

am not to be disappointed. I have had the only good offer made me since my return here from San Francisco that has been suggested to me by any one in this country, and as soon as I feel able will most certainly drive ahead.

Business is extremely dull here, verry little trading going on—it is expected business will commence about Middle of July and the prospect is that by that time I will have a store in operation. It is not expected that so much will be made by the merchants this fall as was last. Goods are on the decline. The retailer does not make the enormous profit of last year. I have taken advantage of Fathers Kindness and drawn on him for 500\$. It was a *sore lick*. Have been induced to believe from a friend of mine here that I will have no further necessity of drawing on Home for ballance offered by Thos & Father.

I have the most comfortable home here that tis been my lot to luxuriate in for months. I am now encamped at the House of a friend of mine from Baltimore named R. Merrill of the firm of Rose-Merrill & [Dodge or Lodge] of Baltimore but now a partner of an old Californian by the name of Hensly—*Bankers*. It is at *Merrills* suggestion that I am induced to remain in Sacramento City. He is a very clever fellow, a friend of *Charly Kemps*.

It is very well that I left the Mines to bring Fred down, there are accounts just recd of tremendous rich deposits on the shore of a lake just discovered and about 100 miles from here where they wash from 1 oz to 300\$ to a pan. They say on Deer Creek persons have left claims for which they paid 5000\$ and gone to the lake. I must confess that I believe but little of it. Some shrewd trader is at the bottom of it I expect.

I recd from Thee Thine of Feb 3rd, Feb 24th, March 12, March 25th & Apl 10th. Also numerous and very acceptable from Robt, Thomas, Father Tyson, J. Curlitt, & Tony. I am and must if I can answer all, but if thy only could imagine how a fellow felt that was suffering from the poison of the country thy would hardly expect any letter from me this time.

I have the can[dles]. Say to Robt & Tony put the Invoices & Bills of Lading for *Catherine* and *L. Bevans* in to the Hands of Cross Hobson & Co. provided I should not be in San Francisco, they to take charge of them. The vessels have neither of them arrived yet. Candles do

not appear brisk though prices keep up say 60¢ on Shore. Say I will give them my attention. Dear Lizzie, give my love to Mother & Girls, Boys, little ones, to all.

To Gillie & Tommy

I recd the letter you wrote little Boys. Am glad to hear you are first rate boys. Be good and dont give dear Mother more trouble than you can help.

Father

Dear Lizzie I expect I will come out Jay Bird, yet no knowing. Say to Missus Curlett I recvd her kind present of a cap, the most magnificent affair in California. Give her My Respects, remember me to W.A. Talbott.

THINE

I cannot write any more today, my breast & back sting like a swarm of bees was on it. Such is life in California. When I get home I dont want to go away no more.

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Sacramento City, June 27 1850

To Thomas Marsh Smith

DEAR THOMAS M

Your kind favour of Mch 26th was handed me by Joseph Hobson. The particulars of my visit to San Francisco I have made Elizabeth and Father Tyson familiar with, and as Fred has left for home trust ere this arrives he will have reached home. I have not written to you, it was not for want of inclination on my part you must be well aware, but mortified at myself by being unable to make favourable reports on my progress. It has not been owing to neglect or indolence on my part.

My hotel was a humbug. It never was fitted up and the Floods made a clean sweep of it. I lost nothing individually by the operation but made nothing. I determined then to strike for the mines. The

snow acted as a barrier to me but their melting cornered me during most of the time. I had determined to give the mines a fair shake and do not think I should of left them for some months had it not been requisite for Fred's security. I prefer the mines and mountains of California to its *Sodoms* and *Gomorrah's*.

The kind offer you made me I shall not avail myself of at present. I drew on Father Tyson for Five Hundred dollars, the balance of his order I hold on reserve and will not use it unless I think I can make a sure thing of it. I have had the effect what little means I may want made me by a friend in this place. It was my desire to embark in some retail business, but not being able to secure what I considered a desirable location for such a business, have been compelled to embark in something more extensive.

Have taken a fine warehouse on I St[reet] near the river, and have nearly disposed of one entire cargo from N. York and have the promise of more. If you hear of any cargoes shipped direct for Sacramento from Baltimore, please mention me to the shippers. Hayden and Cole I understand cleared a vessel for this port. Our firm is Smith & Suydam, J. Marsh Smith and James Suydam. My partner is a son of Lambert Suydam of New York and seems to have many friends disposed to throw business in his way.¹⁷ It is our present intention to connect the auction with our commission business.¹⁸ I think Sacramento is destined to become a great place, probably take the lead of San Francisco.

I can advise no shipments to California. It is impossible to say to day what to morrow will bring forth in a California market. There is no regular system by which the mercantile community here are regulated. They appear more the creations of impulse than of sound sensible reflection. All here is speculation of the wildest character, as for example it is no unusual thing here to sell goods what is called blind, the auctioneer professing not to know what is in the packages. A great many goods sold for freight & storage is sold in this way.

I have left Bills of Lading & Invoice of your shipment in hands of Cross Hobson with orders to sell on board if it can be done to any kind of an advantage, as expenses here are so exceedingly great.¹⁹ Candles such as I believe yours to be are worth in this place 60¢, can

hardly be called brisk. Articles that were a drug this time last year are now becoming scarce. Soap is advancing, good brown, 8¢ Coffee is also high, Green being worth 60¢. Last year there was at this time no sale, the market was glutted, Mining implements such as shovel & picks etc. are now in demand. Cheese and Butter are articles that have always maintained a good price. Lard has always paid, is worth now 20¢ packed in kegs. Dried fruit apples & peaches are selling now for 30 & 35¢ per lb. Salt Beef has always been a drug in this market, is not worth first cost. The vessels have none of them arrived by which the candles have been shipped. I will write Robt.

I am still suffering a good deal of pain from the bite of some poisonous insect. The sore is on my breast. I wish to write John Curlett. Return my thanks to Missus Curlett for her kind present. I rec'd Mothers kind favour on Feb 8th forwarded from Panama Mch 24th by Geo. Fisher. This letter I got out of the offices 22nd day of June. This is my last from Mother. Mother makes some enquiry of a Joseph Cross in this country. I learn there is such a man but have not come across anyone that knew him. I will write you again. Say to Toney do not come to this country. I shall leave it as soon as I get my pile.

YOUR BROTHER
J. Marsh Smith

My best regards to Mrs. Curlett & John. Remember me to Missus Talbott. I trust the day may come shortly when I can remit the favours of my friends.

JMS

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Sacramento City, June 28 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith

DEAR LIZZIE

I have been anxiously looking for letters since the arrival of the mail—an acquaintance of mine from this place called at Cross Hobson & Co but brought me nothing.

I am satisfied there is something for me somewhere and think John Wethered must have something for me.

I have been nearly Twelve months buffitting with the crosses of this country, and hope now I am fixed—My general health is good, and trust I may be favoured. Comforts in California are things I hardly look for and seldom think of, and in fact care not for them here—I leave them for those bright latter days I anticipate my return amongst you. There is but one thing binds me to this hateful country, that is *gain*. All I want is my pile, when I leave the ranch with all dispatch. Iniquity reigns here in its most malignant forms, its greatest sufferers are I think the children of Citizens—here it is really terrific. I have seen little fellows here gambling in the streets, hardly high enough to look upon the top of a half Barrel, putting their five and ten cent pieces down on a card with as much coolness as the oldest vetran in the vice would stake his ounce. If I had to live in California, I would desert its populous places and take to its mountains.

I have no fault to find with the manner in which I am treated. All are kind to me and my immediate associates are Gentlemen in all respects, therefore I have a chance of passing most of my time pleasantly. My partner here in business I have but one fault with, I fear he is too much like myself. It is no use to explain thee knows me. I have tried to be *mean once or twice*, but it aint no use so I give it up. My partner's name is James Suydam, son of Lambert Suydam of N. York—President of the Union Insurance Co. of N.Y. A little while ago, I was a digger, my uniform a pair of Pantaloons, red shirt and cocked hat, with face and head overgrown with hair, and a skin the colour of burnt coffee, lived on pork and hard bread. Now and only of late, I appear as a dignified merchant, wear a clean shirt, eat at the best Hotels, talk as big as any one of Shipments from the States,

of our increasing trade with China, and the ultimate result from the spread of the Angle Saxon race along the shores of the Pacific and when I am able to remit money home kind friends favoured me with, I will then feel like some Punkins.

I am very much in hopes Toney's & Roberts shipments may turn out favourable. They would pay if here now. I am daily looking for the arrival of the Vessel with them, having placed them in the hands of Cross Hobson & Co., provided I am not in San Francisco to take charge. James Lea is doing well and appears a great favourite with the Missourians—he was very kind to Fred when sick. Ned Pearce is at work here—I see Ned frequently.

Kiss the dear little boys for me and tell them I send my love for them to be good Boys—Missus Curlett sent me most an elegantly worked Cap, for which thee must give her my thanks.

I have taken advantage of Father's offer, to the extent of 500\$—having drawn on him for that amount. I will not draw for the balance nor on TMS without I see a chance of making a wise thing of it—I can get what I want for business purposes here at present.

Love to Bell, Anne, Lucy and all²⁰—remember me to Harriete and tell me if she rec'd my letter from the *Mines*. I hope ere this reaches Fred will be with you.

THINE

J. Marsh Smith

Say to Mother Smith I will write her soon—I am a miserable scribe.

[The following was enclosed.]

Sacramento City, June 29 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith

DEAR LIZZIE

I write thee without opening to thy last dates read by me, I have rec'd nothing as yet of the last mail, am satisfied that there are letters for me some where in the country, and think John Wethered must have something for me. I am just getting better from a severe sore on my breast—doct thinks was poisoned from the bite of some poisonous varmant. The steamer's Bell rings and I am selling some

goods. If I get chance will write more. Love to all dear Lizzie. Kiss the little Boys. Adieu.

THINE
J. Marsh Smith

Will try and write by the Sacramento mail.

* . . . *

[postmarked] *Baltimore, Md.*
Thirt [*sic*] day [1850]

To John Marsh Smith
DEAR JOHN

I have not received a letter from you since your departure for California. I wrote you about [illegible] some time since with Invoice of Candles pr *Laura Bevan & Ship Catharine*, which letter I suppose you did not get on its arrival in California, you having gone to the mines, but no doubt you will get it on your return. The article appears to have declined in price but there must be a great demand for them from the immense numbers of people having gone to California and they being an article that are always wanted, though on account of the great quantity of Candles gone they may be low for some time. Write me and let me know something about the article. I put mine up in small packages, I hardly expect to retire on the proceeds of this shipment but will do very well from the present prospects if I get a very small profit. I gave your instructions in reference to the proceeds of the sales of my Candles in my letter with the invoices. If they sell at a profit, remit me anuff [enough] to pay for them and if you can use the balance of the money on your own account you can keep it for the present, but let me know what they sell for and the expences of them in Cal.

Thomas sent duplicate Invoices & Bills Lading of my Candles to Cross Hobson & Co that they might attend to them if you were not in S. Francisco to do so, receipt of which letter CH & Co. have ac-

knowledge, but I wish you to do with them as you think best if you are in San F.

Thomas wrote to you about three months ago to draw on him for one thousand dollars and I think he also said if you saw a prospect of going into business you might draw on him for a thousand dollars more, the latter thousand as a loan which with the shipment of Candles will give you a start. You must have had a hard time in Cal.

Harriet received a letter from you some days since in which you mention Fred's indisposition. I suppose the family will look out for him in every steamer from Charges.

David Ives has gone and goes very soon to Central America to take charge of the Nicaragua road and they expect to have it in operation very soon.²¹ When you are ready to come home perhaps it would be the best way for you to come.

George Hobson intends starting for the white sulphur springs tomorrow.²² I think his daughters are going with him. I do not know whether William and his wife are going. William has brought a house near the monument back of where Howards had use to live.

Mary and Ellen are at Summer Hill.²³ Sallie is going down this week. The Oil speculation did not turn out as we were led to expect as it went down in price too soon for us but we have had a good year, made say 6 or 7000\$ and sold a little over 94,000 Galls year ending tomorrow which will be the 1st.

I think Lizzie has written by this mail.

I know Annie Tyson has. Lizzie intends staying at Betsey Lees where she is at present.

Ned Cobb is home, has quite recovered, Landstreet is also.

Robert M. sends his love to you, says he hopes to hear of your being established in some regular business.

I heard of that speech at Sacramento. You somewhat alarmed the Hon Senator from California when you told the people you were a Whig, William Talbot says he intends being introduced to him when he goes to Washington and ask him about it.²⁴

The Hon gentleman said they had a very enthusiastic meeting at Sac[ramento]. A man who said his name was Smith addressed the

meeting but there was one thing he did not like about him, he said he was a Whig.

This is up to the latest moment, the mail closes directly. We are all well.

FROM THY AFFECTIONATE BROTHER
AM Smith

My love to Fred. Let me know what would likely be a good shipment. I have sent you newspapers several times.

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Sacramento City, July 10 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith

Matthew Smith

Sharp Street

Baltimore, Ma.

DEAR LIZZIE

As tis near the time for the departure of another steamer I will get in readiness a few lines for thee. When I last wrote which was but two weeks since my last mail—I was suffering from the bite of a musquito or some poisinous *varmant*. I am happy to say by this mail that I am relieved from severe suffering and trust I may not have an attack from any more such “Bipeds.” The weather here is not warm, but hot, and I think will feel better than I did before I had the gathering on my Breast. A person here can be well and not feel first rate (the climate, thee can judge, must be peculiar). I try to be careful with my health by paying attention to my diet and do not expose myself to the sun or night air more than possible. There is a peculiarity about the atmosphere here that has never been noticed by the *scientific*, or if it has I have never heard of it. I have been told by old settlers here that if you hang beef say twelve or fifteen feet above the ground, it will keep good for many days, which if hung near the ground it spoils very soon, causing me to believe that there must be different and more pure atmosphere above than near the surface, and since I learned this fact I have taken to sleeping up-

stairs, and do not intend sleeping on the first floor if I can avoid it. In this country people cannot always do what they want.

