

These are letters between Louisa Chaplin of Clarendon and Rutland Vermont and Thomas McConnell of Garden Valley, California between 1854 and 1856. There must be other letters that are missing, but these were found in a small cardboard box in a cupboard at 1320 39th Street, Sacramento, where Winona McConnell Kennedy and family had lived for many years.

When Jean Kennedy Allen passed away, her husband Alfred Allen sold the old home and many nooks and crannies had to be cleared out. It was then the letters were found in a small 5 X 5 cardboard box. (a photocopy of the label on the box is included in this file). Incidentally, many of the antiques found in the home were donated to the Sacramento History Museum.

We took the letters from AL with the thought we would transcribe them for his sons, Mark and Michael. Michael has the original letters in his safe deposit box. The letters are transcribed exactly as written in regards to spelling and punctuations. Many were not in envelopes and there were no postage stamps on any of the envelopes, only the notation of "Paid10".

Marilyn and Bill Hanson

*Marilyn and Bill Hanson
December 1990*

Envelope: none

Letter:

Rutland, Apr. 16, 1854

Dear Friend Thomas,

Your very kind letter of Feb. 22 was duly rec'd and perused with those emotions of pleasure that ever gladden the heart when allowed to hear from dear friends. I was happy to hear of your good health, which I hope may long be yours to enjoy. I regret that your brothers are not alike favored as yourself in the enjoyment of health, but trust they will ere long be restored.

The death of your beloved Uncle is much lamenated. Although we had not much expected to hear of his recovery. Yet we know that his friends realise a great loss in his death. Mrs. Curtis situation must be lonely indeed since the departure of her best earthly friend, together with the vast intervening distant between herself and his family. I doubt not her friends in Cal. will do all in their power to render her life as pleasant as possible while she remains with them. Her family are in usual health and I should think were getting along very well indeed. Your Aunt Sally is very faithful in the discharge of her duty towards them being equally kind and tender of them as a Mother need be. I hope she will be abundantly rewarded for her good works.

My Aunt White who I alluded to in my last, is no more with us in this life. She passed from earth to heaven on the 1st of March, being perfectly resigned to the will of God. She has left a family of eight children orphans, their father having died a year ago, Their fortune seems hard indeed to be bereft thus in early life of the affectionate guardianship of parents. May their thought be turned to the treasures in Heaven. I have attended meeting at the village today, had a very good one. Rev. C. Woodhouse remains with us the present year. Appearances are more flattering this, than last year. I trust that ere long Br. W. will succeed in establishing a Good Universalist Society in Rutland.

My friend, it is one year ago today that you visited your childhood's home and participated in the warm and affectionate greetings of your beloved friends from whom you had long been absent. Yes, and six months ago thou went here but now, thou art far away. I hope you may be blest with good health and abundant success crown your noblest efforts so long as you may sojourn in Cal. I regret that any ill fortune has been yours but trust that you will not mind it, as you have been more favored than many and cannot reasonably expect that every day will be all sunshine. The future may be brighter still.

Ere I pass farther I would inform you that I visited at your fathers a short time since and had quite a chat with your father. His health is quite poor, his symptoms are quite alarming. I think his voice having entirely left him, and it is with difficulty that one can converse with him, he coughs and raises considerable and he told me that his strength was gradually failing. Also that he is alarmed with regards to the state of his health. I hope he may recover, but think unless he finds immediate relief that he cannot long survive your Uncle. I would express my sincere thanks for your kindness in sending me those flower seeds., they will indeed afford me much pleasure. Please allow me the privilege of inviting you to visit my flower garden this summer, I will arrange a very pretty bouquet for you. Yet I presume you will not come. I am informed that Mr. E. P. Loveland is expected home this season, that the prospects are not sufficient to induce him to remain longer.

Miss. M. A. French has been home and made a visit and now gone to Saratoga to engage in her useful labor. I wish her abundant success. I enjoyed two very pleasant visits with her. She intends to spend another winter in Cincinnati. Catherine French is engaged to teach our school this summer.

Thomas you will allow me to make some inquiries viz: of how many members your family consists and also what portion of the cheese was lost. I am sorry indeed that ill fate should attend it. With regard to the apples I would say that we are ever happy to share with you in any of the bounties that our house affords. I presume I shall save some of the above named luxury. Although you may not be here to enjoy it in the fall, when it is the best. Yet perhaps it will keep until Spring.

Truly thine, Louisa Chaplin

I will send with this a number of the Respositary as it contains some very interesting prices which you may be pleased with. Louisa

"Good night" Thomas may angels guard thee

Envelope: none

Letter:

Rutland Vt. June 1st 1854

My Dear Friend Thomas,

Your kind letter of April 26th has arrived and it met with grateful reception as I have been very anxious to hear respecting your health. I must regret to learn that you have been afflicted with poor health since your return to California, but hope that you may soon be well again. You will exercise a degree of caution against taking cold for you are aware that sometimes serious results follow from a slight cold. Let your health be uppermost in your mind and I trust you will not confine yourself to your business when unable to do so. You must surely get well soon for you know we cannot have you sick. Do not fail to write of your health particularly. Your friends here are all enjoying very good health at the present excepting your beloved father. His health is no better. He visited Dr. Horace Green in N.Y. on the first of May who gave him encouragement that he could restore him. He has followed his directions and found no relief but continues to fail rapidly. His voice is no better and it is with difficulty that he breathes, although he is still able to walk about and go out some. Sometimes he feels encouraged and thinks his disease is confined to his throat entirely, then again he feels that he has but a short time to live. It is generally feared that consumption has marked him for its victim. Yet I wish that it might not prove thus, but that he may again be restored and live to enjoy happiness of seeing his dear family once more assembled under the parental roof.

