

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Story of William Doran, Gold Miner

Obituary (Alley, Bowen & Company Mortuary)

William Marion Doran was born in Hardin County, Tennessee, 13 Jan 1825. There he received a common school education, and lived until seventeen years of age when he proceeded to Fayette County, where he remained until the Fall of 1844, when he left his parents and settled in Washington County, Mississippi, where he engaged in farming until 1849, when he started via New Orleans to Gorgona Panama, and from there on foot across to Panama, a distance of twenty-two miles. After remaining here five weeks, he boarded the sailing vessel "Kingston," and after a voyage of fifty-five days landed in San Francisco, 25 Mar 1850. From here he took passage on the steamer Eldorado for Sacramento, thence on foot with blankets on his back he proceeded to Mud Springs in Placer County, a distance of forty-five miles, making the trip in two days. He mined gold with fair luck, and not wishing to pay thirty-two dollars per week for board, he soon set up housekeeping for himself. Paid two hundred dollars for a barrel of pork, seventy-five cents per pound for flour, and everything else in proportion.

He soon left this point and went to Eldorado County, remained three months, returned to Sacramento, purchased teams and began teaming to Nevada City. In Fall of 1850 he turned out his teams and followed mining. In March 1851 he returned to Sacramento and found that twenty-five head of his horses and mules had been stolen. After disposing of the balance of his stock he returned to the mines, meeting with rather poor success, and about the first of Oct. returned to Sacramento, thence to Dry Creek, Amador County, near Volcano, and mined with good success until March, 1852, when he again returned to Sacramento, from there to Sierra County.

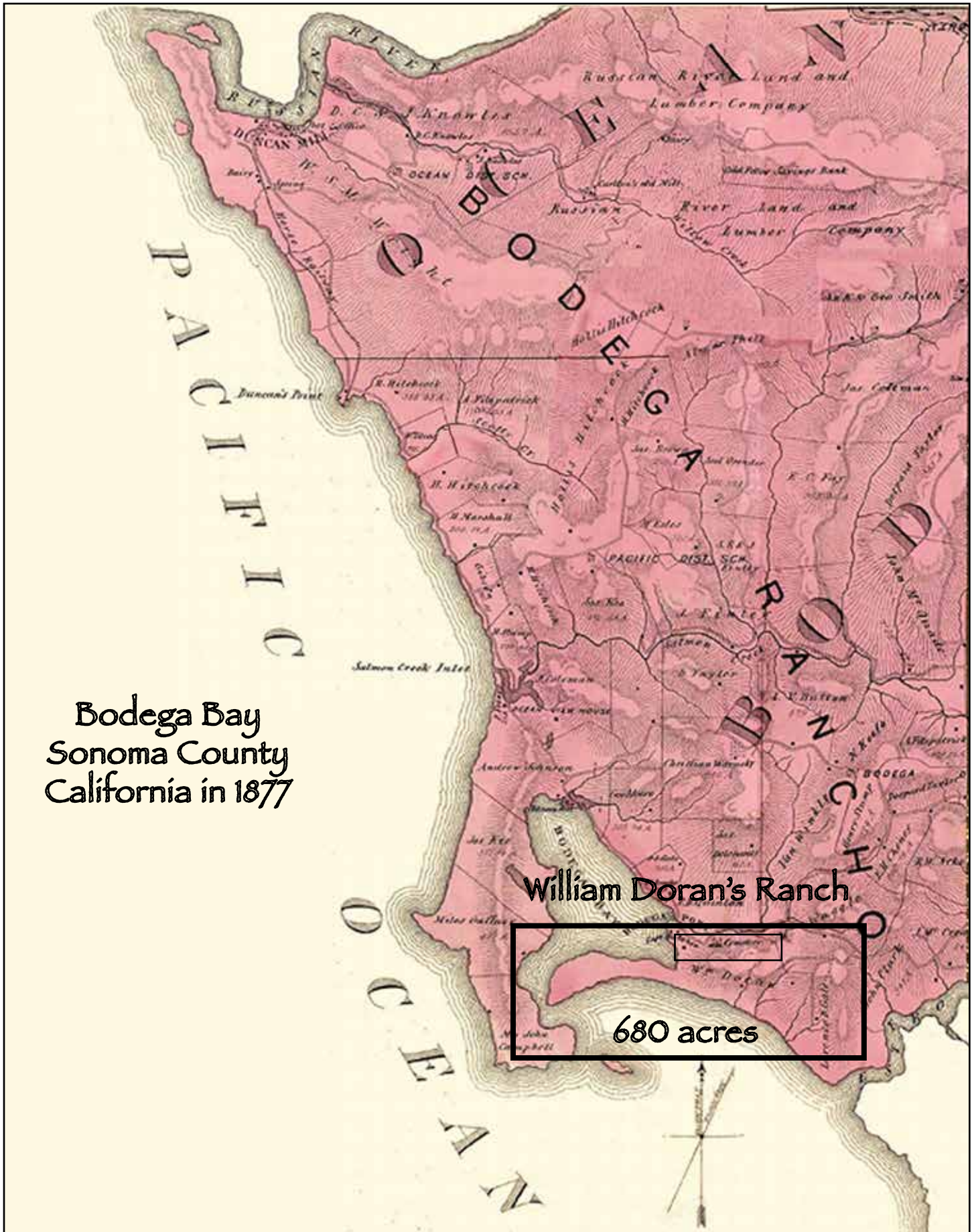
On Dec. 20th he was on his way back to Sacramento. He found the city under water, and the city found him with only five dollars in his pocket. But having an eye to business, he hired a boat at ten dollars per day, and conveyed provisions to Sutter's fort, clearing forty dollars the first day. On the third day he started for the mines: and after mining, prospecting, etc., in many different places until July 1856, we find him in San Francisco where he took the steamer "Golden Age," bound for the home in Tennessee. He remained there until July 16, 1857, when he returned to California via New Orleans.

After gold mining in all the principal mines in California and Idaho. In 1863, he went to Montana where he was successful; after traveling and prospecting for some time, he finally found a place where he took out ten thousand dollars in five weeks time. He then returned to San Francisco, and in June 1864, purchased his present ranch on Bodega Bay which he now owns. In 1867, he returned east, and in Dec. 1867, married in Hardin County, Tennessee to Sarah J. Hawk, she being born in 1843. He returned to California in February and settled on his ranch. In July 1872, he and wife visited the east, and returned in October. In 1877 he purchased a home at Bodega Corners and retired from the farm. Mr. D. has been flat broke five different times, but being well charged with that spirit that will not down, has succeeded and his efforts crowned. He now owns not only his property in town, but a fine farm of six hundred and eighty acres under good improvements. William and Sarah had four children: William James (Jan 1869), Josephine Elizabeth (Oct 1871), John Alexander (Aug 1873) and George Lafayette (Jan 1877). ■

William Doran

BIRTH 12 JANUARY 1823 • Tennessee

DEATH 30 APRIL 1897 • Santa Rosa, California



Bodega Bay
Sonoma County
California in 1877

William Doran's Ranch
680 acres