Dear Lizzie, two steamers have arrived with mails and I have not yet had any letters save one by the last mail from Tony. Say to Tony when he writes to give me all the items. Sally and Ellen must help fill up. I heard they had written me but I have never yet seen the first outside shadow of a line from them. Tell Harriet to write and when she does to get some extract from brother Jim's log. I wrote her from the diggings and told her how we sat there in our arm chairs and how we were sung to sleep by the song of the mountain torrent and all that kind of thing you call sentiment.

In my last I told thee I had embarked in business here and hope I may have as good luck as some others. Business here is dull at present, but every prospect of a speedy change for the better as there is a new trade opening and one that California never knew. A great many expeditions [are] preparing to fit out to carry provisions across the Sierra Nevada for the overland emigrants, some of who have already arrived, having left Independence as late as the 29th of April last. Say to Tony that the candles have not yet arrived. The mails are so uncertain between Sacramento and San Francisco that it is best to send my letters as usual to Cross Hobson & Co.

Kiss the dear little boys for me and tell them I want them to be good boys and mind what is said to them. My love to all. I trust ere this Fred is with you. He can give you an account of California, the heights of mountains on the forks of the American, and the depth of mud puddles in San Francisco. James Lea told me to night at supper that he must write home and then gave as an excuse the sorry one that I have so often offered you. The careless manner in which mine were generally penned, that he had no place where he could sit down and write without continual interruption. Such is California. There is no place where one can retire. Jim is doing well and has a great many friends.

FROM THYNE AFFECTIONATELY
J. Marsh Smith

[On the same page]

Sacramento City, July 10 1850

To Catherine Marsh Smith

DEAR MOTHER

I wrote thee a few lines by steamer of the first. I have made enquiries trying to find out who Joe Cross is but have not learned. The first time I am in San Francisco I will ask Mr. Hopper of Cross Hobson & Co. as he has been for years a resident of the Sandwich Islands and would know Cross if he ever lived there. Say to Thomas M. that

Things are as they is and
cant be any Iser
It tis as it tis and
can't be any tiser
(Such is life)

John Wethered has gone to the diggings and talks sanguine about taking out his pile. I wish him luck. While here he staid with me, was in good spirits and well. I look for him back daily, satisfied at seeing the elephant. This Sacramento is destined, I think, to be the great city of California. During the winter it suffered from a terrific flood that destroyed the prospects of many. The town was diminutive, buildings ordinary. The marks of the flood is still visible but none appear to heed it as a warning for the future, for larger and substantial buildings are taking the place of the camp House that was. I learn from a person who I met yesterday, and I have heard it rumoured before that good diggings have been discovered on the East side of the Sierra Nevada. There are large quantities of provisions such as Flour, Bread now being packed over the mountains by the traders and I have no doubt but a great City will be started in the Carson Valley this spring. All its supplies must come direct from Sacramento City.

JULY 11TH. John Wethered sent for me having just returned from the diggings. John is quite badly poisoned, his face very much swollen and would not make his appearance on the street till I assured him that poison was so common here that any one would know

what was the matter with him.²⁵ He looked as if he had been in a fine riot. He gave me such an account of the Rattle snakes in the mines as to satisfy me he had enough under present circumstances of mining.

Business here is improving, and I do hope I shall be able to remit to my friends what I borrowed to get here. Should be most happy to be the bearer of it. I think my time for making money ought to soon come.

The city is as healthy at present as was expected, diseases, dysentary & Fevers from one years end to another. I do hope I am acclimated. I try and take good care of myself in diet and free as possible from exposure after night, feel well at this time. They are now bringing snow in from the mountains or rather snow ice. They sell it by the waggin load to the Gambling Houses at one dollar per pound as fast as they can bring it in.

My love to Father, Brothers, Sisters, all.

FROM THY AFFECTIONATE SON
John Marsh Smith

[On the back of the folded letter]

July 12th have just received Sallys letter dated May 15/50

From E. Brooke-Gilly & Tommy 8/50

E. Brooke & Anne May 16

containing Sundrys all truly acceptable, the Neck Ribbons great treat as I have been trying to get one for two weeks

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Sacramento City, July 25 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
DEARE LIZZIE

I wrote thee by the steamer of the first, since when I have rec'd several letters from home, amongst them one from thee. It is a great source of pleasure to me to find thy letter written in such a pleasant and encouraging spirit and to find our dear little boys do not appear a trouble to our kind friends. I wrote Wm Talbot per steamer of 17th.

It is a great pleasure for me to think that ere this Fred **is** amongst you enjoying the comfort of home and Security of friends. It would have been utter folly for him to have remained here. He **but** seldom enjoyed good health, a blessing I fancy I am favoured **with**. I feel remarkably well. Business in this place is dull—and **what** helps make it worse for me, my partner has been down most **of** the time since our commencement with Fever. He is now in bed—and I am kept, owing to the circumstance, confined to the stove **when** I ought to be knocking around, but *such is life*.

I am thankful I am not sick. Miners have done very **poorly** up to this time this year. Many are indebted to the traders who, owing to the fact of having their funds locked up, buy but sparingly. Many goods are now arriving out that have been shipped by capitalists at home who do not offer them for sale to the trade, but rent houses and retail them out to the traders and are satisfied with smaller profits than it has been customary to get here.

I sometimes think that California's juicy days are over. Judge Lynch is dead, Law and order has been introduced, honesty can now hardly find space to concentrate a thought, and rascality receives the protection of the Court.²⁸ I have no doubt but there will be a very large business to be done here shortly, when I trust I may receive my share.

The overland Emigration is now coming in. They report great suffering for want of provision. A public meeting was held here last evening, and from the enthusiasm and deep feeling manifested against, abundance will soon be dispatched to the hungry. I know but little now to communicate. I heard some talk of a line of steamers to China. There is now a regular steamer to Oregon. The mail is in from the States. I have no doubt I shall receive a letter from thee. With love to all

FROM THY AFFECTIONATE
J M Smith

Kiss the little boys for me, give my love to all.

Ned Pearce
Jim Lea all well
Ned Iddings

Jas Lea told me he intended writing his mother by this mail but he is now kept so constantly employed that he has no opportunity. His house is head quarters for all Missourians. I think Jim is making money.

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Sacramento City, July 1850

To William Talbot

DEAR WILLIAM

I apologize for not writing you sooner but have been waiting for a streak of Luck (a great many people in this country are waiting for the same thing. Its hope on, and I reckon will be hope ever before all get their pile). Knowing the deep interest you feel in my welfare and the pleasure it would afford you should such at any time prove the case, but at present I see no speedy prospect of a windfall. Shall no longer delay a duty I owe a dear Friend or debar myself a pleasure for the lack of "Dame Fortune's smiles." (So its drive on Carter, for every dog must have his day, better luck next time is the motto of the individual citizen of a portion of the Globe that the American Eagle flies over. So whos a feard)

I have taken advantage of the very first opportunity to embark in Mercantile business. My partner is from N York. He's the son of Lambert Suydam, former president of the Union Ins Co of above mentioned place (And the number of our Ranch is Smith & Suydam, Sacramento City). We have been under weigh so short a time and business being generally dull that we can't give any flourishing acct of ourselves at this time, but I do not expect money to be made so fast here this fall as it was last, not only by a long shot. Many persons who have lately arrived amongst us from the States with money appear satisfied with smaller profits than it has been customary to obtain here, Say one hundred pr ct instead of from five to twenty, so a continued competition of this kind may soon reduce business here to a par with it at *home*.

I have no doubt ere this Fred Tyson has reached home. It would have been folly for Fred to remain here. Frequent spells of violent illness appeared his doom, and I shall be rejoiced to hear of his safe

arrival home. Fred worked hard but had not the constitution to stand the peculiarities of the climate. Dysentarys and Fevers prevail here the year round, but I feel satisfied [that] with an increase of comforts health will become more general. I hardly think the sickness at present is of a dangerous character. My partner is down with the fever, which is of great disadvantage to us in our business operations. I feel remarkably well and try to take good care of my health. I had a pretty rugged time of it up to the time of my leaving the mountains in the winter, have been improving ever since and hope I am now acclimated. I hardly think I should have left the mines had it not been requisite on Fred's acct, but probably it is all best. I feel satisfied with having done so thus far and think my chance of making money is better here than in the mines.

I have within the last few days recd some letters from home (bearing the illness of Jas Atkinson and their youngest, ere this I hope they are well). I cannot post you in San Francisco affairs and hardly know what to conjer up. John Weathered stopped with me a couple of nights on his way to the diggings. His sojourn in the mines was of a very temporary character. Having been quite badly poisoned, he acted prudently by returning where remedys and advice are more profuse than in the mines and mountains of California. Some are very susceptible of poison while others roam with impunity amongst the innoculating shrubbery, proof against its sinus. John Weathered had some cards struck off here and distributed. He embarks in the Exchange Business of what is called at home, money Broker, and established himself in San Francisco.

Sacramento City is a singular place and grows as 'twere by magic. Last fall when I first arrived here it was in its infancy and but a few months previous New Helvetia on Sutters Embarcadero was only known by a trail crossing the river at this point traversed by Indians and mules, but now things wear a changed aspect. It is impossible for me to estimate the population but it amounts to thousands. Some fine and large brick warehouses have lately been completed.²⁷ The trader now is to be seen on the bank of the river, penciling on his memorandum book to find the net proceeds of his invoice just sold, but a little while ago his calculation would have been how to save his scalp. Merchandising and Gambling are the two principal occupations of the inhabitants here tho most Bankers

in the last always the gainers. (Inhabitants almost universally full grown males.) Amusements, *Theatres*, night auctions, Bull fights, Bear dances, Cock fighting and Horse racing, and to complete the list I yesterday saw in the street for the first time an Organ Grinder with a monkey dressed in sold[i]er clothes dancing on the top of the music chest.

The face of the country around Sacramento is one vast plane. It is either plane or mountain in this country, there is no part I have been in moderately uneven, as one used to say at schol^e. When we had that question in Geography, the face of the country, to answer. When in doubt I always found it a good guess but here it is rather flat or perpendicular.

The miners have not done well this season up to this time, but the rivers are falling and profitable mining must soon commence ... [rest of letter missing].

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Sacramento City, August 11 1850

To Nathan Tyson
Care of Tyson & Dungan
Baltimore, Md.
DEAR FATHER

I am in daily expectations of a letter from Frederick, giving account of his safe arrival at Panama. By the steamer just in, I have received dear Lizzie's letter of June 28 from Montgomery Co. I am thankfull to hear of the good health of you all and do hope our little boys may not prove an annoyance to you.

I took advantage of thy kind offer and drew on thee about the time Fred sailed for five hundred dollars. I invested that amount in Barley for the Sacramento Market, but unfortunately the vessel sunk in [word missing] Bay and all is a total loss as there is no insurance in this country and all is at the risk of the shipper. The heavy rates of rent, together with the high interest on money and the material deterioration in freight from last fall's rates, renders merchandising with limited means far from being lucrative. It is a universal complaint here, the inactivity of trade, a few large houses

doing the bulk of the business, Persons having lately arrived amongst us from the States bringing assorted Stocks and goods and capital and seem[ing] disposed to reduce the rate of profit.

It will take me longer to accomplish my object in this country than I would desire as I have not the first outside shadow of a tie here. But rest satisfied, I shall do my best and take prudent care of myself, trusting the day may come when I shall be able to appear amongst you having accomplished the object of this my foreign mission. Sacramento, considering locality, maybe considered healthy at this time. There has been quite a large failure here within the last few days. Barton Lee, an Oregon man, who came here about 18 months since, probably penniless. His liabilities are something over one million dollars. Hundreds of men in the mines have their all in his hands. He called himself a banker and gave from 5 to 10% a month for all the money he could get on deposit.

The overland migration are coming in. They present a rather deplorable appearance and complain of the hardship they have suffered, and very many among them who have means sufficient to, go to San Francisco and start for home in the first steamer. The last steamer carried 350 passengers to Panama and refused 50 more besides. Large numbers of sailing vessels leaving full every few days. I can advise no shipments to this country, as large supplies are arriving from the English Colonies of the Pacific with an assurance that they can supply California with all she wants.

With kindest regards to all
FROM THY SON
J. Marsh Smith

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Sacramento City, August 12 1850
[Stamped] Sacramento 14 August 50 California

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
Care of Matthew Smith
Baltimore, Md.
DEAR LIZZIE

Thy truly acceptable favour of June 23rd written from Walnut Hill has been recd by me.²⁸ It is a source of great comfort to me to find thee, our dear little boys, and Friends are blessed with health.

There is but little occurring here of interest. The mines are hardly paying for the labour that is being bestowed on them, rendering business dull in the extreme which is a universal complaint amongst all traders great and small. The citizens of this place are very much disappointed that the present state of affairs should exist. I would never have settled in this swamp could I for one moment of imagined that such an inactive state of affairs would have taken the place of last years Bedlam in a business point of view. The overland emigration are coming in discouraged, haggard and without means. Many that have a sufficiency pass through here for San Francisco and take the first steamer to the States.

Say to Tony that I learn *Catherine* and *Laura Bevan* are both here, or rather in San Francisco, and I regret to say Candles are dull. I write today to Joseph Hobson requesting him to store them. I cannot account for their being so low as this place is almost bare of them, and they must, should ever business here assume anything of its last fall's character, command a price that will pay. I desire to give these shipments my personal attendance, and if I can so arrange it as to leave here for a few days will certainly do so. Say to Tony I left all the Bills of Lading & Invoices in hands of Cross Hobson & Co., should I not be in San Francisco to attend myself.

