

Chapter XIII

The Pacific Coast and San Francisco

When **William** and **Sarah Titchenal** arrived in Los Angeles they were tired, needed rest, good food and a bath. Mary Ellen was sick, very sick, perhaps Sarah Lovina and some of the other children were also sick. (Note: **William's** family Bible recorded Sarah Lovina death as August 15, 1862, only two months after Mary Ellen was buried at sea, not 1863 as noted in Harold Titchenor's book. If the bible is correct, Sarah Lovina was also probably sick at the same time. I have assumed the Bible as correct for the purpose of this story.)

They found a doctor, but he was of little help. They wanted to make the remainder of the trip as easy as possible on the family. They stayed in Los Angeles long enough to rest and sell their wagon, and find a ship bound for San Francisco. The ship probably was a freighter and a sailing vessel. It could have been a steamboat, but except for the long trip around the horn or from Panama, not many were going up and down the coast at that time.

William and **Sarah Titchenal** arrived in San Francisco July 9, 1852. Mary Ellen was buried at sea on June 11, 1852. This is 78 days after April 1st.

This timing is possible, if my assumptions are true: They must have left Bell County, Texas soon after Sarah Lovina was born February 18. Assuming they left Bell County by April 1st, and if there were no unusual delays, their trip across the desert would have taken about 70 to 85 days. (The wagon trip was about 1700 to 2000 miles. The average time of the wagon trains when moving, was two miles per hour or 20 to 30 miles a day. This would mean 60 to 100 days would have been required for an overland trip)

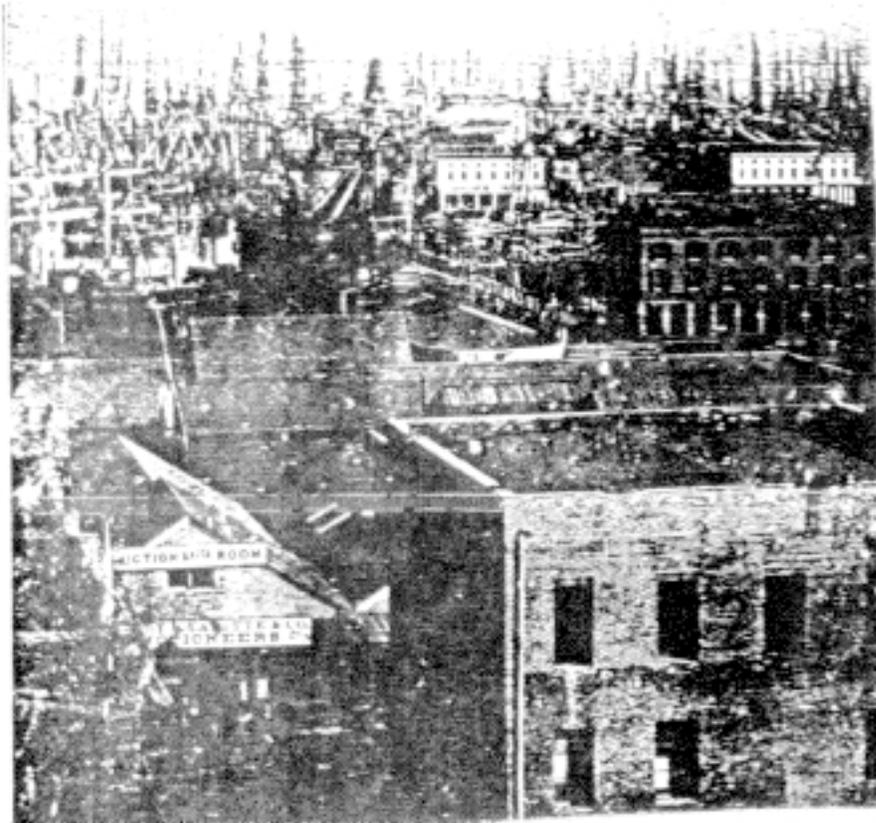
Of course, I don't actually know when they arrived in Los Angeles or if they had to wait for a ship to San Francisco, or how long they looked for medical help in Los Angeles. Whatever happened, Mary Ellen didn't live long after they boarded the ship. From June 11 until they arrived in San Francisco July 9th is 28 days. This is a long time for this trip, even in 1852. The ship may have been a freighter with other stops. It should not have taken that long to sail from Los Angeles to San Francisco. The ship probably did not have a doctor aboard and their little daughter must have died soon after they boarded ship. The sea trip evidently took over three weeks, maybe four so it must have been hard on all of them.

