MILES GOODYEAR

Miles Goodyear is famous as the founder of Ogden, Utah, as well as the founder of the mining town of Goodyear Bar, Sierra County, California.

Goodyear was born and raised in the state of Connecticut, but spent a greater portion of his active life traveling the mountain area from Kansas to California. He was a red headed fellow, rather slight as to frame but lithe and active, possessed of the penetrating eye that was the hallmark of the mountain man, yet amiable of disposition and winning of manner.

History says it was probably sometime in September, 1846, that Miles Goodyear reached the site of Ogden and began building his Fort Buenaventura. By late fall the new post must have been sufficiently completed for the red-headed mountain man felt justified in leaving Captain Wells to finish the job. Leaving his Ute wife, his children, his flocks and herds, and some of his Indian retainers in the Captain's care, Goodyear set out for southern California, hoping to find a market for the considerable stock of dressed deer and elk skins he had acquired in trade with the Indians.

A compaign down through California had brought Fremont's California Battalion to Los Angèlès on January 14, 1847, sorely in need of new clothing and footgear. Edwin Bryant, a member of the battalion, picks up Goodyear's story at this point, and incidentally confirms the recency of the founding of Fort Buenaventura: "A Rocky Mountain trapper and trader (Mr. Goodyear), who had established himself near the Salt Lake since I passed there last year, fortunately arrived at Los Angeles (about this time), bringing with him a quantity of dressed deer and elk skins, which were purchased for the nearly naked soldiers."

Records of Goodyear's transactions with Fremont's command have been preserved in the archives of the General Accounting Office in Washington--and the original of voucher 137 provides the only specimen of Miles Goodyear's signature yet found.

Goodyear was not born a Yankee for nothing. He forthwith put his capital to work. Horses in California were plentiful and cheap. Since 1840 mountain men and Utes had periodically raided Southern California ranches, making a nuisance of themselves. If you were not a bankrupt to begin with, the better policy was to buy your horses and move along the trails at a pace befitting an honest man. This Goodyear proceeded to do. The exact number of horses he bought is not known; several hundred, perhaps.

It was late spring and not a good season to trail livestock across the southern deserts, and Goodyear chose to return to Utah by another route. He took his horses up through California to Sutters Fort. John A. Sutter's post diary mentions his arrival on May 22, 1847.

Early in June he launched upon his journey across the Sierra accompanied by John Craig of Ray County, Mo., one (Samuel) Truitt or Truete of Shelby County, Ill., and two other California immigrants. To help him with his horse herd, the mountain man also had along three Indians or half-breeds, who perhaps had gone with him to California the previous fall. He went

down the Truckee River and via the Humboldt Trail.

During the spring of 1847, while Miles Goodyear was bringing his horses up through California, then east across the Sierra Nevadas and on up the Humboldt, reports about him were a source of disquiet to the westward-moving Mormon Pioneers.

John Brown writes that on August 9, he, "started north with a little exploring company; also in company with Captain Jas. Brown and others who were on their way to California. At Weber River we found the fort of Mr. Goodyear, which consisted of some log buildings and corrals stockaded in with pickets. This man had a herd of cattle, horses and goats. He had a small garden of vegetables, also a few stalks of corn, and, although it had been neglected, it looked well."

The state of the Goodyear garden was a matter of the greatest interest to the Mormon Pioneers, and it is hardly surprising that their journals should be full of information about it. One of the diaries reports, "the garden included corn in tassel which had been planted June 9, beans were ripe, carrots a foot long, cabbages, radishes, etc., looking fine (and for good measure, the sheep in need of shearing)." Another journal records that the American corn was shoulder high and the Spanish corn tasseling out, yet another notes that the garden was some 15 yards square.