James Lea is doing a good business in the Hotel and frequently receives editorial puffs.

Boston *Ice* has become an article of retail traffic here and Ice carts are to be seen in the Streets so marked, price fifty cents per pound.²⁹ Lizzie, Kiss the little boys for me and tell them I want them to be good Boys and mind what is said to them. Say to Mother I

would write her but I have nothing to communicate. Father endorsed on the back of the letter of 28th of June that my letter to Harriette has been recd. containing accts of Freds sickness in the Mines. Tell Harriet she must write me—Harriets letter is probably the first recd. I am verry much disappointed at not receiving a letter from Fred in Panama. I have no doubt he is home before this. Remember me to all.

FROM THY AFFECTIONATE
J. Marsh Smith

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Ship Iona, Harbor San Francisco,
August 30 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
Care of Matthew Smith
Baltimore
Politeness of Joseph Hobson
DEAR LIZZIE

The heading of this will probably startle thee to know whats now out. Having been a little indisposed, my old doctor in Sacramento advised me to spend a few days at the Bay and take the Sea Air and I am now indebted to my kind friend Capt. James Hobson for the kindest care and best accommodation I have had since my sojourn in this land. I intend returning to Sacramento on Saturday next. The Captain says I am his patient and he is not going to let me leave him before Monday. He is truly kind to me and to all his acquaintances and is one of the best men in the world, and but a short time under his kind care, I feel sufficiently recruited to return to my business. I have given *Sacramento* a fair test, and it is but trifling with my health to settle down there with but poor remuneration in a pecuniary point of view and, I almost think, the vain hope of becoming proof against the Rivers of Sacramento Valley.

I wrote thee by the Steamer but regret I could not get off a dispatch to let thee know it was my intention to keep clear of Squatters fights, and am glad to say I was not in the conflict and felt no more

excitement in the matter than I would to see the New Market and United Boys fight. The thing was a little Bloody and some fine men killed. Our Mayor is not dead but his recovery is doubtful. Doctor Brierly and Jessie Hambleton of Butte distinguished themselves in the fight. They were foremost in all the conflicts.

The heat of Sacramento is excessive, thermometer varying from 90 to 100 during the day, the nights pleasant. Business with us is in no means brisk and some heavy failures, and I fear more to follow. A vast many of the Miners have for months been engaged on turning the various rivers and banks, sanguine of success, living on the store keepers & traders who were compelled to demand credit of the Merchants to keep up supplies. Now the tale is about being unfolded [that] hundreds who would not have taken thousands of dollars for their claims have, after months of labour and toil, been able to test and found all was in vain, consider themselves broke and leave the store keeper and traders to whistle for their interest.

Dear Lizzie, I have recd many delightful letters that have been laying in Cross Hobson & Co. for some two or three weeks, from thee, telling of thy visit to Walnut Hill, from sister Anne, Belle, a letter from my Mother, one from Tony and another from thee Handled me by Beverly Sanders, who seemed glad to see me.⁵⁰ Lizzie, thee cannot take my surprise when I met on the street Wm Robinson. He is very anxious to get away from here as quick as possible, spent two nights on board of the ship with us, since when I have not seen him.

Yesterday was a holliday here, a Mock burial. Poor old General Taylor has been burried on the shores of the [word missing] and quite a solemn and remarkable a procession it was.⁵¹ People of all nations composed the procession. These were *Masons, Soldiers, Fireman*, Foreigners and all sorts, amongst whom the Chinese were the most conspicuous from their great numbers and singular and rich dress. This San Francisco a most remarkable place. They are putting up large and elegant Brick Buildings such as would attract attention in a civilized land.

Joseph Hobson leaves in the steamer of the first for home, by whom I will send this letter. Feel so well I should leave for Sacramento today, but think I will stay that Joseph may tell you that he saw me at the latest date. Capt Hobson has just spoken to me to

request me to send his respects. He says he does not know thee but thee is one of the Family. James Lea has been a little unwell but when I left Sacramento he was nearly well again. Ned Pearce was suffering some form of ague but not seriously indisposed. Ned Idings and Sam Stark I think are both well. Say to all that think I ought to have written them that I have been away from my Camp. I don't want to call Sacramento my home. Hearing and seeing so much in this San Francisco I would not concentrate Ideas enough to serve all. I have Bill [Belle] and Annes kind letters in my pocket, for which I do thank them.

I have just had brought me a letter from Father Tyson which has been laying in office for a week, ought to have been delivered with the rest of Cross, Hobsons steamer letters but was not. I should have been sorry had it been lost. It is truly a very kind letter. Say to him I will write him by next steamer. The [piece missing] ship Fred went down to Panama is arrived there in [piece missing] thirty days from San Francisco, so reported. Suppose Fred must be safe home by this time. He did not write me. Say to Fred, the Mule Trade is dull in Sacramento. Fred was a regular jockey, he fully believed in Mule trading. Say to Fred a good many enquiries for him. Kiss the little boys. Recvd their note, Anne and Bell give most flourishing accounts of them. With kindest remembrances to all from

THY AFFECTIONATE HUSBAND
J M Smith

[On address side]

Dear Lizzie please reserve this sack of gold till I return

J M Smith

It is my own digging from Otter Creek about 3 oz in all.

* * * * *

Sacramento City, September 11 1850

To Nathan Tyson
care of Tyson & Dungan
Baltimore, Md.

DEAR FATHER

Thy kind favour of July 12 has been in hand but 2 weeks, having recvd it when on a visit to San Francisco. Having been a little unwell the doct advises me to spend a few days at the Bay which was of great service to me and had the pleasure of seeing Joseph Hobson on the morning of the day he sailed for the United States. I wrote Lizzie by him. I learned while down that the ship Fred went to Panama in had arrived after a good passage of 30 days and all aboard reported as well. I have recvd no letters from Fred yet from Panama, but he must now be with you to answer for himself.

The Squatter now has all seemed to subside and there is no excitement amongst us. I took no part with either side. Business is not to compare with last season. There is a vast overland emigration pouring in but they come exhausted of means and discouraged with the prospects. A vast number that are able to raise the funds take passage in the steamers for home perfectly satisfied with a short visit in this land. A majority of the claims in the Beds of the streams have proved, after months of severe toil and depravations to those engaged, failures. I think we may estimate nine out of ten. Some of these claims, so sanguine were people of their great wealth that from one to five thousand dollars has been offered and refused. A single individual claim, the traders, having equal confidence with the miners, have allowed them unlimited credit for provisions, so the Phantom of a General Bust rears his ugly form and stands sentinel over the Golden Gates through which thousands anticipated passing this fall laden with the fruits of their labour *homeward Bound*.

Dear Father, I am obliged to thee for thy kind invitation to return, but I feel when I reach home as if I should never again want to leave it and as I am here in this country I had better try on for a while longer.

I feel satisfied I am to have good luck yet. I recvd yesterday a letter from Sister Belle enclosing one from Lizzie to Mother, I am rejoiced to learn Lizzie and the little Boys are so favoured with health as also the rest of you all. James Lea tells [that] the finest corn meal he has ever seen in this country was some of Tyson & Dungan put up in *tight* Brls. There are Mills no[w] grinding corn in this place, at Stockton and San Francisco, at this time keep up a fair supply, comes north about 4 cents meal, 8 cents per lb. It is always put up in Bags when ground here as it suits the packers better. My kindest remembrance to all. I shall write Lizzie.

THY SON AFFECTIONATELY
J. Marsh Smith

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Sacramento, Calif., September 11 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
Care of Matthew Smith
Baltimore, Md.
DEAR LIZZIE

Yesterday I rec'd Sister Belle's kind letter enclosing one from thee dated Walnut Hill July 22nd, written to Mother. I rejoice to find thee and the little Boys are so favoured with good health. Belle tells me she has had a glorious time at Cape May and that my Father, Mother, & Tony are amongst the visitors. I am rejoiced to find Father has taken some recreation. It will be of service to him and a great pleasure to Mother to have him along. I regret the proceeds of Tony's shipment for *Laura Bevan* will not reach him in time for his excursion to the Cape. The profits will not take him to France but might render him flush at Cape May.

When I last wrote thee I was on a visit to the Bay of San Francisco to enjoy the Sea Air. Was soon recruited. I staid on board of the *Iona*, a Magnificant ship, commanded by Capt Jas. Hobson who is the kindest man in California. I am well and was glad to report myself so when Joseph Hobson sailed. He goes to the States on business

and to get married (probably he knows best). I sent per Joseph Hobson a little sack containing some gold of my own digging for thee, which hold on to till I return. I hope I will be rich enough to have it made up for thee & my friends. (I think I will have some luck yet—so keep up thy spirits. I know thee tries so to do.) Jas Lea is well. Ned Pearce, Stabler & Iddings, Doctor Brierly was verry conspicuous in the fight against the Squatters. I felt no inclination to embark in the enterprise, so thee must feel easy on my acct, All is now quiet.

I want very much to write to Belle & Anne, but really cannot find enough to [make] up an assortment for a decent letter. We have had quite a heavy rain here yesterday, which is [a] very remarkable thing in this country at this season. Business not brisk.

Lizzie, this is so poor an apology for a letter that I do not like to send it. I met in San Francisco Beverly Sanders. He appeared very glad to see me. I also met to my great astonishment Mr. Robinson. He was the Blueest Man I ever did see. I felt sorry for him. Kiss the dear little Boys for me, with love to all.

FROM THINE AFFECTIONATELY
J. Marsh Smith

[Pencil note]

Sept. 14th. I report myself well. There is a rumour in town of a tremendous large swamp of Gold having been found at Nevada, about 80 miles from this place. They are so in the habit of getting up false reports the day before the steamers leave for the states that I place but little faith in it. A chief of one of the Indian tribes here who has, as a chief under him, an Indian of the Delaware tribe, says tradition tells them that the Penn treaty was first broken by a White Man ordering two Indians to come down out of an apple tree. The Indians would not mind, and the white man shot them, then the Indians begun to hate, and sought revenge. I have sent Thos. M the [illegible] of exchange on acct of Tony's shipment to *Laura Bevan*.

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Sch. *E.A. Spafford* at Sea, September 28 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
Care of Tyson & Dungan
Baltimore Md.
DEARE LIZZIE

In this country one becomes the creature of circumstance. In Sacramento I was not doing as well as one ought when the continued attacks of dysentary & Fevers were regular. I have a small Invoice of Goods as a Venture, and it is with the advice of many of my friends I make a trial of the Oregon markets. The Captain of the schooner is an acquaintance from Baltimore—a clever man, Capt. Beard.³² We are bound to Astoria & Portland. We left the harbour of San Francisco at daylight this morning and are now at sea. This letter will be mailed by John Hooper, who accompanys the Captain to sea and returns by Pilot Boat.

Kiss the little boys.

Love to all
FROM THINE
J. Marsh Smith

Say to Robert the drug business hardly presents an opening in San Francisco or Sacramento. I will see what can be done in that line in Oregon. I write this to let thee know where I am, shall if I do well return after more goods shortly. I will write Robert M.

JMS Remember me to all

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[This letter was with that of November 19 1850, and the ensuing fragment, which was probably to Nathan Tyson.]

*Shoal Water Bay, Oregon, October 21 1850*³⁵

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith

DEAR LIZZIE

After a rough passage of 22 days in a wrecked Condition and through stress of weather we once more find ourselves riding safely at anchor in the above mentioned Bay, about 20 miles to the N of the Columbia, which point we made yesterday one week since, but not being able to get a pilot were compelled to lay off and on. The weather all the time heavy and with a strong current setting to the North put us off in harbour, in which we now ride safe. There was no such harbour as the one we are now in laid down on the Captains chart. We were under the impression we were running into the Columbia, and by some of our passengers who had been in and out of the Columbia on several occasions the impression even after we got in judging from the different land marks, was perfectly satisfactory to them that we were in the Columbia—in fact they pointed out Astoria and Pacific City, and to top all we passed through breakers running by the chart of the Columbia soundings, corresponding with those laid down for the Columbia.³⁴

We are not without company. We found a Brig from San Francisco that had been driven in, passed over the breakers having struck twice and been knocked down on her beam ends as often. She has 19 passengers and to our surprise, this morning we find anchored about 5 miles from us a schooner. No doubt they all think by seeing us here they are all O.K. The indians say we are one sun and one sleep to Astoria, and dreading passing over the breakers again in a sailing Vessel. Our passengers and the passengers of the Brig have hired two Indians to pilot us over to the Columbia into the white settlement. The waters of this bay abound in salmon and ducks of the finest kind. October the 15th was the worst predicament we were placed in.

