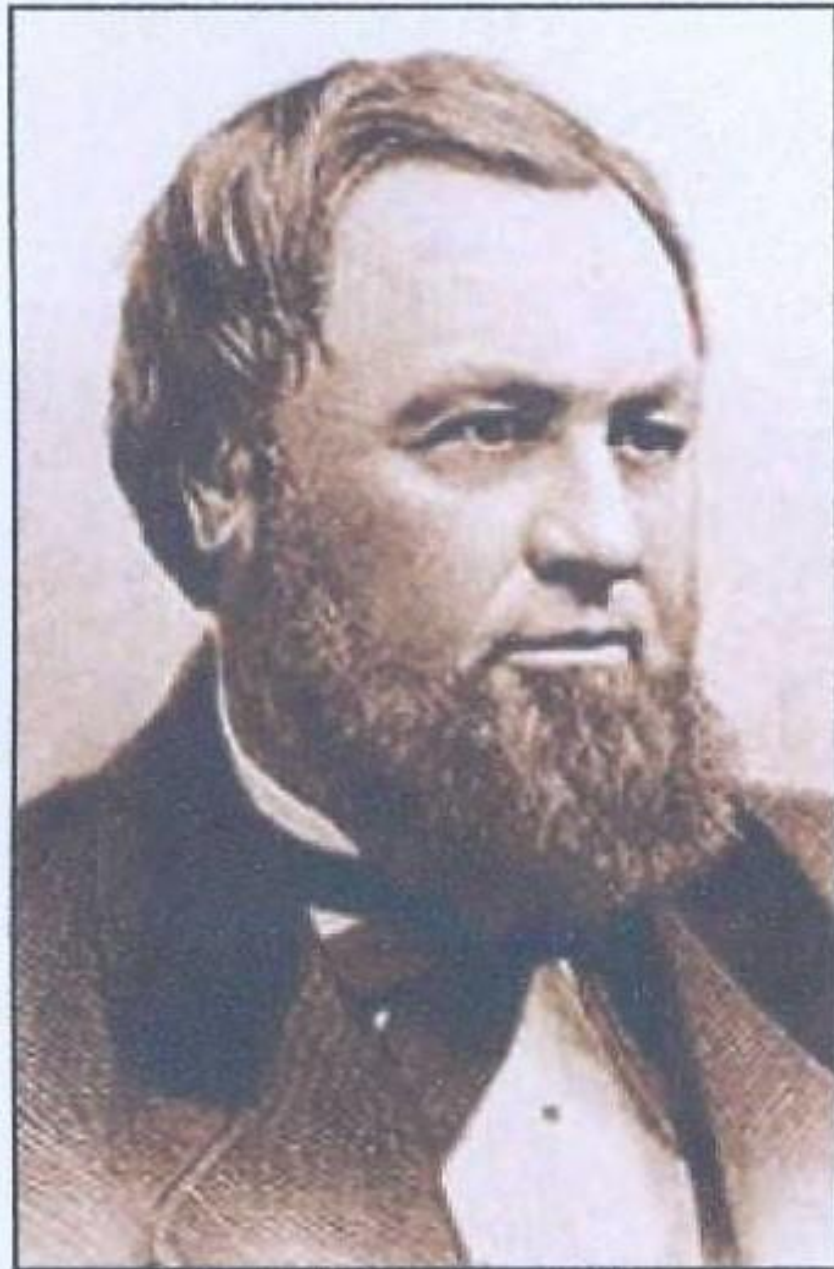


Samuel Merritt A Harpswell Man of Distinction and Success

This article is excerpted from the paper “From Sea to Shining Sea Harpswell, Maine to Oakland, California – Chronology of the Life of Samuel Merritt (1822-1890) of Harpswell, Maine and Oakland, California” by descendant David C. Garcelon. Also the last part is a full history. *Copyright by David C. Garcelon, 2019*



Samuel Merritt (1822-1890) son of Stephen Merritt (1779-1835) and Joanna Purrington (1790-1868); both of Harpswell. He was their fifth and last child. The Merritt family had immigrated from England in 1626. The Purrington family had immigrated from England to York County in the 1650's.

The Town of Harpswell, Maine is one of the most interesting towns in the state, with its beautiful coastline and islands, its serenity, and its history. But, most wonderful of all are its people, past and present. One of its most distinguished citizens is Samuel Merritt, who was born here in 1822, and who lived a life of great success. Merritt left a long lasting legacy that benefits Bowdoin College and other institutions, as well as many people in Maine and California. Born on March 30, 1822, Samuel was the youngest of five children of Stephen and Joanna (Purington) Merritt. Catherine, Samuel's oldest sister, was born on August 9, 1814. Samuel's early life was spent fishing, farming, helping to build ships and getting an education. Just 21 months before Samuel was born, the new Maine Legislature had created the Medical School of Maine as part of Bowdoin College. The school was successful from its beginning. In 1821 its first class had 21 students. Among its students were the brothers Daniel and Seward Garcelon from Lewiston, Maine; Daniel graduated in 1823 and Seward graduated in 1830. Samuel Merritt attended the Bowdoin Medical School, graduating in 1842. Immediately after his graduation in 1830, Seward Garcelon moved to Clinton, Maine and practiced medicine there until 1861. On August 26, 1833, he married Samuel Merritt's sister, Catherine. In 1849 Samuel Merritt began practicing as a physician in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Samuel had a large presence, weighing over 300 pounds, standing 6 feet, 2 inches tall, with a large mental acuity. He soon made many friends in Plymouth and gained an excellent reputation as a physician. In 1849 he completed a difficult operation on a neighbor and friend of the aging statesman Daniel Webster (1782-1852), and Merritt and Webster became friends. Merritt told Webster that he was intrigued by the Gold Rush in California which he had been reading about in the newspapers. Webster, by then having learned of the Merritt family's experience as mariners and shipbuilders, advised Merritt: "Go out there, young man; go out there and behave yourself, and, free as you are from family cares, you will never regret it."



California Digital Newspaper Collection

In September, 1849, Merritt purchased a 140 ton sailing vessel, the Brig Reindeer, and filled it with building materials and other provisions he purchased at ports along the East Coast. Merritt had learned that one of the needs of the Gold Miners and merchants in California was for nails to be used for constructing buildings. Merritt was unable to acquire any nails before he made his voyage.

To assist Merritt, Daniel Webster gave him letters of introduction to several of the statesman's friends in the San Francisco area.

