



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
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**Brown & Dallison's Nevada, Grass Valley and Rough and Ready Directory, For the Year  
Commencing January 1st, 1856, Embracing a General Directory of Citizens, with an  
Historical Sketch of Nevada County, by A. A. Sargent, Esq. And an Appendix of General  
Information Appertaining to Those Towns. An Almanac for 1856. Compiled and  
published by Nat. P. Brown and John K. Dallison. Volume I**

**Stock#:** 91434  
**Map Maker:** Brown & Dallison  
  
**Date:** 1856  
**Place:** San Francisco  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 5 x 8.25 inches  
  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

***First California Mining Camp and Mountain Directory***

***California's Most Important Gold Rush Town***

***Nevada City (Before it was a "City")***

Despite the designation of Volume I on the title page, this is all that was published. An outstanding California rarity. Quebedeaux, in his meticulous study, *Prime Sources of California and Nevada Local History*, has called this "without a doubt, one of the most important of all California directories issued." The curious placename of Rough and Ready clearly comes from General Zachary Taylor's nickname, which he earned during the Mexican War, becoming president. However, the most important of the



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three settlements covered herein is Nevada City, one of the most famous of California's Gold Rush towns.

*Rough and Ready in Nevada County was founded in 1849 by the Rough and Ready Company, led by Captain A. A. Townsend, who had served under Taylor. The town was notorious for having "seceded from the Union" at one time. The settlement of Grass Valley was started in the fall of 1849, when a sawmill was erected in the "little grass valley among the hills." The first quartz gold was discovered accidentally on Gold Hill in 1850, an event which started the town on its phenomenal development as a gold mining center.... Most important of the three communities covered by this directory in 1856 was Nevada City. In the fall of 1849, the site of the city was called Deer Creek Dry Diggings, because rich gold deposits were struck here... In May 1850, the settlers at a public meeting adopted the name Nevada, meaning snow-covered in Spanish. By 1850, the settlement of Nevada - a designation used alternately with Nevada City until the transcontinental railroad, which ran close by, forced the latter to be used as not to confuse the city with the state - was a main stop on the overland trail and a primary destination for the pioneers voyaging around the horn to California and the gold fields. Quickly it became California's most important gold rush city. Emma Nevada, the great operatic performer, was born here in 1859 - Quebedeaux.*

Nat. P. Brown and John K. Dallison, the publishers, included A. A. Sargent's important *History of Nevada County* (pages 7-45) as part of this now nearly legendary early California directory. Sargent's history contains information not found elsewhere, including an account of Nevada County's organization and the residents' 1850 petition for a City Charter. The charter was approved by the California Assembly on March 13, 1851, only to be repealed February 14, 1852 due to overly sanguine expectations of "the dignities and emoluments of office." According to Bancroft, such exaggerated optimism by residents of gold rush towns was not uncommon.

Gary Kurutz includes this directory in his California Gold Rush bibliography due to its status as the first directory of the mining camps as well as for mining content within Sargent's history of Nevada County:

*[Sargent's] sketch offers particularly good coverage of the years 1848-1852 and records the history of several mines and camps, local government, churches, schools, newspapers, lynchings, fires, and amusements as well as major figures - Kurutz.*

Kurutz also quotes Sargent concerning a noted resident of the area, mentioned in the volume: "Grass



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Valley is noted for being selected as the residence of the notorious Lola Montez... Here she displayed her eccentricities to the amusement of some, and disgust of most of the inhabitants."

Streeter mentions that Sargent, who later became United States senator from California, became dominant in state political affairs, serving as district attorney for Nevada County. He had been a printer by trade and as early as 1851 was a compositor for an early newspaper in Nevada City.

### **Rarity**

This directory has been called "excessively rare and historically valuable" as early as the Norris Collection catalogue (1948). John Howell Books Catalogue 50 listed a copy in 1979 for \$675. While fairly well represented in institutional confines, this directory remains very rare in the market and always fetches a premium price.

### **Detailed Condition:**

Original printed green boards, expertly rebacked with a new tan cloth spine, modern black leather title label laid on spine. Board edges worn; corners bumped (with raw boards exposed). Repaired paper loss to lower fore-edge corner of front free (blank) endpaper. Duplicate released from the California State Library (with perforation stamp on titlepage, ink accession and call numbers on page [3]). Contemporary presentation inscription on flyleaf: "Spirit of the Age" Off. with the Publisher's Compliments." [2 blank leaves], [6], 116, [8 pages on yellow paper], [117]-133, [blank page], [18] pages. Two pages of advertisements printed on blue paper mounted inside of front and back boards. Most of the ad pages included in pagination (except the 8 pages on yellow paper and the final 18-page section). Pages 87-88 omitted in the pagination, but apparently never issued (per Quebedeaux and Streeter copy). Pencil note on front free endpaper: "Collated with copy one & found both copies complete and in good condition. 4/15/36."