

BHM 2019 021 09

San Francisco . Cala

By Land Commission

October 30. 1854

This is to certify that I have made an accurate examination of the Archives of this Commission, and after a Careful Comparison of the Cases already decided and those hereafter to be decided – I find that there is but one case whose boundaries cover the Town of Benicia in this State, or take in the Government works, barracks & at the said town. and that this case is the claim of Mariano G Vallejo’s, for the Rancho Called “Suscol” granted to the said Vallejo by Manuel Micheltorena Governor of California, on the 15th day of March 1843. A.D.

That there is no conflicting claim to the land of this Grant, but that the boundaries of the Rancho “Suisun” confirmed by this Commission to A. A Ritchie (*Archibald Alexander Ritchie*) may to a small extent conflict with the boundaries of the Rancho “Suscol” , but can by no possibility reach the Town of Benicia and the land upon which the Government works and barracks stand.

And that this land, if not private property under the grant of Vallejo, will undoubtedly fall into the map of the public domain, as far as the original documents and evidence on file in this Commission show.

A true Copy

C W P Stone

/signed/ Louis Blanding

BvCapt ay US

as Associate Law agent

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Louis Blanding born about 1834 in South Carolina and died 1908 in Tuolumne, CA. He is mentioned on many land jurisdiction cases in California during his time. He was admitted to practice in front of the CA Supreme Court on 06/06/1853.

\_\_\_\_\_ Background \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Solano received a four square leagues land grant due to his friendship and support of General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo. However Solano was not able to retain it, and sold it to General Vallejo in May 1850. There was a dispute between Vallejo and José Francisco Armijo of Rancho Tolenas about the boundary between the two ranchos.

In August 1850, General Vallejo sold Rancho Suisun to Capt. Archibald A. Ritchie. Three days later, Ritchie sold a one-third interest in the land to Capt. Robert Henry Waterman, who like Ritchie had been involved in the China trade. Waterman, who came from Fairfield, Connecticut, established Fairfield, California in 1856. Rancho Suisun would become an ongoing legal battle for Ritchie until his death in 1856.

With the cession of California to the United States following the Mexican-American War, the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo provided that the land grants would be honored. As required by the Land Act of 1851, a claim for Rancho Suisun was filed with the Public Land Commission in 1852 and the grant was confirmed by the Commission. The United States unsuccessfully appealed the legality of Chief Solano's title to the US Supreme Court and 17,755 acres (71.9 km<sup>2</sup>) of the grant was patented to Archibald A. Ritchie in 1857.

A claim for Rancho Suisun was filed with the Public Land Commission in 1852, and 482 acres (2.0 km<sup>2</sup>) of the grant was patented to J. H. Fine in 1882.

### **Archibald Alexander Ritchie**

Archibald Alexander Ritchie (January 28, 1806, New Castle, Delaware - July 9, 1856, Napa, California). Ritchie was a sea captain involved in trading with China. In 1838, Capt. Ritchie left the sea to become the resident agent at Canton, China where he lived until 1847. The discovery of gold in California brought Capt. Ritchie to San Francisco. He was prominent merchant providing supplies for the gold rush. In 1850, Ritchie made Benicia his primary residence until 1854. In 1850 Ritchie purchased Rancho Suisun from General Vallejo. Ritchie and Paul S. Forbes acquired Rancho Guenoc and the adjoining Rancho Collayomi in Lake County in 1851. Ritchie hired John M. Hamilton, his brother-in-law, and Robert Sterling, nephew of Capt. Robert Henry Waterman, as managers. On July 9, 1856, nearing Napa from Sonoma, Ritchie was thrown from his wagon and killed.