In late November, 1849 Merritt left the port of New York City, sailed around Cape Horn through the Straits of Magellan into the Pacific Ocean. He arrived in San Francisco 156 days later on May 5, 1850. Unknown to Merritt, the first two Great Fires of San Francisco had occurred while he was on the Reindeer. By then, the Gold Rush and fires had created an extremely high demand for provisions and building supplies, and Merritt was set upon by people with such high offers for his cargo that he was able to far exceed his expectations for a profit from the cargo. Imagine Merritt standing on the deck of the Reindeer and thinking: "If only I had been able to get nails."

Immediately after selling the cargo from the Reindeer, he sent the ship up the coast and purchased more supplies to sell back in San Francisco and Oakland. He prospered, and by 1852 he had begun building more ships

and purchasing land in the Bay Area. In May of 1852, he moved from San Francisco to Oakland. He lived in Oakland until he died. Samuel never completely gave up practicing medicine, but he was a capitalist at heart. He was highly successful in both shipping and in the land development business. He was well-known and popular in the San Francisco and Oakland areas. He had been asked but declined to run for mayor of San Francisco, but did serve as the 13th mayor of Oakland from November 3, 1867 to February 18, 1869. Samuel was a generous benefactor of the people of Oakland. In 1867 he gave the City of Oakland the 155 acres of dammed tidal waters he owned and assisted financially in turning the area into what is now known as Lake Merritt and nicknamed the "Jewel of Oakland."

At one time during his life in Oakland, the records show that he owned eight ships; one of which was the three-masted bark Samuel Merritt. He also owned several hundred acres of land.

Samuel was a bachelor, and in 1861 he begged Seward and Catherine (Merritt) Garcelon to move from Maine and live with him. They did, and lived at Samuel's home in Oakland until their deaths.

An indication of Samuel's wealth and love of the sea is the story of the schooner Casco. In 1879 Samuel decided he wanted time to be able to "get away from it all." He designed a pleasure fore and aft schooner of 74 tons, with an overall length of 94 feet (plus a bowsprit of 35 feet), a beam of 23 feet, draft of 12 feet, and a mainmast that was 78 feet long. Its decks were made of teak, and its interior was lavishly finished in teak and other fine wood, with furniture and other luxurious appointments. It was designed to

carry six aft and six forward as well as a crew of five. It was the largest pleasure craft on the Pacific Ocean.



Casco Scooner

Merritt made several trips to the Pacific Islands, but the most significant is when, in 1877, he rented the Casco and a crew of five (including his nephew Albert Otis as Captain) for \$750.00 per month plus expenses, to author Robert Louis Stevenson to sail from San Francisco to Tahiti.



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON PARTY ON THE SCHOONER CASCO L to R:Front row: maid Valentine Roch, RLS's mother, and RLS's wife Fanny. Second row: Captain Albert Henry Otis, Lloyd Osbourne, and Robert Louis Stevenson Rear: Dr. Samuel Merritt

,

Merritt's brother-in-law, Seward Garcelon, died in Oakland on February 5, 1877. His estate went to his wife Catherine (they had no children).



Samuel Merritt died in Oakland on August 17, 1890. His net worth at the time was estimated to be more than \$2 million. His will was generous to the extreme to persons and institutions. He bequeathed both lump sum amounts and annuities to relatives, his ship captains, ship captains' widows, etc. An interesting lump sum amount was \$10,000 to the Old Ladies Society of Oakland. After the will was administered, the balance of his estate went to his sister, Catherine (Merritt) Garcelon. Catherine died in Oakland on December 9, 1891. It was estimated that her net worth at the time was between \$2 and \$3 million dollars.



**The San Francisco Call (San Francisco, California) 22 Dec 1895, Sun
Page 8**

Catherine's will was contested but the court ruled in favor of her wishes. The will was extremely generous and it gave away all of her estate. Similar to Samuel, she gave lump sums and annuities to relatives and friends, most of whom lived in Maine, particularly Harpswell. Most notable was \$400,000 bequeathed to Bowdoin College; it funded the Merritt/Garcelon scholarship fund which is still in existence today. She also bequeathed \$600,000 to the city of Oakland to establish a teaching hospital; today the Samuel Merritt University and the Samuel Merritt Hospital exist as a result of that gift.

Despite his humble beginnings in Harpswell, Samuel Merritt lived a life of great accomplishment, and contributed generously to the people and institutions that meant the most to him.

DR. SAMUEL MERRITT

and neighbors led with vision
70 YEARS AGO



DR. SAMUEL MERRITT
First President
Mountain View
Cemetery Association

*The Administration
Building Reflects
the Dignity and
Beauty of All the
Modern Structures
"Behind the Gates."*



BEHIND THESE GATES
Is a True Service
Born of Need

ON JANUARY 15, 1864, Dr. Samuel Merritt (Mount of

ON JANUARY 15, 1864, Dr. Samuel Merritt (Mayor of Oakland in 1868, a Regent of the University of California, and for whom Lake Merritt is named) was elected *first* president of the Mountain View Cemetery Association.

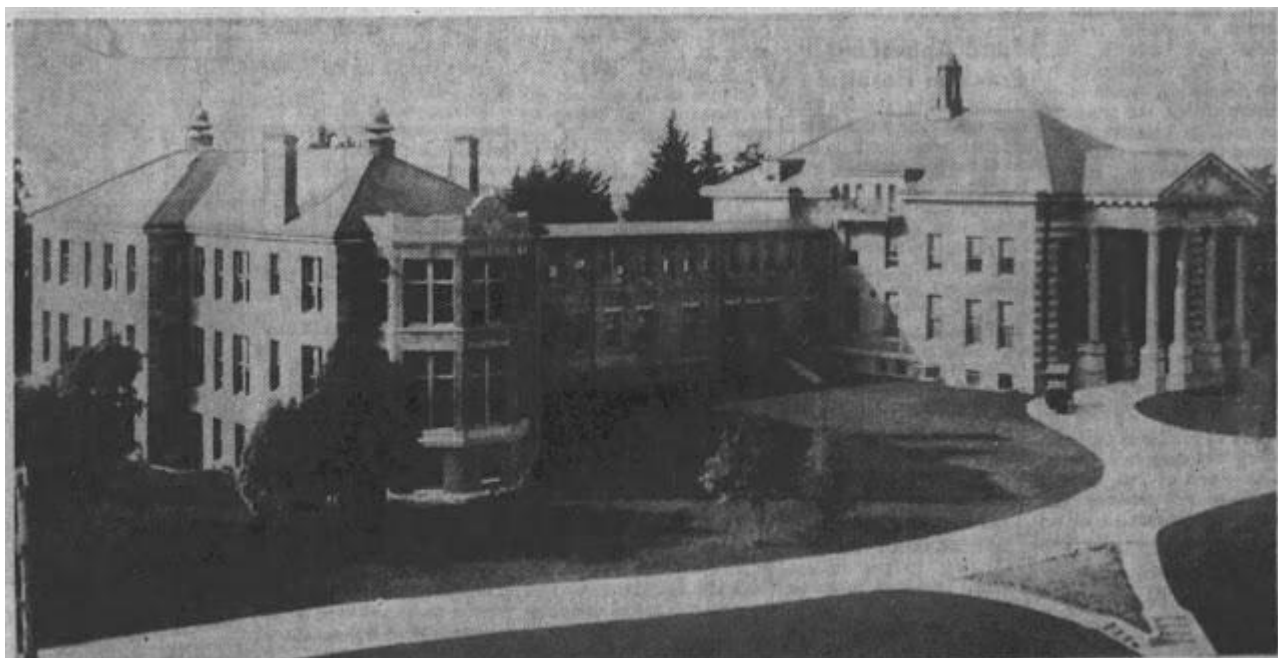
J. E. Witcher was made Secretary, and Hiram Tubbs, Treasurer.