My friend Death has already visited our little neighborhood. Mr. Rogers is no longer here. He was summoned to the regions of bliss on the 19th of May after suffering from a brief illness of Billious Fever. Mrs. Rogers is deeply afflicted in his death and feels that her trouble is greater that she can bear. Although she does not wish to mummer at the will of an All Wise Being.

Edward Dyer, Esq. has also passed to the Spirt-land. He departed this life in Penn. while on a visiting tour. His disease was Cholera. "Passing away" is marked upon all things sublunary.

I have recently spent a week with Mary A. and Susan; in the meantime M.A. and I visited Mrs. Frances Barrows in Castleton. She is plesantly situated and enjoying life well. She is blessed with an excellant husband, I should judge from observation, with her own information.

I have recently received letters from my dear friends, Mary Wright and Mrs. Griswold. Miss Wright is engaged in teaching in Proctorville this season at \$ 3.00 per week. hope I may meet her this summer. She informs me Mrs. Griswold has removed to P.O. 18 Jackson Cal. and would be happy to meet you. I am happy to hear of the prosperity of Miss Amelia Griswold.. Hope that Quitius fairest flowers may be strown in her pathway. Miss Cilia A. Griswold informs me that she is a distant realtive of theirs.

Mr. Woodhouse' two oldest sons have returned from Boston where they were engaged in business to Rutland on account of poor health. They are in Stores. Charles is a very promising young man. He plays the Seraphene admirelly. Mr. Woodhouse has a friend in Calif who he has directed to you. His name is Goodenough.

Father has nearly finished the Dairy house, which I think is very convient, Am anticipating much happiness at work in it this season. I am very glad that the butter and cheese proved satisfactory to you. Presume father would thank you for the compliement, he doubtly expected it would merit it. Judging of the works of the new dairy maid he employed last summer. Am thinking perhaps Samual would prefer your Aunts judgement in regards to the quality of the butter to yours or Frances'. Miss Peedhurn is teaching in your fathers district this summer is doing well. She has purchased a Seraphene at \$ 75.00 and plays very well. Father often wishes he had one. I dare not speak encouraging although it would be very pleasant.

The music of thine own kind voice is all that my soul aspired too and trust that a kind Heavenly Father will spare you to once more reach your native land.

The best wishes of your ever affectionate friend

Louisa Chapin

No Envelope:

Letter:

Rutland Aug 31 1854

Dear Friend

Your letter of July 25 is received and we are happy to hear of your good health. Your friends in this vicinity are also enjoying the same blessing for which we should be grateful.

You are aware that "Time the great invader of all things worked the many changes", also the finger of death and decay is impressed upon all things Earthly.

Ere this message reaches you, you will have doubtless received the solemn tidings of your beloved Fathers death. He passed from Earth to Heaven on the 30 day of June after a distressing illness, which I should think must have caused a heart of Stone to melt. To have witnessed his sufferings yet he bore it all very patiently. He was very anxious to recover and did not seem to realize that he must bid adieu to all things earthly until a day or two previous to his death. Oh, would that I could have been the sufferer. One that will be capable of doing little or no good in the World, and he have been spared to usefulness. You can no longer listen to his kind voice, good instructions and advice in the path of Virtue and uprightousness. Yet doubtless you will treasure and imitate his good lessons and examples.

His disease was not what many had supposed it was. Upon an examination here by several M.D.'s it was proven to be a cancer in his throat. He ever felt that his lungs were not affected and that his disease was confined to his throat. He submitted to several stripping operations

in his throat and in which he expired in one, which seems too awful to think of. Yet his troubles are over and no one could wish for him to live and endure the suffering he did for the last six month of his life. Although he much needed to aid in guiding his Children here along to Years of Maturity.

Your Dear Mother seems quite broken down with the trials & affliction that necessarily pertain to this life. I hope she may be comforted and live long to share in many joys with her children.

I would inform you of the death of one of those Orphan Cousins. Miss Marion White. She died on the 22 of this month with consumption, aged 16 years. She's gone to her parents in the land of bliss. She's happy I trust. Long has my spirit sighed for a home for the blest, where sorrow is unknown and the weary are at rest. Yet patientlly I will await the days.

We are all surprised to read the marriage of your Aunt Curtis. Yet hope that she has bettered her situation and that she has married a worthy man. One who will be a kind father to her children and give her no cause to regret the course she's taken. Her children are subjected to the best of treatment. No one not even their Mother could do better by them. Your Aunt Sally is indeed one of the excellent of the Earth and I sincerely hope that she may be blessed with comfortable health and dear friends to cheer and bestow upon her all the comforts of life and may she be rewarded both here and Hereon for her kidness and watchful care over those children. I should think their Mother would constantly think of them and come to them as soon as possible.

