

THE OLD CALIFORNIA DAYS.

St. John Men Who "Went Out in Forty-nine."

HOW THE GOLD FEVER RAGED AND HOW PEOPLE GOT OVER IT.

Some Gallant Ships and Daring Crews That Went Round the Horn in Search of the El Dorado—Adventures and Misadventures of Some Well-known Citizens.

John Sutter wanted more water in the tail-race of his sawmill, and his man, Marshall, undertook to get it.

The job was never completed. If it had been, Sutter and Marshall might have continued to saw lumber in the California forest, made a comfortable living and died happy. As it was, they became famous, lived miserably and died in poverty.


For the waters of that California stream on that eventful day, 40 years ago, bore a curse to them in the form of a few bright particles washed out of the dirt. They had found the first gold of the richest goldfield in the world.

This was in January, 1848. It was several months later before the importance of the discovery led the settlers to flock to the mines, and it was not until the following winter that the gold fever reached the East. The steamer *California*, which was to begin the new mail service, had left the Atlantic coast to go around Cape Horn before the excitement began. Stopping at Panama, a crowd of adventurers boarded her, and she reached San Francisco on the 28th of February, 1849.

The electric telegraph was in its infancy at that time. Railroads to the west had not been begun. It took from six weeks to two months for news to get from California to the east, for the shortest route was by steamer to the Isthmus. One of the first important items which reached St. John from the gold fields was published late in January. It was copied from a Washington paper and consisted of extracts from a letter written at Monterey on the 16th of November. The story it told was an alluring one. Gold was increasing in size and quantity daily. Lumps were found weighing from one to two pounds. Several had been heard of weighing sixteen pounds, and there was one of 25 pounds. Men who had been poor were worth \$30,000. The average amount realized by diggers daily was \$100. The Indians readily gave an ounce of gold for a common calico shirt. The gold region extended over a tract of 300 miles, and it was not known that it did not extend a thousand.

Such was the news that woke the spirit of wild adventure among the young men of St. John. The city was then entering on one of the gloomiest years of its existence. The return of prosperity seemed far distant, and as the months passed the clouds of depression grew darker. What wonder then that restless spirits were ready to brave every peril and cast their lot among the myriads who were seeking the Eldorado.

On the 18th of August, 1849, the following advertisement appeared in the *St. John Courier*:

 To Sail from St. John, N. B., for California. The new clipper built barque *Teal*. ALFRED G. GRAY, Esq., Commander, built of Hackmatack and White Oak, Coppered and Copper fastened, has ample accommodation for a few Cabin and Forward Passengers, and will sail for SAN FRANCISCO on or about the 15th September. For terms of Passage, apply to the Captain on board, or at the Counting House of ROBERT D. WILMOT, South M. Wharf.

The *Teal* was the pioneer vessel from St. John to California. She sailed on Tuesday, Sept. 25, with the following passengers: John B. Quinton, house joiner; John Simonds, attorney-at-law; Thomas D. Ruddick and Duncan Magee, ship-carpenters; Thomas McNaughton and J. Donnelly, joiners; Charles Hendricks; Edward Perley, of Oromocto and a Mr. Nelson, wife and child of Fredericton. Captain Gray, who commanded the vessel, was a brother of Hon. John H. Gray, now a judge in British Columbia, and he had for mate a Mr. Hayden. The *Teal* was a new vessel, built at Oromocto, by the Messrs. Wilnot, and was 364 tons register. She carried as a cargo house-frames, boards, shingles, bricks, window-sashes and the frames of two saw mills which were owned by Mr. Nelson. She arrived May 2, after a passage of 218 days, or more than seven months. San Francisco can now be reached from the east in seven days.

The Argonauts of *Teal*, though the first to leave, were not the first New Brunswickers to reach the land of promise. The barque *Ada*, Capt. Watson, which left St. Andrews in the latter part of September, arrived on April 7, after a passage of 195 days. She had 24 passengers. The brig *Brazilian*, Capt. Watson, from the same port, arrived on the 8th, after a run of 190 days.

