

### STEVENSON, Col. Jonathan D.



Born in the nation's metropolis on the first day of the 19th century, grandson of a revolutionary soldier, he was from age 18 engaged in the mercantile trade in which he soon made the acquaintance of Gov. D. D. Tompkins of that state. The latter within a short time appointed Stevenson his agent as pro-prietor of the Staten Island steamship line and when Tompkins became vice president of the United States took Stevenson to Washington, D. C., as his secretary.

From age 21 Stevenson attached himself to the NYC militia, becoming in '28 commander of a regiment. He had long been an intimate of President Polk when in '46 the latter offered him the command of a volunteer army which was to be raised for the Mexican war in California.

The rolls of the NY Vols. were accordingly opened July 4 '46. Politics entered into this service. Some who wanted to take over the command attempted to discredit Stevenson by filing charges against him in New York City and attempting to subpoena him to appear. But he got wind of it, took his station on his flagship, refused to permit the sheriff to come aboard except on government business, and when the latter left to get the militia to serve the papers, gave the order to set sail.

The Vols. were artisans, brought to Calif. with the understanding that they would be given lands in any territory conquered. Many brought the tools of their trades with them. Some brought their families. All were not the cream of American society; indeed, the majority were immigrants not accustomed to freedom. A few were carpetbaggers.

With this background, one could expect some trouble with them. . . and California had it. Much of the land trouble could be traced to a few of these men, others of them were among the leaders of the *hounds* whose activities called out the first vigilance committee in '49.

Yet, everything considered, they gave a trifling amount of trouble; among the settlers of Santa Cruz, none at all.

Those who settled here were industrious, frugal, honest, law-abiding, able to live in peace side-by-side with the natives without any of the bloodshed so prevalent in other parts of the state; a truly remarkable record when one considers the land promises made them and compares their yearning for its fulfillment with the fact that all of the best agricultural lands of this small county were long since disposed of by Spanish grant.

Col. Stevenson's force were token warriors. If its components fired a shot, it was not in contest with another army. All, save a unit in

Lower California, who had not been mustered out before the gold excitement of the summer of '48 took French leave at that time and went to the mines.

Col. Stevenson stayed in the service as commander of the southern department at Los Angeles until Oct. '48. At this time, in company with a few picked officers and men of his command he proceeded to the mines. At Mokelumne Hill the general body of miners named him alcalde. In this capacity he formed the first set of mining laws, these became standard throughout the west.

But he foresaw something more than the dull routine of mining, sustained only by the agitation of a new find, as the future of this state. In partnership with Dr. William C. Parker, who had come to Calif. with him as a contractor surgeon, he commenced to set out towns, being the first subdivider in SF and so successful at this that he completely knocked out of existence the true town of *Francesca* which we now call Benicia and which was intended by Col. M. G. Vallejo to be the metropolis of the west.

By February of '49 in company with many of his old command he started to set out the town of Sta Cruz on the hill to the west of the present business center of the town, about the same time acquiring a portion of Rancho Meganos where he set out a town he named "New York of the Pacific," afterward called "Black Diamond" because of the gold deposits in that region and is today known as Pittsburg, one of the manufacturing centers of the Contra Costa shoreline. He had some part, but was not the pretended owner of the land involved, in the development of Martinez.

Stevenson and Parker were the first to erect a lath and plaster house in the state (in SF '49) and the first to offer homes on the edge of the "waterlot" region of the metropolis, erecting these homes on piles, long since filled in and today the city's most valuable property.

Dr. Parker enjoyed Sta Cruz much better than SF. Stevenson, therefore brought him out; but in doing so spread himself rather thin and in the money pressure that followed the gold squanderings he was nearly wiped out, being forced to offer for a song land worth thousands and now worth billions. In spite of this he was one of the wealthy men of the state.

But the problems posed by this financial arrangement caused him to overlook his extensive Santa Cruz holdings, the result being that when in '61 he recalled his possessions here and commenced to regain them, the titles became hopelessly snarled.

He had failed to present his Sta Cruz land claims to the US board of land commissioners. So had the people of Santa Cruz. The result was that the matter went to the congress which decided in favor of the then owners resident of this community and gave title on the Sta Cruz side to a board of freeholders, on the Villa Branciforte side to County Judge Augustine W. Blair. These repositories, in turn, gave the deeds from which most of the modern city titles are derived.

Highly regarded, not only by his troops, but also by the natives and by all with whom he came in contact, he lived, a wealthy benefactor, in SF.

As a member of the first vigilance committee he was required to turn his back on several of his men, some of whom had been his officers. In the trying times attendant upon the gold rush and the terrible winters of those years he contributed largely to the relief of the sick, the poor, the dying and to the decent interment of the indigent dead.

When the grand lodge of Masons was organized, Stevenson was the unanimous choice of its delegates to serve as master.