The Trustees then were: Hiram Tubbs, George E. Grant, J. S. Emery, Dr. Samuel Merritt, A. M. Crane, J. A. Mayhew, Rev. S. T. Wells, R. W. Heath, J. E. Witcher, William Faulkner, S. E. Alden and Rev. I. H. Brayton.

These public-spirited pioneers, with prophetic vision, foresaw the growth of this community and planned accordingly.

Today, because of their initiative, Oakland possesses one of the very finest *Memorial Parks* in the West, and a NON-PROFIT-SHARING SERVICE that is unexcelled.

Originally, Mountain View offered but *one* service (Interment). However, its splendid location and *perpetual-care-policies* (the Perpetual Care Fund is now more than a million dollars) have attracted *thinking* people and made additional service features necessary.

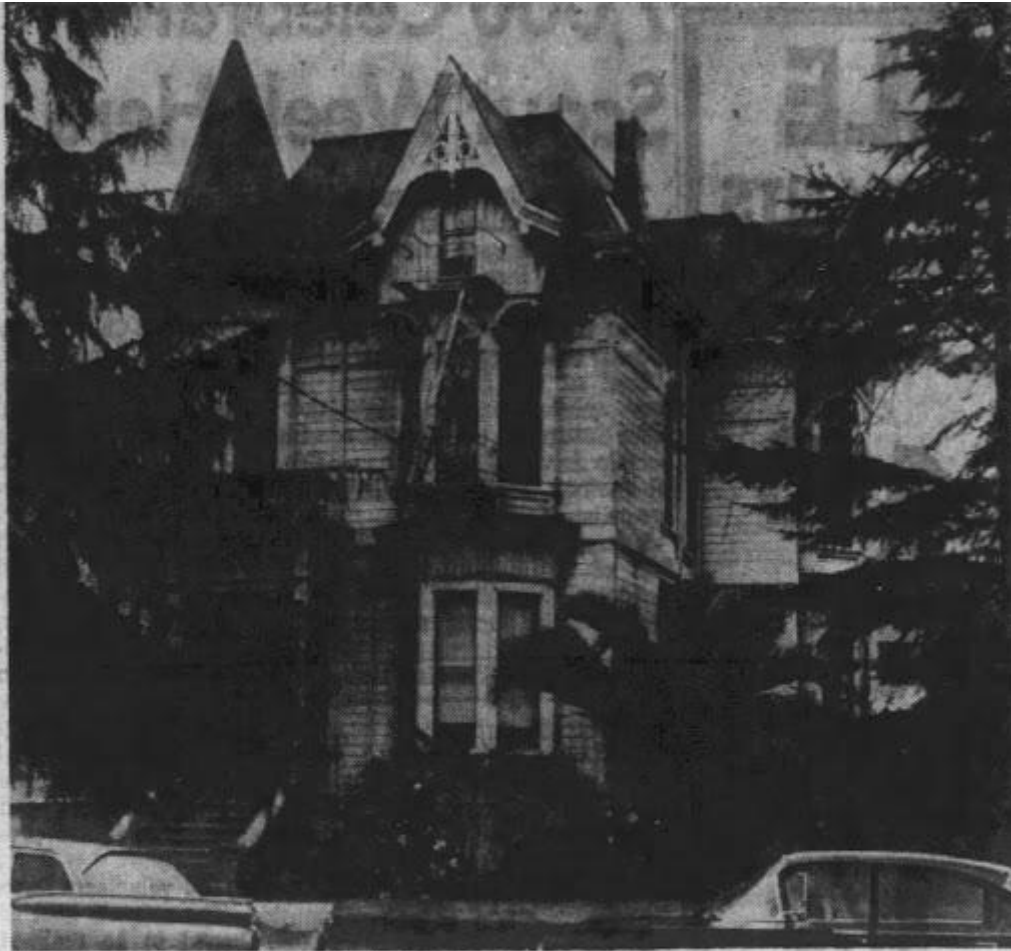


THE ORIGINAL—This is the Samuel Merritt Hospital as it first appeared in 1909 after Mrs. Seward Garcelon contributed more than \$1 million from her late brother's estate for Oakland's first major medical facility. The pillared administration building was demolished three years ago to make way for the 136-bed central tower which opened in March of last year. Remaining sections of the original 36-bed hospital will be demolished to clear the way for current construction.



From a Stereo photo collection owned by Harold Holmes

The home and a portion of the early Oakland estate of Dr. Samuel Merritt . . . it faced Madison St. just above 14th St.



FASHIONABLE HOME OF ANOTHER ERA TO BE DEMOLISHED
House once owned by Dr. Samuel Merritt will give way to an apartment building

End of Another Landmark: Once-Plush Merritt Home



DR. AND MRS. PAUL SAMSON, MRS. EDWIN C. GARWOOD, DR. JAMES A. BARR, MRS. ROBERT CROSBIE
... in the middle is the amazing Dr. Samuel Merritt

A Great Man...A Great Mural

By LOUISE WRIGHT

A king-size mural of one of Oakland's all-time greats, the late Dr. Samuel Merritt, will be unveiled Thursday evening in the main lobby of Merritt Hospital.

