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## Chronicles Of Calaveras

By  
Cornelius Blauvelt Demarest

**Editor's Note:** We were most fortunate to receive a copy of Cornelius' Calaveras Recollections recently from his grandson, Donald D. Leonard, and are pleased to print a portion of them in this issue. Cornelius refers to his brother as the third of the trio or three kings, or simply as Demarest. He refers to himself as "the writer". He is apt to be a bit flowery, exaggerative, prejudiced, and fond of gruesome detail, but we forgive him these peculiarities. We acquire a real understanding of the hardships and problems of early-day Calaveras from his writings. We find revealing first-hand descriptions of persons whom we previously knew only as statistics in county records or early historical accounts. We think you will enjoy reading Cornelius Blauvelt Demarest's "Chronicles" and will find them well worth publishing unedited in our pages.

David Durie Demarest, of New Jersey, came to California during the gold rush. He left his descendants the diary of his trip west in 1849. His later diaries, up to the year 1860, were most unfortunately burned in the Berkeley fire of 1923. David's brother, Cornelius, followed him to California. We don't know when Cornelius arrived, but it was certainly before 1862 and was perhaps in the late 50's. Cornelius returned to the east with his wife and children a decade or so later.

Both Cornelius and his nephew, D. Clarence Demarest (D.D.'s son) had a bent for writing and both completed manuscripts of their Calaveras recollections. They were very observant, had a ready pen, and their writings contain much of historical value to the student of local history. Although we may have to question the accuracy of certain specific statements in the Demarest writings (for they were written late in life and years after the events described), on the whole they contain remarkable descriptions and impressions of people and events during a half century of Calaveras history.

### THE JOURNEY OF THE THREE KINGS

"We three kings of Orient are, Bearing gifts we travel afar."

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 became very soon known over the world and caused a movement of people hardly

equalled in its history. People rushed to California from every state in the Union, from Canada, Mexico, and South America. Chileans came from the West Coast, Bolivians from the Andean Heights, and natives from the Pampas of Argentina. Australia, Japan, China, and the islands of the Orient contributed their quota to the hegira. Bankers left their desks, merchants and traders their counters, statesmen, politicians and businessmen their clients and courtrooms, and farmers their ploughs, all to join in the mad rush to the land where gold was to be picked up for the mere stooping, and all were to revel in riches beyond the dreams of avarice. With them jostled adventurers, gamblers, criminals, and cutthroats from every land, ready and eager to prey upon their more peaceable fellow goldseekers.

Amongst this great and heterogeneous mass were the three men in whom our interest will be more particularly centered in these chronicles. The "three kings" were: first, an Irish physician from Dublin, Doctor William Jones; second, an English miner from Cornwall, George Griffith; and last, but not least, the son of a Jersey farmer from Bergen County, David Durie Demarest, descended from an old and prominent Huguenot family from the Province of Picardy, France.

The gifts they bore to their future kingdom of Calaveras were not Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, but were Indomitable Courage, Energy, Perseverance, and a high character for Probity and Honor. Strangers, they were from different countries, but when thrown together under stress of circumstances, they became as a band of brothers, and cemented a friendship that outlasted all the vicissitudes of the years to come.

The first voyagers to California, especially those going overland, generally made up a company before leaving New York, each member furnishing a certain amount of money as part of a common fund and a quota of arms and ammunition for their defense while traveling through the Indian lands. Our heroes, bound for the land of gold, left New York under the name of the General Persifer F. Smith Association, and consisted of thirty-six men. They left New York on March 3rd, 1849, on the bark "Norumbega", which they had chartered for the voyage, for Galveston, whence they were to journey overland via El Paso and Fort Yuma to San Diego on the Pacific coast.\*

Upon arrival at Galveston, the work of selecting the transportation material and animals began. After much debate, the company of officers finally purchased oxen to draw the supply wagons. This was done against the protests of the more experienced countrymen in the company, who had learned by years

\*The bark "Norumbega" was built in Thomaston, Maine, in 1848, for John H. Brower and associates of New York. She was a small vessel, only a fraction of the size of the clipper ships constructed a few years later for the California trade, but an ideal vessel to take a gold mining company to Galveston. She measured only 108 feet long, and was of 324 tons burden. William Buckingham was her master on the trip to Galveston. (Data from Capt. Francis Bowker of the Mystic Museum, Connecticut.)

of experience on farms and elsewhere of the enormous capacity of oxen for food and water, and the exceedingly slow progress they could make, even under the most favorable circumstances. In addition to this, they bought mules to carry the members' personal baggage, and horses for their individual mounts.

