

Journal
of
Louisa C. McConnell
and
Thomas McConnell
From
Rutland Vt.

At sea aboard of the Steamship Illinois August 8th 1856.

Here we are
at last on the bounding billows, on
our way to the El Dorado of the world
California. It is not without some
misgivings and sorrowful feelings that
we have left the homes of our fathers
and the scenes of childhood, to seek
a home in the highly favored gold regions
of California. A feeling of sadness fills

our minds when we separate from
dear and kind friends, and bid adieu
to our own green hills and Fatherland.
Although may only be for a season
still there is an uncertainty in the
untried future. That is not altogether
pleasant and agreeable on the eve of one's
departure to a far distant land.

The anxious Father, loving Mother
kind brothers and gentle sisters all
claim our attention and a share of
our thoughts. and it was hard to bid
them farewell, and take our place
in the Army of Progress, and march
to the tunes of Westward Ho! putting
our hopes on high and committing our
destinies to Him who rules the
Universe. We must go forth to act
our part in the great dreams of Life
expecting to at least be useful, and
hoping that we can contribute some
-thing to the general happiness of mankind.
and add something however trifling to
the welfare of the human race with good
health and the wise counsels of Him who
rules on high and the early lessons of

economy and industry taught us in youth
among the rugged hills of Vermont. We are
hoping for a moderate share of success in
life that is before us and finally that
we may lead such a life here upon
Earth, that when we are through our great
Master may say enter thou in to the joy
of your Lord is the prayer of your
humble servant

Thomas McConnell.

[?]

I was born in the town
of Pittsford Rutland County State of
Vermont January 30 A.D. 1827; but removed
at an early day (in fact before my remembrance)
to the town of Rutland, Vt. with my father
where I resided until I was twenty-one
attending school winters and working on
the farm during the summer months, with
the exception of teaching school two seasons
and attending the Seminary at Chester Vermont
two terms under the instruction of A A
Ranney.

In Sept 1848 I joined the school
at Norwich Vermont under tuition[?] of
Capt. Alden Pattridge. My brother Samuel was

there at the time.

Feb. 1849 brothers Samuel & Thaddeus C. Mc Connell started for California with a company that left Rutland at that time via Vera Cruz Mexico. They traveled across the country and took shipping at San Blas [Mexico] reached San Francisco sometime in June very much worn out with the trip having suffered on the passage for food and water.

May 1850 I left New York on the Steam ship Georgia for California the notorious Parker H. French was a passenger on her as far as Havana.

June 4 1850 Left Panama on the barque Sarah for San Francisco, which place we reached after a long and tedious passage occupying Seventy Six days having suffered a good deal from bad water and poor provisions.

Paid twenty dollars for my passage on the Gold Hunter (deck at that) to Sacramento city. In the latter part of August 1850 reached Garden Valley El Dorado County, California where I found my brothers Samuel & Thaddeus engaged in farming or gardening and mining. found them in good health and engaged in a very good business.

In September AD 1850 brother Samuel and myself left Garden Valley at Johnston with three mules loaded with provisions to meet the emigrants crossing the plains in Carson Valley. We crossed the Sierra Mountains Nevada Mountains by the way of the Georgetown cut off. Lost nearly all of the provisions by giving away and selling to destitute emigrants who all without exception forgot their indebtedness upon arrival in California and returned about the 1st of October.

We went about half way over the great desert Saw a great destruction of property. The trail of the emigrate was distinctly marked out by the dead and dying animals, wagons, harnesses, guns, clothes and cooking utensils lay scattered around in every direction. The emigrants suffered very much from the scarcity of provisions; flour in the early part of the season [?] in July sold for one dollar to two dollars per lb. Pork & Bacon sold for about the same price. all the time we were there flour had fallen and was very low. ten or fifteen cents per lb.

Carson Valley is a very fine fertile and healthy tract of country well adapted for grazing and agriculture purposes and will in time be a place of importance. There are hot springs in the valley near the Mormon Station that are so warm one can scarcely hold their hands in them. The climate [?]

the mountains on the Lassen's cut off got into the snow and backed out.

Stopped at Neal's ranch on the Sacramento River it is a fine place he has a great many Indians that work for him and in fact they are no better than Slaves. Nearly all of the old settlers in the Sacramento valley have more or less of the Indians in slavery.

