

Leviston, Jr. in San Francisco where they married and raised their two children, Stella C. Leviston Lovegrove and Dr. Frank Leviston. In 1912, five years after George Leviston, Jr's death, the last part of the Leviston land in the El Cerrito area was bought from the Leviston Estate by land speculators. The land was located in the in the Pullman-Stege-El Cerrito border area and was subdivided into four different tracts. Very little building activity took place in this area until the War and Post-war years.

These are only a few stories of our early pioneers. If you have other stories to tell about your family or other early settlers in El Cerrito between 1861-1920, we would love to hear them. You can send an e-mail to elcerritohistoricalsociety@yahoo.com for our collection. Please include their name, year they arrived, how they traveled and the time they lived in El Cerrito.

- by Joanne Rubio

Sources of Information:

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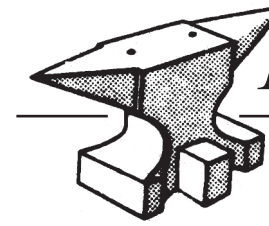
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Sketches of Leading and Representative Men of San Francisco: Being Original ...

By Oscar Tully Shuck, San Francisco: 1875, p. 1055: Rev. Hugh Gallagher, SF, Priest at St. Joseph (Available as a Google E-Book)

1 National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, Item No.7, p. 2, Jun 13, 1975 Emeric Building, St. Beryl Hotel, the Goodman Building, 1117 Geary Blvd, San Francisco, CA, Statement of Significance, 1869-1907

2 *Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey*, Lillian Schlissel, 1982, 3rd Printing 2004, Schocken Books, Random House, Inc.



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Our Next Event:

THE SEARCH FOR HEALTH ON THE OVERLAND TRAIL

7:00 PM Thursday, August 22, at the Senior Center

On August 22 Sarah Keyes from UC Berkeley will talk about how some emigrants who traveled the overland trail to California in the mid-nineteenth century hoped that the journey would lead to an improvement in their health. California's reputation for healthiness is well known, but emigrants' discussions of their search for health during the journey adds something new to this story. It should be an interesting program.

The El Cerrito Historical Society is a volunteer, non-political, non-profit corporation that has as its purpose the preservation and appreciation of the history of El Cerrito. It does this by providing educational and research opportunities; by collecting historic photographs, documents, artifacts and cultural objects; by advocating the preservation of historic resources in the city; and by encouraging others to help further these aims. Anyone may join; dues are \$25 (Household member), \$60 (Sponsoring member), and \$300 (Life member).

TRAVELING TO AND THROUGH EL CERRITO

Huchiun Ohlone, Sailors, Settlers

Tule Boats, Horseback, Sailing Ships, Wagon Trains, Steamships

Over 300,000 people left home, family, and friends in all parts of the world to come to California. This “great migration” began nine years before gold was found in California. News articles, letters and journals of the time, along with early biographical sketches, make it clear that things were not easy for many people living in the United States. This may have been one of the reasons they headed West. A biographical sketch of Joseph Emeric, an early land owner in San Pablo and initiator of the Rancho San Pablo Settlement, states “A commercial panic in 1848 forced Emeric to dispose of all his assets and reestablish himself. Leaving his family in New York he set sail for California in late February of 1849.” ¹

The prolonged U.S. depression and bank closings in 1837 is described by Lillian Schlissel in her book *Women’s Diaries of the Westward Journey*. She further writes that 20,000 were unemployed and laborers demonstrated in Philadelphia that same year. ² About 1,000 people began traveling on a “road” to Oregon in 1839. The first wagon train to cross the Sierra Nevada and enter California arrived in 1841 (the Bidwell Wagon Train).

Settlers began to arrive in the El Cerrito area in 1850 and bought land from Victor Ramon Castro. He lived here with his wife Luisa Martinez Castro and their six children. Their home, the “Castro Adobe” on Cerrito Creek, was completed in 1839. Some settlers were “freeholders” and homesteaded on land they thought was available. Others were given portions of land in exchange for legal services.

The first settlers were born in many places: Austria, Canada, Chile, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, Portugal, Nova Scotia, Russia, Scotland, and more. Others were born in other parts of the United States such as New York, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Louisiana, Mississippi and Pennsylvania. The population of the El Cerrito area in 1860 was about 90 people. They lived on the farms owned by Castro, Quilfelt, Galvin, Hagan, McAvoy, Baldie, Gallagher, Brissac, Mills, and Davis families.