A census of San Francisco taken in August, 1847, showed a total population of 459 people. Of these, 83 were under 10 years of age, while 138 were women and girls. The number of men available for work was less than 300. With the discovery of gold, a city rose as if by magic, so that even before the pioneer *Teal* left St. John, San Francisco had a population of 20,000, and there were, besides, at least 25,000 people at the mines. There were 300 square-rigged vessels in the harbor of

San Francisco. The estimated find of gold from May to August, 1849, was \$12,000,000.

California news, two months old, became a prominent feature in the *St. John papers*. It rivalled the "latest from England," which in those days was the news of all news. Stories of wonderful luck came by every mail. A party of four took out \$6,000 each in eight days. Another party took out \$8,000 in as many days. A lump of gold weighing 30 pounds had been found, and people were seeking the Golden Gate by thousands. Nearly 6,000 men arrived at San Francisco in September and enormous prices were paid for lumber, house frames and dozens of other things of which New Brunswick had a plenty. St. John merchants saw a new and profitable market, and they hastened to freight their ships. Before the *Teal* had reached the end of her voyage, eleven more vessels had left St. John for the same port, and all eventually arrived there in safety. They were of all kinds, from the full-rigged ship to the schooner of 50 tons, and they carried all kinds of freight likely to be of use in a new country. Here are some of the items from the old manifests: Lumber, house-frames, doors, window sashes, locks, hinges, cot bedsteads, bricks, boats, grindstones, butter, smoked and salt fish, socks, shingles, coal, scows, horseshoes, muleshoes, etc. Every vessel carried its complement of passengers, who paid \$200 or so for the trip, and the crews were Saint John boys who willingly gave a premonition to be shipped at nominal wages. They worked their passage and paid for the privilege.

While this fleet is on its way it may be well to look at the *Teal* and the subsequent history of some of those on board of her. Captain Gray, who is still living, in England, was for many years afterward in command of one of the Panama steamers. John Boyd Quinton was a brother of the late James Quinton, M. P. P. He was a member of Saint John's lodge of Masons of this city, and built the Masonic Temple in San Francisco. He died in California. John Simonds returned to New Brunswick and died at Sussex a few years ago. He was a peculiar man and it is said that he never wore socks. Charles Hendricks, after reaching California, became connected with a cattle ranch at Stockton. He subsequently traded along the coast and died at Callao. Edward Perley went to Stockton and practised law in the rude courts of those times. In June, 1850, he was engaged in a case in which one Marshall was defendant. During the heat of the argument Marshall grossly insulted him. Mr. Perley instantly drew a pistol and "had the drop," on his opponent, who pleaded that he was unarmed and cried for quarter. It was granted. The next day Marshall sent a challenge, which was accepted. The parties met and exchanged two shots. Both of Marshall's fell short, but the first of Perley's went close to Marshall's head and the second went through his hat. Mr. Marshall thereupon declared that his honor was fully satisfied and the pleasant occasion ended.

The brig *Volant*, Capt. Wheeler, sailed November 1, and made the passage in 179 days, with a general cargo shipped by Allison & Spurr. This firm was composed of the late Edward Allison and James DeWolfe Spurr, now chief game commissioner. Three weeks later the Yarmouth barque *Acadian*, Capt. Gardner, was sent out by the same firm with a cargo valued at \$3,400. She made the passage in 207 days.

On December 3, the schooner *Clairmont* cleared with a general cargo. She was of 50 tons register, and was owned and commanded by Capt. Albert Betts. The cargo was chiefly his venture. Thomas P. Crane, a merchant of this city, went as passenger. Capt. Betts was the father of Capt. Albert Betts, who came into prominence in connection with the revenue service a few years ago. The *Clairmont* had a good passage, and after her arrival in San Francisco, was sold for \$2,500. Capt. Betts made some money in California, and started to return home in 1853. While coming down the Chagres river, in company with Capt. Vroom, who had gone out in the brig *Arabia*, the canoe was upset and Capt. Vroom was drowned. Capt. Betts escaped, but lost all the gold which he had spent years to gather. He died in St. John a few years ago.

The *Arabia*, just mentioned, sailed on December 5, and arrived on the 9th of August following, being a trifle over eight months on the passage. She was a vessel of 91 tons, owned in Digby, where Capt. Vroom belonged. The cargo was shipped by George Thomas.

