

Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation

April Newsletter, 2022

How Did They Get Here?

This month's newsletter is inspired by local historian and author, Frank Tortorich. Frank is an historical author with three books to his credit, and is heavily involved in activities at the Kennedy Mine in Jackson. Frank and his wife, Mary Ann, (his business partner, editor, publisher, and computer whiz), recently gave a talk on the Western Migration resulting in this month's subject.

1848 - BREAKING NEWS!

When the news broke "back in the States" in mid-1848 about gold being found in California, the seeming abandonment of Eastern Civilization began almost immediately. Visions of great piles of gold nuggets clouded the judgement of previously rational men and women. Every means of transportation known to man at the time was used to "rush" to the gold fields in California.

CALIFORNIAN

BY D. B. DUCKELEY.

SAN FRANCISCO, MARCH 15, 1849.

— 000 —

GOLD MINE FOUND.—In the newly made raceway of the Saw Mill recently erected by Captain Sutter, on the American Fork, gold has been found in considerable quantities. One person brought thirty dollars worth to New Helvetia, gathered there in a short time. California, no doubt, is rich in mineral wealth; great chances here for scientific capitalists. Gold has been found in almost every part of the country.

This early San Francisco announcement of gold discovery mentions New Helvetia which is Sutter's Fort in what is now Sacramento.



This 1850's photograph shows James Marshall standing where he originally discovered gold at Sutter's Mill. This site is now in the middle of the American River at Coloma.

OVERLAND TRAVEL



GRAND PATENT INDIA-RUBBER AIR LINE RAILWAY TO CALIFORNIA.
COMPETITION DEFIED.
 FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC, THROUGH IN NO TIME. The principle of this Railways is such that if the Passengers are nicely balanced both in mind and body all that is necessary to land them at the "Gold diggers" is to cut the line on the Atlantic side, then by one jerk they reach to safety their place of destination. Reverse the above and they are back again. — N. B. What is claimed in this patent, is having discovered the spontaneous expansion and contraction of India Rubber.

Most commonly, people walked, booked passage on westbound

Wagons transported belongings while drivers, along with everybody else, walked along at an average speed of 5 to 7 miles per day. Many trains took Sundays off to rest. Covering the roughly 1,500 miles to California took 5 to 7 months of grueling travel.



Pioneers passed through seemingly limitless country inhabited by vast herds of buffalo and, of course, Native Americans. Indian Tribes were not always thrilled to see great numbers of immigrants arriving in their regions taking game and water without invitation.



Cheyenne Indian village with teepees decorated with scalps.



Buffalo herd on the move.

After many weeks of tedious, slow travel, suddenly the great Rocky Mountains loomed followed by our own High Sierras.



Wagons had to be unloaded and disassembled, hoisted up cliff faces, reassembled, reloaded, and moved along only to have this process repeated and repeated. With each disassembly, loads were reevaluated as to weight and bulk. Trails were lined with the grave markers of those who perished from thirst, disease, or hunger, and household goods no longer deemed necessary formed "aisles" too high to see over. Some strong, lucky ones made it.



TRAVEL BY SEA

Regarded by many as the fastest way to get to the promised riches, ship travel was not all it was cracked up to be either.

A NEW AND MAGNIFICENT CLIPPER FOR SAN FRANCISCO.

MERCHANTS' EXPRESS LINE OF CLIPPER SHIPS!

Loading none but First-Class Vessels and Regularly Dispatching the greatest number.

THE SPLENDID NEW OUT-AND-OUT CLIPPER SHIP



CALIFORNIA

HENRY BARBER, Commander, AT PIER 13 EAST RIVER.

This elegant Clipper Ship was built expressly for this trade by Samuel Hall, Esq., of East Boston, the builder of the celebrated Clippers "SURPRISE," "GAMECOCK," "JOHN GILPIN," and others. **She will fully equal them in speed!** Unusually prompt dispatch and a very quick trip may be relied upon. Engagements should be completed at once.

Agents in San Francisco,
Messrs. DE WITT KITTLE & CO.

RANDOLPH M. COOLEY, 88 Wall Street, Tontine Building.