With things not working out in Texas, the difficult trip across the desert, and now their daughter, Mary Ellen, dead, and their daughter Sarah Lovina still very sick they surely had doubts about ever leaving Fort Smith. After they buried their daughter at sea, except for worrying about their little daughter, Sarah Lovina, the rest of the trip was uneventful and they finally landed in San Francisco July 9, 1852. But their troubles and disappointments were not behind them.

William and **Sarah** were both self reliant frontier people and had faced many emergencies, but now they were worried and didn't know where to turn. San Francisco seemed overwhelming to them. It was booming! People and construction was everywhere but few friendly faces. They had never seen a city like this. St. Louis and Cincinnati were booming and busy but it had taken years to build them. San Francisco was growing daily. Every day shiploads of immigrants were arriving from all over the world. In 1846 the city had been called Yerba Buena, with 200 people. The name

The Titchenal Saga The Gold Under The Sycamore Tree

was changed to San Francisco in 1847. By 1848 it had grown to 800 people and by 1850 the population had reached 35,000. By 1852 it may have been 75,000 or more.



By 1850 San Francisco burgeoned into a major seaport within one year of the discovery of gold in the sierra. This 1850 photograph, (the earliest live visual record of the city), shows the back bay thick with vessels behind a waterfront of multistory brick buildings where as recently as 1847 cows had grazed and farmers and a modest handful of sea traders dozed.

San Francisco, though the largest and most favored California city, boasted few comforts in 1852. The streets, far from being paved with gold, had only litter and discards, no paving. Thoroughfares were muddy in the winter, dusty in the summer. People conducted business in a cacophony of languages. Impeding the wayfarers progress up the harbor's side avenues were disgorged cargoes of everything from fine wines and tinned oysters to flour barrels and tobacco bales. For want of a warehouse the street served.

Note: My family bible indicates William and Sarah's daughter, Sarah Lovina, died August 15, 1952. On the other hand Tim Haidlen's said he had the birth and death record pages from a family bible also. Tim believed that I have a second bible, the first one was worn out and replaced. He believed the handwriting in pages of the bible that I have is that of his great grandfather David Dickason, therefore he thinks David Jackson copied the information from the first bible to the second one. Tim used 1853 as the date of Sarah Lovina death. As Tim is now dead, we may never know where he got the 1853 date, or if the first bible had 1853 and David Dickason by mistake wrote 1852. It makes a big difference. If the baby Sarah Lovina died in 1852, she would have died in San Francisco as 6 month old baby before thy moved to Murphys. If she died in 1853 she would have died an 18 month child in Murphys only one month after another daughter died at birth in Murphys. Either way is possible and would be devastating to them. If Sarah Lovina died in 1852, it would explain they stayed so long in San Francisco before trying their hand in gold mining, so I have used 1852 in my story.

The Titchenal Saga The Gold Under The Sycamore Tree

William and his wife Sarah were too worried about finding a doctor that could heal their sick daughter to leave for gold country or be impressed about the sights of San Francisco. They arraigned with the ship's captain to sleep aboard the ship for a while until they found a doctor and got treatment for their young daughter. Unfortunately it was to no avail; Sarah Lovina died August 15th, 37 days after they landed in San Francisco. When the captain finally asked them to leave and they looked for a place to stay in the city, they had trouble finding a good place.

Even fine hotels such as the St. Francis had canvas ceilings and walls, though it had fine food in a fine dining room, with tables and tablecloths and glittering glass and silver.

More from the book, *They Saw The Elephant* :

One woman described her stay the St. Francis Hotel in a letter, "The bed was delightful with soft hair mattresses under a pile of snowy blankets, she was soon asleep, but not for long. She was awakened by voices, she thought were in her room, but she soon discovered it was two gentlemen talking to each other from their room on ether side of hers through the canvas and paper walls. Later their snoring kept her awake."

Inadequate and over priced housing was everywhere. Many immigrants, like **William** and **Sarah** even stayed on the ships as long as they could. There were plenty of ships in the harbor, few ships left San Francisco after anchoring. The owners and crew often abandoned their ships to seek gold. It was thought more than half the ladies of San Francisco lived aboard the ships because the hotels were so poor, crowded and unavailable. The city's often damp and windy weather disagreed with the ladies.

The mass of argonauts (gold seekers) were young men averaging twenty-five years of age. They comprised the best intelligence, energy, courage and perseverance of the communities from which they came. They were at an age when the love of adventure was strong. Only pioneers or men who had served as soldiers in the field can comprehend how it is possible to do without things and still be comfortable. The early miners endured much and enjoyed much. They were free as the invigorating mountain air. They yielded homage to no man. They were proud that the gold which they extracted from the earth added to the world's aggregate wealth without impoverishing their fellow men. Their work and environment gave them self-reliance and great individuality. They were tolerant of others, willing to think for themselves and accord a like privilege to others. They were charitable and liberal people and these qualities were inherited by their descendants

William was 35, **Sarah** 34 years old, older than most miners, but they and their ancestors had lived adventurous pioneer lives for centuries. They had been raised and had lived without "things" and endured great tragedies more than once. After the buried their daughter, they pulled their family together and got ready for a new life again. The life they were about to embark upon would not be strange to them. Their ancestors had certainly passed on to them all the qualities "49ers" needed.

William did not know where to start looking for gold when he arrived in San Francisco, but he had been an active member of the Masonic Lodge in Fort Smith, so first he looked for a Masonic Lodge. He felt the members might help steer him clear of the many schemes to bilk him out of his money. The city was full of stories of where to look for gold and people who would lead you there

(for a price).

How much help he got from the Masons is unknown but the Masons might have called his attention to the mining camp at Murphys. Mining at Murphys had started out big and popular in 1848 but had dropped down by 1850. By July of 1852, when **William** and **Sarah** arrived in San Francisco, Murphys was again being talked about as having the richest placer mines in the Calaveras County region. It is named for two Murphy brothers that were the first to discover gold there.

The area is surrounded by early gold mining sites. The first discovery of gold at a site on Coyote Creek was made by John and Daniel Murphy in 1848. They were excited about their find and named it Murphy's Diggings. But after a few months of panning the yield fell short of expectations and the brothers moved on to find a bigger camp of Murphy, after which the original location was called "Murphy's Old Diggings." Then Mexicans moved in and satisfied with the smaller amounts of gold dust established a tiny village which they called Vallecito. The Spanish word for Little Valley.

The Murphy brothers had come to California with their friends, Henry Angel, and James Carson. While the Murphy brothers paused to try their luck at what later became Vallecito, their companions went on about ten miles to establish diggings at Angels Camp and Carson Hill. Angels Camp, was later made famous by Mark Twain in the 1870's with his story about the jumping frog. It was said John and Daniel Murphy had taken out \$1,500,000 to \$2,000,000 in gold in the winter and fall of 1848.

When the news of their riches spread around, the miners rushed in. The claims were limited to eight by twelve feet. The average take per claim was \$3000 the first season although one miner realized \$80,000 the first season. Hand panning was the only method at first until a new invention of rockers and cradles was introduced. An ounce to the pan was rather common and four to five ounces was not unusual.

By 1850 the population of Murphys had reached 1200 and it seemed every inch of space on the flat had been mined. A man by the name of Gerstacher described the town when he first saw it:

"The main street is solely occupied by stores and shops, a mass of small block houses and tents behind them, scattered as far as the next range of hills. The stately pines and leafy oaks-the green underwood from which the white and blue tops of the tents were peeping through-the high and finely wooded mountains, busy life on all sides-the flag of the United States fluttering from the tents, made an impression which I shall never attempt to describe, I could have hardly chosen a more beautiful spot in the whole world."

Gerstacher found the mines overcrowded and didn't have any success. Gold was to be found but the majority of the miners didn't find it. Therefore, by August 1850, the miners began to leave the place in which they could not make a day's wages. The storekeepers had crowded in. Murphys was now a little town but the storekeepers wondered what would happen if the miners left. The town merchants had to devise a way to keep the miners in town so they hired a man by the name of Fletcher to locate gold veins with a gold-o-meter. He located and marked out ten or twelve holes where gold could be found at a depth of twenty-five feet. When no gold was found they were told to dig to thirty-

The Titchenal Saga The Gold Under The Sycamore Tree

five feet. Fletcher left town before that level was reached.

Despite Gerstacher's experience, there were great sums of gold yet to be dug out of Murphys Flat. The March 10, 1852 issue of the *San Joaquin Republican* reported, "Miners at Murphys are making twenty to fifty dollars a day."

William had arrived in San Francisco July 9, 1852, three months after that article appeared. But, in the September 25, 1852 issue, the same paper reported, "Many of the deep claims at Murphys pay as high as three or four thousand dollars to the wagon load of earth, and few less than fifty dollars to the cart-load. This camp is destined to become one of the most important placers in the southern mines. It is now a large and substantially built town and is daily on the increase. The flats and hillside gulches for many miles around are staked off for winter digging."

Also in 1852, new discoveries were made just over the grade at the southern end of Murphys and all along the trail through Douglas Flat to Vallecito for a distance of four miles.

Hundreds of miners were hard at work panning for gold. During the first decade of mining Vallecito was one of the most popular of all the towns in the region. Five trails led into it and it soon became the rendezvous for a more vicious crew of rowdies than the rollicking miners who haunted its saloons and gambling halls day and night. These rowdies were the Mexican bandits, generally night raiders and men of Murietta's gang, who often spent the night there after one of their raids in the northern hills.



Murphys in 1852

By November 13, 1852 the *San Joaquin Republican* reported Murphys was now a town of some note and had dropped the "camp" in its name and is now known as "Murphys." The paper also said,

"Some fifteen families had moved into the settlement, and the softening influence of women was having its effect upon the men's coarse natures. The sun of Murphy's greatness has just risen; in a short time she will take the scepter of the mountain queen. The city has upwards of 500 frame houses, large and substantially built, and a permanent and floating population of nearly 3,000. Mr P. Birmingham is constructing a large three-story hotel, and it is rumored it will have mattresses and blankets void of fleas. The town contains eight taverns besides private boarding houses; two restaurants; one express and banking house; one livery stable; seven blacksmith shops; two steam sawmills; one cider and syrup factory one bowling alley, besides dance and drinking houses innumerable".

The Titchenal Saga The Gold Under The Sycamore Tree

In January, 1853 the Union Water Canal was completed to Murphys and the mines became more active. Before this water had been scarce. With water plentiful the diggings could accommodate many more miners. In the next few years the population in the vicinity of Murphys reached 5,000.

Murphys is about 170 miles North West of San Francisco in Calaveras County. The road there went 110 miles around the lower bay to Stockton then 60 miles up the mountain to Murphys. In 1853 when William traveled there the Dillion and Company Stage Line was probably operating. It took about 12 hours from Stockton to Murphys and the fare was eight dollars. Probably another 10 to 12 hours from San Francisco to Stockton as the ground was level but with a lot more stops. **William** could have gone by horseback, wagon or taken the stage.



The trip is very scenic. After the flat country around the bay, the road winds through the foothills of the massive Sierra Nevada mountain range filled with untapped forests of tall pine trees. The roads (such as they were at that time) were cut into the sides of great mountains with drops of hundreds of feet into the canyons.