In the winter of 1852-1853 there was a great amount of rain that fell Sacramento city was drowned out and a large amount of property was destroyed. Flour was very high in the mines \$.50 per lb. for a short time.

March 25th 1853 I left San Francisco on the fine steamship Golden Gate for Panama.

March 28th arrived at Panama had a pleasant trip. the Gate made about 275 miles per day. Was sea sick but little.

March 29 Started for Gorgona about 9 o'clock A.M. walked across, got in after dark, had a thunder storm which wet us all over.

April 1st Left Aspinwall on the Steamer Illinois for New York which place we reached on the 9th of April 8 o'clock P.M.

April 11th 1856[3] Left New York 8 o'clock A.M. for Philadelphia arrived at 1 o'clock pm. Deposited gold dust at the US Mint for coinage and put up at

the Western Hotel. April 18th 1853 visited Girard Colledge one of the finest buildings in the world, and without doubt the best in America. it is built of marble in the most durable manner, and is said to of cost over two millions of dollars. it designed for orphans and destitutes circumstances only. Also visited the Schuykill water works. Philadelphia is a beautiful city, the model one of the continent and the second in size in America Said to contain about half a million inhabitants (now in 1856)

April 14th Drained my money from the mint which amounted to \$6891.70 and returned to New York city. Put up at Lovejoy's.

April 15th Bought \$2000 worth of goods Alpheus Fobes which I sent to S McConnell & Co. Coloma Cal. Left New York 1 o'clock P.M. and reached Rutland Vt 1 o'clock P.M.

April 18th 1853 Gave Leeds Billings of Rutland Vt. \$1140 for William Stien[?] being the proceeds of dust sent home by me, and took receipt for the same.

April 19th Paid Samuel Hayward and Clarissa Curtiss \$167.50 each for J D Flanders and took up his obligations.

April 21th Went to Pawlet to get money from Warren Hewett being money I loaned

him in California to get home with.

April 23, 1853 Gave John L Marsh[?] nine hundred and forty dollars for J D Flanders and took his receipt for the same

April 23: Paid Paul Parker \$60 for a certain note of \$53 for J D Flanders

24th Attended church at North Clarendon and heard the Rev. Samuel Loveland preach his farewell sermon.

May 4th 1853 Went to West Haven and visited with Uncle Samuel Field

May 11th 1853 Went to Chester with Louisa Chapin and attended the examination of the scholars of Chester Seminary.

“ 12th Visited Miss Emeline Wright of Rockingham Vt.

May 17th A D. 1853 Sunday evening visited at George W Chaplin's offered myself to Miss Louisa Chaplin and was accepted.

June 8th 1856 (3?) Gave J Flanders his papers, he having returned from Caly. a short time since.

June 9th Visited at [?] Res M Loveland

“ 10th Went a fishing with Robert Pierpoint.

June 17th Rode out with Charles Matherson Called on Lewis Wal?'s father was at the Clarendon Springs.

June 22nd 1853 In New York called on a Mary Leach.

June 22nd 1853 Visited the Crystal Palace.

“ 24th Left N.Y. 6 o'clock AM and arrived in Rutland 11/2 o'clock P.M.

“ 26th 1853 At G W Chaplin's assisted about the supper, made a straw berry short cake.

July 4th In Rutland village with Louisa Chaplin; heard an excellent oration from Otis Skinner. Attended the fire exhibition in the evening. it was a very good affair.

“ 8th Went to Bridgewater VT with Charles Matheson and visited the gold mines. There is considerable lead, some copper and a little gold not enough to pay for working in my in my opinion. There is a good deal of quartz about and it had the appearance of a gold quartz.

July 11th Went to West Haven with Aunt Sarah and Uncle Seneca Field.

“ 13th Miss Amelia Griswold called on me at Castleton Vt and wanted to go to California.

Jul 14th I framed the ridge pole to Father's new barn.

“ 23rd Lost my breast pin a specimen of gold while picking berries.

“ 25th Invited the help to raise father's barn.

