

Pierson Barton Reading

Pioneer of 1843—Founder of Redding, Shasta County by Alice M. Reading

PIERSON BARTON READING WAS BORN in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, November 26, 1816, and died at his ranch, Buena Ventura, Shasta County, California, May 29, 1868. He was a son of Pierson and Charity (Guild) Reading, and a great-grandson of Governor John Reading of New Jersey.

With twelve companions, he left for California May 19, 1843, arriving at Sutter's Fort (Sacramento) November 10, 1843, where he immediately became associated with Captain John A. Sutter. December 4, 1844, Governor Micheltorena granted Major Reading the Buena Ventura Rancho of 26,633 acres, in Shasta County. In 1845 he conducted extensive exploring expeditions through Northern California, Southern Oregon and Western Nevada.

Major Reading was the Whig candidate for governor in 1851, being defeated by a very few votes; he refused the nomination for governor in 1855, and again in 1861. In 1852 he was appointed Indian Agent by President Fillmore. He was the first cotton grower in California, and the first to introduce the olive into Northern California. He laid out the City of Sacramento for Captain Sutter and established the leading bank of the early days there.

July 4, 1846, Major Reading participated in the convention at Sonoma with Captain John C. Fremont, and served through the Mexican War under him as major and paymaster; he was the head of the United States commission appointed to arrange terms of capitulation with the native Californians. In 1848 he discovered the rich gold fields at Reading's Bar, Shasta County. In 1848-49 he was associated with Samuel J. Hensley in conducting a store at Sutter's Fort and in Sacramento.

In 1856, at Washington, D. C, he married Miss Fanny Washington of that city. For many years previous to his death, agriculture, with the view of developing the resources of California, occupied his interests.

In the words of the Society of California Pioneers, of which he was a member: "Possessed of the most courteous manners, of enlarged views and of a highly cultivated mind, united with probity of character and the most dauntless bravery, he deserves that upon the tomb containing his ashes be inscribed the words that typify his life: READING—PIONEER."

In this biographical sketch of my father, I am not writing from personal memories of things he told me, but confining myself strictly to data from authentic historical records. In a life so replete with pioneer adventures, hardships, privations and accomplishments, I can touch upon but a few of the main events in his career, quoting from his diary, early letters of Captain Sutter, General W. T. Sherman and George McKinstry, and United States documents.

My father left Westport, on the Missouri River, Friday, May 19, 1843, bound for California, and arrived at Sutter's Fort, Friday, November 10, 1843, keeping a diary of the entire trip.

This diary, on January 2, 1847, he sent from Monterey to his brother at Philadelphia, that it might be sent on to his parents in New Jersey. There were but thirteen men in his party that headed for California. Extracts from the letter accompanying the diary, dated Monterey, January 2, 1844, will probably give a clearer conception of this trip than any words of mine:

"You are aware that I ever had a great desire to travel, that I delighted in reading of the immense prairies and their countless herds of buffalo; of the beautiful and romantic scenery of the Rocky Mts., and of the mild and delicious climate to be found upon the Pacific Coast. . . .

Before setting out I provided myself with a good compass and was most careful in taking the course of each day's travel.

"In the accompanying diary you have a map of the route and the distances marked. I have taken much pain to have it as correct as possible, though, of course, the distances are not entirely accurate, though the error is not great, as one can tell very nearly in having animals which vary but little in their gait or speed from day to day. . . . Starvation and fatigue were our constant companions, and as a last resource to sustain sinking nature we were forced to eat our horses and mules. In this deplorable condition we were journeying through a country which offered little of interest, but much to dishearten and discourage us. Mountain after mountain rose to our view, seeming to offer barriers to discourage the stoutest hearts.



MAJOR PIERSON BARTON READING.

First White Man to Explore Northwestern California and
Pioneer Agriculturist.

"Day after day, week after week, we continued in this manner, meeting with hostile Indians that dogged us at every step, watching an opportunity to take advantage of our small party. In writing this diary I was forced to make hurried sketches, as we were constantly traveling, giving but little time from various duties, such as attending to our animals, and unpacking and packing baggage; hunting, fishing, cooking, standing guard, etc. I believe I may safely say that four-fifths of my entries were taken with my rifle at my side, ready at any moment to be called in defense of my life from the attack of the many treacherous and blood-thirsty savages through whom we passed. Vigilance was our watchword, and to it we are indebted for our lives.

