

## Cabin Life in the Early Days of California

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Cabin life in the early days of California was a unique phase of civilisation. In its general make up along many lines it was, to say the least, peculiar. It was peculiar in its outside, and its inside, both conforming to the fancy, or idea of the constructor and their ideas conformed, in a large measure, on old home ideas.

The Southerner used logs when they could obtain them as did most Americans, while foreigners conformed as near as possible to home ideas. The same held good for the internal arrangements and way of keeping along the lines of housekeeping. They did not vary much from the general housekeeping ethics: some orderly, some disorderly, the disorderly in the majority.

It was an entirely new experience to all and being planned for only temporary occupancy, as little head and hand work was done as possible. Generally from two to four backed together with various rules and modes of division of household duties. One general rule always talked about and sometimes adopted was, never to wash the dishes as long as they could remember what was eaten last. The bill of fare was limited variety, but abundant and what was lacking in preparation was made good in appetite.

The cabin, great or small or maybe only a tent, always stood open to all.

I am not so familiar with mining as with ranch life; there was a kind of romantic, picturesque indiscribable charm or something about ranch life that gave it many redeeming features. The wholesouled "Hail fellow! Well met!" A fellowship that always prevailed would be soulcheering today.

The home of one was the home of all who had occasion or desire to avail themselves of the privilege without let or hindrance. Each entered his neighbors charity sangfroid as he entered his own and felt no more restraint in one than the other.

As I look back from this date, it seems a strange life, with many irksome features; approaching very near the Gread wheel idea. But any old timer,



who may read this will bear me out that such was not the case. A jollier, happier, better contented set of mortals I have never known. Young, healthy, full of life, vigor and determination, self-confident, hopeful, with their goal in full view, with unflagging ardor, they pressed on day after day too intent for gloom or discontent.

Determined to win and having full confidence in their own confidence in their own ability to do so, each day brought its reward, only a busy life can be a happy life. To me and doubtless to some others, this is a pleasant picture, one we love to recall while we commune with the past. But it has another side, far from pleasant to think about.

As long as a man is free to come and go, and do as he pleases, there is no good reason for discontent, but bind him, torment him with pain, leave him alone and it is a brave sport that can fight off ennue.

The early comer was a rollicking, happy fellow as long as he was healthy, but let sickness come and drive him to his cabin and his case was a hard one. Very few got real sick in those days, but when they did get confined to bed and unable to get out, few ever got well.

The fatality of those days was more the result of conditions than of discare. Alone all day, often without proper diet, nothing to entertain or direct or divert the mind from present surroundings, it was natural to think of home and pine for Mother's sympathy. How an active determined nature chafes, frets, and finally becomes despondent. Such a condition preys on the mind, long lonesome hours weaken hope till finally ennue sets in with its myriad hordes of phantasms, and the end comes.

The kindest, and most loyal care and sympathy of his fellows can't meet the requirements. Many grand and noble spirits have entered the great Unknown along this line. A sad and pathetic scene, a lonely burial, with only the necessary attendance to perform the physical requirements. No woman, no Chapline, no service, and often no tear, as the pride, hope and hero of some far away home is consigned to a lonely, and in some cases,

soon to become an unknown grave. My eyes

My eyes grow dim as I recall some of these sad, pathetic scenes.

H. C. Bailey