- July 26th 1853 Raised the new barn for father
just west of the house it is 40x50 feet.
- August 10th 1853 Took uncle Seneca Fields note for what he
was owing us thirty five hundred dollars.
- “ 23rd A comet visible in the North.
- Sept 8th Went a blackberrying with Louisa Chapin.
- “ 10th Gave George McConnell one hundred and thirty
dollars.
- “ 13th Sent a draft to Charles A Whiting for
tickets to California for the following persons.
- | | | | |
|---|---|------------|---|
| Wolcott H Curtis & wife of Clarendon Vt | | | |
| Miss Amelia Griswold | “ | Castleton | “ |
| Thomas Griswold | “ | “ | “ |
| Emmet Curtis | “ | “ | “ |
| George McConnell | “ | Rutland Vt | |
- Sept. 19th 1853 Went to New York with George
Miss T Griswold and uncle Wolcott.
- “ 20th George McConnell & those mentioned
above started for California on
the steamer Illinois, uncle very feeble.
- “ 22nd At Saratoga Springs. Attended the
State fair not as good as expected.
- Oct. 11th Sent a check to Charles A Whiting for
tickets to Cal. for the following persons.
- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Thomas McConnell Jr. Rutland Vt, | | | |
| Stephan Gould Shrewsbury | “ | | |
| David Ingalls Brandon | “ | | |
| Royal Nelson | “ | | “ |
- I never received the tickets it put us to some trouble we went
through on them.

Oct. 14th 1853 Left the following notes with G
 W Chaplin \$3500 against Seneca Field
 600 “ W H Curtis
 500 “ G Mussey
 100 “ S C Pierce
 2360 “ G W Chaplin

With Louisa Chaplin.

Oct 18th In New York City

- “ 19th Visited Crystal Palace with Louisa
 Chaplin had a good time.
 - “ 20th Sent by clipper ship San Francisco
 thirty two ½ lbs butter and five casks
 of cheese to Cal she sails today.
 - “ 20th Sent by ship Eagle ten casks of butter
 eight of cheese and one of sundries.
 - “ 20th Sailed for California on the steamer
 George Lane this was her first trip.
 - “ 27th At Kingston Jamaica. Took a severe cold.
 - “ 30th At Aspinwall New Granada. Wrote to
 Louisa and went on the cars as
 far as Barbara[Barbacoas]
 - “ 31st Stopped in Gorgona over night.
- Nov 1st River high arrived at Cruces
 about noon. Hired a native
 to carry my baggage and walked
 rainy and the mud deep. Stopped
 with a Spaniard over night.
- Nov 2 Arrived at Panama about 11o'clock
 R C Newton got in late and much fatigued.

- Nov. 3rd AD 1853 Went aboard of the steam ship Golden Gate 11 o'clock AM Started 4 o'clock PM for San Francisco.
- “ 8th Arrived at Acapulco 11 o'clock P.M., Distance from Panama 1425 miles as run by the Gate. Latitude of Acapulco 16° 40'
- “9th Started 10 1/2 o'clock AM
- “ 16th Arrive at Monterey 7 o'clock AM. Reached San Francisco 5 1/2 o'clock PM and got off about 7 o'clock. Met Samuel
- Greatest distance made in twenty four hours was 300 miles.
- Distance from Acapulco to San Francisco 1931 miles.
- | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|-------|------|
| “ | “ | Panama to Acapulco | 1424 | “ |
| | | | Total | 3355 |
- Nov. 18th Arrived at Sacramento City 7 o'clock A.M.
- “ 19th Arrived at Garden Valley El Dorado County found brother Francis with sore eyes.
- “ 24th Took Thanksgiving supper with Mrs. John Lodge
- “ 25th Rained thundered & lightened.
- “ “ Saw William McConnell.
- “ 28th or 30th Bought one half of steam saw mill paid four thousand dollars. (\$4000) Weather warm & pleasant.
- Nov. 31st At Garden Valley settling up the accounts.
- Dec. 6th & 7th & 8th Weather very pleasant like spring.
- “ 15th Our store caught fire did not do any damage
- “ 18th 1853 Took dinner in our new store Wolcott and guest boarding at the Garden Valley House. George McConnell got up from city with his first load of goods.

January 27th AD 1854 Wolcott H Curtis died with consumption 3 o'clock PM and was buried on Alabama Flat or near there on a hill in El Dorado county Cal.

July 1854 Mrs. Ann Curtis was married sometime this month to a Mr. John Killingsworth from the State of Georgia.