In due course of time they left Galveston in high spirits, proud of their success thus far, and proud in the knowledge that they had really started for the land of gold, and in a strength that could bid defiance to all enemies. But after leaving Galveston they soon came in contact with marauding bands of Indians, and then their troubles began. They had marched out with high hopes and happy hearts as though on a sort of picnic and in utter ignorance of the conditions ahead of them. But their cheerfulness was soon dissipated when, one night, all their horses disappeared. The Indians, too wily to attack in broad daylight so strong and well-armed a party, under cover of darkness stampeded off all their horses.

Equipments were then transferred from the mules to the ox wagons and the mules were pressed into service as saddle horses. But, alas, the mules soon followed the horses, and it was "afoot" for the members of the General Persifer F. Smith Association. However, they consoled themselves with the thought that they still had the patient oxen, but they soon found that their prophets of evil omen at Galveston were about right. Between hunger, thirst and the redskins, the oxen had all disappeared before they had made more than one-half of the distance to El Paso. So after this it was only what each one could carry on his back, and as the journey became longer and fatigue more oppressive, article after article was discarded. They finally straggled into El Paso with little more than the clothes they wore, gaunt, hollow-eyed, hungry, thirsty, and weary, and only the shadows of their former selves.

At El Paso, unfortunately, the third of the trio with which we are concerned, fell sick, due to the fatigue and exposure of the journey to that place. The main body of the company marched on, after securing a new supply of provisions and transportation, but the first two of our trio determined to stay and take care of their "brother". It is a peculiar fact connected with these events that the main body of the company seems to have disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed them up. How many left their bones by the wayside to blaze the way for succeeding travelers, and how many reached the land of gold, and were lost in the indistinguishable mass of gold hunters, will never be known.

Our trio remained at El Paso about two months to recuperate. They dared not proceed without adequate protection through the thousand miles that still lay between them and the coast. Finally, a detachment of United State soldiers arrived on their way west, and the trio made arrangements to march under their protection for the remainder of the journey, doing sentry and outpost guard duty with the soldiers. Various and many were the mishaps and adventures by the way.

Once the third of the trio had occasion to pass outside the lines and on his return in the darkness was shot by the doctor who was on sentry duty at the time. The doctor said he hailed and obtaining no answer, fired. Others said they thought the doctor fired first

and hailed afterward. The latter certainly was determined to take no chances on his scalp. No doubt in his inexperience he was thoroughly frightened, and as he was in the Indian country, took no chances. His victim, fortunately, was shot only in his hand, the ball entering between the thumb and forefinger, passing through the fleshy part of the hand, and emerging just below the little finger. The wound was not a serious one, and did not cause a permanent disability. Still, the hand took a long while to heal and to recover its normal use. Meanwhile, the wounded man was attended with the utmost attention and solicitude by the doctor, who fully realized how near he had come to sacrificing his friend's life. Relentlessly, the march was continued over snow-clad mountains and barren deserts towards Fort Yuma, the next stop in their journey.

Across the river westward from Yuma is the Colorado desert. What visions the memories of these names bring up, the stories told of the terrific heat of these regions! Proceeding westward towards San Diego across the Colorado Desert, the trio encountered the hardest part of their long and wearisome journey. The desert is a nearly circular depression of a hundred or more miles across, sloping down from the periphery to the Salton Sea in the center, nearly 300 feet below sea level. In only three or four places in these awful miles can water be found, such as it is. The wayside was lined with the wrecks of wagons and the bleaching bones of horses and mules, serving as guides and reminders of the perils of the desert.

Our trio finally reached San Diego in November, 1849. After waiting a couple of weeks there, they obtained passage to San Francisco and, after a very tempestuous voyage in a small sailing vessel, passed through the Golden Gate and reached San Francisco on January 1st, 1850, ten months after leaving New York. A weary trio they were, without food or money, and nothing but the rags with which they were clothed. A sorry beginning, surely, for the coming reign over their kingdom to which they had looked forward with so much hope and anticipation through all trial, danger and difficulty.

Resting from the fatigue of their journey was so evidently impossible at San Francisco, that the trio sought passage to Sacramento and joined the motley throng that was already surging to the gold fields. Proceeding to the Northern Mines, as they were called, the trio became separated, but the "Destiny that shapes our ends" finally impelled them to turn their steps to Calaveras, where they again met. From that time forth that area was the scene of their activities.

#### The Water Company

Nearly every scheme and industry that tended eventually to benefit that part of Calaveras County seemed to be the effort of the combined three or was largely built up with their encouragement and aid. Among the most important of the works in which they were engaged was that of the Union Water Company.\*

\*Doctor Jones was one of the incorporators of the Union Water Company in 1852. George Griffith joined the company as superintendent. Demarest claims that all three were later officers or directors.