The barque *James* cleared on December 12 and arrived on August 26, a passage of 240 days. She was in charge of Capt. John Thain, and a Mr. Bell was mate. James N. Thain, who had kept a store on South wharf, and married a daughter of Capt. Simeon Kinney, went as supercargo. Joseph Thain was a passenger. Other members of the Thain family followed at a later date. They subsequently went to British Columbia, with the exception of Robert Thain, who is believed to be still in San Francisco. John and James traded to the Society Islands for a time. They died several years ago.

The *James* had a valuable assorted cargo, shipped by A. McL. Seely, N. S. DeMill, and others. This cargo was sold to good advantage in San Francisco, and that is all the consignees ever heard of it. No returns

were ever made by the captain. In unloading the cargo, Joseph Thain fell from a scow and was drowned in the harbor. The vessel was afterwards beached and used as a dwelling, until it was burned in one of the big fires of the year 1850.

Among the crew of the *James* was Albert Craft, who was a man of varied accomplishments. He settled in San Francisco and did so well that a committee of citizens presented him with an address requesting him to leave the city. He returned to St. John some years later and had a bar in Paddock's building, Prince William street. He is dead.

The brig *Ellis*, captain Caleff, sailed on the same day as the *James* and made a good run of 170 days. She had a general cargo shipped by Thomas F. Raymond, the present proprietor of the Royal hotel, and others. Among other things she took 208 sets of mules' shoes. There were also tongued-and-grooved boards, and all kinds of articles necessary for building purposes. Mr. Raymond invested \$4,000 in the venture. The remainder of the cargo was owned by Joseph A. Crane and the master. About five years later captain Caleff returned to St. John and handed Mr. Raymond two octagonal \$50 gold pieces, the net proceeds of his share of the cargo. And that was all there was to show for the \$4,000 invested.

When the gold fever reached the East, the barque *James Stewart* was catching whales in the Japan seas. From there she went to England and thence to St. John. On January 4, 1850, she sailed for San Francisco, under command of Capt. Joseph Kinney, now of Liverpool, England. She had a general cargo shipped by Charles C. Stewart, and valued at over \$4,000. Two scows were carried on deck. Reaching San Francisco, the cargo was disposed of at retail, and the barque was sold to be used as a storehouse. The passengers were Nathaniel Milby and William J. Bradley, of St. John; John Ruddock, of Portland, and J. A. Miles, of Fredericton. Milby had been in partnership with James U. Thomas. He subsequently returned to St. John, went back to California, thence to British Columbia, where he died. Miles was related to Conductor Miles, of the New Brunswick railway. He died in Montana. Bradley, who was a blacksmith, worked at his trade in San Francisco in later years. Ruddock was a ship carpenter.

The crew of the *James Stewart* was composed of young men well known here. Samuel Shanks, of Portland, was mate. He afterwards served in the civil war, but has been lost sight of for years. Hugh Fraser, a Scotchman, was second mate. He is now living at Annapolis, N. S. The seamen were as follows: William Davis, Portland, who went to Oregon and married a beautiful Indian maiden; John Lemons, Portland; William Burns, Dipper Harbor, who went to Australia later; John Dornon, St. John, who settled in San Francisco; Simeon Anderson, St. John, who also settled in San Francisco; William Paddock, Kingston, Kings county, who mysteriously disappeared from one of the steamers between San Francisco and Panama, while returning home; James Humphries, of Kings county; Duncan Robertson, of Queens county, a brother-in-law of Chief of Police Marshall, and now at Kamloops, B. C.; George Craig, St. John, who returned home and took his family back to California; Robert Bartlett, Nashwaak, who returned home and died there; Charles Venning, St. John, brother of Fishery Inspector W. H. Venning; James W. Hamilton, brother of the late Dr. George A. Hamilton, who made some money, returned home, and was in business at the corner of South wharf and Ward street until he died, some 20 years ago; Alexander Rankine, now of the firm of T. Rankine & Sons. Daniel Coombs was steward, and Thomas Anderson and H. Adam Glasgow were boys. It is not known what became of Coombs. Anderson settled in San Francisco. Mr. Glasgow returned to St. John in 1853, and is today as genial a companion as one would want to meet.

