

The following data is extracted from *An Illustrated History of Southern California - San Bernardino Biographies*.

[The following sketch is in Mr. Thomas Richard Roberds' own language:]

I was born in Monroe County, state of Mississippi, April 9, 1837. My father, John Roberds, was born in Franklin County, Georgia, in August, 1800. My mother, Martha Tucker Walpole Roberds, was born in Madison County, Alabama, May 16, 1817. My father died in San Bernardino, October 15, 1878, being seventy-eight years of age. He was in the Black Hawk war, and learned to speak the Choctaw and Chickasaw languages. My mother still lives in San Bernardino.

"Early in the spring of 1846, when a boy nine years of age, I left Mississippi with my parents and family, there being six small children. I traveled into Missouri with a small party of emigrants with ox teams, through Independence, Missouri; crossed the Mississippi river at what was called at that time the Iron Banks; traveled on to the lead mines in Missouri. Here we enlarged our party with more emigrants. From there on the log cabins began to get very scattering, and in a few days' travel we bid farewell to civilization.

"The next place of any note we came to was the Osage River: no whites but a few Indians. I do not remember the name of the tribe. Here we took our wagons to pieces and ferried them over with great difficulty, in a small boat, the river being about one mile wide. We hired the Indians to swim our cattle over. This they did by crowding them off in the river, jumping in after them, catching the hind ones by the tails, whooping and yelling after them. We traveled on for several days and then got in with another party of emigrants, the noted Donner party, who afterward perished in the snow in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. We continued on by the old emigrant road, turning southward and wintering with such old mountaineers as John Brown, Sr., Reuben Herrin, James Waters, Sr., John Pizle, Briggs and Burris, Matthew Kankade, and his two sons John and Andrew, etc.

"The next place of any note we came to was a river. Here we found the Cheyenne Indian village, and a large village it was. They did not want us to go on farther. They claimed that we were destroying the buffalo. About this time there came a little Frenchman into our camp by the name of Reshaw. He was an Indian trader and could talk with them. He said that we had to make the Indians a feast or they would not let us leave, and might massacre the whole party. Then all hands turned in to make the feast, consisting of mush and coffee, which almost stripped the train of breadstuff. When the kettles of mush and coffee were set in a row, the Indians came up singing and dancing their war dance. They ate, danced and sang, all at the same time. The next day we yoked up our oxen and started on our journey, and the first thing we knew the Indians had taken down their lodges and were on the move with us. I could look back for miles and see them coming. They traveled with us for three days, and when we would camp they would camp a little ways off, and then they would come into our camp and try to trade moccasins and various kinds of skins for bread and cloth; but when we yoked up the fourth morning they did not follow. We were very glad they stopped, for we were constantly uneasy, as they might do us harm, being very bold and saucy. We traveled on some distance, don't remember how far, and came to a creek by the name of Fountain Cabouy. We traveled on for a few days and came to Fort Pueblo on the Arkansas River; here we fixed camp for the winter, making log cabins to live in. We had been there but a few weeks when a lot of Mexican war soldiers came and wintered with us. Here we could trade oxen for corn with the mountaineers. We had a very hard winter. The hunters and trappers are what we call mountaineers. The spring of 1847 I moved with my parents on to some rich bottom land, about ten miles below, with the intention of raising a crop. The country was alive with deer, antelope, and other game. I could see big droves of antelope crossing the bottom every day, going to the river to water. We were now ten miles from anybody, in a wild country, so we moved back up to Fort Pueblo, where we felt safe, and could work for breadstuff, as we had been living on nothing but meat for several weeks. In the fall of 1847 we moved up to another fort, called Hardscrabble. Here the mountaineers had raised plenty of corn and pumpkins, which they were very liberal with. Next came about 300 Cheyenne warriors through the fort, going to fight the mountain Utes. The

men watched them fight from the top of the fort with a spyglass. Several were killed on both sides. Later in the fall we moved about three miles to another fort, which belonged to Matthy Kancade, he going off with his stock, and my father taking care of the fort during the winter. Here we had plenty, Kancade frequently coming in with black-tailed bucks and mountain sheep. From the top of the fort we could see Pike's Peak.

