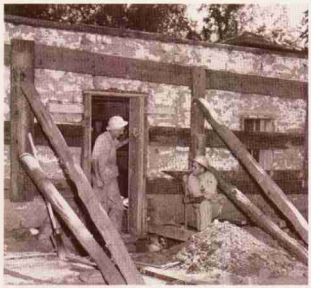
## PRESERVATION OF THE ADOBE

The present adobe was probably built by Abraham Dibble around 1852 and then sold and resold a number of times over the years until it was purchased by George Sutton in 1913. The first steps to place it in public ownership and ensure its protection were taken in 1937, but it was not until 1951 that it was transferred to the state. Extensive repairs to the adobe house and other construction - a cover over the hand-dug well, an adobe smokehouse, a carriage shed, and a small corral, have created a scene typical of Ide's day.



*Adobe during 1958 restoration.*

William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park is open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.


William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park
21659 Adobe Road
Red Bluff, California 96080
(916) 527 5927

Department of Parks and Recreation
State of California-the Resources Agency
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001



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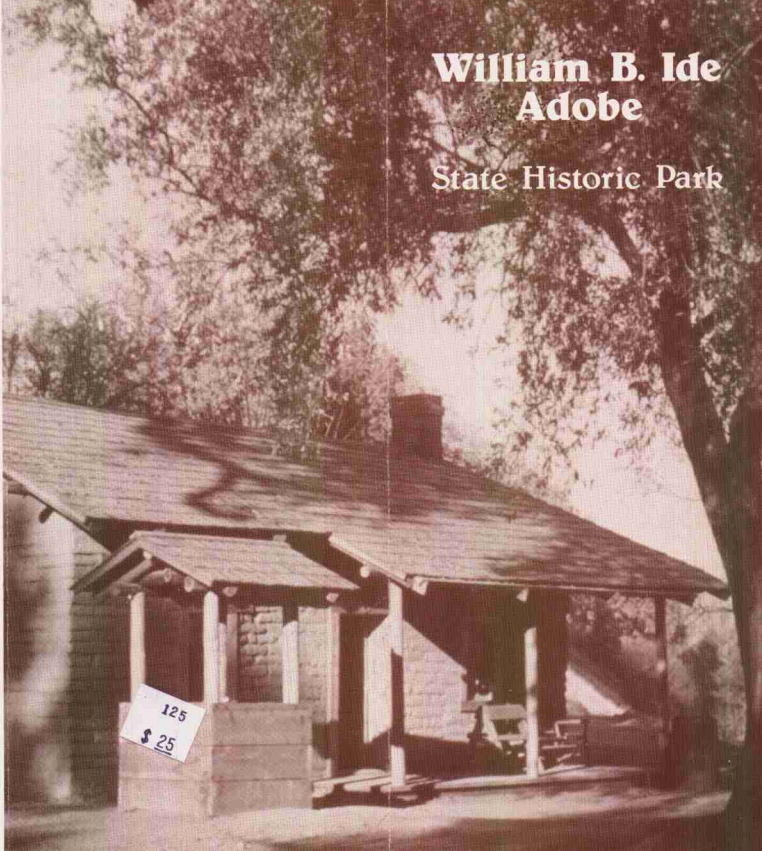
# William B. Ide Adobe

## State Historic Park



William Brown Ide, a farmer from Illinois, became president of the Bear Flag Republic only eight months after he and his family arrived in California in October 1845. But the seeds of the American settlers' revolt against Mexican authority had been planted long before.

## THE BEAR FLAG REVOLT

During the 1840s, the western movement was drawing Americans to the Pacific Coast in small but steadily increasing numbers. Thirty American immigrants arrived in 1841; 250 arrived in 1845.

During this period, Mexico was embroiled in affairs closer to home, and her control of California was ebbing away. Even the Californios - the Mexican population of California - were generally dissatisfied with the Mexican government and, had they been inclined to annex themselves to another nation, Mexico could have done little or nothing about it.

This situation worried President James K. Polk of the United States, who feared that some foreign power, especially England, might gain control of California. To make sure this did not happen, he made Thomas O. Larkin his "confidential agent" and let it be known that, if the people of California should desire to unite their destiny with that of the United States, they would be "received as brethren."