I have recently enjoyed a visit with Mrs. John Loveland from Calif. I was very much interested with her and think her to be a superior person. I also met with Mr. E. W Lovelands intended, a Miss Gray from N.Y. State. She is in very feeble health. I think that he will never see her again unless he returns soon. Consumption has set its seed upon her.

My dear friend Miss Wright has been very sick this summer, her life was despaired of for several days. However she is pretty well again. I have been expecting her to spend a week with me as she writes of coming. Miss Maloina Covey has visited home this summer and stopped a few weeks has now returned to Milwaukie to complete her engagement in teaching at \$ 225.00 per year. Martha A. French will soon return home from Saratoga to make a short visit, thence to Cincinnati to complete her collegiate education. Miss Kate R. French succeeded very well in her school here this season. Closed with a Pic-Nic which was well attended and highly enjoyable. She wished to be remembered to you. She is truly one of the finest young ladies of my acquaintance. She attends school in Portland this fall. Phebe Marsh intends spending the fall term at Female Seminary in Burlington. Your sister Clara expects to enjoy this term in Castifor. Happy School girls, may they profit much by their opportunities.

My sheet is filled and I must bid you Goodnight. Hoping you may ever share in the riches of Heavens blessings.

Truly thine,

Louisa Chapin

No envelope:

Letter:

Sacramento city. January 30th 1855

Dear Louisa,

I received yours of Dec 1st some two or three weeks since, but have not answered it yet. Neglected as usual, always something to do.

Business, business the word. I really hate, first here then there going and coming, something to do continually.

I came to this place two or three days ago to purchase some machinery for our Steam sawmill. We are going to put in to the mill two or three circularsaws for cutting lathe and pickets.

If we do not have any great misfortunes we expect to cut out nearly one million feet of lumber the coming season, and times must be very dull & hard if we cannot make ten dollars per thousand. You will think at once I have forgotten all the Loved & dear ones at home, but I assure you is not the case. In order that you may fully understand my situation, I will write you more particular about our affairs. Last fall, Thaddens and Francis withdrew from our firm, leaving only Samuel and myself. Francis started for home and was wrecked in the ill fated Yankee Blade and the result you already know. Whether he will start again in the Spring or not is quite uncertain, but I am inclined to think he will stop some longer in California. Thaddens may visit home next summer. Sometimes he talks about it and then at other times quite the reverse. California is a strange country, one thinks nothing of making up his mind in a single day to go to the Atlantic States, Australia, Sandwich Islands or some other place equally distant: very few in the mining district consider

themselves permanently located, although there are many who think they will leave California in a short time, will stay here during their life. It may be so with some of us, some one may be home the coming summer, and again we may not. It could afford no one more pleasure than myself to once more visit Vermont, and when I last left you I thought I should be able to get off the coming Spring, but I must give it up for the present season, and if you fully understand all of our affairs, I am sure you would pardon me.

In the first place the Season has been an uncommonly unfavorable one. We usually have rain in November and December, so that the miners can work the dry diggings. This year we have not had any as yet to do any good. It rained once just enough to prevent any further operations in the rivers, and not enough to do any good in the dry diggings. The consequence is that a great majority of the miners have got their goods on "tick" as they term it and have promised to pay as soon as rains so they have water to wash with. The result is the following Goods to the amount of four or five thousand dollars credited out, in sums varying from twenty five cents up to six hundred dollars. which can not possibly be collected in until they have water, for without water the miners cannot make money, any more than you could make cheese without milk. By the way new milk cheese made in California brings from 35 or 40 cents per lb. There are few in this country who make good cheese or butter. And cows can be kept here with one half of the expense they can in New England.

Our mill property including the lumber now on hand is worth about six thousand dollars and it probably could not be sold at the present time for more than four on account of the scarcity of mining.

Money commands three and four per cent per month. We have loaned out upwards of three thousand dollars that is perfectly good, besides a large amount that is poor.

We have real estate in this city worth Five thousand dollars, which would have to be sacrificed by forcing a sale at this time. Also have eighteen head of oxen that are worth about one hundred and fifty dollars per yoke. They are on the Mocosme river about twenty miles from this city. I am going out there to dispose of them if I can in a day or two. Besides we have horses, mules, wagons and one of the best stores in the mines, and a great amount of unsettled business, that cannot be closed up without taking time. You may want to know what all this has to do about my coming home. I have been the principal salesman and more fully understand the business affairs of the concern than any of the other boys and it is desireable that I should settle them up.

Do not consider me an egotist. I have nearly related to you our affairs as they are. Simply to let you know what keeps me here and from you.

California is indeed a fine country. She has this year raised all the wheat necessary for her own consumption and some to export abroad.

Peaches flourish here, last fall there was some of the finest ones in the market that I ever saw in any country. They sold them from 25 to 75 cents each. Peach trees produce in two years from the pits. I have no doubt in three years our markets will be abuntantly supplied with them and sold at resonable rates. Figs are raised with little trouble and are highly esteemed by many. Pears and Grapes are already produced in abundance and the market is well supplied with them in their respective seasons. Apples are sucessfully raised in Oregon. They are brought here by the Steamer that makes regular trips from San Francisco to that place. Some of the finest ones I ever saw came from there. A great many young

apple trees have been set out in this country and most people think they will thrive and do well.