It will be seen that the *James Stewart* had a merry company on board. The crew signed articles for \$2 a month wages, and most of them paid premiums for the privilege. Young Glasgow gave \$40 and signed for wages at a shilling a month. All hands were bound for a land of gold, and doubtless few felt regret at leaving their native shore. The only sentimental man on board appears to have been Dan. Coombs, the steward. As the vessel moved from the wharf he mounted himself on the after-house, fiddle in hand, and began to play, "The girl I left behind me." Capt. Kinney, being a practical man, swore at the noise and knocked the musician down the companion-way.

The crew had signed to stay by the barque for 30 days after her arrival and to unload and land cargo on shore. As soon as possible after the anchor was dropped every man Jack of them ran away. Even the boys would not stand by. The captain took young Glasgow ashore one day, but when he asked the lad to man the boat to return, the future superintendent of ferries laughed at him. "You young rascal," said the captain, "you are under a bond for \$100 and I will make your father pay it." "All right," replied young Adam, "I can make that much in three or four days out here."

He did not make quite that much, but he

did very well for a boy. He hired a boat tender at \$150 a month and half the profits.

The next vessel to leave St. John was the ship *Java*, 418 tons, commanded by Capt. A. A. Coughlan. Everyone who remembers St. John before the fire can recall the tall figure of the aged captain, whose favorite ground for shouting, "We are the people!" was at the corner of Duke and Prince William streets. The *Java* sailed on March 2, 1850, with a general cargo, including sixteen house frames. This cargo was valued at nearly \$6,000 and was shipped by John Wishart.

On the 16th of March the brigantine *Lion*, 112 tons, Capt. E. Hooper, sailed from St. John. She had in addition to the usual boards, shingles, etc., 50 boxes of smoked fish and 20 chaldrons of coal. The cargo was shipped by W. C. Browne, of the steamer *Commodore*, and was owned by him and Capt. Hooper. The passengers were Mrs. Hooper and child; Capt. Hugh Williams Chisholm, late of the steamer *Fairy Queen*, and George Grassie, jr., of Annapolis. On the way, the *Lion* stopped at Valparaiso and sold her cargo, to be delivered at Coquimbo, and then to load potatoes at San Carlos for San Francisco.

Capt. Chisholm remained in California for several years, returned to St. John, and has for a long period been in the service of the International line. Capt. Hooper was a nephew of John Hooper, editor of the old *British Colonist*. He left the *Lion* at Callao, and opened the Globe hotel, which he ran for several years. Capt. Michael Driscoll, now of Carleton, was also on the *Lion*.

The barque *Duke of Wellington*, Capt. Simeon Kinney, cleared from St. John on April 6, with a cargo shipped by Allison & Spurr. Mr. Thomas M. DeBlois, so well known in later years in connection with the St. John News-room, went as supercargo. On April 20, 1850, the barque *Bethel*, 379 tons, McMurtry master, sailed with a cargo shipped by William Leavitt, Thomas E. Millidge, Thomas Wallace and D. Leavitt. Henry Leavitt went out in her as consignee. This was the last of the original forty-niner fleet.

Besides the men already mentioned, numbers of other well-known citizens went to the land of gold, either as sailors around the Horn or as passengers by the Isthmus. It was by the latter route that James E. Carmichael and Otty Cudlip left on Oct. 24, 1849. Carmichael had been in command of the provincial revenue schooner *Phantom*. Joseph Hopley, Matthew Cox, Nathaniel Hicks, Mr. Orr (a wine merchant), George Travis, recently of the inland revenue department, and Joseph Hamm, of Water street, were among the forty-niners.

All sought gold. Some found it. Some were glad to get home on any terms. None amassed fortunes.

Nearly all of them had a rough experience. When they got there their first object was to find a place to sleep. People were pouring into the country by parties of hundreds at a time. No less than 1,500 people left New York for the gold fields in one week, during April, 1850. In the nine months ending the last of February, 1850, 805 vessels had arrived, bringing 30,919 persons, of whom only 919 were females. Naturally, some of our St. John boys had to sleep on harder beds than they had ever found at home. One of them was going along a street in San Francisco one night, when a voice hailed him from the inside of a packing case—"Will you camp with me to-night?" It came from one of the Vail boys, of Carleton, who had gone out in the pioneer *Teal*. Others wrapped the drapery of their blankets around them and lay down to pleasant dreams on the sidewalk. Nobody disturbed them or their bundles. Everybody was after gold and ordinary personal effects were of little account. Lodgings were very high. Board at one time was from \$3 to \$8 a day, and chances in bunks from \$3 to \$4 a night. Good board and lodging could be had in tents at \$25 a week. In sheds, it was from \$30 to \$50 a week. A single meal of roast beef, bread and coffee, cost \$1.

