

1856 was a year famous in California history ; and he acted a conspicuous part in that Vigilance Committee which accomplished so much for the State. At this time, he was captain of the First Light Dragoons. I copy from his letter the account of his connection with the beginning of difficulties. He says, "On Sunday, I went to Gov. Johnson, and tendered my resignation as captain of the Dragoons, telling him that I was going to join the Vigilance Committee. He refused to accept it ; but I joined them, and, at eleven o'clock, was sworn in by special request, although they did not take any members that day ; and I am a member of the Citizens' Guard, a company of a hundred and twenty-five men, used for duty at the court-rooms." At this time, the Committee did not themselves know the arduous duties that lay before them ; and, after the first difficulty was settled, they thought all would be quiet again ; but they were mistaken. When Sewall resigned his commission as captain of the Dragoons (most of the company having left also, and joined the Vigilance Committee), he joined the Citizens' Guard as a private. In three days, he was promoted to the position of captain of one of the companies, — the Guard having been increased and divided into four companies. Here he remained for a time, till he was elected captain of a company of Dragoons. There was quite a strife for a little time as to which company should keep him ; and it was finally settled by Col. Olney himself, who said, that, for the good of the cause, Capt. Reed must go with the Dragoons ; for there were good infantry officers in plenty, but few that understood cavalry as well Capt. Reed. So he became captain of Company B, Citizens' Dragoons, V.C. ; and continued to act in this capacity while he was needed. His company numbered a hundred and sixty men. They met for drill every evening, and oftener if circumstances required. Business was almost entirely suspended during this excitement, and all were interested in learning "the art of war." Men of every rank and position shouldered the musket, and stood in the ranks ; and Sewall often said that he had men in his command old enough to be his father, yet all earnest and enthusiastic, ready to sacrifice life and fortune in the support of justice and right. I copy the account of the taking of "Judge Terry" as an example of the state of excitement there : "I was sitting in my office,