

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Overland Monthly**

Dr. Robert Huffman of Stockton College has drawn our attention to many early happenings in California and to a great many interesting stories which appeared in the Overland Monthly in the middle 1850s. So, we began a search for these items and have discovered a few more which our readers might be interested in reviewing.

The critical date was 1849, according to our informant. Yerba Buena had had its first house in 1835. In February 1849 the village, renamed San Francisco, boasted two thousand population which increased to twenty thousand by December and the rush was on. Within a decade and a half, San Francisco had reared a metropolis from a tent camp. Music, painting, sculpture, a budding school of western literature, and graphic artists flourished.

In 1868 the Overland Monthly published an article By B. P. Avery who had looked back on the years and favorably compared San Francisco with New York in "Art Beginnings on the Pacific Coast." Avery identified Harrison Eastman, and Hyatt as the first wood engravers to arrive in 1849, followed by Thomas Armstrong from Australia, Anthony Keith and Durbin Van Vleck. E. Jump also worked for the pictorial press to San Francisco but later transferred to Leslie's magazine in Nev York.

Probably the first auction room in the west was established by Charles Nahl in 1850, in which collection was a Mass, Jacobs, and a Del Sarto. Charles Nahl, it is believed, drew the design for the California Grizzly Bear which appears on the Great Seal of the State of California. The original painting of the brown bear was given to the City of Monterey by Nahl's sister, Mrs. Augusta Nahl Allen of Portland. Oregon, and is hanging in the museum at Colton Hall. The seal for the state was first designed and adopted at the Constitutional Convention held in Monterey in 1849, so it is appropriate that the historic relic should be placed here.

The most distinguished portrait painter was William S. Jewett who painted Captain Sutter in 1855 for \$5,000. The painting was commissioned for and hung in the Legislature; in 1935 his "Hosea Dugliss" was presented to the De Young Museum in San Francisco by Miss

Augusta Bloomer. His "Hock Valley Farm, 1852" was acquired for Sutter's Fort Historical Museum in 1943. There were 61 painters in 1875, a number which grew to 95 in 1880.

It should also be noted, observed Mr. Avery in 1868, that this first volume of The Overland Monthly contained a story, "The Luck of Roaring Camp" by F.B. Harte along with an article "The Art of Scalping" which, he also mentioned, had nothing to do with the Indians. Scalping had entered the language in a financial as well as a physical sense.

In 1871 the Overland printed "The Wonders of Engraving"; considered "The London Art Exhibition of 1872" and concluded the first series with a discussion of the "Comstock Lode" and "The Future of the Newspaper" in 1873. The latter story noted the increasing influence of the press, the technical complications of telegraphy, steam presses, reporters, and editors, and concluded, that it then took a considerable amount of money to start a newspaper in contrast to conditions at an earlier date.

The Overland Monthly ceased publication in 1873, but after ten years, resumed publication. The second series which contained illustrations beginning in 1883 also provided insight into "Early Books, Magazines and Bookmaking in California," in an article written by Charles H. Shinn in 1888.

This review suggests that Northern California achieved a remarkable growth during the fifties and sixties.