In the early days, gold mining consisted principally of washing the surface dirt from the hillsides or the debris that had accumulated in the gulches or ravines. All it required was a stream of water that could be run through a series of sluices or troughs in which the dirt was thrown, where it was dissolved by the running water, leaving the heavy matter, consisting of stones and heavy gravel, in which the gold had lodged, by reason of its much greater specific gravity.

The supplies of water necessary could only be obtained from the small creeks and smaller ravines with which the countryside was furrowed. The water was usually exhausted early in the summer when the rainy season ended and the springs dried up under the fierce heat of the unclouded sun. To obviate this, the Company constructed dams across Angel's Creek and elsewhere and diverted their larger streams to ditches, following the contours of the hills, carrying the water in every direction where required. These additional supplies only served to prolong the flow of water into the summer a little further and still left a long idle season awaiting the coming of the next winter's rain, so the Company resolved to harness the larger rivers. The Sierra Nevada mountains on their westerly slope are cut by a series of enormous canyons in which flow the rivers fed by the eternal snows on the mountain summits. Calaveras lies between two of them, about thirty miles apart in this region - the Mokelumne on the north, and the Stanislaus on the south.

A dam was thrown across the Stanislaus River about fifteen miles above the Calaveras Big Trees grove, and the water so diverted was, by infinite labor and great expense, carried about twenty miles through flumes constructed along the almost perpendicular sides of the canyon through which the river flowed, until it reached the divide where its volume finally was poured into the headwaters of Angel's Creek. From there, the water was carried down to the nearest gold fields at Murphy's Camp and farther below at Angel's, Altaville, and many smaller settlements or camps as they were then called.

This accomplishment merely prolonged the working season to only about the middle of September or first of October. There was still an idle season up to the times the rains began, say, about mid-November.

The lost time still constituted a very serious loss to the miners. The Company resolved upon undertaking a work that would give the miners water for the entire season. This project was nothing else than the construction of an immense reservoir upon the headwaters of the Stanislaus River near the summit of the mountains with a capacity sufficient, when the water of the river became exhausted or nearly so, to supplement it with adequate volume to keep the flumes and ditches filled until the rainy season was far enough advanced to again fill them from the rivers and smaller streams.

In addition to supplying the gold diggers with the water necessary for washing out the gold, the Company also sold water for irrigation, so that every house or cabin could have its garden spot

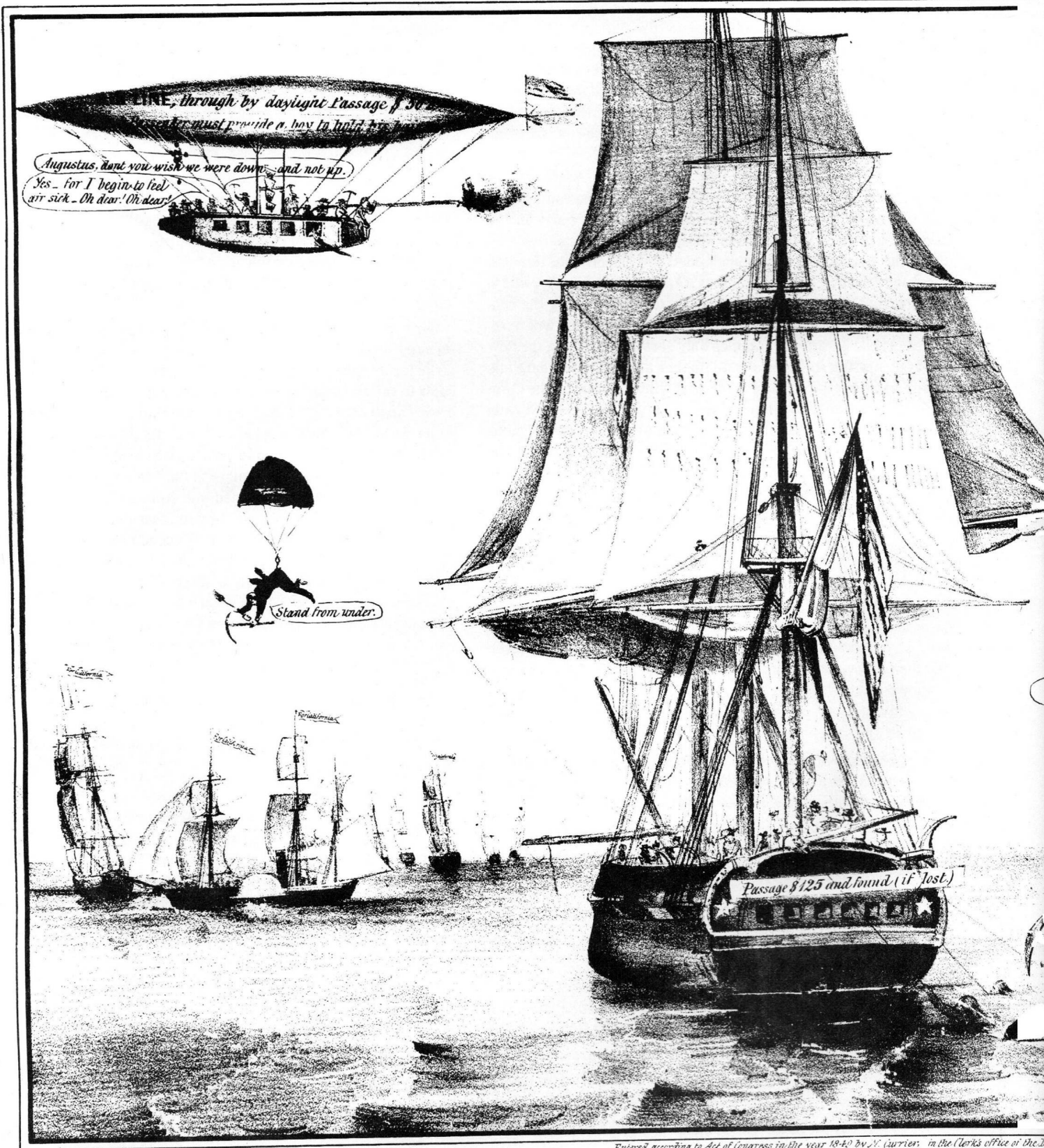
which would flourish immensely amid the prevailing barrenness which surrounded it.

