places along the trail, like Nevada's Black Rock Desert and its Humboldt Sink, a vast, waterless desert, as well as

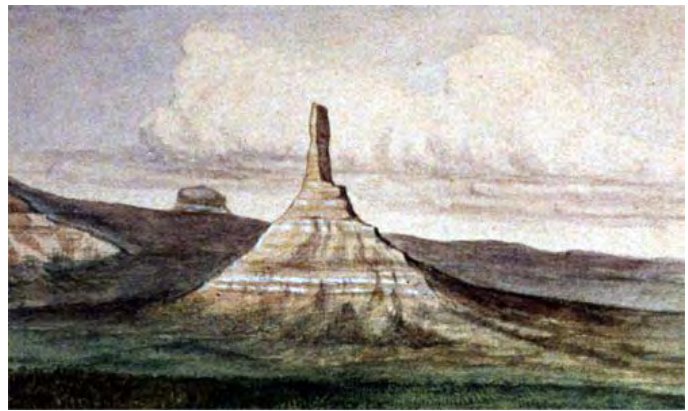
<sup>95</sup> Rice, Bullough and Orsi, *Ibid.* P. 194.

<sup>96</sup> Refer to Alfred Walton's Biography in the Appendix. Walton, one of the early owners of the Adobe Ranch, traveled overland to California and while canoeing down stream on the Green River near the mouth of the White River, lost most of his provisions when a canoe was upset.

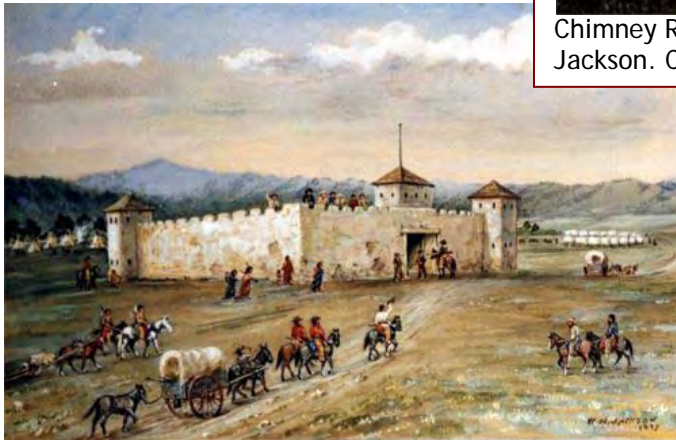


California's rugged Sierra Nevada range, which presented dangers that tested every emigrant's courage and will to go on.

Forts and communities along the way became important stopping points for overland emigrants to replenish their supplies and to relax briefly for the period in their often-arduous journeys. Fort Laramie, Fort Bridger, Fort Hall, Salt Lake City, Bent's Fort, and Santa Fe offered welcome relief for trail-weary travelers.



Chimney Rock painted in 1866 by William Henry Jackson. Courtesy of Scott's Bluff National Monument.



Fort Laramie illustrated by William Henry Jackson in 1932. Courtesy of Scott's Bluff National Monument.



Fort Bridger depicted in 1849. From the Stansbury Expedition. Courtesy of <http://www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/bridger.html>

Choices had to be made on the road and a wrong decision could be disastrous. Josiah and Sarah Royce's experience offers one example of the dangers encountered on the journeys west.

After the trek from Council Bluffs in 1849, for example, the Royce family rested at Salt Lake City, instead of joining an organized party with a guide. The decision put them far behind schedule, and following hand-written directions for crossing the Humboldt Sink cost them more time and severely fatigued their oxen. Even though Sarah Royce walked and carried her child to conserve their animals' energy, the family had to abandon its wagon and finish their journey on foot. They were among the last to cross the Sierra in the bitter winter of 1849, and only the timely arrival of a rescue party prevented another tragedy.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Rice, Bullough and Orsi, *Ibid.* P. 193



Watercolor of a family in trouble in a desert.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

Sarah Royce later wrote:

We had passed the forks of the road before daylight, that morning, and were now miles out on the desert without a mouthful of food for the cattle and only two or three quarts of water in a little cask.<sup>98</sup>

Others were not as lucky.

A similar error was more costly to Roys Oatman and his family in 1851. After they left their train and set out alone on the Gila Trail, Apaches killed most of them and took a daughter, Olive into captivity for five years.<sup>99</sup>

Several years before in 1846, the Donner Party reached the foot of the Sierra Nevada too late in the year and were caught by a heavy, early snowstorm. The Donner Party experienced virtually everything that could go wrong for an emigrant party. Inexperienced in wilderness travel, they followed the directions of Lansford Hastings' *Emigrants Guide to California and Oregon*.



The Donner Party in a winter storm

Hastings suggested a shortcut he had never seen. This route extended the passage through the Nevada desert and weakened the animals. Lack of water and illness plagued the party. When they reached the base of the Sierra they were forced to cross the Truckee River at least 22 times. By the time they neared Donner Lake they were late, sick, tired, low on provisions and fighting Nature's fury. The snows did the rest. Those who survived that bitter winter did so partially by resorting to cannibalism.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Sarah Royce, *A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California*. Yale University Press, 1932. P. 40.

<sup>99</sup> Rice, Bullough and Orsi, *Ibid*.

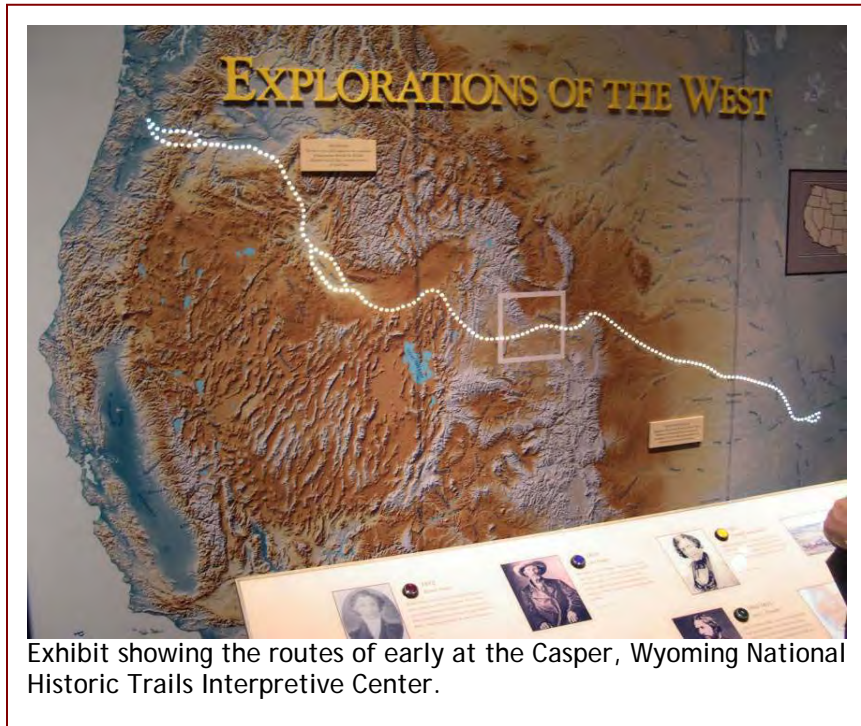
<sup>100</sup> W.H. Hutchinson, *California: Two Centuries of Man, Land and Growth in the Golden State*. American West, 1969, p. 90. See also George R. Stewart, *The California Trail*, University of Nebraska Press, 1962. Pp. 167-183.



The journey generally took emigrants about five months or more from the middle of the continent traveling west. Despite the hazards, 25,000 to 30,000 crossed the Plains in 1849.<sup>101</sup>

*For more quotations taken from diaries and letters about the trails to California, consult the Appendix to this Interpretive Plan.*

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:



A small exhibit panel should precede the main exhibit, highlighting the mythic lure of California that existed for centuries. It should offer a short overview of the Spaniards, Mexicans, trappers, and other early emigrants, like John Sutter and William B. Ide, and the events that were to encourage thousands more to come.

Maps showing the various routes taken to reach California by ship around Cape Horn, by

traveling across the Isthmus of Panama and Mexico, and by going overland across the Great Plains, Rockies and Sierra Nevada will dominate the “Way to California” exhibit. These maps could be interactive with push buttons linking text and/or diary excerpts with pictures. See the Appendices of this *Interpretive Plan* for more quotes about the journeys taken to California. If possible, highlight the transportation routes with LED lights. An example from the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming is shown above.

The exhibit will feature historic images of some of the famous landmarks along the routes, in addition to historic quotes reflecting the cares and concerns of the emigrants. The exhibit may include historic images of the natural landmarks, forts, and cities seen along the different routes. The images, such as Scott’s Bluff, Chimney Rock, Sierra Nevada Mountains, Humboldt Sink, San Francisco, Chagres River, Cape

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<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

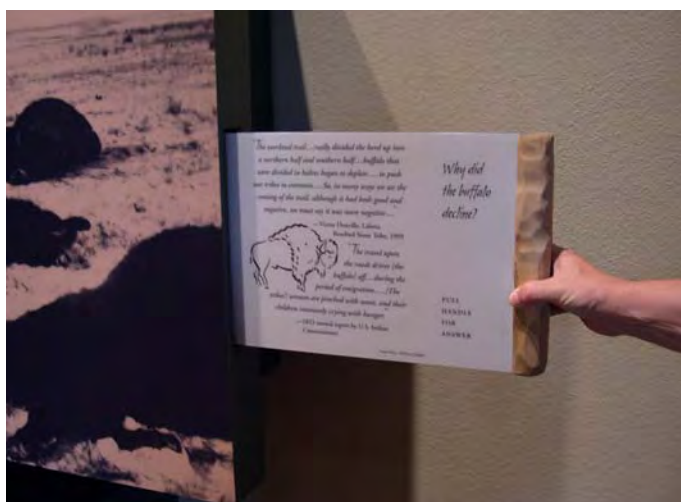
Horn, etc., might be used as backgrounds for the display. Many historic pictures are included in the graphics files associated with this Interpretive Plan.



An exhibit from the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming.

In front of the maps on a platform will be a collection of objects reflecting what the emigrants might have taken with them or elements of the transportation used (e.g. a wagon wheel, wagon jack, pack saddle, etc.). Most of these items should be reproductions as they are likely to be touched by visitors. However, some relatively indestructible historic metal objects, like an anvil, might be used. Those objects needing

protection should be secured seamlessly into the display. For example, a period-style trunk may show a doll and some clothing, but be covered and protected. Eggs (faux) might be shown in a barrel of flour with a plastic cover. Adjacent to the objects and/or on a text railing might be located flip books or pull-out panels with more information about what was taken and what was often left behind along the trail. Where possible, the exhibit should be made interactive.



An example of one style of a pull-out panel with additional information.

A small-scale model of a covered wagon will have wood items scaled to represent the provisions and personal items that many immigrants wanted to take on their journey. Obviously, some things had to be left behind, as there was insufficient space to bring everything. Visitors will have the opportunity to pack the scale-model wagon themselves, which should help them understand the sacrifices made on many of the journeys west.

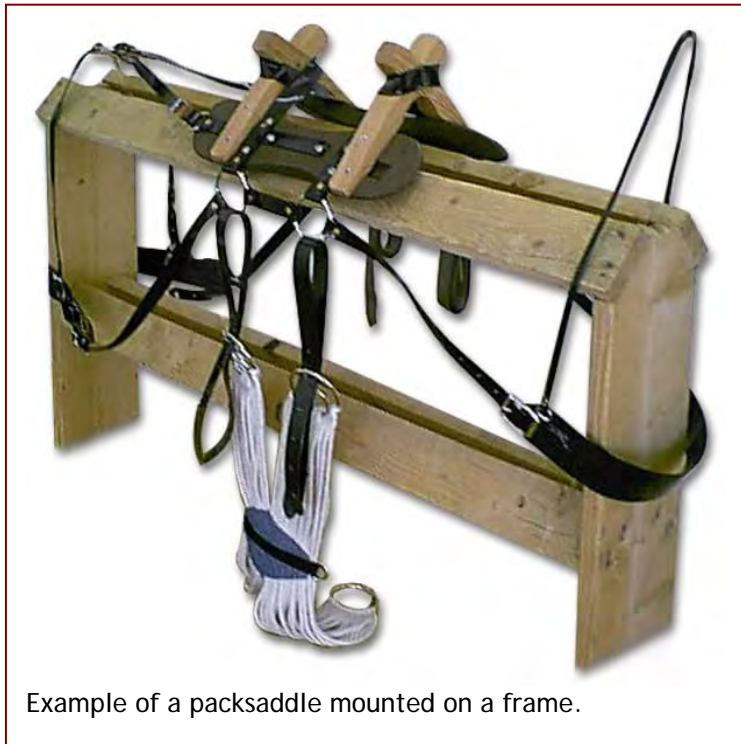
## Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:

The exhibit envisioned should consider including:

- An ox yoke mounted near the entry
- Reproductions of historical maps - refer to the Interpretive Plan's Graphics File
- 3-D topographical map(s) with various trails and routes illuminated
- Reproductions (or original if appropriate) items brought by emigrants to California - see pages 55-56
- Historical photographs of the landmarks en route to California - refer to the Interpretive Plan's Graphics File
- Whale oil or camphene-style lamp(s) - reproductions which may be lit with faux flames to enhance the ambiance
- Scale model representation of a covered wagon with wooden blocks labeled to represent potential cargo items. These items will be handled repeatedly by visitors, so should be made durable.

## Supplementary Interpretive Activities:

To expand the interpretation of the "Way to California," a handout might be developed to include lists of cargo items proposed to be carried by travelers on a covered wagon or on board ship. This list will serve as the basis for a game about choices that teachers may use in their classrooms before their planned arrival at the park.

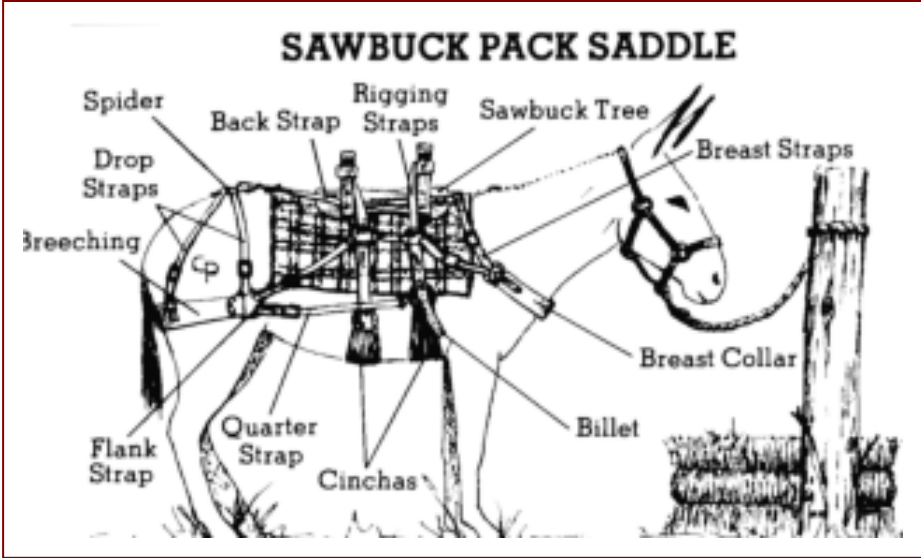


Example of a packsaddle mounted on a frame.

