



PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO: **IMPERIAL STUDIO**, San Francisco
SITTER: **CAPTAIN JOHN GALLAGHER, SR.** (1822 Belfast, County Donegal, Ireland - 1908 Calvary Cemetery, Petaluma, California)

DATE: late 19th to early 20th century

FORMAT: enlarged reprint of original studio portrait

COLLECTION OF THE DESCENDANTS OF JOHN GALLAGHER

Captain John Gallagher was among the first American pioneers to settle near Petaluma. Arriving in California prior to the Gold Rush, his story is of particular interest because of the memoirs he left to posterity describing his participation in the Mexican-American War. A copy of this historically important document can be found on the reading table in the center of the gallery.

Gallagher was born in Ireland in 1822 and immigrated to New York City at the age of fifteen. He worked as an apprentice blacksmith until 1846 when he enlisted to fight in the Mexican-American War as a recruit of Colonel Jonathan Stevenson's infamous regiment of New York volunteers. With the goal of protecting California, a new U. S territory, the recruits departed NYC in early 1847 in three ships bound for San Francisco. After the war many of these soldiers remained to settle the fledgling state of California, and Gaye LeBaron's *Press Democrat* article of March 2, 1980, which can be found on the reading table in the center of the gallery, discusses the importance of these soldiers to Sonoma County history.

Gallagher's twenty-six page memoir was entitled "Personal Reminiscences of the War in Upper and Lower California Between the American and Native Troops." After describing many incidents central to the War, Gallagher provides revealing analyses of the war's military leaders and a very complimentary commentary on California's Native Americans.

After the war, Gallagher was discharged, and according to his memoirs, he "... settled up with Uncle Sam and exchanged the musket for a pick and shovel." After trying his luck in the mines, he moved to Stockton and briefly worked as a merchant selling shoes and boots. By 1858 he and his wife, Margaret McQuade Gallagher, had moved their family to Petaluma where they established a large ranch on San Antonio Creek and raised nine children.



851 - LOWER MAIN STREET, PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA

Their son, John Patrick Gallagher (1861-1934), served for many years in Petaluma as a Justice of the Peace and a grocery and liquor store merchant, an advertisement for which can be seen in this early Petaluma postcard.

Paula Freund, 2017