Yount, George Calvert [1]

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by Robin A. Puckett, 1996; Additional research provided by Kelly Agan; Revised December 2021

4 May 1794–5 Oct. 1865

George Calvert Yount, trapper and pioneer settler of California, was born near Dowden Creek in Burke County [2]. His grandfather, John Jundt, a native of Alsace, moved to Lancaster County, Pa., in the mid-1700s when he was a child, changed his name to Yount, and settled in North Carolina. George C. was the son of Jacob, who served with General Nathanael Greene [3] in the American Revolution [4], and Marillis Killian Yount; in 1804 the family moved to Cape Girardeau, Mo.

In 1818 Yount married Eliza Cambridge Wilds and became a cattleman in Howard County, Mo. In 1825 after a neighbor embezzled his savings, he set out on an expedition to Santa Fe. In 1827, after arriving in the West, Yount led a party that hoped to trap along certain rivers in Arizona, but the expedition failed when part of the group turned back after reaching the mouth of the Gila River. During 1828–29 he trapped in the northern part of the country, and a mountain at the mouth of the Yellowstone River was named Yount's Peak to commemorate his activities in the area.

After meeting Jedidiah Smith while accompanying William Wolfskill, Yount became interested in the exploration of California. In 1831 he traveled along the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles and three years later moved north to Sonoma and San Rafael. At this time he converted to Roman Catholicism and adopted Spanish forenames: Jorge Concepción. He also became a Mexican citizen. Receiving a grant of land for a ranch in 1836, Yount settled in the Napa Valley and guarded the northern frontier of California against Indian attack. After an American emigrant party arrived in the area in 1841, he sent for his family. His two daughters joined him in California, but during his long absence his wife, thinking he may have been dead, sued for divorce in 1829 and married someone else.

In the 1850s Yount began to produce wine on his ranch in the Napa Valley, and in 1855 he married Mrs. Eliza Gashwiler. A Mason [5], he died at his home on the outskirts of the town of Yountsville, named for him. He was buried in the Yountsville cemetery, where his grave is marked by a monument with primitive carving.

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