October 1st 1854 Francis McConnell started for Vermont was wrecked on the Yankee Blade and returned to Garden Valley Cal.

The Steamer Yankee Blade sailed from San Francisco September 30, 1854 and was wrecked October 1st 1854. 75 miles north of Santa Barbary at a place called Point Aquilla run on to the rocks in a fog about 1 1/2 miles from shore and 250 from San Francisco and 300 to San Diego The passengers were taken off the next day by the steamer Goliah from 8 o'clock A.M. to 4 o'clock P.M.

July 21st 1855 Mrs. Amelia G wife of Dr. H W Harkness[?] died very suddenly July 21

November 18th 1855 Visited the White Sulphur Springs with Robert Pierpoint & R C Newton

“ 22th called on Mrs Delia Hopkins at Sonoma found her well her husband Robert Hopkins has been gone about two years and she has never heard from him in that time.

Nov. 28th 1855 called on Mr Canfield's people's family
from Arlington Vt they are located in the
Bodega County.

Nov. 29th 1855 took Thanksgiving supper with Mrs. [E]
West of Sacramento City.

December 2nd Wades Cain's[?] house took fire did not
do any damage.

March 5th 1856 Samuel & myself attended the
Democratic State Convention at Sacramento
Samuel was Vice President of the Convention
and I was elected alternate Delegate to
attend the National Democratic Convention to
meet at Cincinnati June 2nd 1856.

March 8 1856 went to the Macosme [another name for
Consumnes] to look at a ranch owned by E H Smith and
known as the Perron Ranch.

“ 12th made a bargain for the above ranch
for \$10,300 with a little furniture

“ 21st 1856 left Garden Valley for Vermont

“ 27th “ visited George on the Macosme grass
looked fine

“ 30th “ visited A P Smith garden about 3 miles
from Sacramento on the American river
he was formerly from Whiting Vt

“ 31st Rained quite hard today

April 5th 1856 left San Francisco for Vt on the
steamer Uncle Sam via Nicaragua
Passage \$200 Gov. John Bigler & family were aboard.

April 29th 1856 The steamer Philadelphia arrived
from Havana

May 4th Fears are entertained that the George
Law is lost it rained nearly every day
the inhabitants say that the rainy season
is about setting in Passengers are getting
very uneasy

May 5th George Law arrived from New York

“ 6th Sailed on the Philadelphia for Havana

11 1/2 o'clock AM Rained considerably today

“ 7th Sea roughly was sea sick yesterday and today

“10th Reached Havana 10 o'clock PM laid off the
harbor until morning.

“” 11th Entered the harbor early this morning passed
the Morro Castle 5 o'clock A.M. The steamship
Illinois arrived at 9 o'clock from N.Y.
Went ashore and visited the tomb of
Christopher Columbus the discoverer of
America.

Distance from Aspinwall to New York 1006 miles.

“12th Left for NY at 10 o'clock AM

“17th Arrived at New York 12 o'clock noon put up
at the Astor House

Distance from Havana to New York 1205 miles.

“ 18th Attended church in Brooklyn NY and
heard Rev. Henry Ward Beecher preach

“” 19th Reached Rutland (home at mother's) 11 o'clock P.M.
found them all well.

May 20th 1856 Called on Louisa Chaplin early
in the morning before any of the folks
were up. The people of Vermont have
planted but little yet.

May 27th Snowed last night, hills all white
this morning. (That is in VT)

“ 28th Frost last night.

“ 30th Snowed last night, hills white in
every direction.

“ 31st Highland very white in every
direction. Snow, snow.

June 3rd 1856 At West Haven Vt at Uncle Seneca Field

“ 9th & 10th Went to Whiting Vermont visited
Mrs. S Smith & the Miss Smith's sisters
of Sidney & AP Smith of Sacramento City
California. (of Smiths Gardens)

June 12th Visited the gold mines at Plymouth

Vt. at a place called five corners
There is some gold hardly think
it will pay for working.

June 19 1856 Was married to Miss Louisa

Chaplin of Rutland Vt 11 o'clock A.M.
at her father's house (George W Chaplin Esq.)
Started for Saratoga Springs 3 o'clock PM arrived
6 o'clock. T C McConnell & Miss Sarah Mussey
with us . Stopped overnight at
the Water Cure Establishment. Met Miss Martha
French [rest of line missing]

June 20 1856 Left Saratoga for Schenectady 9 o'clock A.M.

