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Following the October 1859 Harpers Ferry Raid, led by abolitionist John Brown, Brown and six co-conspirators were captured and executed by hanging that following spring. Among these six was Aaron Dwight Stevens, considered Brown's chief military aide and the only one among them with previous military experience. The Connecticut-born Stevens had served in the First Dragoons, where he had been court-martialed and imprisoned under dubious circumstances and later escaped from Fort Leavenworth to join the free state forces. In the final period of his life, Stevens became romantically involved with Jennie Dunbar (later June Leigh Dunbar Garcelon, 1835-1928), a music teacher from Ashtabula County, Ohio, who would work as a dressmaker in her later years following Stevens' death.

Offered here is a letter by Dunbar to her father Henry R. Smith on Sept. 1, 1860 from Cherry Valley, Ohio, previously unknown to scholarship, detailing her relationship with Stevens and giving a firsthand account of his death and the aftermath. Dunbar wrote this letter to her father, and somehow a copy ended up in the possession of Edith M. Brown, John Brown's granddaughter. The copy offered is in the hand of Edith M. Brown, copying the original, which is presumed lost. The letter begins with in the summer preceding the raid, Stevens became acquainted with Jennie Dunbar, “I was introduced to Mr. Stevens a year ago last June at Mr. Lindley’s, (where he was then stopping for a while... where I was then giving lessons, going there twice a
week during the summer time…”

“I can not say whether I saw him almost every time or not. I saw him often and often played and sung for him with the rest of the household but never was alone with him but once.”

“I overtook him as I was coming home on horseback and he walking. He walked about a mile beside my horse and we talked of books and men, not of ourselves at all, that I remember. That was the only time we ever spent alone.” After these few encounters, Stevens soon departed, leaving Jennie with a [picture] of himself. Soon after he had communicated to a mutual acquaintance his affection for Jennie and his hope they’d get together: “thinking me worthy him, there was no desire nearer her heart than that we should be united. I also found that he had told her that he loved me and could not be happy without me. He had also told her that she should write the same to me, and the letters, two of them, came through her to me”

Jennie did not however share his same level of interest, and speaks of her intend to write him to say as much, but before she is able to news of the raid, Stevens capture, and death sentenced reach her, and she decides it would be unkind to dissuade him of his affections: “before the letters were mailed, tidings of the Harpers Ferry outbreak reached us and even if it had been possible to send him letters of such a character it would only have added pain to his death pangs we thought as he was reported in a dying state, you know.”

After their capture, efforts were made by those in the Abolitionist movement to offer the prisoners support, or to find means to stay their executions. James Redpath, an anti-slavery activist and journalist, relayed to Jennie that Stevens had requested that he might see her. As the letter explains, Jennie at first did not want to do this, however entreaties from members of John Brown’s family, and other anti-slavery friends, convinced her to do her part to either help free Stevens or offer him what comfort she could.

“The Browns with other anti-slavery friends came to me to ask me to think of it again saying I might save his life. Then I resolved to go, for no effort was too great when there was even a faint hope of doing him good and I felt ashamed of my hesitation as I said, “It is so sad if, when he has so daringly and unselfishly laid down his life for the negro, there is not a woman strong and fearless enough to make at least an effort to save him or failing to do that, try to make his last hours as happy as may be” Following this is an account of Jennie’s journey from Ohio to New Jersey, and then to Virginia. Along the way she relates a number of personal anecdotes about her interactions with abolitionists, and other family and friends of the condemned prisoners.

Arriving in Virginia however, Jennie fails to persuade the Virginia Governor John Letcher to stay Steven’s execution and writes with a poetic bitterness about her encounter:

“under the coldest snows, sweet little violets are often found, and I thought there might be some fresh green thing, even in the desolation of that Slave Holders heart, and there was even then a hope that I might be permitted to remove the ice, that had accumulated over the violets there, and being a proof that all was not dead yet, and it was only when I saw the cold man and heard from his lips the cruel words, which convinced me, that it was
Jennie Dunbar Letter Regarding Aaron Stevens

not as a prisoner and convict that Mr. Stevens was to be executed but as a man, who had proved himself so far superior to the brute Fletcher that enraged animal, because the man had gained his hatred and was in his power had determined to put the man to death for his audacity, in daring to be so much better than he. Hope died then.”

What then follows is an intimate, poignant, detailed account of the time that she and other close relatives spent with the prisoners, both the evening before the execution,

“Mr. Stevens seemed to forget that there was any sadness in life or death, and indeed all the time there was strong and cheerful as if in his expectation he was to receive great joy, instead of pain... and during the evening Mr. Stevens talked, laughed, sung and read to us as naturally as he ever acted. I looked on in wonder, I had never before seen a Free Thinker near death and did not know a Moralists faith would serve” As well as the morning right before the execution:

“...the dear lips now speaking words of comfort to us would soon be hushed forever. We sat down to the last meal for them, both prisoners calm as if they had never heard of the scaffold which was then being prepared in the jail yard for them... young braves so soon to be offered up as a sacrifice to the spirit of Slavery...” This is followed by her telling of her anguish at the funeral, and her weary journey home:

“You have seen a report of the funeral, no doubt, and I will not repeat it... The bodies could not be seen on account of their state. You have seen it stated that Mr. Stevens died in agony. His features were my fearfully distorted, his face very black and all of his flesh that was visible, the blood having gushed from mouth, nose and eyes, so as to completely saturate his hair.... In my exhaustion produced by bodily fatigue, loss of sleep and mental excitement, it seemed all I could bear, to know that the dear strong man had suffered so”

This letter, having been written soon after the occasion, provides the most contemporaneous articulation of Jennie Dunbar’s part in this story. A review of archival holdings and writings on John Brown and Aaron Stevens show no reference to this letter having ever been cited. Only one other account originates from Jennie Stevens herself, but this account may be from over a decade after the incident when she is married. Different sources speculate at the nature of Jenny’s relationship with Stevens, and whether she was a lover, friend or fiancé. This account is notable in her clear articulation of their relationship, and what had transpired between them.

Names, dates and events described in the letter correspond with other sources to validate its authenticity and many of the details within the letter give a candid picture of her experience. The letter itself is not an original but is stated on the letter to have been copied by John Brown’s granddaughter, Edith Brown, in 1888. Effort was made in our research to verify that this letter has not been previously used in research. This included searches in the works of Richard Josiah Hinton and Oswald Garrison Villard who were lifetime experts on the subject of the John Brown and the Harper’s Ferry Raid. Both additionally left archival material with the Kansas State Historical Society and the Columbia University, but
Jennie Dunbar Letter Regarding Aaron Stevens

neither contain this letter. Searches related to Jennie Dunbar generally were done in online databases and in Newspapers.com to corroborate the story told in the letter. In addition Lou DeCaro Jr., associate professor of Church History at Alliance Theological Seminary, and author of “Fire from the Midst of You”: A Religious Life of John Brown and Freedom’s Dawn: The Last Days of John Brown in Virginia — and “lifelong student of John Brown” — was consulted and he confirmed this letter has not previously been cited in literature on the subject.

Overall a significant document that should be of interest to scholars of John Brown and his circle, the aftermath in Virginia and the Abolition movement more broadly.

Sources:

1894 Biennial Report, Kansas State Historical Society


$3,750
Signed Portrait of the Boxer Cecil Phillips.

Washington or environs, 1938. Silver gelatin print measuring 9 ⅛ x 6 ⅛ inches. Some creasing, very good.

A signed photograph of the boxer Cecil Phillips – of whom we find no record besides a negative in the Smithsonian's Scurlock collection of this image. The photograph is signed twice by Phillips, and dated April 1, 1938. The Scurlock Studio played a significant role in photographically documenting the African-American communities of Washington D.C. and its environs during this period.
Portrait of a Seated Saxophone Player, Likely in Washington D.C. or Nearby, c. 1940s.

Silver gelatin print measuring 5 x 7 inches on an 8 x 10 sheet. Some folds and marks, very good.

A portrait of a seated tenor saxophonist taken by Scurlock Studios in Washington DC, circa 1940s or so. The subject is possibly a student, or perhaps a member of a professional band. We are unable to date the photograph specifically, though our best guess is it was taken circa the 1940s or so. Scurlock Studios played a vital role in documenting African-American life in Washington, D.C., and nearby, during the period.

$375
A captivating three-page manuscript penned by the Spanish plenipotentiary minister in Washington (ambassador) to the Spanish Governor of Cuba, Ángel Calderón de la Barca, concerning the issue of slaves 'stolen' by US citizens. Calderón de la Barca describes his actions surrounding a high-profile case - which he would bring up in the Amistad proceedings - involving the emancipation of an enslaved chef in Havana named Manuel by John Smith, a mate on the Brigantine Swiftsure of Massachusetts.

After a concise introduction, the ambassador, Ángel Calderón de la Barca, includes the complete letter he recently dispatched to the Secretary of State of Massachusetts following an incident where an American citizen allegedly 'stole' a enslaved chef in Havana and returned to Boston with him. The incident, which took place in November 1836, is portrayed as part of 'a serious and perilous trend', a sentiment even acknowledged by the Massachusetts' official. Calderón de la Barca urges his correspondent to take legislative measures to penalize such theft, especially as opponents of slavery in the US are hindering obstacles to oppose to the restitution of Africans' slaves.

The enslaver, Daniel Warrens, a British citizen listed as an 'artisan,' witnessed his cook, an enslaved individual named Manuel, brought to Boston by 'Juan' (John) Smith aboard the Brigantine Swiftsure. Calderón de la Barca recalls being assured that a 'special law' would be enacted to enable the 'criminal prosecution' of the 'thief' in Massachusetts, otherwise, legislation would be proposed to the US Congress to determine sanctions for such offenders. He further notes that he has not received communication from the State of Massachusetts since, and that Warrens 'is still deprived of his property.' The suggestion by the Secretary of State to sue John Smith in the US was dismissed, as Warrens was unwilling to pay the 'enormous' fees for such action, especially considering it was 'all but certain that it would be
useless.’

Throughout the letter, Calderon de la Barca emphasizes not only the restitution of the ex-enslaved individuals but also payment of interest to compensate for the enslavers’ losses. The manuscript concludes with a brief note to the Spanish governor, Joaquín Ezpeleta Enrile, extending his regards.

Calderon de la Barca would cite the Warrens / Smith / Manuel case in his testimony in the Amistad case, stating, in a rebuttal to the arguments of John Quincy Adams, that Smith’s actions are a representative example of anti-slavery zeal,

“...The undersigned does not apprehend that the fears herein expressed by him will be deemed exaggerated or unfounded. No one is ignorant of the existence of a considerable number of persons who, prompted by a zeal which it does not belong to him to qualify, are employing all the means which knowledge and wealth can afford for effecting, at any price, the emancipation of the slaves. Many of them, either because they are persuaded of the philanthropy of their designs, or assuming this virtue as a cloak, have no hesitation in repaying the hospitality they receive by the seduction of the slaves of their host, especially if they are skilful in any trade.

“Having induced them to abandon their masters, they ship them on board some vessel, where they retain them in a worse state of captivity than before, or send them to the United States to be set at liberty; thus appropriating to themselves the property of another, and deliberately committing a theft, while, perhaps, they believe that they are performing a meritorious act. In the meantime, the only resource of the ruined Spanish proprietor is to apply, at an enormous expense, to the tribunals of a foreign country, where in many places public opinion throws in the way of the applicant for justice, in matters of this nature, insuperable obstacles. Of the many cases that might be referred to, in proof of the justice of this remark, one is that of John Smith, mate of the brig Swiftsure, who concealed and brought away with him a negro who was cook in a hotel where he was staying; upon which subject the undersigned wrote to the Secretary of State on the 19th of November, 1836, and now addresses him again in a separate communication. That the fears of the undersigned are not without foundation, is also evident from the excitement which this occurrence has produced in the public mind, from the language used by some of the public papers in relating it, and from the exertions that many persons have commenced making in favor of the revolted slaves of the ‘Amistad,’ for whose defence they have engaged some of the most able counsellors of Boston, New Haven and New York.”


Overall an interesting document detailing the diplomatic and legal maneuverings surrounding this case, a precursor to the Amistad case, which should be of interest to scholars of enslavement in Cuba during the period and of Cuban / United States relations.

$3,500
The Plantation Club opened in 1936, occupying the space formerly held by the Cotton Club at 142nd St. and Lenox Avenue. The year after they opened, they renamed a bar inside the club the “Bojangles Bar” after Bill Robinson. Offered here is the program celebrating the occasion of the renaming, which included performances by Mae Johnson, Barrington Guy, Tondelayo, Avon Long, Three Gobs and Wessels and Spencer. We find no other records of the program, and can’t confirm how long the Bojangles Bar existed, though one account of goings on at the bar a year later in 1938 also mention it by name.
An interesting pair of letters to William Philip Perrin, who owned plantations in Jamaica which he inherited from his father. The letters are significant for the discussion of the enslaved workforces in Jamaican plantations at the time, and also provide insight on the Laing family and the status of ‘Free Mulatto’ residents of Jamaica under British colonial rule. Malcolm Laing (1718-1781), had two children with Elizabeth Fickle, a ‘free mulatto woman of color.’ One of the children, Robert Laing, would eventually become an attorney in Jamaica despite his status as a “Free Mulatto.” It is notable that the recipient of both letters is Perrin, as Elizabeth Fickle appears to have been granted her freedom by Perrin’s father, William Perrin.

The first letter, dated April 10, 1772, is written by Malcolm Laing, who owned the Spring Valley plantation in St. Mary. Laing had two children with Elizabeth Fickle, a ‘Free Mulatto Woman.’ Fickley had been “bequeathed £50 Jamaican currency per annum for life, 10 enslaved people, 20 acres of land and a house in the will of William Perrin,” (Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, http://wwwdepts-live.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146651089), the father of William Philip Perrin. In the letter, Laing discusses various matters relating to sugar production, including the enslaved individuals working on the estate. Laing writes,

“I am just now returned from Vere to Kingston... How the crops will be sent home this year I cannot tell, there being so great a scarcity of Ships all over the Island & good crops made everywhere. You will make at least 120 hhds at Vere...This year I shall be able to send you upwards of 500 hhds of Sugar from the different Estates. As Capt. Crisp did not arrive in time with the clothing for Vere, was obliged to supply the Negroes at Christmas the usual time, those sent by Crisp will serve for next year. Therefore you need not send any clothing until the year after for that Estate...
The second letter, written on April 24, 1783, also to Perrin by Jacques and Fisher, who managed several plantations in Jamaica, is longer and contains much on Laing and his estate, in particular the case of his son Robert Laing and his legal career. They also offer opinions on varied topics relating to their enslaved workforce, including the proposition to purchase enslaved individuals from the United States. They write,

“In regard to the American Negroes, we flatter ourselves we have already said enough to satisfy you of the impropriety of pursuing the measure you pointed out, of either a lease, or purchase, or even the hire of these people, for any term whatever. Upon the arrival of those Negroes in this Country, the same advantages which you take notice of, immediately occurred to many proprietors of Estates here, who hired several gangs of them for a year certain.

These Gentlemen are now so perfectly convinced of their having been mistaken, and of the inability of those people to the common labour of Estates, that many of them wish for an expiration of their agreement. Mr. Simon Taylor says they will not answer, and Sutherland, who has an opportunity of seeing how they go on in that Parish, and neighborhood, advises to have nothing to say to them. It is your interest only we are studying when we recommend it you to drop all thoughts of this measure.

The plan you lay down in your letter of the 4th of Febry for the improvement of your Estates, strikes us at once as a measure highly proper, and what we have for some time past had in contemplation. Those Negroes who have been inured to jobbing and the drudgery work upon Estates, are most certainly your object, and by far the more preferable of the two. We shall endeavour by every means in our power to accomplish this upon the footing you mention, having a due regard to what you suppose may be the average price of Sugar...”

The letter then focuses on the Laing estate,

“The second two hundred pounds you paid to Mrs. Cowan is credited in your account with Mr. Laing’s Estate, copies of which, and the other accounts shall be sent you by the Man of War. We cannot say exactly the sum we shall be under the necessity of drawing for this year - but this you may rely upon, that we shall be as moderate as we possibly can. The last year's balance that may be due to ourselves shall remain untouched, unless something very urgent should oblige us to draw for a few hundred pounds. Upon account of Mr. Laing's balance, we hope not to exceed the sum of Three thousand pounds Sterling, if even so much - that, and the purchase money of the Negroes for B. Mountain last year, we think will be all. ..

In regard to Robert Laing. We have consulted with Doctor Nasmyth and other friends of his late father, who are all of opinion, that the circumstance of colour, which you seem to think will operate against him in England, will still be in greater force here, and upon the whole that the difficulties will be found more numerous here than at home. We must acknowledge that this coincides perfectly with our own opinion, and more especially now, that his inclination seems to have taken a turn to the study of the Law, a profession which of all others, the circumstance of colour would operate very forcibly, and be a strong objection against his success in this Country. Should he at last incline to fix his residence here, the [...] certainly seems more promising than anything in the mercantile way, as he may then be able to avail
himself of the whole of his little patrimony without any kind of risque..."

Robert Laing would eventually practice law in Jamaica, despite the issues raised by Jaques and Fisher. Provenance: These letters were among 600 letters and documents sold at Cavendish Philatelic Auctions in 1989 from the Fitzherbert estate, before the bulk of the Fitzherbert Collection was donated to the Derbyshire Records Office, which made microfilm copies of the letters before the sale.
A signed portrait of Samuel Lecount Cook, Sr., likely taken during his time at University of Michigan, where he graduated in 1880. Before his untimely death, Cook, Sr. practiced medicine in Washington D.C., where he was a specialist in gynecology, studying for a spell with Lawson Tait in Birmingham, England. His son, Samuel Lecount Cook, Jr., was a noted physician in Washington, D.C. as well, and was a member of the Howard University medical faculty. This photograph is signed by Cook in Washington, D.C., and with the backstamp of an Ann Arbor photographer we assume it was taken during his time at Michigan, and signed later upon his return to Washington. We find no other record of this photograph.

Ann Arbor, c. 1880. Albumen photograph measuring 3 ¾ x 2 ⅜ inches on larger mount. Signed by Cook on verso. Fine condition.

$875
Realphoto Postcard of Four Identified African-American Officers in France During World War One.


A photograph taken in France of four sergeants in the Co. B 340th Service Battalion. Three of the subjects are identified: Sgt. Eugene Brown of Youngstown, Ohio; Sgt. George Guthrie of Wichita, Kansas; and Bruce V. Brown of Springfield, Ohio. The photograph is printed on French postcard stock. The group is wearing overcoats and appear in front of an old building. Overall a compelling image that should be of interest to scholars of African-American military contributions in France during the conflict.
An early and apparently unrecorded piece of sheet music by John William Boone, published early in his career when he was under the management of John Lange, Jr. Lange, a contractor by trade who owned a concert hall in Columbia, Missouri, began working with Boone in 1879, convincing Boone's mother, Rachel Boone Hendricks, that he would take care of Boone and not exploit him. Lange formed the Blind Boone Company, and apparently took the lead in publishing Boone's compositions - as this piece is copyrighted by Lange and Raisor [?]. Boone and Lange began working together when Boone was fifteen, with Lange promising him half ownership in the company when he turned twenty-one. At the time of this composition, Boone was still self-taught. He took piano lessons with Mary Sampson in 1883 and learned some classical compositions and techniques, which led to increased success. We find no copies of this in any auction records or in OCLC. The only other entry for Boone under the pseudonym Blind John during this time period is a broadside from 1882 held at Brown University. Overall a very scarce relic of this early period of Boone's career when he was working locally in obscurity.