Executed during an eight-month period by the San Francisco artist, Erni Young, the new oil painting stretches out to 24 feet in width, portraying the dramatic life of the gifted gentleman here at the turn of the century.

A physician, architect, builder and shipmaster, Dr. Merritt also dabbled in all manner of community work, serving not only as mayor of the City of Oakland, but as a regent for University of California, and first board president for Oakland Free Library and Mountain View Cemetery.

Lake Merritt is named after him, and so is Merritt Hospital, the institution he founded. He is credited likewise with the construction of the old Grand Central Hotel, Oakland's finest hostelry until it

burned down, not to mention 125 local buildings and homes.

Physicians, their wives and women of Merritt Volunteers will attend the mural's official dedication. Preceding it will be a tour of the hospital's new Central Tower.

In conclusion, there will be a reception in the doctors' lounge in honor of seminar guest speakers — Dr. Ralph P. Campanale, a retired colonel in the U.S. Air Force; Dr. O. T. Claggett, head of the section division of surgery,

Mayo Clinic; Dr. Stewart Wolf, head of the department of medicine, University of Oklahoma School of Medicine.

Dr. Paul C. Samson is chairman of the festivities, while speaking and participating will be Gordon H. Huber, board president; Dr. Gordon R. Lamb, medical staff president; Doctors Ruth Davis, Charles P. Baker, R. Thomas Hunt, Gordon Frost, H. Harvey Peterson, Arthur J. Hunnicutt, Bruce M. Anderson, Robert R. Crosbie, Burt Christensen, Douglas Dickson, Charles F. Lewis, Charles Webster and James A. Barr.

Assisting with registration, answering telephones and delivering messages at the seminar will be a corps of Merritt Volunteers headed by Mrs. Edgar H. Lion Jr.

On her committee are Mmes. Paul C. Samson, Edwin C. Garwood, Robert Crosbie, Charles Hayden, Bonner Hinman, Donald Bellamy, Francis Stryble and Carrell A. Peterson.

Skytown Nursery School Starts New Term Soon

Starting its new term on Monday, Sept. 14, will be Skytown Nursery School in Kensington, a non-profit, non-sectarian, inter-racial parent co-operative school affiliated with First Unitarian Church.

Four-year-olds may attend three mornings a week, while three-year-olds are scheduled twice a week.

A spacious yard and well-planned building are provided for children, and car pools

make attendance possible for people from Berkeley, Albany, Kensington, El Cerrito and Richmond.

Pauline Butler Grana is the school director. A mother of two girls, she is a University of California graduate in art and child development, formerly taught at Berkeley Child Care centers and directed nursery schools in Chicago.

For additional information, call Mrs. Henry Conversano of El Cerrito.

FAMILY and HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY Fall of 1626 Henry Merritt (1590-1652) and his wife Deborah (Goody) Merritt (1600-1637) left England and arrived at Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts. They settled in Scituate, Massachusetts. They were the ggggg grandparents of Samuel Merritt. **1692 to 1775** The British Province of Massachusetts Bay was created by the British Parliament. It included land which is now part of New Hampshire and all of Maine. **Jan. 20, 1758** The Province of Massachusetts Bay legislature, led by Governor Spencer Phipps, enacted the bill which incorporated the Town of Harpswell. **Circa 1760** Henry Merritt (1748-1827), Samuel Merritt's grandfather, moved from Scituate, Massachusetts to Harpswell, Maine.

October 25, 1780 to March 15, 1820 The District of Maine was created within the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

June 4, 1794 The General Court of Massachusetts passed Chapter XVI, An Act to establish a College in the Town of Brunswick, in the District of Maine within this Commonwealth. A portion of Section 5. of the Act says: And provided further, that the said corporation shall confer no degrees, other than those of Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts, until after the fifth day of January, which will be in the year of our Lord one thousand

eight hundred and ten. Section 17 of the Act gave the Trustees of Bowdoin College five townships of six square mile each. Minus 60 acres in each township, for the benefit of the College. The total amount of acreage created in this section was 114,900. **1806** This was the year of the first class to graduate from Bowdoin College. Seven students graduated and one additional student did not graduate. Four of the students received Bachelor of Arts degrees and three students received both Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees. All eight students were from the District of Maine. **1806** Henry Merritt (1748-1827), Samuel Merritt's grandfather, built the Brig Neptune in Harpswell. The brig was 147 tons, 8'-6" long, 24' beam, and 8'-10" depth. **April 28, 1806** Seward Garcelon was born in Lewiston, Maine. He was the son of Mark (1771-1830) and Hannah (Ames) Garcelon (1771-1819). He later married Samuel Merritt's sister, Catherine Merritt. March 4, 1809 – March 4, 1817 James Madison served as the fourth President of the United States. **September 12, 1811** Samuel Merritt's brother Isaac (1811-1862) was born in the Cundy's Harbor area of Harpswell, Maine.



Captain Isaac Merritt Home, Bath, Maine

Isaac became a mariner, and then had a wholesale mercantile business and shipyard in Bath, Maine area. He owned the mercantile business and shipyard in partnership with Captain Samuel J. Robinson (1812-1865). The mercantile business was located on Ferry Street; the shipyard was located at Trufant's Point.

August 9, 1814 Catherine Merritt, Samuel's sister, was born in Harpswell, Maine.

1815 – 1820 Stephen Merritt (1779-1835), Samuel Merritt's father, is credited with building at least one brig and two schooners in Harpswell. In “Merchant Sail”, Stephen is credited with building 8 ships; some as part of the firm “Merritt & Jenks.”

March 4, 1817 – March 4, 1825 James Monroe served as the fifth President of the United States

March 15, 1820 The District of Maine, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, became the State of Maine and formed its own government.

June 27, 1820 The first session of the Maine State legislature passed a bill to form the Medical School of Maine as part of Bowdoin College. Samuel Merritt, Seward Garcelon, Seward Garcelon's brother Daniel, and Seward Garcelon's nephew Alonzo Garcelon all graduated from Maine Medical School. Of the 13 Garcelons that graduated from Bowdoin, six went on to practice medicine.

Spring, 1821 The first series of lectures for the Maine Medical School took place. Twenty one young men were in attendance.