The weather appears more like Spring than Winter. It has not been cold enough to freeze any here and scarcely any in the mountains as high up as we are. Cattle, horses and mules live without any or very little feeding, that is those that are not worked.

California truly possess some great advantages over most of the United States. Still it is a new country and the society is the chief objection, to settling in this country. People have come here from all parts of the civilized world, each bring with him his peculiar notions about almost every thing and hence our society is what would be termed in New England very bad, especially in the mining section. In the agriculture section it is much better and will soon be good. There are very good schools now established in the cities and larger places and a liberal provision has been made for their support by the Legislature of our State.

Sacramento is now the Capital of the State and the Legislature are now in session.

I saw Mr. Loveland last week. he is well and thinks some of going home in the Spring.

Mrs. Narkness (Miss Griswold) is well and is still living in this city. She certainly has married one of the first men in this city; she is contented and happy. Aunt Ann is still living near us, she has been unwell but is now better. I hardly know how she is getting along, as I seldom see her. Mr. Severars & boys are well. John the Frenchman who worked for Luch is in this city. he is making money. he gave me five hundred dollars the other day to keep for him.

Day before yesterday one of the greatest accidents took place near this city that has ever happened in the State of California. The high pressure steam boat Pearl, which run from this city to Marysville, carrying passengers freight and treasure was blown up by the bursting of the boilers, and probably not less than seventy five lives were lost. Fifty three only have found up to this morning and they are still raking the river to find more.

Yesterday I saw one fellow when he found the treasure box containing \$ 6500.00 belonging to Wells Fargo & Co., he was the only person who uttered a single note of joy, he gets a reward for finding of about \$ 1500.00.

A company of eight or nine had started for home, the Atlantic States and were all killed but one.

Their hearts bounding with high hope and joy thinking of the dear and loved ones they soon would meet at home. But alas: how little we know of the future. Now in health and prosperity and in one moment more, in eternity.

Yesterday I attended the burial of twenty nine of the victims, it was a solemn day, nearly one half of them were Chinamen.

The Fire Companies four or five in number, Odd Fellows, Masons, Sons of Temperances, Members of the Legislature and the citizens generally turned out to show their last tribute of respect for the dead. Many of them remain unregonized. Some of them had money about their persons, probably the savings of two or three years work in the gold mines. The procession was the longest I ever saw. There must have been four or five hundred Chinamen in it. The Chinamen are very peculiar people. There are a great many in California. They like all the rest, are attracted hither by the Gold, and the universal desire of gain.

I witnessed some eight or ten weeks since when I was down here, one of their visits to the burial ground of their friends. It was very amusing and odd to one who had never seen anything of the kind before. About 10 o'clock in the morning nearly all of Chinamen of Sacramento, in all about six or seven hundred, started from the City for the burial ground, which is in common with the Americans. Some afoot, some in carriages and others on horse back, Also with several wagons containing dressed hogs, Goats, and chickens, Apples, Pears, Grapes, pies, cakes and various other things including tea & coffee. And last though not least an abundant supply of fire crackers, the burning of which appears to be a favorite amusement with them. They were also provided with a great number of small sticks, which they set fire to and stick up upon the graves of their deceased countrymen. These sticks continue burning fifteen or twenty minutes and in the mean time an innumerable number of the fire crackers are burned. While all this is going on they spread tables and cover them completely with over with the dead hogs, chickens, grapes, peaches and etc. And then they all come and kneel before the tables and appear to be in the attitude of prayer. They continue this for some time and then start for their respective places of residence, taking good care however to take back everything was good for anything to their homes to eat themselves, leaving only a little boiled rice for their dead friends.

They burn a large amount of paper which they think goes to the Spirit land and their friends use it for money.

On the whole the Chinese are very strange people. They manufacture some of the finest goods in the world, frequently do years of work on a single shawl. Everyone wears a long coil braided up and looks like a tail, the rest of the head is shaved

Today I am twenty seven years old. How time hastens onwards. it does not seem possible that it is now over one year since we parted, still it is true. I find myself in good health and here, with the prospect of getting off still in the distance.

I cannot ask you to come to me, you have kind friends where you are and are well cared for with your relatives and acquaintances around you. Living at a happy home and blessed with all the blessings that a civilized and intelligent Country bestows, seeing & knowing only the good and nothing of the bad.

Yet how happy should I be could I but meet you even here in California.

Cruel fate seems to have parted us. Still who knows what one short year will bring forth. Sometimes I think perhaps you may think I have forgotten you. But if I could see you every time a thought called you to my remembrance sure we should not be parted long.

If a good opportunity should offer I cannot say that I should regret to hear that you had started for California. Still I would not advise for who knows the future. All that I can say is that my devoted attachment and affections would be freely, cordially and tenderly offered you.

The railroad is now nearly completed on the Isthmus or will be by Spring, so that the most difficult part of the journey formerly will be the easiest.

The greater part of coming to California would be in getting started. Once undertaken twenty days or twenty five at the most and the journey is completed. Your fare upon first class steam ships is equal to that of the Hotels of N.Y. City with some few luxuries excepted.

Still I fully understand that it would be a great sacrifice in your feelings and also of your friends to come to this country where you have comparatively so few.