S. Brainard’s Sons, 1881. Sheet music 14 x 11 inches, 5 pp., with some chipping to extremities, else fine.

$2,750
Blind Boone Concert Co. Admit One.

Blind Boone Concert Co., c. 1880s-1910s. Concert ticket measuring 4 ¼ x 1 ¼ inches. Small chip to corner else fine.

A concert ticket, stamped “Complimentary,” for the Blind Boone Concert Co. We are unsure exactly the date of the concert, as Boone performed under this company name into the twentieth century. This arrived with an early piece of sheet music (1881), but due to the fact that Boone was performing under the “Blind Boone Company” name at that period, we are unable to prove any link between the two. The card stock suggests 1880s or 1890s to us though we can’t say specifically. Boone toured prolifically and began to enjoy success after the mid 1880s.
A poster advertising the presidential campaign of Dick Gregory, who ran for office in 1968, garnering 45,000 votes. The poster parodies the trope of the “Wanted” poster. Gregory declared during his campaign that the United States was “worth saving.” A particularly fine copy of this iconic poster with no notable flaws.
This illustration of five African-American members of various congresses was featured in James Blaine’s 1884 memoir “Twenty Years in Congress” on page 303. The engraving shows five prominent legislators from the Reconstruction era. Among them, Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina stood as the first African-American representative in Congress, while James T. Rapier hailed as one of Alabama’s earliest representatives. The trio from Mississippi comprised Hiram R. Revels, the state’s pioneering African-American senator; Blanche K. Bruce, the first to complete a full term; and John R. Lynch, their inaugural United States Representative. Wellstood and Company first appear in records in 1879, though the family has a printing history that precedes that date from several years. The engraving was likely completed prior to William Wellstead’s death in 1883. A very nice example of an engraving that often appears in lesser condition.

The transcript of the debates in Congress following the Hamburg Massacre, which as a seminal event in South Carolina’s history and in the use of violence as a form of voter suppression. The pamphlet here reproduces the debates in Congress in July 15th and 18th of 1876, debating whether or not to withdraw Federal troops from South Carolina and reassign them to Texas. Robert Smalls, the formerly enslaved Congressman from South Carolina’s Seventh District, was among those who spoke in favor of maintaining a troop presence in the state. The pamphlet was printed likely by the Republican National Committee to share the news of the massacre.

Washington?, 1876. 8vo, 16 pp. Some tape repairs to margins else fine, very good condition overall.

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Bring U.S. Together.
Vote Chisholm 1972,
Unbought and Unbossed.


An iconic poster from Shirley Chisholm’s 1972 presidential campaign. This is a particularly fine example, with no notable flaws.
William Partridge, born in West Virginia, moved to Boston and opened a photography studio with his brother Edward and father. The brothers then relocated to Portland in the 1880s, and made two trips to Alaska, one in 1886 and one in 1887. William soon moved back to Boston and continued his photographic studio, and his images of Alaska and the west coast were sold with his Boston studio imprint.

Collected here are eleven images from William's trip in 1886. Images are as follows: Norris Glacier; [Untitled Image of a Ship in front of a Glacier]; Sitka Home Mission; By Indian River, Near Sitka; Peril Straits; Muir Glacier; Peril Straits; By Indian River, Near Sitka; [same]; [Untitled Photograph of an Inlet with Icebergs]; [Untitled Photograph of subjects Standing on a Glacier]. Overall the group offers an uncommonly complete portrayal of Partridge's trip and provide some of the earliest photographs of Alaska's glaciers and scenery.

$1750
The Nebraska Indians were perhaps the most successful and longest tenured American Indian barnstorming baseball team, playing for twenty-one years, from 1897-1917, and touring prolifically. The first team was composed of players from the Genoa Industrial and Agricultural School, the Santee Normal School, and the nearby Omaha and Winnebago reservations. Guy Wilder Green, a young lawyer who had graduated from the University of Nebraska Law School, organized the team after watching the Genoa Industrial School team play. Green would eventually recruit players from the network of indigenous boarding schools that were active at the time, and pick up other players including Euro-Americans while touring from town to town. This image, of which we find no similar examples, shows the team in 1909, the year in which the Nebraska State Journal reported that the team had won thirty-nine of its last forty games. While some postcards, which were sold as souvenirs, exist in the trade, photographs are less common, with only one to our knowledge appearing in auction records. This image, which shows the team in their baseball uniforms and without any stereotypical props, as were used in much of the advertising material, is an important record of the team.
Lewis Meyer’s journal, written between February 1849 and April 1852, is a remarkable record of a German emigrant’s voyage to San Francisco during the peak of the Gold Rush. In it, Meyer recounts in great detail his journey from New York and around Cape Horn to San Francisco in search of gold, his time around various gold mine sites in California, and his return—after the unsuccessful venture—to the east coast of the US and out to Europe. Comprised of Meyer’s massive original journal from the first part of 1849, and unique copies of his journals from his time in California afterward, the group comprises an important primary source. Meyer’s detailed descriptions of his journey—from clandestine seagull pot pie parties and passenger revolts at sea to dancehall brawls to observations of the emerging American social strata and indigenous populations in California, various places including at sea, New York, Talcahuano, Concepcion, and San Francisco, 3 February - 9 September 1849. [With:] MEYER, William James (1864-1938). Autograph transcript of Lewis Meyer’s later journals (now presumed lost), 1934, covering the periods 10 September 1849 - 5 January 1850; 14 February - 18 April 1852. Text in English and German. 314 pages, 12 1/3 x 7 ½ inches, written in ink over older ledger entries in several places, occasional penciled corrections (some marginal wear, light dampstains and occasional soiling). Bound manuscript day book (spine separated and early pages loose). Leather boards with black tooling, ribbed spine with label (rubbed at extremities, soiled spots, blade marks, small loss to label). 1934 transcripts: 79 pages, various sizes, but mostly 8 ¾ x 8 inches, some pages joined at top margins (occasionnal marginal tears and losses, but overall very good). Translations in this description from Salvatore John Manna, To The Land of Promise: The Extraordinary California Gold Rush Journal of Lewis Meyer, Burson, CA: Calaveras History Publishing, 2023.
California - offer a rich and compelling history of the first wave of Euro-American migration to California.

Meyer was born in 1818 in Hanover, Germany. He describes himself in his journal as,

“Having been born and brought up by wealthy parents, [and] consequently having imbibed a certain spirit of independence from childhood.” (November 28, 1849)

His life certainly reflects this. He emigrated to New York in 1838, established a grocery business, and set about learning English. Ten years after his arrival in New York, the New York Herald announced that gold had been found in California; within a few months, Lewis and his brother Marx Meyer answered an advertisement in the newspaper: $100 a share to join the California Mutual Association in purchasing the ship Panama and sailing out to California.

Aboard the Panama

Lewis Meyer’s journal begins as the Panama sets sail for San Francisco, on February 3, 1849, with “the departing California gold seeking adventurers.” For the next 187 days, Meyer kept a meticulous record – from longitude and latitude, to weather and food, to remarkable descriptions of nature and the people around him, to even the formation of a mining company, complete with its constitution and bylaws.

It takes the argonauts some time to settle into their new environs, but spirits are high nonetheless. Meyer, quite an able writer even in his second language, describes a striking scene:

“The rain pouring down in torrents; the angry waves dashing fearfully against the sides of our lonely craft, threatening it with instant destruction—combined with the disorder and confusion on bord, produced by the pitching and heaving of the vessel and the briny flood washing her deck—can never be conceived by any one except an eyewitness. Although this awful spectacle (of which I have given but a very faint description) might tend to frighten persons, not accustomed to sea life, I was glad to see none, a few excepted, out of 202 passengers on bord, voice any apprehension. On the contrary if any one fell rolled or tumbled about the deck, or was washed all over and over it caused the greatest laughter and merriment among the spectators at the expence [sic] of the victim imaginable.” (February 19)

The California Mutual association, which held elections every month (documented by Meyer), ran the ship with its passengers’ comfort in mind – including, for entertainment, “weekly debates and lectures” (February 23). The debates included one on the question, “Is war a necessary evil” (February 27) and, appropriately, “Is the individual possession of wealth productive of more good than evil” (March 20); and the lectures included the topics of “Human progress” (February 30) and “the imagination” (March 16), and a lecture which noticeably displeases Meyer,

“Mr. Palmer an oldish man [...] who was by no means competent of the task, on the “Origin of the different races of man.” The lecturer [...] kept the audience almost constantly in a roar of laughter. He made among the rest, the following observation: “Will any one charge Adam with being the father of blacks?” [...] The lecturer positively denied, that the Blacks originated from Adam.” (March 9).
Thirty-five days out to sea, Meyer, his brother Marx, and six others form the Independent Mining Company, with Lewis Meyer as president. Meyer takes down the Company’s constitution and bylaws, which include an enviable sick leave policy:

“Every member of this company shall receive an equal share of all the profits arising from mining trading and other sources and bear an equal part, of all expenses of the company. In case any member should be taken sick, he shall receive the same benefit as if in the enjoyment of good health.” (March 9)

Throughout March and April, the weather is foul, and the passengers amuse themselves—to Meyer’s displeasure—mainly by hunting various seabirds, which are “slaughtered, in the most cruel manner” (April 6). Ever adventurous, though, Meyer finds that he has a taste for the “glorious misery” of life at sea (April 5). In April, rumblings of displeasure about food onboard—and the CMA’s management of it—come to a head, and protests start in earnest:

“Some persons put up a paper in front of the cabin, on which an old bony horse, a barrel, marked “Panama stores” and our ship at sea, was represented. A short rhyme was written below, throwing out insinuations about our association especially, at the officers thereof. The consequence was, that we had pilot bread for dinner again, what other effects it will have, remains to be seen yet.” (April 6)

Indeed, there was some reason to be suspicious about the disbursement of food stores—some individuals had been using the ship’s flour to put together pot pies “manufactured from some sea birds [...] after most of the passengers had retired to their births” (April 7). A new president of the CMA is “elevated to power” in order “to put down these ‘pot pie parties’” (April 17), which had become a nightly event.

**Talcahuano and Concepción**

Rounding the Horn around May 1—and “what a [contrast] between the first of May in New York and the first of May off Cape Horn in a gale!”—the Panama begins to make plans for landing at Talcahuano, Chile. Just before landing, with Talcahuano in sight, the Panama crosses paths with the Trescott (which Meyer mistakenly calls the Prescott); on the same route as the Panama, the Trescott was taking argonauts from Mystic, Connecticut to San Francisco:

“When they came along side, [...] a man fashionable attired addressed us in the English Language. He stated that, if it was in New York Bay, it would have been foolish on their part, to come to see us. But under present circumstances, when many thousand of miles from home, it was always very acceptable, for friends and countrymen, to salute each other. He further stated that, they were from the ship Prescott 106 days from Mystic Conn., bound also for California. The captain (for such he was) also informed us, that they received later news from California, that all what had been received before, was no beginning to that “might was right” and that the Americans were determined, to drive ever foreiner from the ground. [...] The Californian news produced the greatest excitement on board, which now no bounds and never have I seen so many smiling faces, on any former occasion.” (May 19)
The Panama drops anchor in Talcahuano the next day and remains there until June 5. Meyer’s descriptions from here and Concepción are richly detailed. He observes the houses in Talcahuano, with particular attention to the strata of social classes and their corresponding accommodations:

“The streets of the town, if such they may be called, are very narrow, in fact nothing but miserable allies, with very narrow brick sidewalks [...]. The houses are small, only one story high, and those of the lower classes generally have but one apartment. The houses of the more wealthy class are mostly built of bricks, and subdivided again covered with tiles. There are however, rather more frame as brick houses in the place. The houses on the outskirts of the town, on the slope of the hills and on the road to Concepción: are the most wretched habitations, I ever laid my eyes upon! They are nothing but small huts, covered with mud, so thin put on sometime that the eye will penetrate almost any part of them and are generally thatched with straw or a kind of reed. These miserable hovels, appear to be the abodes, of the part of the population, in which the Indian blood predominates. Nothing that looks like comfort and convenience as would compare with the furniture, of the poorest mechanic in the city of New York, can be in the best furnished houses in the whole town.” (May 20)

His impression of Talcahuano is quite negative – he finds the men “the dirtiest, greasiest and most miserable looking set I ever saw in all my travels” and believes that the “Senioritas […] dress very carelessly; sometimes exposing parts of their body: which decency should bid them, to conceal!” The people are impoverished – so much so that Meyer reasoned, if this is the state of society, throughout South America, the unsettled condition of the different states, their frequent insurrections and civil wars: are easily explained.

He describes Concepción in stark contrast, stating that the city,

“is in every respect, far superior to Talcahuano. The houses are generally larger sometimes two stories high and frequently white washed. The “Intendentis” residence fronting the piazza especially is quite a tastful building. It is build of bricks, painted white, two storys high, with columns in fronte extending as far as the piazza. There are a number of respectful stores, of every description jewelry, shoemaker shops, bording houses as other public establishments.” (May 23)

In Concepción, Meyer and his friends follow “three ladies dressed elegantly in the American style” to the house of Paul H. Delano – formerly the American consul to Chile, recalled in 1845 but still living in the area. Delano gives the men exciting news about California:

“He inquired, if we were bound to California? conversed with us about California and the excitement the discovery of gold therein had produced all over the world: and read to us extracts of a letter from California, from a particular friend of his. The letter stated that: the gold region extended upwards of 800 miles in length, with collums in fronte extending as far as the piazza. There are a number of respectful stores, of every description jewelry, shoemaker shops, bording houses as other public establishments.” (May 23)

This figure – roughly $3,000-4,000 in 2024 value - was
about five times higher than the actual figure made by most miners (closer to $20 per day in the early days), and miners’ wages would drop precipitously within months of the first discovery of gold.

Talachuano was home to a number of American and European expats, and it seems that there was some tension between them and the locals. Americans were, apparently, most of the patrons of the “houses of bad reput.”

“Ever and anon, we came across these mentioned houses of bad reput (for such they really are) when a parcel of young man, mostly Americans, were carrying on their jokes: treating its poor degraded inmates rather roughly. However, they appeared to injoy the sport very much, and seemed not to take the least offance at it. (May 24)

Meyer also finds an American in the local jail: The Callaboose (city prison) is a low or rather two low buildings, in the shape of half a square. [...] One of the sailors of the “Hopewell” was confined in it was said: for being dressed and for disorderly conduct. He requested one of the soldiers, in our presence, to give him some water? the later handed him the water [...] the poor sailor had joust time to say: “Thank you sir,” when the soldier spit the water right in his face [...] (May 24)

And a few days later, Meyer hears “From several respectable eyewitnesses” about a brawl in one of the dance halls between an American sailor and the locals.

“A dispute leads someone to call the authorities, and the soldiers insisted upon taking him to prison, using abusive language and treating him roughly. This of course enraged his countrymen, who were looking on; someone shouted: ‘Panama, ‘Hopewell,’ ‘John Petty’ (the names of California vessels in port) when they rushed in to rescue him. But being unarmed, the soldiers having drawn their swords at the very commencement cutting left and right about them. They retreated to the beach persued by the soldiers and great many cittizens. Here the fight was renewed with fresh viggar; swords were seen flashing in the moonlight, while brick bats, stons and other missiles, flow in every direction! However, it was fortunately not long, before the natives, had to beat an inglorious retreat; being about as quick noked down as they could rise again. One of our sailors, named Wilson, defended himself bravely with a smal cane against three soldiers with their swords drawn, and knocked one of the weapons out of their hands. One of the “Hopewell” crew, snaped a revolver twice, at a Chilian, but happily it did not go off [...] Fortunately, none on our side were seriously hurt, though several received heavy blows and cuts; but some of the Chilians were carried insensible from the field of battle. [...] (May 28)

Overall, though, despite his objections to their looks and dress, Meyer’s opinion of the Chilean people is
unflaggingly positive. As the Panama leaves port on June 5, Meyer reflects:

“I am confident, that the following traits are predominating, in the character of its [Chile’s] inhabitants. In the first place, the inhabitants of Chili, are of a very honest disposition, and the vice of theft is almost unknown among them [...] They are very friendly civil and polite especially against strangers, and their hospitality appears to know no bounds.” (June 5)

In fact, he takes umbrage at the poor portrayal of Chileans by others who have visited:

“I am fully convinced that great injustice has been done to the inhabitants of South America. Instead of the fierce treacherous and cowardly set, at all times ready, to plunge a knife into you if offended, as they have been represented by several travelers: I found them very good natured, pleasant and extremely harmless people,”

and, ultimately, finds the Americans’ rowdiness to blame for the earlier brawl, stating,

“I am certain that, if any foreigners would take the same liberties, in any port of the United States or Europe they would be treated, in a far more rough way, as we were at Talcahuano.”

The Pacific Leg

Soon after leaving port, the usual difficulties of sea life resume. Some passengers are tormented by “Talcahuano fleas,” which turn out to be “nothing less than ‘creeping ideas’” (June 18). Meyer is “spared this pestilence,” but continues to suffer from the poor fare. The passengers hold an “indignation meeting” for “expressing their indignation at the miserable fare they have heretofore been compelled to submit to” (June 22):

Although it could scarcely be said, to be organised however, some good resulted from it after all,

“A great many loud complaints were made, about the negligence and indolence, of the cooks stewards and waiters. After a rather stormy session it was finally concluded: to leave the whole management of the ship, entirely to the control of the captain; after which the meeting adjourned.” (June 23)

The “indignation meeting” is a success – although “the former board of directors” had “endeavored to persuade us” that the pilot bread “was all consumed long since,” supper on the 24th included the “far more palatable pilot bread again” (June 24).

The onboard entertainment appears to have dwindled, and passengers start to look for ways to entertain themselves. In June, one passenger pulls off an impressive feat for someone aboard a pitching ship: “A beautiful picture drawn by Mr. Ayers, representing the Panama in a severe gale” is “put up on the cabin” (June 23). This would be Thomas Ayers (1816–1858), who in 1855 would sketch the first image of Yosemite Valley. Ayers was not the only talent onboard – for their Fourth of July celebrations, the passengers put on a day full of festivities with music, poetry reading, singing, and performances from various plays. Among the play actors, “Mr. Mitchell took decidedly the lead” – “his acting [...] plainly showed: that he must have had some experience
on the stage” (July 4). Mr. Mitchell was George Mitchell (1813–????), an Englishman who would go on to become a well-known figure in early theater in San Francisco and across the mining towns.

Other passengers entertained themselves by imagining what their lives would soon be like, once their fortunes were secured. Meyer, listening in, remarked that it is very amusing sometimes, “[...] Hark how they are laying down their plans for future enjoyment after their return from the “Eldorado”; mark, what a difference there is in the views, of different individuals: how dissimilar re their designs and schimes, for better days to come! But alas, they forget how uncertain and vain, are all human hopes and expectations: I fear that in many cases their golden dreams, will never be realised! However as it is rather doubtful, whether the anticipation or actual possession of a blessing, is the greatest not much harm can possible result from it.” (June 30)

Later in July, one passenger amuses himself with a prank, putting up a placard announcing another protest meeting about the food onboard – even promising “Several able speakers” and “forcible speeches” about the matter (July 17). However, “the whole proceeding turned out a complete humbug” (July 18). The prank would have been assured of his success: Meyer describes the fare at that time as “a kind of food” that was “served up in a ‘I don’t know what to call it,’ kind of style” (July 20).

