

GEORGE MENCHINE "FORTY-NINER".

My father, George Menchine, was born in Wrexham, Wales, in 1832. He came to this country in 1848 accompanied by his father and mother, four sisters and two brothers. His third, and youngest brother, William, was born in New York. My grandfather, was an importer and dealer in straw braid, used in the manufacture of straw hats, and I have heard my father say that as there was no market for straw braid in the City of New York he was compelled to sell this commodity in the City of Baltimore. Baltimore was then and is now the chief city in the manufacture and sale of straw hats.

In 1849-1850 while the "gold fever" was at its height George Menchine went out to California by packet from New York, via Cape Horn, accompanied by his two brothers, John and Joseph and a Mr. Adams of West Chester County, N.Y. who subsequently married my father's favorite sister Flora. These hardy forty-niners returned to New York from the Golden West by way of the Overland Route in 1857-1858 after having been unusually successful in "panning for gold" and after having sold their interests in their gold mine or claim.

Contemporary records show that the bark Hamilton from Sag Harbor, N.Y. sailed October 25th. 1849, reaching San Francisco, by way of Cape Horn, on March 16th? 1850. This was probably the boat on which the voyage to San Francisco was made. It required approximately five months to reach San Francisco from New York via Cape Horn.

The journey overland from St. Louis, Mo. over the Oregon-California trail and across the great American desert to Hangtown or Placerville, California, a distance of two thousand miles, was accomplished in from three and one-half to four months.

George Menchine was between seventeen and eighteen years of age when he went out to California and between 25 and 26 years old when the party returned to New York.

Records in my possession show that on October 22, 1857, Louisa Menchine, mother of George Menchine, deposited in the U.S. Assay Office, New York City, 232.06 ounces "California gold bullion" for which she received \$4, 572.34. in gold coins. A torn memorandum dated 1858 shows that George Menchine received from the U.S. Assay Office \$11,149.54. for gold bullion deposited there, and other memoranda show various payments in gold coin made to George and John Menchine in the months of May and September 1860.

George Menchine died in Washington, D. C. January 18th. 1904 aged 74 years.

BALTIMORE, MD.
August 10th. 1930.