Portland, Oregon, November 19 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith

DEAR LIZZIE

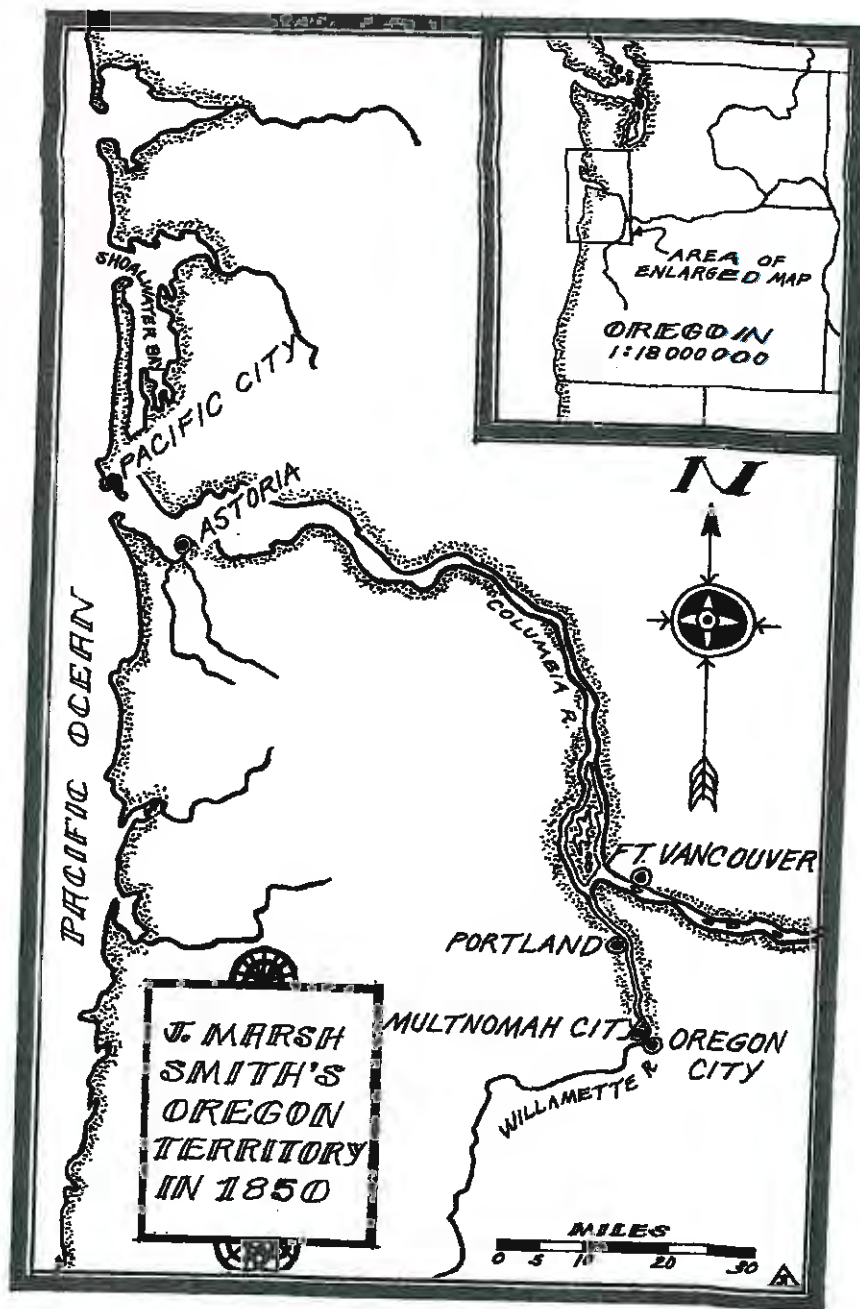
I arrived from Shoal water bay just in time to see a friend as he was going down to California and request him to ask Abe Dungan to report me well. I had no opportunity to write thee but have written thee by the only opportunity that offered per Barque *Tarquina*, which letter may not reach thee by this day. Our vessel, the *E.A. Spafford*, after a hard time made her appearance in this port yesterday, being over 45 days from San Francisco, the goods I brought being most clothing are, I find, a dull article. I expected to do well with my return trade, *vegetables*, but a vessel has arrived since we left bringing gloomy accounts of the cholera which would make vegetables a risk. I am anxiously waiting for the Steamer to see what turn the disease has taken. If staying there, it will be most prudent for me to remain in Oregon till health favours San Francisco.

My last dates from thee is July 26th. I know there is quite a lot of letters for me at Cross Hobson & Co. How I should like to have them. It is now dull, raining. I do not know what to communicate interesting. Kiss the dear Little Boys for me. Remember me to all.

THINE AFFECTIONATELY

J. Marsh Smith

Commenced raining hard. We started their fires for them and then pushed on to Oregon City, distant about one mile, which we reached before all the supper in the city was wholly demolished, and fancy the Landlord would not call me a paying guest although I paid him his price. By invitation from McL I went with him to his store and spent the night with him.⁵⁵ Before we had retired his Father called down [*sic*]. (Dr. McL is, I should judge, a man of over seventy, in Size and personal appearance much like Mr. Henderson and a perfect Gentleman and a kind and amiable man. A Scotchman by birth and for more than Forty years in the service for the Hudson Bay Company and a great part of that time chief Factor for the same.



He was pleasant and kind to me but I could not make anything out of him as he told me he had promised the command of his boat to someone else. I left Oregon City on Sunday morning at 10 o'clock in a whole boat and by Eleven I was again on board the *Spafford*.

P.S. I met some familiar faces in McL boat when I entered, in the shape of Candles and Soap with Smith and Curletts brand on. They composed a large portion of her freight and when encamped at night one of our Indians while setting round the fire drew from his breast a card which seemed to excite considerable interest amongst them. I felt a desire to see the Curiosity myself, when at my request they handed it to me and to my great Surprise it proved to be a business card of Tyson & Dungan and where they got it or how I know not. My kind regards to all. I will write Lizzie by next Steamer.

AFFECTIONATELY YOUR SON
J. Marsh Smith

If I succeed in getting the river boat, I will get it on Shares on half the profit of leasing half the expense.

J.M.S.

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Portland, Oregon, November 1 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
DEAR LIZZIE

I wrote thee a letter and handed to pilot on leaving the Bay of San Francisco. This point is the destination of our vessel, but owing to misfortunes of various kinds we were driven in to Shoal water bay about 40 miles to the North of the Columbia. Not liking to risk the vessel until some more substantial repairs could be put upon her than the conveniences of Shoal Water Bay afforded, with some Fort passengers we started with an Indian guide for the settlement, which after travelling one and a half days we made, Pacific City opposite to Astoria being the point we made. After spending the

night at the former place, we crossed over to Stora and took passage in a small steamer for this point.³⁶ Portland is on the Wilhammet about 12 miles below Oregon City and a growing place, contains probably about a hundred houses and is probably the greatest business point at this time in the territory.³⁷

I have just learned that the commanding officer at Fort Vancouver has employed a pilot and sent relief to the captain of our schooner, and if she has not been too badly abused I may soon hear of her safe arrival in the river with my little stock of merchandise, having made a little raise through the kindness of my Brother Robert, who authorized me to make use of a part of some funds he might have in the hands of Cross Hobson & Co., which I have done to the amount of seven hundred dollars. I am now in hopes daily of hearing from the supercargo who left at Astoria of the safe arrival of the vessel in the river. If they cannot get her out I will have to go over and do the best I can. The Indians are peaceable and quiet but no money amongst them.

I send this letter to be mailed at San Francisco by a sailing vessel which leaves here tomorrow. I had no opportunity to write thee from Astoria by the mail steamer as she was nearly ready to leave when I got along side of her, but sent word by an acquaintance who was going down to California to tell Abe Dungan to get some one to report me well. I will try and write Robert M by the Mail Steamer. Dear Lizzie, I did not leave California for Oregon for the purpose of getting farther from home, but having had a succession of misfortunes in my trading operations, I thought a change for the better might be the result and then I would be sooner with you. Direct my letters as usual to Cross, Hobson & Co. If I find I can make the trade profitable between here and California, I shall stick to it. Say to Robert I will write him and give him my views. I do not believe there is a drug establishment in this whole territory. A regular drug house on a small scale keeping a supply of Paints and oils would do well.

There is a large emigration daily arriving here from the States and from California. Portland at present is headquarters for trade but there are a good many towns springing up all along the Wilammett. Oregon City is a small place and will always be a manufactur-

ing and milling point, but it will never be the great place as shipping cannot approach within some miles of it.

Kiss the dear little boys. Tell them to be good and give no one trouble. With love to all.

FROM THINE AFFECTIONATELY
J. Marsh Smith

* * * * *

Portland, December 2 1850

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith

DEAR LIZZIE

The Steamer *Gold Hunter* arrived here yesterday and I learn leaves here tomorrow for San Francisco. The *Spafford* I am still on board of and have not yet disposed of all my traps. The steamer brings the acceptable intelligence that the Cholera has abated in California. I intend going down in the Schooner. We will probably not leave (Oregon) in less than 3 or 4 weeks and will be late in January or sometime in February before we get to San Francisco, when I hope to receive a treat in the way of letters. My last dates from thee sometime in July. The articles I brought up here have not paid me well. I trust to the vegetables I take down to make on.

I have not time to say much as I have just got down from the vessel. She lays about two miles higher up the river than Portland and the boat is [a]bout leaving for her. The steamer that has arrived was unexpected or I would have had time to write thee with more care. I want to write Brother Robert, to thy Father, to Mother, but have not now the chance. Say to Robert M. that there is not a regular drug House in all Oregon Territory and that a regular establishment with a well selected assortment of Glass, Oils & Paints, dyes & co. would pay well if he should see fit to establish a house. The selection at this point might be left till his goods arrive in the Territory. Portland is at this time the most flourishing town in the Terri-

tory but many are striving for this ascendancy so it is hard to tell what will be the best point in a few months.

Give my love to all. Kiss the dear little Boys tell them to be good.

FROM THINE AFFECTIONATELY
J. Marsh Smith

Excuse the rough workmanship on this epistle

Notes to Chapter Two

1. Bond may have been sent to San Francisco as a representative of his firm. Evidently he left Baltimore before JMS's letter of December 1849 could have reached him.
2. JMS addressed both his father and his father-in-law in this way.
3. On the American River, approximately three miles from Sacramento, Fort Sutter's was the home of John A. Sutter, whose associate, John Marshall, is credited with finding gold while constructing a lumber mill 40 miles upriver.
4. Grandmother Ellicott was Lizzie's mother, Martha Ellicott Tyson (1795-1873).
5. Near Coloma.
6. Possibly William High, aged 27, born in Virginia.
7. Possibly Thomas Scott, aged 24, born in Virginia.
8. Near Georgetown.
9. Built in 1850 by Nathan J. Stevens and operated by him until his death in 1857.
10. Now Ellicott City and a suburb of Baltimore, Ellicott Mills was the family home of Martha Ellicott Tyson.
11. Ned Pearce, of Brickhead-Pearce, Baltimore, who brought JMS mail sent in care of Cross, Hobson, left the mines on May 14 1850, as did High and Iddings.
12. Near Mormon Island and at the mouth of the Feather River, Vernon was a depot for goods and transport. It is now submerged by Lake Folsom.
13. Dover's powder was made from ipecac, opium and lactose or potassium sulphate.
14. Lizzie's grandfather, Elisha Tyson, was a staunch prohibitionist who refused to allow the storage of whiskey in his warehouses.

15. A general trading vessel built in 1849 by William H. Webb and owned by Tucker, Cooper & Company of New York.
16. Evans gained considerable notoriety in the Eastern press for his claims of being among the first to find gold in California.
17. Lambert Suydam was president of the Union Insurance Company of New York. James Suydam was associated at various times with a number of business enterprises in Sacramento.
18. Unclaimed goods were auctioned in San Francisco for shipping costs, thus providing a relatively inexpensive means of starting a business in Sacramento.
19. This method made unloading and warehousing unnecessary.
20. Isabelle Tyson, a sister of Lizzie, born March 17 1823; Lucy Tyson, Lizzie's youngest sister, born March 20 1833.
21. The TransIsthmus Railroad was fully operating by 1855. For mention of the railroad survey, see Appendix.
22. It was customary to "take the waters" at Bedford, Pennsylvania, the site of White Magnesia Springs (information courtesy of Judge Clark).
23. Mary Marsh Smith, a sister of JMS, born October 14 1823; Sarah R. Smith, a sister of JMS, born April 5 1830; Catherine Ellen Smith, JMS's youngest sister, born September 14 1831.
24. The torrential rains often prevented many delegates from attending the first legislative session, which at times moved from San Jose to Monterey and Sacramento. JMS's speech in Sacramento was doubtless against slavery, a tense subject as California appealed for statehood. The two senators elected as first order of business were the popular John C. Frémont, a Whig, and William M. Gwin, a pro-slavery Democrat.
25. John Wethered was certainly suffering from poison oak (*rhus toxicodendron*).
26. The lynch law was prevalent during the squatters' riots that ended in the summer of 1850 with the establishment of law and order.
27. Many of these warehouses have now been restored, re-creating the appearance of Sacramento in 1850.
28. Presumably in Montgomery County, Maryland (see JMS's letter of August 11 to Nathan Tyson), where Ellicott Mills was.
29. Ice, packed in sawdust, was a regular New England export in the 19th century.
30. A friend of the Smith family from Baltimore, Beverley Saunders eventually became a business partner of Abe Dungan in San Francisco.
31. President Zachary Taylor died on July 10 1850, but the news did not reach San Francisco until the arrival of the United States mail steamer on August 24.

32. Captain Edward (Ned) Beard, master of the *E.A. Spafford* and later of the *Merchantman* and the *George and Martha*, evidently considered himself a concerned friend of JMS (see Beard's letter to JMS of February 28 1851). He was lost at sea in 1853.
33. Shoalwater Bay, in the Oregon Territory, is now Willapa Bay, Washington, just north of the Columbia River.
34. Pacific City was on Baker's Bay on the north shore of the Columbia River, separated from the ocean by Cape Disappointment, near the present Fort Canby.
35. Dr. John McLoughlin ("McL") had retired in 1846 from his position as Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver and moved to the Territorial capital, Oregon City.
36. Astoria, or "Storia," named after John Jacob Astor, is near the mouth of the Columbia River on the south shore.
37. Wilhammet: Willamette River.

CHAPTER THREE

1851



* * * * *

San Francisco, January 14 1851

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith

DEAR LIZZIE

I have just arrived here from Oregon, came down in the Barque *Louisiana* twelve days from Astoria. It is now late in the evening and will write further by next steamer.