However, conditions on the Panama are luxurious compared with those of the Orion, 155 days out from Valparaiso, which they encounter in late July. The Orion requests any spare sails from the Panama, which the latter’s captain obliges. More than sails, though, the Orion needs food. Her captain tells the Panama that there were four Americans on board of the Orion, “who were in a horrid condition, boardering nearly on a state of starvation.” They had entreated him, to take them on board of our vessel, or if he would not do so, to send some beef or pork, something to sustain life! Scarcely had this announcement been made, when it was moved and seconded, “To tender to these poor unfortunate fellow citizens, a free passage to San Francisco”: wich was carried unanamously, with hearty applaus. (July 28) One non-citizen tries to get passage on the Panama, and is turned away – not for his citizenship, but because “he was the only person no board of the Chilian craft, who understood navigation.”

Finally, on August 8, 1849, the Panama sails through the Golden Gate and is moored in the San Francisco bay, ending “our long tedious passage, in search of the golden treasures of California.” Visitors board the ship, and Meyer gets the first of many warnings about his plans – a passenger states, “There is plenty of gold, but d_____d hard to get it.”

California

Meyer spends August and early September in San Francisco, waiting for the California Mutual Association to settle its finances and dissolve. He pokes around the “Happy Valley,” an argonaut tent city on Mission Street, and observes some men panning for “some small grains, glittering among the black sand” (August 12). He observes some gambling establishments, and is impressed by the sheer amount of money being lost at them:

“I was astonished, to see such large piles of gold and silver (paper money not being current here) the latter
mostly dollar pieces, on the different gambling tables. At some of these establishments, I know I speak within bounds, I saw several thousand dollars exposed to view, to entrap the unsuspecting stranger. It is, I am told, at these “hells of infamy,” where the miners, after carefully collecting the gold dust, from the sand, lose sometimes several thousand dollars, in a single night!” (August 13)

His first journal ends on September 9 with a description of the city and an incomplete passenger list for the Panama. The following entries are transcripts of the original journal, written out by Meyer’s son William, and included in this group in typescript with the original presumed to be lost.

Stockton

Finally, on September 12, Meyer and the Independent Mining Company are able to leave San Francisco. They head for Stockton aboard the Lawrence, entering the San Joaquin River on September 13. For a second time, he is met with ominous statements about the mines: Several large and small schooners, and sloops, met us coming down the River. One of those vessels hailed us with: “More victims for the Gold Mines!” [...] the exclamation created a great deal of laughter and merriment. (September 14)

They arrive in Stockton around the 15th and begin to make plans for traveling to the mines. However, they have a hard time getting started. First, their “company could not make up 1500 pounds, which is considered a load” and so they lose a contract to have their belongings brought to the Tuolumne mines (September 17). Then, a deal to head for Carson’s Creek falls through “on account of one member of our company [...] suffering from inflammation of the eye” (September 18).

The next day, they decide to leave behind the man with the enflamed eye along with one member of the IMC. Meyer is selected to continue on to Carson’s Creek. For yet a third time, the men are warned:

“At a short distance from Stockton, we met three of our former passengers, on our voyage to San Francisco, who advised, “as friends” to turn right upon our heels and go back again! However, we heeded not their counsel, for no man who has taken passage around the “Horn” is satisfied before he has seen the ‘Elephant.'” (September 19)

Public Tents and Carson’s Creek

Along the way from Stockton to Carson’s Creek, Meyer and the IMC stop at a number of so-called “public tents”: lodgings open to the public “where he may repose, and regale himself by paying $1.50 for each meal” (September 20). The first public tent the IMC stops at is unclear – it is “situated on some creek”, but no one seems to know the name of the creek and it did not appear on Meyer’s map. On the 21st, though, they stay at a famous one: Charley Peck’s “Double Springs,” which would, in 1850, become Calaveras County’s first courthouse. Meyer writes: The “Double Springs” are pleasantly situated about half way between Stockton and Carson’s Creek. The public tent is protected from a scorching sun in summer by a group of large shady oak trees; the proprietor has a large flock of sheep feeding on a naked plain in the neighborhood, in consequence of which the traveler can have fresh mutton every day. The owner keeps a good
table, and it is the only place on the road where anything like comfort and convenience can be procured, by paying the usual rates.” (September 22)

Other public tents the men stay at or pass through include Little Jack's Tent, Red's Tent, the Oregon, the Texas Tent, the Mountain Inn, and Dancing Bill's Tent.

Meyer has very little to say about Carson's Creek - the many warnings he had received turned out to be true:

“We were greatly disappointed in our expectations regarding Carson's Creek - the bed of it being apparently all dug over and turned up, and the answers we received to our inquiries were highly discouraging.” (September 24)

Mormon Diggings

The journal resumes on October 11, when Meyer and the IMC arrive at Mormon Diggings - the location of the second gold strike after Sutter's Mill. In his time at the Mormon Diggings, though, Meyer seems much more interested in the people around him than in striking it rich. He observes "a party of Indian squaws and children" bathing nude in the Stanislaus River, noting:

"Being all bare-footed they waded partly through the River and halted at a small island nearly opposite the store. All females were dressed in old female garments, imported from the United States. As soon as they arrived on this spot they put down their small baskets, which they were carrying on their backs, and divested themselves entirely of their clothing with the exception of the lower frock, which they folded up in such a manner as to leave but a very small portion of their bodies unexposed to the public gaze! What would some of our fine city ladies think, if upwards of a dozen women, besides half a dozen grown-up girls, would thus expose themselves in their presence? They would scarcely believe their own eyes. Nevertheless such is the case in these regions. I am even told by persons long residents in California, that it is a common every day occurrence in this country to meet with Indian females in a perfect state of nudity.” (October 12)

Indeed, his impression of the indigenous people in California is quite negative:

"All Indians I have met yet in my travels in California are of a low stature and ill-proportioned, of very dark complexion, repulsive features and long straight hair, as black as the 'raven's wing.' The females, though of a fairer complexion, are, however, also extremely ugly. All hard labor of any kind is, unlike as in civilized society, unhappily reserved for them. They carry their goods, baggage and children in baskets on their backs in their wanderings; pound their acorns and take care of household affairs, and are, in fact, the slaves of the stronger sex, while the men pursue their favorite occupation of hunting and fishing.”

Unlike Meyer’s experience in Chile, this initial impression does not change – perhaps because Meyer has no personal interactions (that he documents, at least) with California’s indigenous population. In fact, Meyer’s previous goodwill towards those from outside Europe and America seems to have dried up. His changing views on the subject are notable. He cheers on a resolution to expel all Mexicans, South Americans, and Native
Americans from the Diggings – so long as the ban does not include Europeans:

“At night a meeting took place at the Alcalde’s office for the purpose of devising means for expelling all Mexican, Chilians and other South Americans from this mine. After the meeting was organized and the object thereof had been stated by the secretary, some one proposed that all foreigner Europeans, too, no matter of what nation, should share the same fate when an intelligent looking person arose and addressed the meeting in the following words: ‘[…] Gentlemen, I would rather be excluded myself than to see those Germans, Frenchmen and Irishmen, who fought the battles of our country [Palo Alto, Buena Vista], excluded from the benefits of the mines.’ With these few, but very proper remarks, he seated himself again, under a roar of applause. […] it was agreed that all Europeans should not be expelled from the mines, as nine-tenths of them would undoubtedly take their residence somewhere in the United States, and would become citizens of the U.S. – and that the resolution offered to that effect should only include Mexicans, South Americans, and such other foreigners and native Americans as had sworn allegiance to some South American country. I was happy to see so much good sense manifested on the occasion, and good order and propriety prevailed during the proceedings of the meeting.” (October 13)

He is even quite irritated by the large number of French immigrants living at Mormon Diggings:

“A large French boarding tent is situated a short distance from our own, which is frequented by a number of Frenchmen, especially at night and Sundays, who are extremely noisy, drinking, singing and carousing – sometimes till after midnight, seriously annoying those longing for sleep and repose. There are, besides, a number of stores in the encampment where excessive drinking takes place, thereby disturbing the peace of this community. Sunday is, indeed, the most noisy and rowdy day in the whole week, and more ardent spirit is consumed and more “engagements” take place on that day than during all the rest of the week. (October 14) There are no entries in the diary until November 14, when the men are on their way back to Stockton.

Out of the Mines – Stockton and San Francisco

The men pack up and begin to send their belongings out of the Mormon Diggings on the 14th of November, and themselves leave on foot on the 15th, arriving back in Stockton on the 18th. In Stockton, they hear from some “former fellow-passengers” who had had some decent luck:

[...] all appeared to have been more favored by fortune than we unlucky (beings), fellows. Among the rest we fell in with, Charles Williams, our former cook on board the ship “Panama,” an individual looked down upon (as he himself observed) by the aristocracy on board, as being below their station, who owned that he had accumulated the snug little sum of $7500.00, since his arrival in this golden country.” (November 19)

The men wait in Stockton for the arrival of an affordable ship back to San Francisco, finally departing on November 24. On the 26th, they arrive at the southern half of Rancho Los Medanos, which was known at the time as “The City of New York on the Pacific” – so named after it was purchased by Colonel Jonathan Stevenson.
London

Meyer stayed in San Francisco until early 1852. However it was that he occupied himself there—probably not searching for gold—allowed him sufficient funds to return to Europe in February of that year. He and his brother Marx departed San Francisco aboard the steamship Pacific, bound for New York City, on February 14. Their fellow argonauts were joyful to be returning out East:

“I never saw a happier set of men on board of any vessel as our passengers were, for the prospect of a speedy reunion of the loved ones they “left behind” several years since could but tend to have a happy influence on their spirits and indeed, can only be felt by those who know from experience what parting and returning is.”

(February 14)

The record of his trip back to Europe is more terse, perhaps due to a disparity in enthusiasm between the voyage and his trip to California. He picks back up writing when he and Marx are boarding the Royal Mail steamer Europa in Jersey City, on April 7. Aboard the Europa, he is particularly taken by a series of arguments “about several different subjects” between an English man and woman—especially about the US being freer than England, despite slavery—where the young man “came off completely triumphant” against the woman with her “more ugly than handsome exterior” (April 9). Most of this journal, though, kept daily for the eleven days it took to reach England, remarks on the weather.
Lewis Meyer’s Journal

The Europa arrives in Liverpool on April 18th. The remainder of Meyer’s journal consists of a list of topics headed by chapters – it seems that he was intending to write a book. The topics are intriguing, including “A scrabble with existence” (April 21), “A Nervous Young Lady” (April 26) and, under the header “Concluding remarks about London” (undated), “Prejudice of the English people against Americans.”

Meyer would return to New York City later in 1852, and marry Ann Elizabeth “Annie” Wilson (1832–1884). They would move to San Francisco and have four sons: Edmund (1854–c. 1870), Edwin Lewis (1855–1932), George Homer (1858–1926), and William James (1864–1938), the latter producing the transcript of his father’s later journals. Lewis would own a grocery store starting at least in 1859, but by about 1866 he was living and farming in Analy Township (now Sebastopol). He would later moved to Alameda County. Both Annie and Lewis died in Alameda; Annie in March of 1884 and Lewis in June of 1900.

Overall, Lewis Meyer’s journals provide an exceptionally detailed account of the journey to California during the Gold Rush period, with his detailed record-keeping, keen eye for the developing social strata of American culture, and his own eventual malleability as he eventually advocates for the removal of non-Europeans from California, providing ample opportunity for scholars of the period and of immigration to America more broadly. The detailed account of Chile is particularly notable. Journals of this length and depth are exceptionally scarce in the trade. Previously unknown to scholarship, Meyer’s journal was transcribed, edited and by Salvatore John Manna in 2023 and offered on demand as To The


References:


A lengthy letter by an unknown author to his father, describing life in San Francisco in 1849, with some familiar themes: dropping wages at the mines, transitory business relationships with fellow emigrants, the high cost of goods, and the agricultural superiority of California. The author refers to “Amsterdam,” making it likely that he was originally from one of the several towns in the eastern United States of that name, possibly New York. At over eight hundred words, the letter describes San Francisco in some detail. The author writes,

“San Francisco, Oct. 29, 1849

Dear Father,

Being once more in the vicinity of a post office, I take the opportunity to prepare a few lines for you, to go by the Steamer which leaves here the first of next month. You will no doubt wonder at my being in San Fran. at this late date, when I should be at the mines picking up the lumps of Yaller. We went up to Stockton about a month ago, as I wrote we should in my last letter, but owing to the weakness of Mr. Nickols & myself, occasioned by
having the diarrhea very bad before we left this place, it was thought advisable not to go to the mines until we had gained strength enough to undergo the fatigues of the journey; consequently the well ones looked about & got work in Stockton. Dr. Sprague is in a mint & getting twelve dollars a day. Mr. Delamater is driving team at two hundred dollars a month & James K. M. chopping wood at six dollars a cord & Mr. N. & myself keep house & cook for them. We are now all as well as usual in most excellent health. I came down here yesterday after a box of tools we accidentally left on the ship, which we find to be very necessary and in fact indispensable. We also wanted from here some things in the cooking & eating line which could be bought at a much better advantage here than up the river. Today is Sunday. I shall, if nothing happens, finish up all my business tomorrow & start back Tuesday. We then shall go directly to the mines & try our luck with the pan, pickaxe & shovel. There are a great many coming from the mines discouraged, but as I wrote before, their expectations were too high, or else being persons not accustomed to work, they could not stand it, gave it up and call it awful hard work & don't pay. We will stop in the mines all winter. We can live there as comfortable there as in town & as cheap, as we shall have nothing to buy after we get there. If we don't do well this winter, we shall in Spring turn our hands to anything that will pay well.

Had I farming utensils here and the help of James & Delamater, in the space of three or four years we would be worth more money than the richest man that Amsterdam contains. For instance, oats & barley are the feed for horses, mules & oxen. The oats is put up in two bushel bags & cost fourteen dollars a bag. Barley is put in a bushel & a half bags & sold at the same price. Potatoes are sold for six shillings a pound. Onions are two dollars a pound. Squashes about as large as a man's head are sold for four & five dollars. Fresh beef, twenty five cents a pound. Lambs & sheep are not cut up at all by the butchers, but sold whole. They vary in weight from ten to twenty pounds. The lambs are sold for eight & the sheep for twelve dollars a piece, no matter what size or weight. The soil about Stockton appears to be very rich and is all ready for a person to put a plough right in. Things that are brought from the States are very cheap, but anything that costs labor is very high. Whatever a person buys, he has got to pay a good price for it. Mr. Sprague wrote to you about our company business. He read the letter to me before he sent it. What he said was all true & not the half was yet told. I am sorry that we couldn't stay together according to agreement, but I heartily rejoice that we have got rid of their company. They were rowdies at home & rascals away from it. This is the best I can say of them. But I have nothing more to write that will be interesting to you. Write soon. I have not had a letter from home since the thirteenth of April, with the exception of one from Theodore Van H. & the latest news from Amsterdam is the 25th of June. We hear that Cholera has been raging fearfully and we do not know whether our friends & relations are dead or alive. We have hopes & fears, anxious for letters & still dread them. But write often, write by every steamer which will be once a month. We can't get to the Post Office very often & when we do, we want to get letters & papers. Tell N.M. to be a little more particular in writing interesting news. Now she said in her letter that Julia had an addition to her family in the shape of a young Phil about the time Genl. Arnold died. She did not say when he died. I worked on it by arithmetic & algebra but I couldn't find out how old the young one was. Ask her to work it out & send the answer to me. But no more at present.

Yours affectionately,
J. M. Van ———

Overall an interesting letter from the Gold Rush period.

$375
The Los Angeles Times building bombing of 1910 was, at the time, one of the deadliest bombings in American history. James and John Barnabas, who were both members of the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, were tried for the bombing, with James admitting to the crime and eventually getting a sentence of life in prison. The LA Times was known for its anti-union views. Offered here is a collection of contemporary press photographs of the Los Angeles Times building bombing and its aftermath, including photographs of the Macnamara brothers and close-ups of similar bombs. Interestingly, the file of photographs, from the Brown Brothers firm, also included photographs of Frank Steunenberg, who was killed in 1905 by Harry Orchard, with notations on the verso attributing his death to the McNamara brothers.
The John Shillaber archive contains 173 documents related to the business and personal activities of John Shillaber, an American merchant and consul. These documents range from 1839 to 1852 and include letters, inventories, invoices, bills, and receipts from his businesses dealing in the Asian countries of China, Manila, Batavia (Jakarta), as well as correspondences from London, The United States, and Spain (most of being to John Shillaber with a small number to other people in his circle). Many of these correspondences originate with influential people at this pivotal moments in the history of Anglo trade with China, with a majority of the correspondences from the three-year period of the First Opium War (1839-1852). These correspondences reveal John Shillaber’s activities and role amidst the merchants of the British and Spanish trade routes moving cloth, tea, shark fins, sandalwood, tobacco, rice and opium between Europe, India, Macao, Canton, Hong Kong and Manilla.

Born in Danvers, Massachusetts John Shillaber (1791-1853) was the first American appointed as counsel to Batavia (Jakarta) in [1834]. He soon resigned as consul and relocated his business dealings to China. His famous contribution to history was a letter written by him to president [Jefferson] urge an increased involvement

Most China, Manila, Spain and the United States, 1839-1850s, the bulk 1839-1842. Over 170 unique items, appx. 500 pages total. Condition varies from fine to good only, with a small percentage of the letters showing insect damage.

Large Archive of Correspondence to the American Diplomat and Merchant John Schillaber, Giving Details on Mercantile and Political Activities in Asia during the Period of the First Opium War and Beyond.
in trade in China, notably predicting in these letters the forthcoming conflict between Britain and China (“letter here mentioned not in this collection). A real estate dealing later in life would also lead to a dispute which the Supreme Court would, posthumously, offer opinion on (Shillaber v. Robinson, 97 U.S. 68 1877). Later letters include those regarding his business dealings back in the States.

Many of the earlier letters in this archive (1839 - 1851) originate from key figures in this unique chapter of history. Many letters involve trade and business dealings with Jardin, Matheson & Co. (JM&Co.), the leading British trading house in China at this time who were swayed the actions of the British government who would eventually invade China in order to force China to trade favorably with the British on terms set by the British. Many of these letters come directly from Sir James Nicolas Sutherland Matheson himself, the founding namesake partner of JM&Co. While some of these letters are in his name, a number of them are under his pseudonym of “Santiago Thomasen” ("Thomasen" being an anagram of "Matheson"). These letters show the need for secrecy in what was being disclosed, likely due to the continued involvement by Europeans in the opium trade, which had been banned (under punishment of death) at this time in China.

In addition, there are correspondences from other partners in JM&Co. Including John Abel Smith, a member of Parliament and a founder of Jardin, Matheson & Co., [Magniac J. & Co.] and Henry Wright, as well as frequent mentions of James Ryan, JM&Co’s American agent in China. These letters highlight the role American traders played as go-betweens in this time when British merchants were banned from trading in China. Many of these letters elude to clandestine dealings:

“Here is a little in strict confidence. The English Ship ‘Royal Saxon’ gives the opportunity for my friend & colleague, Mr. Silverbork to go up in her, to take samples. Mr. Matherson knows of it, in fact suggested it - but no one else… knows anything about it - that people may not learn & talk about it, he assumes temporarily the name of Mr. John Whitehead…”

One notable document in the archive is a statement by the Hoppo of Canton, the Qing dynasty official at Guangzhou (Canton) who controlled shipping and collected tariffs, which discusses trade with Americans at a moment when British traders were banned, suggesting concerns of Americans acting as [something birds] for the banned British traders. This letter notes that Shillaber, as an American, was not barred from trade through barter, but raises concerns that he and others may act as go-between with the British, and should be monitored that American ships are trading as they were prior to the conflict with the British.