March 30, 1822 Samuel Merritt was born in Harpswell, Maine. He was the son of Stephen Merritt (1779-1835) and Joanna (Purrington) Merrill (1790-1868); both of Harpswell. He was their fifth and last child. The Merritt family had immigrated from England in 1626. The Purrington family had immigrated from England to York County in the 1650's.

March 4, 1825 – March 4, 1829 John Quincy Adams served as the sixth President of the United States.

1826 - 1830 Seward Garcelon (1806-1877) graduated from Bowdoin College/Medical School of Maine. Seward was the grandson of James Garcelon (1739-1813) and Deliverance (Annis) Garcelon (1735-1828). Seward was the second Garcelon to graduate from Bowdoin; his brother Daniel (1795-1863) graduated from the Medical School of Maine in 1823. James was the first Garcelon to live in America. He immigrated as a cabin boy on the ships of Daniel Gibbs about 1752.

March 4, 1829 – March 4, 1837 Andrew Jackson served as the seventh President of the United States.

1830 Seward Garcelon began his medical practice in Clinton, Maine.

August 26, 1833 Seward Garcelon and Catherine Merritt married in Clinton, Maine.

1835 Englishman William Richardson began a settlement in the San Francisco Bay area and named it Yerba Buena.

March 4, 1837 – March 4, 1841 Martin Van Buren served as the eighth President of the United States.

1839 The Brig General Washington was built on the “Jordan shore” in North Harpswell, Maine. Washington Garcelon (1809-1849), Seward Garcelon's brother, was one of the owners of the Brig.

March 4, 1841 – April 4, 1841 William Henry Harrison served as the ninth President of the United States. He died after only one month in office.

April 4, 1841 – March 4, 1845 John Tyler served as the tenth President of the United States.

1843 Samuel Merritt graduated from the Bowdoin College/Medical School of Maine. He was trained as a physician.

March 4, 1845 – March 4, 1849 James K. Polk served as the eleventh President of the United States.

1845 – 1849 Samuel Merritt, M.D. practiced medicine in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

July 9, 1846 The USS Portsmouth sailed into San Francisco Bay. Its sailors and marines planted the United States flag on Yerba Buena. The United States government had annexed California earlier that year.

1842-1847 Washington Garcelon (1809-1849), Seward Garcelon's brother, built the Brig General Washington on what was called the “Jordan Shore” in North Harpswell. He hired master shipbuilder John Jordan (1800- 1875) of Harpswell to build the ship. Washington Garcelon was the first postmaster of Harpswell, holding the position from October 1, 1842 until his death on June 11, 1849.

Jan. 30, 1847 Yerba Buena's name was changed to San Francisco.

January 24, 1848 John Wilson Marshall discovered gold flakes at John Sutter's water- powered sawmill in Coloma, California while helping Sutter to build the mill. Marshall's discovery is credited with beginning the California Gold Rush. The easiest routes to Coloma were from ports on the Pacific Coast of California; particularly San Francisco. Coloma is approximately 110 miles easterly of San Francisco and 105 miles easterly of Oakland.

1848 – 1855 More than 300,000 people immigrated to California, approximately half by land and half by sea. Many came to seek their fortune; many others came to supply goods and services to the gold-miners and citizens of the area.

1849 While practicing medicine in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Merritt completed a difficult operation on a neighbor and friend of the aging statesman Daniel Webster (1782-1852). Webster, who lived in the adjacent town of Marshfield, Massachusetts befriended Merritt. During

one of their conversations, Merritt told Webster that he was intrigued by the Gold Rush in California which he had been reading about in the newspapers. Webster, by then knowing of the Merritt family's experience as mariners and shipbuilders, advised Merritt: Go out there, young man; go out there and behave yourself, and, free as you are from family cares, you will never regret it.

March 4, 1849 – July 9, 1849 Zachary Taylor served as the twelfth President of the United States; he died while in office.

July 9, 1849 – March 4, 1853 Millard Fillmore served as the thirteenth President of the United States.

September, 1849 – November, 1849 Merritt, with the help of his brother Isaac, purchased a 160 ton sailing vessel, the hermaphrodite brig Reindeer. He purchased the ship from Joseph Holmes (1771-1863), of Kingston, Massachusetts, a town approximately four miles north westerly of Plymouth. Holmes was considered to be the largest individual owners of ships (101) in the United States, and he also built ships. He was very well known in the area. Merritt filled it with building materials and other provisions he purchased at ports along the East Coast. Part of the anecdotal history regarding Merritt is that he had learned that one of the demands of the Gold Miners and merchants in California was for nails to be used for constructing buildings. Merritt was unable to acquire any nails before his voyage. Daniel Webster gave Merritt a letter of introduction to Webster's friends in the San Francisco area.

September 21, 1849 Daniel Webster's letter of introduction read: Dr. Samuel Merritt, of Plymouth, in this State, is a gentleman known to me personally and by reputation. He has been eminently successful in his practice as a physician, is of unblemished character as a man and as a gentleman, and is worthy of personal as well as professional regard, Dr. Merritt thinks of going to California to practice his profession, and I very cordially recommend him to any gentleman in that quarter to whom I may be known. Daniel Webster.

Late November, 1849 Merritt sailed from the port of New York City. He sailed around Cape Horn through the Straits of Magellan into the Pacific Ocean, and, after making several landings along the way, arrived in San Francisco on May 5, 1850. When he left New York, the only known demand for his cargo were the gold miners, but by the time he arrived in San Francisco, the first Great Fires of San Francisco had occurred, creating another large demand for his cargo.



Lurana Ware Clearle (1830-1905) of Plymouth, Massachusetts



Samuel Wing Percival (1823-1891) of Hanover, Massachusetts

A least one passenger was on the Reindeer. It Was Lurana Ware Clearle (1830-1905) of Plymouth. It is possible that her fiance, Samuel Wing Percival (1823-1891), of Hanover, Massachusetts, was the Captain of the Reindeer. Lurana and Samuel married in San Francisco on April 3, 1851; their second child, a boy, was named Samuel Merritt Percival.

Dec. 24, 1849 The Great Fire of San Francisco. It was estimated that over one million dollars of property was destroyed. Just prior to the fire the city was estimated to have a population of 25,000 people.

May 4, 1850 The second Great Fire of San Francisco occurred. It is noteworthy that the City had not recovered from the first Great Fire which had occurred just 4½ months before.