Arrived about 11 o'clock met Wm Butman an old school mate he is one of the conductors on the N.Y. central railroad. Took dinner at Utica and stopped overnight with Wm Butman at Rochester who treated us very generously. Had some very fine strawberries.

"21st Arrived at Buffalo 11 o'clock A.M.

Reached Hamburg, Aaron Goulds 2 o'clock P.M.

Stopped overnight

" 22nd Visited Mr Pierces[?] folks Cousins of Louisa

" 23rd " Mr Du[??] " " " "

" 24th " " M Chaplin's " " "

Had some fine apples and goods visits.

The western part of N.Y. is a very fine country land is worth \$100 per acre

25th Visited Niagara Falls arrived at 11 o'clock

A.M. put up at the Cataract House

Took a carriage in the afternoon crossed the Suspension Bridge went into Canada visited Table Rock and the battleground at Lundy's Lane. had a

fine view of the falls from this side much better than from the American side Met Wm Butman & Lady took supper with them at the Cataract House Niagara

" 26th Took a short trip on a small steam boat called the New Maid of the Mist went up

under the falls and down to the Suspension
Bridge or near it

- June 26th On board on the Steamer Bay State
4 o'clock P.M. at Lewiston
- “ 27th At Oswego early in the morning
Arrived at Ogdensburg at 9 o'clock P.M.
- “ 28th Stopped aboard a small steamer
called the Montreal last night
Left at 5 o'clock A.M. for Montreal
Went down several frightful rapids
on the St Lawrence river and called
at several villages on the way passed
several large rafts of timber lumber & [?]
and reached Montreal at 3 o'clock P.M.
Put up at the Onegana hotel the wind
blowing hard and the air full of
dust..
Attended the Theater in the evening
proved an entire failure
- “ 29th Attended meeting in the large
Cathedral Montreal Canada East it
is capable of seating 10000 persons
it is one of the largest buildings in America.
The 39th regiment from the Crimea [?]
arrived here the day before yesterday
There is about 900 of them
- “ 30th Reached Swanton at 8 o'clock A.M.
Thaddeus & Sarah went home to Rutland VT

- June 30th 1856 Left Swanton for Berkshire Vt 9 o'clock A.M.
 by stage at East Highgate we were overtaken
 with a severe hail storm accompanied with
 high wind heavy thunder. Hailstones fell
 that were four and five inches in circumference
 Considerable damage was done: glass was broken
 out of the windows exposed and
 the crops were also injured to a great extent
 Arrived at Mr. Noble's Berkshire Vt 2 1/2 o'clock P.M.
- July 1st stopped at Mr Bartins
 " 2nd " " Aaron Chaplin's
 " 3rd " " Sylvester Nobles
 " 4th Left Mr Nobles for St Albans Vt. arrived
 at 8 o'clock A.M. Met Stephen Lawrence & Lady
 Attended the celebration at this place had
 a good oration and fine fireworks in
 the evening
- July 5th arrived at Rutland 1 o'clock P.M.
 " 18th Went to Bethel Vt with Louisa arrived
 4 1/2 o'clock P.M.
 " 19th Called on Miss C A Griswold one of
 Louisa's old school mates
 " 21st Returned to Rutland called on Misses
 Hayward
 " 24th Bought a Piano Forte of Mr Lyons manufactured
 at Albany N.Y. by Boardman & Gray cost \$335
 Visited at Mr H Musseys
 " 29th Paid Bradford Lyon \$335 for piano 6 3/4 octave

July 30 1856 Sent to J W Raymond 177 West St
 NY for tickets to California
 for the following

Thomas McConnell & lady
 Miss Clarissa McConnell
 Thaddeus C McConnell
 H S Smith

“ 30th Sarah & Phebe Marsh stopped
 last night at G W Chaplin's

“ 31st Went to Rutland village and had our
Ambrotypes taken

Aug 2nd 1856 Left Rutland Vt for California 2 1/2 o'clock
 P.M. with Louisa and sister Clarissa. Arrived
 at Albany 7 o'clock P.M. Went aboard
 of the steam ship Isaac Newton and
 started for NY. City 8 1/2 o'clock

“ 3rd arrived in NY city 7 0'clock A.M.

