

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 6, 1953

### **All is Not Gold that Giltters**

Alfred Robinson, the pioneer who took the first California gold to be sent to the United States Mint, ran an advertisement in a San Francisco newspaper 103 years ago. It read as follows: "Rancho for Sale – A splendid rancho, five square leagues of good land within 25 miles of the port of San Luis Obispo. Well timbered and watered. 1000 head of cattle included in the sale." So we learn that gold was not the only interest in California in 1850.

Another item dated June 1, 1850, told news of the plans for the Washington Memorial. "California's gift to the Washington Monument to be erected in the nation's capital, a block of gold-bearing quartz weighing 125 pounds was shipped today on the steamer Oregon."

"The rock, taken from Mariposa Diggings near Fremont's mines, will be delivered to the Washington Monument Society for placement in the structure when it is commenced. John Bidwell and H.A. Schoolcraft were appointed by Gov. Peter H. Burnett to accompany the block to Washington and make the presentation."

Another item dated: "Sonora June 2, 1850: A lump of pure gold weighting 18 pounds has been dug up here by a Sonoranian Mexican. At Placerville almost the whole town has been dug over by the gold seekers. Large operations are reported on Gold Run, Deer Creek. One man sold a 150 foot claim for \$10,000, and the eighth of another claim changed hands for \$4,000."

"Governor Lang of Oregon Territory has resigned his office. He plans a trip to the Umpqua river in search of gold."

In still another news story relating to gold we found this item: "Marysville, June 10, 1850 – great excitement was caused in all the towns along the Sacramento River by the reports of terrific gold finds at Gold Lake, which was variously reported to be 100 to 200 miles distance in the mountains.

"Hundreds of men took up the journey there, and the prices of provisions and mules took a terrific jump with supplies scarce. The story of the great discovery was told by two or three men who said that they had been to Gold Lake. Everybody believed it for a time, but it was found to be a complete humbug,"

So all was not gold that glittered in California!

"A Peddler is attacked by two Mexicans" was the headline of another news story under a June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1850, date line from Monterey, California: "An elderly Englishman who had been peddling jewelry in this neighborhood, is near death after he was attacked on the Salinas plains.

"The assault was perpetrated by two Mexicans, who lassoed the Englishman, dragged him for several hundred yards, shot him three times and stabbed him in several places. After he was discovered unconscious and bleeding by travelers, he was taken to the ranch of Senor Thomas Blanco."

Walter Colton reports on gold in California in his diary on June 12, 1848, in his "Three Years in California": "A straggler came in today from the American Fork, bringing a piece of yellow ore weighing an ounce. The young dashed the dirt from their eyes, and the old from their spectacles. One brought a spyglass, another an iron ladle; some wanted to melt it others to hammer it, and a few were satisfied with smelling it. All were full of tests; and many, who could not be gratified in making their experiments, declared it a humbug. One lady sent me a huge gold ring, in the hope of reaching the truth by comparison; while a gentleman placed the specimen on the top of his gold-headed cane and held it up, challenging the sharpest eyes to detect the difference.

"But, doubt still hovered in the minds of the great mass. They could not conceive that such a treasure could have lain there so long undiscovered. The idea seemed to convict them of stupidity. There is nothing of which a man is more tenacious than his claims to sagacity. He sticks to them like an old bachelor to the idea of his personal attractions, or a toper to the strength of his temperance ability, whenever he shall wish to call it into play."

Sutter Entertains: "Sacramento, June 2, 1850 – A large party of ladies and gentlemen took a pleasure trip today on the steamer Governor Dana to Hock Farm, ranch of the famous Captain Sutter. The Captain entertained them in a bountiful manner before they re-embarked on the steamer back to Sacramento."