### BRIAR, The Rev. James

A local minister of one of the west. conferences of the M. E. church appt. to supply work as a local preacher for the Calif. conf. overland in the 'Jay-Hawker' party that suffered such hardships in Death Valley during the winter of '49-50 with the Arcan family. Prob. spent time in S Jose before coming to Sta Cruz '50 to take charge of the local church. Promised \$1,000, but took \$600 when this sum was all the community could raise for one year's work. At Feather River '51, prominent in various parts of the state until '58 when, as a result of the slavery question, he gravitated away from the ME faith, organized the American Wesleyan church in S Jose and when this failed united with the Congregational church. His attitude and action was regarded as "a great loss," according to C. V. Anthony (50 Years of Methodism). See also Mrs. Kirby's *Diary* reprinted by *Riptide* Sept. 1948. The widow died at Lodi May 26, 1913, aged 99 years. A son, Junius, was living in Pacific Grove in 1933.

### COOPER, Franklin

B in Pa., poss. uncle of J. L., T. S. and W. F. Cooper; b '13. To Calif. by sea '49; in the mines for a time in bus. in Sta Cruz from May '50 with his relatives, with whom he was unable to get along. He was a political figure for a time, deputy county clerk and

### BELLAMY, George W.

Virginian, to Ore. with the Bennett-Daubensiss group '42, and to Calif. from Ore. '43 with the same party, opening a shop in S Jose '44, signer of the call to foreigners '45, but apparently not one of the military the following years. Man with a mind of his own, in occasional difficulties with justice, owner of the Sta Clara House as a partner or competitor of Grove C. Cook. His wife from '45 was Maria de Jesus Bernal, who, after B's death '62 became Mrs. Perez Bellamy, or Bellomy, as it was also spelled, was in the lumber business in Mont. and Sta Cruz after '50.

### STEINMETZ, Charles

B in Hanover, Germany, Feb. 19 '27, cabinet maker by trade who reached NY in time to enlist with the 1st US art. for the Mex. war. Ill at war's end, he returned to Germany to recoup. In '50 to Calif. around the Horn, settling in the Nevada co. mines. In the mercantile bus. there for several years. M '57 to Miss Anna Kessler. Able to retire and live in Sta Cruz from '68, memb. of the bd of supers and public school trustee for years before becoming county treasurer for two terms after '84. Of his nine child. at least two are alive.

### GILMAN, John B.

In Sta Cruz '50. In Mont. co. '83.

### COOPER, John Leckey



B in Gettysburg, Pa., '29, of a family that could trace its antecedents to James Fenimore Cooper, author of the 'Leatherstocking Tales' and beyond that to the Earl of Stratford-on-Avon, in the interim obtaining an American grant direct from William Penn.

To Calif. aboard the schooner *Sovereign* which left Boston Jan. 18 '49, in company with T. S. and Franklin Cooper (q. v.). To the Isthmus and to SF on the English bark *John Richardson*. Perhaps to the mines, but started a store in SF later that year. Cooper Bros., in early times the county's leading mercantile establishment, was organized in May '50 perhaps with materials transported across the plains by a third bro., William F. (q. v.).

Called 'Fatty,' he was a good-natured, if somewhat straight-laced man. Elected to the county bd. of supers. '58, refusing to serve, but going east to marry Miss Alice Maria Paxton of Chambersburg, Pa. Two child. were b here, a son, John, surviving to become a noted newspaperman in SF. His wife died '66 and he married about '79 the widow of David J. Saslam. D in Sta Cruz '87.

### BENNETT, Silas F.

B in Canada of American parents about '04; raised by an uncle at where today Cleveland, Ohio, is. Wed Oct. 17 '25 Susanna Ripley, b in NY Oct. 28 '05 and resident of Ill. to '48 when they came overland. The trip was rugged, Mrs. B— being sick 'nigh unto death,' Inds. were unruly and tho' they started with plenty of provisions for themselves and six child, tolls by threatening Inds. as well as those of Christian charity depleted the supply long before reaching Calif. Had it not been for the kindly help of Col. Fremont, whom they met near the Calif. line, Bennett later said he never could have gotten through. F— piloted them to a place of safety. After replenishing their larder from the reservoir of game, they reached Sacto six months after starting.

A millwright, B— was employed by Capt. Sutter to repair his sawmill at Coloma. Here Mrs. Bennett, while her husband worked, conducted a boarding house and sold the produce of six cows. Regular boarders paid \$25 per month. Meals sold for \$1.50. Milk was similarly high, but her conscience wouldn't permit her to sell it for more than \$1 per quart, she adding two home-made biscuits to the bargain.