According to the 1860 U.S. Agricultural census, most of the families in the El Cerrito area had farms or ranches - some of them quite large. For the most part they grew wheat, barley, oats, and hay. Those who were farming had two or more horses, 2-10 milking cows, other cattle/oxen and 2-50 swine. Some had a few sheep. Most grew their own garden vegetables. Victor Castro had a fruit orchard behind the Castro Adobe.

James Henry King was born in New York in 1842. He left home at a young age and went to Pittsburg, PA. He found work at a publishing house. James saved enough money to buy a ticket on a steamship to California. Around 1856 he set out from New York for the Isthmus of Panama. He traveled the short distance across Panama by steam train and boarded a steamship on the Pacific side. When he arrived in California he went to the gold fields but did not have much luck.

Worn out and very sick from diphtheria he found his way to the Castro Adobe in El Cerrito around 1857. Victor let him stay with them and nursed him back to health over a period of weeks. When Charles was well, he worked for Victor for a couple of years as a ranch hand. They remained friends through the years. Victor often went down to Charles’ stables in Oakland and rode Charles’ horses. Charles became a teacher and taught in Healdsburg, Hawaii and Trinidad (near Eureka.) Charles became quite wealthy and famous. He ended up owning the San Lorenzo Ranch in the Salinas Valley and was the founder of King City, CA. After selling the ranch to Claus Spreckels, he came to live in Oakland. Charles helped fund the construction of many buildings in Oakland, including the Hotel Oakland on 13th Street, which is still standing today.

Stella M. Reed Leviston (wife of George H. Leviston, Jr. listed above) Wisconsin > New Orleans > Panama > SF

Stella May Leviston’s father, William K. Reed, set out west and died somewhere in Nebraska or Kansas. Stella’s mother, Elizabeth Phelps Reed, decided to head to California in 1862 with her daughter, Stella M. who was about 13. It is not known if they boarded a steamship in New York or New Orleans. It is unlikely that it was New Orleans because all of the Mississippi River traffic was halted until 1863 by the U.S. Civil War. Stella and her mother boarded the SS Ariel which was a Pacific Mail Carrier. When the Ariel neared Cuba, a ship approached rapidly with an American flag flying. As the ship came closer they changed their flag to a Confederate flag.

The captain of Stella’s ship tried to outrun the CSS Alabama. The Alabama fired a warning shot. Since there were over 100 women and children on board, the captain of the Ariel decided not to resist. In addition to the regular passengers there were 136 US Marines on board, who were to be the permanent garrison for the new naval base on Mare Island. The passengers were captives for three days and were almost left stranded in Jamaica but the Ariel was freed instead and allowed to continue on its way. Stella and her mother got off in Panama City and took a steam train across the Isthmus of Panama. When they reached the Pacific Ocean, they boarded another steamer heading to San Francisco. Later, Stella met George H.

as infants. 1860 also saw his daughter Josefa marry Henry Edward Fitch. Julia and Victor had five more children over the next several years. Julia and Victor lived at the Castro Adobe until Victor died in 1900. Two of Victor's children from his first marriage to Luisa Martinez were living: Isabela Castro O'Neil and Patricio Castro were both living on their ranches in El Sobrante off of Castro Ranch Road. Isabela had 6 children living in 1900 and Patricio had 5 children. Victor's oldest daughter, Josefa Castro Fitch, died in Mexico the same year her father died. She had eight children. Josefa's youngest daughter and her children later moved to San Francisco.

After Victor died Julia went to live in San Francisco with their daughter Julia B. Castro Galpin. Julia Townsend Beardsley Lupton Castro died in 1901. The Castro Adobe passed on to her two living children, Belinda Lupton Sargent and Julia B. Castro Galpin.