While correspondence from John Shillaber himself appears in the archives of others, no such cache of correspondences sent directly to him are known, and these papers provide a unique opportunity to uncover his role, and that of the United States, in this tumultuous chapter of history. Limited biographies have been written about Shillaber and his doings among the foreign merchants of China, or his personal life. A number of letters in this archive also contain correspondence with family and friends abroad, as well as in the United States. Among these are letters from his sister Caroline Colledge.
John Schillaber in the First Opium War

(nee Shillaber) and her husband, Thomas Richard Colledge, the former surgeon for the Lord William John Napier, famously rebuked for attempting to establish trade with China outside of the Hong Merchant System and first suggested a military involvement in China by the British.

Three letters in the collection, from 1839, are from Shillaber’s sister Caroline as she sailed with her son from Macau to London. The first of these letters finds her at the British territory of St. Helena, due west of southern Africa, while the last announces her arrival in England after a 125 day Journey from China. Her letters describe life on the ship and her observations:

“Mr. Hartness, the Bombay professor, is very gentlemanlike and intelligent and quiet. Of the other passengers I cannot speak well. One is the tell-tale of the ship and the other an impertinent ignorant vulgar cockney. I have nothing to say to them. Capt. R. is most kind and attentive to all my wants. My Persian cat has had kittens, three, and the other, the handsomest of them, has jumped over-board to my great sorrow…”

Upon arriving in London she describes many of the scenes and people she meets as observed from her perspective as an American woman:

“They seem to peck like pigeons at an eight o'clock dinner, they manage to dish up a very tolerable tiffin with beer or porter to match. I judge so from their appearance, still I think them far finer women than our countrywomen at the same age… climate must be the cause, together with their not nagging about their families as most American Mothers do. I saw some very fair specimens of beauty at the Opera last week and among them the Countess of Blessington and her cavalier Count D’Orsay. She is immensely stout too. It will be needless to tell you that I was enchanted with the music and almost as much so with Taglioni’s dancing, if dancing it can be called, which is more like floating on the air than any movement made by a human being. I declare I scarcely breathed while she continued flitting about before me. They quite worship her here. I have also been to see some fine pictures by the old Masters, beautiful things”

In addition one letter in 1839, from a seeming family friend Mrs James Wallace (Helen Wallace nee Fortin) of Baldwinsville NY, speaks of her family and affairs in the states and notes a connection with his sister Caroline. An additional [6] letters from Caroline between 1842 and 1844 are also included in the archive.

Another unique letter in the collection, from James Matheson (under his pseudonym of “Santiago Thomasen”) to Thomas Richard Colledge (Shillaber’s brother-in-law) speaks of the shifting and uncertain moments during the years of the opium war. Seemingly fearing involvement in the British blockade and military campaign in Canton, “Thomasen write’s” saying:

“In regard to you & Mr. S. being recommended to leave Canton, it is difficult for us to write anything definite, for on the one hand, no pecuniary consideration would induce our wishing either of you to remain one moment longer than you deem yourselves perfectly safe; while on the other hand, we cannot bring ourselves to recommend Mr. S. to leave & thus deprive him of the benefit which he may expect by remaining.”

After the banning of opium in China, Manilla became an
important port for the shipments of Opium coming from their British colonies in India. Shillaber seemed to also be involved in a number of ventures related to trade with Manila, notably with a trading house Eugenio de Otadui & Co.

A number of letters from the Spanish ports of Madrid, Cadiz and Sevilla originate from the trading house of Coll., Andreys & Co. and a man named Jose Coll in Cadiz. In these letters a glimpse can be had of how Asian trade moved between Europe and Asia:

"...The articles that are to arrive from London for you cannot be prevented from being opened at this Custom House, where they are too scrupulously examined, which is very often the effect of the curiosity of enjoying the sight when they are things of taste, & as they are to be forwarded to Madrid..."

Another letter (1842), likely from Shillaber’s son Theodore, speaks candidly about American involvement in the opium trade, stating:

"... The order in Council prohibiting British subjects and vessels to be concerned in the Drug trade at any of the five ports has not yet been enforced... though doubtlessly it will be after the treaties shall have been exchanged, unless said trade is legalized, which some persons think will be the case... nearly all the other American schooners here engaged in the Drug trade. The Commodore went directly to S. America from Amoy, but before leaving issued a Proclamation warning all American vessels not to be engaged in carrying Opium..."

As has been noted this trade also became very tied in with Spanish trade between Havana, Cadiz and Manilla. While opium does not seem to be overtly mentioned in the letters, this may reflect the clandestine nature of such smuggling. A number of letters speak of other items shipped throughout this network, including tobacco, cloth, rice and tea. These trades often are shown in Shillaber’s letters to connect the British trading house with a number of Spanish ones, including Eugenio de Otadui and Co. and Coll. Andreys & Co. and Spanish trading houses showing how American merchants acted as links between these networks.

Later letters in the collection find Shillaber retiring from overseas trade and relocating back to the United States. One such letter from Matheson speaks to the settling of their debts and the conclusion of their partnership:

"I have pleasure in confirming what your late partners Mr. Otadin and Mr. James Adam Smith have written you with regard to your retirement from the House of E. de Otadin & Co. and... the canceling of all your debts due to my House in China, and leaving you with means, small in amount certainly, but then on the other hand, free of pecuniary involvement... Now you are about to embark for your native country and probably to enter upon new pursuits, you have my best wishes for your success and happiness as well as the recovery of your health from the effects of your long residence in the East.

Overall a significant archive that should be of interest to The John Shillaber Archive is potentially a significant resource for understanding the complexities of 19th-century global trade and Asian-American diplomacy, particularly America’s involvement in the Asian markets during the First Opium War. This collection should be of interest for researchers in fields such as economic...
John Schillaber in the First Opium War

history, international relations, and studies, providing unique insights into the trade dynamics and geopolitical happenings in this period. Additionally, it offers a rare perspective on American mercantile activities and their interactions with British and Chinese entities.

Sources:


Collection of Reports Addressed to Peter McQuhae From Various Figures in the British Foreign Office, on Subjects Including an Imminent Filibustering Attack on Cuba by a Pro-Slavery Organization from the United States; the Movements of a Slave Trading Brig's Fishing Rights, Relations to Spain And Other Issues of Pressing Importance to British Interests in the Caribbean.

The group consists of five groups of bound documents, some bound out of order and likely bound later. Contents are as follows:


Henry Addington writes McQuhae to recommend stationing a warship at Grey Town:

"...it would be sufficient that a Ship of War should from time to time look in grey Town, without remaining there at any time long enough to endanger the health of the crew... to provide for the case which is possible, tho' not at all likely, that during the interval between the visits of a Ship of War, some expedition of Nicaraguan, or some of the North Americans returning from California,
might take advantage of the comparatively unprotected state of the lace, to take possession of it, and that the cruiser on its return to Grey Town, might find the place so occupied, Lord Palmerston conceives that in such an event, it would seem to be inconsistent with the Honor of this Country, that a British Ship of War, should acquiesce in such an aggression, and it would be right that the intruder should be expelled, if the Commander of the Ship of War, should find as he probably would, that he had the means of doing so, without much difficulty, and that in case he should repel the intruders and re-establish the authorities of the Mosquito Government, demanding the liberation of any British or Mosquito subjects who might have been made Prisoners, and holding hostages for their relief if they should have been removed up into the interior of the Country.

It is to be hoped however, that all questions of dispute in regard to Grey Town, will, be soon be settled, because Her Majesty's government has through Her Majesty's Minister at Washington proposed to the Government, of the United States, that an arrangement should be made, by which the Sovereignty of Grey Town... should be transferred to the State of Costa Rica... Lord Palmerston desires me to add that there are at present at Washington a plenipotentiaries, both from Nicaragua and Costa Rica for the purpose of conducting this negotiation...


Addington writes to McQuhae about two incoming vessels carrying enslaved Africans, passing on information received at Rio De janeiro by another British vessel:

“I am directed by Earl GraH.M. Minister at Rio, reporting that he had received information that two Slavers had sailed from Havana to... the coast of Africa... with the intention of returning with Cargo of slaves which are to be landed at the Entrance de Cuchillo, in Cuba.”


A series of four reports addressed to McQuhae on various subject, as follows:

A. Report dated May 17, 1852, from Seymour, discussing the case of the Creole, detained in 1851:

“...enclosing copies of a letter from the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, approving of the course I had pursued with regard to the Creole, and of a despatch from the Earl of Malmesbury to Her Majesty's Minister at Madrid, relative to the rights of British Subjects to fish on the coast of Cuba...”

B. Letter from Augustus Stafford, April 23, 1852, discussing the Creole, mostly discussing the enclosure of varied reports on the subjects but with little specific information.

C. Addington, A.M. April 21, 1852, letter discussing the Creole case and the enclosure of documents.

D. Earl of Malmesbury, April 14, 1852, letter discussing the...
Creole case in more detail:

“The Right thus claimed rests on this universally admitted precept of international Law, “dominium finitur, ubi finitur armorum vis,” which in modern practice has been construed to mean “about one marine league from the mainland,” and H.M.’s Govt are clearly justified in demanding that the Spanish authorities shall be ordered not to meddle or interfere with British fishermen outside that three mile boundary.”


A very interesting series of reports detailing the planned response to pending “Piratical Attacks,” showing the extent to which British forces were prepared for an American filibuster attack on the island and the degree to which they intended on assisting the Spanish forces. As follows:

A. Seymour, G.F. Secretarial Copy of Letter Written on May 5, 1852 from Cumberland at Bermuda, relaying the transmission of a full report of instructions to the British forces regarding an impending filibuster raid:

“I hereby enclose for your guidance... orders... relative to the assistance which is to be afforded by Her Majesty’s Ships on the application of the Captain General of Cuba, in the Transport of Troops in the event of a Piratical attack being again made on that island by which you will govern your conduct...”

B. Earl of Malmesbury. Secretarial Copy of a Letter Dated April 10, 1862, discussing piratical attacks:

“...that in the event of a Piratical Attack being made upon that island... H.M’s ships might assist in conveying troops to any point of the Coast of Cuba at which the invading Party might effect a landing...”

C. Honley, P. Secretarial Copy of an Undated Letter, c. 1852, regarding piratical attacks:

“Her Majesty’s ships might assist in conveying Troops to any point off the Coast of Cubat at which the invading Party might effect a landing... you should be instructed until further ORDers that if the Captain General of Cuba should require your assistance for the transport of troops in the manner pointed out in your abovementioned dispatch, you should comply with that demand...”


A fascinating letter relaying information received from M. Calderon de la Barca concerning an impending filibuster mission against Cuba led by a Dr. Wren, part of an organization called “The Lone Star Association:”

“...it would appear that the government of the United States has also received an intimation that something of the sort is on foot for the President informed M. Calderon that orders had already been sent to the U.S. Authorities at the different Ports of the Union to be prepared to take vigorous measures for the repression
of any such attempts... an expedition is in fact meditated by certain parties in the South, and that it is intended that it should leave some Port of Florida. The real object of this expedition however, as as I am told, not Cuba... but San Domingo, for the purpose of acting as auxiliaries to the Dominicans against the Haytians... it is by no means impossible that its ultimate aim would be Cuba... the persons I am given to understand, engaged in the expedition, are a Dr. Wren, who is president of a society called “The Lone Star State Association...”

The letter is worthy of further study - we find references to a Dr. Wren in newspaper articles from the period but were unable to pinpoint his identity or the history of his organization. An article from a Loudon, Tennessee newspaper describes Dr. Wren as a “representative of New Orleans societies” and described a meeting in Loudon in 1852 trying to recruit for the overthrow of the Spanish colonial government of Cuba through an invasion.
An interesting document from the period following the Treaty of San Lorenzo and before the eventual surrender of Natchez to the Americans in 1798, in which the governor of Louisiana and West Florida, Francisco Luis Hector de Carondelet, issues a statement regarding the delayed withdrawal of Spanish troops from the region. Carondelet is concerned with the British presence in the area, and notes that it is a violation of "the treaty concluded with Spain," - or Pinckney's Treaty, which opened up navigation rights of the Mississippi to the United States. The letter describes the possibility of escalating hostilities between the United States, Great Britain and Spain as a result of an impending American mission against the Illinois, the motives of which

Carondelet questions as he notes that "These hostile dispositions can naturally only concern these provinces, because the U.S. are in peace with all the savages..." He raises the possibility of British invasion of Louisiana, and potential danger to the city of New Orleans, and states that the Spanish will maintain their presence at Natchez and Walnut Hills unless the American soldiers withdraw. This is a copy of Carondelet's speech in the hand of Lieutenant Piercy Smith Pope, and we find no other record of it. A full transcription follows:

"The Government being informed by his Majesty's Ambassador to the U.S., that an expedition assembled on the lakes was intended to attack the Illinois, has judged necessary for the surety and tranquility of Lower Louisiana, to suspend the evacuation of the posts of
Natchez & the Walnut Hills, being the posts that cover it; the possession of which, will put the English in a situation to disturb and ravage the country, in case they rendered themselves masters of upper Louisiana, with so much more facility, as by an article of the treaty, concluded, posteriously, with Great Britain, the U.S. acknowledge that the English may freely navigate and frequent the posts belonging to the said States; situated on the river in general, lakes &c being a manifest contradiction to the treaty concluded with Spain, which it appears...... because by this the U.S. acknowledge that no other nation can navigate upon the Mississippi, without the consent of Spain.

...... the legitimacy of these motives, the ...presented to the Congress of the U.S., with all the necessary veracity, and intimated by our orders in the Commissary of Limits, as well as to the Commandant of the Detachment of American troops now at Natchez. We are now informed that a detachment of the army of the U.S., cantoned on the Ohio, are on their way by Holstein towards Natchez, while the Militia of Cumberland, are intimated to hold themselves ready to march at the first notice.

These hostile dispositions can naturally only concern these provinces, because the U.S. are in peace with all the savages, the anterior menaces of the Commissary of Limits, & the Commandant of the detachment of Americans now at Natchez; the immediate rupture (& if the American Gazettes are to be believed) already effected between France, our intimate ally and the U.S. engage us to be on our guard to defend our property with that valor & energy which the inhabitants of these Provinces have manifested on all occasions, with the advantage and superiority which a knowledge of our local situation will procure, and that confidence which right and justice inspires. If the Congress of the U.S. had no hostile intention against these provinces, they will either leave the post of Natchez or Walnut Hills, the only bulwarks of Lower Louisiana that can stop the courses of the English, or that they give us security against the article of the Treaty with Great Britain, which exposes lower Louisiana to be pillaged and destroyed down to the Capitol. We will then deliver up the said posts and lay down our arms which they have forced us to take up by arming their Militia in time of peace and sending a considerable body of troops by round about ways to surprise us.

New Orleans, 31st May, 1797

A copy of the Baron de Carondelet's Proclamation.

P. Pope

Overall a document of significance in United States / Spanish relations in the period following Pinckney's Treaty, worthy of further study for scholars of the diplomatic history of the period.
A scarce promotional book printed by the Palm Beach Land Company, which was run by Charles Curtis Chillingworth (1868-1936), and instrumental in development of the Palm city and Palm City Farms area. Chillingworth, originally from New York, bought 12,000 acres of land from the 12,000 acres from the Florida Coast Line Canal & Transportation Company. He then sold the land in chunks, entertaining perspective buyers with rented boats and cars. The book here shows pictures of various houses and agricultural scenes in the region, and describes the opportunities for prosperity in the region. Unlike some developer literature, Chillingworth led by example, relocating himself to Florida and dying there. He was, according to his autobiography, a lover of nature, and in particular for Florida's famous cabbage palm trees. An uncommon and interesting early illustrated Florida title. One copy in OCLC, at the Florida State Library.

Fort Pierce, Tribune Printing Company, 1913. 8vo, wraps, 16 pp. 9 x 6 inches.

Sunshine and Shadows of Florida.

Fort Pierce, Tribune Printing Company, 1913. 8vo, wraps, 16 pp. 9 x 6 inches.

$600
An arrest warrant against Roger Rine, laborer in Boxford, regarding the evasion of military service at a campaign against the French at Crown Point. The warrant is signed by Joseph Bowditch (1700-1780), the ship-owner and merchant who held various offices in Salem during the period. Rine was paid to serve in Ichabod Plaisted’s regiment and failed to enlist. The document gives an interesting firsthand account of an attempt to avoid enlistment during the conflict. Full transcription of the manuscript portion of the document follows:

N His Majesty’s Name, you are Required to Attach the Goods or Estate of Roger Rine of Boxford in said County, Labourer, to the value of Eighty Shillings, and for want thereof to take the Body of the said Roger (if he may be found in your Precinct) and him safely keep, so that he may be had before me, Joseph Bowditch, Esq; One of His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the County aforesaid, at my Dwelling-House in Salem, on Monday the 3d Day of May next at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon; Then and there to Answer to Thomas Andrews of Boxford aforesaid, Innholder, In a Plea of the Case, for that at said Boxford on the 24th day of April current, upon a certain Discourse between the said Thomas & Roger had it was agreed between them that the said Roger should enlist himself under the Command of Col. Ichabod Plaisted (if he should approve of him) as a Soldier for the intended Expedition against Crown Point & would faithfully serve therein under sd. Col. Plaisted (instead of such person as the sd. Thomas had contracted to procure for sd. Service) & would immediately offer himself to sd. Col. Plaisted for his approbation & stand ready to take the necessary oath & become an enlisted Soldier as aforesaid according to Law & the agreement aforesaid, and that in consideration thereof, the Plaintiff then & there paid him one Shilling & nine Pence & agreed to pay him nine pounds, four shillings & ten pence when afterwards he should be required, & in consideration that the plaintiff promised to perform his part of the agreement aforesaid, & had paid the [..?..],

the said Roger promised to perform his part thereof as aforesaid. Yet tho he was paid to [..?] approved of & requested at sd. Salem on the same day, the sd. Roger refused to become an enlisted Soldier according to his aforesaid agreement, whereby the Plaintiff has been put to great trouble, costs & expense to the Damage of the said Thomas as herewith the Sum of forty Shillings, as shall then and there be made to Appear, with other due Damages. Hereof fail not, and make due Return of this Writ, with your Doings therein, unto myself, at or before the said 3d Day of May. Dated at Salem aforesaid, the 26th Day of April in the 29th Year of His Majesty's Reign. Annoque Domini, 1756.

$1,250

A Large, Candid Group of Letters Documenting Marital Infidelity, Love, Divorce and Unemployment in Depression–Era Northern California

Lora Rolison and Leland Moffitt probably met at Lora’s family’s ranch in Cottonwood, Shasta County, where she lived with her husband Marion Rolison (1896–1949), their son Money Rolison (1922–????), and likely some other members of Lora’s family. It’s unclear exactly how or when the affair began, although Leland seems to have been sent away to Folsom, just outside of Sacramento, in October of 1934 – probably because the affair was discovered. Lora says of her husband Marion that:

“...When I say Lee did this or that, he nearly goes wild [...] He took me to town [...] yesterday and was dreadful very nice until I said how much I missed you then the excitement started. Well its no worse to say it than think [it]. (October 16, 1934)”

Marion takes the infidelity hard. Lora tells Leland that:

“ [...] the hard part is to have him keep asking me if I love him or if I ever will again – he said last evening even if I didnt love him he’d always love me. (October 27th, 1934)”

Thus begins a correspondence, mostly carried out in secret, between the lovers – more than 200 letters over the course of seven months, from October 1934 to April 1935, when Lora finalizes her divorce from Marion and she and Leland are reunited for good.