Another activity might include a reproduction sawbuck packsaddle, which could be mounted on a moveable frame (for use inside or outside). It would be available for students and other visitors to try loading and packing a pannier for travel.

A scale could be used to weigh the items to demonstrate load limits or, especially for heavy objects, they might be reproduced having the same bulk but made lighter with the actual weight of the original (e.g. barrels, boxes with various contents noted) written on the side.

Participants will be challenged to complete the task of loading the pack saddle quickly. Experienced muleteers could arrange a heavy load on a pack mule in three minutes!





# WILLIAM B. IDE ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN

## Table of Contents

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● Executive Summary	1
● Introduction	3
Plan Purpose	4
Interpretive Planning Team	4
Status of Interpretation	5
● Missions & Vision	6
California State Parks Mission	6
Park Mission	6
Mission for Interpretation	6
Vision for Interpretation	6
● Interpretive Goals and Objectives	7
● Overall Interpretive Direction	12
Park Themes	12
Interpretive Periods	13
California Educational Content Standards	14
● Content and Media	17
Exhibit Themes	17
Special Concerns	17
Visitor Circulation	18
Exhibit Space Allocation	19
Exhibit Area 1: Welcome and Introduction	23
Exhibit Area 2: The Way to California	37
Exhibit Area 3: Pioneer Skills	65
Exhibit Area 4: Transportation Nexus	81
Exhibit Area 5: The Adobe Ranch through Time	107
Exhibit Area 6: Ide's Story	141
Exhibit Area 7: The Park Today	165
Exhibit Area 8: Changing Exhibits	178
Area 9: Contact Counter & Park Interpretive Sales Area	179
● Appendices	181
The Way to California - Quotations	183
William B. Ide's Views of the Overland Journey, 1845	197
Alfred Walton Biographical Notes	203
Newspaper Account Summaries of the Court Case in the Matter of the State of California vs. George Sutton	207
● Graphics File (CD under separate cover)	





# WILLIAM B. IDE ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN

## ● Executive Summary

This Interpretive Plan for William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park's Visitor Center identifies essential elements and provides important resources and information for producing effective interpretive exhibits. New displays in the Visitor Center will replace provisional ones quickly fabricated for the opening of the building in 2006. Produced with few resources or time to do thorough research, they were intended to be temporary from the outset.

The purpose of this plan is to support the development of a new interpretive experience for visitors, docents, and staff to increase understanding of William B. Ide and the Adobe Ranch at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Exhibits will capture the industry and determination of the ranch's early settlers, who faced many challenges and adversities. William B. Ide will be featured as one of California's important figures, who personified the "pioneer spirit" typical of his time.

The January 1990 *William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park General Plan* has directed park interpretation to take two approaches:

1. Interpret the lifestyle that Ide and other California pioneers would have experienced between the years 1845 and c.1865 and
2. Present William B. Ide as an important figure in early California history and to the development of this area.

In this plan, Mission and Vision Statements (page 6) have been crafted to identify the overall interpretive direction for the park. In addition, specific Goals and Objectives (pages 7-11) refine and shape the approach for the new Visitor Center exhibits. The applicable California Department of Education's Educational Content Standards (pages 14-16) have been singled out in this document to help ensure new exhibits have real educational value, relating to schools and their uses of the park's resources.

Themes (pages 12, 13, and 17) derived and updated from the *General Plan* will serve to guide the Visitor Center's content. It will be made clear to the public through the exhibits that William B. Ide and his family never resided on this property, but rather lived down river, below present-day Red Bluff. The exhibits will emphasize the Primary Interpretive Period for the park, 1845-c.1865, while also acknowledging the years before and after to provide interpretive context.

Special concerns for the exhibits (pages 17-18) have been identified to ensure they are addressed in the development of the exhibits. These include creating accessible exhibits and media, protecting and preserving sensitive objects, and supporting hands-on learning opportunities, among others. Visitors will move counter-clockwise around the room to take advantage of the obvious path of travel upon entering the building. The arrival area near the existing fireplace will be visually connected to the exhibits. While not large, the space will provide visitors an assembly and orientation area.

An adjacent contact counter will serve several purposes, with staff providing greetings, information, park admission, and interpretive sales transactions. Criteria for this space is detailed as Area 9 in the plan (pages 155-156), following Exhibit Areas 1 through 8 addressed in the Content and Media section.

Within this plan, space has been allocated for each exhibit area as a percentage of the Visitor Center's available *interpretive floor space*—not the entire floor area. These assignments reflect the relative importance placed on the various themes. A chart reflecting them is on page 20.

Interpretive support and direction for each one of the eight exhibit areas is provided in the form of the Space Allocation percentage, relevant Theme, Interpretive Objectives, Background Information and/or Storyline (source materials are footnoted), Interpretive Design Concepts/Proposed Media, and Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics. Appendices present additional information and serve as a resource for the development of the interpretive exhibits, especially Areas 2, 5 and 6.

A comprehensive digital Graphics File, containing a significant number of images for potential use in each exhibit area, is included as a part of this Interpretive Plan as a set of CDs. Images contained in these files are for reference only. Further reproduction of them will require the permission of the copyright owner. Responsibility for obtaining all necessary permissions remains with the exhibit developer.

Information about the Adobe Ranch and William B. Ide has been gathered in this plan to satisfy not only the current needs for the Visitor Center's new interpretive exhibits, but also to support the interpretation by staff, docents, and volunteers. The park has needed a ready reference since the State of California acquired the property in 1951—just shy of the ranch's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Now nearly 60 years since it has become a public trust, the *William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park Visitor Center Interpretive Plan* offers a testament to the past and to the park's future.

## ● Introduction

In 1846 William B. Ide wrote the proclamation that established the short-lived California Bear Flag Republic, which lasted 22 days. Ide recognized the opportunities available to him in the West. As a surveyor, miner, treasurer, district attorney, deputy clerk, and judge, he provided support and leadership to this northern part of California.

While William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park memorializes Ide's role in early California, historic research has shown he never owned this property, but rather had built a home south of present-day Red Bluff. Like Ide, early settlers here at Bluffton Ranch (also called Adobe Ranch) came to California envisioning new opportunities. Facing a hardscrabble existence and taking risks, they used their pioneer skills to transform the land.

Contrary to the quiet, rural impression the park leaves today, the ranch's location near the California-Oregon Road and adjacent to the Sacramento River (important communication and transportation arteries) probably kept its residents well connected. Spanish and Mexican explorers met well-established California Indians along the valley's rivers on their journeys. Before, during, and after the Gold Rush, a succession of travelers on foot, pack-mule trains, freight wagons, herds of cattle and sheep, and stagecoaches passed through the valley, as canoes and riverboats moved up and down waterways. The influx of newcomers from around the world altered the traditional lives of California's Indians forever.

Depending upon the water's depth in the mid-1850s, steamboats transported goods and passengers to the most northerly navigable point on the river. From there, they were off-loaded and transported to nearby communities and mining camps. In the 1860s, Adobe Ranch owners made the most of their location by establishing a ferry across the Sacramento River. Travelers depended on this service as well as others up and down the river to make their crossings safe and easy. The Adobe Ranch operation was later relocated downriver to Red Bluff.

Today the park represents the hard work and skills required to maintain life away from California's urban centers in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Through new exhibits, visitors touring the park and its ranch buildings will be able to learn about and appreciate the talent and industry of the people who passed through this property during its pioneer era, and will be able to contrast them to their own abilities. William B. Ide's character and leadership will be told as a part of that interpretation.

## Plan Purpose

New exhibits in the visitor center will replace “temporary” ones quickly fabricated for the opening of the facility to the public in 2006. From the outset, they were intended to be short-lived—just to have something on the walls. They were produced with few resources or time to do proper research. Now the temporary exhibit panels regularly fall off the walls. In addition, objects displayed in the glass cases do not correspond to the timeframe for the park. The exhibits were assembled with few resources and it shows.

This plan will offer research and thematic direction to guide the development of high-quality, professionally-produced exhibits to support the mission, vision, goals and objectives of William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park. Construction of a freeway off ramp from Interstate 5 onto Adobe Road now leads many people directly to the state historic park. This has increased visitation. New exhibits will better serve these travelers, who stop, but often are not able to go inside the adobe or other buildings because of limited park staffing. With these exhibits in place, visitors will linger longer and their interpretive and educational experiences will be enriched greatly.

The thousands of young students involved in the park’s Environmental Learning Programs will appreciate and learn more from the enhanced facilities. Development of the themes and the organization of research and information for the new exhibits, detailed in this document, also will support staff and docents well into the future by providing background materials for training and interpretive programs.

## Interpretive Planning Team

The development of this Visitor Center Interpretive Plan was a team effort. The individuals listed below contributed to the process and the product through conference calls, meetings, research and the plan’s development to establish and accomplish the team’s collective goals.

Mary A. Helmich, Associate Park and Recreation Specialist  
Ellen M. Clark, Regional Interpretive Specialist  
Raeann Bossarte, Park Interpretive Specialist  
Debbie Chakarun, State Park Interpreter I



## Status of Interpretation

The park Visitor Center building, identified in the *General Plan* as “the greatest need at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park” was constructed in 2005. As it was envisioned by the *General Plan*,

...space should be given to exhibits in the new visitor center to more fully interpret the life of William B. Ide as a pioneer leader and “president” of California, and on the historic lifestyles represented by the Bluffton Ranch. Other displays will orient visitors to the park, to its interpretive period and to the historic zone. Orientation exhibits are particularly important for those visitors unable to see active environmental studies and living history programs or demonstrations. Original artifacts and documentary materials could be displayed in formal exhibits in the new visitor center, whereas they cannot be used now. Exhibits will complement, but not duplicate, other interpretive experiences in the park.

Funding for the new Visitor Center was allocated, but none was dedicated to planning, developing and installing new exhibits. Consequently, the good orientation anticipated with a new visitor center in the park never materialized. Current exhibits are a mixture of wall-mounted displays salvaged from the old visitor center (formerly a trailer from the 1964 Squaw Valley Olympics), as well as donated and refurbished exhibit cases displaying an array of artifacts. Foam-mounted images with text have been affixed to some walls with salient interpretive messages on the history of the Adobe Ranch and river transportation. Staff uses the Visitor Center to gather school groups, visitors, and docents for park interpretive orientation and programs or training. A counter serves as a merchandise display area for sales. Items offered for sale are in keeping with the 1852 interpretive period. The Ide Adobe Interpretive Association operates the sales area.

## ● Missions and Vision

The park and its development is guided by statements that help frame the overall approach to the park and its interpretation and the intended visitor experience.

### California State Parks Mission

#### Our Mission

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

Mission and vision statements for William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park have been established to guide the park's interpretive development.

#### Park Mission

William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park recreates the Adobe Ranch environment at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, capturing the life and times of early pioneers, including William B. Ide, who played a pivotal role in California history.

#### Mission for Interpretation

Staff, docents, volunteers and community members will deliver traditional and innovative interpretive programs, offering authentic portrayals of California's colorful pioneer past to forge meaningful connections with visitors and inspire park stewardship.

#### Vision for Interpretation

Visitors to William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park can expect to experience pioneer life in the mid 1800s through interpretive exhibits, programs, and events that reflect the era's sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures.

## ● Interpretive Goals and Objectives

No goals or objectives statements were developed for interpretation in the 1990 *General Plan*. With this reexamination of the park and its resources for the production of new exhibits, the park's staff has adopted the following goals and objectives for William B. Ide Adobe's interpretive facilities and programs. The goals and objectives to be addressed through the development of the new Visitor Center exhibits are highlighted below in green.

### 1. GOAL: Provide for the appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment of the park's special resources.

#### Objectives:

- Offer a variety of interpretive exhibits and programs featuring the park's cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational resources to inspire visitors and enhance their experiences.
- Tell noteworthy stories associated with California's pioneers and William B. Ide's experiences.
- Provide interpretive activities that contribute to visitor understanding of the era.
- Train park staff, docents, volunteers and concessionaires in effective interpretive techniques and sound park practices.

### 2. GOAL: Bring history alive, by recreating or interpreting the park's vital historic character.

#### Objectives:

- Interpret the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century past now missing in the park.
- Re-create/restore the park's historic environments and landscape features.
- Support and encourage appropriate activities that promote the park's history, helping to create a "living" historic environment.
- Create special activities year-round in the park tied to the park's history and cultural traditions.

### 3. GOAL: Reach out to diverse populations.

#### Objectives:

- Provide meaningful interpretation that incorporates multiple perspectives, including those of park visitors.
- Offer multi-sensory, multi-lingual interpretive opportunities in a variety of park locations and settings to engage visitors.
- Develop interpretive facilities and programs to encourage the public to share cultures, experiences, perspectives and histories related to the park.

- Establish a program to preserve and interpret the personal stories and experiences of the people associated with the area's history.
- Use discovery techniques to connect with visitors having different learning styles.
- Develop an education plan to complement the state's educational frameworks and content standards.
- Develop programs and partnerships with local schools, youth groups, colleges and universities aligned with the state's educational standards and the park's significant resources.
- Continue supporting an environmental learning program to enhance learning among school age children.
- Encourage interpretive outreach to community organizations.
- Encourage development of a strong Volunteers in Parks program.

#### 4. GOAL: Engage park visitors on a daily basis in fun, as well as education.

##### Objectives:

- Offer interpretive programming that is visible and frequent on a daily, weekly, and yearly basis.
- Provide interesting, appropriate orientation signage for park visitors that is regularly maintained, repaired, replaced, and updated.
- Make outdoor signage with current park information available to visitors all hours.
- Develop a variety of entertaining, innovative interpretive services to attract, capture, and involve visitors.
- Establish a Park Host Program to make daily interpretive connections with visitors.

#### 5. GOAL: Create accessible interpretive facilities and programs.

##### Objectives:

- Offer exhibits and programming that responds to people who have diverse learning, visual, hearing or mobility needs.
- Identify strategies and implementation methods for removing barriers to language, education, and economic classes during interpretive planning and development phases.
- Develop training programs to support "All Visitors Welcome" for park interpretive programs.

**6. GOAL: Provide up-to-date resources to support the park's interpretation.**

**Objectives:**

- Build and maintain a reference library accessible to staff, docents and volunteers.
- Create opportunities for ongoing research, capturing new information about the area's resources and historic events or traditions that might be interpreted.
- Coordinate the interpretation of local resources through collaborative partnerships.
- Place wayside exhibits at strategic points where visitors can immediately connect with significant park history or resources.
- Produce printed materials to stimulate interest in the park's natural and cultural history and interpretive programs.
- Develop interpretive resources (such as interpretive furnishing plans, with information about period furniture, merchandise, attire, and suggested programmatic elements).
- All staff and volunteers will participate in continuing education/training on cutting edge interpretive techniques.