George H. Leviston, Jr. - Springfield, IL > California

George H. Leviston, Jr. became a land owner of hundreds of acres in El Cerrito and the surrounding area, though he never lived here. At the age of three years George, Jr. came by wagon train to California in 1849 with his parents and his brother William (who was four.) The journey took six months. His father, George Leviston, Sr, had been a successful lawyer in Springfield, IL. When the family set out from the Missouri River, George's father loaded many of his law books in the wagon. These were all tossed out of the wagon to lighten the load a short time after starting their journey. The family settled at first in Benicia, California. George, Sr. built the first brick building in Benicia where the new California State Legislature met. Both Leviston brothers also grew up to be lawyers. The entire Leviston family was living in San Francisco by 1866. George, Jr. sold 600 acres in the hills of El Cerrito to land speculators in the 1890's. This included portions of northeast Berkeley and two-thirds of what is now Kensington.

Steamship Journeys

The first paddle wheel steamer, the "SS California," left New York Oct. 6, 1848 before word of the gold discovery reached the East Coast. It was carrying mail and a few passengers on its way around the "horn" of South America. People scrambled to meet up with the ship on the Pacific Coast of Panama to get to the California Gold Fields. When it arrived in San Francisco February 28, 1849 it had over 400 passengers! All the crew but one jumped ship for the gold fields.

Charles Henry King - Steamer from New York to Panama > Cross the Isthmus of Panama > Steamer to SF > Gold Mines > El Cerrito

We only know of a few early settlers in El Cerrito who came to California by wagon train. Regular steamship service from New York and New Orleans to San Francisco began in 1848. Those who came to El Cerrito after 1870 could have come by wagon train, steamship or by steam train. Regardless of how they traveled, these settlers began the development of what eventually became El Cerrito and southeast Richmond.

Before Settlers Came - Huchiun Ohlone - Walking/Tule Boats/Kayaks

This great migration drastically affected the 278 Ohlone and other local Indian people living in Contra Costa County in 1852 (which in those days still included all of Alameda County.) The Ohlone people had lived in this area for over 4,000 years. The Ohlone means of getting around was mainly by walking or by paddling tule boats. (They made these boats from strong reeds they found in the marshy areas which once lined the nearby shores.) Eighteen people listed as "Indian" were on the 1860 census for this part of Contra Costa County. Of these eighteen, Jose, Isabela and their two young children - Amado (age 6) and Isabela (age 2) - lived and worked at the Castro Adobe. Jose was born in Mexico but his wife and children were born in California.

From Spain/Mexico - Horses/Sailing Ships

The earliest non-native families/soldiers came on horseback to San Francisco and then to our side of the bay. The first ones were part of the Anza Expedition of 1775-1776, which traveled here from "New Spain" (Northern Mexico) by horseback. Others began to arrive by 3-mast sailing ships from Mexico. Lt. Ignacio Martinez, Commandante of the San Francisco Presidio, first sailed from Mexico City to San Diego and Santa Barbara. He was the father of Luisa Martinez. She married Victor Ramon Castro, who built the Castro Adobe. Luisa's maternal grandparents were on the Anza trip as was Victor's father (Francisco Castro) and many relatives. The Martinez family settled in Pinole.

From U.S, Europe, and South America - Sailing Ships

Some people traveled here in the early 1800s to trade with California as well as with the rest of Mexico. They were the captains and sailors on sailing ships. They would make trips that lasted for months or years from the U.S., Mexico, South America, England, France, Spain and Russia. Once in awhile, a shipmate would decide to stay in California. Deciding to stay meant getting a passport, as this was part of the country of Spain (and then Mexico.) Some sailors became citizens of Mexico. They married and raised families in California. Several of the men who stayed in Yerba Buena/San Francisco married Luisa Martinez Castro's sisters and nieces.