Lora and Leland are clearly from different economic strata, a difference made all the more striking by the conditions of the Great Depression. Lora formulates a plan to travel to Reno and establish residency so that she can pay $140 for her divorce from Marion, from which she
will receive a settlement of about $650 (about $3,000 and $15,000 today, respectively). She often tells Leland about her new clothes and hairstyles. Leland, meanwhile, struggles to find and keep work. In November of 1934, he finds employment on a dredge:

“I am going to work Monday or Tuesday if this rain doesn’t hold things up. It isn’t the best job in the world but I surely am glad to get it, only pays 45 cents per hour, 8 hours a day, but I may get more later. It will be a start anyway sweetheart. With good luck it will not be so long until I can support a wife.” (November 3, 1934)

And he is overjoyed to have done so – Lora writes:

“You could just tell, sweetheart, how happy you were, that letter fairly radiated happiness, your Moms, too. Oh, Lee, dearest, was I happy too, your family + I just whooped for joy – everyone was so happy Darryl hugged Muriel + I hugged your Mom – Cause we knew how happy our sweetheart was that he had found something to do – (November 6, 1934)

But this is not to last. By December, Leland is unemployed again:

“We went down to the new boat but there was nothing doing. Material is coming in very slowly. Surely hope I get to work soon so I can have my sweetheart with me. [...] I saw Lear yesterday, he could not promise me anything definite at this time. Said he was having a hard time keeping what men he had busy.” (December 17, 1934)

As with many men during the Depression, the lack of work takes a psychological toll on Leland. He describes himself variously as ‘unworthy’:

“God it is hard to wait sweetheart I feel so small and useless and unworthy of you. Seems like if I were any good at all I could find something to do.” (December 19, 1934)

...a ‘bum’:

“I certainly would like to send you a nice present for Christmas, but guess I can’t right now. You have a bum sweetheart, my darling. [...] It is terrible sweetheart when a person needs a job as much as I do and can’t get one, seems like things get worse all of the time.” (December 20, 1934)

...and ‘useless’:

“It is terrible doing nothing to make the money that we need so bad. I keep hoping every day for something but nothing happens. [...] I feel so useless and disgusted with myself sometimes I don’t know what to do. I am willing to do anything that there is a living in but there doesn’t seem to be anything.” (January 18, 1935)

Leland is emasculated by the lack of work – and the humiliation keeps going, as in April of 1935 he is continually being told by superintendents and foremen that it will only be ‘a few more days’ before work will certainly start up again. Leland’s brother-in-law Frank is having a similar experience. Frank’s wife, Muriel, writes:

“That job at [...] ville fell through. After telling Frank to keep coming back for about four months, the boss finally told him about a week ago that he couldn’t promise him anything. Said the men he had were just in each other’s way.” (April 11, 1935)
Frank tries for a job at a mine, but the mine isn't making any money:

“Jack McGovern, a kid at the mine that we know, said that he wouldn't be surprised if the mine shut down most any time as he didn't think it was paying.”

And meat processing will not work out, either, because nobody is buying meat:

“Nothing doing on that meat job at Roseville. Meat has gone up so terribly high that very little of it is being sold.”

Another striking difference lies in the two’s gendered experiences. As Leland is emasculated by lack of work, Marion—whom Lora frequently refers to as 'the Boss'—apparently reacts quite differently to his own emasculation. Discussing her divorce proceedings, Lora casually mentions to Leland that:

“Mrs Preston says they always favor the women here + I will get it [the settlement money] by default – I'll bring in the charge of him choking me if he gets too funny.”

(March 21, 1935)

But Lora has a strong support system – particularly of other women who had also gone through divorces. After seeing her lawyer for the first time in November of 1934, she mentions:

“I'm going to see Pearl, too, she probably can give me some good information having gone through the deal. ”

(November 12, 1934)

And Lora's cousin follows her lead:

“Walter + I are seperating. He's got a girl friend + got sassy + fresh to me in her presence before others + I surely told him plenty. He's still here untill money matters are settled [...] I just can't stand him around now, it's unbearable. [...] I've suffered agonies mentally for so long taking his smartness + now that it's settled + I'm making a move I feel like a different person.”

(February 27, 1935)

Indeed, Lora is also unafraid to stand up to her abusive husband. She tells Leland:

“He started in to give me the [...] about going by for Muriel yesterday and I said “Now thats just about enough I'm not going to take any more – Then pretty quick he came over and kissed me + said he was sorry - “Till the next time” The other night he raved around til 3 A.M. trying to get me to promise to forget you + say I wouldn't go see the folks – I told him I wouldn't do any such thing.”

(November 6, 1934)

As his final tactic to wear away at Lora's resolve, Marion refuses to respond to her lawyer's request to sign their divorce papers – while she's living in Reno, she endures weeks of complete silence from Marion and his lawyers. Finally, on March 30, he signs the papers. Lora writes to Leland:

“Well, I guess this will be my last love letter for a while + I hope for always [...] Sweetheart, do you know that to-morrow then Saturday – Then when that choo choo train comes in Sunday – I sure hope I'll see my sweetheart

(April 11, 1935)
From the remainder of the letters, addressed to the couple from family and friends, it seems that they managed to live more or less happily ever after – both emotionally and financially, though details of the latter are not discussed. A letter from a friend sums it up well: I certainly am pleased to hear of your good luck. I sincerely hope Lee continues to step up. You deserve all the breaks you’ll get. More power to you! (July 5, 1936)

This intimate set of letters tells a compelling story of love and perseverance during an incredibly difficult time in American history.
A candid letter written by Hezekiah Niles discussing the Missouri compromise and a letter and the future of the union, in which he states that “The question of slavery will make the division firm, depend upon it.” Niles – perhaps the most influential American editor at the time – was adamant about providing unbiased coverage in his Weekly Register, making this candid discussion of current affairs more significant.

ANB notes,

“He saw editorial bias as contrary to his mission to be an authoritative historical documentarian for the future. The Register’s prospectus, published 24 June 1811, vowed the publication would be a “Book of Reference, a Fund of Reading,” and its motto, adopted in 1817, was “The Past—the Present—for the Future...” So eager was Niles to fulfill that mission that by 1828 three days of his working week were consumed poring over official reports for material useful to future historians as well as his contemporaries. So determined was he to be objective and thorough in his task that he scorned influence from politicians, endorsed no individual political candidates, rejected all advertisements, and refused all anonymous materials.”

He also discusses a letter written by Thomas Jefferson on the Missouri Compromise,

“I saw a copy of a letter from Mr. Jefferson to John Holmes of Maine, in regard to the Missouri affair, which
I wish never had been written. He thanks Holmes for his exertions! - or something like it. I was not allowed to take a copy. I would have proposed some middle ground, if, unfortunately, we should even obtain any. The question of Slavery will make the division firm, depend upon it."

Niles likely refers to Jefferson’s April 22, 1820 letter, now quite famous, in which he writes that “we have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go.” Jefferson was among the subscribers of the Weekly Register, but the exact circumstances surrounding Niles’ viewing of the letter are not clear. Niles published articles in the Register on the necessity of modernizing the economy of the South so it was not dependent on enslavement.

Overall a significant letter which should be of interest to scholars of the Missouri Compromise, Niles and the history of American publishing during the period. Full transcription follows.

Baltimore, Sept. 12, 1820

Dear Sir,

This is the anniversary of our little ‘fight’ with the enemy near this place & has been observed with military parades, & sort of Sunday like abstention from business, a part of which I am filling up by writing you a few lines of recognition & remembrance, though I have nothing especial to say.

You last noticed the Missouri case. At last I begin almost to despair of the republic, & much as I have repelled the idea of a dissolution of the Union being within the scope of probabilities, I now apprehend that it will happen, & fear that I may live to see it come to pass. Clannish spirits are at work to create separate interests. As yet the spirit of party prevents the [...] union in the middle & east & free western states that exists in the south, - but this is dying away, & when it expires, & section is fully arrayed against section, we shall have a fearful time of it. The tobacco & cotton planters are hastening this by their enmity to the encouragement of domestic industry, so needful to the grain growing countries, & besides they have been so much used to governing that they will not be easy under government, & the damnable stain of Slavery & the principle which grows out of it, is so repulsive, that those opposed to the [...] are losing the affections that they formerly held.

I saw a copy of a letter from Mr. Jefferson to John Holmes of Maine, in regard to the Missouri affair, which I wish never had been written. He thanks Holmes for his exertions! - or something like it. I was not allowed to take a copy. I would have proposed some middle ground, if, unfortunately, we should even obtain any. The question of Slavery will make the division firm, depend upon it.

I shall now send on my bills for the year - but shall let Woods remain, being behind as ‘hopeless’ of payment.

Yours truly,

Hezekiah Niles

$2,400
Joseph Carpenter (1774-1814) was born in Massachusetts, and emigrated to Cincinnati in the Northwest Territory, eventually publishing the first regularly printed journal in the city, the “Western Spy and Hamilton Gazette,” which he first published in 1799. The journal had 1,200 subscribers at the time of Carpenter’s death in 1814. He held several posts in the city including Coroner, and commanded a company of militia in the War of 1812, eventually dying due to exposure to extreme cold in a march from Fort Meigs to Urbana in 1814.

Offered here is a significant letter from Carpenter to Irish-American publisher Mathew Cary in May of 1797, asking for Cary’s assistance in the opening of a stationary shop and printing press, roughly two years before he would eventually publish the first issue of Western Spy and Hamilton Gazette. Carpenter writes to Cary,

“The probability is, that I should in a short time, be [able] to pay you, Sir, as my prospect is very good. There will [be] an edition of the Laws of the territory to print soon. If I get an office I shall have the job; otherwise it will be [..?] to Freeman & Son. Mr. McCullagh seems to incline to [..?] in the business, however, should you, Sir, make it convenient to assist me, I have friends who would help me to pay part of it. If I had a small assortment of Books & Stationery they would fill very well. I would thank you if you would write me respecting the matter as soon as convenient. I am very anxious to know if I am to do

Cincinnati, 27th June, 1797. Folded stampless letter, 12 ½ x 6 ½ inches. Some tape repairs and tearing at folds, fair to good but legible. With twenty five cent manuscript rate on cover.
anything in this country. If I cannot succeed in getting an office, I intend to go to my father's. I, however, hope for the best.”

The first book printed in Cincinnati was William Maxwell's edition of In 1796, The Laws of the Territory of the United States North-West of the Ohio, published a year earlier.

Overall the letter should be of interest to scholars of American territorial printing history, and is also philatelically significant as an early postmark originating from the Northwest Territory.

Full transcription follows:

We have no Book or Stationery Store in this town. Could I be so fortunate as to procure a small office & a small assortment of Books & Stationery, I should be in a fair way for making a very handsome living. I have advised a number of gentlemen of the town respecting it, assure me they think it would answer a very good purpose, they also assure me of all the support in their power. Some of them have offered to assist me in getting in an office.

Having no other friend to write to but yourself in Philadelphia, I beg you would pardon the liberty I take in writing you on this occasion, The distance from my friends puts it out of their power to assist me; if this should be in your power to assist me in getting an office, without embarrassing yourself, you would confer an obligation on your humble servant that time never could wear off. The probability is, that I should in a short time, be [able] to pay you, Sir, as my prospect is very good. There will [be] an edition of the Laws of the territory to print soon. If I get an office I shall have the job; otherwise it will be [..?..] to Freeman & Son. Mr. McCullagh seems to incline to [..?..] in the business, however, should you, Sir, make it convenient to assist me, I have friends who would help me to pay part of it. If I had a small assortment of Books & Stationery they would fill very well. I would thank you if you would write me respecting the matter as soon as convenient. I am very anxious to know if I am to do anything in this country. If I cannot succeed in getting an office, I intend to go to my father's. I, however, hope for the best.

I saw Mr. McCullagh yesterday. He is well, carries on business very briskly. He desired to be remembered to you.

I am Sir, with respect, your most obedient and humble Servant,
Joseph Carpenter, jun.
[to] M. Cary

$2,750
A collection of fourteen press photographs of garment workers, mostly in New York city, from the files of the Brown Brothers firm. Two of the photographs were likely distributed around the time of the Triangle Fire, as they have markings to verso indicating that they were contemporaneous. One photograph notes that the workers are Puerto Rican on the verso. Lewis Hine famously photographed garment workers during this period, though an image search on these photographs did not yield any matches to Hine or any other identified photographers. The group overall provides a compelling photographic record of conditions in the factories.
A letter written by Samuel Curtis French of Newburyport, who was twenty-one years old at the time of writing, describing life in Charlestown, Massachusetts. French's letter is notable for his description of Mesmerists and members of the Anti-Masonic movement. It is unclear the specific circumstances of his travel from Newburyport, his home, to Charlestown. He writes:

"Charlestown is rather a dull place in the winter. Some of the carpenters peddle oysters, and the rest loaf... The girls are a touch above the vulgar & the prettiest lot I ever saw in one place....

The Mesmerites have got up quite an excitement here. They have been lecturing and getting them to sleep all over the Hall by looking at them. When he made one cry, they all cried and when he laughed, they all would. I expect they will kick up a row tonight. I mean to go and see them...

There is a set of fellows who have come out and expose the Odd Fellows. They are making money by it at a great rate. They go through all the ceremonies of Initiation, ride the Goat, &c., climb a slippery pole well greased and charge 25 cts. a ticket. One got up in the Hall and proposed a member for sport, so another got up and said he had nothing against the man, but he knew his great Grandmother and she died of consumption, so he was afraid it ran in the blood and thought they had better not take him in...

I want to see some of our good Universalist people. They are the worst set of Old hard headed partialists here I ever got among. They are superstitious as you please, get together here in the store and tell dreams and fortunes and all such silly stuff."

An interesting description of both the mesmerism and Anti-Odd Fellow movements.
A scrapbook documenting the military service of 1st Sergeant Samuel Gaffney of the 74th National Guard, New York, in the Mexican Border Service. Gaffney documents the campaign in great detail through printed matter - with each of the forty leaves containing material affixed, including panoramic photographs, advertisements from local businesses along the routes, programs from entertainment offered to the troops, military orders and official correspondence, and many affixed newspaper articles and photographs.

Scrapbook Documenting the Mexican Border Service Campaigns of 1916-1917, with an Unrecorded Map of the Campaign in Hidalgo County in 1916.

The scrapbook is most notable for the inclusion of an unrecorded map by Charles A. Rice, the Buffalo native who would eventually map the campaign in larger fashion in a map entitled Map Showing Lines and March and Border Patrols in my Mexican Border Service, 1916-1917. The map here, just showing the route through Hidalgo County, is unrecorded. The larger map – which was produced as souvenirs for the other members of the 74th – is quite scarce as well, with five copies known to exist per OCLC with two different numbers. This blueprint map, which appears to be complete cartographically and missing only the ornamental border on one portion, shows the route taken early in the campaign in 1916. The Buffalo native Rice (1885–1931), who would eventually settle in Texas after the conflict, also wrote a history of the 74th during the campaign. Rice published the maps and memoir himself. The map shows the route in great detail, showing the location of wells, farms, roads and identifying landowners. Water quality and abundance is understandably a common theme in Rice's notes. Some notes show the location of bandits, smugglers, and the like. We find no other examples of blueprint maps by Rice.

Other highlights from the scrapbook include seven panoramic photographs of the 74th encamped at Pharr; a broadside advertisement for the shop of Agustin Acevedo in Pharr, listing prices of goods; a handbill advertising the 74th's Minstrels and Great Entertainment show on September 16, 1916; an advertisement for a production entitled Glorious Liberty at the National Theatre in Pharr; two circulars instructing troop movement issued by Headquarters Brownsville District;
Scrapbook Documenting the Mexican Border Service Campaigns of 1916-1917

30 CONTINUED

several postcards with songs about the campaign; several snapshots; a mounted albumen photograph of troops at rest, with the notation “Corp Frederick Paid” verso; a typed poem entitled “Home Again” and a notebook page describing his activities from January, 1917 onward; and a thanksgiving menu for 1916 for the holiday spent at Pharr. The remainder of the scrapbook is composed of affixed newspaper clippings, which provide extensive information on the 74th collected in a single volume.

Overall a significant scrapbook with much information to glean for students of the 74th’s activities, with the map providing a unique cartographic reference of the early days of the campaign.
Daniel Winsor was “ship captain and agent for Magoun & Son, Boston shipowners. Daniel was the son of Nathaniel Winsor, Jr. and Hannah Loring. Winsor and his wife, the former Sally Bartlett Sampson, lived in Duxbury, Massachusetts. The couple’s daughter, Georgianna Lloyd Winsor (1830-1840) died at age 11 of paralysis. Their other child was a son, George Lloyd Winsor (1843-1919). Beginning in 1847 and for each year thereafter, they also rented a home in New Orleans from January through late spring.

Winsor operated mainly out of Boston but spent considerable time trading in New Orleans. He owned, commanded, or had some type of interest in the ships Astracan, Coliseum, Deucation, Jacob Perkins, Java, Medford, Manlius, Pharsalia, Prairie, and Timoleon. Winsor sailed to New Orleans; Liverpool, England, Elsinore [Helsingor], Denmark; St. Petersburg and Cronstadt [Kronshtadt], Russia; and Havana and Matanzas, Cuba. [Source: LSU Collections, https://liblegacy.lsu.edu/sites/default/files/sc/findaid/4740.pdf]


Winsor sent this letter to the merchants Magoun and Son, which was run by Thacher Magoun. The Mystic Seaport Records describe the firm as follows:

“Born in 1775, the company’s founder, Thacher Magoun began his career as a shipbuilder in Medford, Massachusetts. Retaining partial interest in the vessels he built, Magoun quickly accumulated a large estate. In 1838, Magoun firmly established himself in his role as merchant by opening the company of Thatcher Magoun & Sons in Boston. With the assistance of his son, Thatcher Magoun, Jr. and eventually Thatcher Magoun III, the company continued in maritime trade until the late 1870s.

Magoun’s ships were noted for their speed and dependability. The most noteworthy of these include the ARCHIMEDES, DEUCALION, ELECTRIC SPARK, GREENWICH, HERALD OF THE MORNING, MANLIUS, MEDFORD, PHARSALIA, SWALLOW, TALMA, THATCHE MAGOUN, TIMOLEON, and WITCHCRAFT.
Daniel Winsor Letter

merchant. Routes in the 1840-1860 running between Boston and New York to New Orleans and the Caribbean and from there to European ports such as Liverpool, Cronstadt or Marseilles before returning home. Cargos typically included cotton, sugar, molasses, hemp and Spanish specie. [https://research.mysticseaport.org/coll/coll230/, accessed 5/24]

The letter describes in detail the state of trade in Vera Cruz during the Mexican-American War. He writes, “the return Ships are coming in finely from V.C. [Vera Cruz] and the last company of Volunteers up at Mexico came up this morning, and it seems the Timoleon had got to leeward of her port and was in tow of the Steamer going in when Capt. T. was coming out, therefore it is evident that she will bring Regulars & the Pharsalea, instead of going to Hampton Roads, will come here with Regulars & get $6000.00 instead of $7,500.00. I have been told that the Government have stopped the sale of property in V.C. and all the horses, mules, camp equipage & stores is to be shipped to ports in the U. States. Horses were sold at $7 a piece before the sale was stopped.

Freights are growing worse & worse. Mr. Gale has just taken for the Ship Elizabeth, 600 barrels pork @30c pr. barrel, [..?..] 100 tons of lead freight free. A Ship was chartered 2 weeks since to go to Boston for the lump sum of $3500.00. She will not make $1500.00 and it remains to be seen whether the vessel get her charter paid. The [..?..] has 700 Bales on board and stowed.

Your most Obedient Servant,
Daniel S. Winsor

I shall send the Timoleon when he comes back across the River to safe wharfage, also the Pharsalea, unless we can get something to do in the Government employ. Going to Europe or elsewhere is out of the question for the present.

