Panorama of Downieville, Calif., ca. 1860-ca. 1870

Processed by Chris McDonald.
The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California 94720-6000
1996
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BANC PIC 1982.081 -- E

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Collection Summary
Collection Title: Panorama of Downieville, Calif.,
Date: ca. 1860-ca. 1870
Collection Number: BANC PIC 1982.081 -- E
Extent: 1 panorama photograph (2 photographic prints), mounted, 27 x 80 cm. 2 digital objects
Berkeley, California 94720-6000
Languages Represented: English
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Acquisition Information
The Panorama of Downieville, Calif. photograph was purchased in 1982.

Scope and Content
The Panorama of Downieville, Calif. was taken circa 1870 by an unidentified photographer. The mounted 2-plate albumen photograph pictures an eastward view of the town settled in 1849 by a group of prospectors led by "Major" William Downie, a native of Scotland, after whom the town is named. Originally called "The Forks," Downieville is located at the fork of the North Yuba and Downie Rivers, the latter veering northward to the left in the photograph. A year after its settlement, as a result of successful mining, the town had a population of several thousand. In 1851 the town gained notoriety following the lynch-mob trial and hanging of Juanita, a Sonoran woman who stabbed to death an English miner after he broke into her home during Fourth of July festivities. The town is the present seat of Sierra County.

Among the points of interest pictured in the panorama, in addition to the fork of the rivers, are the Sierra County Courthouse, right; the Catholic Church, far left; the Methodist Church, center; Main Street, left of center, with the Armory Hall Livery Stable and the McDonald Hotel both visible; the Downie Hotel, right of center; and cemeteries to the far left and along the eastern ridge left of center.

That the panorama was possibly either produced or came to be used for purposes of documentation in Downieville legal proceedings is suggested by the label appearing on the mount verso, which reads: "To amend an act entitled, " An act to entitle any person or persons to divert the waters of any river or stream, and run the same through any ditch or flume, and to provide for the right of way through the lands of others," Approved March 3, 1866."