Pioneers in El Cerrito By 1860

Baldie, Louis	FRANCE	1860	Galvin, Mary	NY	1860
Baldie, Carmel	CHILE	1860	Galvin Child	NY	1860
Brissac, Felix	FRANCE	1860	Galvin, Ann B.	IRE	1860
Brissac, Virginia	NY	1860	Goodale, David	NH	1860
Brissac Children	CA	1860			
			Hagan, Christian	DEN	1860
Castro, Victor R.	CA	1839	Hagan, Madlad	GER	1860
Castro, M. Luisa A. Martinez	CA	1839	Hagan Children	LA/CA	1860
Castro, Felicidad Carrillo	CA	1853	Jose & Isabela	MEX/CA	1860
Castro, Julia T. Beardsley	NY	1859	Their Children	CA	1860
Castro Children	CA	1839-1860's	King, Charles Henry	NY	1857
Cook, Archer S.	MA	1850	Pollard, John	RUS	1860
Cook, Charles H. H.	MA	1848	Livermore, Obadiah	NY	1849
			Lupton, Belinda (dtr J.Castro)	CA	1859
Davis, John	AUSTRIA	1860			
Davis, Hannah Ann	SCOT	1860	McAvoy, Bernard	IRE	1860
Davis Children	CA	1860	McAvoy, Isabelle Gallagher	IRE	1860
Dougherty, William	IRE	1860	McAvoy Children	IRE/PA	1860
Doyal, John I	RE	1860	Mills, Walter	SCOT	1854
Doyal, Catherine	NY	1860	Mills, Isabella	SCOT	1854
Doyal Children	CA	1860	Mills Children	MI/CA	1854
Gallagher, Daniel	IRE	1860	Peralta, Ignacio	MEX	1860
Gallagher, Mary A.	IRE	1860	Quilfelt, Wilhelmina CC "Minna"	GER	1853
Gallagher Children	PA	1860	Quilfelt Children	CA	1853
Galvin, John	IRE	1860	Stowell, Frank	NH	1860
Galvin, William	IRE	1860	Stowell, Clara	NH	1860
Galvin, Mary (Mother)	IRE	1860	Stowell Children	VT	1860

Captain William A. Richardson married Luisa’s older sister, Maria Antonia Martinez. They had the first home in what became San Francisco. Richardson Bay got its name from the Captain. William Heath Davis, captain/merchant/historian settled in San Francisco and married Luisa’s niece, Maria T. Estudillo. Luisa’s younger sister, Susana Martinez, married Capt. William Sturgis Hinkley. He served as the mayor of San Francisco in 1844, before California was part of the U.S. After William Hinkley died, in 1848 Susana married Col. William M. Smith. He helped form the City of Martinez, naming the streets after members of the Martinez family that same year. Though none of these early sailor-settlers lived in the

El Cerrito area, they visited Victor and Luisa Castro’s adobe home here in El Cerrito many times over the years for family events and celebrations.

A FEW STORIES OF WAGON TRAINS AND STEAMSHIPS

Wagon Train Adventures

Julia Townsend Beardsley Lupton Castro - New York > Wisconsin > California

Julia Townsend Beardsley was born in New York in 1827. Her mother died when she was about eight years old. Her father then married the sister of Julia’s mother and headed west via wagon train a few years later. In 1843 the Beardsley family homesteaded in Wisconsin. When

***What Did You Bring With
You in Your Wagon?***

Here is a typical list of the “necessities”

- 200 lbs. Flour
- 150 lbs. Bacon
- 10 lbs. Coffee
- 20 lbs. Sugar
- 10 lbs. Salt
- Chipped beef
- rice
- dried beans
- baking soda
- pickles
- tallow (candle oil)
- fry pan
- tin plates
- knives
- heavy rope
- axles
- tar bucket
- water barrels
- wagon tongues
- powder/lead/shot/rifles
- Money for ferry crossings,
- replace parts/animals and food
- tea
- dried fruit
- vinegar
- mustard
- kettle
- coffee pot
- cups
- forks
- spokes
- wheels

Julia was 21 she married Isaac Lupton. Isaac and Julia joined a wagon train and came to California from Wisconsin in 1849. Julia was pregnant with their daughter Belinda for the last part of the journey. After 5-6 months of traveling they reached Sacra-mento and headed to Calaveras County, where thousands had already arrived. Isaac and Julia set up a merchant store to sell items to the miners. Julia’s daughter was born there. In 1852 the family moved down to Sacramento and opened a laundry busi-ness. Their son William Lupton was born in Sacramento but died 9 months later of TB. In 1858 Julia and Isaac made their way to San Francisco. Julia was widowed shortly after and began working as a governess for Victor Castro who had seven children. They had both suffered the loss of their spouses and young children.

Julia married Victor Ramon Castro in 1860 at the “Castro Adobe”. When she mar-ried Victor he had seven children ages 6-21 from his marriages to Luisa Martinez and Felicidad Carrillo (who had both died in childbirth.) Two of his children had died