

James C. Ward's Eldorado: Coast-to-coast Identity Case



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Merchant? Diarist? Army veteran? Artist? Correlating evidence from family, associates, records, a diary, and an ink sketch identifies a New Englander in California.

Synopsis

Vital records, newspapers, a passport application, and federal and state censuses document James C. Ward's life with his family—including parents, siblings, a spouse, and children—in Massachusetts and New York. The appearance of "tree completeness" belies evidence of a life lived between these events—a life lived between the lines, on the other side of the country.

IMAGE: Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado: Or, Adventures in the Path of Empire...* Vol. I (New York: George P. Putnam, 1850), frontispiece, "San Francisco in November 1848," by J.C. Ward, November 1848.

Components of the Genealogical Proof Standard

- Reasonably exhaustive research showing that all (openly available) potentially relevant sources were consulted
- Source citations reflecting the extent of research and quality of sources used
- Analysis and correlation of all relevant evidence
- Resolution of conflicting evidence
- Written conclusion

Tips for Success

- ✓ Correlation is key.
- ✓ Timelines can assist with identifying conflicts.
- ✓ Meeting the GPS requires the resolution of any conflicts.
- ✓ Make sure you have a source citation for every statement of fact you make.
- ✓ Looking beyond your subject (siblings and their spouses, business associates, neighbors, witnesses to documents, etc.) can broaden your search and lead you to clues that may otherwise be missed. Be prepared to research family members forwards and backwards in time as well as those secondary lines.
- ✓ Studying peer-reviewed case studies can help provide tips on methodology and further references to consult in your own research.
- ✓ Don't neglect potentially relevant historical, legal, geographic, etc. context.

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[Note: The citation above refers to the first installment of the published diary entries. Additional entries of relevance to the subject presented here can be found in subsequent editions of *The Argonaut*, all available on *InternetArchive*.]

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