



What's An Elodian?

Definition: \E*lo"di*an\, n. (Zo["o]l.) One of a tribe of tortoises, including the terrapins, etc., in which the head and neck can be withdrawn.

In late 1849, the first party of gold seekers from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia sailed to San Francisco bound for the gold country. Most on board were shareholders and related through family ties. Their ship, the *Mary Jane*, known for 'yacht-like' speed, was re-rigged as a brigantine and carried a cargo of house frames, shingles, wagons and hardware that the crew hoped to sell to gold miners in San Francisco.

The route to San Francisco took them out into the Atlantic Ocean using the westerly winds to clear the Brazilian coast. From there they sailed south with the trade winds. En route the party "caught plenty of dolphins and fish, and held daily evening gatherings for the singing of temperance songs."

The *Mary Jane* crossed the equator on Christmas Day, 1849, and sighted the coast of Brazil on the 30th. When storms began battering them in January they elected to attempt a passage through the Strait of Magellan, but another storm blew them past the entrance, southward past Tierra del Fuego. They made their run around Cape Horn beginning on February 7th, 1850, but it wasn't until the 19th that they sailed into the Pacific. They finally anchored in the Galapagos Islands on March 21st, 1850.

In the Galapagos they took on fresh beef and water, and hunted down and took a "deck-load of immense turtles." The group left on the 25th, but encountered calm winds and drifted 500 miles west of Acapulco, where the crew rationed water and worried about provisions. Finally, with the aid of a northwest wind, the *Mary Jane* sailed through the Golden Gate on May 25th, 1850 and anchored "on the inside row of the six hundred vessels then in the harbor."

Except for the wagons and the hardware, attempts to sell the ship's cargo were failures, though they were surprised that the deck-load of turtles "went like hotcakes." The *Mary Jane* herself could bring only \$1,300. Several of the weary travelers stayed in San Francisco while others moved on to search for gold. .

Ebenezer Haley, great, great grandfather of Kerry Eddy, was forty-eight years old when he sailed on the *Mary Jane* from Nova Scotia. Though his search for gold had been 'moderately successful', it was the fertile soil surrounding the lower San Francisco Bay, perfect for farming, that would lead him to bring his wife and family to settle there-- a family that would eventually include mining engineers and early California winery owners. Kerry and Tom Eddy carry on that pioneering tradition today on their Napa Valley property, one thousand feet above the valley floor.