**7. GOAL: Restore and maintain authenticity, validating the park as a valuable repository of California history and culture.**

**Objectives:**

- Interpret the cultural landscape of William B. Ide Adobe SHP as an expression of its history.
- Reduce and/or eliminate modern intrusions in the historic zone of the park.
- Use non-intrusive interpretive techniques to minimize impacts around sensitive and fragile resources, complementing the surrounding open space or cultural landscape.

**8. GOAL: Support the use and care of museum collections by using park guidelines and Department policies.**

**Objectives:**

- Review the park's Scope of Collections Statement to ensure there are clear guidelines on objects to seek, to decline, and to de-accession.
- Acquire and maintain objects for the park to: 1) preserve original elements of the cultural and natural environments; 2) preserve documentation of people, events, cultural features, or natural features central to its purpose; and 3) support the interpretation of important themes.
- Manage collections in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the Department's Operations Manual.



**9. GOAL: Create flexibility for park changes and for updating and expanding interpretation.**

**Objectives:**

- Alter the park's interpretive and educational programs to keep pace with any changes in park resources, size or facilities.
- Develop interpretive features/facilities in the park to provide permanent and temporary exhibit spaces for highlighting the park's history, themes and resources.
- Explore traditional, new, and innovative technologies and techniques for use in the park's interpretive and educational programs and facilities.
- Share resources and exchange ideas with other organizations that have related themes.

**10.GOAL: Support California State Parks' mission and policies.**

**Objectives:**

- Interpret the significance of the movement to preserve the Adobe in the 1950s.
- Interpret the continuing efforts to preserve the park's special natural and cultural resources.
- Include the State Parks Mission and logo in all training materials.
- Ensure all publication guidelines are followed.
- Follow all related policies including Equal Employment Opportunity policies.

**11.GOAL: Encourage people to recognize and preserve the park and its resources.**

**Objectives:**

- Create opportunities for visitors to learn how to help protect the natural and cultural resources of the park.
- Encourage visitors to safely pursue compatible uses in the park.
- Interpret the relationships between people and the park's listed endangered or threatened species.
- Create opportunities for public involvement in park programs.
- Build positive public recognition for the park, its ongoing activities and future development plans.
- Create opportunities for strong community partnerships.
- Continue to nurture, coach and guide the Ide Adobe Interpretive Association.

**12.GOAL: Create long-term strategies for interpretive programming.**

**Objectives:**

- Utilize interpretive planning teams to develop or update interpretive plans and historic reports.

- Develop park training manual(s) to standardize, inform, and direct staff, docents and volunteers about the park's history, sites, and significant stories, landscapes, historic crafts and trades, interpretive methods, park media, accessibility, and park values.
- Schedule regular program evaluations and interpretive training for all staff, docents and volunteers.
- Evaluate visitor and management interests for interpretive programming to determine the most effective way to allocate resources and staff.
- Periodically encourage teacher feedback and review to advise park staff on interpretive programming.
- Encourage cultural organizations to aid in development of park interpretive programs emphasizing the contributions of California's ethnic and cultural groups.
- Establish a volunteer advisory committee to encourage volunteer participation in the park.
- Evaluate new forms of interpretive media to determine the most effective methods for communicating messages.
- Encourage participation of the Ide Adobe Interpretive Association in supporting and funding interpretive programs and activities.
- Develop an endowment fund for support of interpretive efforts

## ● Overall Interpretive Direction

As stated in the *General Plan*:

This property was established as a state historic park in William B. Ide's name 40 years ago in 1951. While it is certain that he never owned the Adobe Ranch, the public has come to identify him with the park. Because of his importance to state history, and because Ide's house, located south of the city of Red Bluff, no longer exists, he will continue to be interpreted here. Interpretation will basically take two approaches. It shall:

2. Interpret the lifestyle that Ide and other California pioneers would have experienced between the years 1845 and c.1865 and
2. Present William B. Ide as an important figure in early California history and to development of this area.

## Park Themes

The Primary Themes that follow have been updated from the park's *General Plan*. They have been revised to conform to current interpretive standards. They are also identified in the park's draft Interpretation Master Plan. A new, overarching Unifying Theme has been created for the park. These themes will guide the development of the new exhibits in the Visitor Center. Park interpretation should make clear to the public that William B. Ide and his family never resided in the adobe house, but lived nearby, downriver at one time.

### Unifying Theme:

In the upper Sacramento Valley, adventurous pioneers endured a hardscrabble existence during the rough and tumble times of the California Gold Rush and the years that followed.

### Primary Theme:

Emigrants to California struggled and adapted to life on the frontier.

### Supporting Themes:

- As with today, adventurous mid-19<sup>th</sup> century inhabitants, settlers and travelers through the Adobe Ranch area represented California's rich diversity.
- Determined emigrants and gold seekers braved the hazardous journeys to come to California.
- Self-sufficient pioneers employed their skills to transform the area around the Adobe Ranch, and California's frontier.

- The Adobe Ranch and the Red Bluffs area developed into a transportation nexus for riverboats, ferries, pack teams, freighters, stage lines, and today's cars.
- The adobe ferry offered a safe and dependable river crossing.
- The Adobe Ranch changed hands many times, as settlers moved on, seeking new opportunities.

**Primary Theme:**

William B. Ide played a pivotal role in California's independence.

**Supporting Themes:**

- William B. Ide served as a leader in the Bear Flag Revolt.
- Like other pioneers, Ide took advantage of the many opportunities available to him in California and the Red Bluff area.
- The inaccurate story of William B. Ide living at the Adobe House is an example of how written history can change.

**Secondary Theme:**

The park's unique oak woodland and riparian area broadens understanding of the natural environment of the Sacramento River.

**Supporting Themes:**

- One of California's most fragile ecosystems is represented here.
- The mighty Valley Oaks are in decline and need to be preserved for future generations.

**Secondary Theme:**

Little evidence remains of the once thriving California River Nomlaki Indian communities who lived in this area.

**Supporting Themes**

- Exposure to the first Explorer's diseases caused many of the River Nomlaki to perish.
- When gold seekers came to settle, they waged a campaign of annihilation and submission on the River Nomlaki.

## Interpretive Periods

The 1990 *General Plan* set the interpretive periods. They are as follows:

**Primary Interpretive Period: 1845—c.1865**

The primary interpretive period for William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park shall be from 1845 to c.1865. This timeframe encompassed William B. Ide's arrival in California; his settlement in the northern part of the Sacramento Valley; his

involvement with the Bear Flag Revolt; his service as a treasurer, district attorney, judge and deputy clerk for historic Colusi County; his death in 1852; construction and use of the adobe house on this property; and development and operation of a ferry, until its relocation to Red Bluff.

**Secondary Interpretive Period: 1796–1856**

A secondary period encompasses the birth of William B. Ide and his life prior to his arrival in California.

**Secondary Interpretive Period: 1951–Present**

The department's efforts to restore the property will be encompassed in this secondary interpretive period.

**Secondary Interpretive Period: 1857–1950**

New research has demonstrated that the period between 1857 and 1950 is also of importance to the Adobe Ranch's history and to the park and should be represented as a secondary interpretive period.

## **Educational Content Standards**

Interpretive and educational exhibits will relate to many curriculum frameworks and content standards established by the California Department of Education. Exhibits will offer students informative and hands-on learning that emphasizes the experiences associated with early California settlers. Applicable standards are listed below.

### **California Social Science and History Educational Content Standards**

#### *3<sup>rd</sup> Grade*

- 3.1 Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.
  
- 3.3 Students draw from historical and community resources to organize the sequence of local historical events and describe how each period of settlement left its mark on the land.

#### *4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

- 4.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.
  
- 4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood.



- 4.3.1 Identify the locations of Mexican settlements in California and those of other settlements, including Fort Ross and Sutter’s Fort.
- 4.3.2 Compare how and why people traveled to California and the routes they traveled (e.g., James Beckwourth, John Bidwell, John C. Frémont, Pío Pico).
- 4.3.3 Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics and physical environment (e.g. using biographies of John Sutter, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Louise Clapp).
- 4.4 Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power, tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850s.
- 4.4.2 Explain how the Gold Rush transformed the economy of California, including the types of products produced and consumed, changes in towns, (e.g. Sacramento, San Francisco), and economic conflict between diverse groups of people.

*5<sup>th</sup> Grade*

- 5.8 Students trace the colonization, immigration, and settlement patterns of the American people from 1789 to the mid-1800s, with emphasis on the role of economic incentives, effects of the physical and political geography, and transportation systems.

*8<sup>th</sup> Grade*

- 8.8 Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.

**Historical and Social Science Analysis Skills**

*9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> Grades*

*Chronological and Spatial Thinking*

1. Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
2. Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.
3. Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration, changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns, the frictions that develop

between population groups, and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.

### *Historical Interpretation*

2. Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitation on determining cause and effect.
3. Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.
4. Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.

## California Theater Arts Educational Content Standards

### *4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

- 4.1 Dramatize events in California history

## English Educational Content Standards

### *4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

#### Listening and Speaking Strategies - *Comprehension*

- 1.1. Ask thoughtful questions and respond to relevant questions with appropriate elaboration in oral settings.

### *5<sup>th</sup> Grade*

#### *Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials) Structural Features of Informational Materials*

- 2.2 Analyze text that is organized in sequential or chronological order.

### *6<sup>th</sup> Grade*

#### Listening and Speaking Strategies - *Comprehension*

- 1.2 Identify the tone, mood, and emotion conveyed in the oral communication.

### *7<sup>th</sup> Grade*

#### *Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials) Structural Features of Informational Materials*

- 2.1 Understand and analyze the differences in structure and purpose between various categories of informational materials (e.g., textbooks, newspapers, instructional manuals, signs).

## ● Content and Media

### Exhibit Themes

The new exhibits in the Visitor Center at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park will principally feature the themes listed below. Background information and further direction for each of these exhibits follows in this section.

- Introduction: As with today, adventurous mid-19<sup>th</sup> century settlers and travelers through the Adobe Ranch area represented California's rich diversity.
- The Way to California: Determined emigrants and gold seekers braved hazardous journeys to come to California.
- Pioneer Skills: Self-sufficient pioneers employed their skills to transform the area around the Adobe Ranch, as well as California's frontier.
- Transportation Nexus: The Adobe Ranch and the Red Bluffs area evolved as a transportation nexus for riverboats, pack teams, freighters, stage lines, ferries, and today's cars.
- The Adobe Ranch Through Time: Over the years, the Adobe Ranch changed hands many times, as its owners sought different opportunities. It eventually became a state park.
- Ide's Story: William B. Ide personified the "pioneer spirit" typical of early settlers.
- The Park Today: History comes to life at William B. Ide Adobe SHP through the environmental learning program, tours, living history events and fun celebrations.

### Special Concerns

A number of special concerns will be addressed through this exhibit project's development. Many of them are listed below.

- For their protection and preservation, access to or the touching of easily damaged objects will be minimized.
- Whenever feasible, appropriate objects that may be handled by the public will be incorporated into the exhibits.
- Reproduction objects will be used in all hands-on applications.

- Historic artifacts may be incorporated into the new exhibits.
- All interpretive spaces and media shall be accessible, including video captioning.
- Additional energy-efficient interior lighting with ultraviolet and heat protection will provide a safe, inviting environment that enhances the exhibits.
- Electrical needs should be assessed as they relate to the proposed exhibits.
- Carpeting will be impacted by the relocation of the existing contact counter.
- Consideration should be given to maximizing the exhibit space by using the full height (e.g. ceiling, soffit, etc.) and depth of the room.
- Exhibits will focus on all ages, but will give special consideration to school students and the California State Educational Content Standards (noted previously). The facilities will address their level of understanding and needs.
- Visitor flow should be clearly indicated by the exhibits.
- While doors may be hidden, exhibits will not obstruct the doorways on the south and east walls or the windows of the Visitor Center.
- A larger sales counter and display area is needed for the museum store, as well as different methods for displaying merchandise.
- As the room is small, the entrance area will have to serve multiple purposes—welcoming visitors, a contact counter, as an assembly area, an orientation to the exhibits and as an entrance to the museum sales area.
- Consideration should be given to leaving the ox yoke in its current location near the entrance.

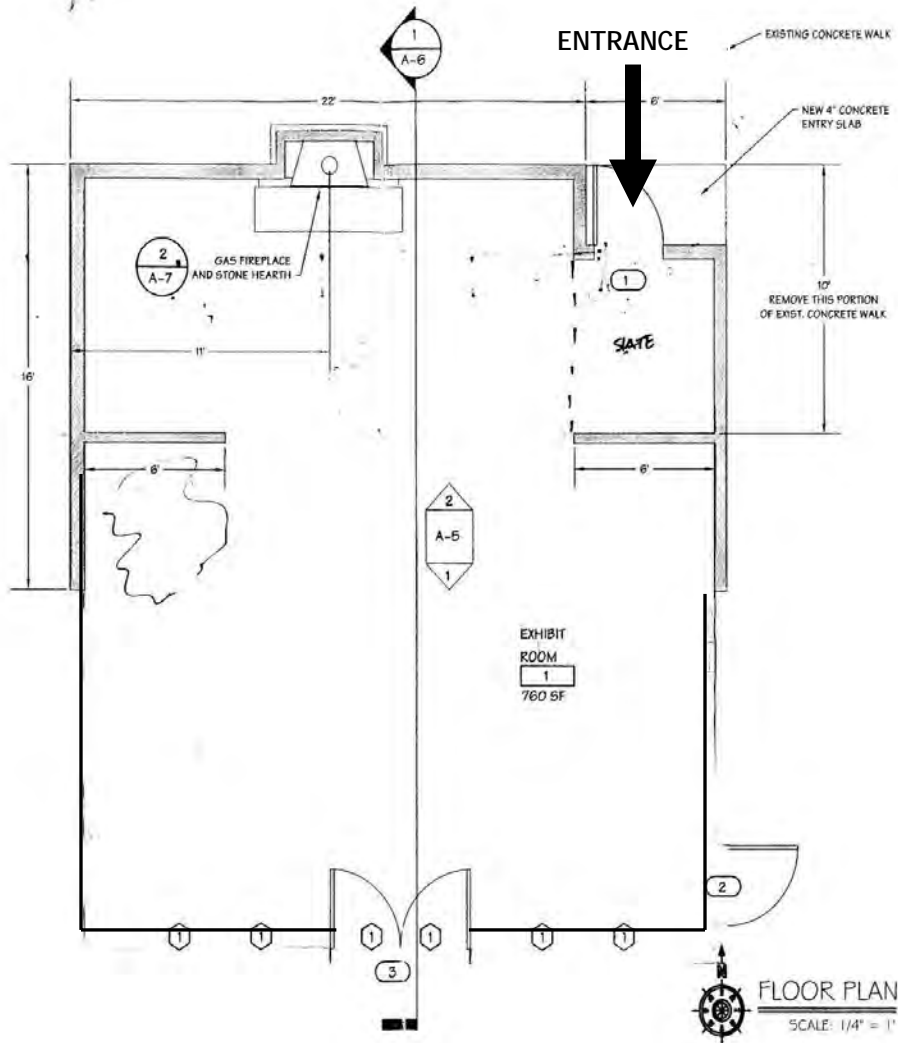
## Visitor Circulation

Due to the limited size (760 square feet) and the square shape of the building area to be used for exhibits, visitor movement will be difficult to predict. However, a counterclockwise chronological flow through the interpretive media is projected as the most obvious path. Upon entering the building, visitors must immediately turn to the right.