"Nearly the whole extent of this country (the Plains) is nearly destitute of timber. I have traveled four or five hundred miles without seeing as much as would make a good camp fire. Nothing can be more disagreeable than to camp in cold, stormy weather on the open Plains, or on the bare mountains exposed to driving, pelting sleet.

"After the exercise of all the perseverance and fortitude we possessed, we at last reached this happy country. So enchanting is the view that it seemed as if we were in some fairyland. With California I am delighted. The air is fine; I have not seen a sick man since I arrived.

"The grizzly bear is most abundant ... at one time I have seen 14 within 300 yards, feeding on acorns under an oak tree. I saw one herd of at least 2000 elk. A fat elk weighs about 700 lbs. dressed, and their flesh is very sweet and palatable. There are large herds of wild horses, some droves containing over 2000 or more.

"My land grant covers forty-five square miles, on the upper Sacramento, which is navigable for steamboats some distance above my residence.

"After following me through the trackless wastes, exposed to a hundred dangers, enduring cold, fatigue, hunger, there is one question I am certain you will ask, 'Do I feel myself remunerated?' I can candidly answer, 'Yes.' This is a most delightful country, and one in every respect calculated to make men happy."

Such was my father's impression of California in 1844. The first entry in his diary reads:

"Friday, May 19, 1843. Crossed the Missouri River at Westport Landing and proceeded to the encampment of the Oregon Immigrants . . . about 250 persons expecting to leave in a few days for the Columbia River" As this diary was one of the very first ever kept of a trip to this state, I will include a few of the entries picked at random. Father's party joined with the Oregonians for a short part of the way.

The diary continues:

"Thursday, June 1st. After electing Peter H. Burnett Commander-in-chief, the Company met at 10 o'clock for the purpose of organizing. Entered into many rules and regulations which all the Company agreed to, with the exception of one, who desired to take along a large number of loose stock and have the Company herders look after them. This creates much discord . . . and a division

must take place. Left Camp Delay about one o'clock; proceeded 7 miles, encamped, forming a hollow square with the wagons. Named the camp 'Go Ahead.' Sublette's company is a short distance ahead of us.

"June 2nd. Divided our company into four marching divisions, one captain to each, subject to the Commander-in-Chief. . . .

"June 4th. One horse killed by lightning. . . .

"June 7th. Heavy storm, most of tents blown down. The whole atmosphere seemed charged with electric fluid, and for five hours the sky seemed a continuous blaze. I felt much uneasiness, sleeping in the back of our tent, at the foot of six guns with horns full of powder.

"June 8th. Much discontent in our company, Mr. Appleby has withdrawn his wagons and some others joined him, 25 wagons in all. Capt. Burnett resigned his position. Mr. Martin, of our mess, was elected in his place with the title of Colonel.

"June 22nd. Slept in wet clothes on ground in cold night, without fire, without dinner or supper. There are twenty of us in the same condition. Misery loves company.

"July 1st. Our camp received a visitor today in the shape of a fine girl infant, born in the tent adjoining our mess; the lady of a Mr. Stewart being the happy mother. Success to the little one, born on a journey across the Rocky Mts.

"July 2nd. Mr. Childs, with his company, bound for California, overtook us this evening, also Mr. Waldo and his party.

"July 10th. Several of us went to visit Chimney Rock; it is about 175 feet high.

"July 14th. Reached Ft. Laramie. It is about 300 feet square, and built of sun dried brick; walls 15 feet high, three feet thick, with two bastions. We will cross the Platte River tomorrow.

"July 16th. Left camp this morning in company with Mr. Childs' expedition, which we overtook at this place. Saw several mountain sheep; after a great deal of fatigue in climbing the bluffs I finally killed one. The flesh is certainly the most delicious of any I ever ate.

"July 20th. Camped on Squaw Butte Creek, where we met Vasquez and Walker, trappers who were bound for Ft. Laramie. Passed on the creek a new made grave over which a letter was placed informing us that it was of a child killed in Applegate's company by a wagon passing over its body.

