

Footsteps on the Sands of Time

The County's Pioneer Legion

By AUNT MATHILDA

RENNIE, William



An Aberdeenshire man, b March 11 '22, enroute to Canada '46 when he fell in with a fellow carpenter who persuaded him that Wisconsin was better territory. If he ever got to Canada it was after '91 for he was at long convincing himself after hearing of the discovery that golden California was the place for him; left Milwaukee March 6 and was a safe at Greenhorn's camp, Bear river, Oct. 6 '49. Until the rains forced him to cease he was taking out from \$30 to \$50 per day. Helped build the first brick building in Sacto, worked for a while in the Yuba mines. When '52 the Australian strike was announced, he proceeded to the land down under in a disastrous voyage that ended in shipwreck. Back to Calif., this time as a farmer, he took time out to visit the native heaths and acquire a wife '59.

To Sta Cruz '68 to become prop. of a sawmill above the powder mills on the San Lorenzo and a planing and wood turning mill at what is today the corner of Calhoun street and Pacific avenue. He was the father of five child. In the development of Lompoc the family moved there, retaining a home and property in this city. The widow, recently remarried, of one of his child, still lives here.

PARKER, Robert A.

Nat. of Boston, sup. of the Mt. Vernon to Calif. '47, introduced as a 'tough customer'; owner of an adobe store on Dupont st. SF '48, and from July of the City Hotel in company prob. with Robt. Ridley and J. H. Brown (q. v.). At Crescent City '54, then to Calif.; to Sta Cruz '60 to participate in the S Lorenzo yal, mineral excitement; died at S. Quentin (not an inmate) '65, aged 45. His widow d. in SF '83, aged 61, leaving five child.

PARKER, William C.

7, ast surgeon of NY vols, to the mines prob. with Col. J. S. Stevenson (q. v.) but shortly engaged in community and commercial development, named as owner of NY of the Pac (Pittsburg) '49, a partner of Elihu Anthony in commerce at Sta Cruz this and the following year and of Stevenson in developing the 'town. About '51 went to SF to make his home until '76 and in later years resident of Oakland as a merchant. Still alive '84. His son, Herbert, was for years prop. of a hardware store where Mock's drug store stands at the corner of Church and Pacific. His wife was Minnie Laird, whose father owned the dairy farm that became the site of the Davenport cement plant. Members of the family still live in Berkeley.

PACKARD, Albert

Lawyer and trader from RI, from Mazatlan '45, trading at Mont. and SF '46-8 and in Sta Cruz as late as '62; in Sta Bar '76, ex-city atty and holder of other offices.

PALASKO, J.

In Sta Cruz '50.

PALMER, John

'49, an employe of Graham who in April '50 assisted Tillatha Catharine to flee the farm with the old man's gold and the babies. They went by horseback to SF, took a boat to Honolulu. Palmer died before the boat docked in the islands. He had reached Calif. '46 with Co. C, 1st dragons under Kearney.

ROWE, William H.



B in Plymouth, Eng., Nov. 17 '29, to the US at age 13, working his way as a deckhand on a sailing vessel. To SF '48, for a short time in the mines above Sacto, but finding this unprofitable took up a squatter's claim on the Pajaro river '53, but abandoned this in favor of a better claim in the Green Valley region, claiming to have been the first settler in this area. By the time of his death Feb. 1 '93 he was the owner of 1,340 acres of some of the most valuable land on each side of the Pajaro river. He was a leader in Christian church circles at Watsonville, a member of the democratic party who never sought office.



MRS. ROWE

Nee Rhoda Ann McFarland, a native of Mo., b '34. Very little has been written about the courageous women who came west to contribute to the founding of an empire. This is due perhaps to the fact that their migration was not encouraged. Most of the emigration never expected to make a home in Calif.; but intended, rather, to acquire a pile and return to the comforts of the family hearth.

Miss McFarland, deprived of a father by the Mexican war and confronted with the necessity of attempting to care for a semi-invalid mother possessed of few comforts about the family hearth, conceived the idea of coming west to mine gold and with the dreamed-of profits returning to Missouri to lavish wealth upon her mother.

The mother either could not, or would not, make the trip. The daughter talked her into consenting to a 14-year-old son accompanying Rhoda Ann. With this boy and a neighboring family of father, mother and three child, the girl reached Hangtown early in the fall of '50. Before fall had run out into winter her brother and the mother and father of the three accompanying children were buried.

Left with three hungry mouths to feed, alone in a wilderness of men not always gentlemen, the 16-year-old girl struggled through the winter as a serving-maid in a boarding house. A subscription eventually was raised to return the child, to relatives in Mo.; but Rhoda Ann stayed on.