Controlling visitor flow will be a challenge. The center of the room should be used for the placement of freestanding exhibits, which will help to better direct visitors. It

will also enable an element of surprise, so that visitors do not see everything upon their entry to the visitor center.

Also, it is proposed that the current contact counter and interpretive sales area be relocated to the front of the building to the left of the room's fireplace. Visitors will immediately see the counter upon their entry into the room. This will allow space for the assembly of groups, as well as provide a welcoming environment for visitors.



Visitor Center Floor Plan

## Exhibit Space Allocation

The diagram on the following page indicates how themes will relate to one another and the percentages of the Visitor Center's overall space to be allocated for each of the exhibit stations. This should help determine exhibit placement and the relative importance of the stories to be represented.



Note that the areas required for visitor entry, group assembly, the contact counter and interpretive sales, and accessible walkways have not been included in this diagram. That space will be taken from the total square footage of the room at the outset of the planning, before space is assigned for each of the exhibits.



Space Allocation for the William B. Ide Adobe Visitor Center Exhibits

Recent views of the Visitor Center's interior at William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park



Looking toward the entrance door (left) on the north wall



View of the fireplace and alcove on the north and west walls



A view of the southwestern corner of the building's interpretive area



The area of the room with the current contact counter (to the left). Exhibits will not be allowed to obstruct the doorways on the southern or the eastern walls of the room.



View of the existing contact counter and sales area along the eastern and southern walls of the Visitor Center

# Visitor Center Exhibit Stations

## Area 1: Welcome & Introduction

Space Allocation: 15%

### Theme:

As with today, adventurous mid-19<sup>th</sup> century inhabitants, settlers and travelers through the Adobe Ranch area represented California's rich diversity.

### Interpretive Objectives:

Visitors will:

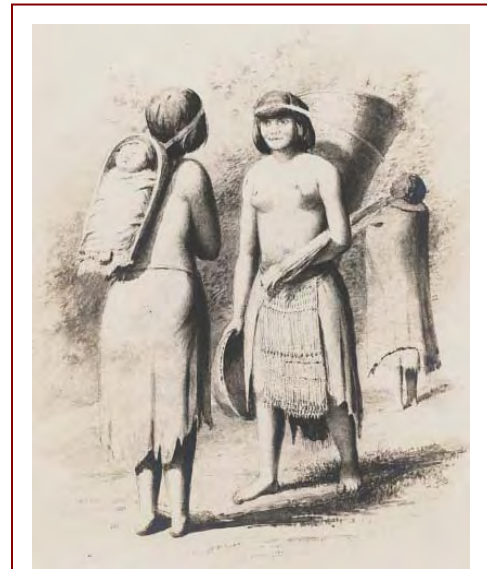
- Feel invited to explore the exhibits
- Be introduced to the area's early residents and travelers
- Relate to the diversity of California's mid-19<sup>th</sup> century population

### Background Research and/or Storyline:

The Sacramento Valley has always played host to culturally diverse, often transient populations. There is evidence of the passage and settlement of many people through the Red Bluff area before written records.

#### *Indian Explorers*

Northern California's earliest explorers and settlers, later named California Indians, came into the region in successive waves beginning perhaps 15,000 years ago. They traveled on foot over mountains, across and along rivers and through valleys. The trails they forged connected them to important natural resources—sources for their food, clothing and shelter. The routes also were used for trade, to exchange raw materials and handmade goods or for maintaining family and social relationships. Some of the most frequently traded items among California's many linguistically diverse groups included marine shells, baskets, salt, hides and pelts, bows, acorns, fish, and obsidian.<sup>1</sup>



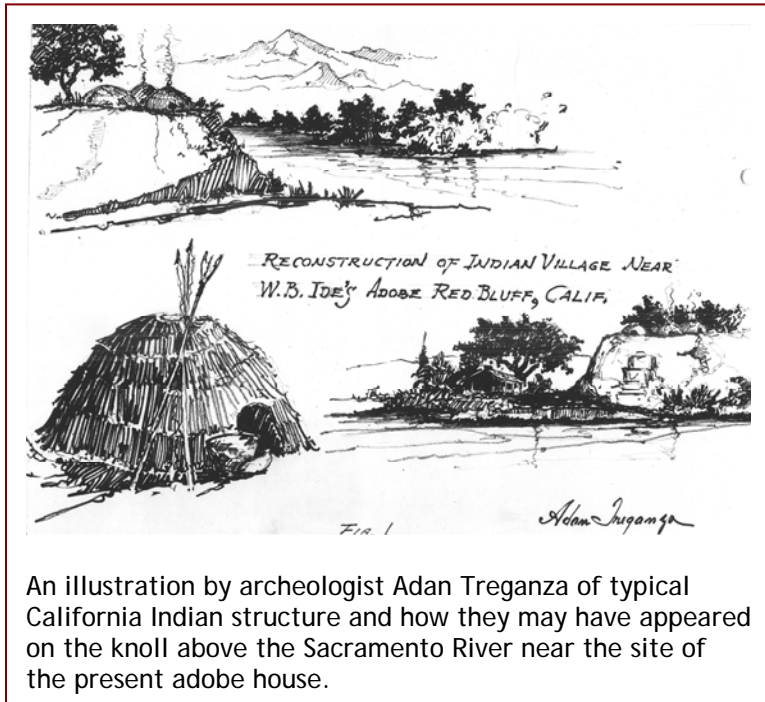
Two California Indian women meet.  
Drawn by Henry B. Brown, c.1852.  
Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

<sup>1</sup> Robert F. Heizer, "Trade and Trails," *Handbook of North American Indians: California*. Vol. 8. Robert F. Heizer, ed. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978. P. 691.



The River Nomlaki Native Americans have lived near the Sacramento River near present-day Red Bluff for countless generations. They were organized into two groups: the northern *memwaylaka*, and the *puymok*, to the east. The term Nomlaki comes from the name *nomlaka* meaning west language, referring to the Thomas Creek Hill Nomlaki, *nomkewel*, west people. Alternative spellings include Noamlaki, Nomee Lacks, Nome Lackees, Numleki, Nomalackie, and Tehama.<sup>2</sup>

At William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park, there is evidence that the nearby oak-covered knoll above the adobe house was used by California Indians as a camp site.<sup>3</sup>



An illustration by archeologist Adan Treganza of typical California Indian structure and how they may have appeared on the knoll above the Sacramento River near the site of the present adobe house.

Archeologist Adan Treganza noted three shallow house pit depressions in a survey of the site, as well as a slight discoloration of the soil and numerous obsidian flakes. He determined the site probably had not been used for any great length of time, but may have been occupied seasonally for hunting, gathering and acorn processing.

A large fresh water clam bed lay nearby below Dibble Creek on the Sacramento River. Property owner A.R. "Bert" Mount recalled in a letter dated August 17, 1967:

...there was a sort of ridge or high spot near the river side of the flat that was covered with black broken burnt rock and lots of clam shells... Evidently the Indians went there and got clams and brought them to this high spot and got large rocks from the creek bed and heated them in the fire and dumped the hot rocks into vessels of water containing clams to cook them and the hot rocks would break when they hit the cold water.

The River Nomlaki utilized the area's abundant natural resources for survival. They traded with neighboring groups, including the Hill Nomlaki to the west, and were part of the exchange route that extended from the Oregon border to the San Francisco Bay. Their population prior to contact with white explorers is believed to have been more than 2000 individuals.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Goldschmidt, "Nomlaki," *Handbook of the North American Indians, California*. Vol. 8. Robert F. Heizer, ed. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978. Pp. 347-349.

<sup>3</sup> Adan E. Treganza, "Archeological Investigations at the William B. Ide Adobe, Red Bluff, California," MS. Berkeley: University of California, Department of Anthropology, Archeological Survey, 1958. P. 16.



Jedediah Smith's trapping expeditions of in 1828 and later Ewing Young's in 1832, traveled through the area. Young's party encountered the Nomlaki people as they moved north. They observed people curing salmon and living in villages. In 1833, upon the parties' return trip, 75% of the Nomlaki population had died from exposure to the diseases introduced by the trappers.<sup>4</sup> A malaria epidemic in 1833 was one of many devastating blows to the native population.

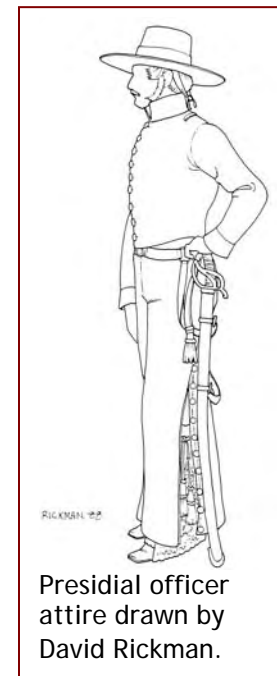
As more newcomers moved through the area, disease and displacement reduced the Nomlaki's numbers further. In 1854, the United States government established the Nome Lakee Indian Military Post Reservation near Paskenta.<sup>5</sup> It encompassed 25,000 acres and continued until 1863, when white settlers took control over the land. The Nomlaki were removed to the Mendocino County Round Valley Reservation, in Yuki territory. However, as the Yuki were a major enemy of the Nomlaki, some chose to move back to their traditional lands. They established small settlements and struggled to survive in the culture of the new populations that now occupied their homeland. They established three small rancherias: Grindstone, Newville and Paskenta.

In 1994, The Federal Government restored them to full tribal status, and in 2000, they purchased a 2000-acre reservation near Corning, California.<sup>6</sup> The Nomlaki today are the Paskenta Band of the Nomlaki Indians and they operate the Rolling Hills Casino in Corning.<sup>7</sup> Revenues from the Casino will continue to assist the Nomlaki in rebuilding their lives.

The footpaths and trails that the native people of California established became the routes followed by later explorers and the basis for many 19<sup>th</sup> century roads and the modern highways of today.

### *"The Last Spanish Expedition"*

About the time that American colonists were rebelling against England, a handful of Spaniards began to reinforce their King's claim to California by establishing missions. Each was developed to not only convert its native people to Roman Catholicism, but also to gain control over the territory's resources.<sup>8</sup> *Padres* selected sites for missions where large Indian populations already existed.



<sup>4</sup> Vestra Resources, Inc., *Tehama West Watershed Assessment Executive Summary*. Tehama County Resource Conservation District, April 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Goldschmidt, *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Tribal Information on the Paskenta Band of the Nomlaki Indians, <http://www.rollinghillscasino.com/tribal.htm>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> The first Spanish mission established in Alta California (Upper California) was begun in 1769 at San Diego.

Spanish explorers roamed the central valley looking for potential mission sites, as well as to understand the geography of Alta California. Among them, Luís Antonio Argüello was the first and last Spaniard to explore and document his experiences in the northern Central Valley area near what would become Red Bluff.<sup>9</sup> In October 1821, Argüello set out to investigate whether or not “foreigners” (most likely Russians) were settling in the territory. His party, known as “The Last Spanish Expedition in California,” consisted of 70 men and 235 animals.<sup>10</sup>



Tombstone of Luís Antonio Argüello at Mission Dolores in San Francisco.

They traveled up the valley to a point where they saw “Los Quates” or “the Twins.” Argüello stated that the Twins were “in essence very much alike in their size and form and are almost joined.”<sup>11</sup> There remains a question today about what mountains Argüello was describing. It has been speculated by historians that he was referring to the view of Mount Lassen and Brokeoff Mountain from a point near Red Bluff. Argüello’s expedition very probably traveled as far north as Cottonwood Creek.<sup>12</sup> However, no missions were established later by Spain in California’s Central Valley. This may have been because the populations of California Indians encountered by Argüello’s party were considerably smaller than before Spanish settlement.

Although the Spanish exploring party did not linger long in the area, the diseases unknowingly carried by them and others into California, including sailors, trappers and settlers, proved devastating. They created fearful

epidemics affecting countless coastal and inland communities of native people, who had little or no resistance to them. Thousands succumbed to syphilis, consumption, small pox, dysentery, pleurisy and other ailments. In the 1880s historian Hubert Howe Bancroft estimated that they had swept away three-fifths of the native population of the Sacramento Valley.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> According to James D. Hart’s *A Companion to California*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. P. 17: Luís Antonio Argüello (1784-1830) was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mexican governor of Alta California (1822-25) and the first native-born Californian to hold that office. He entered the military in San Francisco as a cadet (1799). As a young captain (1817) he succeeded his father, José Darío Argüello, as *comandante* of San Francisco, remaining in that post until he became governor. He presided during the transition from the Iturbide empire of Mexico to the new Mexican republic, of which California became a territory.

<sup>10</sup> *The Diary of Captain Luis Antonio Argüello 1821: The Last Spanish Expedition in California*, Translated by Vivian C. Fischer. Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, Friends of The Bancroft Library, 1992. <http://www.siskiyous.edu/shasta/bib/B5.htm>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Mildred Brooke Hoover, Hero Eugene Rensch & Ethel Grace Rensch, *Historic Spots in California*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962. Pp. 183-184.

<sup>13</sup> *California Pastoral, 1769-1848. The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*. Vol. XXXIV. San Francisco: The History Company, 1888. Pp. 616-617.

## *Fur Trappers*

More foreigners began trickling into the Central Valley in the late 1820s to take advantage of California's rich resources. Some came overland by way of the Rocky Mountains, where an annual "rendezvous" held between 1825 and 1840 brought together a gathering of trappers and Indians. New York-born mountain man and explorer Jedediah Strong Smith (1799-1831) and his party of 17 beaver trappers were first to open the South Pass (Wyoming) route to the Far West in 1826. At the time, he was 27 years old.

Smith had legendary courage and wilderness savvy. Unlike his boisterous companions with their long beards and drinking ways, he imagined himself as St. Paul, bringing Christianity to the frontier. He neither smoked, drank or slept with Indian women. He shaved every day and read the Bible each night by the light of the campfire.<sup>14</sup>

As a co-owner of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co., he traveled with his beaver-trapping companions from Salt Lake in 1826 and then, led by two Indians who had escaped from Mission San Gabriel in Alta California, across the Mojave Desert to California.<sup>15 16</sup>



Portrait of Jedediah Strong Smith, c. 1835, drawn after his death by a friend from memory. Courtesy of Wikimedia.

Governor Echeandía detained him and ordered him to leave California by the same route he had entered. Instead, Smith headed up the Central Valley [via the Tejon Pass] and trapped his way north. Leaving a band of his men at the Stanislaus River, he crossed the Sierra Nevada by the river's north fork [in 1827, becoming the first party of whites to traverse the Sierra Nevada], crossed the Great Basin, and arrived in the Rockies in time for the next rendezvous. He soon returned to California with a larger party and rejoined his men along the Stanislaus River. The Mojave Indians had attacked him [killing 10 of his 18 men] and seized his supplies, so he went to Mission San José in search of more.