The family, 'Christians of an earnest type,' organized the first prayer-meetings in Sacto and in the mines. With John Woods, John Pinkham, Robert Sears, Bishop William Taylor and Elihu Anthony, the Bennett family reached Santa Cruz in the fall of '49 and continued to reside here for a decade. In '50 with A. A. Hecox he gave the seven acres of land to the M. E. church for the first protestant structure in Sta Cruz, erected at the corner of Green and Mission streets. He took his family to Long Valley, Mendocino co. in '59, erecting a sawmill and grist mill and helped Enos Beaumont, another local M. E. minister erect the first log church there. Died at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. C. V. Anthony at Petaluma Jan. 25 '82. His widow died at the Oakland home of the same couple three years later. I have no information on the sons. The daughters became, I believe, Mrs. Thomas Gatch, wife of the first principal of Santa Cruz elementary school; Mrs. Charles V. Anthony, wife of an M. E. minister and sister-in-law of Elihu Anthony, and Mrs. Bascom Case, daughter-in-law of this community's first teacher. (See B. A. Case). One of the Case daughters in recent years owned an apartment house on Elm street near Pacific avenue, but dropped suddenly from sight.

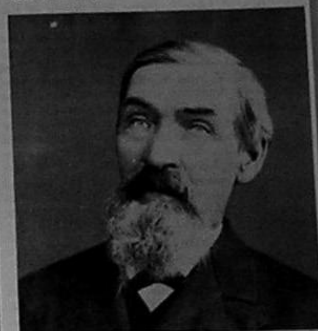
### PORTER, Thomas R.

Buying prop. in Sta Cruz '49; prob. in Villa Branciforte; sold '50 to E. B. Kellogg. No relative of the other Porters.

### GARDNER, J. H.

In Sta Cruz '50. No less than 17 of this surname appear on the county roll in early years. There is no way of connecting them.

### COOPER, William Franklin



B in Gettysburg, Pa., Dec. 18 '23; bro. of J. L., T. S. and Franklin, unless the latter was an uncle. Overland to Calif. as a member of the Pittsburgh Enterprise co. This party of about 250 left that city April 13 '49; including in its membership T. Galbraith, I presume, the father of Mary Caroline G—, the lady who became Mrs. Thomas Pilkington here in '55.

To the mines until that winter when in SF he organized Cooper Bros. and settled in Sta Cruz. The store fronted on Front street where the courthouse annex now is. William became known as a friend of the mission Inds., contributing largely to the welfare of this group rapidly wiped out by disease. Here in formative years he served as a sort of land agent for the federal government, occupying a position of great respect and maintaining it with considerable reserve. Served as the first mayor under the reorganization of municipal govt. '76, postmaster for many years. Died in Sta Cruz Dec. 6 '94, survived by the widow, to whom he had been married before starting west, and four of his five child.

### BLACKBURN, Daniel D.

Bro. of William, b in Ohio (?), to Calif. '49 with Wm. Finley (q. v.), taking over his brother's store and in '51 engaging with the judge in potato raising, the first year's yield being so enormous that at 13c per pound they received nearly \$100,000, four acres producing \$1200 to the acre. I have little info on Daniel after '52 when, in what is now Paso Robles, he opened a hotel in his house. Still owning property here '66.

### BRUMMETT, James

'Uncle Jimmy' was the first Pajaro valley election judge '50; from this to '54 freq. ment. as a road supervisor.

### SANFORD, Fred H.

'50, attorney with J. H. Rankin.

### SMITH, Orrin

Of the Mormon col. '46 with wife and six child. ex-com. and left for a time at Honolulu. Lived in Sta Cruz in the '60s. Adau., Amelia, was living in Utah '84.

### BARTON, John R.

'45, serving in the Micheltorena campaign; perhaps a brother of William; lt. of the Calif. bat. '47-8, to Sta Cruz '50 but soon settled in Los Angeles where he became the first sheriff. Not in all matters an exemplary citizen, he was nevertheless fearless in the discharge of his public office, killed in ambush by *Las Manillas* near LA '57. Owner of a great deal of valuable property left to his son, born out of wedlock to an Indian woman. The boy was highly educated, died as a young man, leaving the bulk of his fortune to charity.

### BERTRAND,

A family of this name seems to have been pioneers. Emile Bertrand reached Calif. '47 as a member of Co. C NY vols. Vincent and Gracia Bertrand ment. in Sta Cruz '62. C. Bertrand of '59 must have been of the same family.

### COOLEY, R. M.

Speculator in lands in Sta Cruz '49.

### HEWITT, Adam

In Sta Cruz '50. Perhaps Adam Herriot ment. '46, 'Huet' in an American farmer to Calif. from Ore. '45. A. Hewitt, serving under Hensley in Calif. bat. '46, in N Hevittia '48.

### GIVENS, George F.

At Soquel '50.

### BYRD, Thomas

'50, associated with the Humboldt mill. Unable to collect on a David Jackson Bennett here.