## 1859 - The U.S. Land Patent is Issued

Cameron's Rancho Barco claim faced uncertainty following the Mexican-American War in 1848, when most of the areas previously constituting Alta California were ceded to the United States. The California Land Act of 1851, enacted following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and California's admission as a state in 1850, further jeopardized Smith's Rancho Barco holdings. Although the treaty concluded the Mexican-American War, obligating the United States to respect Mexican land grants, Smith found himself compelled to reapply to the U.S. government, substantiating his previous grant. To strengthen his case, Smith argued that a Mexican clerk had inaccurately transcribed his surname during the initial filing, hence filing this grant application under his true English name.

During this period, Smith exercised great caution to keep his small gold mining operation clandestine, avoiding a similiar fate of <u>John</u> <u>Sutter</u>, who had famously met misfortune in Sacramento to the north. In 1839, Sutter persuaded the Mexican governor to grant him lands on the Sacramento River, where he built a thriving community until the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill brought calamity. While constructing a water-powered sawmill, a carpenter who worked for Sutter named James W. Marshall uncovered gold flakes in a streambed in January 1848. Despite their efforts to keep the discovery secret, word spread rapidly. In 1849 gold seekers and squatters flooded Sutter's land, pilfering and destroying his possessions and livestock. Finally, the U.S. courts denied Sutter title to his Mexican grants, leading to his financial ruin by 1852.

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting: CERTIFICATE | Olymas, Clasen Juse of appeneone bounty Jewa, the North East quarter of Section righteen and the South West quarter of the North East quarter of Section thirty in Township Security North of Pranys devention West, in the district of lands formerly Juliet to tale at Chariton, new First Der Moures, Sowa, containing bighty leves, according to the Orynnax Plar of the Survey of the mid hands, returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the Surveyer Genrul, which mid tract has been purchased by the mid Now know ye, that the EXPERT ATATES OF AMERICA, is consideration of the premium, and is conformily with the several Acts of Congress in such case m provided, Have Gress and Garran, and by these presents Do Gress rules of the Market Factor factor. Acts of the being the sold Tract above described; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the man, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appertanance, of whatever theremus belonging, mato the sold Constant Acts of the sold of the sold to the sold the sold to the sold tothe sold to the sold to the sold tothe sold to the sold to the so In testimony higheref, J. James Buchanters PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. have caused them letters to be make Paters, and the Seal of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereento affind. Gibt mader my hand, at the WITY DO WARDINGTON, the Intelli-thousand eight hundred and fifty frices up of the BT THE PRESSNESS: no at the Walter Busin the lightly formall Signed by President James Buchanan in Juchanan October 1859, the parcel that contained 1 243 Seonard sig the Ship Mountains in the Mojave Desert TIMMU Becorder of the General Land Office was granted to Captain Cameron Smith. DED, Vol. 51 Page 225 (

Cameron Smith knew he faced a similar threat,

but after a protracted and costly legal battle spanning over eight years, he ultimately received a U.S. government patent for his land. Perceived as a desolate wasteland with little inherent value, Smith's land grant was officially endorsed by <u>President Buchanan</u> in October 1859.