I hope you will excuse the mistakes and errors that no doubt are in this letter. Always please to hear from you.

from your devoted friend,

Thomas McConnell

Envelope: None

Letter:

Rutland Jan 31 1855

My Dear Friend,

You will pardon me if I address a few lines to you this morning and enclose in fathers letter. I have sad intelligence which I cannot forebear communicating to you at this time. The solemn tidings of death of one of my dearest and most precious friends, Miss Emeline Wright reached me yesterday morn. Alas, she's gone, never again can I behold her in this life or listen to her sweet voice and never more, can I through those sacred little messages of exchange with her the voice of love and true friendship. In her death I realize a great loss. She had won the promised seat in my affections that had she by her untiring faithfulness and affection with her many virtues, she had rendered herself truly of great worth to me. It indeed seems hard that I must give her up. Yet, I feel that our loss is her gain, that she has passed from a world of sorrow, to one of eternal joy in Heaven. She was an ornament to earth and by her true excellence had won a large circle of friends. But a Merciful Father has taken her in the bloom of life, knowing her to be too pure for earth, to join the Angels in that bright world above where we all hope to meet in Heaven. She departed on the morning of the 25inst after a protracted and distressing illness of Typhoid fever. My last kind message from her was dated Sept. 10th which was characterized by a shade of melancholy on account of her health, not having recovered from the measles, with which she was attacked early in the summer. She expressed a strong wish to visit me if her health would admit. I did not hear from her again until the 19th of Dec. when I was addressed by a Miss Fisher who had taken care of

her until her death. She wrote that she was taken about the middle of Sept. with the T. fever, had been under the care of a Physician for ten weeks, but was at that time convalescent. I trusted in her recovery and was anticipating a from her this spring when another letter from Miss F reached me announcing her death. Ah, how fleeting are the joys of earth, and how frail our natures. Earth has indeed few attractions to win us to this life. May our affections be centered upon the lovelier objects in Heaven. My dear friend suffered much during her illness, yet was very patient. She frequently told her friends she should never recover and never once expressed a desire to. I should have visited her had I known of her decline. I can now only hope for a reunion in Heaven.

I would inform you that your friends are enjoying good health for which blessings we are ever grateful. I trust this may find you in good health. May a Kind Father ever bestow the richest of earthly blessing upon you so long as you may sojourn here below. May you ever be guided in the paths of virtue and honor which can only insure your happiness. And when your earthly career is ended may you be gathered with the Heavenly Host Above where bliss forever reigns. Please remember me tenderly and affectionately to your brother Frances and all.

Your unchanging friend. Louisa Chapin

Mr. Thomas McConnell

Envelope: none

Letter:

Rutland March 15, 1855

Dear Friend Thomas,

Once again I'm started to pen a brief reply to your lengthy espistle of Jan 30 which was duly received and perused with interest, happy to learn of your good health and hope that you may long enjoy the rich blessings.

With regards to your business affairs, I lament that you are unable to accomplish them according to your wishes. I should think that your business had much increased since your return to Cal. is it not rather poor encouragement to its completion, I regret that you have not the confidence in Samuel's ability for the management of your Firm that I have. Yet it is very natural for people to entertain feelings that you do, perhaps it is all correct.

At our parting in N.Y. one year and half since I could not have looked to this period with the expectation that you would be in Cal. yet it is ever true. and none, know when to anticipate your return. Oh! how sad that friends should be so long separated. Perhaps "all will be rights". I will trust One who knoweth and doeth all things for our good. I hope I may be more worthy and better prepared to appreciate your society, should it ever be granted me than I am at present.

You have again alluded to my visiting Cal. I would say that I would be happy to do so. What Earthly place would afford a lovelier meeting than the Wilds of Cal. I doubt not that it is a delightful country possessing many attractions. The geniality of it's climate I would think be well adapted to my peculiar nature, as I have little sympathy for the frigid Winters of Vermont.

Mrs. Emily L. Alford is now at her fathers preparing to leave for Oregon in April. It will be quite an undertaking for her with her little children, in her delicate state of health. Yet her noble heart is prompted by nobler deeds, and may a merciful Father safely guide her to her beloved companion. I would be happy to accompany her could I feel under our existing circumstances it would be approved of by either of us. Were you present I could freely join you. Although there is One who ruleth the mighty deep and in whom I can trust. Yet could not I feel more safe with thy protecting arm and watchful eye over me then otherwise. Surely I could, but I will leave the subject to your wiser decision.

Mr. John Willoughby has sold out in Mass. and intends to leave with his family for Minnesota in April or May. Mr Austin Andrews who married Levery Richardson of Pittsford has also sold his property and going West this Spring.

I would inform you that Mr. Gruman Moulthrop departed this life on the 11th inst with Billious fevers. Thus one after another passeth away. I feel that we can not mourn for the departed although we miss them here. Yet with the Faith that they have passed to a brighter world is consolation to the afflicted.

Henry Massey and wife returned home the day previous his death from Ohio, do not intend to return there again. Oft does my memory revert to my dear friend Miss Wright and the happy hours spent with one I loved so well. But she's passed to that blissful Abode, that knows no sorrow, where we all hope soon to meet. I have written to the afflicted Mother twice and am soon expecting her Miniature which will serve as a beautiful memento of one very dear to me. She was truly one of earths fairest and loveliest flowers.