"July 26th. Nooned at a small spring; here I was attacked very singularly by a vertigo. Attempted to bleed myself but failed in the operation." For several days my father was very ill, then came this entry:

"July 30th. Was bled today by Dr. Whitman, who cut an orifice in my arm large enough for a beaver to make his ingress.

"Aug. 9th. Buried one of our company, a Mr. Stephenson, from Ky. They deposited the remains on the bank of the creek, far distant from his native home. His relatives will probably never know his resting place. Covered his grave with large stones to prevent the wolves digging up his body.

"Aug. 22nd. Today met with a celebrated old mountain trapper, Peg Leg Smith. Found him just from Ft. Hall, starting out on a trapping expedition.

"Aug. 27th. Reached Ft. Hall today; Hudson Bay Company are the present owners. Capt. Richard Grant is in command. His kindness to the immigrants and his hospitality is almost to the extreme, and it appears to give him much pleasure to have it in his power to serve them.

"Aug. 29th. The Oregon Company left this morning. Our company will proceed for the Valley of California by an unexplored route.

"Sept. 16th, 1843. Left Ft. Hall for Ft. Boise, 300 miles distant. Our company now numbers 13 men, each with riding horse and pack mule, with provisions for ten days. The following are the men of our party: Samuel Hensley, Milton McGhee, John Myers, Capt. John Gant, Wm. Martin, Chas. Bradley, Joseph B. Chiles, Henry Chase, James Williams, John Williams, Isaac Williams, Squire Williams and myself.

"Sep. 20th. Set off in heavy snow storm, very cold. Storm too severe, had to make camp, almost no wood. Our poor animals standing around drawn up with the cold. Their heads turned from the drifting blast; we sitting with our blankets wrapped around us, shivering with cold.

Sept. 27th. Saw many Indians and traded with them for some salmon. One remained in camp during the night, chanting till nearly daylight a song, sometimes in a low whisper, then breaking forth at the very top of his voice. Perhaps it was some Indian love ditty, sung with its peculiarities and variations; he did not, however, look like a love-sick swain, being a fatfaced, round-bellied, jovial and joking sort of a fellow. He wanted to travel with us, but we declined his offer, as we were short of provisions and he was a big eater.

"Oct. 1, 1843. About twelve o'clock reached Ft. Boise [about 50 miles west of the present Ft. Boise] which is about 4 miles below the junction of the Boise and Snake Rivers. It is owned by the Hudson Bay Co., built of sun dried brick, about 150 feet square, walls 14 feet high and three thick. Its principal trade is in supplying fish to the other forts of the company.

"Oct. 2nd. Passed the day in making preparations for the trip through to the California Valley. We will be the first party that ever attempted to pass through this way. Capt. Payette, who has been west of these mountains for 35 years, informs us that he has traveled to some lakes on the course that we shall take, but knows nothing of the country lying beyond. He says the Indians are very bad, having already killed many of the Hudson Bay Trappers. Although our party is too small to be safe, we determined to set off through this unexplored region, believing that a southwest course from this place will at least be the shortest distance to the California Valley. Most

unfortunately for us, we are not able to furnish ourselves with provisions, as they are very short of them at the fort.

"Oct. 3rd. Capt. Payette, realizing our danger, most kindly shared with us his small stock of provisions, which, with the greatest economy, and by eating but one scanty meal each day, will last us for 15 days. We hope to reach the Valley in 30 to 35 days.

"Oct. 15th. Came in view of large lakeits appearance is very singular, the valley for nearly a mile from the water is covered with pure white salt, like snow. We were in hopes that this lake might prove fresh water as we have been thirty hours without one drop of water. To our great joy, we found at the west end of the lake some springs of excellent fresh water.

"Oct. 16th. Our provisions nearly exhausted; for the past three days have lived on pint of weak soup twice a day for each man.

"Oct. 17th. Travel very slowly. Obligated to dismount and lead our poor exhausted horses.



ALL THAT REMAINS MAJOR READING'S OLD HOME.

Built in 1847, the Oldest Building North of Sutter Fort (Sacramento).

