

Moses Meeker, and Capt. Hardy had furnaces already in operation. Mr. Henry Gratiot and my husband first selected a place at the foot of the hill in a valley, at a distance of a mile from the river, afterwards occupied by Mr. William Hempstead. They worked diligently all winter notwithstanding the severity of the weather, erecting cabins and log furnaces, the primitive way of smelting. As soon as the river was free from ice, in the month of April, 1826, Mr. Henry Gratiot brought up his family.

I had spent the winter in New Orleans. My husband came for me, and I arrived at the mines on the 19th of June. When the boat landed, I was vainly looking for a town or village, but a few scattered log cabins were all that I could see; piles of lumber lay on the shore, promising new buildings. I was put in possession of a small cabin, standing where Capt. H. H. Gear afterwards built his residence. But although just from the city, all this looked much more like fun than hardships—we were young, and had bright prospects before us. Every one around us was sociable, hopeful, and in good spirits. The country was so vast that no jealousy could exist from the laborer to the capitalist and speculator. A large field was open to the enterprise of all.

The first insight I had in border society was on the Fourth of July celebration, of the same year. It was to occur at the old Harris place, below the portage, three miles from the town. It was the most curious medley that could be well imagined—only a fanciful pen could describe the scene: Several very polished persons, of course, were present; but it was the contrast that made it original: Capt. Comstock, Maj. Farnsworth, Dr. Newhall, Capt. Hardy, Mr. Meeker and others. Col. Strode delivered the oration. But of miners with uncut hair, red flannel shirts, and heavy boots drawn over their pants, there was a great number, all eager to dance and enjoy themselves to the worth of their money; but I must say to their praise, that they all behaved like gentlemen. The ladies were few: Mrs. David G. Bates and her two sisters (afterwards Mrs. Newhall and Mrs. Swan), Mrs. Lockwood, and Mrs. Henry, the wife of Capt. Henry, a government agent, with three or four miners' wives smoking