New Orleans, July 6th, 1848

Messrs. Magoun & Son
Gentlemen,

I wrote you yesterday advising Draft [..?..], 1-1/4%

$375
An unusual use of sheet music as satire, with the lithographed cover showing a fake stock certificate. The cover - engraved by Major & Knapp - advertises an ownership share in the Spondolix Petroleum company and states that F.B. Helmsmuller, who was actually a noted composer, was the “Treasurer and General Manager” of the company. This is a particularly fine example of the piece. In our research we found several references to this piece as being a real stock certificate for a real company, however this is clearly a parody of the oil business. This was printed in 1865, when the Pennsylvania oil industry was booming, and the engraved illustration appears to show a countryside scene in Pennsylvania or somewhere similar. Four copies in OCLC.

New York, 1865. Folio, 13 ½ x 10 ½ inches. Fine condition.

Spondulix Petroleum Co.
/ Capital $50,000,000
/ Shares 50 cts Each.
/ Dividends Declared Very Often... / Every Stockholder is Entitled to One Copy of the Famous Petroleum Galop.

$675
A scarce photographically illustrated title on El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, published by the Albertype Company of Brooklyn, New York. Photographs include an untitled panorama of El Paso; a view of El Paso showing The Angeles, La Plaza and Mount Franklin; El Paso's City Hall; a South El Paso street scene; El Paso's courthouse, San Antonio Street; a montage of several businesses in El Paso; an outdoor scene entitled “Mexican Town and Mount Franklin;” Hotel Dieu Hospital; an unidentified high school; a photograph of several subjects in front of a smelter entitled “Smelter;” a montage of Fort Bliss; the Church of Guadalupe in Ciudad Juarez; an interior of same; Acequia Madre in Ciudad Juarez; a street scene in Ciudad Juarez; a scene of mesquite wood merchants; a domestic scene entitled “Patio of Mexican House;” a montage with two images of Mexican subjects entitled “Lovers” and “Jarabe - Mexican National Dance;” and a montage of two women working. Overall an interesting collection of images showing U.S. attitudes about Mexico as much as the scenery and subjects themselves. OCLC locates one copy, at Yale.

$950
Regular Free Soil Ticket. For Representatives to General Court, Henry Humphreys, Asaph Churchill.

Likely Dorchester, Massachusetts, 1848. Handbill measuring 5 x 4 inches. “1848” written in pencil at upper margin, fine condition.

A rare Free Soil Party handbill for a local election which was likely printed in Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1848. We find records of Humphreys and Churchill in Dorchester, where both of their names appear on a large broadside for a Free Soil rally in the same year. We also find Humphreys listed as participating in a Free Soilers reunion several decades later. The party was formed during the 1848 presidential election. The aforementioned broadside advertises a large rally in Dorchester in July of 1848, and we suspect that this handbill was printed in the ensuing months. We find no other records of this in auction records or institutional holdings.
Elijah Richardson Craven Jr. (1824–1908) was born in Washington, DC, and educated at Princeton, receiving an undergraduate degree in 1842. Having decided not to pursue a career as a lawyer, in 1849 Craven entered the Theological Seminary in Princeton; after which—during the time most of these letters were written—he was the pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Somerville, New Jersey, and then of the Third Presbyterian Church of Newark, New Jersey. He resigned from this position in 1887 or ’88 to become General Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, and was involved in service to the Church and with the New Jersey Historical Society until his passing.

Hannah Tingey Sanderson (1827–1863) of Brooklyn, great-granddaughter of US Navy Commodore Thomas Tingey, was Elijah Craven’s first wife. They were married in 1852 in Brooklyn. Her correspondents here include, additionally, her maternal grandfather Tunis Quick Craven (1780–1866) of Pennsylvania (Tunis does not appear to be related to Elijah) and uncle Alfred Wingate Craven (1810–1879) of Washington, DC. The latter served as the Chief Engineer of the Croton Aqueduct Department and was a founding member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and Architects. During the time many of his letters herein were written, he was working on the construction of railroad through South Carolina.

Offered here is a large archive of letters documenting the family affairs of the Presbyterian minister before, and during the first few years of, the American Civil War, spanning 180 letters over thirty-eight years. The letters are often highly personal and affectionate, detailing
intimate family affairs between writers. However, a running theme concerns race relations in the antebellum United States; the family members were relatively wealthy Northerners whose work often took them to the South, and their attitudes are commensurately complex as they interact with freed and enslaved Africans and with the political issues of their time.

In an early letter, a friend or family member, Jane, writes from Ringoes, New Jersey to Hannah’s mother Margaretta Tingey Sanderson (née Craven, 1804–1828):

“[...] altho this place is over run with free blacks, yet ‘tis with the utmost difficulty we can get any one even to do our washing – so you may know we have a sweet time of it – – a want of help is a general complaint throughout the neighborhood – to make the best of it ‘tis a mean disagreeable place – I am too fast the place itself is pleasant enough – but the inhabitants – tis they I would (if I dare) abuse” (March 28, 1825)

Hannah’s uncle Alfred—who, during the Civil War, bemoans that “I cant say to you Merry Christmas!, for none of us can feel so when we think of our country + the desolate hearts of so many of its people” (December 25, 1862)—is happy to use what is likely to have been enslaved labor, as his work as a civil engineer for the railroad finds him directing work in South Carolina in 1838. He describes a workday scene in a letter to a young Hannah:

“The other day I was riding along my line, when I saw a cloud of dust at some distance ahead of me, just in the edge of some pine woods – In another moment, I could distinguish the cause – there were nearly 40 negroes on as many mules, all galloping away towards their mess house, to get their dinners – both men and mules – and then return to their work – it would seem strange to you to see so many negroes, each one as black as possible, and each mounted on a donkey – the whole road is worked by negroes, and I have a great number on my part of it – about 200 – besides the masons + brick makers, who are Irishmen + Yankees -” (August 28, 1838)

Hannah, for her part, has at least somewhat more sympathy for enslaved people than do her older relatives. In a revealing passage, she asks Elijah whether he would allow her to take on a young girl from Cuba who had been freed by a distant relative:

“By the way – talking of responsibility makes me think of an offer I had made me last evening – You have heard me speak of a far off cousin of ours – James Murdoch – he arrived yesterday from Cuba, and has brought with him a little girl, nine years of age, to whom his brother has given her freedom, they are anxious to place the child in some family where she will be well brought up, and kindly treated. He says she has all the requisites for making an excellent servant – is very smart, and can already wait upon table, and do many other things. They were desirous that Aunt Maria should take her, but she has such a housefull that she does not want her now – Then he wanted me to take her – I thought at first that I should be most unwilling to take such a charge, but since, have thought that she might be very useful to us – taking her at that age we might make a Cassy of her, and as the baby grows older, she might be of great assistance in amusing and running after her, and perhaps in a few years be able to take the place of nurse, and for some time at least, there would be only the expense of clothing her, which would not be much – Tell me dearest what you think exactly – consult with your mother and
tell me what to do – my sympathy is rather excited for the poor child just now – a little colored child of nine years old, alone at the Astor House with Captain Murdoch, and scarcely understanding a word of English, can hardly fare very well – Her not speaking English is a difficulty certainly, but she is learning it – she speaks Spanish, and a little French, but at her age, will I suppose very soon speak English when she hears nothing else – But I must not devote so much of my letter to her, only in your next letter, tell me what you think of our taking her.” (June 16, 1853)

And, in a letter written the next day:

“Captain Murdoch has brought up here this morning, the child I wrote about yesterday – Aunt Maria having asked him to send her here till he goes to Boston on Saturday – Poor little thing – she looks so very sad, + cannot understand what is said to her – Her French is Creole French, + none of us can speak Spanish. I wish she could speak English – or at least understandable French – Captain M. is very anxious that I should have her, – of course that will entirely depend on what you tell me in your letter tomorrow, I must give an answer by Saturday –” (June 16, 1853)

However, it appears that Hannah is not allowed to take on the girl, as she is never mentioned again, even in passing.

In the meantime, Hannah and Elijah have more children of their own, as Elijah’s career takes him to Somerville, New Jersey—where he takes on a student who is “quite pleasant, talks very well, but is very odd looking”, in Hannah’s telling (July 11, 1853)—to Newark, and all around the Eastern Seaboard. In 1857, Elijah goes to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, where he writes to Hannah:

“We are getting along nicely with our business in the Assembly – We have some talkative men but we shall I think be able to keep them in order –” (May 9, 1857)

One of his letters from the Assembly includes some intriguing notes, possibly for a sermon, which include:

“Church – constituted authorities – heathen man + publican to be labored for + prayed for – Discipline divinely appointed […] reclamation of offender – removal of dead branches – prevention of sin – Tell it to the Ch…” (May 10, 1857)

The next General Assembly that Elijah attends is famous in the history of Presbyterianism: the 1861 Assembly in Philadelphia, where the Gardiner Spring Resolutions were enacted. The Resolutions would require Presbyterians—clergy and Church members—to pledge allegiance to the US Federal Government.

Elijah has some business of his own at this meeting, about which Hannah reassures him:

“[…] the assurance that you were ‘Calm + peaceful, enjoying the spirit of the 4th Psalm’, was very sweet to me – I trust it continues darling, and will continue, whatever be the result of this unpleasant matter – I think you ought to be prepared to have the assembly decide against you – It is impossible that such a body of men should really understand the true state of the case –” (May 27, 1861)
should really understand the true state of the case –” (May 27, 1861)

But this is both repeatedly postponed and overshadowed, it seems even for Elijah, by the debate over the Gardiner Spring Resolutions. He writes:

“Our case does not come up till Monday – but I am glad to be here – the debate this morning on Dr Springs resolutions to uphold the government was one of the most magnificent I ever heard –” (May 24, 1861)

And, the next day:

“The debate here is gigantic – It has already been through two days + is to be continued on Monday – It is a [certainty] that the passage of Dr Spring’s resolutions will split the Church – + yet – (even tho a member of the Cabinet who is also one of our Elders, has telegraphed that the government does not want them passed) they are passed + will probably carry –” (May 25, 1861)

His assessment was correct: the enactment of the Resolutions would precipitate the schism of what would be the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America from the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. This concerns Elijah, but it seems that he is strongly opposed to the very premise of the Gardiner Resolutions:

“The debate on Dr Springs resolutions [is] still going on. I am afraid that the Church will be broken to [pieces] in consequence – And I contend that they have no more right to entertain the resolutions than they have a right to decide on a case of forgery –” (May 27, 1861)

That is, the notion that the Church, as a religious organization, should even be considering pledging allegiance to the Federal Government is preposterous to him, regardless of his own position on the issues.

At the 1862 meeting in Columbus, Ohio, Elijah again has business of his own, concerning the Third Church in Newark. The business is controversial – Hannah writes:

“I suppose this terrible fight which is to come off at the Assembly will be worth hearing – but it seems sad that Christians cannot control themselves better. Why is it that when Jesus came to save from sin – there is so much of it among his own true believers – It puzzles me in others – In myself it causes doubt –” (May 21, 1862)

However, his business is again postponed, by further political debate and by a hoax:

“Yesterday we had quite a time in the Assembly – it was announced that a telegram had been received in the City declaring the Capture of Richmond + Jeff Davis! – – There was a perfect tornado of cheers +c – It was quite a damper to have the Moderator a few minutes after announce that the intelligence was premature – or, in other words, that the Assembly had been hoaxed – Our business was postponed yesterday afternoon – in order that the debate on the state of the Country might proceed – When it will come up now – none can tell –” (May 24, 1862)

A large set of intimate and personal letters punctuated by the unavoidable tensions of American life in the mid-nineteenth century, these will be of interest to scholars of Presbyterian history, the Antebellum period, and race and religion in America.
35 CONTINUED

Craven Correspondence Archive

Sources:


Willard Martin Rice, History of the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1888), https://archive.org/details/historyofpresbyt00rice/page/n7/mode/1up


A Collection of Four Diaries by John Carter, Member of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, Giving Extensive Details on Life and Current Events During the Civil War and Reconstruction Period, with Particular attention Given to the Machinations of the Quaker Community and Social Causes, 1862-1877 [with] An Additional Journal by John’s Daughter Sarah Carter, c. 1893.

Philadelphia, 1862 – 1893. Contents fine, some boards detached. Full inventory as follows:

(Carter, John). “Vol. 1. Daily Memoranda from 11m.20d.1862 to 4m.23d.1866 (sic).” (Philadelphia, November 20, 1862 – April 23, 1866). Oblong folio, 12” x 5.5”; 305mm x 140mm. Quarter calf over marbled boards; scuffed and rubbed, front board detached and crudely reattached with modern cello-tape. 383 hand-numbered pages manuscript text in brown and black ink; evenly toned, text generally crisp and bold. Unpaginated front matter also contains an holograph index and notes on barometry, back matter some undated Quaker meeting memoranda and a short postscript collection of original animal folk stories.

(Carter, John). “Vol. 2. Daily Memoranda from 4m.24d.1866 to 12m.31d.1868 (sic).” (Philadelphia, PA, April 24, 1866 – December 31, 1868). Folio, 10” x 8”; 254mm x 203mm. Quarter calf over marbled boards; scuffed and bumped, front board detached and crudely reattached with modern cello-tape. 240 pages manuscript text, unpaginated, on feint-ruled paper. A few tipped-in manuscript property maps.

(Carter, Sarah). Untitled Manuscript Journal. (Philadelphia, PA, March 28, 1893 – n.d.). 4to, 8 1/2” x 7”; 216mm x 178mm. Quarter calf over marbled boards; front board detached, moderate exterior wear. 8 pages manuscript text (on 60 otherwise blank feint-ruled pages); internally very clean, some related loose manuscript material laid in.

[relig. hist - quakers - abolitionism and the civil war - historical climate studies] CARTER, JOHN (1800-1877); CARTER, SARAH (1845 – ?)
John Carter (November 28, 1800 - June 3, 1877) was a professional chemist, amateur naturalist, Quaker leader, and, perhaps above all, proud Philadelphia family man. He was also a prolific diarist, and, in the four manuscript volumes on offer here, he left for posterity an historically detailed compendium of the events of his time, replete with copious notes and commentary. Carter's journals give an extensively detailed account of life within the Quaker community during the period, with a particular interest in the plight of enslaved African-Americans and conscientious objectors to the conflict. Carter was the co-founder of the Carter & Scattergood firm, which, according to the Hagley Museum where its records are held, "was the first in the United States to produce yellow prussiate of potash (ca. 1834), and red prussiate of potash (potassium ferrocyanide), chemicals used in dyeing, calico printing, blueprinting, and other industrial applications." (https://findingaids.hagley.org/repositories/3/resources/841, retrieved 4/24)

At the outset of Volume I, he articulates the specific reasons for preserving these memoranda: “At the suggestion of my daughter Sarah, I commence making records of desultory character acknowledging the correctness of her remark that they might be found in future to have an interest and value which was not apparent at the time of making them.” The four extant diaries span nearly fifteen years, and conclude, it would appear, on the very day of Carter's death in June, 1877.

Carter pens his memoranda methodically, typically arranging content in a four-part sequence. First, as a man of science, he invariably gives a thorough meteorological summary of the day's weather; second, he offers a narrative of any world-historical event of the moment, especially those at variance with his Quaker pacifism; third, he recounts his religious experience of the day, both in his interior spiritual life, and in organized Quaker worship and praxis; and fourth, he makes lovingly detailed note of any developments in the lives of his children and friends. A synoptic reading of the journals suggests that he perceives all of these topics to be correlated, sometimes even dramatically interdependent. Carter's observations on his life are lyrical and self-reflective. In volume II, page 43, he writes: “It is well often to number our days, with the desire that we may so do it that for may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Very solemn and affecting has been the changes made by death wither a short period, and what a few month, more may bring us know not; though we do know that it behooves us to make all diligence in our heavenward journey, watching unto prayer, with our affections set on things above, and earnestly endeavoring that the days wish may keep pace with the day.”

Each day’s memorandum begins with a weather report. These reports are highly technical, and, in concert with data he has collected with his own instruments, Carter cites data from many other sources. These sources may be local (e.g. the Pennsylvania Hospital) or far afield, with Carter receiving regular telegraph transmissions on the subject. Notably, he begins Volume I with a brief summary of the principles of barometry, because, in spite of the cruciality of that field, he expects that the anticipated reader (i.e. his descendants) would not be skilled therein. Carter's background as a chemist and scientist informs his fastidious attention to detail, and much information about the climate of Philadelphia may be gleaned from these volumes, and his forays into other branches of science - for example describing in detail an eel getting stuck in a pipe at his factory, the seasonal
pollution of the Schuylkill river or many descriptions of crop quality - show an overall interest in scientific subjects outside of chemistry.

Where relevant, he then proceeds to report any daily events deemed to be of historical importance with respect to future interpreters. These, too, are often painstakingly recorded, because, as Carter himself notes at the outset and throughout his diaries passim, they will provide needful lessons for later readers. The author shows almost prescient judgment here, inasmuch as he treats themes which remain even now current and salient e.g. violence, power, gender, race, oppression, mass extinction, pollution, &c. He often quotes notable texts verbatim, for example on March 11 of 1863, when the Pennsylvania Society of Friends submitted a formal message to the Pennsylvania Legislature recommending the decriminalization of the transport of African-Americans into Pennsylvania. He often describes the Philadelphia meetings, including notes on who speaks and what sentiments are aired. Describing a meeting in 1863 discussing the Friends Indian School, he adds that “The condition of the Indians does not show any marked improvement within the year.” Carter’s copious notes on the varied meetings and committees would provide a detailed complimentary source to the minutes and publications of the Philadelphia Meeting.

Carter recounts, for example, the unjust and often violent treatment of those Quakers who objected to participating in, or even indirectly endorsing, the United States Civil War. He follows the trial and imprisonment of Edward Smedley, a Quaker conscientious objector, from beginning to end. In one entry on April 26, 1863, he describes a young Quaker who is being prosecuted for refusal to enlist: “Benjamin Cope, son of Cobb Cope living in West-Chester, was brought to the city yesterday as a prisoner. He is one of the drafted and not-answering the requisition had been arrested shipped and uniformed and sent to the city… for trials.” He later notes Cope’s acquittal on charges. He describes the violence which Union authorities inflicted on many other objectors to forced conscription, including public humiliation and physical assault. He verbatim transcribes speeches read by Quaker delegations before the U.S. House of Representatives and letters written to Edward Stanton, the U.S. Secretary of War.

Carter pays particular attention to the institution of slavery and the execrable treatment of Indigenous persons in the United States; he is particularly invested in the hope of access and upward mobility amid these populations, and notes Quaker efforts in the form of advocacy and activism on behalf of African and indigenous Americans. The Friends Indian School and Quaker involvement with indigenous groups is a constant theme. “The colored people are our brethren,” he states in an entry, and describes a law passed by Pennsylvania limiting African-American migration as “retrograde.” In a meeting note for July 2, 1863, he describes discussion of the plight of African-Americans from the Cumberland Valley, “When a statement was made of the sad condition of the colored refugees from the Cumberland Valley and the parts of the state which had been invaded by the Southern Army. It was stated that good numbers of these unhappy people, chiefly women and children, were now in the city, in a state of utter destitution. It was concluded to hold a Meeting in the Colored Institute Lombard St. this afternoon for the purpose of adopting sufficient measures for their relief, and as friends were
immediately needed a subscription was given and $1100 was promptly contributed by those present..." He praises Thaddeus Stevens and his "radical actions," describes post-war efforts on behalf of African-Americans including the Philadelphia Shelter for Colored Orphans, and comments on the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment.