May 5, 1850 Merritt and his brig Reindeer arrived in the San Francisco Bay area one day after the second Great Fire of San Francisco. The voyage had taken five months. The Gold Rush, and the two Great Fires of San Francisco had created an extremely high demand for provisions and building supplies that Merritt made such high offers for his cargo that he was able to far exceed his expectations for a profit. When Merritt had left New York neither of the two Great Fires had occurred. He would have been completely unaware of them until he arrived at the smoldering port of San Francisco just one day after the second Great Fire. Imagine Merritt standing on the deck of his ship and thinking: If only I had been able to get nails.

1850 Immediately after unloading the cargo from the Reindeer, Merritt began chartering the brig out for \$800 a month, thus beginning the process of accumulating a huge personal fortune. He also practiced as a physician and surgeon, often rowing from boat to boat in the Bay to attend the sick and injured.

August 4, 1850 The Brig Reindeer arrived in San Francisco from Humbolt Bay with a cargo consigned to Ottinger and Brown.

September 9, 1850 California became the 31st State in the Union.

June 22, 1851 The “Sixth Great Fire” of San Francisco. Between four and five hundred houses were consumed; damages were estimated to be nearly \$300,000.00.

1852 Oakland was incorporated as a town. Merritt had already begun to purchase land in the San Francisco and Oakland area, and soon owned large acreages in Oakland.

May, 1852 Samuel Merritt moved from San Francisco to Oakland.

1853 The clipper ship Live Yankee was built to specs. by shipbuilder Horace Merriam in Rockland, Maine, It weighed 1637 tons, was 214 feet long, 40 beam, 23.6 foot draft. It was of the largest clippers built in Rockland. Her first voyage left New York on June 23, 1854 and arrived in San Francisco 113 days later on October 15, 1854. She sailed all over the world including New York City, San Francisco, the Pacific Coast, Melbourne, Calcutta, Hong Kong, Havana, London, etc. At the end of her first voyage to San Francisco, Samuel Merritt became a part owner of the ship and used her in the Pacific Coast trade and trips to China. The Live Yankee was used to bring many “coolies,” or Asian workers, to the West Coast.

March 4, 1853 – March 4, 1857 Franklin Pierce served as the fourteenth President of the United States.

March 25, 1854 The Town of Oakland was incorporated as the City of Oakland.

May 14, 1856 The Vigilance Committee was formed to deal with the civil crimes and political corruption that was rampant in San Francisco at

the time. Samuel Merritt was a member of the committee.

June, 1856 Captain Isaac Merritt made his last voyage. He was the Master on the 549 ton ship John Henry owned by John Henry of Bath, Maine. He sailed from the ship's home of Bath to New Orleans, and on the return trip he stopped in Havana, Cuba before returning home to Bath, Maine.

March 4, 1857 – March 4, 1861 James Buchanan served as the fifteenth President of the United States.

April 3, 1860 to October 24, 1861 The Pony Express was created to carry letters (messages) from cities and towns on the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers to the West coast. By using trains from the East Coast to the two rivers and the Pony Express from the rivers to the West Coast, it took approximately 11 days for a letter to travel from Harpswell, Maine to Oakland, California.

1861 Seward Garcelon retired from his medical practice in Clinton, Maine. He and his wife Catherine moved to Oakland, California to live with Catherine's brother, Samuel Merritt.

1861 The Live Yankee, which for part of her life had been owned by Samuel Merritt, wrecked off the coast of Galicia, Spain.

March 4, 1861 – April 15, 1865 Abraham Lincoln began his presidency as the sixteenth President of the United States. He was 56 years old when he died.

April 12, 1861 The Civil War began with the battle of Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina.

April, 1861 – April, 1865 Alonzo Garcelon (1813-1906) served as the Surgeon General for all of the Maine armed forces throughout the Civil War. He was one of Seward and Catherine (Merritt) Garcelon's nephews.

October 24, 1861 The first transcontinental telegraph was completed. This engineering feat made communication from the East Coast to the West Coast almost instantaneous. One of the first telegraph messages was California Chief Justice Stephen Field's message to Abraham Lincoln assuring him of California's allegiance to the Union. Prior to this time letters carried by the Pony Express and train from the East Coast to Oakland took approximately 12 days. When President William Henry Harrison died in 1841 it took 110 days for the message to reach the Pacific Coast. For Samuel Merritt, the telegraph made it possible for him to place orders for goods and services on the East Coast within minutes rather than taking 12 days.

1862 Samuel Merritt served on the Oakland City Council.

April 21, 1862 Captain Isaac Merritt, Samuel Merritt's brother, died in San Francisco.

December, 1863 After several meetings at the home of Samuel Merritt, a group of 12 influential men of Oakland formed the Board of Trustees for

the Mountain View Cemetery Association. Merritt was one of the members of the Board, and was elected as its first President. One of America's leading landscape architects, Frederick Law Olmstead, was hired to design the 224 acre Cemetery. Today it is the largest cemetery in Oakland.

1865 Samuel Merritt contracted with Stephen Larabee (1807-1887) of Bath, Maine to build two barks (the Oakland and the Vidette). It appears that Larabee did not complete two ships. Merritt formed the partnership of Merritt & Jenks with Bath shipbuilder Caleb S. Jenks to finish the two barks. Merritt sent Captain Timothy Batchelder east to sail the Oakland from Bath to Oakland. Timothy Batchelder (1824-1876) was Isaac Merritt's brother-in-law and had sailed with Isaac on more than one voyage.

April 9, 1865 Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, thus ending the Civil War. Anecdotal history is that General Joshua Chamberlain, an English professor from Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine was the officer General Grant placed in charge of the parade and formal surrender of the Confederate Army. The formal surrender which included the laying down of the Confederates arms and flags. Although anecdotal, Chamberlain is credited with his instructions to officers assisting him to treat the confederate soldiers as equals and not attempt to humiliate them in any way.

April 15, 1865 President Abraham Lincoln died from the wounds he had incurred the day before when he was shot in an assassination attempt by John Wilkes Booth. He was 56 years old.

April 15, 1865 – March 4, 1869 Andrew Johnson served as the seventeenth President of the United States.



May 25, 1865 The Mountain View Cemetery was formally dedicated. Later, Samuel Merritt, his sister Catherine (Merritt) Garcelon, and brother-in-law Seward Garcelon, were buried there.

1867 Merritt donated 155 acres out of his large land holdings around the dammed tidal waters from the headwaters of Indian Slough to the City of Oakland. He contributed liberally from his private fortune to construct the Twelfth Street Dam, which helped to create Merritt Lake. Today it is known as Lake Merritt, and is considered the "Jewel of Oakland."

