



## City of San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society P.O. Box 875, San Bernardino, CA 92402

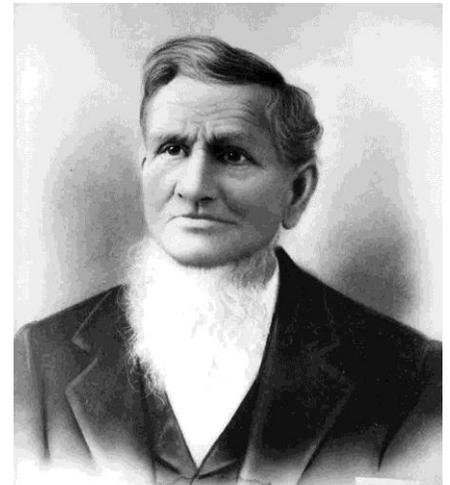
### LIBRARY NEWS MARCH 2012

By Richard D. Thompson, Librarian

### PIONEER “UNCLE GEORGE” LORD

Last month I mentioned our intent to create a "big-book" on William F. Holcomb and his descendants. A big-book is a four- or five-inch-thick, heavy-duty ring binder filled with hundreds of pages of whatever can be found on the family. We have one on John Brown and one on Fred Perris. These are works in progress because there is much more material available than what we were able to collect within the restricted time and effort devoted to the project.

A file on George Lord is now being gathered. He was the first president of the San Bernardino Society of California Pioneers, who, upon his death in 1898, was described in a Riverside newspaper as the "most famous man in southern California." Another article said "there was not a stain" in his life, and a third stated that "thousands" attended his funeral (the total population of the city was only about 6,000). I am still in the process of accumulating what is readily available on this man. This includes photographs, references in history books, newspaper articles and anything that can be found on the Internet.



George Lord

“Uncle George” Lord, as he was called, and his wife Arabella Singleton Lord had two sons and a daughter, the latter of whom died as a baby. The boys, George Lord, Jr., and John Singleton Lord, both had families, and I have included in the big-book what information I have on them, their wives and families. I already have a fairly decent start, but a descendant, Gary Lord of Rialto, informs me that he has a pretty good genealogy of the family, and I anticipate this will help flesh out the skeleton work that I have done.



Arabella Lord

The best biography of Lord is found in *An Illustrated History of Southern California*, published in 1890. A reprint of the article, in its entirety, is given below.

I would like to embellish upon the biography’s story about the problems Lord encountered when he settled in San Bernardino Valley. He was not a Mormon, but he came to San Bernardino early—in 1852—and he soon found that the Mormon elders did not

want him to be part of their community. They asked him to leave. The boundaries of the Rancho San Bernardino had not yet been established, but Lord found out where the intended westerly boundary was going to be and he selected some land west of that, on what was surely, or so he thought, government land.

Many years later he found out that it was not on government land, but instead on property located within the Rancho Muscupiabe—a result of some creative boundary setting by U.S. Deputy Surveyor Henry Hancock. It turns out that Hancock and his boss John C. Hays, the U.S. Surveyor General of California, had become owners of said rancho. Hancock ended up doing the government survey for their own land, and by the time the survey was completed, the acreage has expanded from its original 4,428 acres to 30,144, which made Lord's property part of the rancho.

Lord ended up paying two unnamed “pretended prior claimants” to his property in gold coin, according to the biography, after Arabella persuaded him “to effect a peaceable settlement rather than resort to force to vindicate his rights.” The unnamed “pretenders” were Hays and Hancock, which can be verified by the grant deed recorded in Book L, page 84, showing that Lord paid them \$500 for 100 acres. He subsequently bought another 40 acres from others. Government land would have been \$1.25 per acre, so he was forced to pay four times what the price should have been.

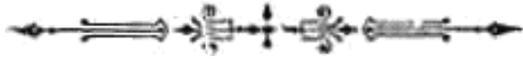


**The Lord family home on Mt. Vernon Avenue**

Lord's biography then adds the coming of another man, a “Mr. White,” who began making demands on him: “The third one came after he [Lord] had paid for and obtained his title from the Government, and, forbearance ceasing to be a virtue, Mr. Lord informed him that his demands would be settled with powder and lead if he persisted. Mr. White did not press his claim.” Mr. White is surely the Michael White who was the original owner of the 4,428-acre Muscupiabe Rancho, by virtue of a Mexican land grant.

Interestingly, White believed that *he* was the aggrieved party and that Hays and Hancock had stolen the property. In one source he stated he was never paid, and in another, a lawsuit, he goes so far as to accuse Hancock of forgery. All to no avail. White had lost all claim on the now 30,000-plus acreage of the ranch, and continued to be a bitter man until his death.