In short, Carter was a keen observer of contemporary life and a sagacious, often quasi prophetic, social critic. Other topics noted in the journal include, to name a few, Gettysburg, the Austria-Prussia War, Johnson's impeachment, Grant's inauguration, Nathan Blackburn, the DuPont explosion, the Committee for the Improvement of Indian Nations, cholera in Philadelphia, Minnesota indigenous land theft, the Chicago Fire, wildfires in Canada, pollution, and many others.

Despite his attention to world affairs and scientific nuance, Carter seems to have been a mild soul, never failing to emphasize the central importance of his family, his faith community, his close friends, and his broader social network. There are daily recollections of precious time spent with his children until the very end, and, very movingly, he includes for their delight a selection of animal stories which he told them in their youth.

Finally, John Carter's love for his family may also be seen in conjunction with a short companion volume, written in 1893 by his daughter Sarah Carter (b. ca. 1845 - D.O.D. unk.), which is also included in this manuscript lot. In her prologue, she writes: "Some two or three weeks ago the thought recurred to me that I would never regret it if I wrote down incidents in my father's life as he might relate to me from time to time. Obviously, they are not arranged in chronological order as they will be scattered events of a lifetime, which it seems to me are well worth remembering." The bulk of Sarah's short journal is comprised of a transcription of a story told by her uncle about her father.

Altogether, a very substantial record of the Philadelphia Meeting, the life of the Carter family, the inner spiritual life of a prominent Quaker during the period, and the weather and climate of Philadelphia, with scholarly interest across a range of subjects, and comprising many hundreds of pages in fastidious detail.

$7,500
Correspondence of Future Major League Baseball Player John Franklin “Stuffy” Stewart, Jr., with his Wife, Agnes Eulalie Edwards, Concerning the Trials and Tribulations of Minor League Ball and Life on the Road.

Various places, 1914–1926. Approximately 116 items: 88 letters to Edwards, mainly from Stewart, with approx 3–4 from various family and friends; 3 letters to Stewart; and 25 pieces of miscellany, including photographs, calling cards, and newspaper clippings.

John Franklin “Stuffy” Stewart, Jr (1894–1980), had his Major League Baseball debut in 1916 for the St. Louis Cardinals, and would play in the MLB on and off through 1929, ending his career with the Washington Senators. Before this, though, Stewart had to rise through the ranks. He played college ball at Southwestern Presbyterian University in Clarksville, Tennessee, and then with the class-D Florida-Alabama-Georgia (FLAG) and class-C South Atlantic (SALLY) leagues. Typically, Stewart’s letters refer to these only as “the League” and “the Club,” though several of his letters are written on Valdosta Base Ball Association letterhead and some are return-addressed to the Florida B.B.C. Within the FLAG League—during the time most of the letters were written—Stewart probably played mostly for the Valdosta Millionaires, though he never himself specifies.

These letters, to his girlfriend and then wife, Agnes Eulalie Edwards (1893–1973), document the ups and downs of Stewart’s pre-MLB career. For one, Stewart seems to frequently run into disciplinary trouble. While at Southwestern Presbyterian, he writes:

“Had my first Call to the Presidents office this am, for fighting (as usual) had a scrap with one of the Preachers he came in and woke me up this morning about 530 and it sure did make me some sore, I used some real ‘harsh’ language and he objected, and we had to settle it by force.” (March 21, 1914)
And a few days later that “I am in bad again, ‘Mr President’ here has given me just two weeks on my good behavior” (March 23, 1914).

While playing for the FLAG league, he spars with umpires:

“Had a little fuss with the ump’s yesterday and got fined $5 but I sure did take a bust at him. Called me out at the plate on a play that would have won the game I was safe but he saw different.” (May 23, 1915)

And with his manager, Otto “Dutch” Jordan:

“I sure am disgusted with this Club. They wont get [...] players and expect four of us to win. Otto spoke to me today for the first time since the first of last week we sure did have a ‘feud’ for he asked me today if I knew where he could get a good first base man or pitcher I told him I didn’t know, if I did I wouldn’t tell him. (May 1915)

In fact, Stewart wasn’t the only one, as “Otto has had a fuss with about half of the bunch and they are not playing for him” (June 10, 1915).

Stewart is also frequently injured – first, a weak ankle, which “don’t make any difference with the Mgr.” (May 31, 1914), and then his wrist and side, which he first injures on July 2, 1915. The side continues to bother him:

“My ‘side’ gets bigger + bigger and I can’t get anything to do it any good. The Dr say’s nothing but rest, but I can’t take it now, it’s impossible for we sure are battling for first place, or rather trying to stay there.” (July 10, 1915)

“Baby I sure am in a bad fix tonight can’t hardly stand straight my ‘side’ is swelled so. I don’t know what is the matter with me. I don’t expect I’ll be able to play ball tomorrow. I sure feel bad to.” (July 12, 1915)

And on July 16, he is hit in the face with a ball, breaking his nose and landing in the hospital. His injuries prevent him from moving up to a better league despite an offer to play for what’s likely the Atlanta Crackers:

“I had a chance to go to Atlanta and finish the season today, but couldn’t except it for I am not in condition to play that kind of ball, it’s too fast for a cripple man. I sure would have loved to have gone to for that sure was some jump from a class ‘D’ league to a class A.A. league was’ent it. Hard luck can’t be helped can it.” (July 17, 1915)

Stewart’s playing, though, still seems to outclass his peers: he complains to Eulalie of playing for a “Bum’ Ball Club” (May 16, 1915) and tells her that “I sure would love for this Club to win a game to see how it feels” (May 24, 1915). He often “gets his daily” – at least one good hit per game. In 1915, he tells Eulalie:

“I want to set a record in this league for stolen bases, and I will if I can keep well. I have 27 already and the nearest one to me has 22 so you see I have a good start to beat them all, and I do it too.” (July 3, 1915)

And he succeeds, with 38 steals across 71 games.

A small set of letters in this collection was written from Colorado in 1917 – after his debut with the Cardinals, Stewart was briefly demoted back to the minors, playing for the Denver Bears in the Western League. In his letters from Colorado, Stewart is exhausted:
“I did not worry about losing the game. I worry about myself. I did not write you last night for felt too bad. I went to bed right after the game, and just got up 1 Oclock. I guess I’ll look good out at the park today. I sure wish the league would close so I could come home [...] to get some rest. I need to stay in bed for two weeks and not do a thing, but I can’t so will have to try and stick it out.” (August 2, 1917)

And fed up:

“Well I am out again just as bad off as I was at first cant play, dont know what they will do with me and dont care. Wish I were with you so you could love me well again. I have had a Hell of a time this season and about ready to quit.” (August 7, 1917)

He then spends part of 1917 and 1918 stationed in Camp Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina – where, as a letter from Eulalie mentions, he is visited by no less than Otto “Dutch” Jordan (October 28, 1918). He writes to Eulalie from Company K of the 2nd Provisional Regiment and from Battery F of the 8th Field Artillery Regiment, and describes serving as a non-commissioned officer as “one sweet job” (October 30, 1918). His job involved overseeing shipments of horses for cavalry:

“I had to number and make out a discription card of each one and it sure was not any play, I had to personely number over two thousand horses and I look like a horse myself.” (November 23, 1918)

While serving, he has little interest in playing baseball:

“They sent for me to go out to play ball this afternoon, but I could not go for I sure was a farmer, I was planting Rye in my flower beds.” (November 3, 1918)

which, one assumes, is a euphemism for drinking whiskey.

The last few letters in the group are written during Stewart’s postwar MLB tenure, and are highly personal – one deals with the death of his father; another reads, “I had rather not read any more letters from you if they are like the one I had in L.R.” but has a love poem written onto the envelope:

“I think of you often and I write you every day but there’s so very little that it seems worthwhile to say it either rains or it doesn’t rain it’s either hot or cold the news is all uninteresting or else it’s all been bad the only thing that matters is the fact that you are there and I am here without you it’s lonesome everywhere I think about the way you smile and I recall your touch and distance lends enchantments and I miss you very much.” (April 17, 1926).

Overall, an unblinking look into the reality of life as a ball player for a class-D team who struggled through injury, exhaustion, and burnout to make it to the Major Leagues.

Sources:


$2,400
A letter written from Buffalo, New York, in 1849, giving an account of a ten mile running race in which the participants included a Euro-American runner with the nickname “The American Deer,” and several indigenous participants. Competitive running gained foothold in the United States in 1840s, as traveling athletes - such as the aforementioned American Deer (of whom we find no record) would travel from city to city and challenge local runners. The writer writes to his wife, a Mrs. M.E. Stern of St. Clair, Michigan, and describes the race as follows,

“and what will surprise you, went the first thing to a race. The great foot race, between a lot of Indians and a white man called the ‘American Deer’ came off yesterday & the afternoon being pleasant and inviting, and having nothing else that I could very well do, I went out with some gentlemen in a carriage & looked on while the poor devils ran 10 miles without stopping. An Indian named ‘Canada’ took the prize. It was an interesting race. One white man who started with the rest & run first rate in that distance, give out on the first mile, and a number of Indians fell back, and after running several miles, gradually dropped off one by one, till from 12 to 15 there were about 5 left, and only 3 who had any pretensions to running. The ‘American Deer’ came out second best. So much for the foot race.”

We find no record of “Canada,” as the name is quite difficult to isolate in searches. Overall an interesting firsthand account of early competitive racing in the United States.
Buffalo, Oct. 25, 49
Thursday Evening

Dear Wife,

Supposing that you may be still at St. Clair, I will drop you a line. I am still here as you perceive from the heading of this, and have been steadily getting better again - have had an appetite that should go far to keep one along - have not been out of the house however, except yesterday and today - and what will surprise you, went the first thing to a race. The great foot race, between a lot of Indians and a white man called the ‘American Deer’ came off yesterday & the afternoon being pleasant and inviting, and having nothing else that I could very well do, I went out with some gentlemen in a carriage & looked on while the poor devils ran 10 miles without stopping. An Indian named ‘Canada’ took the prize. It was an interesting race. One white man who started with the rest & run first rate in that distance, give out on the first mile, and a number of Indians fell back, and after running several miles, gradually dropped off one by one, till from 12 to 15 there were about 5 left, and only 3 who had any pretensions to running. The ‘American Deer’ came out second best. So much for the foot race.

I have been looking around today, something in the way of business, and for your preserve dishes, lamp, picture frames, bonnet, &c. Have bought lamp, dishes, & two frames, couldn't possibly afford to buy 3. The expense of all these things will take so much money I shan't be able to afford to go away if I don't economize - so I bought 2 frames only. I priced bonnets, was offered one trimmed as Ann directed for 3/4 Dollars. Shall look around more tomorrow - price of bonnet alone from $1 to 1.50, except a new braid, which they offered at 2.50. I didn't like the appearance of the new as much as the old. Shall look about & watch the market. Would like to buy you one, but fear I can't. Your window curtains tomorrow. Reid has not come, and I want [to] do up my matters and leave here Saturday evening (it would be of no use to leave here tomorrow) and get home Monday morning. You will probably not leave St. Clair till Monday & get home Tuesday morning. I am very much grieved not to feel able to meet you at Detroit, and hope you will experience no difficulty in getting along. Indeed, think you scarcely run any risk of difficulty if you are careful. The run across from Detroit is short & if you watch for good weather, you can have no trouble then. Don't start from Detroit if the weather is bad - better lay over a good deal than run any risk. I shall be very glad to join you again at home, I will assure you, & our dear little children. I am anxious to see you all. I hope the little ones have been good. I have been so much confined here with nothing to do and doing nothing that I have got homesick.

Adieu, the letters are going.

Yr hus "$350
Ft. Richmond, 1815. Single page, bifolium, 15 x 9 ½ inches. One area of loss measuring roughly an inch square and affecting the final paragraph of the letter, else about fine. Circular New York stamp with manuscript rate at the war rate of 25 ½ cents.

An uncommonly detailed letter written by a Captain D. Crawford of the 46th Infantry to Colonel Charles K. Gardner, detailing his career in the army and asking Gardner to advocate on his behalf for further military service. Crawford's letter gives a detailed account of the process of forming a company by his own endeavors, writing, “in the fall of 1812, without bounty, when the pay of a Soldier was but 5 Dollars per month, I almost entirely by my own exertions enlisted a Company of 75 Volunteers.” He continues to make his case, both for his career and for his reimbursement, stating “That we have been in no battles is our misfortune rather than our fault. We have done our duty.” It is possible that his lack of engagement was a cause of the withholding of funds.

Overall an interesting and detailed account of a Captain's experiences in the War of 1812, worthy of study for scholars of the United States military during the period.

Fort Richmond, S.I., April 28, 1815

Dear Sir,

Understanding that you have gone on to Washington, and expecting you will remain there during the selection of Officers for the Peace Establishment, I have thought proper to address you to make known my desire to continue in the Army and to solicit your assistance in that behalf, wishing that through you the Secretary at War and the Officers directed to assist him may know my claims, which will be briefly stated.
It is well known to you Sir, that in the fall of 1812, without bounty, when the pay of a Soldier was but 5 Dollars per month, I almost entirely by my own exertions enlisted a Company of 75 Volunteers. The character of the Regt. to which I was attached is sufficiently known. Col. Gray's reports will show in what state my Company was always found. The term of service of the principal part of the men expired on the 5th Novr. 1813. They generally volunteered a second time to stay till the January 1814, and as the Officers of our Regt. had no orders to engage them for a longer time, they were then discharged, and the most of them reenlisted in the 41st & 42nd Regts.

My appointment in the 46th Regt. is the 21st April, 1814. The last of May following, I was ordered on the recruiting service, & during the Summer, enlisted 49 men, all except 2 for 5 years. I have rec'd $1000 only of the public money, the amount necessary and that which is allowed by law to recruit the above number, with the contingent account would be $3288, leaving a balance in my favor of $1788, a great part of which I have advanced, and notwithstanding the exertions of Col. Tallmadge, remains as yet unsettled.

We shall have remaining in our Regt. for 5 years about 70 men. Of course above half that will remain were enlisted by myself, in fact, the greatest number that any other officer recruited was 37.

If to have been the means of bringing in service a great part of the numbers of Volunteers mentioned above, if to have recruited nearly 50 men for 5 years and by my own advances paid many of them the bounty, if being senior Captain, and enlisting a greater number of men by a fourth part than any other officer of our Regt. gives any claim, then may I confidently expect what I ask. That we have been in no battles is our misfortune rather than our fault. We have done our duty. We have obeyed the orders of those appointed over us. Capt. Gourlay having made arrangements to go in business, has given notice that it is his wish to be discharged.

I have only to observe that you have known me as a citizen, and perhaps may have understood my character as an Officer, and being well convinced that what anyone can do in my favor, you can do, I shall ever consider myself as gratefully obliged for any assistance you may render me.

Very Respectfully
Sir
Your obt. Svt.
D. Crawford
Capt. 46th Infantry

[to]
Col. Gardner

P.S. If it would not be asking too much, I would request from you a line on this business, which I could received at the Post Office in New York, with your opinion when the reduction will take place as soon as convenient.

D. C.

$475
Dillon Brook Cherry (1852–1937), known as Brook, hailed from Ohio but moved to Houston in 1892, where he found success in oil. His wife, painter Emma Richardson Cherry (1859–1954), called “Gla” by her family, has also been called “Houston’s first modern artist”. She studied in New York and Chicago and at the Julian and Delécluse Academies in Paris; and is credited with co-founding the Kansas City Art Association and School of Design, the Artists Club of Denver (later known as the Denver Art Museum), and the Houston Public School Art League, which would eventually open the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston.

In this group, the couple’s primary correspondents are Emma’s sister Ruth Richardson Mayberry (1875–1911), and Ruth’s husband Jim Mayberry (1872–deceased). Jim was an artist-turned-inventor and was friends with the likes of Howard Hughes Sr. Ruth was (or at least, wanted to be) a writer; but while she cultivated working relationships with some public intellectuals of the time, primarily the eugenicist Havelock Ellis, much of her time was taken up in Houston social life and in managing the Cherry house affairs.

Material about Emma Cherry
Most materials in the group date from between about 1904 and 1930, when Brook and Emma were well settled into Houston life. However, one set of letters was written by Emma herself in the late 1880s, while she was attending art school in Paris. These letters are unfortunately in quite poor physical condition, but what can be easily extracted from them shows they will be of special interest to scholars of Emma Cherry’s life. In early 1888, she writes to her mother describing her instructors at the Académie Julian, including Jules Lefebvre:

“School goes along about the same. We had Boulanger this month and he is not so encouraging a teacher to anyone as Lefebvre but I like him as well in some ways. He would make a stronger worker out of me I think, while Lefebvre would help one more to finish. I took some of my watercolors down this week + showed him + he liked them quite well, the one I made at […] with the bright reflections and the one I did at Remington, and my shanty at […] he said were very good indeed. I am going to show them to Lefebvre too. Altho’ they expect a good deal from pupils, and are rather severe in criticisms, yet they encourage you to do all kinds of things + keep you on that way very much. They never despise the day of small things.” (February 25, 1888)

To Ruth later that year, Emma writes about a commission she was working on over her Christmas break, and the sketching atmospheres in various galleries in the region:

“I have been out of school for a week, finishing the pictures I had commenced for Mrs. Whitney. I tried to do them afternoons, but the large one at the Luxembourg went along, so slowly, as you cannot work after two in the afternoon there. The galleries are not so large as the Louvre galleries + so many visitors come in + the […] + copyists are in the way. One is surprised at the many visitors in the galleries – a great many children and their ‘bonnes’ (nurses) come in, as they play in the Luxembourg gardens every day. Some of the children have such pretty complexions –” (December 23, 1888)

This letter contains several sketches of fashionable women’s headgear that Emma had observed lately – the headwraps of the aforementioned “bonnes,” Alascian women’s bows, and Norman women’s long ribbons.

In a letter written probably nearing on 1890, as she appears to be on her way home, Emma tells her mother about her attempts to find a good location to sketch in Glasgow:

“I wrote you last from Brussels, and thought my next letter would be from New York, but it seems fate or something has decreed otherwise, for when I arrived here last Friday, for sailing, the steamer was not ready to go, as there is a strike there, on all steam ship lines and no boats have been out since last week. […] I was so disappointed I have only just begun to get the upper hand of myself. It would not have been so bad if I had been stranded in some interesting place, four [sic] then I could have looked about. I go prowling about Glasgow, hunting for something interesting, but, beyond the cathedral, there is very little, and that can’t last. The only sketchable parts of it are in the crypt, where I […] work today, but found it too dark to do much and my sketch looked rather strange when I brought it up to the light. I did not have nearly the time I wanted in London, and if it wasn’t for the expense would have gone back there, but as I had planned to just come out even I couldn’t find the wherewith.” (June 19, N.Y.)
At some point perhaps in the early 1900s, Emma had begun to take on students. Ruth’s letter about one student demonstrates Emma’s undeniable influence on aspiring female artists of the time: “She telephones periodically to keep her spirits up til you return. She is pining – burning for the higher life. She seeks to embrace art as a mistress” (June 12, 1902). Emma later receives a letter from Anne Evans, who was also involved in the founding of the Denver Art Museum. Evans writes that her current painting teacher “is the only painting teacher besides you who ever taught me anything”, and that “Scarce anyone sees things as interestingly as you do, in line and in color and light” (January 18, 1904).

