

COLUMBIA.

DURING the year of '49, while mining was being carried on in the vicinity of Sonora and Shaw's Flat, and at Paso del Pino, no prospecting, or at least no mining had been done in the territory, now occupied by the town of Columbia, or in that embraced within the limits of Columbia Mining District, except what was done by a few Mexicans at San Diego; but, on the 27th of March, 1850, a company of Miners, consisting of, Dr. Thaddeus Hildreth and George Hildreth, his brother, from Maine, Alex. Carson and Billy Jones, from N. Y., and John Walker, from ———, while returning to Wood's Crossing, from a prospecting excursion in Calaveras County, encamped for the night under an Oak tree, that stood just below the present bridge at the foot of Main street. Rain fell during the night, and obliged them to remain awhile in the morning to dry their blankets, and while thus detained, Walker thought he would try and see if he could raise the "color" in the small gulch that puts into Columbia gulch from the East, what was afterwards named Kennebec Hill.—He found a fine prospect in the first pan of dirt. The party concluded that they would stop for the day and give the Gulch a thorough prospecting. At night they found that they had as the result of two hours work, with pans and picks, one ounce. They then decided to locate at this point, which they accordingly did. Water being scarce, and only in small pools, they were obliged to carry their dirt in sacks, and wash in cradles, by which process they realized six or eight ounces a day, to the man.—Capt. Avent was the next white man that located a claim on the Gulch; from the first day's working he realized two and a half pounds of gold, on the second day a pound and a half, and he averaged from 12 to 15 ounces per day until July when the water failed.

The news of rich diggings spread over the country, and thousands came pouring in. About the 10th of April there was six to eight thousand persons in the Camp, which was located on Kennebec Hill. A large number of Gamblers came with the crowd, and at one time there was one hundred and forty-three monte-banks in operation, the funds of which amounted to not less than half a million of dollars. It was common to see men turn a card for three and four thousand dollars.

On the 29th day of April, D. G. Alexander, Major Collingsworth and Major Sullivan named the town Columbia, in honor of the great navigator. About the same time it was found necessary to have public officers, and Major Sullivan was chosen Alcalde, and ——— Gregsby, Constable, who immediately entered upon the

duties of their offices. The first case brought before his honor was a case of theft—an American complaining of a Greaser for stealing a pair of leggings. The Greaser was fined three ounces for stealing, and the American one ounce for complaining of him. The next case was a suit brought by George Hildreth, against a Frenchman, for the recovery of a pick, stolen from George's claim, and found for sale in the Frenchman's store. Judgement was entered against the Frenchman for the worth of the pick, one ounce, and three ounces costs.

On the first of June the Foreign Miners Tax of twenty dollars a month was enforced, which thinned the Camp of the foreign population, and water becoming scarce the Camp dwindled down so that only nine or ten persons remained.

The first tent put up on the north side of Columbia Gulch, where the town now stands, was on the site now occupied by McLean & Evans' Blacksmith Shop, and was dedicated to cards and whiskey.

In September, Jackson & Stone put up the first Wooden Building in the place, on the site now occupied by their fire-proof building, which was used as a store. In October, of the same year, Brown built a store on the corner of what is now Main and Washington street. Mr. Brown brought the first wagon that ever came into Columbia.

In the Fall of '50 a large number of miners and others congregated in the Camp and vicinity, but the dry winter had the effect to again disperse them.

In the Spring of '51 A. W. C. DeNoielle, and his lady, opened the first boarding house. Mrs. D. was the first white woman that came into Columbia, and the second in the county. Mrs. Patch was the first white woman in the county, and gave birth the first white child, born in the county, at Pine Log.

On the 21st day of June, '51, a meeting of the miners of Tattletown was called for the purpose of taking measures to survey a route for a ditch, to convey the waters of the South Fork of the Stanislaus into Columbia, and the adjacent Camps. Joseph Dance, of Alabama, was Chairman, and J. D. Patterson, Secretary. A Committee consisting of General Benard, Civil Engineer, J. D. Patterson and Judge W. H. Carlton was appointed to make a preliminary survey of the route, and report in two weeks.—at the expiration of the time the Committee made a report favorable to the enterprise. The Company was then organized at Tattletown.—Joseph Dance was chosen President, and J. D. Patterson, Secretary, and Gen. Benard, Engineer. The Company then consisted of twenty-