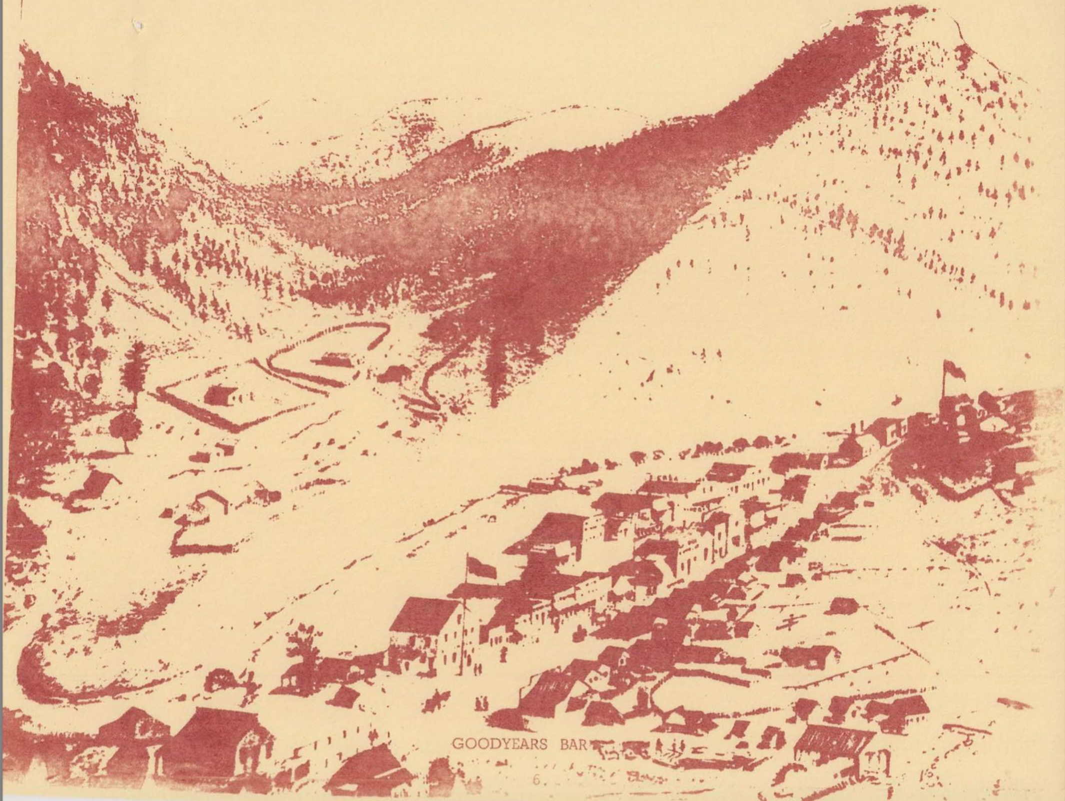
All this was the work of Captain Wells, of whom it is unfortunate that so little is known, for he was Utah's first white agriculturist, and the buckets of water he poured upon his garden made him the first white man in Utah to practice irrigation.

Jim Baker, in association with Goodyear, was on his way south to trade with the Utes on the headwaters of the Sevier. It is said that,"in September, 1847, he camped with the pioneers at Salt Lake, being on his way home from a trading trip to the San Pete valley Indians, and that according to the account of Joseph Wood of Trenton, he bought from one of the Mormon emigrants the first house cat brought to Utah, paying $10.00 for it."

Andrew Goodyear joined his brother in the Salt Lake area in the latter part of 1847, and they went on to Southern California in January 1848 to acquire another herd of horses. Trading horse was somethin Miles Goodyear liked and did well.

So on April 23, 1848 a detachment of the first United States Dragoons stationed in Cajon Pass to see that no stolen animals passed eastward experienced a break in the monotony of their duty. As Lieut. Geo. Stoneman, the officer in command of the detail, reported on April 31st,"On the 23rd an American by the name of Goodyear arrived, with 231 animals and four men--the animals I inspected and by my authority gave him a passport--to pass out."

It is singular that Miles should have driven his horses all the way from southern California to the Missouri River, but the Mormons in the valley of the Great Salt Lake were too poor to provide much of a market, and he



GOODYEARS BAR

was too late to trade with the immigrants of 1848 alond the California-Oregon trail. It is much more curious that instead of disposing of his horses to the immigrants gathering on the frontier, Miles undertook to drive them back across the continent. He may have reasoned that prices would be better farther along the trail or in the gold fields than in Missouri, where he had to compete with every farmer for 50 miles around. The upshot was however, that he made an unprecedented 4,000 mile journey from California to the Missouri River and back.

Late in March 1849 Miles visited St. Louis, and an interview with him was printed in the Missouri Republican, March 30, 1849:

> MR. MILES M. GOODYEAR, A Rocky Mountain trader and traveler, arrived in this city yesterday, from St. Joseph. He says that the people along the whole line of our frontier, are making preparations for an early start across the Plains. Mr. Goodyear has traversed all the different routes to California, and is familiar with the several roads. He reached the Rocky Mountains in June last, remained there until the last of August, when he returned to the States by the South Pass, arriving in October last. He intends starting, we learn, as soon as the weather and grass will permit, for the Rocky Mountains and California, by the way of Fort Kearny, which he thinks the best and most practicable route."

Like everyone else Miles and his brother Andrew were headed for the gold fields of California, and in the late summer of 1849 they arrived on the bar of the North Yuba which was later to bear his name.

The history book says, "This celebrated old mining camp, one of the first located within the present confines of Sierra County, is picturesquely situated on the North Yuba, four miles below Downieville. Beautiful pine-clad hills surround the place, conspicuous among which is the noble crest of Grizzly peak. In the distance may be seen Saddle Back, Fir Cap, Monte Cristo, and many other points of interest alike to the practical miner and the lover of nature.

The first inhabitants of Goodyear's Bar were Miles Goodyear, Andrew Goodyear, Dr. Vaughan and a Mr. Morrison who settled here in the late summer of 1849. Discoveries of rich gold deposits caused others to settle in the neighborhood, who had left the lower diggings and followed up stream in search of a more rapid road to wealth. Philo Haven, Frank Anderson, and the Downie party passed here during the fall at different times, seeking the North Fork.

