

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

June 10, 1966

Chronicles Of The West

George C Yount and his "Chronicles of the West", a book designed and printed by Lawton and Alfred Kennedy in San Francisco this year, has been procured for the memorial library in Casa Serrano by the Monterey History and Art Association.

This book is edited by Charles L. Camp, whose narrative "Desert Rats" is Number 14 in the series of Keepsakes given by the Bancroft Library to all Friends of the Bancroft Library at the University of California, at the annual meeting of the Friends recently.

The book on George C. Yount gives extracts from his memoirs and from the Orange Clark "narrative," He reached the borders of present-day California twice before 1828.

George Yount never learned to read or write. Everything he told in his long narrative was the product of a phenomenal memory. The full story only lately brought to light and acquired by the Huntington Library, forms the basis of the present account and is important as a record of activities in frontier Missouri; the Santa Fe trade and trapping in the southwest in the 1820's; the wandering of the Patties, George Nidever, and other figures in early trapping and fur trade days along the California coast; Indian wars along the Russian River and in Napa and Lake counties and the early American history and settlement of California.

Yount lived close to the soil and knew the wide frontier as did few others. He entered California with William Wolfskill over the old Spanish Trail through Colorado and Utah in 1831, and one of the first Americans to settle there and stay there until the Gold Rush. His block house and adobe fort were set up on the remote frontier three years before Sutter's establishment in the Sacramento Valley. The local Indians became his friends and assisted in skirmishes with the wilder tribes.

In later years Yount's Napa County Farm became a welcoming center for many of the early overland emigrants, including member of the Donner Party. His hospitality was unstinting. His farm was one of the first in the region to boast of extensive vineyards, fruit orchards and grain. It witnessed the beginnings of agriculture as it is today in California.

The author, Charles L. Camp's interest in George Yount goes back forty-three years. The jacket cover informs the reader that Camp regards Yount as one of the "quiet heroes" of the frontier. With the newly found manuscripts Camp's long study come to fulfillment, and George Yount emerges as one of the great pioneers of the southwest.

The book contains 300 pages, illustrated, 7x10 ½. Is priced at \$20. The Old West Publishing Company are the publishers, 1228 East Colfax Avenue, Denver Colorado.

"The California Gold Discovery" has just been published by Rodman W. Paul, with half-tone illustrations and line-drawings, containing sources, documents, accounts and memoirs, relating to the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill.

A wealth of related material, some originating in the form of letters and memoirs, some written in retrospect of the discovery, are included in this book. Some of this material the trader is informed has never before been published. And some letters originally published in newspapers in the 1850's, including at least one by Marshall, have not seen publication in modern times.

The whole is constructed by Dr. Paul in such a way as to present an intriguing problem in historical evidence. The gold discovery itself is, of course, one of the great events in American history: a great event witnessed only by meagerly educated men who left little written record that is strictly contemporary.