

# JOAQUIN MILLER

## NEWSLETTER

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### Research

Rex Burrell is writing about the Pony Express and he has a question for us which reminds us to watch our use of "a" and "the" when writing.

Rex wrote:

"The reason I am writing is to obtain some information about Joaquin Miller and the Pony Express. I am writing about that era, and one source of information says that the Pony Express was discontinued in Oct of 1861. However, in Harr Wagner's book, "The Other Side of Joaquin Miller," [page 37] said: '...he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1861...In 1862, with Issac Mossman, he established the Pony Express. He was known as the best horse back rider in the country...Joaquin rode the Pony Express of Millersburg Idaho, to Walla Walla, Washington.'

Is this a different Pony Express than THE Pony Express beginning at Sacramento, CA and ending at St. Joseph, MO.?"

Wagner should have written "a Pony Express." So let us watch our use of "a" and "the." Just a few citations should help us sort this out.

1861 "In February, 1861, I went to Walla Walla and stopped with Mr. W.S. Gilliam, who lived on Dry Creek about ten miles from that city. I remained there until April, when I started a pony express to the Oro Fino mines, Captain Pierce and Marion Moore having discovered gold there in 1860."

(Isaac Mossman writing).

<http://gesswhoto.com/mossman2.html>

1861/2 Joaquin Miller and Isaac Mossman operated an express line in Montana and Idaho. (*Pac. Hist. Rev.* 1950, Vol. 19)

1861 "I continued in the business previously mentioned until October, 1861, when C. Hiner Miller,

now known as Joaquin Miller, met me at Walla Walla with a letter of introduction to me from his uncle, Colonel W.W. Chapman. Miller wanted to join me in the express business. He had one little pony, and \$5 in cash, but he could ride well and was a hustler. I had at that time eighteen head of good saddle horses, so I gave him an interest in the business. Soon after that the Salmon River mines were discovered, and I put Miller on the route from Lewiston to Florence City, in the Salmon River mines, while I rode between Walla Walla, Lewiston and the Oro Fino."

(Isaac Mossman)

<http://gesswhoto.com/mossman2.html>

Nothing that MGK has found in actual history would indicate to MGK that Miller had any connection with any Pony Express that went between Sacramento and the East. That concept could only come from someone who doesn't really know history as I believe the above quotations will so illustrate. Those interested in the Pony Express should read:

Forster, Dale E. *Oregon Express Companies*. Eugene Oregon 97405: Dale E. Forster, Raven Press, P.O. Box 135, Lake Oswego, Oregon. 97034. 1985. Limited edition of 500 copies [MGK #336]. pp. 1, 25, 30, 37-38, 42, 127-128, 135-139, 218-219.

### ...and more Research

Jay Thompson's gift to us of *Old Shasta: Images of America* by the Town of Old Shasta Interpretive Association and Al M. Rocca 2005 had on p. 110 a rakishly handsome picture of a then young Henry Clay Stockton (1826-1884) who was Shasta County's sheriff from "1857- 1859" exactly the time JM was mining, plotting with the Wintu Indians, writing poetry for the *Shasta Courier* and eventually in Shasta's jail for having borrowed,

stolen, what have you? Bass's horse. One can't help but wonder what they talked about as they surely knew each other well.

Henry Clay Stockton has become famous in Shasta history for his leadership during the Chinese/white miner conflict of that same year 1859. It was Stockton who "appealed to the governor for assistance. The arrival of 113 guns, additional ammunition, and the promise of troops quelled the fire of hostility. Stockton remained one of the few county officials to defend the Chinese when anti-foreign sentiments ran high. Stockton eventually moved to Tehama County and then to Lassen County where he died in 1884."