Miles Goodyear was taken sick shortly after his arrival, and lingered along for several months, finally, on the twelfth of November, 1849, yielding up his life. He was buried on a point opposite Goodyear's Bar, since named Slaughter Bar. The remains were deposited in an old rocker, with a buffalo robe for a shroud. A rough head-board, carved by Dr. Vaughan, told the stranger that Miles Goodyear was no more, giving the date

of his departure from earth. The body was afterwards removed below by his brother Andrew.

Great hardships were experienced at Goodyear's Bar during the succeeding winter. Food was terribly scarce, and the prospect of famine drove nearly all the pioneers to the lower country to obtain the necessities of existence. Flour was the most needed and most difficult food to procure. Even the nutritious bean, the pioneer's loadstar in all new countries, was not to be had.

With the return of spring came a great horde of eager miners, and long ere the snows had vanished from the ridges, thousands were delving every foot of ground that showed promise of returns. Andrew Goodyear was located on a point, with several Indians who were working for him, and had very rich pay ground. At a meeting of the miners the size of the claims was fixed at thirty feet square. Daniel Cowley, who arrived that spring, was forced to content himself with half a claim, not another spot being vacant. James (1880) Golden, now a well preserved old gentleman of 82 years, arrived at the camp on the thirty-first of March. The buildings were nearly all of canvas. Many of them were called hotels, where a fare, rude and plain enough for an anchorite, was charged for at the fancy prices which prevailed. A man named Woodruff opened the first regular store, in a log building; other stores were soon run by James Golden and a Mr. Vinyard. Among the early business men of Goodyear's, in addition to these, may be mentioned Hughes and Davis, Scott and Arnold, Hook & Co., Hickok & Johnson, and George & Scellen.

In 1852 Mr. J.C. Stewart arrived at Goodyears. At that time the whole flat was covered with houses. The presidential vote of that year was nearly 600 from Goodyear's alone, the outside camps forming other election precincts. An effort was made at the organization of the county, in the early part of the year, to get Goodyear's Bar named in the organizing act as the county seat, but it proved unsuccessful. It is believed that had the miners paid more attention to this matter, the seat of justice might have been fixed in Goodyear's Bar instead of at Downieville; but the people were far more interested in making money from their diggings than in the prosperity of the town, considering themselves only temporary sojourners in California soil. In this way Goodyear's lost the only opportunity she ever had of becoming the permanent metropolis of Sierra County.

A post office was established at Goodyear's in 1852, and Woodruff became the first postmaster. He was succeeded by Robinson, who was followed in succession by the Meyers brothers and Julius Meinhart. Mr. O.F. Ackerly has had the office about ten years. Langton's express started through this place in 1850. Wells Fargo and Co. established an office here in 1858, with John D. Scellen as their first agent. Some years ago the office was discontinued, without ever being re-established.

A privite school was first taught at Goodyear's in 1856 by Mrs. Massey. She had but few pupils, the boy-and-girl crop of the mountains being, at that time, very small. Afterwards school was held near the present site of the school-house. Mrs. Delaney became the next instructress of youth. The schoolhouse now used was erected in 1862, for church and public uses, and was built by subscription. It was finally converted into a temple of

learning, where at the present time (1880), Mr. Albion Miley presides, giving universal satisfaction.

This is just the story of the beginnings of Goodyear Bar. Today it is a sleepy little village with a few permanent residents and quite a few vacation homes. The schoolhouse, now the Goodyears District Community Clubhouse, is the one built in 1862. The hotel building dates back a long ways. It is still owned by descendents of the Bachels family who ran it as a hotel for a couple of generations. It is a far cry from the bustling mining camp of the 1850's and 1860's,--even the Post Office has been moved over to the highway. It makes it much handier for the stage driver. (A list of the Post Offices in California in a newspaper of 1852 indicates there were only two in Sierra County, Downieville and Goodyear's Bar.)

A picture of Mary Goodyear, daughter of Miles Goodyear, hangs in the Downieville Museum. It was brought here by Mrs. Marian Pepper of Bolinas, California,--a descendent of the Goodyears.

Notes on the Author:

When asked to submit some facts for a paragraph about herself, Mrs. Drury replied, "Well, that is a tough one." Following is her brief account of herself, which hardly covers the many interests and talents of this woman:

> "I came to this county first back in 1919 as a school teacher at Goodyears Bar. My name was Ruth Turner (no relation to any of the local Turners). And as the story goes, I married one of the local boys, Wm. Arthur Drury. He belonged to two pioneer families of the area; mother to the David Owens family of Goodyears Creek, and father to the Drurys who lived at one time around Greenville and Crescent Mills, Plumas County.
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> Presently I am a widow and live on the Owens homestead on the Goodyear Creek Road. I report for the local papers, Messenger and Booster, and try to keep active in local affairs. I am a member of the local P.T.A. and Naomi Parlor #36 N.D.G.W.

Ref: Ruth Drury got her information for the article from an article in the Utah Historical Quarterly (Oct. ,1953): "Miles Goodyear and the Founding of Ogden" by Dale L. Morgan.