There he was jailed and questioned by Ignacio Martínez of the San Francisco *presidio*... Smith was then sent to Monterey and questioned by a very skeptical Echeandía. He was released only when a group of Anglo-American merchants to

the town posted bond for him. Echeandía ordered that Smith be taken to Sonoma under military guard and from there escorted out of

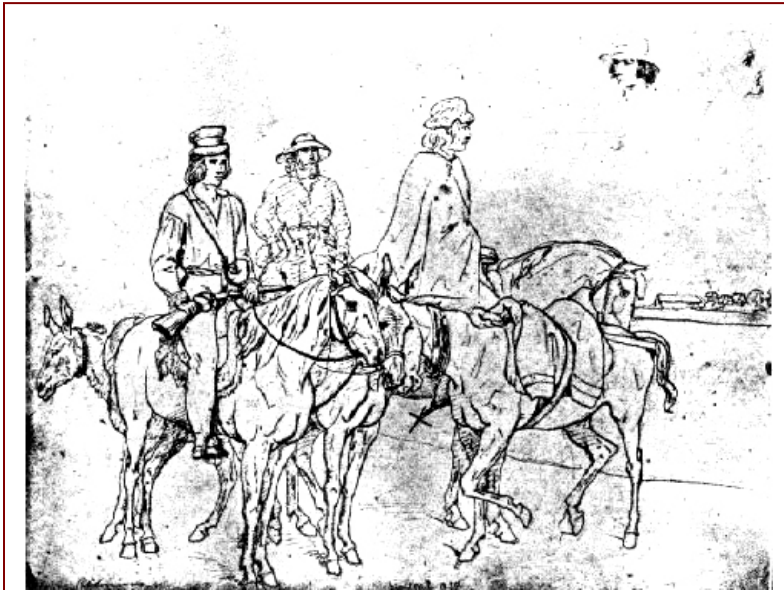
<sup>14</sup> Del Wilcox, *Voyagers to California*. Elk, Calif.: Sea Rock Press, 1991. P.109.

<sup>15</sup> James D. Hart, *A Companion to California*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. P. 410.

<sup>16</sup> Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, eds. *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846*. Berkeley: Heydey Books, 2001. P.357.

California. Former governor Luis Antonio Argüello, also at San Francisco, assisted Smith in arranging for supplies for the journey at Mission San José. When Smith expressed a desire to return through the fur-rich Central Valley, rather than on the route Echeandía had prescribed, Argüello insisted that he had to follow the governor's orders. So Smith simply snuck out of San José one night on his own.<sup>17</sup>

On December 30, 1827, Smith and his men, in his words "returned again to the woods, the river, the prairie, the Camp and the Game."<sup>18</sup> In 1828, Smith's trapping party



Trapping party drawn by Swiss artist Rudolph Friedrich Kurtz, 1851. From [www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/images/kurz/](http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/images/kurz/)

followed the Sacramento River north and made the first recorded journey by land up to the northwestern coast of California into Oregon. Smith's pioneering expeditions overland to California and within the territory made the inland valleys known to more fur trappers and through them, to American settlers.<sup>19</sup>

Hudson's Bay Company trappers from the north followed much the same general course during the years that followed from 1830 to 1845.

Americans were not the only trappers to penetrate California's borders in the 1830s. Britain's Hudson's Bay Company, enjoying a monopoly of the Canadian fur trade after merging with rival North West Company in 1821, began sending annual expeditions to hunt beaver in the streams of the Central Valley in the mid-1830s. In early 1841 it established a store and warehouse alongside William A. Richardson's trading post in Yerba Buena [later named San Francisco]. There was talk in England of a possible annexation of California.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration & Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966. P. 137.

<sup>19</sup> According to James D. Hart, *Ibid.* P. 410: "Three years later, while still a young man, he was killed by Comanches in New Mexico. The Smith River in the extreme northwest corner of California honors him, as does the Jedediah Smith State Park of the Redwood National Park."

<sup>20</sup> Joshua Paddison, ed. *A World Transformed: Firsthand Accounts of California Before the Gold Rush*. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1999. P. 220.

According to historian Dr. Joseph A. McGowan,

Hundreds of trappers moved up and down the valley in the 1830's. Hudson's Bay Company brigades came annually from the Columbia [River] as a result of Jed Smith's reports on the valley. Each of these brigades consisted of sixty to one hundred persons. The John Work party of 1832-1833, for example, had twenty-eight men, twenty-seven women, forty-four children, and six Indians, while the Lafromboise group had eighteen men, twelve women, sixteen children, and seventeen Indians... The brigades included several French-Canadian trappers who named the [Sutter] Buttes (small hills) and after whom French Camp (near Stockton) and other places were named. In 1837 an American trapper, who had finally settled in Oregon, even drove over 600 head of cattle up the valley for his new ranch, indicating how well traveled the road to the Columbia was.<sup>21</sup>

The trapper explorers forged the California and Oregon trails and revived the Old Spanish Trail in Southern California.

This old Sacramento Valley route, known at first as the California-Oregon Trail and, later, as the California-Oregon Road, was soon beaten into a well-defined path by such trappers and explorers as Ewing Young, Lieutenant Emmons of the Wilkes Expedition, Joseph Gale, and many others. Sometimes proceeding all the way down the western side of the river, and at other times crossing over to the east side somewhere between Red Bluff and Tehama (a variation used most frequently by the gold-seekers of '49 and the '50's), this historic road was traversed by a long succession of pack-mule trains, horsemen and footmen, herds of cattle and sheep, slow and cumbersome oxtteams and covered wagons...<sup>22</sup>

While not interested in wagon routes or permanent settlement, the discoveries and information gained by the trapping parties found their way to the geographers, cartographers and scientists of the time. This information, in turn, was transformed into maps and written accounts of the region, providing helpful information to a growing number of foreign settlers intent on coming to California.

### *Newcomers*

American and other foreign settlers came on the heels of the mountain men, eager to make a fresh start in California. Many were not interested in becoming Mexican citizens.

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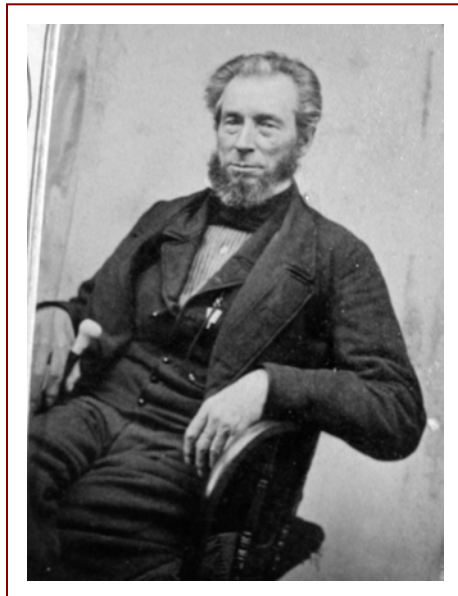
<sup>21</sup> Joseph A. McGowan, *The Sacramento Valley: A Student's Guide to Localized History*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1967. P. 7-8.

<sup>22</sup> Hoover, Rensch & Rensch, *Ibid*. P. 184.



Like the mountain men who had forged their trails, most overland emigrants resisted integration into Spanish-speaking communities. Bringing their families and neighbors with them, these Americans created their own farm colonies segregated from Californio culture [along the coast]. In 1841 fewer than 400 foreigners from the U.S. and Europe lived in California; over the next seven years that number would steadily rise to about 7,000, outnumbering the Californio population.<sup>23</sup>

Among the newcomer settlers in the Red Bluff area was Massachusetts-born William B. Ide. In 1845, he headed west toward Oregon from Independence,



Two images—one young, the other older—reputed to be of William B. Ide

Missouri with his family. The Ide party consisted of thirteen people: William B. Ide and his wife Susan with their children James, William J., Sarah, Daniel, and Lemuel, a young boy named Thomas Crafton, and five young men who helped drive the teams for their board and passage. Their cattle numbered 165, including 28 working oxen.<sup>24</sup>

On the advice of mountain man Caleb Greenwood at Fort Hall, Ide changed his direction, deciding to travel to Alta California at the time a province of Mexico, instead of Oregon.<sup>25</sup> Daughter Sarah later wrote: “While there [at Fort Hall] Father changed his plan—concluded to go to California: but first, before definitely settling the question, put it to vote of his company, and they voted for California instead of Oregon.”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Paddison, *Ibid.* P. 259.

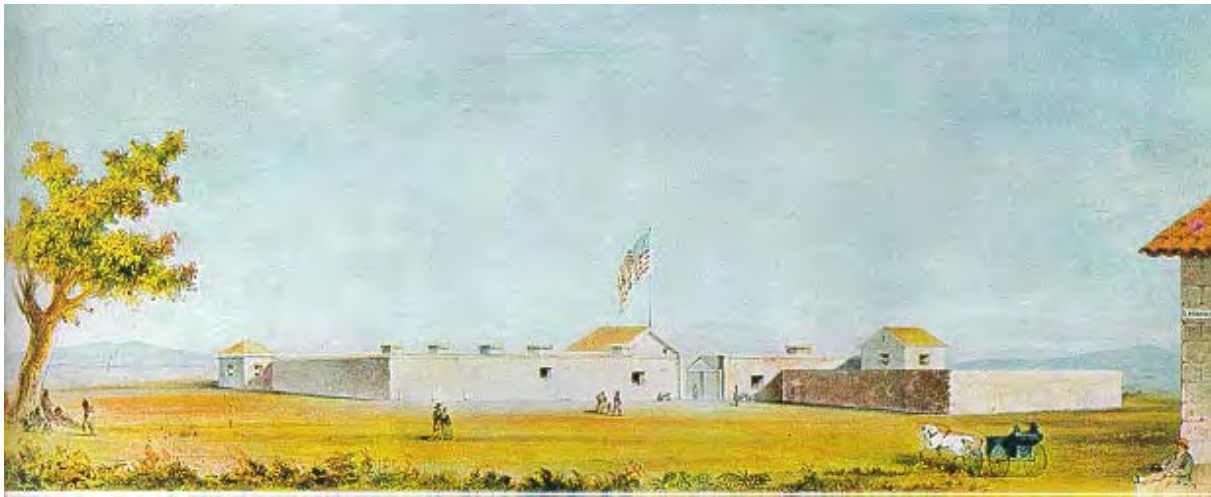
<sup>24</sup> Louis W. Flanders, M.D. Simeon Ide and Edith F. Dunbar, *A Genealogy of the Ide Family*. Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1931. P. 30.

<sup>25</sup> John Sutter directed Caleb Greenwood to Fort Hall to help turn Oregon-bound immigrants toward California.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* P. 33.

After a laborious overland journey, they arrived on October 25, 1845 at Johann August Sutter's Fort in the Sacramento Valley.<sup>27</sup> Sutter's Fort became *the* destination for many overland emigrants to California. Only a few years before, German-born Sutter, who had been reared in Switzerland, had

...arrived in Monterey in 1839 and, calling himself Captain John Sutter of "the Royal Swiss Guard of France," managed to secure a gigantic, 48,000-acre grant of land in the Sacramento Valley. At the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers he established a large fort, cattle ranch, and farm he dubbed New Helvetia [New Switzerland], maintained by Hawaiian and Indian servants... Beginning with [John] Bidwell in 1841, Sutter employed a growing number of American emigrants, as well as dispatched supplies to help wagon trains in trouble in the Sierra and sold land to new settlers once they arrived.<sup>28</sup>



Sutter's Fort painted in 1847. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Sutter's Fort became *the* destination in California's interior where American explorers, soldiers, and immigrants could rest and replenish their supplies.<sup>29</sup>

New Helvetia lay at the terminus of the main westward trails. Sutter encouraged American migration along these trails and frequently sent supplies east over the Sierra to emigrant parties in trouble, receiving them with warm hospitality when they arrived. He gave them work, sold them land, leased them Indian laborers, gave them passports, and otherwise promoted the advance of the American frontier.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* P. 43.

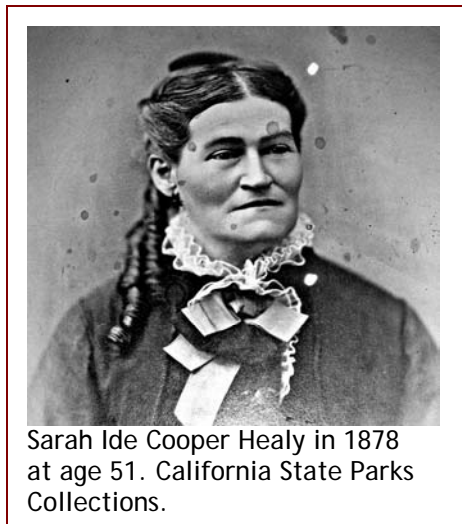
<sup>28</sup> Paddison, *Ibid.* P. 260.

<sup>29</sup> However even before the discovery of gold in 1848, Sutter was land poor and chronically had difficulty in paying his bills.

<sup>30</sup> Richard B. Rice, William A. Bullough, and Richard Orsi, *The Elusive Eden: A New History of California*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1996. P. 155.

While at Sutter's Fort, Ide met Peter Lassen, who owned a large tract of land on Deer Creek approximately 130 miles up the Sacramento Valley from the fort. Lassen offered Ide a cabin in which to spend the winter in exchange for help with building a sawmill on the property. Ide moved to the cabin, but a week later Lassen brought another family to live there, forcing Ide to leave. Sarah Ide, who was 18 years of age at the time, remembered:<sup>31</sup>

This was about the middle of November, 1845. We packed every thing into our wagons; and, getting our cattle together, started up river and forded it. After going about seven miles, we came to a camp of one family, (a Mr. Tusting)... We camped near them. They being very anxious to have us remain with them all winter. As the rainy season had already commenced, the weather was stormy. Father, with two other men, built a log-cabin. All of us lived in it until April 1846.<sup>32</sup>



Sarah Ide Cooper Healy in 1878 at age 51. California State Parks Collections.

Sarah further recalled the winter spent in the cabin:

There were eight in our family, including a Mr. Tustin, his wife and child.--Three young men—a Mr. Boker, having charge of Mr. Thome's cattle and horses—a Mr. Belden, an Eastern gentleman, and a Mr. Pitts, who were weather-bound and were of course some company to us, we all lived in a log-cabin several months. One of these men, [Josiah Belden] owned the farm now known as the "Ide Rancho".<sup>33</sup>

Josiah Belden had a Mexican land grant north of the Thomes Ranch. He offered Ide the northern half of his ranch if Ide would manage the entire grant for three years. An agreement to this effect was signed in April 1846, and the Ide family moved to a partially finished log cabin on the Rancho Las Baulinas, later called El Rancho de la Barranca Colorada. This name was derived from Red Bank Creek, which served as the northern boundary of Belden's grant.<sup>34</sup> Ide later bought a third of the southern part of Belden's rancho.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> According to Louis W. Flanders, Simeon Ide and Edith F. Dunbar, *A Genealogy of the Ide Family*. Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Company, 1931. P. 237: Sarah Elizabeth Ide was born November 1, 1827 at Newfane, Vermont and died April 1904 in California. She married William Cooper and then Lucien B. Healy.