When this work, the building of the reservoir, was undertaken, it was in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties. Nothing was known positively as to the amount of snow or rainfall at these high altitudes, although it was known to be great. The success or failure of the work depended upon the ability of the Company to cope with this high rain and snowfall. The entire work must be absolutely finished in one working season, that is, from the time in the spring when the snow was so much reduced that it was possible to ascend into the mountains, to the first snowfall in the early winter, which generally came in November. Should the construction crews be caught up there when the snow began, they would experience great difficulties in returning to the lower regions alive.

George Griffith, the general superintendent of the Company, an experienced dam builder, had charge of this project. Taking a large force of men and supplies, he forced his way through the late snow to the site selected and by almost superhuman exertion his crew constructed a timber dam more than forty feet high and some six hundred feet long before the end of the season. The Company, the previous year, had partly prepared for this work by hauling a large quantity of timber to the site and building a great log house as lodging for the men and storage for materials and provisions. Upon completion of the dam, two men were left behind to do some little work that was still needed on the dam and to protect it from fire until it should be filled with snow and water. In order to record the snowfall, a large platform was built in a sheltered locality, and a daily record was kept of the snowfall for each day. At the end of the season this amounted to thirty-seven and a half feet, and at one time there was as much as seventeen feet of snow on the ground.

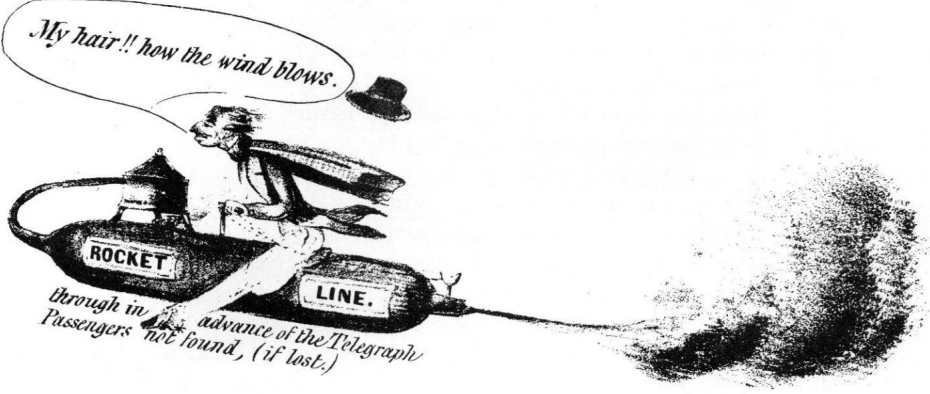
When the snow began to fall, every living thing escaped before it, down the mountains. All winter long, not a vestige of animal life was seen by the two watchmen. Not a chirp of a bird nor the growl of a beast was heard; everything was silent and absolutely lifeless.