Rev. C. Woodhouse soon closes his labors in Rutland and Clarendon and intends to remove to St Johnsbury. Charles W. is engaged in a Bank in Burlington where he receives a good salary. He is a very promising young man. He is probably one of the best musicians in the State. He is regarded to play the best Organ that is known about here.

Perhaps you would like to know how we are succeeding with music. Father is improving rapidly can play several tunes very well.

My teacher Mrs. Hopkins talks quite encouragingly to me. I think her an admirable woman and love her very much indeed. I would inquire if there is any call for music teachers in San Francisco. I am glad to hear of the prosperity and happiness of Mrs. Harkness. May it be continued to her.

Miss Martha A. French has recently graduated at the Medical College in Cincinnati. I received a message from her recently she thinks some of coming home in the Spring. Although she is wanted in Saratoga another summer.

A letter from Miss Griswold states that her brother John is well and thinks much of Cal. Have you met with him recently. I think the death of Miss Wright will be a sad affliction to him.

With my best wishes for your future success I remain ever happy to hear from you.

truly your friend Louisa Chaplin

Envelope: Embossed; no postage but "paid 10,"

Miss Louisa Chaplin
North Clarendon
Vermont

Letter:

Sacramento May 12th 1855

My Dear Friend.

Yours of March 15th is now before me and it should have been answered by the last mail, but it has been neglected as it has frequently been the case before.

I left home about one week ago. have been down to San Francisco to purchase goods and transact some other business in this city.

Saw Mr. Griswold, he is in good health and clerking in San Francisco.

I also met with Major Alvord of the U.S.A. he is expecting his wife and children by the next mail boat which should be in a day or two.

If you had been with her rest assured you would of met with a cordial reception: or should you hereafter visit California, I can only say what I have said before, you will be heartily welcome and my best exertions will be tendered at all times to render you happy and make a California life agreeable: there are many, very many things which I could wish were different but dame Fortune has placed me where I am and I cannot consistently leave for the present. Truly as you say when we parted in N.Y. I did not think so long a time would pass and we still be separated.

Events have taken place that I could not foresee, or even did not dream of: by the death of Mr. Cody our partner in the mill, that property has fallen into our hands which is worth seven or eight thousand dollars besides a large amount of lumber and logs and it requires time especially on such a year of Bankruptcy as 1855. has been to close up an affair of that kind without great loss.

You say you "would be happy to accompany Mrs. Alvord. Could you feel that under our circumstances it would be approved of by either of us"

My Dear Louisa, if you feel perfectly willing to leave old friends and acquaintances, I can say it meets my approbation and should be very happy to have you name the day you would leave New York. You will find twice the trouble in getting started and away from home that you will on the journey here.

Once started the task is half accomplished. Do not bother yourself with baggage. One trunk, a carpet sack and satchel is all that you should think of bringing, even this is too much, everything that one might want can be had in California at resonable prices. I should prefer the Panama route, the Steamers are more commodions and there is less difficulty in crossing the Isthmus which is now done by railroad in four or five hours. You will not be oblige to stop on shore more than one night and probably not any.

I will meet you on the boat at San Francisco, if life and health permit.

I stop at Williams Exchange when I am in San Francisco.

Four hundred dollars will be sufficient for your expenses including the cost of your ticket, which must be a First Cabin one. And twenty five days from the time you leave home to San Francisco is all that is required unless something very extraordinary and uncommon should occur.

I have at all times endeavoured to give you correct statements in regard to this western portion of our country and hope when you shall of seen it, you will not of been disappointed and I trust you will have no occasion to regret your coming to California, where "Truth is Stranger than Fiction!!

Brother George is some better and we now think he will recover his health again, still he will not be able to work any this season. The rest of us are all in good health.

Senator Gove (State Senator from Sacramento Co.) he formally came from Rutland and is a relative of old Col. Gove, returns soon for his family. think he lives in Fairfax. V.T.

The opportunity of coming with Mrs. Alvord I cannot help but hope has been improved, if it has not fear not my noble girl there is no harm that can overtake one, when motives are as generous as yours, and who puts their trust in One who does all thing well.

With my best wishes for your future welfare and happiness,
I remain as ever your true friend

Thomas McConnell

Envelope: Embossed Paid 10.

Miss Louisa Chaplin
North Clarendon Vermont

Letter:

Garden Valley July 30, 1855

My Dear Friend,

I received a letter from you by the last mail in which you decline visiting California unless I should come for you.

I shall start for VT on the 15th or 16th of August and if good luck attend me as usual I shall be with you by the 15th of Sept.

I would take you wholly by surprise were it not for the short time that I shall probably remain, which can not exceed four weeks.

There are no other that know of my return. You may keep it still as Mother would worry herself continually if she knew that I was on the way, until I arrived.

Brother George is recovering his health, he is Sacramento attending school.

The ballance of us are all in good health.

Mrs. Harkness died very suddenly on the 21st. You will see a notice of her death in the papers.

ENVELOPE: embossed (no post mark, but note "paid 10.)
addressed to: Miss Louisa Chaplin
North Clarendon Vermont

LETTER:

Sacramento City
Sept. 15th 1855

My Dear Louisa.