I am ranching out at Abe Dungans, who desires to be remembered to thee. I have seen Bob George & George Gibson.¹ Walked up and spent the evening with them and was highly delighted at the recpt [receipt] of the *degarrs* of our dear little boys.² Trust they may be favoured with the health they appeared to be blest with when they sat for their pictures. I prize very much the little bundle Thee sent me. Thank the girls for their kindness. I have not yet got all my letters—I hear of some I must have in the morning. Have gathered enough to learn of your good health, which is a source of great happiness for me, and one from Fred satisfying me of his safe return home. I met quite unexpectedly with T. Butler King on the street

this afternoon—he told me he had met my sister and my brother at Mr. Corwins. He gave me a kind invitaiton to call on him, which I shall do.

I see I have been appointed Naval officer for the Port of San Francisco but then again, I ain't. Dear Lizzie, I excuse thy mistake. I know thy anxiety—I could not but help smiling when I [read] the sentence. I thought it was too rich a b[e]rth to fall to my share, and as for anything in Sacramento, don't be *afraid*, I ain't *there*, and rejoice I left it when I did. Tony says something about Marshall of lower California that is not exactly the thing, but as I am numbered in the [blank space] of Oregon and expect to return there, I should like Thomas M to enquire of Mr. Corwin if he thinks there is an opening for a young man. I am at my countrys service. My reasons for mentioning this particular berth are these—

1st Oregon is a *human* country. It has high mountains and Steep cataracts, its climate salubrious—all interesting, and the latter particularly so to one who has spent some time in the Sacramento Valley. Its lands are productive, its timber gigantic, its *saw* mills numerous, and I feel satisfied its Gold Mines are rich. Its rapid progress is certain, and further, this said deponent states that if present prospects should not be frustrated (which if they are he will look upon it as his luck), he will try his chance there in trade—and my object for accepting this office of Marshall for the Territory, were I to get it, would be if Merchandising was not paying, that I might have a berth by which to raise salary enough to make home in the fall. I would not sacrifice a mercantile business for an office if it was or should be paying, and I think it would throw chances in one's way that he would not be likely to meet with as a secluded citizen. Say to Father and Mother I am no political aspirant but want to do all I can for what I think is best calculated to hasten my return, dearest Lizzie, once more amongst you.

Love and kind remembrances to all. I want to write to Robert. Say to him his candles are all sold at saving prices, and will make remittance by next Steamer. Was under the impression that Cross, Hobson and Co. had done so till today. Segars, say to him, like all else in California, is dull, but I think I can make these pay which he has shipped. They will certainly not loose anything. I will retail them

first. They have not yet arrived. Lizzie, thee will excuse ~~this~~ scrawl. If there was time I would copy and correct. Kiss the dear Little Boys.

FROM THINE AFFECTIONATELY
J. Marsh Smith

P.S. I must write Gilley. I don't like spinning him any yarns to excite his curiosity. I want our little boys to imbibe no disposition to wander.

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San Francisco, January 22 1851

To Catherine Marsh Smith
Care of Mathew Smith
Sharp & Co. [?]
Baltimore
DEAR MOTHER

Thine of Dec 9th was handed me by Mr. Moore.³ I wrote thee and Father while in Oregon, but presume owing to some faults of the public carrier that the letter has been delayed. I note thy kind invitation to return, and assure thee it will be a joyous day to me when the time arrives, truly trusting that Lizzy and again all will try and make yourselves happy on my acct. I do really believe my health to be better than it has been for months, and have come down here for the purpose of trying to get a stock of Goods such as will suit the Oregon market. I think I shall succeed, but most unfortunately for me those who are the least able are the ones most disposed to give me a lift.

I have made acquaintances in Oregon who will be of service to me if things turn out there this summer as is anticipated by the knowing ones. Good Gold diggings have been discovered in Oregon and large numbers of people are leaving the California mines and striking for the mines of Oregon, whose mining districts are believed to be both productive and healthy, and should the rush be to the Oregon mines this summer, and I fixed some where on the Columbia or Wilhamette, my chance will be as good as some others

and better than in California, as I have the promise of being let into the secrets of speculators and a promise of assistance and means, from a success that I feel satisfied can be depended on.⁴

I do not know how it is, but upon reflection I find my acquaintance there pretty large. I do not know how it is I missed getting acquainted with the Governor,⁵ but on reflection I recollect having had an invitation from a Gentleman to accompany him on an evening visit, but was debarred that pleasure owing to the high price of Boots. The only pair I owned being rather too weighty a matter to introduce into the Parlor of so high a Functionary. I met with T. Butler King on the street. He gave me a kind invitation to call him, which I done, but as he was setting over his wine, I left the ranch, to call again. I think he will be sent to the United States Senate.

I am glad I left Sacramento when I did. There has been a great deal of sickness there and a poor business done. I have no desire to return to it. I should like, if it can be done and a change is to be made, to get the Marshal Ship for Oregon, But between thee and myself, I would not accept it if I am so fortunate as to do tolerably well at trading, but if the appointment is to be had, I want it so that if I should be dissapointed in trade, I may be able to realize enough from that office to pay expenses home, where I hope to be in the fall. Love to Lizzie and all.

THY AFFECTIONATE SON,
J. Marsh Smith

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San Francisco, January 29 1851

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
Care of Tyson and Dungan
Baltimore, Maryland
DEAR LIZZIE

I have since my arrival here been favoured with numerous acceptable favours from home. Owing to some delay you have not recvd by my last dates per Mr. Moore any letters from me while in

Oregon. I wrote frequently, met with a good deal of kindness, am prejudiced in favor of the country, believing it to be far superior to N. California in every respect save its mineral wealth, which has just begun to develop its self, and even in this respect think it will equal it. I assure thee I have not seen anything to infatuate me so since I left our home as to induce me to believe that under the most flattering circumstances thee and our little Boys could be as happy here as amongst those who are so kind and dear, I never could.

I expect to return shortly to Oregon, anticipating a result there in the state of affairs, speculative at present but this far as it were maturing to my satisfaction. I hold on to a stubborn kind of hope that my plans are not always to be frustrated, and if Oregon turns out to be rich in Gold I do think that I have found stronger friends who will furnish me means to operate with, they assure me so at least. I do wish to be so fortunate as to be able to return to thee in the fall with a sufficiency to place me out of debt and on one hundred and fifty acres of Good land near home. Persons have retired without a light ahead and in the morning have shaped their course without a dollar to steer by, and in less than a month have made more than I would stop in this country another month to double (but its still down on Carter, better luck next time, hope on hope ever).

I am anxiously expecting letters from Oregon but will not receive them by the first steamer that is to arrive. There are now three running between there and this place. I met Mr. King on the street, he kindly invited me to call on him, which I did, but was not able to see him as he was dining. The next day he left for San Jose where he has been ever since. I will see him on his return. I shall get Mr. King to write to Mr. Webster and some of my other friends will write other partys and I will write Mr. Corwin and Thomas M.⁶ I want the Marshal Ship for Oregon. (If I should get it and am doing well I will not accept, but merely want an anchor ahead.) From all I can gather there is nothing in the Custom House left here.

I received Anne & Bells Kind letters, also Father Tysons. I want to answer them all but have nothing to say at present. Everything in California is *dull, dull, dull*. Look out for General *bust, bust, bust*. I think he will be about shortly. My advice to my friends is, keep your Money and your goods where you can control it and then your-

selves. This is a country where *honesty* is a phantom too *hideous* to be countenanced. It has some martyrs, though. Love to all. I hope to be with you in the fall.

THY AFFECTIONATE HUSBAND
J. Marsh Smith

Kiss the dear little Boys for me. Tell Gill I noticed he had on a jacket with brass buttons and trousers and Brother Tommy looked first rate with his little frock on. Their pictures were truly acceptable. Tell the girls to write me often. I will try to reply.

J.M.S.

Jan 31st Mr. Ober of Ober and McConky has kindly offered to take for me a degar, so yesterday I sat for one. Accompanying it is one I had taken on my arrival from the Mines last summer. I was not well at the time it was taken, and thought I would, when I got first rate have a *Genteel* one taken, and now forward both. The one taken last Summer just from the mines was pronounced first rate at the time it was taken, and my friends say the one I had taken yesterday is as good as could possibly be taken of a person. I feel better and more like myself than I have since I left home.

THINE AFFECTIONATELY
JMS

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Astoria, Oregon, February 21 1851
[Postmark] Astoria Or Mar 24

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
Care of Tyson & Dungan
Baltimore, Md.
DEAR LIZZIE

We have arrived here all safe in Ten Days from San Francisco. Night before last we laid to in a severe gale of wind off the Mouth of the river but rode it out without the loss of a single rope yarn, and once more I am safe inside the Columbia bar.

It is, Lizzie, my intention to return home this fall, and as no inducements offered to remain in San Francisco I was Glad to leave it. Mr. King probably might have given me an inspectors berth in the custom house but *ship fever*, the disease of California, and other serious objections make it a poor situation. In Astoria here they tell us that there is great excitement in the upper country in regard to the Klamouth Mines. They say they are richer than any mine in California, *dare be* people have arrived who have had great success and large partys are prepairing to leave for diggings.

I write, Lizzie, to let thee know of my safe arrival and that I really think my health is first rate and I weigh more than I did when I left home. My average weight in California last Winter & Summer & Fall was 130 lbs., since my first visit to Oregon, 149 to 152 lbs. I want to consult with one or two friends here before I become fixed.

Kiss the dear Little Boys. Tell them to be good. With love to all

FROM THY AFFECTIONATE
J. Marsh Smith

I want my claim for the Marshalship of this Territory to be remembered by you.

JMS

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Astoria, February 28 1851

To John Marsh Smith
on board Barque *Luisanna*
Columbia River or Portland
US
DEAR SMITH

On my arrival here, I was informed that you were on board of the *Luisana*. I am sorry I did not see you. I understand that you were going in business here in Oregon. If you do, I sincerely hope you will make a fortune, Smith. If there is anything I can do for you in S. Francisco write me and I will do it with pleasure. If you have any letters for me just direct them to S. Francisco drop me a line down

here as it is uncertain when I shall leave here. Let me know all the news, I expect to be back here in about 6 weeks from the time I leave Astoria. Mr. Burns will be pleased to see you,⁸ don't forget to call on the family and give them my kindest respects.

YOUR SINCERE FRIEND
Edward H. Beard

• • • • •

Portland, Oregon, March 9 1851

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
DEAR LIZZIE

I wrote Thee from Astoria noting my safe arrival, and as a mail will leave here tomorrow for San Francisco I take advantage of the opportunity to pen Thee again. On my arrival here I found things very much as I anticipated. The mania here is Lo for the Klamouth Mines. The Male portion of the community are fast leaving, and even at this early approach of Spring and before the hills have shed their mantle of Snow, individuals are arriving in the settlement who report the Road to the diggings to be good for Waggon to within forty miles of the mines. This forty miles at this season, they are compelled to pack on Mules and Horses and some who have returned are packing back heavy Stocks of Goods from this and various points along the Willamette. Twice I tried the Mines and as often found myself defeated. Having lost some faith of growing rich by gold digging, I feel but little curiosity to try my luck in that line and particularly as I am encouraged to believe there is something better left for me.

Thee must, dear Lizzie, try and keep in good cheer and by thy letters I believe thee does. Time speeds on, and if life and health are mine in but a few months more I trust I shall be with you all. Although, Lizzie, I am far from home I hardly feel amongst strangers. I do not like San Francisco, but I think from present impressions I may have to go down for a short time, and as beggars cant be choosers I must do the best. I made some good purchases for a friend of mine in this Territory while in San Francisco and he seems

well pleased. I had a short talk with him. We are to have another, I think the result will most probably be good, in my next further particulars.

I am well, Kiss our dear little Boys for me, tell them to be good. Love to all, I want to write Belle and Anne. No doubt ere this you have recd my two degares. I always try and carry mine with me, I treasure them so much. Beverly Saunders promised to get Mr. King to write a letter for me to Washington. He (Mr. King) was at San Hosa when I left and I came off without having a talk with him.

THINE AFFECTIONATELY
J. Marsh Smith

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Portland, Oregon Territory, March 21 1851

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
Care of Matthew Smith
Baltimore, Md
DEAR LIZZIE

I write knowing thy anxiety to hear from me. I have but little to say. Thankful to report myself well, as Thee may judge from the fact that I weigh one hundred and fifty two pounds, While my Sacramento standard was one hundred and thirty. I find things here in an unsettled state. All depends upon one thing. If it proves easier to transport Goods from the valley here than from San Francisco, affairs in Oregon will undergo a great change.

I look anxiously toward returning to thee soon, and trust I may meet with some success ere long. Things here will not fully develop themselves for a month or two.

I learned but a few moments ago there would be a chance of sending this to the mouth of the river to connect with the mail for California, and as the boat is about leaving I close with a desire to be remembered to all. Send love for thee, a kiss for our little Boys. Say to Robt M. there is quite a fine drug establishment just gone into operation.⁹ There is not much for them to do just at present. He wrote me enquiring of Doct. Massy, I learned nothing of him. Young

Fendall I learn is farming Some where above Oregon City. A person told me he saw him a week since and he was well. I am expecting some letters from San Francisco as I left word how to forward to me. Thee direct as usual.

Electioneer for me, as the Marshalship here I think will be worth having. Should I be so lucky as to make sufficient to pay expenses and my debts at home I will be a most happy man. I am in as good spirits as tis possible for one to be who is so far away from all that is so dear to him. Lizzie, when I get home I wont want to leave *any more*. There has been but one mail from San Francisco *this* month, it brought me nothing.

FROM THINE AFFECTIONATELY
J. Marsh Smith

* . . *

Portland, Oregon, April 4 1851

To Elizabeth Brooke Smith
DEAR LIZZIE

As there is a mail to leave tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock I take advantage of the chance to write Thee. There has been a good deal of rain falling here lately, but for the last few days we have been favoured with occasional Sun Shine. Today it has changed to rain and now falls fast. I am anxiously waiting the arrival of the mail in hopes of hearing from thee.