Ourselves, too, were weak from the little solid food we had eaten for several days past. We trudged along, weary and discouraged, up one mountain and down another until near night, when we camped at a small stream with some grass. It set in to storm, with a cold driving rain. Again

we partook of our weak soup, leaving only a sufficiency of flour and grease for one meal more." The next day they succeeded in killing a deer, which furnished the first solid food they had had for five days.

"Oct. 23rd. Came to numerous pits lying across our path, about nine feet deep, with a small mouth covered with weeds. To avoid riding into them we had to be constantly on the watch. Mr. McGhee, who was walking ahead a short distance, very suddenly disappeared. In a few minutes we saw his head rising in the path. He had stepped into one of these traps, but fortunately came out only with bruises.

"Oct. 27th. The company disheartened and discouraged. Nothing but high ranges of mountains before us. Our horses beginning to fail very fast; and ourselves now four days since eating one solitary mouthful. Passed several Indian villages. At night we came to a creek but it was 400 feet below us, a veritable trap for us if the Indians attacked; but there was no alternative, water we must have or lose our animals. About ten minutes after we camped the Indians commenced fighting with deafening yells, and the shooting of arrows. It was every man for his rifle. We finally drove them across the creek and kept a vigilant guard all night.

"Oct. 29th. Each mess had. a handful of antelope grease for supper. The men are weak from starvation.

"Oct. 30th. Found all the horses and mules missing. A search disclosed three killed by Indians. Found some of the others. Our company, having been in a state of starvation for several days past, we butchered the animals killed by the savages, and now we have to subsist on horse and mule meat exclusively.

"Oct. 31st. After traveling 8 miles and crossing a pretty hill, we saw the Valley close to us, and never were a set of poor, worn out travelers more gratified than we were. After so much toil and travel to at last have the El Dorado in view. No one can imagine our feelings after traveling through a hostile country, with Indians watching every movement to take advantage of the weakness of a small party and shout over our scalps. Heaven has prospered us, and thanks to the great Giver of all Good for our success. Horsemear.

"Nov. 3rd. Continued our course down the Sacramento. Grass and trees green. Saw plenty of elk, deer and bear; the latter so numerous that they have worn large paths five or six inches below the surface of the earth. Today saw 14 grizzlies feeding on acorns under an oak tree.

"Nov. 5th. Entirely out of provisions again in view of three buttes, or hills, about 30 miles distant. [Sutter Buttes.]

"Nov. 8th. Camped at ranch of Capt. Sutter [Hock Farm] this is the first settlement we have seen for nearly six months. Here we fared well on bread, coffee and beef. Mr. Biddle [John Bidwell] came from one of the ranches in the evening to our camp.

"Nov. 10, 1843. After six hours brisk traveling, crossed the American Fork of the Sacramento River and came within sight of the Fort of Nuevo Helvetia, an extensive establishment owned by Capt. John Augustus Sutter. This gentleman made us all welcome; congratulated us upon our safe arrival; gave us such information of this beautiful country as to induce most of our party to abandon the thought of going any further than the settlement of the Sacramento.

"Capt. Sutter is a civil officer under the Government of California, having under his charge the government of the Northern Frontier. The fort itself is large and cozy on its approach, with its high walls, its bastions frowning with heavy cannon. It is the largest and best fortified fort in California. The walls encompass an area of about 400 feet square, and are built of sun dried bricks. They are about three feet thick, 15 feet high, and defended by several large cannon planted in reversed bastions. This establishment was built by Capt. Stitter at his own expense, and its military force is in no way connected or controlled by the government. A distillery for the distillation of grain and the juice of the grape is in the yard, and in one corner is a mill for the grinding of wheat. There is also a blacksmith shop, a carpenter's shop and a shoemaker's shop; and connected with the establishment is a tannery.

