



**PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO: BRADLEY
& RULOFSON, San Francisco**

SITTER: PETER DONAHUE (1822-1885)

DATE: between 1864 and 1866

**FORMAT: enlarged reprint of original carte de
visite**

BANCROFT LIBRARY PORTRAIT COLLECTION

This portrait depicts Peter Donahue and was taken at the popular San Francisco studio of Bradley & Rulofson. It can be firmly dated to between 1864 and 1866 by the tax stamp affixed to its reverse. During these years the United States government was in need of funds to pay for the Civil War, and a tax was levied on photographs. A tax stamp was attached to the reverse as proof of payment.



Carte de visite reverse, photo
courtesy of the Bancroft Library

Like Andrew Carnegie, Peter Donahue came to the United States from Scotland and established himself through hard work and single-minded perseverance. Both were self taught and became important 19th century industrialists. Toward the end of his life, Carnegie became a world-famous philanthropist and provided money to construct the very building in which this exhibit is displayed. His portrait hangs prominently on this building's north wall.

Donahue was at times a Petaluma hero and at others a Petaluma villain. On October 1, 1870, the *Petaluma Weekly Argus* declared, "This gentleman's name has been on the lips of everyone... We had become almost discouraged about our railroad.... until at last it was announced that Peter Donahue had taken it in hand...But Mr. Donahue's munificence does not stop here. He has purchased the gas works here and intends supplying the city with cheaper and better quality gas. We rejoice that a man of large capital and large heart is identifying himself with the business of this city." This sentiment was reversed when the city put restrictions on Donahue's plans to construct his railroad through the center of town. To usurp trade and profits, Donahue created an entire town and railroad terminal just south of Petaluma that he named after himself.

Appropriately, this is the last portrait of the exhibit. Donahue established railroad transportation in San Francisco and the North Bay, and the railroad marked the end of the era of the American pioneers and their covered wagons.