Since writing to you last I have firmly made up my mind to settle up my affairs in this country and leave it at the earliest moment which will probably be some time next spring. Say in Feb or March. We have some contracts with others that cannot possibly be closed before the 1st of January.

My course may of appearance strange to you and doubtless it does, but if you could of fully understood, the situation of our business affairs and my connections there with I think at least it would look quite differant. My property is and has been in company with others. at times I have thought perhaps that it would be the best thing that could be done to settle in this country: there are many advantages that is precuniary ones with a beautiful climate which taken together have at times over-ballanced the many objections such as a final separation from the old and early associations of youth the model institutions of New England and the excellent society every where there to be found.

I am well aware that the objections spoken of would bear more heavily upon a lady than a gentleman, whose mind is in one continual state of excitement with business affairs by which he is surrounded.

I think that if we meet with no sad disasters in closing up our affairs that I can leave California with a small competency.

I feel almost certain that you will approve of this course, which I shall put into execution if life and health permit.

Brother George is attending school in Sacramento. His health is improving and I think eventualy he will regain his former good health.

The Know Nothings have carried this State by about 5,000 majority and elected J. Neely Johnson Governor.

The village of Grass Valley was destroyed by fire night before last, lost estimated at \$ 400,000.

Our markets are abundantly supplied with Grapes, Pears and fine Peaches. There are a few apples they come mostly from Oregon.

There was one hundred deaths on the Steamer Uncle Sam, just in from Nicarangue - Cause Cholera.

The Spring of the year is much the healthiest time to travel from here to the States or vica versa

How the wheels of Time roll on, it is now nearly two years since I parted with you and almost Six since I first left Vermont for California. What a change has taken place. Many of my acquaintances are dead and others have gone into the wide world to continue with its ups and downs.

I trust that you are enjoying yourself and that you and all of your friends are in good health.

I shall be very happy to hear from you as often as you can find it convenient to write during my short stay in California which I now confidently believe will not exceed six months. Still I have found out by experience that everything in the future is very uncertain.

I have been stopping here a few days on business, but shall leave in a day or two for home. John the Frenchman is at work in this city, he is well and is Steady and faithful.

From your Lover

Thomas McConnell

Envelope: Postmarked Rutland VT Dec 3 Paid 10.

Mr. Thomas McConnell
Garden Valley, California

Letter:

Rutland VT Dec 2nd 1855

Dearest,

Yours of 2nd of Nov was rec'd yesterday , by which I am happy to hear of your good health, also that of your brothers. Good health is indeed one source to human happiness it then befits us to take that course which shall both promote our moral and physical health, as are mortally essential to a good end.

Your friends here are at present enjoying unusual health. Your respected Aunt Sarah is yet feeble but able to be about and rides out occasionally. It is not expected that she can long remain in this world. She is a Worthy person, capable of doing much good here. But, ah! how off the best are first to be taken from us. None are more worthy of that blest abode. Yet have much. With the precepts of the Most-High do we meet their light and influence to cheer and guide us aright.

Death has marked many of your former friends and acquaintances during your sojourn in Cal. A kind fathers voice is no longer heard and other friends I need not mention. Yet I trust that they abide in a happier home.

My friend, have oft are we reminded of the frailty of man. I have recently been informed of the death of Miss C. M. Fisher, the lady who officiates in taking care of my friend Miss Emeline Wright. I have corresponded with her the past year. She also made me a week's visit in Sept. I found her to be a person of more than ordinary intellect kind and amiable in disposition and calculated worthfulness, but she's gone to fortake of the joys of the immortal state, that kindly invites the weary traveller to a home of rest.

Sometimes when I look around and think of the uncertainty of life a shade of sorrow pervades my mind with the thought that we may never meet again. Yet I cannot dwell upon so sad a theme. Although it may be come true, I can only say "The Lord's Will be done" trusting we shall meet on your bright shores to part no more. Oh! I can not think we shall meet no more in this life, one who claims my present affections. Surely I hope we shall meet again. I shall look upon the bright side and trust in the goodness of One who rules the universe.

Ere this reached you a New Year will have dawn upon us. May it be a 'Happy One' to you and richest blessings be yours to share more and ever.

May those bright-gems of Virtue, Truth and Goodness, which alone elevates mankind, ever adorn our lives., it is the surest and only foundation of happiness.

Gladly do we have the dawning of another Spring. May it's gentle breezes waft thee safely home, where kind friends will give you a welcome greeting. We are happy that your brother Samuel anticipates accompanying you. We are indeed expecting you all and hope it may be possible for you all to come.

Thomas you will not leave Francis in Cal. will you. I hope he will return with you. My best wishes and regards to you all.

Mr. Thomas McConnell sotre ami Louisa
Chaplin

(postscripts in the margins)

Mr. Willoughbly friends are in good health. His father called here today. Sends his best wishes and hope for sucess. I recently visited Mr. Barrows family they are prospering nicely.

I would say that our progress in Music is gradual. My friend it is Thanksgiving here on Thursday of this week. Would be happy of your company at this time.

Thomas you must not labor too hard.