Lumber was a great commodity. At one time it sold from \$250 to \$275 a thousand. Shingles were \$36 a thousand and bricks from \$20 to \$30. Lime was \$36 and \$38 a barrel. Flour was \$20 a barrel and \$22 when put in bags. At one time it was from \$35 to \$40. In August, 1849, a store rented for \$2,000 a month. In October the rent of the same store was \$3,500 a month, payable quarterly in advance. Butter was from \$1 to \$1.25 a pound, cheese 25c to \$1 and potatoes 50c a pound. Eggs were \$4 a dozen.

This was in San Francisco where things were reasonably plentiful. There were times in the mines when the prices for necessities of life were far in excess of the figures quoted. In the winter of 1850 the snow lay in the mountains to the depth of 30 feet in some places. It was almost impossible for mules to force their way through it. William Paddock, Adam Glasgow and James Perkins were among those at the mines. They paid \$1.25 a pound for flour and carried it 21 miles on their backs in two 50 pound sacks. The regular price of flour in the mines was 20 and 25 cents a pound. Beans were 20 cents a pound, fresh beef 25 cents, tea and coffee \$1.

And all this time good whiskey was only \$1 a bottle or 15 cents for a reasonably big drink.

GREAT ATTRACTION

—IN OUR—

NEW DRESS GOODS ROOM.

NOVELTIES in Combination Costumes, Robe Dresses, Bordered Costumes, Embroidered Costumes. Novelties in Cheviots and Homespuns, Oriental Silk and Wool Wrapper Patterns, Fancy Wool Wrapper Patterns.

Amazon Cloths, Habit Cloths.

In addition to the above we have an endless variety of FANCY and PLAIN COSTUME CLOTHS, Wool, Stripes, Etc.

New Dress and Mantle Trimmings in all the Latest Designs.

MANCHESTER, ROBERTSON & ALLISON.

Lace, Nun's Veiling,

—AND—

SATEEN DRESSES

Cleaned Equal to New Without Being Taken Apart

—AT—

UNGAR'S STEAM LAUNDRY - - - 32 Waterloo Street.

FOR THE LADIES.

We are Showing a Fine Line of

POCKET BOOKS, PURSES, PERFUME, DRESSING CASES, ODOR SETS, WATCH CASES, Etc. All Marked Low.

FOR THE GENTS: We have a Large Variety of CUFF and COLLAR BUTTONS, SCARF PINS, WALLET, POCKET KNIVES, Etc. At

JENNINGS' Book Store, 171 Union Street.

Labor brought a good price in San Francisco. It cost \$12 a thousand to load lumber. Carpenters, masons and good mechanics got from \$12 to \$15 a day. Cartmen got \$10. A colored man who went out as a steward on a ship got \$250 a month at one of the hotels. Sailors for return voyages were shipped at \$150 a month. Plain cooks and servants got from \$150 to \$200 a month.

Before the St. John ships got to the Golden Gate, however, lumber had fallen. Brick was taking its place, and many of the ventures, like that of Mr. Raymond, resulted in serious loss. Old forty-niners remember Montgomery street as being washed by the waters of the bay. Today it is far up town. They remember many other things which do not belong to the San Francisco of 1888. One of these was the vigilance committee.

At the corner of Montgomery street and Sacramento wharf was a resort known as the "Tontine." The St. John men called it "Tisdale's Corner" and used to meet each other there at night to talk of old times at home. One night, the 19th of February, 1851, several of them were chatting there when some one rushed in with the news that a man had been robbed and murdered. Two fellows had entered a store of a clothing dealer named Jansen, and while his back was turned hit him with a slung-shot and robbed his money drawer. The men were caught. An immense crowd filled the street and proposed to lynch the prisoners. They did not succeed in securing them, but for several days intense excitement prevailed. The men subsequently got free. This led to the formation of the vigilance committee, which was not fully organized until the 1st of June. Some of the St. John men were members of it. On the 8th of June the first thief was hanged from the projecting beam of a warehouse, and in August the committee tried and condemned two men, Whittaker and McKenzie, took them from the custody of the police and hanged them without delay.