Ruth’s letters to Emma, which make up a large portion of the group, are often as telling about Emma’s personal life as they are about Ruth’s. For one, Ruth makes some telling remarks about Emma’s relationship to their mother. While Ruth takes care of the house as Emma travels for a second time through Europe, Ruth writes that:

“Mother seems interested in planning for a European trip but she is gloomy many days. She says she misses you and one would think you were dead but I think she always requires something either to worry about or to grieve over [...] I never thought you and she were especially congenial but one would infer that the hours of your company had been the choicest of her life, and that you were the favorite child.” (February 20, 1910)

And that:

“I well know it is true when you say that you can never paint with mother in the house. It is a terrible affliction to reach the end of life with no further interest in it than the people one has been associated with by habit or ties of blood. Mother is so lonely that she can’t avoid thrusting her presence upon one all of the time or remaining away and making you feel worse by a knowledge of her loneliness.” (March 11, 1910)

Meanwhile, as Emma is away, Ruth and Jim show her work off to an impressed audience in Houston; Ruth remarks that, when Emma returns, she “may not find the people so unappreciative as heretofore” (January 23, N.Y.). Many pieces are sold or loaned, including to the Houston Public Library (January 13, N.Y.). In February of 1910, Ruth and Jim host one Henry Preston White, an architect from Boston, at the Cherry home. White is incredibly taken with Emma’s work:

‘[W]e turned his attention to some of your pictures, and after that he had no eyes for anything else. He said they were the best sketches he had seen in ten years; that he had no idea there was anyone in America doing such perfect ‘dream pictures’. He said no wonder we like Texas if we could see such things in the landscape as you had painted. He asked me if you had not studied under Chase, and when I told him you had he said: ‘Well she has everything that Chase could give her and a good deal besides.’ He repeatedly referred to them as ‘dream pictures’ and compared them with the Japanese, especially my favorite – the one I call the ‘masterpiece’; and it made me so happy I wanted to hug him almost, and then send you a cablegram about what he had said. He said he had had some experience in drawing and painting, but he had concluded for sundry reasons that he had best give it up, and when he saw pictures like yours it always made him a little sad.” (February 24, 1910)
“Chase” refers to William Merritt Chase, under whom Emma studied at the Art Students League of New York. As Ruth puts it, “Mr. White […] said you are one of the leading landscape painters of America, if you only knew it” (February 27, N.Y.). She admonishes Emma that her time is better spent painting than in anything else:

“If only you would not try to do everything and please everybody and not be ashamed of showing sentiment and not live with […] and not chase reforms and art leagues, but leave such uplifting labor to Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Christian, Mrs. Heyer and Mrs. Tracey, you would no doubt reach an enviable [sic] goal. I am sorry I have to scold you but when a person like Mr. White simply goes into raptures and then turns upon me for allowing you to hide your light, I feel I must express myself forcibly. We were talking it over Sunday, and Jim and I concluded we were not sorry byou [sic] had remained in Texas so alone for by being away from the influence of other painters, you had been able to find yourself, but now that you have arrived it behooves you to arrange your life so youbcan [sic] pursue your calling.” (ibid.)

Or, as Jim puts it, “It is a positive shame for Glah to ever do anything more but than to paint and think and do just what the fancy of the moment may decide for her” (February 24, 1910).

Brook, for his part, gets an occasional mention in the Mayberrys’ letters to Emma, as they update her on his success in oil. Ruth writes,

“There is a new well in at Humble, an enormous gusher, in a quite remote part of the field and everybody is excited. Brook is absorbed in trying to get some leases, I believe, and if you saw how he is enjoying the chase, going without his meals and being worried to death, you would not think he needed Europe. He loves the business world as you love art and Humble suits him better than Italy.” (April 12, 1910)

About the Mayberrys
Where the Cherrys find success in art and oil, the Mayberrys decidedly do not. In the early 1900s, Ruth and Jim Mayberry were living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Jim was attempting to make a living as an artist, designing wallpaper patterns. Of this career, he writes:

“I have had enough of the art life – there’s nothing in it – I think I could eventually succeed but it’s a long long road and could mean a dog’s life for us all – so that’s out of the question – I haven’t enough money to stick it out as I want to and so before it’s all gone I am going to give up the dream –” (January 2, 1904)

The Mayberrys return to Houston to care for the Cherry house some time before 1910 – the year in which the bulk of Ruth’s correspondence with Emma is written. It is also probably in about 1910 that Ruth has her correspondence with physician, writer, and eugenicist Havelock Ellis. Ruth, like Ellis, was writing about human gender and sexuality; she was “thinking all the time about the book I hope to write called ‘A Theory of the Social Instinct in Woman’” (January 23, N.Y.). She updates Emma:

“I also have some real progress to retail [sic]. You perhaps remember I wrote two further articles to send Havelock Ellis after the long one he at first accepted. I had a long and very cordial letter from him yesterday in which eh [sic] said several of the phases of my articles interested him very much and one in the ‘Woman and the Mythical relation of Serpents’ he had himself never
thought or heard of. You may be sure I felt proud. And he, the leading man in his line now that Lembrose is dead, actually asked my opinion about something he is doing!" (April 8, N.Y.)

And, in May,

“Yesterday I had a letter from Havelock Ellis which made me happy all day, it was so long + friendly. I will quote from it: ‘Thank you for your letter with the additions and the notes on various points. I can assure you that they are all valuable to me and I am grateful to you for the time and trouble you have spent over them. Even though I do not refer to all the points you bring forward I am glad to have them for future consideration and reference; and I especially value the ideas and experiences of a highly intelligent and observant woman.’ Was that not nice? He discusses things with me quite as an equal and tells me if he disagrees. He also sends me an article of his torn out of a magazine which he thinks will interest me and which he says, finding it to be his last copy, ‘he would rather like to have back.’ Such things keep one just a little in touch with the world one really moves in but it is so pitifully small and far away.” (May 22, N.Y.)

Ruth Mayberry passes away in 1911, and Jim leaves the country for several years—from at least 1913 to 1914—to live in France with his and Ruth’s daughter Frances. While there, he socializes with some prominent creatives: Jim calls on Marguerite Audoux, author of Marie Claire (who is “petite and fat and very pleasant to talk to”; November 29, 1913); and Frances is to take drawing and painting lessons from the American illustrator Harry Townsend (who “wants to quite illustrating + paint”; March 29, 1914).

Jim is remarried to Renee L. Mayberry (1897–deceased), and the two arrive back in the States in 1922. Having still not found a stable means of supporting his family, Jim writes to Brook that he is returning to Houston and needs a job “to repair my finances” (January 12, 1922). He goes into sulfur mining, and several letters from this time detail oil and sulfur prices. Finally, though, Jim lands on something he feels has serious potential: as his letterhead states as of 1923, he is not only “J.B. Mayberry Oil Producer”, but also the “Inventor of Link-Cup System for lifting oil from deep oil wells”.

The link-cup, for which a patent was granted in 1925, is a chain of spherical links that work to scoop material out of wells (Jim’s letters include some technical drawings of the system). As Jim puts it, writing to Brook from New York City,

“When the oil fraternity see my system working in a 3000’ well and when they know that I’ve gotten the right lawyer back of me to protect my interests, the game will be won, Brook. Because the whole oil world is looking forward right now for some […] new system. The deep wells of California have shown them that the old standard pumping rig has reached the end of its prime – they simply cannot pump a 5000 or 6000 foot well with that system. With mine they can – and not only that but they can do it cheaply – and it’s cheap to install.” (October 16, 1928)

In fact, his link-cup system has some prominent early supporters – for instance, no less than fellow Houstonian Howard Hughes, Sr., whom Jim meets in New York. Of an early test, Jim writes, “Wish you could have been there to see her work – Brook, she’s a ‘humdinger for wells making sand’ – just as Howard Hughes remarked when I showed him the idea –” (May 17, 1923).
Hughes, from Jim's telling, is highly impressed with the link-cup system. Jim writes:

"Howard Hughes is here and I spent all morning with him the other day at the Plaza Hotel. He began by criticizing the thing from every angle and he wound up by being very enthusiastic about it. I asked him what he thought about the question of tangling or mishap – and he just laughed. He said: don't let that worry you for an instant, and as for speed I think you can run that chain about as fast as you wish. And there is no question about its strength." (November 2, 1923)

And Hughes even offers the use of his own wells and engineers:

"Howard Hughes told me by all means to get a well at Goose Creek where there were good roads and also water transportation – said I could have the free run of his plant and the advice of his [...] engineers and it wouldn't cost me a nickel. Said I could use all of their time I wished." (November 2, 1923)

Getting a prototype manufactured, though, is a lengthy process. Jim does not have the dies cut until January 3, 1924 – and he would not get to test the system at Hughes' wells, since Hughes would pass away on January 14 (which Jim was “all broken up over”; January 17, 1924). By September of 1925, the system is still not manufactured; Jim states that “it will take them until the 1st October to do the brazing” (September 15, 1925).

Once manufactured, the testing of the link-cup system commences – disastrously. In October, Jim writes from Kentucky that:

“The fellows lied to me about the well, or else did not know. They claimed there was lots of gas* you couldn't smell let alone see any gas + there's no pressure in the sand at all. and that the well headed up above the sand about 60 feet. It doesn't head up an inch – in fact it lacks 12 inches [...] of coming up to top of sand. It's only a dribbler, and of course I never claimed I could naturally increase such a well.” (October 10, 1925)

And in November, he writes:

“Well I couldn't make my test even on the last well, for the reason that these Kentucky wells are in a class by themselves for the most part. You see I must have a well with life enough to head up above top of land like the one in Okla. which I tested, but I must have one which heads up at a variable rate – that is, which heads up fast when the well is first pumped off then slows down and then stops entirely. Here in Ky. they just keep on heading up at the same rate [...] but they dont make any more oil. [...] I never heard of such wells until coming here, and of course my system will not affect such wells.” (November 9, 1925)

By 1926, though, things have improved – testing is “going in in a perfectly satisfactory manner” (March 19, 1926) and the head of the “American Controlled Oil Fields and his chief Engineer [...] are very favorably impressed” (January 22, 1926). Jim is feeling confident; 1927 finds him back in Paris where he is “lead[ing] a very modest life”, having “drunk champagne only once since we arrived here” (October 20, 1927).

This is not to last. In 1928, back in Houston, Jim writes
that he hasn’t found a financial backer for the link-cup system and that the “Sulphur mine isn’t doing so well” (July 30, 1928). By 1932, things are looking bleak. In the latest letter in the group, Jim writes:

“I don’t know what is going to become of me, and those dependent upon me. The sulphur is at a very poor ebb – and they say they are just ‘cleaning up’, and expect soon to abandon the production at Bryan Heights. When that is gone, I’m gone. And I see it – and have seen it for a long time – two or three years – but what could I do? I am too old now to hunt for a job, either here or in the U.S. […] If I had the proper amount of courage I could just ‘slip off this mortal coil’ […] But, hang it all, I believe in the next world and I dont want to arrive there under a handicap. So, dont worry, my dears, I’ll never suicide.” (January 18, 1932)

Overall, a wide-ranging, intimate look into the lives of a highly socially connected, more or less well-to-do, Houston oil family. Of interest especially to those studying Emma Cherry’s life and work; American painting at the turn of the 20th century, particularly early female artists; and the history of American oil.

Sources:


Kelly Montana, “Emma Richardson Cherry: Houston’s First Modern Artist at the Houston Public Library,” Glasstire [Texas visual art], April 27, 2013, https://glasstire.com/2013/04/27/emma-richardson-cherry-


Margaret Darling Nims (1896–1963) was born, lived, and died in Troy, New York. However, from 1920 to 1922, she lived in Paris, France. What was supposed to be a six month trip to place wreaths and markers on the graves of servicemen from the Troy Citizens Brigade (or its descendant, the 105th Infantry) killed in World War I—including her younger brother, Henry Spicer Nims (1898–1918)—turned into a two year stay. Margaret lived and worked in Paris, enjoyed a rich social life with other Americans and Brits abroad, and traveled around the French countryside to various cemeteries as the process of concentrating bodies, and sending some home, dragged on.

Information about the young Henry Nims is mixed. He was a member of Company A of the 105th Infantry Regiment of the 27th Division of Infantry. His death record lists his date of death as September 25, 1918, but this is potentially incorrect; a Sergeant from his company, who was wounded in Bony and interested in Margaret’s work in the area, wrote to her that “If my memory is correct Henry was killed early the morning of the 27th while we were occupying the support line trench. My platoon (the 2nd) was just to the right of his machine gun” (June 21, 1923). Margaret speculated that
Henry was killed at Guillemont Farm, just outside of Bony, as it was “where most of the heaviest fighting was carried on by the 27th Division” (July 1, 1922), including the Battle for the Hindenburg Line. Moreover, although genealogical records list Henry as a private first class, Margaret wrote to her father to ask him to “have one of the officers give you the proper data to have the grave inscription changed from Pvt. 1cl. to Cpl.” (May 9, 1922).

Margaret left for France in July of 1920 with her friend Ardel Herzog (1895–deceased). The pair had employment waiting for them as clerks with the American Graves Registration Service, through Margaret’s friend Arthur, who appeared to have worked with the Service as well. Unlike this clerical work, though, the markers were not official government business, which immediately caused problems at the border. She writes to a Dr. Oakley, who coordinated the marker placement from the Troy side, about not being allowed to take the markers through customs:

“I was given to understand I must go to the American Consul and get a letter stating the markers were for graves of American Soldiers, etc., etc. I couldn’t argue with them so just had to say “Oui, oui”. However I found out afterwards that the Customs Officer thought the markers were being sent over officially by the Government and wanted to see papers proving it. Well, to make a long story short, on Thursday we went to the American Consul where they said they had nothing to do with it at all.” (Sept 21, 1920)

On returning to the baggage office that Saturday, Margaret manages to get the markers through with the help of a French-speaking friend and an ambiguous “tip” (described as “a little personal influence” in a contemporaneous newspaper clipping):

“Saturday afternoon we went to the baggage office and after a lot of talking on Mayne’s part (She always carries on all the French conversations for the bunch) and a few tips on Arts part, we had the box of markers opened for the second time and they were passed without paying any duty.” (August 9, 1920)

For a few months, Margaret works her clerical job and enjoys the social life in Paris, where there are plenty of other Americans around, dinners to be had, and dances to attend. She begins her travels to various American cemeteries in France in August of 1920, going first to Amiens and Tincourt, and placing a wreath and marker on Henry’s grave. Henry had initially been buried in Driencourt—in Grave #4, according to a February 1920 letter in the group from the Graves Registration Service—but was moved to Tincourt during the process of concentration, and would later be moved yet again. His seems to be the only wreath placed on an American grave there, and Arthur tells Margaret “that very few of the American Graves have been visited by members of the immediate family and that probably I am the first one to visit Tincourt” (August 19, 1920).

She next goes to Romagne, to the largest American cemetery—presumably Meuse-Argonne. She plans to begin placing markers on the rest of the Troy men’s graves, but runs into the second major problem with the markers. She writes to Dr. Oakley:

“After lunch we decided it was never going to stop raining and that we might as well start out with the markers. We thought that, as a matter of form, we would go first and ask permission of the Captain in charge [...]. We took one
marker over to show him. Can you imagine our surprise when after some hesitation he said he was awfully sorry but really couldn’t give us permission to place them. He said an order had been issued recently prohibiting everything but the regulation crosses. He said the only way he could allow it would be for us to bring a letter of authority from Headquarters in Paris. He also said he had refused a good many others before us. It seems just the week before the Knights of Columbus had been out with markers to put on some of the graves and he had refused them also. [...] So we decided we would take one marker and put it on the grave, take the pictures and then take it off again. Then in case I could get the authority, I would have the pictures with the markers and could have someone else place them for me later. [...] I left the markers in charge of some people we knew and they said if I could get the permission they would place them for me. [...] I tried for several days to see the Major I was told to go to for authority to place the markers. Finally about the end of the week I had a chance to interview him. I told him all I could about the markers, but he said practically the same that the first officer had said. He said they had had so many requests that they had to refuse all. He gave the reasons that such things spoiled the grass, made it much more work to keep the grass cut and detracted very much from the general appearance of the cemetery. Although I didn’t say so, I couldn’t help but agree with the latter statement.” (September 21, 1920)

Margaret makes the same trip through Amiens and Tincourt the following summer. In Tincourt, the townspeople, especially the schoolchildren, partake in Memorial Day services for the Americans:

“As we were going up through the town we saw a lot of children coming out of the schoolhouse and forming a line, two by two. There were about twenty children from five to twelve years old, and they were all carry[ing] many tiny bouquets of flowers. There were two or three older people with them. We realized right away that they were observing the American Memorial Day. We went up to the cemetery and had only been there a few minutes when the children arrived. Of course the American Memorial Committee had already decorated the American graves. They had placed an American Flag and a green wreath with three or four red flowers on each grave. The French children of the village had tiny bouquets [...] which they placed at the foot of each American grave. They also had a large wreath of the same which they placed on the directory box. It was the most touching and pathetic sight I have ever seen. It was quite too much for me. Even the smallest tots went around with the most serious and sad expressions as if it all meant so much to them. [...] when [the children] found out I was there to visit my brother’s grave they were very much impressed. They all left after a while and presently three of them returned with two mammoth bunches of the red, white and blue flowers which they placed on each side of Henry’s grave. It was the sweetest thing the way they did it. They walked up very quietly and knelt down and placed the flowers on the grave. They told me afterwards that they would go up often and put flowers on the grave for me.” (June 18, 1921)

The following year, Margaret observes Memorial Day in Bony, where Henry’s body had been moved for a second time, now to a morgue and awaiting permanent interment. As Margaret explains to her father,

“[T]hey had sent practically all the bodies home and were waiting for Congress to appropriate money to buy
land for the big cemeteries before they could do the concentrating. Well they got the work along just as far as they could while waiting for the appropriation. They built big morgues, at the sites of what will be the big permanent cemeteries, and brought all the bodies in from the smaller cemeteries to these morgues so that just as soon as they get word from Washington they can accomplish things quickly.” (May 9, 1922)

But the money specifically for Bony had not been appropriated by Congress, so many soldiers’ bodies awaiting burial were being stored in the morgue there - news that Margaret breaks to her father as gently as she can. However, she soon gets to see the Bony morgue, and writes that “Before I went to Bony I was very much prejudiced against the bodies being in the morgues, but after having seen them I realize how very well they are all taken care of” (July 1, 1922).

At the Memorial Day services at Bony, the Troy contingent is strongly represented:

“Just as they called us to lunch, General and Mrs. Kincaid drove up in a large car. They were most unexpected as General Sherrill was supposed to be the speaker of the day. As you know, General Kincaid is Adjutant General of N.Y. State and was over here with the 27th. [...] During lunch different ones were speaking of relatives who were buried at Bony and I said something about my brother. Gen. Kincaid immediately asked if he was from Troy or New York. Of course I couldn’t imagine how he had guessed Troy, but he had recognized my Troy Citizens Corps pin. After that we had lots in common.” (July 1, 1922)

The service, like the previous years’, “went off beautifully” with much participation from the local children.

As for the markers with which Margaret originally came to France, she wrote to her mother shortly before her return,

“Will you please do something for me and let me know right away. Call up Dr. Oakley and ask him what he wants me to do with those markers that I didn’t put on the graves. I think I have twelve left. You know I placed two and took five up to Romagne and left them with a man up there until I could get permission to place them. Of course I didn’t get the permission and before I had a chance to recover the markers, the man had left for the States and I haven’t an idea what he did with them. Come to think of it that should leave thirteen as I think I brought twenty. Ask Dr. Oakley if it would be worth while to bring them home.” (August 18, 1922)

Overall, a well-written and intimate picture of life for an American in Paris after World War I, with significant detail included about cemeteries for, and concentration and return of, Americans killed in action in the Western Front.

References:
