

1838 - Cameron Smith Heads West in Search of Adventure

Captain Cameron Smith (1815-1885), born in Philadelphia and the son of a distinguished naval officer, was an oysterman, adventurer, and, eventually, a gold miner. His father, Amos Smith (1785-1830), had served on the Ticonderoga under [Lieutenant Stephen Cassin](#) during the War of 1812. He fought in the [Naval Battle of Plattsburgh in 1814](#) a battle that played a pivotal role in American naval history, ultimately concluding the War of 1812. Cameron's upbringing immersed him in tales of his father's maritime exploits, igniting his own desire for adventure.



Growing up in Philadelphia, Cameron followed in his father's seafaring footsteps. As a young man, he saved his earnings from working as a [commercial oysterman on the Delaware Bay](#) to purchase his own boat. Yet, the allure of the American West, fueled by nightly stories in newspapers, proved irresistible. Cameron yearned for the opportunities and adventures that awaited him in the western frontier. Consequently, he sold his boat, packed his belongings, and embarked on a journey to California in his early twenties.