Extraordinary precautions were taken to insure the safety of the men left behind by stocking the great loghouse with everything for their comfort, including large supplies of bedding, clothes and an ample supply of food. Attention was also paid to their mental well-being by providing a plentiful supply of books, papers and cards, and tobacco, the universal solace of the solitary, was not forgotten. Each man was supplied with a watch. A long board was fastened up above the great fireplace perforated with holes like a cribbage board, with a hole for each weekday and a special hole for Sunday, so that they would not lose account of the days or weeks. The watchmen made it a rule to wind their watches when they retired, and at the same time, advance the peg a hole. Notwithstanding all these precautions, they had actually lost one day when Griffith reached them the next spring after nearly losing his life in the snow in the attempt. The watchmen said that all the wealth in the state, if it were offered to them,



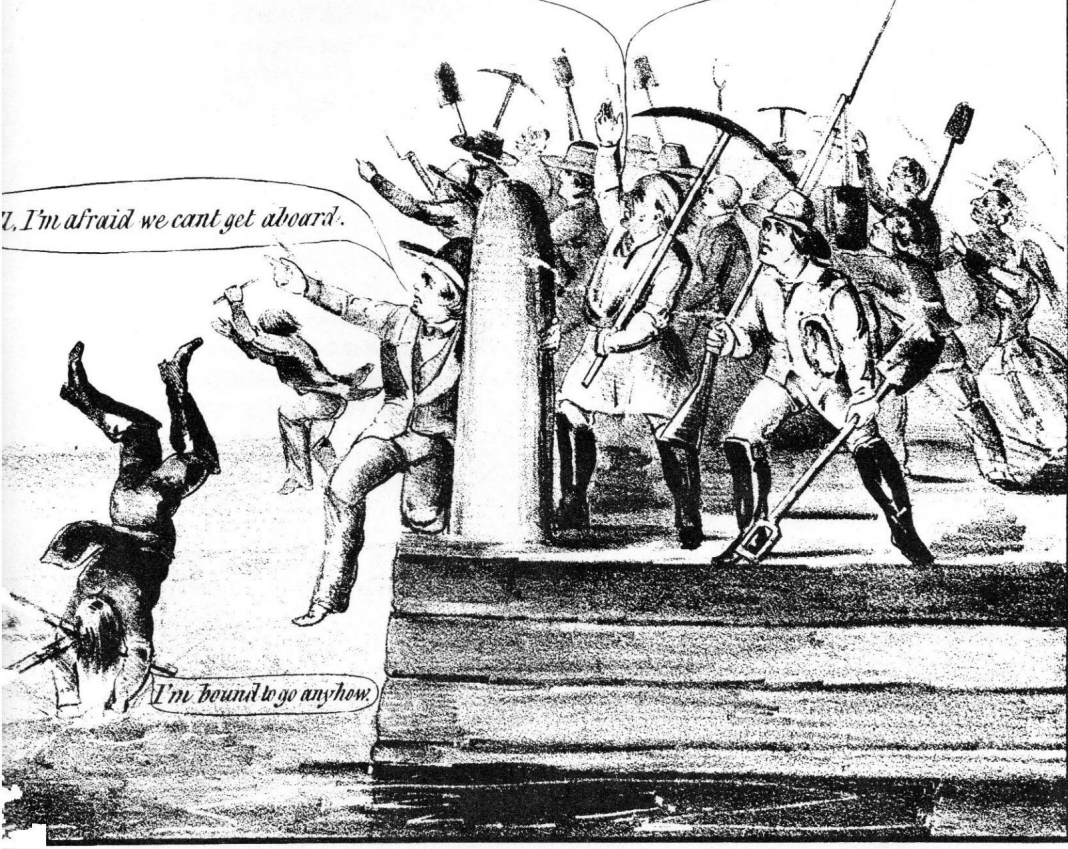
LITH. & PUB. BY N. CURRIER,

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1840 by N. Currier, in the Clerk's office of the D.



*Hold on there I've paid my passage and I aint aboard.*

*I'm afraid we cant get aboard.*



# THE WAY THEY GO TO CALIFORNIA.

Some of the argonauts came by sailing vessel around the Horn. Some sailed to the Isthmus of Panama, crossed on foot or muleback, and re-embarked on the West Coast for San Francisco. Many came directly across the Plains. A fourth route, that traveled by Cornelius Demarest and the other members of the General Persifer F. Smith Association, was the most difficult and therefore the least traveled. It consisted of going to Galveston by sailing vessel, and overland from there.

Courtesy of California Historical Society

*Course of the South West Dist. of N. Y.*

152 NASSAU ST. COR. OF SPRUCE N. Y.

would not induce them to pass another winter in these awesome solitudes.

The writer of these chronicles lived for six years at Altaville and had about one acre under irrigation with water from the Company, and on which flourished in the utmost profusion roses of many different varieties besides many other garden flowers and vegetables, apples, peaches, plums, pears, apricots, nectarines, figs and grapes. Outside the fence not a blade of green grass was seen in summer, and all was covered with a mantle of dust. The garden was a veritable oasis in the desert.

In later years, Calaveras fell upon evil times. A "Pharoah that knew not Joseph" arose in the shape of the great Utica mine. Obtaining control of the Union Water Company, Utica diverted the entire stream to its own mills, cut off the irrigation supply, and caused that region to return to its original barrenness. Gardens and vineyards were abandoned, roads were ruined by its enormous logging teams. Although more gold is now extracted than ever before, nothing whatever has been done to improving or beautifying the town that has given the owners of the Utica all their wealth and whose beauty they have destroyed, together with a large region around it. The principal "improvement" has been to increase the population by about four thousand foreigners, and to support some forty saloons.

#### DOCTOR JONES

Some years after settling in Calaveras, the three friends found themselves engaged in quite different occupations and at different localities. Notwithstanding, the affairs of the Water Company, of which they were directors and officers, brought them together nearly every week at Murphy's, which was then the headquarters of the Company.

Doctor Jones, by his ability and skill as a physician and surgeon, had established a wide and lucrative practice, embracing a large part of the county. In connection with his practice, he had built and operated a drugstore at Murphys.\*

When the writer first made his acquaintance after his advent in Calaveras, the doctor was married to a French lady, one of Nature's noblewomen. Kind, warm-hearted and sympathetic, she was a worthy helpmate to the doctor. The writer had a lively appreciation of more than one occasion when he was turned over by the doctor to his better half, in his distress to be relieved by her ministrations and sympathetic help.

At one time when the writer was living with his brother at Slab Ranch, he was taken with a most violent attack of fever and ague, at that time an absolutely unknown ailment in that place. After suffering for about ten days, he started to see the doctor at Murphy's some six miles up the gorge of Angel's Creek, on foot, then the only means of conveyance directly between those two points. After examining his case, the doctor mixed up some medicine for

\*William Jones was a prominent resident of Murphy's and involved in many public activities. He also occupies a special niche in local history, for it was he who in 1866 sent the controversial "Calaveras Skull" to Professor Whitney in San Francisco. Whether he was a party to the hoax or was hoaxed himself is still not known to this day.

him. Unfortunately, he had another patient for whom he was prescribing at the same time. By some mental twist of mind just at that time he did what the nurse in "Pinafore" did, "mixed those babies up." The other patient was given the writer's dose, and vice versa. The doctor was very much chagrined when he found out the mistake he had made and said that it must be ejected, for though it was not harmful for a strong man, it was much too much for him in his weakened condition. He was ushered into the living room and given in charge of the doctor's wife. Shortly before this time, the doctor's drug store had been burned down and he had converted part of his dwelling into an office and drugstore. After many and large draughts of warm water and many titillations of a quill feather in his throat, the offending dose was finally persuaded to evacuate its quarters and find lodgement in the kitchen sink. When this was accomplished, he was forbidden to go home that night as it was already evening. So quarters were provided in the best chamber in the house for the night. The next morning, bright and early, his brother came up the creek to look for him, for he had been expected home before nightfall the previous evening.

The doctor received the whole Demarest family as kings and brothers and insisted that the entire family must repose under his medical care without remuneration or reward. However, to the average person he was a very irritable and irascible individual, and in his intercourse with the outer world his noble wife acted in the capacity of a balance wheel to a steam engine, steadying its movements and keeping it from running wild.

The interviews between the doctor and his patients were not always characterized by the most suave and elegant language, particularly when his directions were not carried out with the most explicit exactitude. On one occasion at romantic Slab Ranch he was treating an Englishman who lived in the enjoyment of the refined name of Lomax, who had broken his leg. The doctor was called and he set the fracture properly and bound it up in splints and bandages and left it in good condition. A couple of times after that he called on his patient who was progressing comfortably. The last time he called he met the patient's wife at the head of a short lane that led down to his house and asked how the patient was getting along. She told him that he did not appear so well, that he had suffered so much pain they had taken off the bandages and splints to look at his leg. Talk about an explosion of dynamite! "You -----fools," roared the doctor, "If you don't know better than to do a thing like that, you are not worth saving a man's life for." And wheeling his horse, he sped away, cleaving the air as he went with his vehement imprecations, leaving a perceptibly blue and sulphurous atmosphere behind him. Fortunately, the work had been done so well that the man recovered despite the blundering of his nurses.