Nov. 3, 1867-Feb. 18, 1869 Samuel Merritt became the 13th mayor of Oakland, California. Nine of the first 20 mayors of Oakland were New England-born.

March, 1868 The Oakland Library Association was founded. Samuel Merritt was its first President.

March 4, 1869 – March 4, 1877 Ulysses S. Grant served as the eighteenth President of the United States.

May 10, 1869 The First Transcontinental Railroad in the United States opened for service. Its western terminus was at Oakland's Long Wharf on San Francisco Bay. Samuel Merritt is credited with lobbying for and promoting Oakland to be the railroad's western terminus. Merritt was responsible for the construction of the wharf.

Merritt's vision was easy to understand; his trip on the Reindeer from New York City to San Francisco in 1840-1850 had taken more than 156 days! It was taking approximately eight days to haul freight overland

from New York City to Oakland. The railroad shortened that time to approximately 90 hours (3 days 18 hours).

The Long Wharf served both local, continental, and international transportation and trade. It served some of the largest ships in the world. The drawing below shows clipper ships, a ferry, local merchant ships, and the railroad. This happened at the confluence of wind powered and steam powered vessels.

1870 Merritt convinced the California State legislature to make Lake Merritt a wildlife refuge. It is considered to be the first such refuge in the United States.

1871 Merritt built a palatial mansion for William Camron near Lake Merritt. Today it is known as the Camron-Stanford, and is one of the remaining homes which Merritt had built on his large land holdings in the area. Merritt built over 100 buildings in Oakland, most with his own capital. One was the legendary Grand Central Hotel on Twelfth Street; it burned down in 1890.





February 5, 1877 Seward Garcelon died in Oakland, California. He is buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland.

March 4, 1877 – March 4, 1881 Rutherford B. Hayes served as the nineteenth President of the United States.

1879 Samuel Merritt designed the fore and aft schooner Casco as a pleasure yacht. He had it built for himself by Maers and Havens Company of Oakland. Her hull length was 94 feet and beam was 22 feet 5 inches. Her three masts from step to cap were as follows: foremast - 76 feet; mainmast - 78 feet; topmast - 47 feet. The outboard length of the bowsprit was 35 feet. She weighed 70 tons. At the time it was considered the largest pleasure craft in the Pacific Ocean. The name Casco was in remembrance of Casco Bay in Maine and Merritt's home town of Harpswell, Maine. The Town of Harpswell has more than 200 miles of tidal shoreline on Casco Bay.

March 4, 1881 – September 8, 1881 James A. A. Garfield served as the twentieth President of the United States. He died while in office.

September 8, 1881 – March 4, 1885 Chester A. Arthur served as the twenty first President of the United States.

March 4, 1885 – March 4, 1889 Grover Cleveland served as the twenty second President of the United of the United States.

August 30, 1886 Samuel Merritt wrote his last Will and Testament. In it, he willed \$96,000 in cash, \$7300.00 in annual payments for annuities, ½ of a building he owned, executors pay and expenses, and the rest and residue to his sister Catherine (Merritt) Garcelon. Catherine had inherited her husband's (Seward Garcelon) estate when he died in 1877. While there has not been an appraisal of his net worth at that time, it has been estimated to have been more than \$2 million.

June 28, 1888 At 5:00 am Robert Louis Stevenson and his party of four passed through the Golden Gate into the Pacific Ocean on board the Casco. They were bound for Tahiti, where they arrived on September 27, 1888. They had four landfalls during the 92 day trip; their actual sailing time was 33 days. The party later went to Hawaii and was there from January, 1889 until June, 1889. The crew, provided by Dr. Merritt, was captained by his nephew, Albert Henry Otis, who had been born in Brunswick, Maine.

March 4, 1889 – March 4, 1893 Benjamin Harrison served as the twenty third President of the United States.

August 17, 1890 Samuel Merritt died in Oakland, California. He had never married. Perhaps Daniel Webster's comment of 1849 when he said: Go out there, young man; go out there and behave yourself, and, free as you are from family cares, you will never regret it.

He is buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland. In Samuel's will, written in 1886, the second paragraph reads: "I give and bequeath to my Executor the sum of \$50,000 for the purpose of erecting a monument to my memory and to keep in order and repair my cemetery lot, or place of burial."

Today he is remembered as a physician, entrepreneur, and philanthropist.

August 20, 1890 Samuel Merritt's Last Will & Testament, written in 1886, was filed with the Probate Court. At the time of Samuel's death, Catherine (Merritt) Garcelon inherited the rest and residue of his estate, as well as a \$5000 per year annuity. She had inherited her husband's (Seward Garcelon) estate in 1877.

1890 Catherine Merritt Garcelon bequeathed \$400,000.00 to Bowdoin College to be used to give scholarships to medical school students. It was named the Merritt-Garcelon Scholarship in honor of her brother Samuel Merritt and her husband Seward Garcelon. The scholarship fund still exists and is part of Bowdoin College's scholarships awarded each year.

1890 Catherine Merritt Garcelon bequeathed \$600,000.00 to the city of Oakland to be used to build and operate a teaching hospital in Oakland in honor of her brother Samuel Merritt.

Dec. 9, 1891 Catherine M. Garcelon died in Oakland, California. She is buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland. At the time of her death her net worth was estimated to be between \$2 million and \$3 million.

March 4, 1893 – March 4, 1897 Grover Cleveland served as the twenty fourth President of the United States.

1896 Catherine Merritt Garcelon's will was contested on the grounds she was not mentally competent. After two trials and several weeks of trial, the courts ruled that the evidence presented to them proved that Mrs. Garcelon was in complete control of her faculties at the time she wrote her will, and ruled in favor of the will being administered as she wished.

1909 The Samuel Merritt College (now Samuel Merritt University) and the Merritt Hospital were built. They still serve the City of Oakland today.

1919 The Casco was “ground to pieces” on King Island, Alaska by the waves of the Bering sea after she had grounded on the rocky shore

1921 Bowdoin College's Medical School of Maine closed its doors, but the Merritt-Garcelon scholarship at the college has continued until this day (2019) serving Bowdoin students.



Merritt Hospital 1915



Merritt Hospital Complex





Schooner Casco in the Artic Ice and Kings Island Alaska



Lake Merritt 1900

David C. Garcelon and his wife Kathleen Mackay live in Harpswell. David, a retired land surveyor and historian, is a nephew of Samuel Merritt through Samuel and Catherine (Merritt) Garcelon.

