

THE OLD PATHFINDER.

CAPTAIN JO. WALKER.

From the Contra Costa (Cal.) Gazette.

In two of our contemporaries, the Napa Reporter, and the Santa Rosa Democrat, we find extended and interesting biographical sketches of the late Captain Joseph R. Walker, whose remains now rest in the beautiful Alhambra cemetery which overlooks our village. That in the Napa Reporter was written by the Editor, Captain Geo. W. Gift, who was familiar with much of the history of the old Mountaineer and visited him during the summer. From his sketch we quote the following:

In the year 1832 he determined to make a visit to California. The best maps he could procure of the country represented a river flowing from the Great Salt Lake to our Pacific Coast. He determined to follow this route, and accordingly in the early Spring set out at the head of thirty bold and experienced trappers, well mounted and outfitted. Arriving at Salt Lake, he made its circuit, to be disappointed in finding the river. But, nothing daunted, he struck out West, and in October reached the Sierra Nevadas, which he undertook to scale. His first attempt to descend to the West was near the headwaters of the Tuolumne, which he found impassable, but working a little further to the Southward, he struck the Merced, and got into the valley of the San Joaquin. His were the first white man's eyes that ever looked at the Yosemite,

mild in manners. He had resided in Missouri for many years, on the frontier; had been among the earliest adventurers to Santa Fee, where he went to trap beaver, and was taken by the Spaniards. He returned to Missouri and had acted by turns as sheriff, trader and trapper until he was selected as a leader by Captain Bonneville."

Captain Walker remained with Bonneville and in the summer of 1833 he left Salt Lake, struck west, followed the Humboldt river to the sink, went from there to Carson Lake and thence over the mountain to Walker's river and lake, which still bears his name. He saw Mono lake, crossed the Sierras near the head waters of the Merced and came down into the San Joaquin plains.

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In 1843, while Captain Walker was in the vicinity of Fort Hall, Captain Childs, now of Napa, came along with Mr. Yount's family, Julius Martin and wife, now of Gilroy and Frank McClellan. A Miss Ayres afterwards joined the party. Captain Walker was afraid they would not get over a mountain before winter and agreed to pilot the party to California. Captain Childs was sent on in advance and was to return and meet the party at or near Walker's lake with supplies. After recruiting the animals Captain Walker started with his party for California by way of Walker's lake, the route he had formerly traveled. He missed Mr. Childs and the party were severely put to for provisions. They got fish from the Indians on Walker's river, trading horseshoe nails, which the Indians used for awls, for them. Beyond Walker's Lake they abandoned their wagons as winter was closing in upon them, cached their goods, killed their cattle for winter.