The mass of the People have left the Settlement here and gone to the Mines, we are hearing news from that region. In anticipation of large demand for supplies for the mining district of Oregon, large stocks of Goods have been shipped from San Francisco which, together with the arrivals direct from the States and no demand for goods, has created a Glut in the market and all are complaining bitterly of dull times and poor returns. If the mines prove good, prospects here will brighten. I was induced to return here thinking things would be very prosperous and believing I had found a friend who had means that I could secure the use on joint acct, but trade

here presents such a dull prospect and its revival depends upon circumstances which are yet to develop themselves. I do not feel at liberty to advise or risk on an uncertainty the money of a man who has toiled hard and places every confidence in my integrity.

I will enclose thee a letter* from him recd a day or two since from him. The person I have allusion to is the same that I made purchases for when in California and fortunately for me, or rather for my judgement, all the articles I bought him paid very handsomely, while some he bought without my advice still hang and daily, I suppose, judging from his character, pronounces [blank space] upon them. He merely bought on speculation, is not engaged in any business nor never has been a mercantile kind, and I am merely hanging on in hope the mines may turn out well and the trade concentrate here or Oregon City. If it does, from what my friend Burns tells me I think I can depend on him for a start. If it turns out that they can draw supplies from some more convenient source, my *cake* will be *dough*, as there will be no business to do here of any consequence this summer.

I think often of Thee and our little boys and numerous friends, and if it were possible to increase in my attachment could in truth say that absence makes the heart grow fonder. I am looking for my friend Burns down every day, when I will have a talk. Kiss our dear little Boys, love to all.

I am well
FROM THINE
J. Marsh Smith

* *

*Possibly the following from Hugh Burns, dated February 6, which would have been forwarded by Joseph Hobson.

Portland, February 6 1851

To John Marsh Smith
to the care of Cross Hobson & Co
San Francisco
FRIEND SMITH

I have just come and find that my friend Neall has gone down to King & Cross and will get on the *Sea Gull* thair. I thearfore send the Gold dust to the amount of \$2144.80 by Todd & Co. Mr. Todd come up with me in the *Oregon* to see what he could do in the Express Business in Oregon, so I send the money by him. I paid him one percent for freight and Insurance, he is to deliver it to H.Q. Adams and Mr. Adams will pay to Lowenstein & Gibson & Co. and to the French man and the Balance he will pay over to you.

Mr. Todd had a letter for you that he will leave at Cross & Hobson Co for you. In that I told you what to buy for me. If you see a Good bargon in some other things that you know will sell here, why, you buy them either for me or for you and me together. Cigars is very dull here at present, so is chees and crackers. Shuger is seling at 13 cts wholesale, Coffee 22cts yet. If you can get some good coffee not above 14cts, Buy it, Good green tea also is cheap. Send me up a few small cask of good Brandy and some good porter or ale if cheap. In my other larter [letter] I told you to buy doors and windows. Get as many good 4 or 6 panel doors inside and out as you can. I think by this time they are cheap. I forgot the tin of cake at the Thoms Bennett that Mr. Gibson brought down for me. If you find it send it to me altho it wont set here, but I will eat but one.

Capt. Beard is well, he commenced loading yesterday. In 12 hrs he will be off[f]. He has not seen the Girll yet. I will as soon as I can get a little more time write to you and give you a full account of all that is going on here.

Write to me and let me know how you are doing and when you will come up.

Give my best to Mssrs Lowenstein & Gibson Co., to Mr. Dungan and to all my old friends. If you see Capt Hoit, rember me to him and tel him that we would like to see him up here with a good light

steam boat that could run on the rapids. From your friend and well wisher.

H. Burns

* *

San Francisco, March 22 1851

To John Marsh Smith

DEAR JOHN

Enclosed herewith four letters which I found at Cox room of C.H. [Cross, Hobson].*

I arrived here a month ago and left our family all well in the states in January last. I met your wife and sister in law at our Fathers, The former anxious about you and eager to join you here or at home. I offered to bring her out to you. Tom wishes you to return, as better than making nothing abroad, and I would recommend you to go *in case you have no certain and permanent as well as profitable employment.*

Let me hear from you. I learn that you are at Portland from Mr. Dungan and, agreeable to his direction, send this to care of Norris & Co. there. The mail Steamer *Panama* came in yesterday with date to 15 February but letters not yet delivered.

My wife with Mr. Main and *his* wife and Mrs. Captain are all here and send their regards & I remain very truly yr. friend.¹⁰

Jos. Hobson

* *

*See preceding letter from Hugh Burns. The other letters have apparently not survived.

*Multnomah City*¹¹, March 30 1851

To John Marsh Smith
FRIEND SMITH

John handed me the 28 yours of the same date and I regret very much that you have met with such a loss in the stores. By ~~this~~ mail I received letters from B Lowenstein & Gibson. Mr. Adams has paid them and has sent me the ballance of the mony. By their Bill the Sandwich Island shugar is corect, but the manilla they say is 12341 by my account it is 12049. The account of sacks are corect, but the damaged state in which [they were] delivered accounts for the diference—48 sacks, White Crash shugar—3220.

My account 3061, the balenc [balance] lost out of bad sacks. They say by the short account of the Manilla shuger that when they bought it from Mr. Bond he told them that he had 20,000 lbs of it but has now shoven them the oregonal invoice and that they can attach no further blame than that of an oversight of him in the matter. I suppose they would like if Oregon had a good many such fools as me to let them have mony and then pay them five percent per mounth to Boot, but we will see about it. If Shuger fell it would then get 20,000 lbs. They send me the invoice of their stationary, carpeting & oil cloth with the bill of prices of the carpeting and cloth. If you think any person in Portland wants to purchase any of it, I will send you down the invoice & bill, they propose to set 50 per ct. above cost. They wish me to rem[em]ber them to you. If you write to them I wish you would state to them the condition the shuger came in. I have nea[r]ly sold out, and if the weather was good, I would have closed out before this.

How is friend Barnhart coming on.¹² Tel him to let me know if he can sell crackers or segars, if-so, will send him down some. Friend Smith, what are you doing or what do you wish to do, and if i can help you let me know your plans and what you think you would like to do and if I can help you I will do it willingly, so let me know what you would like to do. What are thare in Portland that can be bought cheep. I may go down this week.

YOUR FRIEND
H. Burns

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San Francisco, April 4 1851
[Postmark] *Astoria, Oregon, April 8*

To John Marsh Smith
Portland, Oregon
DEAR JOHN

Your form of 21st March have been received and contents noted.
The *Silas Richards* has arrived and will discharge in a day or two.
I will receive your segars, and hold them until I hear from you, there
is little or no demand for them and are selling at about cost. Please
let me hear from you by return steamer.

I am no longer a partner in the large Commercial House of
D.M.&P. [unidentified] and on the day Mr. M & P put their names to a
document declaring the independence of A.S.D. that individual in
company with his friend W.B. celebrated the event by dining to-
gether and getting most dreadfully tight. I have since that time my
dear fellow been in high spirits and hope to make some money.

You know exactly the state of my finances, and would say if you
can make arrangements with Burns to send some money down so I
can use it for you in the purchase of goods for your markets. I would
do so but if you cannot, send me a list of what you will have and I will
try to buy them on joint a/c/. What have those vessels in that have
arrived in your port.

Hams Prime in Market	15¢
Lard	12
Butter	30
Oysters Fresh	16
Candles Sperm	42-45
Soap	12¢
Brandy American	1.50-1.75
Whiskey	1.50
Ale & Porter	3.50
Lemon Syrup	3.50-4.00

In writing for foods be explicit as Jas Hobson has not sent us your letters. I enquired for them be he preferred sending them himself, hoping the news from home may be pleasing to you.

I remain very truly
YOUR FRIEND
A.S. Dungan

* * * * *

San Francisco, April 22 1851

To John Marsh Smith
Care of Messrs Norris & Co
Portland, Oregon Ty
DEAR JOHN

I was very much gratified at receiving your letter of 10 April, as I had heard from those with whom you have been corresponding that you were not much given to chirography and I need not be surprised at not having my letters answer'd¹⁵

It seems you are disappointed in your expectation of doing business in Oregon. You and Burns, from whom we have two letters of like dates with yours, speak in equal terms of the poor prospect of business in Oregon: of there being no money in the country; no men to buy, all having gone to the mines,¹⁴ and plentiful stocks of goods both by importation from San F. and direct from the States. I must believe it, tho' it's against the grain to do so, that what you and he state is correct and I am mightily sorry of it. I calculated on Oregon taking away some of our overgrown stocks and thereby helping us out of the scrape but there appears to be no hope on any side. From every quarter we have and have had news only of overstocked markets, low prices and dull prospects and on top of it all nearly 100 vessels have come in lately with large assorted cargoes from the States, England and Germany. What's to be the upshot of things, I don't know, yet our mkt. has not wavered. In fact we have been doing a larger business since these arrivals than before and generally at better or at least no worse prices. Larger arrivals of people from the States via Isthmus are taking place. The *Republic* brought

up 430 of whom 40 were women and 60 children!!!! What a babydom the cabin must have been, and she brings news that 1,500 had arrived at Chagres by late steamers. I suppose we'll find room to stow them away somewhere. For my own part, if we manage to stick together and hold our own, clearing only our most economically administered expenses, I shall be satisfied for 12 months yet. I am no advocate of change—and rather depend on perseverance and proper management in a fixed deportment of business than on the chances of more satisfactory returns from a change.

The Soap affair is rather exploded. I could not find a man competent to undertake the management of it and I can hardly agree with you that it requires no skill. I have gleaned some considerable information from Merc's [?] Dictionary but just enough to convince me that it would be futile to attempt the manufacture without a person of experience to superintend it. So until such an individual turns up Soap Manufacture must be at a stand still, as far [as] I am concerned. Burns can hardly complain of our charging him interest on any of the money he left to pay for Sugar with. We paid it over immediately to Hussey, Bond & Hale and only had it returned to us when the Sugar was wghd. In the mean time several other transactions occur'd by which Burns became indebted to us in general acct. and on these items we charged interest. As far as we were concerned in the Sugar Money, we had no use of its further than paying it over immediately to them—and could not therefore be expected to allow interest. The Sugar was doubtless in as fair order as Manilla Sugar generally is. It was more-over rec'd by Burns' agents and as it passed their inspection, we should be exonerated. Burns writes us in a slightly complaining strain but on the whole appears pretty well satisfied. It would have been far better for him if he had ordered us to sell here when Sugar had advanced so much. It has been sold lately at 34—up and down sure enough. Two cargoes I understand have been purchased, one for the States, the other for Germany. Sort-a-sending-coals-to-Newcastle business, tho' in this instance I think the coals will pay.

I don't know what to say of yr Fort Vancouver project [unidentified]. I feel sure that if you enter upon it, you will not make anything out of it for 4 or 5 years; that is, sufficient to authorize you in your own mind to think you had enough to go home on. I can only think it

is the support of your family that keeps you out here. While you are striving for what you think it necessary to ensure their comfort and happiness, they are deprived of one of the choicest sources of both by your absence. Nearly every letter to me from the girls bears a request (a prayer nearly, so earnest is it) that I would use my influence with you to have you return home. I know, and knew when I left Baltimore, that all your family wished you to return; that Lizzie was fretting herself to death about you. While you were here I did not say all I had heard and seen of Lizzie's grief and unhappiness because I thought you were in a fair way of realizing your wish to make a pile sufficient to satisfy you and I did not think it proper to discourage you, but I cannot see that your Vancouver project will bring you nearer to your object.

The time has passed when men without means can make sudden Fortunes in California. It has suddenly grown into and [page torn] place. Money is here in abundance as ready to [page torn] all channels promising profit as in the old cities [page torn] who win without it must do so by steady perseverance in their beaten track. You are feverish and restless [page torn], very fact of your family depending on your exertions [page torn] for future competency acts as a goading spur to your energies and you are making desperate attempts to gain your point—I think unwisely. You know on what you can depend at home. I know they all wish you returned and I think you would best find your comfort and happiness and best compass that of your family by returning. I know what *pride* is, John, that pride which would suffer the rack before yielding and if I were you, I would not return with nothing in my pocket. But I have no family, no wife weeping for me; no children to ask, where's dad and I might indulge in the luxury of pride, but you, Johnny, have higher claims on you than those of that high strained tyrant. You must not call this advice presumption.

Touching your purchase of stoves from Mssrs. Starr Minstrom & Co., I called there about it and heard from them that they recollected the purchase, had received no letter from you but had a call from a person not long before who had wanted to purchase stoves of them of a certain class, as he had understood they had some of that class of stoves *without hearths*. I am sorry you did not send me the documents, any Bill Lading, Bill act. on Expenses and order to col-

lect as I could doubtless have collected the amount. As it is you had better send me, as near these documents as you can, at once and Write to Mr. Hopkins to send your letter to S[tarr] M.[instrom] & Co. to us, if he has not delivered it.

I have had diarrhea for a week. Partners well. Send their respects. Business still dull.

YOURS EVER
Robt. George

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Oregon City, April 28 1851

To John Marsh Smith
FRIEND SMITH

I can sell almost all the hams by the lbs at 25 cts. if the[y] are good, so if the[y] can be bought at 15 cts buy them and send them up—that is, keep as many as you think will sell in Portland If you go in jointly and if not tell Mr. Barnhart to sell some of them for me. If you get them send them as soon as you can. I wish you would look out for my canoe along the shore at Portland, and you will much oblige your

FRIEND
H. Burns

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Portland, Oregon, May 1851

To Robert George
DEAR BOB

Your favour of Apl 22nd was rec'd a couple of days since. Since my last I cannot report any favourable change in demand or rates of Goods, with a market fully suppl[ied]. There are now lying in this port *Three* Barques and one Schooner, just arrived with full and assorted cargoes direct from the States, and more on the way, and two vessels expected shortly from Canton together with frequent

arrivals from San Francisco and generally fair stocks in the hands of merchants, affording sufficiency for the present and prospect of some expected into the future. The accounts from the mines of late have been of rather an encouraging character ... [rest of letter missing].