SOURCES:

Adasiak, Paul, *The Shipwreck of a Celebrity Ship: The Northern Mining and Trading Company, the Schooner Casco Photo Collection*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska, 2014.

A Timeline of Harpswell History (particularly Orr's Island). Harpswell Historical Society, date unknown.

Alexander, William T., *Harpswell on Casco Bay, its Early History and Shipbuilding*. Portland: The Print Shop, 1973.

Baker, William Avery, *A Maritime History of Bath, Maine and the Kennebec River Region Volume I*. Bath: Maritime Research Society of Bath, 1973.

Baker, William Avery, *A Maritime History of Bath, Maine and the Kennebec River Region Volume II*. Bath: Maritime Research Society of Bath, 1973.

Bay of San Francisco – The Metropolis of the Pacific Coast and its Suburban Cities – A History Vol. I. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1892.

Bay of San Francisco – The Metropolis of the Pacific Coast and its Suburban Cities – A History Vol. II. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1892.

Blankenship, Georgiana Mitchell, *Early History of Thurston County, Washington: Together with Biographies and Reminiscences of those Identified with Pioneer Days*. Olympia: Thurston County, 1914.

Bunting, W. H., *Live Yankees- The Sewalls and Their Ships*. Gardiner: 2009.

Bush, Asahel, *The Oregon Statesman* Volume 14 No. 50, February 13, 1865

Camron – Stanford House. Oakland: Camron-Stanford House Museum, date unknown.

Clayton, W. W., *History of Cumberland County, Maine: with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men and Pioneers*. Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1880.

Colbruno, Michael, *Lives of the Dead: Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland*. Oakland, Michael Colbruno, 2009

Cumberland County, Maine Atlas. New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1871.

Davis, William T., *Plymouth Memories of an Octogenarian*. Plymouth: Memorial Press, 1906.

Drury, Richard, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Casco Cruise*. Publisher and date unknown.

Dunlap, M. L., *The Illinois Farmer, A Monthly Agricultural Journal, Devoted to The Interests of the Farmer, Gardener, Fruit Grower and Stock Raiser*. January, 1861.

Fairburn, William. *Merchant Sail*. In six volumes, Center Lovell: Fairburn Marine Educational Foundation, Inc., 1945-1955.

Garcelon, David C., *From Sea to Shining Sea – Harpswell, Maine to Oakland, California – Chronology of the Life of Samuel Merritt (1822-1890) of Harpswell, Maine to Oakland, California*. Harpswell: David C. Garcelon, 2019.

Garcelon, David C., *Garcelon Family Tree*. Harpswell: David C. Garcelon, 2019.

Garcelon, David C., *Samuel Merritt's Will and Probate Records of 1886 and 1890*. Harpswell: David C. Garcelon, 2019

Harpswell's Tall Ships. Brunswick: Curtis Public Library, date unknown.

Holmes, Lowell D., *Treasured Islands – Cruising the South Seas with Robert Louis Stevenson*. Dobbs Ferry: Sheridan House, 2001.

Jefferson, Sam, *Sea Fever: The True Adventures that Inspired our Greatest Maritime Authors*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.

Little, George Thomas, *General Catalogue of Bowdoin College and the Medical School of Maine 1794-1894*. Brunswick: Bowdoin College, 1894.
Map of Brunswick and Harpswell, Maine, by Frederick W. Beers, 1871.

MacFarlane, John F., *The exotic History of the Schooner Casco*. Nauticapedia, 2012

Map of Harpswell Neck, author unknown, 1745.

Map of a Portion of Harpswell, Maine, author unknown, 1771.

Matthews, Frederick C., *American Merchant Ships 1850-1900 – Series I*. Salem: Marine Research Society, Ltd 1930.

Matthews, Frederick C., *American Merchant Ships 1850-1900 – Series I*. Salem: Marine Research Society, Ltd 1931.

Message of the Governor of Oregon to the Legislative Assembly – Report of the Pilot Commissioners for 1868.

Mountain View Cemetery by Oakland Wiki

Powers, Dennis M., *Tales of the Seven Seas – The Escapades of Captain Dynamite Johnny O'Brien*. Lanham: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2010.

Rudge, Mary, *Jack London's Neighborhood*. Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2013

Report of Cases Determined in the Supreme Court of the Territory of Washington – Gove v. Moses. Olympia: C. B. Bagley, 1855.

Samuel Merritt 1822-1890. by The Maritime Heritage Project.

San Francisco Call Bulletin. Friday, October 25, 1895.

Scott, H. W., *History of Portland, Oregon, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens and Pioneers*. Syracuse: D. Mason and Co., 1890.

Ships in Port – 1800s – Vaquero (steamer), author and date unknown.

The Federal Reporter Volume 75 September-November, 1896. President, etc. of Bowdoin College et. al. v. Merritt et. al (Circuit Court, N.D. California June 5, 1896) No. 11,563.

The Journal of the Maine Medical Association. Vo. XIII. August, 1922. No. 1

The Overland Monthly, Vol XXI – Second Series. California: Overland Monthly Publishing Co., June 1893.

United State Census' of 1810 through 1900. Washington: United States Government

Varney, George J., *Maine State Gazetteer, History of Harpswell, Maine*. Boston: B. B. Russell, 1886.

Wheeler, George Augustus & Wheeler, Henry Warren, *History of Brunswick, Topsham, and Harpswell, Maine including Ancient Pejepscot*. Brunswick: A. Mudge & Sons, 1878.

Wilder, Philip S., *General Catalogue of Bowdoin College and the Medical School of Maine A Biographical Record of Alumni and Officers 1794-1950*. Brunswick: Bowdoin College, 1950.

Wright, E. W., *Lewis & Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest*. Portland: Lewis & Dryden Printing Co., 1895.

Posted by Melissa Davenport Berry at 7:30 AM

Email This Blog This! Share to Twitter Share to Facebook Share to Pinterest

Labels: Albert Otis, Bowdoin College, David C. Garcelon, Harpswell Maine, Joanna Purington, Lake Merritt, Samuel Merritt, Seward Garcelon, Washington Garcelon

1 comment:

.

Anonymous December 9, 2019 at 6:42 PM

.

The photo labeled "Merritt Hospital Complex" is actually of the Oakland Cathedral, about a mile away from the hospital at Hawthorne Ave. & Webster St., now known as the Summit Campus of Alta Bates Summit Medical Center.

.

[Reply](#)

.