Early in 1846, U.S. Army Captain John C. Fremont arrived in California with sixty well-armed men. Though he was ostensibly on a scientific expedition, he began to provoke the Mexican authorities shortly after his arrival, and stirred up the American settlers by spreading rumors of impending action against non-Mexican immigrants. Though the Americans had found the Californios friendly and hospitable, they nevertheless began to fear that the authorities would drive them out.

In June 1846, the Americans heard that a Mexican military force under the leadership of General Jose Castro was on its way to the Sacramento Valley, destroying crops, burning houses, and driving off the cattle of American settlers. Though untrue, this rumor was enough, along with the presence of Fremont and his men, to arouse the settlers to action.

On June 14, 1846, a group of thirty American settlers marched on Sonoma, which was then the center of Mexican authority north of San Francisco. They captured the town and made a prisoner of its leading citizen, Mariano Vallejo. They announced the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic and declared themselves independent of Mexican rule.

Then, some of the party had second thoughts. If they were not supported by the United States - by Fremont, as well as by other Americans living in California - they would be unable to withstand General Castro's forces. Concern spread, and there was a move to abandon the town.

At this critical moment, Ide stepped forward and exclaimed:

> *"Saddle no horse for me... I will lay my bones here before I will take upon myself the ignominy of commencing an honorable work, and then flee like cowards, like thieves, when no enemy is in sight. In vain will you say you had honorable motives. Who will believe it? Flee this day, and the longest life cannot wear off your disgrace! Choose ye! Choose this day, what you will be! We are robbers, or we must be conquerors!"*

The party rallied around Ide and declared him president of the new republic. They raised their famous flag, which featured the grizzly bear - then common in California - plus a star and the words "California Republic." Later their design was adopted for California's official state flag.

*Bear Flag of 1846.*

Ide's term as president was short. On July 7, 1846 just 22 days after the capture of Sonoma, Commodore Sloat raised the American flag at Monterey, and the California Republic became a protectorate of the United States. Two days later the Bear Flag was struck, the Stars and Stripes were raised at Sonoma, and the Bear Flag force merged with Fremont's men to campaign against the Mexican forces in central California.

## WILLIAM B. IDE

Born March 28, 1796 at Rutland, Massachusetts, William B. Ide was descended from ancestors who came from England about 1630. He married Susan G. Haskell and became a successful farmer, first in Vermont and later in Illinois.

But Ide was attracted to the western frontier. On April 1, 1845, he started for Oregon with his wife and five children (four of their other children had died earlier). Along the trail the Ides joined a wagon train headed for California and, after an arduous journey across the Sierra Nevada, arrived at Sutter's Fort. From there, Ide traveled up the Sacramento River and settled near present-day Red Bluff.

After taking part in the campaign against the Mexicans, Ide returned to his farm and family. In 1848, he and his sons joined the great California gold rush and managed to bring back $25,000, which they used to purchase part of a Mexican land grant, called Rancho de la Barranca Colorada (Red Bluff Ranch) because of a high red cliff along the west bank of the Sacramento River.

Elected judge in Colusi County - now Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama Counties - Ide held court in Monroeville, a small town about thirty miles south of the adobe. Its population was mostly transient. "Nine-tenths of our population are here today," Ide said, "and tomorrow are somewhere else.... All the circumstances that make it difficult to obtain responsible and permanent county officers combine to make these officers necessary."

Since few of Monroeville's citizens were interested in public service, Ide had to fill many offices. In the trial of a horse thief, he acted as judge, court clerk, prosecutor, and defense attorney. He raised legal points for both sides, mounted the bench and gave his rulings as judge, and then as court clerk, recorded the proceedings. The jury found the defendant guilty, and Ide, as judge, sentenced him to hang.

When Ide was judge, the law stated that the theft of any item with a value of more than $20 was grand larceny, punished by hanging. Ide mentions in one of his letters, "The hanging goes on bravely, and none appear to be hung amiss. When they come to the hanging point, they confess to more than is laid to their charge."

Ide passed away in Monroeville in December 1852 at the age of 56.