* * * * *

Ms Steamer *Northerner*, May 15 1851

To Messrs Corwin Brothers & Co.
Panama
GENTLEMEN

I beg to introduce to you my friend, John Marsh Smith of Baltimore.

Mr. Smith is going home and I give him this letter to use in case of sickness or detention on the Isthmus. And should such a misfortune befall him and he should thereby require funds you may advance him what he needs on his bill on Thomas M. Smith of Baltimore, or on his father-in-law, Mr. Tyson, and I hold myself responsible for the prompt and faithful honor of his drafts.

VERY TRULY YOURS, ETC.
Beverley C. Saunders

* * * * *

[This letter was presumably forwarded to JMS in Baltimore.]

Baltimore, May 22 1851
[Postmark] Baltimore, May 24, MD

To John Marsh Smith
Care of Cross Hobson & Co.
San Francisco, Cal
DEAR JOHN

It has been a long time since I have written to or rec'd a letter from you, but I have often thought of you and your trials and troubles. My principal object in addressing you at present is to call your

attention to an opening which presents itself at this time & leave it for your consideration. I must commence with the melancholy information of the death of James Atkinson: The poor fellow died in New York, where he had gone accompanied by his wife & one child to embark for England. His remains were brought home and interred at Gree[n]mount. Hannah bears her misfortune as well as could be expected. (But to go on), since James death Robert will have to fill his place by someone who can look after the customers of the concern & expresses himself anxious to have you; from what I can learn his views are that if you will come home he will give you one thousand dollars for the first year & proposes if you like the business to advance your interest. Now it does seem to me that the prospect is a fair one, but of course I would not urge you to any measure contrary to your own judgement. It would be pleasant indeed to have you at home once again, & it does seem to me that the present prospect looks fairer than any which is likely to occur.

Sister Lizzie & the little boys spent the day with us yesterday. They were all very well. The boys are fine little fellows. By the way we have lately moved & are living at the corner of St. Paul and Franklin St. All of our mutual friends are quite well. Harriette would be glad to add a P.S. & her love but as I write from the store will hardly have a chance. Since Fred's return he is in business with father & Dungan & though his start is small I consider it better than mine was. Bob is at present in our counting room.

With much love I remain your
AFFECTIONATE BROTHER
James E. Tyson

* * * * *

Oregon City, June 22 1851
[Stamped] Oregon City, Org. June 25

To John Marsh Smith Esq
Baltimore, Maryland
MR. JM SMITH

Dr. Sir I hope you will excuse me for intruding this upon your notice so soon after your arrival among your friends, but believing that in your generous nature you sometimes think of the land you have seen, and the friends you have left behind you, I am induced to believe that a line or two from *Tumwata* would not be unwelcome.¹⁵ As you have some idea of the place I write from, of course you will not expect much news, but if I have not been anticipated I will give you a trial [?] about the election.

I think our friend Thompson of Portland had declared himself a candidate for the legislature before you left. Well, things went on first rate, his right hand Norris was very active for him, so likewise was Barnheart and nearly all the young men in Portland.¹⁶ As the day of election approached excitement began to increase, and there was considerable betting. Thompson you know ran against King.¹⁷ Col. Backinsloch of course was one of Kings champions.¹⁸ Norris and the Col had a bet of some three or four ounces, Barnheart and the Col some two or three moor. May (of the firm of May and Goldsmith) and the Col had a bet of Fifty Dollars.¹⁹ At length the day of election arrived, and the dafter [day after], and Thompson's majorities began to come in from Lynn City & Milton, & King got every vote on Souvies Island,²⁰ but still Thompson was ahead and there was one or two other precinct to be heard from, but they were Thompson strongholds, and of course would swell his majority, so the opposition gave it up.

Thommsonians were in the best kind of spirits, they nearly worried the Col's life out of him. Capt. Norton, a Kingite, hoisted the flag at half mast, with the Union down.²¹ Dryer at the head of a body of Thomsonians went over and remonstrated but the Capt maintained that he would do as he liked with his own property.²² The Thomsonians then commenced firing Canon, and that brought out the

Canon of the opposition. The poor Siwashes couldn't countenance what the Bostons meant, they thought it a great waste of *polallio*.²³ The Kingites said they would have the last fire, But Thompson heard of it and hired a man to fire all night, so we had a roar of cannon from that evening until the next morning at sunrise, 700 guns in all. In the meantime there was two or three champaign drinkings at the Col expense. But, lo! on tomorrow, a majority of six came in for *King*. You can imagine what a turn things took after that, better than I can describe it. The flag was run up to the masthead and the Kingites renewed their firing and the poor Thompsonians had to pay for the Champaign & the bets besides. Thompson bore it like a man. I haven't known anything as exciting since I have been in the territory.

The fire company are going to celebrate the 4th. T.G. Dryer is to deliver the oration, then they will proceed to Oregon City on the Willamette. The river is quite high at this time. Any boat can come up here at this time. The bark *Success* is lying here at Allan & McKinleys wharf.²⁴ The *Lot Whitcomb* has been purchased by the citizens of Oregon City for \$50,000 and is undergoing repairs at this place, the little propeller *Blackhawk* brought from San Francisco and owned by Clark, Angel & Hoyt makes daily trips to Portland and back. The *Skukum Chuck* and *Tumwater ain't no where* and I like Othello find my occupation *gone*.²⁵ There will soon be three steamboats in operation above the falls, The Harrises, Lieut Bessells, & Murrys.²⁶

Things are going ahead *here awfully*. The news from the mines is pretty good but the Indians are giving the miners some trouble. Gov. Gains has gone out to see what is to be done. Bently has gone to the Umpqua to take a claim.²⁷ Tom Collins has gone to San Francisco, he expects to get charge of the vessel his brother has. *Old Hugh* has gone to San Francisco, to buy some more sugar I guess. D. Burns & family are all well.²⁸ I have requested my brother, A.F. Fenwick to call and see you, when he visits Balt. A.[llan] M.[c]K.[in-ley] & Co. talk of building a store at Canimah and putting me in it.²⁹ I send you the *Statesman*, with this.³⁰ I believe I have told you all worth mentioning. Remember me to all of my friends that you may

meet up with. I would be glad if you would call on John Murphy, Book Seller on Market Street, you know. Also on Geo. W. Webb-Quiller and remember me to them both.

YOURS IN HASTE

J.A. Sims³¹

I hope you will excuse all mistakes and burn this as soon as you read it.

JAS

* * * * *

Multnomah City, August 3 1851

To John Marsh Smith.
in care Cary, Tison & Dungen
Baltimore, Md.

ESTEEMED FRIEND

This day have performed what I should have done long ago, namely fill up a deed for a lot that I promised you when you and myself were in San Francisco, but you know what a hustle I was in when I came home, But I hope I will not be too late now, and hope you will except as part pay for your kind services tendered to me both here and in California, for which kindness I have not nor will not forget, and now friend Smith if I can do any thing for you here or in San Francisco, name it and I assure you that I will take great pride in doing it.

I was down to San Francisco last June, left on the 21. I will say nothing about fires of that place for you know all about it. I found the business very dull. I bought coffee and shuger, a better article than what I bought last winter, for less money, but I cannot sell it so that it will pay as much, for this country is almost knee deep with coffee and shuger and good shuger is sold here for six cts per pound and coffee at 14 cts and goods of all kinds in like maner. While I was in California six large vesals came in direct from the states and from China and is selling goods cheeper than I bought mine, so if I get out of this lot of goods with my coat on I will stay out a while.

Capt Beard is here in the *Merchantman*, he leaves in a few days

and when he returns he will be marid to the girl he saw at curhs [church]. She and her sister Dr. Barckley's wife and the Docktor and a host of other jentry was at dinner on board the *Merchantman* yesterday.³² They tuck me along to fill up an odd corner, Well they had a splendid time of it. Ned done his best to make them happy. I forgot to say that a week ago yesterday the Doctor gave a picknick party and Ned was there, and as it was at the spring below my house they stoped in as they were going and invited me to diner. They think a greadle [great deal] of Ned, and the way he loves the *dear* in the Girl is nobody's business.

Barnhart is full partner now and is doing as well as any of them. The Brig. *Amazon* belonging to Winter & Latamer arrived here from China in June with a full cargo,³³ and when the[y] ware in full blast seling, Old Capt Norton came down on the Cargo Brig and all winter was here at the time, so they will have a fine low time of it. Lewis May is winding up in Portland and is going to the States next steamer.

Portland looks sick and I think before the first of Jan next there will be a jenrel smach [smash]. There has been a splendid steamboat ship[p]et here from the States and put to[ge]ther on the Willamette river above the fall. She is 80 hors power. As to the mines of Oregon, I cannot tell you whether the[y] are good or not because all those from this place returned in a short time, yet old miners comes in with plenty of dust and says they are doing well, so that is the way it gos. But the people of Oregon has no need of going to the mines, they can do better at home, for I do believe the best crops that man has ever seen of all kinds has been Oregon this year.

The emigrants from the States are coming in slowly. I can't tel you anything about the number that will come across the planes this summer, as those that has come in cannot tel how many is behind them, but I think about 1000 wagons—some says two or three [thousand]. My sister and her family from the west is coming, and then all of mine will be her[e] and as soon as I get a little paper in my old pocket for my claim I will go to the lot along side of I sold last year for \$400.00 to John Brisbane, he since built a good house on it. It tis a good place for business it being close to the ferry, and I hope some day you will have a fine store on it. I will send you some papers.³⁴

My brothers folks are all well. I hope this find you and family well and happy. Write to me if you have time. If I live and be well I hope to be in your city before the first of May next, but during that time I would like to hear from you as often as your time will permit.

FROM YOUR FRIEND
H. Burns

* * * * *

San Francisco, August 30 1851

To John Marsh Smith

DEAR JOHN

I am in receipt of your favor of June 30th, and must say I am very much pleased at your safe arrival home away from friends. You should be a happy dog, With your family centered around you as in days past and no doubt up to this date you are recounting scenes in California & Oregon witnessed by Mr. M. Smith, the veritable John. Well, we certainly have had the devils own luck in this country, but you are among those who really care for your *home*. I [am] still among that class of people so freely called rascals in Balt[imore] with at this present moment about a dozen fleas who appear to revel on the fat with which I abound and am so justly proud of. How I write I hardly know, very badly tho, for which please blame the fleas, not me.

Business is most intolerably dull and does not improve in the least I assure you. How the majority of jobless manage to exist is a mystery to me, but with few exceptions nothing has advanced on prices. Segars are bringing about cost, no more. A great number are preparing to leave for home. Bailing & McKee start the steamers, having made a snug fortune each, quick work and easily done, While I have toiled and worked, have been energetic and I hope honest, and am still at the starting point. I have not had one single friend to say one word that would benefit me. But I will leave this subject as I feel passion uncontrollable rise up within me, I wish to get along smoothly and will on to some other topics.

Believe me my dear fellow that I am truly glad to hear of you being among the Drugs & paints and I do hope the tide you have travelled with so long has at last turned flood. I would rather be *home working a living than be here doing well, for I swear there is* no comfort and no real pleasure. There are some of the best fellows in the world whom I will hate to leave yet there is no place like home, no friend equal a Mother and my mother I do wish to see, God knows how anxious I am to see her kind face again. You say truly my visit will be a satisfaction to my family and friends; to my family no doubt, but where are my friends, save yourself and but few others I have no friends in Balto, that has been proved.

Ned Beard has arrived here but I have not yet seen him. When I told the boys I have received a letter from you they were eager to know the contents, and all desire to be remembered, you have many very warm hearted friends here, and you now are held in good esteem by them.

Spt 1 1851

The *Flying Cloud* arrived yesterday in 89 days from New York, an extraordinary quick run, and which has created some excitement.⁵⁵ Since I wrote the previous pages I have seen Ned Beard, he desires to be particularly remembered and told me where his mother was to be found, in Gay St. but I have forgotten the location.

I hope you have been a frequent visitor at Surrey, since your arrival home. If you have not, stand clear of me when I return.

You must excuse this miserable letter, as I am not in writing mood. Write me often. Regards to any *friends* who enquire for me, with best wishes for your future prosperity.

I REMAIN TRULY YR. FRIEND
A.S. Dungan

• • • • •

[The following is all that has survived of a letter—evidently to a newspaper editor—by JMS on his experiences in the West.]

... Contrary to your advice in particular and my friends in general, and pressing invitation from the diggings. To the contrary and notwithstanding, "I cut my cords and left all meaner things to low ambition and the pride of Kings." And returned home a busted individual after a two years cruise in an unsuccessful search after the root of all *evil*, which I expected to procure in the same way all other roots are procured by steady application of the Agricultural implement that generally fetches that answer, but having been seduced by the representations of others and an uncontrollable desire to see for myself, I suddenly stopped rooting and went to dam[m]ing. Well, you know, dam[m]ing operation is Speculative and with some People Speculations turns out right and with some its generally over the left. That side I belong to and no doubt as you are a man of experience you can form some idea of the consequences attending such a fate, retrenchment and reform economy. What was economy? going without anything to Eat because I had not the money to pay for it. Editor, when a man gets hungry he reflects and thats the time I begun to think of Oregon, Land that the American Eagle flied over.