B.F. Frank and H.W. Chappel recite in their 1881 *History and Business Directory of Shasta County* p.149 the following time sequence:

"On the 25th of February, 1859, fifty Chinamen were expelled from the mines about the mouth of Rock creek, and were driven through the town of Shasta by the miners. Only one arrest was made by Sheriff Stockton - a Mr. Garton, who was charged with malicious mischief, and a preliminary examination resulted in his discharge. On the 29th of February a large number of men, mostly miners, well armed and equipped, commenced the expulsion of the Chinese from Horsetown, Middletown, Oregon gulch and other places in the vicinity where they were at work, and marched about two hundred of them into Shasta. The Sheriff, with about sixty Deputies, dispersed the miners. A fight between the authorities and the miners seemed inevitable; but a few well-timed remarks in front of the Empire hotel by some of the coolest of the rioters, as they were then called, had the effect to disperse the crowd, and peace was again restored. Our authority does not state that any arrests were made. Since the expulsion of the Chinese, one attempt was made in the winter of 1860-61 to introduce the Chinese into what is known as the Buckeye mining district, but the men having them employed were promptly waited upon by the miners, and a few hours later the Chinese were gone, and no attempt has been made since that time to introduce them into the district."

Sheriff Stockton, of all people would have recognized that it was undoubtedly none other than

young Cincinnatus Hiner Miller (1839-1913) who wrote an unsigned piece to the *Shasta Republican* which paper published it as follows 30 April 1859 just a few months after the previously described incident and perhaps another Chinese incident and not long before young Miller would land in Sheriff Stockton's Shasta's jail:

#### "POETRY

"We have received the following from a correspondent at Briggsville. The lines will be keenly appreciated by all living in Briggsville, Horsetown, and Texas Springs, who are acquainted with the subject of which the gifted poet treats [Chinaman bashing].

#### "('Taking Subscriptions')

Come, fetch out the list, spread it on this gunny sack.  
Roll up my lads. "here's the place to get your money back! here's a fresh victim - blow your horn, trumpeter! String up the kettle-drum, somebody thump at her; Sound the gong, sound the pan; sound the horse fiddle, too - Clear the track, Decency, "cuss me I'll riddle you!

"Don't be obstreperous, what does this fluster mean? Where is the war you are going to muster in; Have the Indians made a fresh break up in Humboldt, Or the same old affair of Sonora and Walker? Has Cuba said "No," to our loving advances, Has somebody run off Pike's Nigger in Kansas, Has Miramon seized upon potency regal, Has Lopez throwed stones at the American Eagle? If he has, I'm in with you, for death or for victory! "I'm thar, you bet high, in the words of Old Hickory.

"Come stow that old fellow, dry up there any green 'un, I'll show you the latest improvement by Heenan. We don't fight with Frenchmen, nor diggers, nor Greasers; But when we feel wolfish, we hunt something easier, We're American citizens - we're just the kind of men For a fair stand up fight with the best blood thirsty Chinamen. W'ere the heroes what fit in this war you've all seen about. Where the buggers cut dirt 'fore we'd time fur to clean 'em out, And the Sheriff and posse, though they might have cum faster, Darsn't git in a mile of us 'til we reached Shaster (They'd plenty of show; but the game didn't

suit 'em. Old Guv. Sent 'em guns, if they'd knowed how to shoot 'em.) We're the fellers that done it . For this little spree to night – Just wait until morning, you know it will be all right. We'll stand by the hoss that stood by us in trouble – then Here's three Months for the Kuy-yur, and cuss the REPUBLICAN. “

[Spelling and punctuation have been kept as in the original. “Kuy – yur” of course refers to the *Shasta Courier* which was a Democratic paper and more often published Miller's offerings. Heenan referred to Jack Heenan, a boxer later known as the Benicia Boy and who had fought in Deadwood during the same period when Miller had been there earlier in his mining days.]

MGK likes this kind of poetry JM was writing in 1859 better than some of his later stuff. Obviously the editors of his day recognized him as a “comer” but how about your opinion of the above heretofore never recognized JM poem?

We Miller researchers all know how JM later became famous especially in London for his poetry and for *Life Amongst the Modocs*. But, most Shasta County historians still remember Miller because he supposedly stole a horse.

