



The Novato Historian

The Quarterly Publication of the Novato Historical Guild and the Novato History Museum

FEATURE SECTION

Contents © 2003 Novato Historical Guild, Inc.

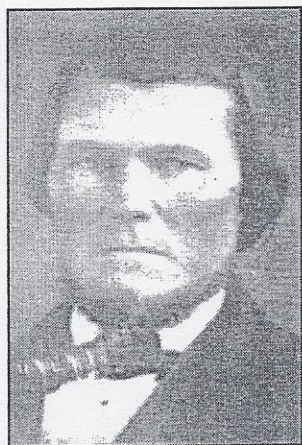
June 2003

Preserving Novato's History

Vol. 27, No. 2

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 (Scott) Black. He 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:

Callo, Peru
17 May, 1832

James Black
No. 29 Adlington St.
Liverpool, England

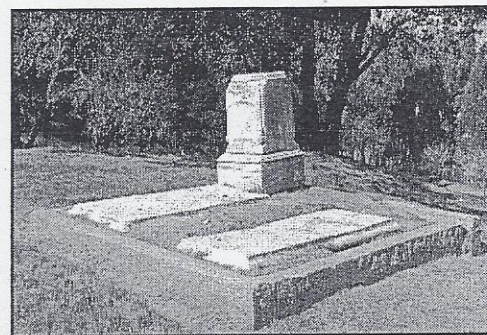
Dear Father and Sisters,
As Dawson is to sail tomorrow, I embrace the opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know how I am getting on and in the first place I must inform you that I have left the schooner Dolphin and am now on board the Brig Catalina. We are

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 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



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

Marin County. By 1835 he settled on the Canada de Jonive Rancho, consisting of 10,786 acres, which had been granted him by Pio Pico, February 5, 1845, in what was to become Sonoma County.

Mr. Black married Maria Augustina Sais/Saez on May 19,



Maria Augustina Sais

continued on pg F2, see Pioneers

Pioneers

continued from page F1

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 Maria Augustina [1845 - 1900], who married Dr. Galen Burdell D. D. S., son of James and Sila [Lamon] Burdell. After Augustina's death in 1864, James married Maria Antonia Expectacion

Loretto [Duarte] Pacheco, widow of Juan Ignacio 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, he purchased the 8,877.48 acre Olompali Rancho from Camillo Ynitia, and in 1865, he deeded to his daughter, Augustina, 6,335 acres of this rancho, along with a band of cattle, as a wedding gift.

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, (sic 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



Maria, Mary and James Black, ca 1863.

He 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.

of Sessions, and the first coroner of Marin County.

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



Mary Black Burdell

continued on page F3, see Pioneers

Pioneers

continued from page F2

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 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, Botn 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 Burdells 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. Polly's 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.]

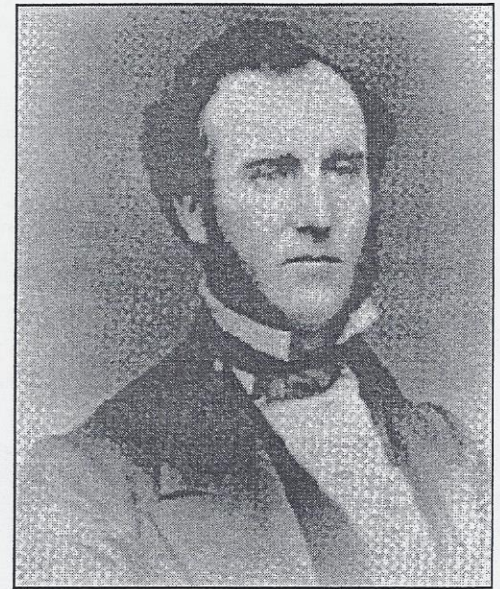
The New York City Directory for 1831 - 1847 lists **Dr. Galen Burdell, Dentist, office corner of Franklin and Broadway.** He was nineteen years old.

In 1849, Galen decided to visit another uncle, Dr. Lewis Burdell of Rio de Janiero, 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 the *Alta California*, September 27, 1849, appears the following ad:
*Copartnership — The undersigned have this day entered into copartner-ship 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.



Dr. Galen Burdell, D.D.S.

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. 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 non-residents 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 Blacks's home in Nicasio, Marin County. 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

continued on page F4, see *Pioneers*

Pioneers

continued from page F3

18, 1869. James married in 1892, Maria 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.

In 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 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 Burdells 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.

Galen Burdell was a member of the 1851 and 1856 San Francisco Committees of Vigilantes, badge number 259. He was a charter member of the Society of California Pioneers and served as vice-president in 1894 and 1895, in Marin County.



Vigilante emblem. The all seeing eye.

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

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

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. The book may be purchased with this order form. ❖

Daughters of History: Centennial Memoirs of the Daughters of California Pioneers	
Copies @ \$30.00 = \$	_____
California Resident Sales Tax (7%) = \$	_____
Shipping/Handling (4.95 for the 1 st book; \$1.00 for each additional book) = \$	_____
Total = \$	_____
Make Checks Payable to:	Daughters of California Pioneers
Mail Order Forms & Checks to:	Lorraine McLaughlin 3308 Ten Rose Drive El Dorado Hills CA 95762
Ship Books to:	_____