<sup>32</sup> Flanders, Ide and Dunbar, *Ibid*. P. 46.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*. P. 48

<sup>34</sup> On page 208 of Book "A" for Butte and Colusa counties reads: "Deed to Las Baulinas Rancho." Josiah Belden and wife Sarah Margaret, sold for \$3,000.00 U.S. coin, to William B. Ide, April 12, 1849, the undivided north one half (½) 8,856 acres, of Rancho de la Baulinas, consisting of four Mexican leagues. Bounded on the north by Rio Colorado Barranca (Red Bank Creek), on the east by the Sacramento River, on the south by the land I reserve for myself, and on the west by vacant or unoccupied land."

The arrival of growing numbers of well-armed American immigrants in the interior of California was unsettling to the Mexican government. In 1846, about thirty men acting on a rumor that the Mexican government was threatening to expel all non-Mexican citizens, conducted what became known as the Bear Flag Revolt. On June 14<sup>th</sup>, William B. Ide and other recent emigrants seized the *pueblo* of Sonoma, capturing the Mexican Commandante of Northern California, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (who actually supported American annexation). On June 15<sup>th</sup>, Ide produced a proclamation he had written the night before. According to historian Walton Bean,

Ide had once been a Yankee schoolteacher, and he loved the traditions of the embattled farmers at Lexington and Concord. He wrote a flowery and somewhat eccentric proclamation, solemnly though not deliberately misrepresenting most of the circumstances. He remained under the impression that he had “conquered California.”<sup>36</sup>

By noon on June 17<sup>th</sup>, the rebels had raised a new, California Bear Flag, proclaiming the Mexican province to be the California Republic. Ide was chosen to serve as commander. The Bear Flag Republic lasted until July 9, 1846—just 25 days, when the flag of the United States was raised in the Plaza of Sonoma. Ide and the other “Bear Flaggers” joined John C. Frémont and United States armed forces in taking possession of California from Mexico.



The conquest over, William B. Ide returned to his cabin on the Sacramento River that November, eventually to become the owner of the Rancho La BARRANCA Colorado. His desire for prestige and influence was finally satisfied when Colusi County was formed in 1850 (including the present counties of Colusa, Tehama, and Glenn). In a brief but satisfying two years before his death from smallpox in 1852, Ide held, at various times, the following county positions: associate justice and member of the Court of Sessions, county judge, deputy county clerk, county treasurer, county clerk, clerk of the Ninth District Court, clerk of the County Court and the Court of Sessions, clerk of the Probate Court, county recorder, and county auditor.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *William B. Ide State Historic Park General Plan*. Sacramento, Calif.: California Department of Parks and Recreation, January, 1990. P. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978. P. 80.

<sup>37</sup> Rice, Bullough, and Orsi, *Ibid.* P. 126.



Like so many other newcomers, William B. Ide, his daughter Sarah and the rest of the family quickly adapted to California life, building a home and finding niches where they could manage their own future.

### Interpretive Design Concepts / Proposed Media:



Full-sized, two-dimensional, free-standing figures will greet visitors as they step into the lobby leading into the exhibit area—much as they do at the Wyoming National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming (pictured to the left). The figures will represent a River Nomlaki Indian woman with a baby in a cradleboard, Spanish explorer Luís Antonio Argüello, mountain man Jedediah Smith, William B. Ide and his daughter Sarah Ide, as a young girl of 18, with possibly

an ox painted in the background. Each figure will represent a significant part of the history of the area surrounding the Adobe Ranch prior to its construction.

In addition to the life-sized figures, there will be a low-profile panel bar for text and graphics to offer information about the people represented. Text will be brief and focused to provide a quick overview, as well as a welcome to the park and to the Visitor Center. Historic images and other materials will be used to supplement and enhance the text.



### **Interpretive Objects and/or Graphics:**

The historic ox yoke hanging in the entrance area will remain at its current location to help communicate the idea of early pioneer travelers who came from elsewhere and settled in the Red Bluff area.

The two-dimensional figures developed for the introductory exhibit will be based upon the best information and historic images available about what these individuals may have looked like. There are few actual portraits, if any, available of them, so artistic interpretation will be needed in their visual rendering. A graphics file under separate cover will be provided to support the development of these figures.

On the text panel bar, there will be space for a few historic images and other documents to supplement the free-standing figures and text. This material will also be available in the graphics file.



"Crossing the Plains" letter sheet printed by Barber & Baker in 1853. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library.

# WILLIAM B. IDE ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN

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October 2009

Northern Buttes District  
California State Parks  
State of California

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The Planning Team would like to give special thanks to the following people for aiding our detective work and helping us solve many of the Adobe House's mysteries.

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**WILLIAM B. IDE ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK  
VISITOR CENTER INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

**APPENDICES**

- **The Way to California – Quotations** 183
- **William B. Ide’s Views of the Overland Journey, 1845** 197
- **Alfred Walton Biographical Notes** 203
- **Newspaper Account Summaries of the Court Case in the  
Matter of the State of California vs. George Sutton** 207





## ● The Way to California – Quotations

Quotations from first-hand accounts of the journeys to California are presented here to support the interpretation of Exhibit Area 2: The Way to California. They are broadly organized by the categories listed below with sources indicated for each.

Getting Started  
On the Trail  
Dangers and Mishaps  
Sickness and Death  
Entertainment  
Landmarks along the Trail  
Ocean Travel

### Getting Started

No one of the party knew anything about mountaineering and scarcely anyone had ever been into the Indian Territory, yet a large majority felt that we were fully competent to go anywhere no matter what the difficulties might be or how numerous and warlike the Indians.

*John Bidwell, 1841*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pp. 79-80.

Our ignorance of the route was complete. We knew that California lay west, and that was the extent of our knowledge. Some of the maps consulted, supposed of course to be correct, showed a lake in the vicinity of where Salt Lake now is; it was represented as a long lake, three or four hundred miles in extent, narrow and with two outlets, both running into the Pacific Ocean, either apparently larger than the Mississippi River.

*John Bidwell*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pg. 102.

Independence, Missouri: There were 250 wagons in rendezvous at Independence, Missouri, ready to start for California on April 1, 1846. In

order to guard against Indian raids we organized into companies of 25 to 50 wagons, each company electing its own captain... We aimed to travel 12 miles each day stopping when a good camping place was found. There were a great many buffaloes on the Plains at that time. We would hardly ever be out of sight of a band of from 100 to 1000 of the magnificent animals.

*David Campbell, 1846*

*Account of Travels West in 1846* from Campbell's articles in *The Weekly Review* (Porterville, CA) published July 14, 18 and 21, 1899 and reprinted in 1934 book by Ina H Steiner, *Porterville Genealogies*, pp. 304-310. <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and <http://www.cagenweb.com/cpl/bios2.htm>

St. Joseph, Missouri: Father & mother went into St. Joseph's bought another tent, heavy canvas for the boys and men to sleep in, using the other tent for an eating place. They also bought a small sheet iron stove, cut a hole in the tent for the pipe, then when it was raining, we could warm up a pot of beans, make a kettle of soup or a pot of coffee, sometimes a pot of mush.

*Mary Hite, age 13½, 1853*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992

## On the Trail

Mud: Saturday morning, though the weather still continued cloudy, we attempted to proceed, but the rain had softened the ground so much that we found ourselves "stuck" almost every half mile. After a hard day's work we succeeded in reaching the little town of Tipton, only three miles from where we started in the morning.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, July 4, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

Herds of Buffalo: I think I can truly say that I saw in that region [Platte River] in one day more buffaloes than I have seen of cattle in all my life. I have seen the plain black with them for several days' journey as far as they eye could reach. They seemed to be coming northward continually from the distant plains to the Platte to get water, and would plunge in

and swim across by the thousands—so numerous were they that they changed not only the color of the water, but its taste, until it was unfit to drink; but we had to use it.

*John Bidwell*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pg. 107.

Abandoned Goods: Letters were received in this city yesterday from emigrating parties to California, dated as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> of May... These letters also speak of the reckless conduct of some of the emigrants in throwing away their double and single trees, and other necessary conveniences for all traveling. Some have left large wagons on the road-side, with cards on them intimating that those who came after may take them, if they wanted them. So eager are they to get along, that all surplus weight—stoves, pots, boxes, tobacco, bacon, &c., may be found scattered along the road, in the general rush towards the end of their journey. Poor fellows! They may want the provisions before they reach California.

June 18, 1849, *Cleveland Plains Dealer*.

Reproduced in *To the Golden Shore: America goes to California—1849.* Ed., Peter Browning. Lafayette, Calif.: Great Wet Books, 1995. P.245

“Lone Tree”: ...for several days we went on, with nothing special to mark our progress, except passing the “Lone Tree,” which I made into an event to myself, by straining my eyes to get the first glimpse of it, watching its change from the first dim uncertainty, till it stood distinct in the distance, awaiting our approach; then mentally holding converse with it, as I drew near; questioning how it felt, standing there all alone, not one of its kindred within sight? How long it had thus stood? What strange cause had led to its life of isolation? Had the thousands of human beings who had passed it before us this season, cheered its old lone heart as their voices vibrated among its branches? Had any of them been cheered by observing its greenness, or resting in its shade?

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, June 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977. Pg. 21.

Council Bluffs waiting to cross the Missouri: And, where bushes, trees or logs formed partial enclosures, a kitchen or sitting room quite easily suggested itself to a feminine heart, yearning for home. The few women who caught glimpses of each other, or, in some cases, were thrown nearer together in this motley gathering were in general very kind to each other, and to each other's children.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

Sublett's Cutoff (Green River), Wyoming: We are much wearied by the toils & fatigues of the long journey, and the immense numbers of emigrants who are upon the road makes it doubly tiresome from the fact that they are constantly in each others' way and more particularly at the crossing of rivers and difficult places on the road; here at this time are two or three hundred wagons with their accompanying teams and men, and the ground is covered with a coat of light dust two inches in depth which the wind is constantly carrying to and from, whilst the sun is pouring down his hottest rays upon us, and the wonder is that some of us only and not all of us are sick.

*Alexander Ramsay, July 4, 1849*

*The California Trail* by George R. Stewart. Lincoln, Neb.: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press.

Desert Crossing: The hot earth scorched our feet; the grayish dust hung about us like a cloud, making our eyes red, and tongues parched, and our thousand bruises and scratches smart like burns. The road was lined with the skeletons of the poor beasts who had died in the struggle. Sometimes we found the bones of men bleaching beside their broken-down and abandoned wagons. The buzzards and coyotes, driven away by our presence from their horrible feasting, hovered just out of reach.

*Luzena Stanley Wilson, 1849*

*My Checkered Life: Luzena Stanley Wilson in Early California* by Fern L. Henry. With reprint of *Luzena Stanley Wilson: '49er* published by Eucalyptus Press, 1937. Carl Mautz Publishing, 2003. P. 27.



Desert - Truckee Route: When we got to the 'sink' of this river we found that we had a desert of 35 miles to cross without water or grass. We started in the evening and traveled all night reaching the Truckee river the next evening...We traveled down the river for two days and crossed and recrossed it 25 times... When we came to the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mts. It looked as though we could not get any further; but as we had no time to lose we doubled-teamed and took one wagon at a time up to the summit.

*David Campbell, 1846*

*Account of Travels West in 1846* from Campbell's articles in *The Weekly Review* (Porterville, CA) published July 14, 18 and 21, 1899 and reprinted in 1934 book by Ina H Steiner, *Porterville Genealogies*, pp. 304-310. <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and <http://www.cagenweb.com/cpl/bios2.htm>

Death Valley, California: Many accounts have been given to the world as to the origin of the name [Death Valley] and by whom it was thus first designated but ours were the first visible footsteps, and we the party which named it the saddest and most dreadful name that came to us first from its memories.

*William Lewis Manly, November 1849*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992

## **Dangers and Mishaps**

Buffalo Stampede: One night when we were camped on the South Fork of the Platte they [buffalo] came in such droves that we had to sit up and fire guns and make what fires we could to keep them from running over us and trampling us into the dust. We were obliged to go out some distance from camp to turn them: Captain Fitzpatrick told us that if we did not do this the buffaloes in front could not turn aside for the pressure of those behind. We could hear them thundering all night long; the ground fairly trembled with vast approaching bands; and if they had not been diverted, wagons, animals, and emigrants would have been trodden under their feet. One cannot nowadays describe the rush and wildness of the thing.

*John Bidwell*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pp. 107.

Storms: I recall but one real storm. It was on the Platte River in Nebraska. We were in camp on the bank of the river when it came on. The wind blew a hurricane! Thunder roared and lightening flashed!... Every tent was blown down. No one was seriously hurt, though a babe was narrowly missed by a falling tent pole... Our camp belongings were blown helter skelter over the country around about and our stock was stampeded 'till it took all the next day to get them rounded up...

*Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Munkers Estes, 1846*

*Crossing the Plains in 1846* as told by Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Munkers Estes in 1916. <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html>  
[http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cchouk/oregon\\_trail/crossing/munkers.htm](http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cchouk/oregon_trail/crossing/munkers.htm)

Winds: ...some time in the night the wind arose to a hericane direct from the north and we had Keep awake and hold on to our blankets and robes to keep them from flying away in the morning we gathered a large pile of dry pine logs and fixed up our blankets against the wind but the back current brought the smoke and ashes into our faces in fifteen or twenty minuets after taking down our Screen our fire blew intirely away and left the wood but no fire we then cleared away the snow under the lea of a clump of willows fixed ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit laid to sleep the wind still blowing all day and night without abatement... [NOTE: spelling and breaks in sentence quoted exactly as written in the source]

*James Clyman*

*Narrative, by James Clyman.* Original in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and <http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/clyman.html>

Dust on the Lassen Route: The alkali dust of this territory was suffocating, irritating our throats and clouds of it often blinded us. The mirages tantalized us; the water was unfit to drink or to use in any way; animals often perished or were so overcome by heat and exhaustion that they had to be abandoned, or in case of human hunger, the poor jaded creatures were killed and eaten...

*Catherine Haun, 1849*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Crossing the Sierra Nevada range: One old man gave out, and we had to threaten to shoot him before he would attempt to descend the mountains. At one place four pack animals fell over a bluff, and they went so far that we never attempted to recover the packs. We were then out of provisions, having killed and eaten all our cattle. I walked barefooted until my feet were blistered. We lived on roasted acorns for two days.

*Nancy Kelsey*

*The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure, The Documents and Memoirs of the Overland Pioneers.* Ed. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Western Tanager Press, 1991. Pg. 198.

Quicksand: The Platte was the first great water-course we crossed. It is a peculiar, wide, shallow stream, with a quicksand bed...The water poured into the wagon in spite of our precautions and floated off some of our few movables; but we landed safely on the other side, and turned to see the team behind us stop in mid-stream. The frantic driver shouted, whipped, belabored the stubborn animals in vain, and the treacherous sand gave way under their feet. They sank slowly, gradually, but surely...In a little while the broad South Platte swept on its way, sunny, sparkling, placid, without a ripple to mark where a lonely man parted with all his fortune.