Henry Clay Stockton, a fellow miner and sheriff at that time, doesn't fare much better than JM in today's recital of history. A visit to Stockton's wife's grave in Old Shasta Pioneer Cemetery by way of an Internet California State Parks Video Transcript will apprise you of Stockton's young wife's sad death in childbirth, her brother's adoption of the baby but they dismiss by simply saying Henry Clay Stockton ...”never really recovered from the loss.”

Well “Is that all there is?” Not really! Read Henry Clay Stockton's obituary and other facts kindly provided us by historian Tim I. Purdy, [lahontan@citlink.net](mailto:lahontan@citlink.net) or <http://www.citlink.net/~lahontan/home.htm>

“*Lassen Advocate*, Susanville, California – 24 April 1884 3;3. The Tomb.

STOCKTON. – At the mill near Susanville, April 21, 1884, Henry Clay Stockton, aged 57 years, 5 months and 9 days.

“The deceased was born in Kentucky November 12, 1826, and at the age of 20 years,

enlisted in one of the Kentucky regiments and fought in the Mexican war until its close. In 1849 he came to California and located in Shasta County where he was elected Sheriff, serving four years. In 1863 he came to Lassen County where he erected the sawmill known as Stockton's mill, six miles west of Susanville, bringing the machinery from Shasta county. In 1864, he was appointed by Governor F.F. Low as one of three Commissioners in the organization of the County and in May of the same year was elected Supervisor of the first District—being the first Supervisor after the organization of Lassen County. He leaves eight children to mourn his loss.

“H.C. Stockton was a man of more than average intelligence, and had many warm friends in this county, who will miss his accustomed voice and hearty jokes. He had his faults like all humanity, but under the rough exterior, beat a heart as warm for those whom he regarded as friends as ever beat in a human form. He will be missed in Susanville, as his presence was always made known by a jovial word or hearty laugh. He leaves four boys here, the oldest of whom is 15 years, he has one daughter who resides at Prattville, Mrs. Abe Bunnell, and three others living in Texas.”

On seeing where MGK was going with this, Tim I. Purdy sent along some more nuggets from his books and files:

“According to Stockton's bankruptcy papers filed in 1868 it states he came to California in 1849 and to Shasta in 1850 where he first engaged in mining and then went into merchandising, and that venture was successful. He then went into mining/ditch operation and “lost about all he had”. In 1860, he moved to Tehama County and engaged in ranching, until he sold out in 1863 and purchased a sawmill and moved it to Lassen County. The property where the mill was located six miles west of Susanville is still owned by the descendants of Ella Stockton Bunnell, the daughter from his first marriage.

“On October 16, 1859 he married Annie E. Duty, and they had eight children. As you had mentioned Ella was raised by her uncle Alex Andrews in Shasta. In 1878 Annie Stockton filed for divorce and it was a very bitter process. Annie was granted custody of the girls, and H.C. the boys.

The way I understand, is this [was] when Ella shows up to take care of her half brothers. And the following entry is from my *Lassen County Almanac* book that you might find of interest.

Alaska and the Klondike (Vol. 3) @ \$9.95 (+\$1.50 s&h) are still available.

“**Williams Creek (West Lassen)** In 1863, William Williams’ (1827-1883) good friend, Henry C. Stockton, urged him to move to Lassen County and Williams did so in 1866. In 1867, Williams was awarded the contract to build the County’s first Courthouse for \$9,850. In 1878, Williams became involved in one of the more unusual lawsuits filed in Lassen County. Henry C. Stockton sued Williams for \$15,000 for compensation in a suit when he alleged that Williams was responsible for the coercion of Stockton’s wife to abandon and divorce him. The court ruled in Williams’ favor and the case was closed.”

We thank Tim I. Purdy for this enlightenment and look forward to further input along these lines from others in search of truth about our history.

#### **Charcoal Sketches Series**

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