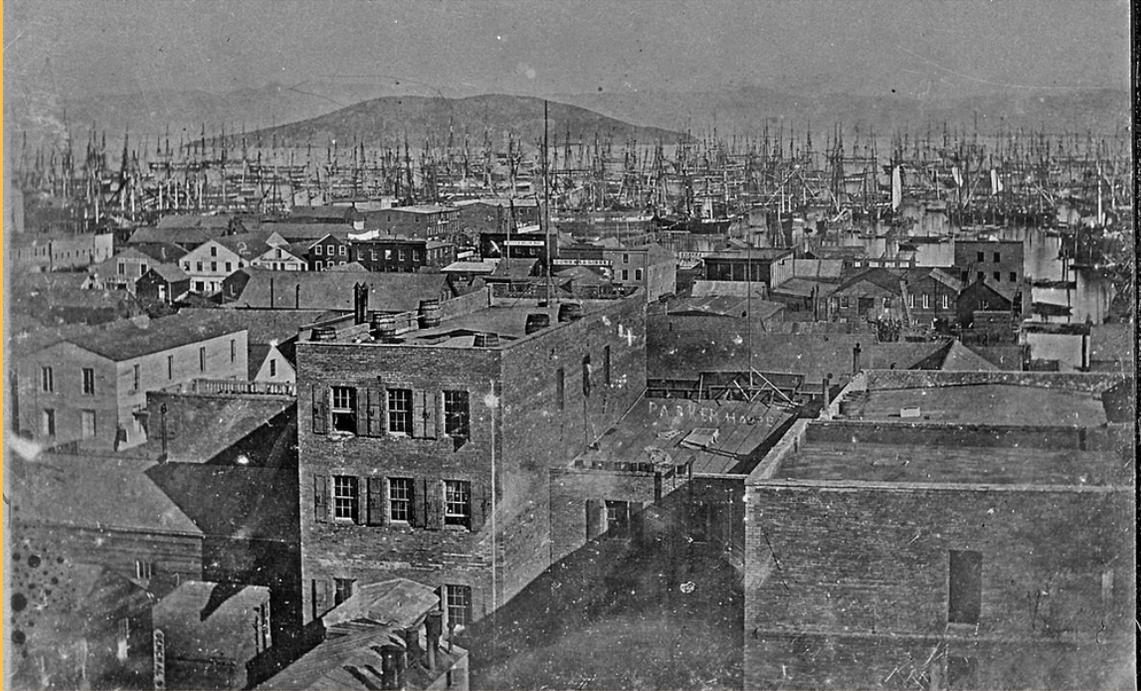
NESBIT & CO., PRINTERS.



Steam-powered clipper rounding the horn.

Clipper ships - touted as being the fastest things on the waves - were advertising arrival at San Francisco in 6 to 8 weeks. Six months was closer to average and you went one of two ways: 1) "around the horn" - the tip of South America, infamous for violent freezing hurricanes sometimes lasting for weeks; or 2) disembark in Panama and cross mosquito infested, disease ridden isthmus on foot or by Indian dugout canoe confident in the knowledge that you would be picked up on the other side by a fast sailing ship and be in San Francisco PDQ. The only fly in the ointment was, since you had paid for your passage in full

before leaving New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, only rarely did a ship show up, and when they did, they could only accommodate a few of the thousands of the deserted, betrayed Americans.