The name of Slab Ranch has left some vivid impressions on the writer's memory\*. He lived there with his brother during the second and third years of his stay in Calaveras. He was engaged during that time doing his share in making the beauty places of

\*The site of Slab Ranch can be seen south of the Murphys Grade Road a short distance before the road enters the narrow gulch upstream. It is currently being subdivided.

California into a barren desert, leaving a lovely flat valley nothing but heaps of stones and tailings. He was with his partners working a large flat that for ages had been the abode and cemetery as well of a tribe of native Indians. The soil was honeycombed with pits in which the incinerated remains were deposited. This flat had been formed by the accumulation of debris brought down by Angel's Creek and was very fertile. On the opposite side of the creek was Lomax's Ranch where magnificent watermelons were raised. The writer and his two partners made an arrangement with Lomax such that for four bits or half a dollar they could have the privilege of picking from the vines as much as one man could carry over to our claim. The load usually consisted of two melons. After coming from the hot sun, they were thrown into a water-hole. After they had lain there in the cold water for half an hour, they were a feast for the gods. Thus at least twice a day we were almost in the condition of the little 'coon in the song who had crawled through the hole in the fence to the watermelon vine, and after gorging himself, found that he could not get out the same hole and was caught by the irate farmer and sent to pris'n because the melons were not his'n. Fortunately, we had a clear title to the melons we transported across the creek.

This flat was the scene of the fiasco a couple of years later when the writer was involved in a mining scheme which awarded its stockholders the munificent amount of thirty-six dollars for an expenditure of some twenty thousand.

After leaving Slab Ranch, the writer moved to Altaville and carried on the iron works at that place until his departure for the East. It was during his residence at this place that an event occurred that will illustrate the hazards of quartz mining physically as well as financially, and at the same time show how closely the bonds of friendship had been drawn between our three kings.

Demarest (the writer's elder brother) owned and operated a quartz mine and mill some seven miles distant from Altaville in the Bear Mountain range. Associated with him was Phil Ward, a relative of his wife. Demarest and Ward took turns in charge of the mill, day and night. At this particular time, Demarest had the night shift.

The night was cold and the ordinary condition of a quartz mill is very wet under foot. So, to keep his feet warm, he wore two pairs of heavy stockings and over all a large pair of rubber boots. In going around the mill attending to his duties, he went to some of the framework overhead to oil the bearings of a certain member of the machinery. As he was passing along a timber to reach this, the toe of his projecting rubber boot got caught in the arm of a slowly revolving wheel and was drawn down close to the timber. Before he could extricate it, the next arm came down and caught the boot squarely across the middle, jamming it so fast that it brought the entire mill to a standstill. In order to release him, the mill crew turned the water off the thirty-foot overshot wheel that furnished the power, and with great levers, all hands managed to turn the wheel backwards enough to release the foot. He promptly fainted from the pain when the blood again found its way into the foot.

Here was a situation! What should be done? Seven miles from home and fourteen from a doctor, and no conveyance to carry him

to either. As fast as possible, Ward mounted a horse for Altaville to bring down a wagon and at the same time sent a mounted messenger to Murphy's to ask Doctor Jones to come down and meet him at Altaville on his arrival. About seven in the morning, Ward returned with his patient, meeting the messenger from Murphy's with word that the doctor would not come down. The patient must be brought there, as the doctor could not properly take care of him at that distance. They must bring him to Murphy's where he could have him at close call all the time.

Here was our unfortunate patient, after enduring the torture of the crushed foot for six hours, again to undergo another seven-mile over roads equally as bad if not worse than that from the mine to Altaville. We fixed him up in the easiest wagon that could be found, and with mattresses and pillows, we attempted to make his position as comfortable as possible. In an hour we started for Murphy's over the rocks and ruts that abounded in what we called the inside road. This we took as it was about four miles shorter than the stage road. After suffering the most excruciating pain during the ride, the patient and his party reached Murphy's some two hours later. Driving directly to Doctor Jones' office, we found an elegant and glittering array of surgical instruments laid out as in dress parade, in anticipation of amputating the foot.

After cutting off the boot and several pairs of stockings, the doctor was astonished to find the foot apparently uninjured to all outward appearances. Apparently deceived by this (he didn't realize fully its actual condition inside) he declared that he would not amputate but would save the foot, for, he said, a bad foot was better than no foot at all. The instruments were put away. The writer suggested that perhaps the injury was much worse than appeared on the surface, but the doctor's professional pride and reputation were at stake, and he repeated that he could save that foot, and that the foot must and would be saved.

A room was prepared at Griffith's home only about a hundred yards away and to that the patient was carried and put to bed. This was his position for the next six months, attended with the most assiduous care by the doctor, his friend Griffith, and Griffith's family, all without remuneration or expectation of it, until he had so far recovered as to be removed to his home in Altaville. Here he could manage to move around and attend to his business by the aid of a pair of crutches.

