



# The Cupola

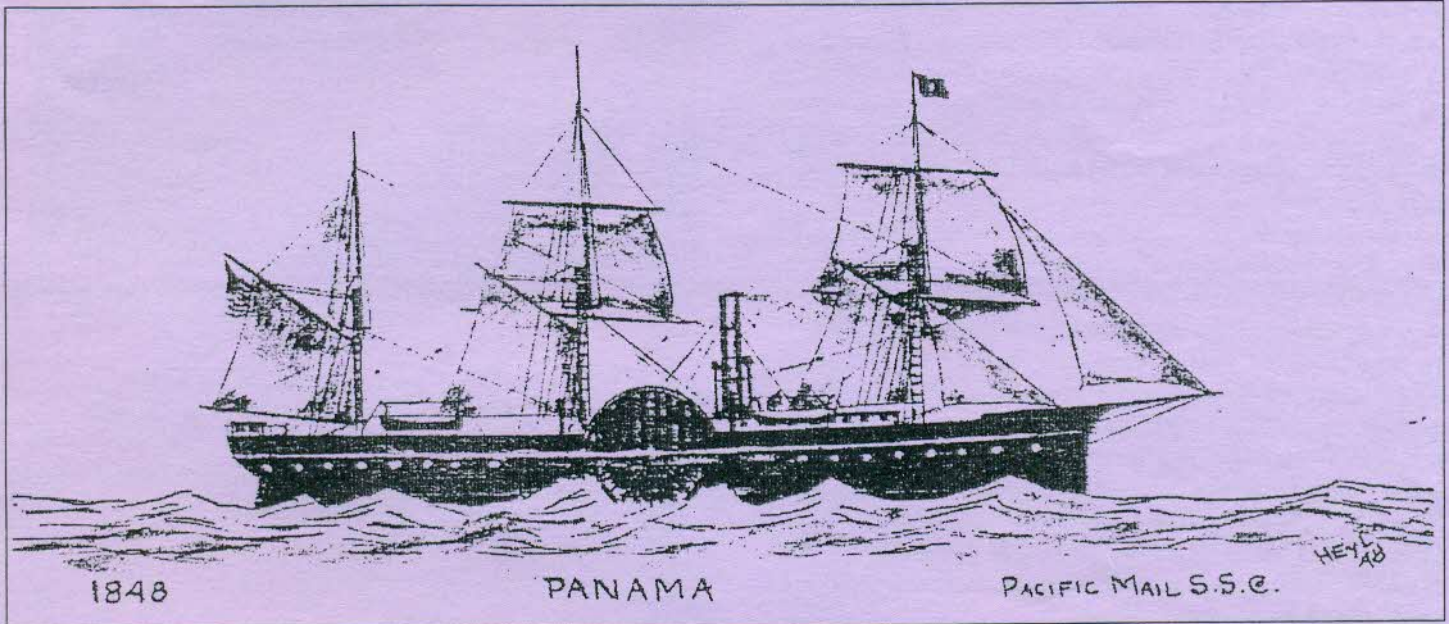
The Quarterly Newsletter of the Pardee Home Museum

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Oakland City Landmark, 1975

National Register of  
Historic Places, 1976

California Historical Landmark,  
1998



Enoch traveled aboard the above steamer, the *Panama*, some 5500 miles from New York City to San Francisco for six weeks, from late December 1851 to early February 1852. This illustration is from *Early American Steamers* by Erik Heyl, published in 1953.

## 150 Years Ago: Argonaut Enoch Pardee *En Route* to California

*Among the most valuable holdings in our museum's archives are the nearly fifty letters written between Enoch Pardee, and his future wife, Mary Pardee (her maiden name — they were distant cousins, just like the Roosevelts), between the years of 1851 and 1855. Though filled with anachronistic language, misspelled words, and other difficulties to the modern reader, they constitute a touching and important tale of a young man deciding to leave behind his family and fiancée to join the Gold Rush, struggling with life in the gold fields before settling in San Francisco as a successful "oculist," or eye doctor, and finally arranging for his fiancée to journey to California and marry him here in 1855. In these pages we celebrate the sesquicentennial of Enoch's arrival in California by taking a closer look at this remarkable correspondence.*