*Luzena Stanley Wilson, 1849*

Her Memoirs as Taken Down by her Daughter in 1881.  
<http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html>  
<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/three/luzena.htm>

Accidents: A few casualties have occurred on the road—a team ran away, (not in our train,) which passed over the body of the teamster and killed him. Another person was accidentally shot dead by the discharge of a rifle; several have been wounded by carelessness with revolvers, and some two or three have died from sickness.

*A.W. Wright, June 16, 1849*

Letter reprinted in *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Reproduced in *To the Golden Shore: America goes to California—1849*. Ed. Peter Browning. Lafayette, Calif.: Great Wet Books, 1995. P.245

Stampeding Cattle: The cattle must have been frightened by the flash of lightning. Those [cattle] near the entrance to the corral instinctively tried to escape, others near, pressed upon them, the panic grew, till, in their frantic struggles, they overturned the two chained wagons... There were some unimportant injuries done to both the wagons and to some of their contents; but the grand calamity was the breaking of three wheels... the Captain of the company came near, and, after gazing a moment in speechless consternation, exclaimed, "Three wheels broke all to smash, and fifty miles from timber!" It was true, and the fact was a hard one, yet, strange elasticity of mind, we laughed heartily at the grotesque speech.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, June 20, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977. Pg. 20.

## Sickness and Death

Trailside Burials: Everything was at first weird and strange in those days, but custom made us regard the most unnatural events as usual. I remember even yet with a shiver first time I saw a man buried without the formality of a funeral and the ceremony of coffining. We were sitting by the camp fire, eating breakfast, when I saw two men digging and watched them with interest, never dreaming their melancholy object until I saw them bear from their tent the body of their comrade, wrapped in a soiled gray blanket, and lay it on the ground. Ten minutes later the soil was asleep in the silent wilderness, with only the winds, the owls, and coyotes to chant a dirge.

*Luzena Stanley Wilson, 1849*

*My Checkered Life: Luzena Stanley Wilson in Early California* by Fern L. Henry. With reprint of Luzena Stanley Wilson: '49er published by Eucalyptus Press, 1937. Carl Mautz Publishing, 2003. P. 14.

There were nine of us children, ranging from four years to my eldest sister about 19. My mother kept the two youngest with her always in 'Mother's wagon.' Her health was not very good... and being frail and weary with the long journey, she fell a victim to the cholera, so

prevalent that year on the plains, leaving her sorrowing family to grieve for her... The rolling hills were ablaze with beautiful wild roses—it was the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, and we heaped and covered mother’s grave with the roses so the cruel stones were hid from view.

*Harriet Palmer, 1852*

*Crossing the Great Plains by Ox-Wagon by Harriet Palmer.* The Oregon Trail. <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and <http://www.iisu.edu/~trinmich/00.ar.palmer.html>

## Entertainment

The most pleasant part of the trip across the plains in '49-'50 was around the camp-fire. Supper over, dishes and pots out of the way, we would gather around the camp-fire and relate the scenes of the day, and spin long yarns. Some played the violin, others the accordion. A few would play cards, while the young men would sing their favorite California songs... 'O Susanna, Don't you cry for me, I'm going to California, some gold dust for to see.'

*George W. Thissell*

*Crossing the Plains in '49* by G.W. Thissell, Oakland, Calif., 1903. Reprinted by Kessinger Publishing, 2008.

In the afternoon we halted to celebrate the day. In one tent, a few gathered for a dance; in another several of us old fashioned people enjoyed a cheerful 'sing'.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, July 4, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

## Landmarks along the Trail

Council Bluffs, Iowa: Here we found a city of wagons, some of which had been there many days waiting their turn to cross the great river. But we were consoled by being assured that the ferrymen were working as fast as possible, and that probably in a week or so, all now camped ready for crossing, would be over the Missouri.



*Sarah Bayliss Royce, June 4, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

Fort Kearney: All pass through Fort Kearney...It is a military post & quite a stirring place the government built up. The residences of the officers are very fine, some small framed building, others built of sod or turf laid up like brick, with windows & doors... We went into the register office & I looked over the names of those who had passed before us. Some 20,000 men, 6,000 women, besides cattle & horses, mules & sheep to almost any amount.

*Mary Bailey, 1852*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Chimney Rock, Nebraska: On the morning of July 4<sup>th</sup> we passed some remarkable rocks called Ancient Bluff ruins (probably Court House Rock) and came within sight of Chimney Rock, an immense natural tower visible for many miles, before, and after, we passed it.

*Sarah Bayliss Royce, 1849*

*A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* by Sarah Royce. ed. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. 1932 Yale University Press. Bison Book edition Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977.

Chimney Rock, Nebraska: Camped opposite Chimney Rock... Here the scenery is remarkable, interesting and romantic. It produces an impression as if we were bordering on a large and antiquated city.

*Richard Ballantyne, age 15, July 1848*

*Journal of Richard Ballantyne, 1847-1848.* 2 Vols. 15 July 1848, Family and Church History Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [microfilm], 2:15.  
[http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary/pioneer/20\\_Chimney\\_Rock.html](http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary/pioneer/20_Chimney_Rock.html)

Scott's Bluff, Nebraska: Passed Bluff Ruins, most beautiful, too. I made a rough draft then I was so charmed that I could not gaze enough. Made our noon halt opposite Scott's Bluff, altogether the most symmetrical in

form and the most stupendous in size of any we have yet seen. One of them is close in its resemblance to the dome of the Capitol at Washington.

*Mariett Cummings, 1852*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

Independence Rock, Wyoming: May the 26<sup>th</sup>, 1850. We were at the Rock Independence resting are mules as it was the saboth day, The Rock Independence is a very Larg Rock with, perhaps 5 Thousand or more names on it. I took a Cold Chisel and hatchet then Engraved my name on the south side, as it is such a noted Place for names to stand For Ever. [NOTE: spelling and language quoted exactly as written in diary]

*John App, 1850*

*John App Diary (1850)*, Larry App, Bristol, Indiana, June 1995.  
<http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and  
<http://www.skyenet.net/~larrya/jal850.htm>

Devil's Gate, Wyoming: It is a grand sight! Surely worth the whole distance of travel. The 'Sweetwater' rushes through an opening in the rock, the walls on each side rising several hundred feet perpendicularly, and as though driven in two by some great convulsion of nature...

*Lucy Cooke, 1852*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

South Pass, Wyoming: Ate luncheon on the south pass of the Rocky mountains. Altitude seven thousand, four hundred feet, but the ascent is so gradual, that one scarcely knows when one is at the summit. The headwaters of the streams flowing eastward to the Mississippi and those flowing westward to the Pacific are but a few feet apart.

*Eliza Ann McAuley, 1852*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

North Platte River crossing: In strange contrast was the North Platte which we next crossed, a boiling, seething, turbulent stream, which foamed and whirled as if enraged at the imprisoning banks. Two days we spent at its edge, devising ways and means. Finally huge sycamore trees were felled and pinned with wooden pins into the semblance of a raft, on which we were floated across where an eddy in the current touched the opposite banks.

*Luzena Stanley Wilson, 1849*

Her Memoirs as Taken Down by her Daughter in 1881.

<http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and

<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/three/luzena.htm>

Salt Lake City, Utah: For the last 10 days there has been a great deal of dissatisfaction in our company & private talk about a division at Salt Lake which I have no doubt will be done from the fact of some having a severe quarrel this evening immediately after arriving in camp—Some wished a division here but did not get it—I am as anxious as any for a division thinking it will benefit all—In fact some are so disagreeable & insulting that I will go no further with them.

*Cyrus Phillips, July 3, 1852*

Cyrus Phillips Pp 53, 54. <http://overlandtrails.lib.byu.edu/ctrail.html>

Platte River tributary: We now moved over a low ridge and Struck on Sweet Water Since ascertained to be a tributary of the Platte river it was cold and clear the evening that we encamped on Sweet water many of South sides of the hills were bare of Snow Buffalo scarce and rations limited... [NOTE: spelling and breaks in sentence quoted exactly as written in the source]

*James Clyman*

*Narrative, by James Clyman.* Original in the State Historical Society of

Wisconsin <http://www.over-land.com/diaries.html> and

<http://www.xmission.com/~drudy/mtman/html/clyman.html>

Soda Springs, Idaho: The soda Springs are on the right of the road and boil up from the ground in many places, forming mounds of earth with a little cup or hollow on the top. Some of the mounds are several feet in height, the water bubbling over the top on all sides. By some they are called Beer Springs, from their peculiar taste.

*Margaret Fink, 1850*

*Covered Wagon Women: Diaries & Letters from the Western Trails* by Kenneth L. Holmes, David Duniway, and Lillian Schlissel. University of Nebraska Press, 1995. Pg. 114.

Fort Hall, Idaho: When we arrived at Fort Hall we found about 500 Indians of the Flathead tribe who had come in to trade. They had buffalo hides and deer skins and would pay any price for beads and tobacco. We bought some buffalo robes and I bought a horse for five pounds of tobacco and a pound of beads. I afterwards sold this horse to the Government for \$50.00. We found this tribe of Indians very friendly.

*David Campbell, 1846*

*Sketch of Hardships Endured by Those Who Crossed The Plains in '46.* Written for the Review by David Campbell of Porterville, Cal.  
<http://lib-operations.sonoma.edu/fin/aaa-0712.html>

Fort Bridger, Wyoming: August 12 Still at Fort Bridger. Here we have a good time for washing, which we women deem a great privilege.

*Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, 1847*

[http://www.theragens.com/fifty\\_years/fifty\\_years\\_in\\_oregon\\_18-19.htm](http://www.theragens.com/fifty_years/fifty_years_in_oregon_18-19.htm)

Raft River, Idaho: We followed up the Raft River, as we supposed it to be, this forenoon past a small spring on the side of the mountain and came to where Hudspeth's Cut-Off came into this road again. The cut-off took out soon after we left Beer Springs; those who took it have not gained very much on us. The road today has been tolerable and we have not been troubled so much with dust. This afternoon the wind was blown very hard and the dust consequently bad in proportion to the wind.

*Israel Hale, 1849*

*The Great Western Migration to the Gold Fields of California, 1849-1850* by Robert J. Willoughby, published by McFarland, 2003. Pg. 202.

Humboldt River, Nevada: Away from the river, the soil is hard and dry, void of any vegetation except sage-brush... Much of the level land of this valley is bare, from the salt and alkali in it... The dust is intolerable.

Many wear silk handkerchiefs over their faces; others wear goggles. It is a strange-looking army.

*Margaret Frink, 1850*

*They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* by Jo Ann Levy. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

## Ocean Travel

Heavy Seas: We passed Cape Pillow on Monday April 9, 2 A.M., with a heavy gale of wind and an awful sea, the ship pitching very much; the passengers generally, fore-and-aft, were much frightened. At 4 A.M. she pitched her head clear under, when the bolt which holds the bobstay was drawn and the bowsprit carried short off by the head. I have been at sea, off-and-on, twenty years, and I assure you I never saw it blow harder, nor a worse cross sea on.

*New York Tribune correspondent, April 1849*

Printed in the June 19, 1849 *Philadelphia Public Ledger and Daily Transcript*. Reproduced in *To the Golden Shore: America goes to California—1849*. Ed. Peter Browning. Lafayette, Calif.: Great Wet Books, 1995. P.247.

On Board Ship: Our whole passage, a period of 95 days, was the most unpleasant imaginable, and all were glad when it terminated. Our food was all of the most wretched character, and full of worms, and for thirteen days we were on a very short allowance of this. They were obliged to put into Monterey for water, wood, and provisions, where we remained six days; but as I was confined below, I did not see the town...

*Cleveland Plains Dealer* Correspondent, September 29, 1849

Reprinted on December 13, 1849 by the *Cleveland Plains Dealer*. Reproduced in *To the Golden Shore: America goes to California—1849*. Ed. Peter Browning. Lafayette, Calif.: Great Wet Books, 1995. P.400.



## ● William B. Ide's Views of the Overland Journey, 1845

William B. Ide wrote the following descriptions for the *Sangamon Journal* published on June 5, 1845. Ide was the newspaper's "Oregon Correspondent."

My teams, waggons, cattle, and all concerned, have stood the trip, so far, (all things considered) better than I expected. My cattle are thriving. I kill all my calves.

The present emigrating party consists of about five hundred wagons—one hundred and seven are in our company—thirty-five are a few miles ahead, and some seventy are a few days behind. But it is impossible to speak definitely as regards the number of teams. The number of souls is said to be between six and seven thousand. The number of cattle is immense—exceeding in all probability ten thousand head. Our teams, horses, mules ponies, cattle and waggons, stretched out in procession some three miles in length on the broad prairies, present a grand spectacle. The Caw Indians flock around us like crows. Their business is to 'swap' ostensibly, but in reality it is begging and stealing. More or less cattle are stolen every night. These Indians are great cowards, poor and faithless. They meet you with an air of courtesy, extend the hand of friendship in graceful waving circles to all, and shake hands most heartily with any one of the company, who notices them most; and the next business is 'swap', 'swap.' In this traffic the supplying of their present want is the standard value they attach to their money. To all appearances these Indians are in a wretched, starving, condition.

Ide described the scenery for those back East who might be contemplating the journey.

The soil and face of the country from Independence to the Nebraska river, is equal in point of beauty and fertillity [sic] to any I have seen. Timber is very scarce. Small groves, however, of an excellent quality, are found along the streams. The prairies are beautifully rolling—the soil rich and deep. The Nebraska river has shallow banks, and its bottom is quick-sand. The creeks which we have crossed, however, that empty into the Nebraska, have deep banks and muddy bottoms—on some the soil is more than fifteen feet in depth. These deep channels and muddy bottoms, have given us much trouble. Quite a number of cattle in crossing them, got mired, and sometimes we have had to haul from fifteen to twenty out by their horns.

Gentlemen and ladies, too, of liberal minds and means are in the midst of our social circle. Finally, there is something ennobling in the very idea of

an expedition so fraught with consequences, so self-devoting in its effect. No narrow-minded soul is fit for Oregon. If such embark, discord and confusion follow—they will shrink from the undertaking and escape to the States. But those whose minds are congenial to the enterprise, present their shoulders to its hardships, their breasts to its dangers, and their means and talents to the accomplishment of its purposes, will, I doubt not, be well rewarded.

I have written this in a great hurry. The country as we advance becomes more interesting, and in my next I hope to be able to give more information in regard to '*fitting out*' I fear we have more cattle than we can protect. We are now obliged to have one hand to every twelve head.

The emigrants are still in good health and spirits.