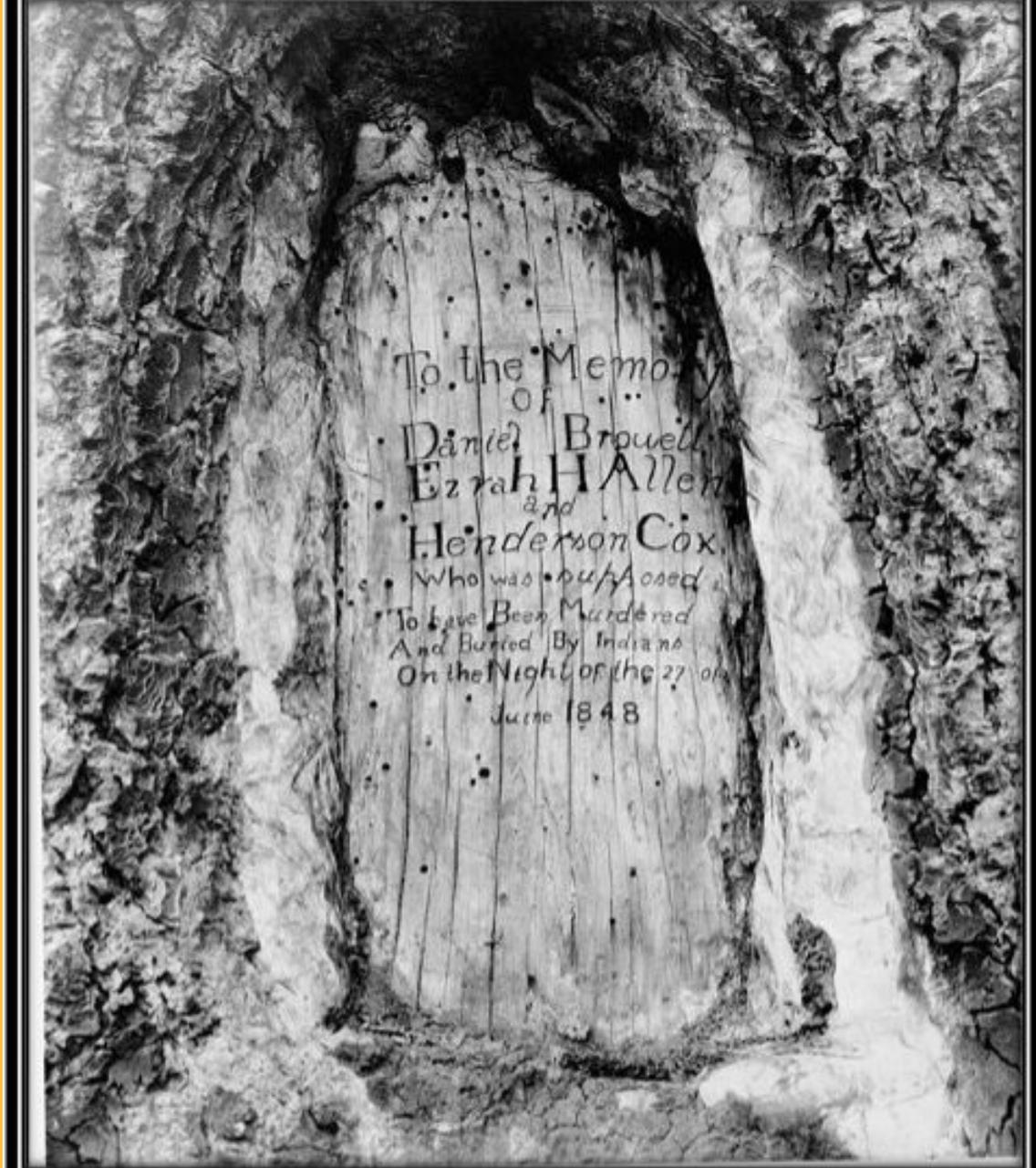


Yerba Buena Bay at San Francisco - 1849. Hill in the background is Telegraph Hill.

Ships were stocked with stale water, frequently old to rotten food and surly crews who would not hesitate to put you off at a hint of dissatisfaction. If sea sickness or a violent storm didn't kill you, the food or crew might.

NO EASY OR QUICK WAY

During the California Gold Rush there was no easy or quick way to get there. If you wanted to fill your pockets with gold nuggets, you had to be willing to sacrifice everything you owned or held dear - possibly even your life. Some people did.



TODAY

Most of us who live in the "Gold Country" are familiar with the discovery at Sutter's Mill in the village of Coloma on January 24, 1848. It was certainly the discovery that shook the world and resulted in the largest mass migration in U.S. History. Not nearly as well understood or appreciated is the determination and effort it took to actually get to "The Mother Lode."

Today, with travel by automobile over paved highways, you can travel the entire Mother Lode in a little over three hours.

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DONATE TODAY

Do you know someone who would like to receive our monthly newsletter? Send contact information to info@sccbf.org to be added to our distribution list.

The Historic Sutter Creek Grammar School is rich in Gold Rush history. This beautiful building is California's second oldest two-story brick schoolhouse. The Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation has restored the first and second floor making it a wonderful rental for any occasion. There are four rooms within the Historic Grammar School that can be rented.

Contact the City of Sutter Creek for information on rates and availability - (209) 267-5647 ext. 230 or email info@cityofsuttercreek.org

Whether it's a love of our heritage, a special connection to our town's diverse, deeply rooted cultures, or a desire to improve your community, every donor's passion for Sutter Creek is unique. A gift to Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation is the perfect way to fund your passion and watch it prosper. By connecting people who care with causes that matter, we help ensure a stronger, healthier tomorrow. We provide a simple, powerful and highly personal approach to giving. (Donations to SCCBF are received through the Amador Community Foundation.)

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