The foot took another year before it fully healed, the wound being kept open all this time so that all the crushed bone could slough out. Jones' prophecy was fulfilled and proved that a poor foot was better than no foot at all.

#### IN MEMORIAM

Jesse Coffee - October 23, 1976

#### BACK ISSUES

A list of our back issues is available for the asking. Out of print issues will be supplied as "xerox" copies. Price to members is 60 cents a copy, and a discount is given for orders over \$10.

## Officers of Calaveras County Historical Society

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The Calaveras County Historical Society, a non-profit corporation, meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Grange Hall in San Andreas — except for dinner meetings which are held each quarter at different places in the county.

### CORRECTION

In our last issue, "The Smith Family of West Point", there was mention of Claude Smith as sitting on the original board of directors of the Mark Twain Hospital District, having served from the Hospital's inception. It should be noted, however, that although Claude was appointed to the board of directors in 1950, prior to the opening of the Hospital in 1951, he was not the first representative of the West Point area on the board, which was formed in 1946. Mr. Frank Solinsky first represented that community, and it was not until his premature death in 1950 that Claude Smith was appointed.

### CALAVERAS HERITAGE COUNCIL

A new organization has been formed under the auspices of the Calaveras County Historical and Cultural Activities Commission to help administer the newly-renovated County Courthouse, to preserve and encourage the use of the county archives, and to encourage cultural activities here in the music, arts and crafts related to our heritage. The first three hundred persons to join (at \$10 per year) will be charter members and will receive a copy of a most interesting little volume entitled, "Trips to the Mines", Calaveras County, 1857 - 1859", an edition limited to charter members.

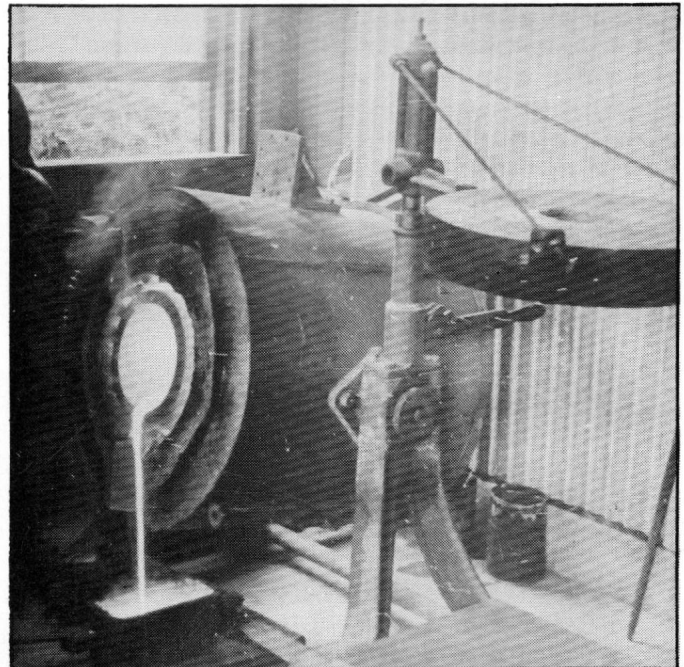
### "THIS IS MY LAND"

We have few professional writers in our Mother Lode region, and so it is with much pride and pleasure that we announce that a new book by Mokelumne Hill poetess and author, Lirrel Starling, has recently been published. "This Is My Land" is a miscellany of her writings, past and present, interestingly arranged in four categories. Section I, "Fact", concerns her associations with people of Mokelumne Hill, including her own family, the Gardellas. "Fiction" is the title of Section II, containing excerpts from an unpublished novel, "Martin Hilby", and several short stories, mostly set in the Calaveras scene. In the next section, "Fourth Estate", the author includes parts of her columns and articles, published in various newspapers, with reminiscences of related matters. "Rostrum and Lyre" completes the book, and consists of tributes to certain writers of California and to mementoes of the past.

"This Is My Land" may be purchased from the author, Box 307, San Andreas, California, 95249, for \$6.50 (including packaging and mailing).

### "CALAVERAS COUNTY DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED"

There are still copies of the soft-bound edition of "Calaveras County Described and Illustrated" available for sale. These may be obtained by sending a check or money order for \$5.25 per book to the Society's mailing address: P.O. Box 721, San Andreas, Ca. 95249.



### THE LAST GOLD BRICK

Pouring the last gold brick at the Sheepranch mine in 1942 from an oil-fired tilting furnace at the mine. This is a picture from the collection acquired recently from Mr. George Bartholomees, a staff-member of the St. Joseph Lead Company, last operators of the mine.