Following is the Lord biography from *An Illustrated History of Southern California: Embracing the Counties of San Diego, San Bernardino, Los Angeles and Orange, and the Peninsula of Lower California, from the earliest period of occupancy to the present time....* Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1890, pp 571-573.



GEORGE LORD, President of the Society of California Pioneers of San Bernardino County, and a representative of the best type of "Forty-niners," is a native of New York city, and was born June 27, 1800, and consequently was eighty-nine years old his last birthday. His father, George Lord, was a sea captain, who died of yellow fever at quarantine in New York harbor, having contracted the disease in the West Indies, whence his vessel had just returned.

The subject of this memoir being left self-dependent when quite young, early developed that remarkable decision of character and equipoise which have characterized him in later life. At the age of twenty-eight he left the Empire State and went south, largely for the improvement of his health, which had been somewhat undermined by close application to mercantile pursuits. Stopping for a time in Louisville, Kentucky, he was there made an Odd Fellow, being inducted into the order by Past Master Wildy, who was sent over from England to establish Odd Fellowship in the United States. Mr. Lord joined Boone Lodge, No. 1, in 1833, and is one of the oldest living members of the order. On leaving Louisville he spent about three years in St. Louis, when, not finding the climate agreeable, he returned North and lived a number of years in Richland and Knox counties, in Ohio, engaged in merchandising. In 1846 he went to Iowa, continuing there in the mercantile business until 1848, when he lost everything by fire.

The excitement over the discovery of gold in California, reaching fever heat the following spring, Mr. Lord purchased four yoke of oxen, and fitting out with a wagon-load of supplies—including eight pairs of moccasins, seven pairs of which he wore out footing it across the plains—he started in April, 1849, for the golden El Dorado, via Green River and Fort Hall route. On the way he saw numerous bands of Indians from different tribes, among them a company of Sioux warriors, whom he thought the finest body of men, physically, that he ever saw.

Reaching Bear valley, California, September 8, 1849, he did his first mining in Steep Hollow. He spent fourteen months in search for the yellow dust, and was successful above the majority, taking out "an ounce" a day and upwards, though the enormous cost of living reduced the net savings to a much smaller sum. He and his companions paid as high as \$3 a pound for butter, brought around Cape Horn; potatoes were \$3 per pound; onions \$3 per pound; and vinegar \$16 a gallon. On one occasion he had a friend to dine with him, and having onions, fried potatoes, beefsteak and bread as the bill of fare, the dinner for the two, exclusive of bread, cost \$8. They occasionally indulged in a newspaper from "the States," which would be a month old on reaching the camp, for which they paid a dollar a copy.

Varying fortune rewarded their labor in the mines: while prospecting on the Yuba river, near where Downieville now is, they struck it rich, and in one day he and his chum took out of a pocket seven pounds and five ounces of gold dust, and in a week they had taken out \$5,000. In 1851 Mr. Lord left for San Francisco with \$5,000 in gold dust, on his return trip home. The Pacific coast metropolis was then a rude country town, containing only one brick house. On arriving there the steamer had sailed; so he took passage on a

sailing vessel, and crossed the Isthmus by the then new Nicaragua route, experiencing much delay and difficulty in crossing. He returned to Iowa, expecting to remain, but the Hawkeye State had lost its charms for him, and as soon as he could dispose of his interests there he prepared to move to California. While in Iowa, in 1851, Mr. Lord married Miss Arabella Singleton, a native of England, who came to America when entering her teens.

Again crossing the plains, Mr. and Mrs. Lord reached San Bernardino valley in the summer of 1852. The Mormon colony had come the previous year and purchased and settled upon the Lugo ranch, in which was comprised the site of the city of San Bernardino. Mr. Lord had intended to go on up to Santa Clara valley and settle in or near San Jose; but, finding abundant pasturage in this valley, he sought and obtained permission from the president of the colony to turn out his jaded teams for a few weeks to recruit. With his candid, outspoken nature, the Mormons soon learned that he was not in sympathy with their religion, and he was warned, at first gently, and afterward sternly, that his gentile presence was not congenial to them, and that he " had better move on."

