



PHOTOGRAPHER: GEORGE ROSS (1832 - 1893)

SITTER: FREEMAN PARKER (1822 - 1914)

DATE: 1872-1893

FORMAT: enlarged reprint of original carte de visite

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Freeman Parker was an educated and complex man. He attended theology and military schools, worked as a teacher and as a farmer, and heartily supported many liberal causes of his day including the religious concepts of the Universalists, the philosophical viewpoint of Freethought and phonetic printing. (You may enjoy reading his letter to his son, George, written in “reformed spelling” housed in the display case below.)

He was born in Vermont in 1822, married Cynthia Adeline Roberts in 1847 and departed alone for the gold fields of California in 1849. He traveled to Panama by ship, crossed the Isthmus and, for the last leg to San Francisco, boarded Charles Minturn’s steamship, the *Senator*. (Make certain to view the portrait of Minturn on the exhibit’s last display wall.)

Late in 1852 Freeman returned to Vermont, and in 1853 arrived back in California with his wife and first son, Pitman. They settled in Petaluma and purchased their ranch near Haystack Landing where Freeman lived until his death in 1914. His home was a well known location to the Petaluma community. Toward the end of his long life, Freeman opened his home, making it a resort for hunters, and the group of men who congregated there were known as the “Parker House Club.” This historic ranch was destroyed in 2008. To read about the unfortunate incident, find Katherine Rinehart’s account, “A Lost Treasure, The Freeman Parker House,” in the display box below.