Put up at the Astor House
 Attended church in Brooklyn NY

“ 4th Daniel and Henry Dwight met us at the
 Astor House

“ 5th Left NY. on the steamer Illinois
 2 1/2 o'clock P.M. for Aspinwall
 Louisa and Clarissa sea sick.

“ 6th & 7 & 8 Louisa sea sick more or less every day

“ 11th Island of Cuba in sight

“ 12th Louisa still sea sick

“ 14th Arrived at Aspinwall New Granada 9 0'clock A.M.

1856 Her passage from NY to Aspinwall Aug 5th

“ 6th 218 miles distance as run by the ship Illinois

Aug 7th 211 miles

“ 8th 228 “

“ 9th 214 “

“ 10th 199 “

“ 11th 225 “

“ 12th 245 “

“ 13th 261 “

“ 14th 213 “

2014 “

Aug 14th 1856 Arrived at Panama at 5 o'clock P.M. and went

on board the steamer Golden Age about 7 o'clock

The Golden Age is a very commodious steamer and

everything is well arranged Louisa well.

“ 15th Left Panama for San Francisco 6 1/2 o'clock P.M.

Thaddeus arrived about 3 o'clock with the

sheep & foals

“ 16th Louisa sea sick again. Run in sight of land

all day.

“ 17th Rained nearly all day. Louisa sick

“ 20th Louisa came to the table for the first time

since leaving Panama.

“ 21st Arrived at Acapulco 7 1/2 o'clock A.M.

Went on shore with the Rev. Mr. Baker & Lady, Louisa

Clarissa & Thaddeus. Went around the fort

and through the palace saw the chain gang

at work Left Acapulco 1 o'clock P.M. 16° 44` N

Col. J Ing[?] came aboard at this place.

“ 25th Saw several whales today weather growing colder.

Aug 26 1856 Weather colder one needs winter clothing

Latitude 30° 51`

“ 27th need and overcoat today. Louisa sick

“ 28th Louisa vomited this morning arrived in San Francisco 10 o'clock A.M. Put up at the Willson's Exchange. Left San Francisco on the William G Hunt for Sacramento City 4 o'clock P.M.

“ 29th Arrived at Sacramento 2 o'clock AM put up at the Orleans. Met R C Newton & brothers Samuel & George

“ 29th Visited A P Smith garden, about three miles from the city. He has one of the best gardens in the country. in it he has about two thousand bearing peach trees. He had peaches that are twelve inches in circumference The trees, many of them were broken down with the fruit. He also has ripe strawberries

“ 30th Arrived at our ranch on the Macosme River about eighteen miles from Sacramento about 10 o'clock A.M. Met Mr and Mrs West found everything in very good order Called on Mr. [?] gave me a fine bunch of grapes

31st Called on Mr. Hull's folks

Sept 1st Went to Garden Valley with Samuel

“ 2nd Attended the primary meeting of Garden Valley was selected as chairman

“ 3rd Called on Mr & Mrs Killingsworth they are stopping with [rest of line missing.]

Sept 4th Left Garden Valley. Stopped overnight at Folsom

“ 5th Home about 11 o'clock P.M.

“ 8th Called on Mr A Wilder and Bargained for
the one half of the Ranch being an undivided
half interest for Six Thousand dollars

“ 9th Went to Sacramento City with Mr Wilder.

“ 10th Made visitings with A. Wilder for his half
of the Ranch. Gave a bond for a deed

“ 10th Returned with brother Francis to the ranch
after dark. got here about 10 1/2 o'clock

“ 13th Went Sacramento City with Louisa & Francis
Borrowed Mr Hull's team

“ 14 Attend church in said city at the
Presbyterian heard the Rev Mr Baker

“ 15th Went shopping all day bought some
Furniture, carpets [?]

Returned home about 10 o'clock P.M.

“ 18th George gone Sacramento City

“ 19th Mr Warner of Sacramento & son called on us and
took dinner. I got a fall in loading hay

Monday Sept 22 1856 In the United States District

Court a decree of affirmation was entered
in the case of James Murphy previously
confirmed by the Land Commission to a tract
of land called “las Cassaderes ”[cazadores] four square
leagues, on the Consumes River in Sacramento
County. it being the land we
are located upon.