Respectfully yours, W.B. Ide<sup>212</sup>

*Best Waggons.* — Strong two horse waggons capable of bearing three thousand pounds on common roads, wide track, block tongue, coupled twenty inches back of the forward axle, body 15 to 18 feet long, straight: bed 14 to 16 inches high in the clear—2 partitions across 18 inches each way from the middle (having a space for the ladies Parlors) the two ends covered with half inch linn plank, the alternate plank hung on butt hinges, and supported on a slight stringer passing from the hind gate to one of the partitions. Under these decks pack your provisions, either in bags or boxes—if in boxes, let the deck form the covers, resting on each side at the sides of the bed—at the top of the bed, let the sides project 6 inches, above which, put side boards 18 inches wide, one half inch thick, riveted to ten standards on each side 4 ½ feet high, leaving the middle space open for a door on each side: on the top of each pair of standards rivet an elliptic to bow, rising 8 inches higher than the standards (making the inside of the bed 5 feet two inches high)—at the same time rivet a strip of half inch plank 3 inches wide firmly to the top of the standards on each side—leaving an open space of 15 or 18 inches wide between the side boards and said 3 inch strips, which may be stopped by a curtain, nailed to the outside of the strip above, and buttoned to the outside of the board below- on the center of the bow rivet a slender ridgepole, let the ends boards of gates be firmly fixed and extended from the under side of the bottom plank of the bed to top of the side boards, so tight as to exclude rain in a driving storm; let the top be covered with Osnaburg [coarse, cotton fabric] drawn on as tight as may be, and sized and painted with 3 coats of oil paint—the curtains and doors to be made of the same, and sized and painted one coat; the center support underneath the bed may be 4 or 5 inches wide, and

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<sup>212</sup> Rogers, *Ibid.* P. 10.

extend 6 or 8 inches from the sides of the bed, to form a step, another iron step between it and the ground, will make it convenient for ladies to descend to and from the parlor. The inside upon the deck, may be fitted with shelves and racks to suit the fancy or convenience of the 'lady of the house'. With slight strips of half inch plank fastened in front of the shelf there would be little danger of dishes falling, after one leaves Fort Leavenworth: such is the evenness of the road.

*Best Route* – From Springfield to Hannibal on the Mississippi River, to Paris, to Huntsville, to Fort Leavenworth—take the trail to the Kaw village on the North side of the Kansas river, thence the left hand trail to the Platte river—(there are three right hand trails falling off one after another, less travelled than the best route) thence up the South Fork to the ford, thence up the North side of the of the same—the left hand trail up to the North Fork, thence up the South side to Scott's Bluff, eighteen miles above steeple tower, or the 'Chimney'-which is situated about three miles from the River, on the top of a conical bluff elevated some 150 or 200 feet above the river bank. The Steeple or 'chimney', is a pillar of hardened clay, about 60 feet by 30 feet in diameter, rising out of the top of the cone some 200 or 250 feet retaining its full size to the top—which is covered with rock of very curious dimensions, and formed of clay—thence take the left hand twelve miles, to Cole Springs—thence twelve miles to Horse Creek—thence down the west side of said creek, and up the North Fork to Laramie. Here my way-bill must end for the present.

*Amount of Loading* – Twenty or thirty hundred pounds to one team of eight oxen, or four oxen and eight cows—one half should be worked every other day.

*Out-Fit* – One waggon for four to six persons—team as above. Stout young cows are preferable to oxen; Horses are of little service, except to collect cattle of morning. They need to be exchanged once in seven or eight hundred miles for others if much used. One hundred pounds hard biscuit; 150 pounds of flower; 20 pounds lard, 50 pounds corn-meal sifted, 75 pounds bacon: 5 pounds coffee, ten pounds sugar: one peck of beans: 50 pounds dried fruit: 5 pounds of salt: one half pound pepper: 7 pounds hard soap: 2 pounds salartus: one half pounds of spice: one half pound cinnamon: 2 pounds ginger—a little castor oil: a little rhubarb: peppermint and camphor: —and some other things such as a dry body needs—but rarely thinks of beforehand—to each person full grown. Fifteen pounds of tar and two pounds of rosin to each wagon: 65 feet of 1 inch rope, one set of spare shoes and a hundred horseshoes nails to

each horse: four ox shoes to each work ox or cow, and nails: one years clothing: tarpolin hats: one water proof cloak: one rifle 32 balls to the pound: ten pounds of powder: ten pounds of lead: one thousand percussion caps: one belt, butcher knife, scabbard, shot pouch and powder horn: one canteen or tin cup, and two whips to each man: five pounds of salt to each head of cattle. One axe, three augers: one drawing knife, and two chisels to each family, and one tent made of stout Osnaburg.

*Best Fashion for a Tent* – Set up one pole in the centre, from the top of which, on the outside, extend three guys, or stay cords, which make fast to three strong stakes, then pin down the bottom once in 18 inches, let the entrance be low and make to close tight by a piece of the same buttoned over on the inside.

*Best Method of Traveling* – and Remarks on Traveling. –Twenty waggons with forty men are amply sufficient for the purpose of protection, or rendering assistance to each other. ‘Large bodies move slow.’ It is easier forming connections, than it is dissolving them. More servants than are needed, breed confusion in a camp away from established governments, –where from humanity, one is compelled to retain a disagreeable servant. It is easier purchasing cattle than it is driving them to Oregon. Cattle and horses should be guarded day and night from Fort Leavenworth to Platte river. Men who have large herds of cattle, and those who have but few, will seldom long agree to travel together.

Mutual interests and mutual necessities, from the strongest bonds of unions, with some few honorable exceptions. No company of forty waggons have ever traveled to Oregon without dividing.

The less emigrants depend on each other the more quietly they proceed on their way. A selfish, narrow-minded man is not likely to enjoy a trip to Oregon. Emigrants are generally too impatient, and over-drive their teams and cattle. They often neglect the concerns of the present in consequence of the great anticipations of the future—they long to see what the next elevation hides from their view. Millions of the acres on our route, which usually produce a tolerable crop of hay, are now entirely destitute of grass. Emigrants should not depend on the last port, for their out-fit. I think the trail from Springfield to Vancouver, in Oregon is twenty-six hundred long miles, if the balance of the road is as crooked as the past.

*Trade* – We purchased buffalo robes for from six to ten pounds of flour, or from three to six pints of sugar or coffee. We can get an ox, or horse shod, at Fort Laramie for one dollar per foot. We hire a smith’s shop for \$6 per day. Three bars of lead will buy a buffalo robe; salt 50 cents a pint.

*Prospect Ahead* – We expect hard times, in consequence of the scarcity of grass for the next three hundred miles. Oregon brightens the nearer we approach. A Frenchman who has resided there five years, and now travels in our company, often makes comparison between the most beautiful prairies we pass over—always giving the Prairies of Oregon the preference—saying, ‘suppose this prairie you now see, was always clad in green , as you now see it, —such is Oregon!’ But I must close.

Respectfully yours. “William B. Ide”





## ● Alfred Walton Biographical Notes

Excerpts from: *A Memorial & Biographical History of Northern California Illustrated*.  
Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1891.

File contributed for use in USGenWeb Archives by Joy Fisher sdgenweb@yahoo.com  
February 17, 2007, 11:56 pm

ALFRED WALTON came to California with the Jones expedition in 1842 in the United States sloop Dale. He has seen much of the world, and ranks among the pioneers of this great State. A sketch of his life is as follows:

Mr. Walton was born in Walton, England, October 22, 1822. He served in the navy for three years as a volunteer, and two years more after his first term had expired. He returned to Philadelphia and was there discharged, after which he went back to England. He then emigrated to Iowa, and there carried on farming from 1844 to 1849.

In the latter year he joined a company, under command of George M. Dallas, to come to California. When they reached the Green River, they attempted to go down the stream with canoes, and, after passing the mouth of the White River, they were upset and lost their provisions, being able to save only a sack of flour and some bacon. Nothing daunted, however, they continued their way westward and fell in with a friendly Indian, who explained to them, with a stick, the trail across the desert. Thirteen of them started across the trail for Fort Utah. They packed water and had for their daily rations a spoonful of flour mixed with water. As a relish with this they ate crickets and grasshoppers, and sometimes got a rabbit away from the buzzards. They made the journey to Fort Utah in safety and started for Los Angeles with wagons. At Desert Spring, Colorado Desert, they left the wagons and continued their way on foot, going through Cajon Pass.

At Los Angeles he made an arrangement with a man who was buying cattle, whereby he, Mr. Walton, was to drive a team to a place near San Francisco, and was to get his board for services rendered. The stock-dealer provided the men with a gun and told them to kill the Spanish cattle to subsist on; and that was the way he furnished board!

In San Francisco Mr. Walton worked at whatever he could get to do for awhile, and was paid six dollars per day. From there he went to the mines at Bidwell's Bar on Feather River. On the North Fork of that river he got plenty of gold; took out as high as \$500 in a single pan, but had to

dig several days to get down to it. He exhausted that claim and afterward went on a prospecting tour.

In Shasta County he took a ranch at what is now Kimball's Plain and engaged in raising cattle. After being thus engaged for a time, he went to the town of Shasta, and, with John Scott, conducted a hotel. He subsequently engaged in mule teaming and packing, and came to Red Bluff, where he followed that business six or eight years. He was also interested in the sheep business.

In Red Bluff he purchased lots five and six, block fifty-two, near where the railroad has since been built, and there erected a home, lived and reared his family. Misfortune overtook him; he trusted too much; sold stock and teams on time; hard times came on and the parties left the country and Mr. Walton was financially ruined.

During the mining excitement in Idaho, he went all through that country and tried to recover some of his bad debts, but was unsuccessful, and came back to Red Bluff a poor man. He then turned his attention to any kind of work he could get to do. In 1874 he purchased a dairy and engaged in the milk business, which he has since followed. In this he has been very successful. Their present house was built in 1876.

December 18, 1860, Mr. Walton married Mrs. Mary Ann Reeves, a native of Ireland. She came to the United States when she was fourteen years of age. They have had five children, three sons and two daughters, all born in Red Bluff, viz: Agnes, now Mrs. Henry Frank; Thomas, Alfred and Mollie. One of the children is deceased. The family are members of the Catholic Church. Mr. Walton was reared an Episcopalian. He is a lively old gentleman who has seen a great deal of pioneer life.

From the Native Daughters of the Golden West (NDGW) files:

A submission by George D. WALTON, grandson and great granddaughter Dorothy REEVES JOHNSON which gives much the same information but notes children as Agnes, Alfred, Margaret Mary and stepson Joseph REEVES

From the Tehama County Historical Society's *Leaves of the Past*:

Alfred WALTON died Red Bluff, July 18, 1911  
married Tehama County (not San Francisco) December 18, 1860

Mary Ann WARD REEVES born Ireland December 7, 1834, daughter of Timothy WARD and Bridget JONSON, natives of Ireland; Mary married 1st (\*) REEVES.

Children:

Joseph Henry REEVES (Stepson) born New York 1855; married Julia Wentz, born California 1859

Margaret Agnes WALTON born December 7, 1863; died French Gulch December 2, 1949; married Henry FRANCK

Alfred Ward WALTON born Oct 19 1861; died Red Bluff July 9, 1893

Thomas Richard WALTON born California Nov 16 1867; died Red Bluff April 13, 1944; married Anetta Elizabeth KRAFT

Alfred John WALTON born California February 16, 1870; died February 23 1965 (see below); married Susan Iren BREARCLIFFE;

Children:

Alfred WALTON

George Dorian WALTON born CALIFORNIA Sep 17 1895; died Red Bluff July 25 1960; married Dorothy HUSON; children: June WALTON and Dan WALTON

Stephen WALTON

Jane Ann WALTON

Mary Ann WALTON born Sep 24 1872; died July 6 1949; married Milton Gordon GILL; child: Walton W. GILL

From the *Sacramento Bee*:

Alfred John WALTON died Feb 13 1956 Red Bluff, wife Susan; sons Alfred & Stephen; age 85





## ● Newspaper Account Summaries of the Court Case in the Matter of the State of California vs. George Sutton

Re: William B. Ide Adobe and Four Adjacent Parcel's Property Value and State Acquisition

Red Bluff Daily News, March 7, 1951

### **Witnesses Testify In State Park Row Over Ide Property**

A court battle is ongoing about the value of 3.96 acres of land along the Sacramento River, which includes the historic adobe said to have been built by Wm. B. Ide. George E. Sutton owns the land, which is separated into five small parcels. Negotiations for the purchase of the property have been in progress since 1935 but the parties failed to agree on a price for the land. The state filed condemnation proceedings in the summer of 1949 to acquire the historically significant land. Sutton wants \$34,000.00, which he still considers a low number, especially for the adobe land.

Witnesses were called and a listing of the jurors was published. The Native Sons of the Golden West raised \$7410.00 to cover the cost of the land, and with state matching money, the total available is \$14,820.00.

Red Bluff Daily News, March 8, 1951

### **Jurors View Park Site to Determine Value of Property**

Jurors were lead by deputy sheriffs on a tour of the proposed State Park. They viewed the Ide adobe and were accompanied by Judge Albert F. Ross, who is presiding over the case, and attorneys for both sides. George Sutton's value for the property is \$37,500.00 and he is asking for \$7500.00 severance damages. Milton Hull appraised the property at \$25,000.00 and Chauncey T. Burgess (county deputy assessor) appraised the property at \$34,000.00.

Red Bluff Daily News, March 9, 1951

### **Testimony Ending In the Ide Park Case to Establish Price**

Various witnesses testified today on the value of the adobe and the other parcels. The state witnesses placed a much lower value on the property than witnesses for G. Sutton, the landowner.

Red Bluff Daily News, March 12, 1951

**Value of \$25,000 Put on Park Site By Jury's Verdict**

The jury verdict came out late Friday as \$15,000.00 for the land the adobe sits on, \$3000.00 for another parcel, \$2000.00 for another and two others at \$1250.00 each, for a total of \$25,000.00. Funds have been raised by Tehama county and the City of Red Bluff with matching funds by the state for a total of \$14,800.00.

Red Bluff Daily News, May 9, 1951

**Chamber Directors Will Borrow \$2340 For Ide State Park**

“Red Bluff Chamber of Commerce directors went on record Tuesday to borrow \$2340.00 to assist in the acquisition of the Ide Adobe property as a state park following a request by Red Bluff attorney Rawlins Coffman. The money will be borrowed following the budgeting of that amount by the board of Supervisors next month to be repaid out of county funds late this year”.

Corning Daily Observer, July 26, 1951

**Ide Park Fund Paid to State, Project Nears**

The William B. Ide Parlor No. 15 Native Sons of the Golden West mailed checks to the State Attorney General today. The amount totals \$4402.35 from the City of Red Bluff and Tehama County. The judgment for condemnation determined the total amount to be paid to owner George Sutton was set at \$23,624.70. The state is obligated to pay half, at \$11,812.35 with the city and county matching the amount.

The next step will be to ask the Legislature to appropriate funds for restoration of the adobe and begin operating the property as a park. Under terms of the contract, the City of Red Bluff and the County of Tehama will manage and operate the park for twenty years.

This last funding amount marks the culmination of 16 years of effort by various groups and individuals working to make the area at the adobe a park. The local parlor of Native Sons was formed in 1947 with its main objective to have a state park made in honor of the man who built the adobe and was a key figure in the Bear Flag Republic.

Red Bluff Daily News, August 22, 1956

**Funds to Restore Ide Adobe Sought**

Rawlins Coffman, a local attorney, with Robert Minch, local Red Bluff citizen, attended a State Park Commission hearing in Eureka and did a presentation featuring

the neglected condition of the adobe and surrounding park area. The east wall of the adobe is sagging and is held up by heavy supports from the outside.

Commission members will give next years State Legislature a budget request for forty to fifty thousand dollars to cover the restoration and establish a parking lot large enough to handle thirty cars.