Envelope: None

Letter:

Garden Valley, January 30, 1856

Dear Louisa,

I received your excellent communication of Dec 2nd by due course of mail and was very happy to learn that our friends were generally in good health. Aunt Sarah has not enjoyed good health for a long series of years and I have often thought it very remarkable that she could endure what she has so long. True she is a worthy person, but death makes no distinctions; in due time he calls alike upon all, high or low, rich or poor.

When we are reminded of the frailty of man and the uncertainty of life by the death of our early friends and associates, a feeling of sadness naturally comes over the mind: such doubtless was the case when you wrote to me last. But Hope should ever be our watch word.

*"Auspicious Hope in thy sweet garden grow
Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every wo.
Cold in the dust this perished heart may lie,
But that which warmed it once shall never die.
Cease every joy, to glimmer on my mind
But leave-oh leave the light of Hope behind"*

I trust you will pardon me for inserting the few lines from Campbell (something I seldom do) as they express my feelings much better than I could write them.

Samuel and myself are now making arrangements to leave California next April. We want to attend the Democratic National Convention to be holden in Cincinnati next May. Our business will necessarily be left in an unsettled condition, which will require at least one of us to return. Our affairs however on the whole look quite flattering. Brother George has fully recovered from his sickness, he feels well and has no desire to return to VT.

I am twenty nine years old to day, no grey hairs yet. Still I have no doubt but the cares and anxieties of life have left their mark. The wheels of time are rolling rapidly around truly, it seems but yesterday that I were a school boy roaming over the cold and rugged hills of Vermont.

Samuel Willoughby has been working for us this winter and last fall, he is a worthless fellow.

I am happy to hear that you are making progress in Music, and regret that I can not join in your Thanksgiving dinner, but will endeavor to be with you once more on the 19th of May hoping we shall have no cause to render the meeting of 1856 less joyous and happy than was the one in 1853.

Trusting that it may be yours long to enjoy good health, happiness and prosperity, I remain as ever your sincere friend, Thomas McConnell

Envelope: Postmarked Rutland VT Feb 17 1856

Mr. Thomas McConnell

Garden Valley, California (Written in pencil on envelope, George L.
Bradish, Elk Creek

Letter:

Rutland, Feb 17, 1856

My Dear Thomas,

Yours of Jan 1st was gratefully rec'd on the 4th inst. in an hour of affliction being at the time with sister Susan aiding her in the care of a dear little son about a year old who was very sick. He is now nearly restored and with proper care will soon be well.

I was happy to hear of the good health of yourself and brothers and am with much pleasure anticipating your immediate return. I had indeed been expecting you this Steamer, but as cruel fate has thus preadministered, We have alike been doomed to disappointment. Your friends in VT are generally in good health with the exception of your dear Aunt Sarah. She is quite feeble and probably must soon bid adieu to all things earthly. It seems hard to see one whose usefulness is so much needed so early fade away, but such is life. We are but transitory Creatures born but to taste of the joys & sorrows of this life, and in God's command pass to the better land.

Mr. L. Lowely has sold his residence in Rutland and purchased a Hotel in Bethel hence tommorrow.

Your Mother is about commencing a task which I think will require assistance. Hope it maybe favored her. My friend be assured that I have not been insensible of your long absence. Nor did I think it could be so long protracted. It may be all right 'tis not for me to say.

I trust that you may soon join the loved ones at home. The guidance of Heaven attending you ever. I am truly thine L. Chaplin

Envelope:

Embossed, No stamp or Date
Miss Louisa Chaplin
North Clarendon, Vermont

Letter:

Garden Valley March 18th 1856

My Dear Louisa,

Your excellent communication of Feb. 17th came to hand last evening and as there is an opportunity of answering by return mail, I gladly improve it.

I have no reliable information in regard to Mr. Leach. (Have heard an idle rumor that should not be made public, until it's truth could be substantiated I therefore refrain from saying more)

Hope your sister Susan's boy has fully recovered ere this and that my dear Aunt Sarah may yet be spared to pursue still further her course of usefulness here on earth.

I have not met Mr. Griswold for sometime. I called at his former place of business in San Francisco the past summer and ascertained that he had left for the mines, since which time I have not hear from him.

Samuel and myself attended the Democratic Convention that assembled in Sacramento City on the 5th of the month. Samuel was honored with the position of vice president of the convention and your humble servant was elected alternate Delegate to attend the national Convention to assemble in Cincinnati next May.

I suppose you will be somewhat surprised when I inform you that Samuel & myself have purchased a farm of about two thousand acres on the Macome River situated on the road between Sacramento City and Stockton. About eighteen miles from Sacramento City. Nevertheless it is true. We pay ten thousand dollars. It is one of the finest situations in this or any other country. There is a good brick house on it that cost about \$ 7000. A barn and some other improvements. Can cut two to three hundred tons of good hay on it now in its present condition. Furthermore it is in a healthy locality and good neighbor. Do not think too much of it until you see it and then judge for yourself. Brother George is now stopping on the place.

I now intend to start for the Atlantic States on the 5th of April next. Think I shall get away this time.

The weather is delightful. It has had more the appearance of Spring for the past three months, than Winter. Many flowers are now in bloom. Peach trees were in bloom three weeks ago. Our business affairs are still in a flourishing conditions and myself and Brothers are all in good health.

Hoping this will reach you in good health and still continue to find you in fine spirits. I remain as ever -your affectionate friend,

Thomas McConnell