

The Novato Historian

The Quarterly Publication of the Novato Historical Guild, the Novato History Museum, and the Hamilton Field History Museum



Preserving Novato's History Feature Section

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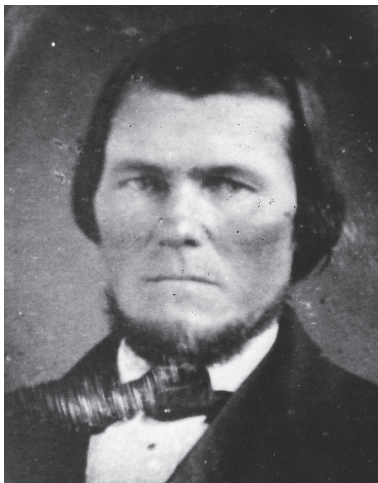
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Novato Pioneers

by Charmaine Burdell



James Black Jr.

James Black Jr. was born in Carnwath, County Lanark, Scotland, on January 1, 1810, the son of James and Janet (Scot) Black. He James Black, Jr. arrived in California on January 2, 1832. Sick with typhoid fever, he was put off the ship at Monterey, taken to the home of John B.R. Cooper and nursed back to health by Mrs. Cooper — Encarnacion Vallejo, sister of Mariano G. Vallejo. Returning to sea, he wrote this letter to his father:



Vandals have removed the spire from James Black's tombstone and the tombstone of his wife, Maria, who lies between Black and McIntosh.

James Black

No. 29 Adlington St. Liverpool, England

Callo, Peru
17 May, 1832

Dear Father and Sisters, As Dawson is to sail tomorrow, I embrace the opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know how I am getting on and in the first place I must inform you that I have left the schooner *Dolphin* and am now on board the *Brig Catalina*. We are bound down [up] the coast to California and from there to Hamburg [Germany]. I think if I complete this voyage, I will have the pleasure of meeting with you all in about sixteen months, perhaps a little more. I am sorry that we have been parted so long. I was happy to hear of sister Margaret's union with Mr. Jones. Give them my best respects, wishing them much joy with health and happiness in store. I must stop, hoping this will find you in as good health as it leaves me,

Your Son and Brother, James Black.

A Scottish sailor, James Black met Edward Manuel McIntosh, also a Scotsman, probably in Monterey, who invited Black to accompany him on a sea otter hunting expedition. "Mac," as he was called, became a naturalized Mexican

citizen in 1833, and requested permission from the Mexican Republic to engage in sea otter hunting for four months along the coast of the territory, extending from San Luis Obispo Mission to the Port of



Maria Augustina Sals

Bodega, with the specific condition that he equip his craft with at least two other parties, people from the region. The permit was granted at Monterey, November 20, 1834, signed by Jose Figueroa. Black hunted with Mac for the next two years, forming a friendship between the two men that lasted a lifetime. They are buried side by side in Mount Olivet Cemetery, San Rafael.

When not hunting with Mac, Black lived part of the time at Bodega and part of the time in the redwoods on John Reed's farm in Marin County. By 1835 he settled on the Canada de Jonive Rancho, consisting of 10,786 acres, which had been granted him by

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Pio Pico, February 5, 1845, in what was to become Sonoma County.

Mr. Black married Maria Augustina Sais/Saez on May 19, 1844 at the mission San Rafael Arcangel. Born at the Presidio of San Francisco and baptized at Mission San Francisco De Asis on February 17, 1828, Augustina was the daughter of Juan Maria Saez and Dominga (Valenzuela) Saez. Her grandparents were Justo Nazario Saez and Micaela (Sotelo) Saez, who had come to San Francisco with de Anza's second expedition, consisting of fifty-one persons, soldiers and their families, arriving in Monterey, May 23, 1775.

James and Augustina had two children; James III [10/29, 1848 3/19, 1849] and Mary Augustina [1845 – 1900], who married Dr. Galen Burdell D. D. S., son of James and Sila [Lamon] Burdell. After Maria's death in 1864, James married Maria Antonia Expectacion Loretto [Duarte] Pacheco, daughter of Mariano and Teodora [Peralta] Duarte.

During the Gold Rush, Black drove large herds of cattle to the gold fields, where he found a ready market for them. Their sale helped to make him a very wealthy man. In August of 1850 (or 1852), he purchased the 8,877.48 acres Olompali Rancho from Camillo Ynitia, and in 1865, he deeded to his daughter, Mary, 6,335 acres of this rancho, along with a band of cattle, as a wedding gift.



Mary Black Burdell



Mary, Mary and James Black, ca 1863

James Black was a plain, straightforward, honest man, strong in his likes and dislikes and his word was as good as his bond. He was a man of strong will and decision, and not likely to be influenced by others. A man of few words in business matters. His principal business was stock raising and he seemed to understand that business thoroughly.

By 1851 Black was driving herds of cattle up the Russian River Valley to a tract of land adjoining the Sanel Rancho on the north, for grazing purposes. Walter Skidmore, deputy Assessor of Marin County, listed Black's property in 1853 as; two leagues of land in Nacasio, (Nicasio) Nacasio houses, three lots in San Rafael, one and two thirds leagues of Olompali, tame horses, wild horses, mules and asses, six yoke of oxen, tame cattle, wild cattle, swine, fowl, mortgages, bonds, money due, growing crops, potatoes, and grain, script.

Black was baptized at the Mission San Rafael Arcangel on March 8, 1840 and became a naturalized Mexican citizen in September of 1843. In 1845, he was the second alcalde of San Rafael. On May 1, 1849, he applied in San Rafael to register his brand, the number "3" with vent and ear marks. In 1850, he became Associate Justice of the Court of Sessions, and the first coroner of Marin County.

Jim Black's will was contested by his daughter, Mrs. Mary Augustina Burdell. She claimed it was not the will of her fa-

ther, that her father at the time of signing the paper was not of sound mind, that he was under restraint, undue influence and fraudulent misrepresentation. This controversy was submitted three times to the juries of Marin County. A fourth trial took place in the Probate Court of San Francisco, March 16, 1874, and was concluded April 2nd. The decision of the jury: The will shall not stand. One half of the estate will go to Mrs. Black, and the other to Mrs. Burdell.

The fees for the three attorneys for Mrs. Burdell – Messrs. Shafter, Sewell and Southard – were established at \$100,000, or something over \$30,000 each. Mary A. Burdell's will divided the property between her son, James and her daughter, Mabel [a.k.a Mary], with Galen receiving a life interest. The home ranch became Olompali State Park in 1977. Some of the property is still retained in the family by great granddaughter, Charmaine Burdell.

Dr. Burdell was born near Adams Centre, Watertown, Jefferson County, New York on June 26, 1828, the son of James and Sila (Lamon) Burdell of Ellisburg, New

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York. Sila was the daughter of Noah and Nancy (Gault) Lamon, also of Ellisburg. Noah's father, Francis, born in 1727 in Palmer, Hampden County, Massachusetts, served in the Colonial War, on the Lake George Expedition of 1755 and the Crown Point Expedition of 1756. He died in 1829 at Hounsfield, New York at the age of 101. His wife, Margaret Ray, born 1737, Greenwich, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, died in 1836 at the age of ninety-nine. Nancy's father, James Gault, lived in Halifax, Windham County, Vermont at the time of his enlistment in the Revolutionary War and served in the Massachusetts line.

The Burdell's were living in Simsbury, Hartford County, Connecticut in 1790. Galen's grandparents, William and Polly (Cunningham) Burdell, lived in German Flats, Herkimer County, New York in 1810. POWs parents, John and Rebecca (Taylor) Snyder Cunningham, lived in Salem, New Jersey, where he served with the Jerseymen during the Revolutionary War.

At the age of fifteen, Galen became a student of dentistry, under an apprenticeship to his uncles, Doctors John and Harvey Burdell, prominent dentists of New York City. [Harvey was murdered there January 30, 1857 and the case has remained unsolved.]

The New York City Directory for 1831 - 1847 lists Dr. Galen Burdell, Dentist, office corner of Franklin and Broadway. He was nineteen years old.

In 1849, Galen decided to visit another uncle, Dr. Lewis Burdell of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, who was physician to Emperor Dom Pedro II. In the archives of The Society of California Pioneers, Galen states that he arrived in California aboard the Duxbury as her surgeon. He may have been on board the ship when it sailed from Boston, February 10, 1849, bound for Rio. The Duxbury rounded Cape Horn on May 22, arriving off the Golden Gate on August 21, in a dense fog. Seeking the entrance to the harbor on a calm sea, it ran aground on a reef, today known as "Duxbury Reef", off Bolinas. At the following high tide, it was pulled off by her crew and came into San Francisco harbor, August 22, 1849.

Dr. Burdell wasted little time in pioneering a dental practice. In Alta, California, September 27, 1849, appears the following ad: Co-partnership — The undersigned have this day entered into co-partnership under the firm of Tompson & Burdell for the practice

of Dentistry. J. Whitlock Tompson and Galen Burdell M.D. Office on Clay Street, next door to Woodruff & Addison, Jewelry.

Volunteer fire and militia companies were considered "places of the highest resort." On January 8, 1850, Galen joined the St. Francis Hook and Ladder Company No. 1. A sense of sympathy and brotherly love bound the members with the closest of ties of friendship. When a member was sick, one or more of the members were required to visit him daily and tend to his needs.

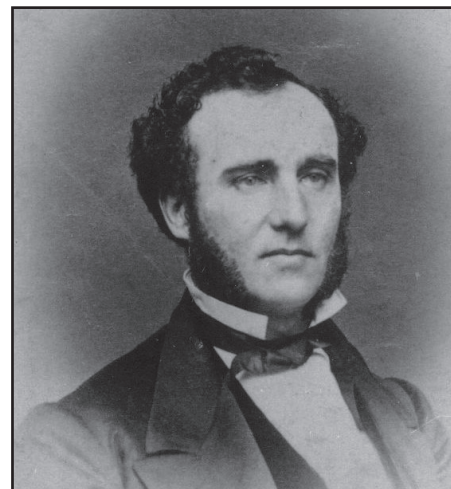
Dr. Burdell, with Dr. Horace J. Paine and their friend Eldridge G. Hall, became partners in a scheme to get rich in Oregon, which they called "The Umpqua Expedition."

Unfortunately, Simmons, Hutchinson & Co. went bankrupt and the company lost their entire capital of \$1,000. (Simmons was the owner of Rancho Novato in 1850) The Act of Congress offering a square mile of land in Oregon to settlers, expired December 1, 1850. By this date they had not taken possession of any claims. During the autumn of 1850, Congress passed a law forbidding the issue of U.S. patents for lands in Oregon to companies or nonresidents whose object was speculation.

Burdell became acquainted with Maria Augustina, the daughter of James and Maria Augustina Black, in 1861. They corresponded for six months before their engagement. The wedding was held at Black's home in Nicasio, Marin County (October 6, 1863). In 1865, as a wedding present for his daughter, Mr. Black conveyed 6,335 acres of Rancho Olompali, stocked with cattle. Dr. and Mrs. Burdell moved onto the property December 24, 1866.

A son, James Black Burdell, was born in San Francisco on November 18, 1869. James married in 1892, Mary Josephine Sweetser, daughter of John Robert Sweetser of Novato, Marin County. On March 21, 1876, a daughter, Mabel Isabel was born to Dr. and Mrs. Burdell, also in San Francisco. She married first, John M. Comman in Dublin, Ireland. She married second, Edwin V. Smith in Reno, Nevada. Her third marriage was to Rudy Lichtenberg of San Rafael, Marin County. In her later years, she was known as "Mary." She died in 1956, in Sonoma County.

On February 23, 1864, Mrs. Burdell's mother came to Dr. Burdell with a severe toothache and during the operation, she died in his dental chair. This was the first



Dr. Galen Burdell, D.D.S.

fatal case of using chloroform in dentistry.

On April 21, 1869, Dr. Burdell and Henry Wakelee made a contractual agreement to market "Dr. G. Burdell's Oriental Toothwash." On May 19, 1870, Burdell sold all controlling rights to Oriental Toothwash to B.B. Thayer, a well-known chemist in San Francisco. Wakelee continued as sole agent and added Burdell's Toothpowder to the line.

When Mrs. Burdell's father died in 1870, she acquired half of his estate. One of her ranches, on Black Mountain in Marin County, contained many springs from which the Burdell's were able to supply their neighbors and the village, which later became Point Reyes Station. This was the first water system in this area, before the first train arrived in 1875.

By 1876, Galen established a bar and a hotel to serve the needs of the trains passengers and crew. In 1879, Mrs. Burdell deeded her husband 950 acres surrounding the Point Reyes train depot, which he had surveyed off into town lots. At the end of 1883, the town had one hotel, one saloon, a railroad depot, blacksmith shop, livery stable, butcher shop, general store, dentist office and post office.

Dr. Burdell died April 8, 1906 at his home on Rancho Olompali, just ten days before the great San Francisco earthquake and fire which destroyed most of the city which he loved so much. He and Mrs. Burdell are interred in Mountain View Cemetery Columbarium, Oakland, California.

Charmaine Burdell-Martinelli is the great, great grand-daughter of James Black, and

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Joseph Bryant Sweetser. She is the past vice president of The Marin County Historical Society. After the death of her grandmother, Josephine (nee Sweetser) Black, in 1964, Charmaine in the process of finalizing her grandmother's estate, discovered a plethora of family genealogy collected by her grandparents, on both the Sweetser and Black sides of the family. So fascinated was Charmaine, she became hooked, "and the rest is history..."

This article was reprinted from its original publication in *Daughters of History, Centennial Memoirs of the Daughters of California Pioneers*, copyright 2000. Written to commemorate the one-hundred-year anniversary of the founding of the "Daughters of California Pioneers", the book is a compilation of stories of the pioneer men, women and children of California, written by their descendants.

Added by Michael Read

One of the most amiable traits of the character of James Black is the brotherly love, akin to that of Jonathan and David, which he evinced to his pioneer comrade Edward Manuel McIntosh. From the early days when they first met in Monterey, they were together, until in the old age and broken health of McIntosh he found a home with his warm friend.

Edward McIntosh was also a native of Inverness, Scotland, where he was born February 14, 1784; he died November 7, 1871. In his early day's he followed the sea for a livelihood, and in the war of 1812 served on board an American privateer. He came to California in 1813, where he remained but a short time, returning in 1823, as first officer of a hide-drogher, and abandoning his vessel, remained here until the day of his death. In 1834, he became a Mexican citizen.

At the direction of Governor José Figueroa in 1835, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo began construction of the Presidio of Sonoma to counter the Russian presence at Fort Ross. To extend the settlements in the direction of Fort Ross, Vallejo sent three men, Edward McIntosh, James Black, and James Dawson, in that direction. These three men came to California as sailors with Captain John B.R. Cooper, brother-in-law of General Vallejo. Black settled upon what is now known as Rancho Cañada de Jonive, while Dawson and

McIntosh settled upon Rancho Estero Americano.

They formed a partnership to build a saw-mill on Salmon Creek, near the town of Freestone. The Russian-American Company left Fort Ross and sold it to John Sutter in 1841. The mill on Rancho Cañada de Jonive operated until 1849, when they sold all the lumber they had and left for the gold mines.

McIntosh and Dawson agreed to make application jointly to the Mexican government for the two-square league grant known as the Rancho Estero Americano, to confirm the title given them by General Vallejo. McIntosh went to the capital in Monterey to get the necessary papers in 1839. However, at that time, the Mexican authorities did not like making grants to multiple owners. When McIntosh returned, Dawson on examining the papers, found that they were made out only in the name of McIntosh. Tradition has it that when Dawson made this discovery, he sawed the house, in which McIntosh and Dawson had been living, in two parts, and removed his half to what would become Dawson's Rancho Cañada de Pogolimi grant.

Dr. Burdell in 1867 found himself much overworked by unremitted attention to his practice and decided to temporarily retire from his labors, leaving his close friend Dr. Wm. Boyle in charge of the business. His absence evidently had no detracting effect on his highly regarded name, and in 1869 an enterprising Henry Wakelee approached the popular dentist with a business proposition.

A country-wide sensation at the time was the proprietary product "Burnett's Oriental Toothwash," issuing from the large firm of Joseph Burnett & Co. of Boston Mass. Realizing the potential of marketing a comparable item "to beautify the teeth and gums, arrest decay of the teeth, and cure cankers in the mouth" on the West Coast, Wakelee suggested that Burdell lend his name to such an "elixir for the teeth and gums", and thereby make available a local preparation similar in properties (and name) to the well-established boast of Boston. Thus "Dr. G. Burdell's Oriental toothwash" was born.

Mrs. Mary Burdell's mother, Maria Black, died during her operation by Dr. Burdell with a severe toothache. You may not



Bottle of Dr. G. Burdell's Oriental Toothwash

have known that Mary Burdell also died on the operating table. She was strong and robust up to two weeks before the operation, when she was taken ill, and on the advice of her physicians was moved to Lane's Hospital in San Francisco. An operation was her only hope for life.

Nineteen large gall stones were removed from the liver. The operation was a successful one, but fifteen minutes after it was completed Mrs. Burdell passed away. Death was due to hemorrhage, and the end was painless and very peaceful on January 23, 1900.