

"THE LATE PETER STORM"

"The venerable gentleman whose name heads this article died suddenly of paralysis last Friday morning at Calistoga, in his 78th year. Much has already been said by others of brave old Peter Storm, but it is well that we should have something to say of him, too. Mr. Storm was born in Christiansand, Norway, in September, 1799, and at the early age of fourteen went to sea, which he followed for many years. He finally gave up his life on the seas, and settled in California in 1833, where he followed the life of a trapper and hunter, the scenes of his adventures being mostly in Napa and adjoining counties. Peter was not, by an accident of fortune or good management of business, possessed with old Californias, he was very poor -- so poor in his old age that, had it not been for the generous assistance of some of the Napa pioneers, he might have perished from shere want. But the old Scandinavian -- worthy of being a descendant of those hardy warriors of the North Sea -- worthy to have been under the leadership of Horsa and Hensa -- was neither a beggar nor a poltroon. In the days of his manly vigor he earned his bread by honest toil; but when decrepitude crept upon him, he, like many another man, appealed to his friends.

"It is told of old Peter that, at the capture of Sonoma, in 1846, he was informed that he would be shot by the Mexicans if taken prisoner, as he was a recognized citizen of the Mexican Republic. And such was really the case in those days; for, previous to the Mexican war, the Americans as well as the Europeans who were then residents acknowledged a sort of allegiance to that government. Old Peter's reply was brief but emphatic, "Tell them to go to ___; I'm an American now!" He was unquestionably honest in that declaration, for he often said, "The United States is the only country I now claim."

"It is unnecessary for us to repeat what connection old Peter had with the Bear Party. The story has often been told, and most every man in Napa is familiar with it.

"The body was brought to this city, and on Sunday the funeral took place from the Engine House, Rev. W. J. Maclay conducting the funeral services. Notwithstanding the inclement weather, quite a number of the Pioneers of this place and the adjoining counties followed the remains to their last resting place in Tulocay Cemetery.

"Considerable dissatisfaction is expressed at the course pursued by the San Francisco Pioneers, they having refused to take any part in the ceremonies, notwithstanding their society is under great obligations to the deceased."

[NAPA COUNTY RECORD, December 21, 1877, page 3, column 4]

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Storm Family

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