The five earliest letters were written by Enoch from Hartland and Plymouth, Michigan — small towns not far north and west of Detroit — to Mary in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio — a town in Summit County, just north of Akron, where she grew up, along with the neighboring towns of Hudson and Northampton. In these letters the twenty-four-year old Enoch referred to a number of recent developments in his life which

illuminate our otherwise sketchy knowledge of his young adulthood in the Midwest. He wrote to Mary about recently attending school in Plymouth and Pontiac (where he also became engaged to Mary), about teaching in the western part of Michigan, about studying astronomy, about his hands being "lame and sore" from working as a cooper (barrel maker), and, most remarkably, about taking up the arts of "ventriloquism and legerdemain." He wrote that ventriloquism seemed a "natural gift" to him, and that he had been declared the best ventriloquist who had ever traveled through Michigan!

In June of 1851 he announced to Mary that "I intend to locate myself in Chicago or Racine [Wisconsin] and establish myself as an oculist," but by November Enoch, who constantly complained of poor health, wrote from Plymouth that "my doctor tells me that I have got too stop study and he advises a journey acroot salt water. I am thinking very strongly whether it would not be best for me to journey to California." On December 21, 1851, Enoch wrote to Mary from New York City "on the point of starting for that place that you so strongly and generously persisted on me not going to — California. My eldest

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## Halloween Mania at the Haunted Mansion Precedes Gold Rush Holidays

On the evening of Saturday, October 27th of last year, the Pardee Home Museum co-hosted, with the Oakland Heritage Alliance, our second annual "Halloween at the Mansion," and it was *fantastic!* For the first time ever, we had to turn people away, after over 200 people lined up outside the Twelfth Street entrance to our carriage house for admission to the highly anticipated event. And it was a colorful crowd, as both children and adults arrived gloriously decked out in great costumes.

As was true of our Halloween event the previous year, self-guided flashlight tours of the main house, filled with cobwebs, darkness, and gloom, were highlighted, as were the searches for "spirits" or "orbs" residing in this macabre mansion, led by noted Oakland ghost seeker, Tim Dennehy. We also offered expert readings of tarot cards, a crystal ball, and ouija board in the coach house, plus mask-making and coloring stations for younger visitors, and costume and blood-curdling screaming contests. Two spaces never before opened to the public, the cellar of the main house and the water tower, were also incorporated into the spooky milieu, the former as a wildly popular autopsy room where a temporarily deranged Dr. Pardee and his assistant performed ghoulish acts with animal organs (YUK!!), and the latter as a Ghostly Gallery, featuring an exhibit of historic portraits and the opportunity to have photos taken of our costumed guests.

The holiday season followed soon (*too soon!*) after Halloween, but decorate and celebrate we did, to the theme of a "Gold Rush Christmas," honoring the sesquicentennial of Enoch's "Argonaut" voyage to California in 1851-52 (see main article). Clay cut-out figures of California and miniature gold mining pans adorned the tree, and gold nuggets and ribbons were seen



The Choir of St. Paul's Episcopal Church posed between carols at the December 8 Holiday Reception. Photo by Cathy Sponseller

throughout the house, during both our holiday reception on December 8th and our candlelight tour on December 18th. The choir of St. Paul's Episcopal Church sang favorite carols at the Saturday afternoon reception, and guests to both events were also able to enjoy the usual buffet of homemade holiday refreshments and to view the temporary exhibit *Seeing the Elephant*, honoring the sesquicentennial of Enoch Pardee's arrival in California for the Gold Rush. This exhibit will be on display through the end of February 2002.

*Special thanks to Registrar Vicki Wiese and OHA board member Erika Mailman for the creative planning they devoted to the Halloween event; to Cricket Dietz of Spetiro Restaurant for the bountiful donated food and Chiodo Creations for the ghoulish figures they created in the coach house; and to the over thirty volunteers who helped us carry off this huge event without a glitch!*

From left to right, Mia Perkov assists with a ouija board reading; Laura Bajuk and Randi Wood await unsuspecting guests; and Cindy Haines and Gloria Pieretti beside the alleged casket of Enoch Pardee in the music parlor.