One day a young man entered the boarding house exhibiting a nugget of rare beauty and value. He got away before Rhoda Ann had a chance to glimpse the exhibit. She used this as an excuse for an introduction to the young man the next day. Two weeks later she led her nugget to the altar and became Mrs. William H. Rowe. By the summer of '53 the Rowe

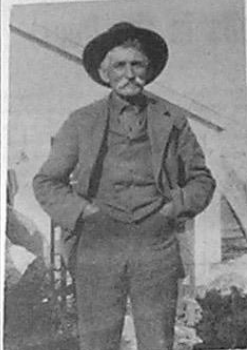
wisdom of this and with each year's acquisition spent a portion of her time worrying about it. However, when William Henry died he was able to leave a farm to each of his children and a large farm for all of them in community.

Mrs. Rowe was highly regarded by her neighbors. Many a Watsonville girl of the generation immediately succeeding hers was christened with the name Rhoda Ann. By the time of her death about 71 she was the mother of 11 child.

PARKER, Richard

Speculating in lands here '49.

RYDER, William Roland



According to one of his granddaughters, here in '50, while Leon Rowland says he was a '49er; but I presume he arrived about '52. Said to have been born in New Bedford, Mass., May 24 '36, by one branch of the family, while his daughter, Bertha, says he was born in '32. Meanwhile Ryder in '64 gives his age as 30 years and in '66 as 34. It is this discrepancy, I suppose, that causes the confusion since he apparently dates his arrival at age 17 years.

Ryder, to reach Calif. repaired to Boston and boarded a vessel bound for the Isthmus of Panama. The migration was so heavy at the time that in order to cross the isthmus (he had to have mules) he was required to pay \$50 per head for these beasts of burden. When he had reached Crueses, he could find no market for mules at any price. Before he was aboard ship bound for Calif. an agent for the man from whom he had purchased them originally picked them up for nothing!

In early times preferred mining in the Grass Valley region, and then moved for a time to SF, but finally, about the outbreak of the civil war consenting to participate in a farming venture with his brother, Charles Henry, at Soquel possibly because of the girl, Mahala Jane Himes, who became Mrs. Ryder in '64. Ryder was a member of the home guard during the civil war years, but for the most part avoided public display of any kind. Died in Sept. '17, survived by two of his three child, one of whom, Bertha (Mrs. William H. Ewell) lives in Watsonville, the mother of three daughters. A number of grand- and great grandchildren reside in cent. Calif.

The surname is variously spelled 'Rider' and 'Ryder.' William was said to have had several bros. here, but the only one I'm aware of is Charles Henry (q. v.) Another William Ryder is listed among the pioneers of the Pajaro valley. One of these girls became the wife of Charles Bardin, member of a noted Monterey family. One or two descendants make their home in the Pajaro valley.

REED, James Frazier



years who was taken ill and died before reaching the sierra in Oct., her death and the attendant delay awaiting it (despite her pleas that the party proceed without her) was one of the factors responsible for the fate of the Donner party.

In the trying experience of breaking a trail over the desert, during which all had to leave their belongings behind, John Snyder, one of his drovers becoming engered by the weakness of some of the oxen and administered a beating to the animals. This Mrs. Reed protested. Snyder struck her with his whip. Reed drove a knife into the heart of his drover and was hailed before the remainder of the company for murder.

The company split over this, part holding for capital punishment; but eventually a compromise was reached wherein Reed was allowed to take the horse of his stepdaughter, Virginia Blackburn, and proceed over the mountains without a gun or food. Little Virginia and a man crept out of camp that night to pass him a gun and some crackers.

The act perhaps saved those of

the Donner party who were saved. For Reed got over the hill to Sutter's Fort ahead of the snow, properly read the weather signs he saw, and commenced immediately a campaign to send relief to those trapped in the mountains.

On Oct. 31 the party was trapped at Donner summit. Reed, struggling up the west side with supplies was forced to turn back, dividing his time that winter between serving as a lt. of vols. at Sta Clara in the Sanchez campaign and attempting to earn enough money to buy supplies against the day he could get into the hills.

In Feb. '47 he went back to the Donner party with the second relief and brought out several of the party, the remainder of those who were saved being rescued by a party whose activities he had inspired.

All the family was saved. They settled at S Jose where R— became a wealthy and respected land owner, holder of much of the property on which the present town is built, obtaining by deed from the owner a mile square at 35 cents an acre. In (Continued on Page Four)

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