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Abstract: "Pioneer Days in California - The California Fever - 1849" is a 39 page original typed manuscript by George C. Gorham that describes the author's journey to California from Massachusetts and his impressions and experiences during his first years in California. Gorham moved from San Francisco to Marysville in 1850, where he clerked for Judge Stephen J. Field, the first and only alcalde of the town. He describes a rodeo, bull fights, mule trains, and a bull and bear fight. He discusses the process of obtaining statehood, mining and the development of mining rights and the problems with the "American Squatter" on Mexican land grants. He also provides biographical information on Senator Broderick.
creator: Gorham, George C., 1832-1909
Conditions Governing Access note
Collection open for research
Conditions Governing Use note
There are no restrictions on access
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Biography
George C. Gorham was born in Greenport, Suffolk County, Long Island, N.Y., July 5, 1832. He sailed from New London, CT, to California in the summer of 1849. After a voyage around Cape Horn on the brig "Flora", he arrived in San Francisco on December 19th, 1849. He was a newspaper editor in both San Francisco and Marysville. In February 1850, Mr. Gorham left San Francisco for Yuba City and Marysville, where he settled and mined. He was appointed clerk to the Alcalde of Marysville in March of 1850. Mr. Gorham was a Republican, a Newspaper editor, a candidate for Governor of California in 1867 (but was defeated), and a member of the Republican National Committee from California in 1868. He joined The Society of California Pioneers on November 2, 1874. He died in Washington, D.C., February 11, 1909. For further biographical information, see the Society's Institutional records - listed in Related Archival Materials note.
Scope and Contents note
"Pioneer Days in California - The California Fever - 1849" is a 39 page original typed manuscript by George C. Gorham that describes the author's journey to California from Massachusetts and his impressions and experiences during his first years in California. Gorham moved from San Francisco to Marysville in 1850, where he clerked for Judge Stephen J. Field, the first and only alcalde of the town. He describes a rodeo, bull fights, mule trains, and a bull and bear fight. He discusses the process of obtaining statehood, mining and the development of mining rights and the problems with the "American Squatter" on Mexican land grants. He also provides biographical information on Senator Broderick.
Gorham left from New London, CT on July 3, 1849 on board the whaling bark "Flora", which had just returned from San Francisco and lost its crew to the gold fields. He arrived in the City on December 19, 1849 and said the Bay was a "forest of masts" and the City was like "a great camp, with frail wooden houses and great canvas tents. After dark the Plaza was the center of activity with saloons and gambling houses in great number.
He provides and extensive section on California's path to achieve statehood.
In Feb 1850 he took a schooner on a 10 day voyage to Marysville where he clerked for the first and only alcalde, Judge Stephen J Field. He describes the role of the alcalde and one case of robbery that they tried.
Gorham attended a rodeo at an adjacent land grant rancho where the wild cattle were lassoed and branded by the native vaqueros and describes a bull fight put on by the Californios.
Wagon roads were unknown in the mountains and transportation was by mule trains; 30 - 100 animals each carrying up to 300 lbs loads and travelling 15 to 20 miles per day.
Mining rights were subject to no existing laws and each camp developed a written code of common consent. These codes served as the basis for later legislation under which all mining in the west was governed.
Gorham was in San Jose, the State Capital, for the 2nd Legislative Session after statehood. Native Californians were represented and participated in the government. (Don Pablo de la Guera)
The American squatters on Mexican Land grants were impossible to contain or control even though the legitimate land grant were guaranteed by US Treaty.
Gorham finishes the manuscript with a biographical section on Senator Broderick.

**Existence and Location of Originals note**
The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth St, San Francisco, CA, 94107

**Institutional Records**
SCP Archive Record, vol. 2, pg.79; Autobiography & Reminiscences, vol. 7, p.3 (available online at Online Archive of California); Marshall Record, vol. 1, pg. 86; and Mortuary Record, 1906-1933, pg. 230.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**
Broderick, David C. (David Colbreth), 1820-1859
Gold mines and mining - California - History - 19th century
Land grants -- California.
Rodeos
San Francisco (Calif.) - 1840-1860
Voyages to the Pacific coast