It is hard to say what **William** and **Sarah** did, other than try to save thier daughter, during the six months between the time he and **Sarah** arrived in San Francisco and the time he joined the lodge in Murphys January 22, 1853. He may have just delayed joining the lodge after he arrived in Murphys, or he might have gone there first by wagon or horse back to get established or look the situation over then had **Sarah** and his family follow by stage. In the 1850s Murphy's population reached 5,000 but by 1875 without mining, it had dropped back to about 300 people. Today (1993) it has a population of about 950.



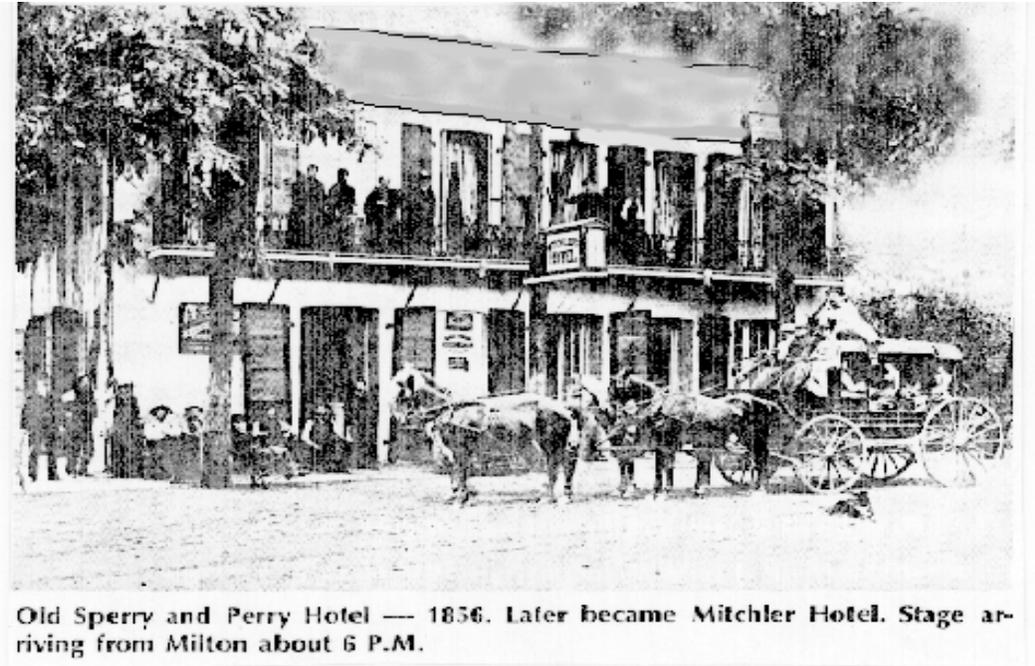
The Ophir Lodge # 33

The news articles and the fact that Murphys had a Masonic Lodge may have convinced **William** and **Sarah** to start looking for their fortune there. It would appear that William's choice and timing was good, gold was still around when he settled there just before a great increase in population.

From California Masonic Lodge records we find **William** became a charter member of Ophir Lodge #33, Murphys, California on January 22, 1853 about six months after he arrived in San Francisco.

The Ophir Lodge # 33, Free and Accepted Masons, had the longest continuous existence of any organization in Murphys. The first meeting of the lodge was in 1852 at the home of Mr. Turner. The lodge was chartered May 6, 1853 after **William** became a member. He may have helped to get the charter.

The Titchenal Saga The Gold Under The Sycamore Tree



Old Sperry and Perry Hotel — 1856. Later became Mitchler Hotel. Stage arriving from Milton about 6 P.M.



Today the Mitchler Hotel has become the Murphys Hotel.



An old home of the 1860s



and a rapids on one of the rivers near Murphys

The Titchenal Saga The Gold Under The Sycamore Tree



A ranch near Murphys



The good view from the cemetery



**Murphys old Cemetery
Buena Vista Cemetery**