"It is almost impossible to conceive in what manner, and in so short a time, Capt. Sutter has made such extensive and permanent improvements, but when you read the character of this gentleman, you will at once perceive that with his intelligence, he is remarkable for his perseverance and enterprise. No one could have labored under more disadvantages than has he in carrying forward the improvement of this beautiful property so far removed from where he could obtain the necessary articles and tools. He has converted the wild Indians into good and faithful servants, of whom he employs a large number. They are in far better condition than in their wild state, and I can see that Capt. Sutter is a great benefactor to this tribe of Indian

"I cannot speak too highly of the hospitality of this gentleman. He received us most cordially, and it affords him much pleasure to administer to the wants of the way-worn, weary traveler. What can be more gratifying, after we had been for nearly six months traveling among hostile tribes of Indians, half starved as we were, than to reach a haven such as this castle affords us."

After a month's stay at the Fort, my father left on Sutter's schooner "Sacramento" for Yerba Buena, whence he traveled with Don Miguel Persidino by boat to Monterey. At this point the original diary of my father ends, as it was then sent East to his folks. It is quite probable that he continued keeping one, but if he did I have no knowledge of it. In 1854 he began a ranch journal, covering affairs at the Rancho Buena Ventura. After he married, my mother continued keeping a diary, but just how long I do not know. Shortly after he visited Monterey he returned to Sutter's Fort and became associated with Captain Sutter. They became very intimate friends and trusted each other implicitly.

As to how my father happened to select the land, some fifty-four square miles, that was granted him by Governor Michelforena, I will quote from the records of the United States Land Office of March 27, 1852; Samuel J. Hensley testifying: "In February, 1844, I was on the head of "the

Sacramento, rafting logs down the river; saw this place [Rancho Buena Ventura] and recommended it to Mr. Reading. He asked me to give him such boundaries as I would take for myself if I wished to obtain it. I did so, and gave him the boundaries, commencing at the mouth of Mud Creek, thence down the Sacramento to the mouth of Cottonwood Creek, following the east bluff of said creek one league, thence northerly to Mud Creek, thence down said creek to its mouth, the place of beginning. There is an island, called Bloody Island, named by myself, in consequence of a battle with the Indians in which I was personally engaged. It is opposite the mouth of Cottonwood Creek.

"Major Reading took possession in August. 1845. I spent ten days on the place with him, looking out suitable locations for fields and building spots. He decided on a place and left a Frenchman in charge, named Julian, to build a house and keep possession. He placed horses on the place and soon afterwards a quantity of cattle. The Frenchman built a house and corral. It was afterwards burned down by the Indians. Julian was later killed by the Indians.

"In 1847, after the close of the Mexican War. Major Reading again went to the ranch with horses and cattle, built a house, and put some forty acres of land under cultivation. He now [1852] has over 200 acres under cultivation, with fruit trees and grapevines growing."

The house that Mr. Hensley refers to is the old Reading adobe, the second house built upon the ranch, but the first built by himself; and of the many buildings later put up, it alone remains today—it and a few of the fine old pear trees, the oldest and largest pear trees in California, with their trunks over three feet in diameter, trunks that have twisted round and round in the wind as they grew, until today they look like gigantic corkscrews. There are seven acres belonging to this old historic building at the present time, and I should like very much to see the property preserved as a state landmark in memory of my father and those brave Pioneers who settled up here in Northern California.

It is today the oldest building north of Sutter's Fort. It was the county seat of Shasta County in 1851. Within its walls have been entertained most of the illustrious men who later became famous as the builders of California. Around its great fireplaces, there are three of them, gathered those men of the early days to discuss the problems of those times, to talk over the best agricultural practices, such as experience had taught them was best in this new land they were developing for you and for me.

This old adobe—with its extra thick walls, high windows for protection from arrows of the murderous Indian, adobe floors and the deep, rock-lined well just outside the door—hallowed by memories of the Pioneers of the past, should be preserved for all time, and I sincerely hope that the Native Sons, in their meeting at Redding this year, will evolve some way of doing it. It is upon the bank of the Sacramento River, the soil is of the richest, and I fully believe that a caretaker could make his living by farming those seven acres, with their many fruit trees.

It was in 1844 that my father entered the services of Captain Sutter, and he was at the Fort when Captain Fremont arrived that year. In 1845 he was left in full charge of the Fort while Sutter marched with his forces to assist Governor Micheltorena in quelling the insurrection headed by Castro and Alvarado. Micheltorena had shown his partiality for the Americans by granting them large tracts of lands, for which reason they espoused his cause.