One of the St. John men, who is living here today, was the horrified witness of the lynching of a woman who killed a miner in a quarrel at Downieville, on July 4, 1851. She died game.

The end of the gold fever, as far as St. John was concerned, came early in 1851. Letters from some who had started out full of hope told the tale that, even in California wealth was not to be had without work. "It is my opinion," wrote Thomas M. DeBlois, "that no person should come here who has not health, energy and a disposition to work, if necessary, by the sweat of his brow, and even in a menial capacity. . . . Without money it is starvation or mining. . . . Shipments are, and will be, worse than a lottery on this spasmodic market. The slaughter houses have been turned into auction rooms, where the principal part of the sales are now made."

Everybody in the east had looked to California as a market that could not be crowded. The country was flooded with goods which were auctioned at cost and charges. Boots which at first sold for \$25 and \$30 a pair were forced off at less than it cost to make them. The golden opportunity for shippers from the east had passed. The tide of speculation had begun to ebb.

The St. John people who had dreamed of wealth from the Pacific awoke. Their next dream was of the European & North American railway. California was almost forgotten.

But to those who dared and ventured in the new land, who toiled and suffered there, it is still remembered as a wonderful thing in their lives. Those who were among the Argonauts in the early days, whatever may have been their fortune, are men of distinction at this day.

It is something for a man to feel that he was a forty-niner.

A BRIGHT AND HANDSOME STORE.

Business Rushing, and the Firm Is Not Yet a Month Old.

"What a pretty store! I have seen nothing like it in the city."

The remark was made in Barnes & Murray's and the lady stranger and speaker had evidently been around the town. She was seeking something novel and began at once to make her inquiries.

One of the firm told a representative of *PROGRESS* that remarks similar to hers were frequent. The ladies of the city were pleased with the handsome fittings of the new establishment and did not hesitate to express their approval.

"How has business been with you?" inquired the writer.

"So good that our most sanguine expectations have been more than realized. As soon as our announcement appeared customers flocked in to see us and we have been rushed ever since. The fact is, scores of people have come and gone without being attended to. Our staff is small—too small—for the very good reason that good salesmen are very scarce. But new and good lines of goods marked at reasonable prices will always draw buyers. We have found it so and there can be no doubt of its truth. Our stock is all new and the best that we could purchase. Already many of our lines have sold so well that we have had to renew them—and yet we only opened Sept. 1!"

Glancing around the place, the writer saw many and ample reasons why the stranger should call it "a pretty store." Probably there is no similar store in the city which has the same care and taste displayed on its fittings. The counters are stained a bright cherry color, and the wooden trimmings here and there correspond. The front portion of the store is small, and contains of course the thousand and one "small things" of the trade. In the rear is the larger and handsome part of the store—where the shelves are filled with the best dress goods. A large mirror reflects every corner of the place, and thus serves as a further and decided ornamentation.

During the few minutes the writer was in the store he had some chance to judge of the class and volume of custom it was receiving, and he came to the conclusion before he departed that when he left newspaper work and wanted to make money, he would learn the dry goods business.

Such firms as Barnes & Murray would, however, handicap him. Both gentlemen have grown up with the business and understand it from beginning to end. They have been the trusted and among the best employees of large firms and by their courtesy and knowledge of customers' wants have won hundreds of friends who will patronize them so long as they are in business.

Present appearances indicate that the continuance of the rush to their handsome store will force them ere long to find larger quarters for the accommodation of their goods and their customers.

They Want More Machinery.

The American Steam Laundry has had a great run of custom this summer and though with the cooler weather the business is usually less pressing the Messrs. Godsoe say they notice no perceptible difference. Mr. Ted Godsoe leaves for Boston this evening to purchase some new and improved machinery for the establishment.

Go and See Him.

Mr. Jos. Murdoch's great success in supplying the public with refreshments during the summer season has emboldened him to cater to their wants in that line this fall and winter. Hereafter he will be prepared to serve oysters to all who wish them in the neat and well-fitted parlors connected with his confectionery establishment.

REYNOLDS.