In the spring of 1848 several of the mountaineers began to prepare to go to California, hearing that gold had been discovered there, and we, seeing that there would be but few left started with them. We started in company with about twelve wagons, the mountaineers having about 200 head of stock. We traveled on for several days and came to a creek, where we stopped and dried buffalo meat for about one week, the plains being black with buffalo. We traveled on a few days and came to a river. We took off a wagon box, covered it with buffalo hides to keep the water out, unloaded the wagons and taking them to pieces ferried every-thing over in the wagon-box. We kept on the old emigrant road, stopping a few days at Independence Rock. We then came to a stream called the Big Sandy: here we stayed a few weeks to trade with emigrants. My father traded a yoke of oxen that had brought us all the way from the Mississippi, to get clothing for his children, as my mother had patched as long as she could find anything to patch with. I will say here, that if there ever was a pioneer woman, my mother is one, for she almost raised her family up on the road traveling.

"The next place of any note we came to was Fort Bridger, where was the Snake Indian Village. From here we crossed the mountains into Salt Lake, made log cabins and fixed the best we could for the winter. In the spring of 1849 we were not able to fit out a team to go farther. So we went to work to raise a crop, which we did. We now had something to trade on, got more oxen, and early in the spring of 1850 we started with the first train that left Salt Lake, going the northern route to California; we had two teams, my father driving one and myself the other. Next we came to the Humboldt River, and traveled down that river to the sinks, and found the Indians very troublesome.

We rested up for a few days, getting ready to cross the big desert, from the sinks to the Truckee River. After being on the desert awhile, I saw great destruction among stock and wagons, there being carcasses of horses and mules for miles, but our train got across all right. We traveled on without much interest, and came to a valley called Carson valley. Here my father, with two other families, stopped for three or four weeks, while the rest of the train kept the road for California. The emigrants from the States now began to catch up with us. They had nothing much to eat and we let them have grub until we could not spare any more. We yoked our oxen and began to travel the Sierra Nevada Mountains. While on our way to the top of the mountain lots of men came to us for grub. They always got something, if it was only a pan of milk. They were mostly on foot, their teams having given out and died on the road. From the top of the mountain we soon reached places where we could buy.

We arrived in California in the last of July 1850, at Diamond Springs, close to Hangtown. My father, uncle and I, dug the spring and gave it the name of Diamond Spring, the cause of the name being the very white and pearly quartz rock glittering like diamonds. Here we concluded to stay, as there seemed to be plenty of gold diggings everywhere, and as winter came on quite a big town was built up, which is Diamond Spring today. In the spring of 1851 we moved to Coon Hollow, close to Hangtown. Early in January 1852, I move to Suisun valley and went through Sacramento just after it burned down. We started early in the spring of 1857 for Southern California, having a good time hunting on the road, as there was plenty of game, and arrived in San Bernardino June 25, 1857, I being then twenty years of age. January 23, 1859, I married Miss Harriet Bemis, of San Bernardino, with whom I have lived happy ever since, having raised a large family, consisting of eight boys and four girls. I lost one girl when thirteen years old: the rest are all living in this valley, two married and the remaining nine at home."

The names of Mr. Roberds' children are: William, Rosel, Nellie, who married J. W. Smith; Harriet, who died at the age of thirteen years; John T., Frances G., now the wife of Parley King; Albert F., George R., Alvin N., Walter, Birdie M. and Eli. Mr. Roberds has a fine ranch of about 100 acres on Ninth Street, one and one-half miles northwest of San Bernardino, and has been very successful as a general farmer and stock-dealer. He has seen a good deal of the world and is one of the pioneers of the valley.