My father was present with Fremont at Sonoma, taking active part in the discussions there, for he was an energetic promoter of the revolt that brought California into the Union. Immediately that war was declared with Mexico, Captain Fremont appointed my father major and paymaster of the Bear Flag Battalion, later known as the California Battalion. As an indication of the high regard in which he was held by the United States Army officials, I might mention that he was commissioned by Territorial Governor Fremont, March 2, 1847, as special agent and attorney to proceed with blank bonds, already signed by Fremont and Secretary of War Wm. H. Russell, "to Mazatlan, Lima, or any other place that he may elect, to negotiate certain loans for the use and benefit of the U. S., with full power to regulate the rates of interest, fill up the dates and do everything necessary to be done to accomplish the loans." Fremont also authorized him to charter a vessel for the trip and to appoint such agents as might be necessary for the work he had to do.

In 1850 he went to Washington. D. C, to settle his accounts as paymaster during the Mexican War. He had disbursed over \$166,000. In the records of the War Department occurs this statement: "The accounts sent in by Major P. B. Reading were the best sent in during the entire Mexican War."

The following, from the records of the Society of California Pioneers, indicates my father's integrity and determination to do right by everyone: "While in the States on this occasion [1850, to settle his war accounts,] he visited his old home at Vicksburg, where, in 1837, he succumbed to the crisis which caused such widespread ruin among the merchants of the Southwest. His object was to pay in gold the principal and interest of his long outstanding and almost forgotten obligations. This he did to the extent of \$60,000; an instance of commercial integrity of which our own State has reason to be proud."



BURIAL PLACE MAJOR READING

Upon a Little Hill Not Far from His Old Home. Marked Recently by His Daughter (also shown) with a Bronze Plaque.

September 15, 1852, Major Reading was appointed special Indian Agent by the United States with a cash fund of \$25,000 to be spent for the benefit of the Indians. For this work, extending over many years, he received no compensation, though several times he was highly complimented by the department for his splendid work and the accuracy of his accounts. As to what the Indians thought of his work, I will say that at my father's funeral were scores of Indians, old and young, who had traveled night and day from far up in the mountains that they might arrive in time to pay homage to the memory of their former agent and friend.

In 1851 he was nominated Whig candidate for governor and lost by but a few votes. A few years later a man who had deliberately destroyed 1,000 Whig votes in the interest of the successful candidate met my father and, after becoming acquainted with him, confessed to his destruction of those votes, and said: "Had I known you then, I should never have done it, major." My father cared nothing for political distinction. He was offered the nomination in 1855, and again in 1861, also the nomination for United States senator, but refused them all. The original letters offering these nominations are now at Sutter's Fort, in Sacramento. In 1861 he was unanimously elected as commissioner to represent the Pacific Coast at the World's Fair in London.

The winter of 1861 was notable up this way through the discussion that waxed hot and heavy over whether Red Bluff was to be the head of navigation on the Sacramento River, or the newly-projected town of my father's, which he called Latona, later changed to Reading, and still later to Redding, to honor an official of the S. P. R. R. who had no connection with the place. The original location of Latona was a few miles south of the present City of Redding.

Red Bluff contended that "it couldn't be done, that Iron Canyon would rip daylight into any steamer that tried to pass through above Red Bluff." Father was positive that it could be done, and backed his faith by purchasing from the California Navigation Company the old steamer "J. A: McClellan" for \$18,000, and then contracting with that company to thoroughly rebuild it. He bought the "McClellan" January 24. 1861, and renamed it "The Rainbow.

The news of the purchase of the steamer called forth much derision on the part of Red Bluff. It was not until January 3, 1862. that the first trip was made. The affidavit of the captain reads: "This will certify that the steamer 'Rainbow' made the run from Red Bluff to Latona and back to Red Bluff in 13 and 30 60 hrs., without the use of lines or rubbing the banks. Signed, Wm. Pierce, Capt."