Mr. Lord is not made of the sort of human clay that is driven or intimidated, and this presumption on his rights as an American citizen aroused a spirit of resentment, and he determined to remain in the San Bernardino valley. After trying in vain to purchase land from the Mormon leaders, he went outside of their possessions—Lugo ranch—and settled on a 140-acre tract, four miles north of the present city limits, on Lytle creek, which he improved, and which was the home of himself and family from January 3, 1853, till 1886, when he sold it and moved into the city, getting for his ranch and water right \$30,000. After locating on what he supposed to be Government land, entirely free from any encumbrances, he was still persecuted and annoyed by pretended prior claimants. Acting upon the advice of his wife, to effect a peaceable settlement rather than resort to force to vindicate his rights, he paid the claims of two of the pretenders in gold coin. The third one came after he had paid for and obtained his title from the Government, and, forbearance ceasing to be a virtue, Mr. Lord informed him that his demands would be settled with powder and lead if he persisted. Mr. White did not press his claim.



*Courtesy California Room, Feldheym Library*

**In 1886, the Lords moved into this home at 744 N. D Street,  
just south of the original location of our Heritage House**

Mr. Lord was the first to demonstrate the successful culture of the raisin grape—Muscat—in this valley, early in the '60's, and took the first prize ever offered in Los Angeles County for the finest box of raisins: a \$5 gold piece. It created quite a sensation, and he supplied thousands of Muscat cuttings to people of San Bernardino and adjacent counties.

Up to the time of the civil war, Mr. Lord had always affiliated with the Democratic party, but when the old flag was fired upon and the life of the nation threatened he at once joined the Republican ranks and stood firmly for the Union. He still marches in the ranks of the party of Lincoln and Grant, Sherman, Garfield and Harrison. At the solicitations of his friends he has twice been a candidate for the Legislature, but was beaten both times by his Democratic opponent. Mr. Lord was one of the organizers of the Society of California Pioneers of San Bernardino County, and is now serving his second term as its president. He has been an active and prominent member of the Masonic order for sixty years, having joined the order in 1828. He has filled all the chairs of the local lodges in the Master's and Royal Arch degrees, except secretary. On his eighty third birthday, his Masonic brethren presented him with an elegant gold watch and chain, as one of the numerous tokens of their fraternal regard for him. In Odd Fellowship he has been honored with every office in the local lodge. He is a veritable patriarch in these two orders of which he has been a zealous and honored member for more than a generation.

Mr. and Mrs. Lord are the parents of two sons and a daughter, the latter deceased. The sons, George Lord, Jr., and Joseph S., are both men of families, and reside in the immediate vicinity of the city of San Bernardino. Their father started each of them in life with a fine homestead. Mr. and Mrs. Lord reside happily in their pretty cottage home on D street, where, and on an adjoining street, they own several other nice pieces of improved property, the rents of which furnish them a comfortable income. Mr. Lord, though in his ninetieth year, is remarkably well preserved, physically and mentally. Few men of sixty-five have as much vigor and activity of mind and body as he now possesses. Notwithstanding his meagre early educational advantages, he is a well-informed man; he is endowed with a natural gift for extemporaneous speaking; ready in thought happy in illustration and expression, he never fails to entertain his auditors. He has always led a temperate life, using neither alcoholic liquors nor tobacco. Kindness of heart is a prominent trait of his character. Unswerving in his adherence to his convictions, his conscience is his guide, and to do right his religion.



George Lord, Jr.

—End of George Lord Story—

**JOHN MARNELL WILL PRESENT A PROGRAM ON THE  
RAILROAD SURVEY OF 1867-68 IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY  
SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2012**

Most history buffs know of the building of the transcontinental railroad by the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads which culminated in their 1869 junction at Promontory Summit, Utah Territory. During this

construction, the survey of a second transcontinental was underway, one by the Union Pacific-Eastern Division. Although more than one route was investigated, the company leaders let their preference for the alignment along the 35th Parallel be known in early 1868.

A reporter for an eastern newspaper accompanied the survey team and wrote back periodic accounts of its progress. Those letters pertaining to San Bernardino County were published by Tales of the Mojave Road Publishing Company under the title, *The Letters of Alfred R. Calhoun, Mojave Desert, 1867-1868* (Goffs, California, 2011.)

John Marnell edited these letters and designed the book. He provided photographs of the people and places along the route, and some of the photos are exceedingly scarce. John did extensive research on the people who are mentioned in Calhoun's missives, much of which, of course, falls outside the scope of the survey project. He has agreed to give a talk using this data with an emphasis on those persons connected to the City of San Bernardino, Cajon Pass and Mojave River areas.

John has arranged a PowerPoint show, which will begin at 1:00 p.m. on March 10th, the second Saturday of the month. The meeting hall at 796 North D Street, San Bernardino, is the place. Free parking and admission.