The editor of the Red Bluff "Independent was aboard, as were many other prominent people. He made two reports on the trip, one written immediately afterwards, which leads to the belief that he dined well, for he began with "What a jolly time we had on the 'Rainbow! What a jolly set was on the steamer on occasion of the trial trip to the new town of Reading that is to be. The 'Rainbow.' beautiful steamer, capacious, powerful, light, airy, extensive accommodations for passengers and freight—just the thing—everything free—nothing to pay—good bed—good board—and free tods always produce good reports the 'Rainbow' is a splendid boat—Maj. Reading a magnificent gentleman—the town of Reading is a beautiful place"

In a parallel column, written later, he stated; "The location is a beautiful one; situate in an oak grove, good soil, and surrounded by good agricultural lands it is yet a paper town, for no building, hut or canvas tent yet graces the spot where it is proposed that the head of navigation shall extend" Then he proceeded to lampoon the projected town, contrasting it with Red Bluff, "the Albany of the Sacramento." Evidently the effects of the good time aboard the "Rainbow" had worn off by the time he was ready to write the editorial. However, Reading has survived, even if it was compelled to change its name to Redding.

In my mother's diary of Friday, January 3, 1862, appears this entry: "Clear and cold. Mr. and Mrs. McLean came for lunch. 3 o'clock. Maj. Reading arrived on steamboat 'Rainbow.' Mr. Jaynes and Mr. Bishop on board. After stopping half an hour, the boat started for Reading." Thereafter, for some time, she entered the arrival of the 'Rainbow' at the landing just down from where the old adobe now stands. It was in this old adobe that the excursion party was entertained that afternoon when they stopped over on the way to Reading town. Just how long the "Rainbow" continued in service, I do not know.

Many people seem to be of the opinion that Fort Reading was upon my father's place, but it was not. It was simply an army post, some four or five miles up the river and upon the other' side. It is probably more historic from the fact that it was commanded by Major R. B. Lee. a first cousin of General Robt. E. Lee, than anything else, though it was named in honor of my father. It was through Major Lee that my father met the major's niece in Washington, and married her while

there. At the present time the old fort site is owned by J. Hawes, who has preserved the only building left, an old barn put together with wooden pegs.

At the time of the gold discovery by Marshall in 1845 my father went down to Sutter's Fort, had a talk with Captain Sutter, then went up to Coloma, El Dorado County, to the new gold diggings. My father knew Northern California probably better than any other White man. He felt that there must be gold up this way. His experience is best given in a statement he made to Isaac Cox in 1858:

"In the spring of 1845, I left Sutter's Fort for the purpose of trapping the waters of Upper California and Oregon. My party consisted of 36 men. with 100 head of horses. In the month of May I crossed the mountains from the Sacramento River near a point called The Backbone, in about twenty miles reached the banks of a large stream which I named the Trinity, supposing it led into Trinidad Bay, as marked on the old Spanish charts. Remained on the river about three weeks, trapping beaver and otter . . . having been successful, returned in the fall to Sutter's Fort." This is the first exploration of Trinity County by a White man, as far as known.

"In the month of July. 1845, I crossed the mountains of the Coast Range at the head of Middle Cottonwood Creek, struck the Trinity at what is now called Reading's Bar; prospected for two days and found the bars rich in gold; returned to my home on Cottonwood, and in ten days fitted out an expedition for mining purposes; and passed the mountains where the travel passed about two years ago from Shasta to Weaver.

"My party consisted of three White men, one Delaware, one Chinook, and about sixty Indians from the Sacramento Valley. With this force I worked the bar bearing my name. I had with me 120 head of cattle, and abundant supply of provisions."

At heart my father, like Captain Sutter, was a farmer, an agriculturist, who believed that from the soil came wealth, health and happiness in the shape of golden grain, luscious fruits and beautiful flowers. He lies buried on the hill overlooking the home he loved so well, his grave marked by a simple bronze tablet—

Northern California's First Pioneer.

"Passing away!

'Tis told by the leaf which chill autumn breeze

Tears ruthlessly its hold from wind-shaken trees;

'Tis told by the dewdrop which sparkles at morn.

And when the noon cometh

'Tis gone, ever gone."

[Grizzly Bear, A Monthly Magazine for California 1907 Grizzly Bear Publishing Co, Los Angeles, California]