I was not long striking the trail and following it up and to my inexpressable joy, found it as I had always heard it represented, a land flowing with Asses Milk and untamed Honey. You may depend upon it, I represent it in its true light, for I know its rich in gold, rich in Timber, its valleys and hills richer, its mountains higher, its cataracts more stupendous, its mill priviledges unequalled, its women Handsomer, its Hogs fatter, its dogs uglier, forming a picture more gigantic than any artists has ever yet been able to execute. But Editor, pressing invitation from these diggings whare I am now located sort of took possession of my senses, and I now left you—feelin[g] bad, sorry to separate myself from so much that I was attached to and feeling worse the further I got from you, but getting company with a fellers Wife and little Ones and some old friends dont only fetch a feller biped to his senses *fast*, but *faster*, and from present prospects I may consider myself fixed and contented. I have detirmined to go with my Brother who is doing a large Drug Business,

the firm Smith & Atkinson, the latter a brother in law having died after I left Oregon. I have had various propositions made me since I arrived home, one to return to Oregon, but judging from experience I believe it better for me to remain here where I am well known and with I think a certainty of success....

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Bob George, a family and business friend of JMS; George Gibson, of Lowenstein & Gibson, a general trading company.
2. Degarrs: daguerreotypes.
3. A Baltimore friend of John Curlett, Jr., and JMS and his family.
4. Gold was found in the Klamath Mountains in the southwestern part of what is now Oregon.
5. John P. Gaines was appointed territorial governor of Oregon by President Taylor in 1850, and took office in August in Oregon City, the territorial capital.
6. Orator, statesman and senator from Massachusetts, in 1851 Daniel Webster (1782-1852) was serving as secretary of state under President Fillmore.
7. This is thought to be the daguerreotype from which the frontispiece portrait was painted.
8. Hugh Burns emigrated to Oregon in 1844.
9. Probably the business opened by Henry W. Corbett in March 1851, when he was 24 years old. He rapidly became a prominent citizen of Portland.
10. "Mrs. Captain" was Captain James Hobson's wife, and thus Joseph Hobson's sister-in-law.
11. Burn's land claim, which he called Multnomah City, was across the Willamette River and slightly north of Oregon City.
12. William H. Barnhart was the Portland agent for Wells, Fargo & Company.
13. Chirography: handwriting
14. The rush to the Oregon mines left animals and crops unattended.
15. Chinook for "waterfall," *Tumwata* was a colloquialism for Oregon City, which lies at the falls of the Willamette River.
16. Shubrick Norris was a member of Portland's first City Council, in 1851.
17. R.R. Thompson and William M. King were bitter rivals for a seat in the Territorial Legislature. Thompson, a Democrat, was later an original investor in the Oregon Steam Navigation Co., Oregon's first major business enterprise, and became influential in Portland's business

- community. King, a Whig, was backed by the more conservative element, including the *Oregonian*. He, too, became prominent in Portland's development, as the King's Heights section of the city attests.
18. Lt. Col. Jacob B. Backenstos, U.S. Army, was stationed at Oregon City.
 19. Lewis May was among the many transient merchants in Oregon City at the time.
 20. Lynn City, the present-day West Linn, across the river from Oregon City, was established in 1840 by Robert Moore, Hugh Burn's neighbor to the south; Milton is a small community at the junction of the Willamette and the Columbia; Sauvie Island is a large island in the Columbia.
 21. Zachariah C. Norton was master of the *Sequin*, the first ship to sail from San Francisco to Astoria and on to Portland, carrying the mail. He was also a partner in a merchandise and commission business in Portland.
 22. Thomas Dryer, the *Oregonian*'s first editor, was a staunch Whig, much in demand as an eloquent speaker.
 23. *Siwash*: Chinook jargon for "Indian," here used derogatorily for the Democrats, who were combating the "Bostons," or Whigs; *polallio*: Chinook jargon for "gunpowder."
 24. G.T. Allan and A. McKinley owned a general-merchandise, boat-operations and commission business.
 25. The *Lot Whitcomb*, named after one of its owners, was the first steamboat built on the Willamette River, at Milwaukie. It was launched on Christmas Day 1850 and competed with the *Columbia*, the only other vessel making the highly profitable run between Portland and Astoria. The small steamer *Black Hawk* was brought to Portland in 1851 from the Sacramento River by its owners, Abernethy, Clarke & Co., for whom it was a money maker. ("Angel," George Abernethy, was a respected Methodist who served as provisional governor from 1845 to 1849, when Oregon became a U.S. territory.) The *SkukumChuck* (Chinook for "rapids") and the *Tumwater* ran between Portland and Oregon City. They were operated by James Colum, who appears to have employed Sims, but evidently competition from the *Black Hawk* was too great for them.
 26. The April 4 1851 issue of the *Statesman* notes that "Lieut. Bissell, U.S.N. has arrived to operate a steamer above the falls."
 27. The Oregon City *Spectator* had to suspend publication when its printer, S. Bently, left for the mines.
 28. Dan Burns was Hugh Burns's brother.
 29. Canemah was the loading and unloading point for portage around Willamette Falls.
 30. The Oregon City *Statesman* began publication in 1851. Its editor was Asahel Bush, who strongly represented the Democratic viewpoint in the politically charged period as Oregon moved toward statehood, and was known as "the Locofoco editor."

31. Originally from Baltimore, John A. Sims eventually moved to The Dalles, on the Columbia, where he was the Indian agent and representative for Allan, McKinley.
32. Dr. Forbes Barclay appears to have been an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1846. In 1895 he opened a drug store in Oregon City, and later served there as coroner.
33. The *Amazon* is reported to have been the first ship to reach Oregon from China; Gabriel Winter and B.G. Latimer were commission merchants in Oregon City.
34. Although Hugh Burns managed to sell several lots in Multnomah City, the community did not thrive, in large part because of competition from Linn City. In November 1853 most of its buildings were swept away by the high waters of the Willamette River.
35. The *Flying Cloud*, Captain Josiah P. Creesy, master, broke all records when it made the run to San Francisco in 89 days and 21 hours.

CHAPTER FOUR

1852



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Multnomah City, February 16 1852

To John Marsh Smith
ESTEEMED FRIEND,

I was at Portland last week and Barnhart gave me a note from you of the 28th of Oct. last which was enclosed in a letter to him, he had it some time before he thought to hand it to me. There is no person here at present engaged in the Degarratiple [daguerreotype] business, but you may depend that the first opportunity that I have I will send you a view of the places you wish.

I send you enclosed some of those blue beads of different Shapes and sizes, and some frequencies that the Indians use or did use, so says tradition, for many, but now the women use them. Some has them around their neck like beads. Others t[h]rough their nose, across under the nostrils, perhaps you saw some when you were here: also an armaluitt that the women wore on the wrist, all of which I ploughed up today in my field and send them to you just as I found them, for recollect that they were put there with the owner as

all things they possess at there death is put at the place whare they are layed. Where you saw the beads was a large burrying place, I should have said a place of the past, for when I first come to this country I found here in the bushes a hundred canoes with bones, pots pans pi[t]chers, tin kettles and up and all maner of things in and round the canoes, the pots and such thing put on sticks that is stuck in the ground. They punch a hole trough the botom, and also make a large hole in the botom of the canoe. When I was clearing the place I could have got a bucketfull of beads in the canoes.¹

A shocking accident has hapened to the propeller *Genrel Warren* near the mouth of Columbia river on Sunday morning Feb 1st, the full account is published in the papers which I will send you. Her cargo was oats, flour & hogs, which if it had arrived in California to meet the present high prices for hogs & oats, Would have sold for at leat \$150,000.²

This winter is very much the finest that has been since I have come to the country on shore, but up the coast it has been dreadfull, and it is feared that seveal vesalles bound up from California is lost besides two going down, the schooners *Harriet* and *J.C. Demerest*, Tom Collins master. Capt Jerry Collens left San Francisco Jan 17, has not since been heard of, also Brig *Marshal* and Bark *Success*, and many others.

Ned Beard has been here all winter loading the *Geo & Martha*, he has been laying at the mouth of the Columbia severl weeks waiting to go out, he is to be mari'd on his return. Friend Smith you know the part I took in the matter the first time I saw him. At his earnest request I interaduced the subject to her friends, an act that I have since much regreted, and now a gentleman told Mr. McLoughlin in Presence today that he had a woman on board dresed in men's clothes & calls her Charley. The D. "pitched" right on me and said that me and my Brother interaduced him as a gentleman. Their will be the devil to pay. I expect that Dr. Barckly will be after me about it and how to get out of it I do not know, for if I knew nothing about him I should have said nothing and stand convicted. However I think that their is nothing of it and think Ned will make a good husband, for he is a good hearted young man and stands high here.

MARCH 6 1852. I intended to send th[is] by Dr. Maxwell who left here in the last steam[er] for Washington City but he left a day soon-

er than I expected. I am going to San Francisco in this steamer that is now due and if I can see anyone going to Baltimore that I know I will enclose the beads. If not I will send them by the first opportunity. Letter has just come in from Jerry Collens stating that he lost the schooner *Juliet* on the beach about 30 miles south of the Columbia river on the morning of the 28 of January. All hands survived and part of the cargo. She had full loads of merchandise for this country, worth over \$60,000. The *John C. Demerest*, Tom Collins master, has not yet been heard of. It is feared that all hands have perished. The other vessels have arrived. The propeller *Seagull* is also lost, no lives, a full cargo for Oregon.³ Oregon has suffered very much by sea this winter. The *Geo & Martha* has arrived safe in San Francisco, so friend Beard will do well. All the winter that we had has been in the last 8 days, snowing every day, today it rained. Snow all gone and I am glad of on my cows account & hogs.

MARCH 7 1852. The mail from the States has just arrived. Dr. Barkley received a letter from Mr. Beard. He tells the Dr. that he is out of the *George & Martha* and is coming in a fine ship and will take his little Duck down to San Francisco next time he goes down. He is all right. The Dr. Don't believe a word of it and says it's all false and I am glad, so you may soon expect to hear of a big wedding in Oregon City, but I won't be in. I send you five papers. You will find 1 & 4 of a fine wet party. I will send you all of it soon. it is rich. Names of the actors: Judy Prat, Chickopee Bush, Wick ned M.P. Deady, Arnold Anderson of Astoria, Frank Dr. Wilson, Thotspur Lovejoy, Rex King of log rollers of Portland. The others you don't know.

You shall have it in pamphlet form with plates.⁴

FROM YOUR OLD FRIEND AND
WRITE SOON
H. Burns

* . . . *

Multnomah City, October 1 1852

To John Marsh Smith
ESTEEMED FRIEND

I received a letter from your kind lady dated July 20 in answer to mine of June 4th in respect to a school for my boy, Which is fully answered in Mrs. Smith's letter, from which I hold myself forever indebted. In a word the promptitude and kindness of your most amiable lady overwhelms me, for full well I know that such real kindness and disinterested friendship is rarely met with, at least by me, and be assured that such a treasure won't slip through my fingers easily.

I regret to say to you that I don't think it will be in my power to go to the States this fall. When I wrote to you in June last I was in hopes that I could have left before this time, for I thought in three months after I proved up my land claim that it would be allright, but Old man Moore runs his line over mine on the upper end and Mr. Tompkins on the lower, neather [neither] of which can you get one inch of my claim, for I was on mine three months before Moore was on his, and eight years before Tompkins, but the lines has to be settled before we can have our claims surveyed. When that is done then the surveyor gen. will send to Washington the plan for my claim and proof of my settlement and Cultivation, but as soon as the lines is settled and this surveyed then I can go where I please. Their is a greadle of confusion about the lines all over the country, and hundreds will be at Law all their lives. The Oregon Land Law was the worst law that Chongress ever made, all entirely for the benefit of Lawyers.⁵

Capt Norton got judgment against Winton & Colman last June for a large amount. I don't no the amount—all their property in Portland was sold by the sheriff.

Times are very good here now, farmers are in their glory. Wheat at the river at any point that a boat can get to is at \$2.50 per bushel, oates [illegible], potatoes \$2.00, onions \$8.00, butter 50 cts lb, hogs on foot 12 ¢, 19¢ per lb, chickens \$1.00 each. Their is also a greadle doing in Lumber business and mony is plenty.

The Emagrations to this country this year is larger than any two years heretofore. Their is a greadle of sickness and much sufering

among them and half of them not in yet, so reported. We have had many fine rains during the past month which done much good, the whole face of the country looks like spring and the grass is growing fast so that stock will have a good feed all winter, besides the rains has soffined the ground thorough for the farmers to plough and their is more ploughs running now than has been put it all to[ge]-ther for the last four years. Our farmers are wiping the cobwebs from their eyes and some biting their fingers off, because now that all kinds of provisions are high, they have nothing to sell and their mony is getting short. So this year the[y] are determined to have something to sell.

Everything needful will be high here this winter. Their is scarcely any coffee or sugar in Oregon at present, nor can it be bought in San Francisco for anything that would justify any person to run the risk of the market. The cargo of the ship [illegible] that reached here six weeks ago from New York has sold at a great profit. Abernathy & Cox had 200 tons on her and Mr. Abernathy told me that he will make more on them than on any other goods he ever bought, the demand is so great.

OCTOBER 3. Richard Lane Esq formerly of the Hudson's Bay Company committed suicide in Oregon City yesterday by cutting his throat. I saw him a few minutes after he don it. It was an awfull gash such as I never saw befor and hope I never will again. He cut the winpipe exce[p]t a small portion at the back part, but cut no blood vessell. He is yet alive 24 hours after. His wife died last year and he has not done well since. He has neglected his business and drank hard. Consequently his business got deranged and some of his creditors here came down on him and he's gave way. I think you must know him as he kept the Hudson Bay Company Store in Oregon City when you ware here. He is a small man, and a Gentleman of high respectability.⁶

It tis imosable [impossible] at present for me to tell when I can go to the States. I thought that I could have settled the boundry Lines of my claim last week but the man that run his line over mine on the lower land of my claim has gone to the mines and wont be back until January next. But I may start before that time, if I can I will.

Allow me here to congratulate you on the Birth of a young daughter in your absence and I do hope that this may find the mother and

daughter enjoying every happiness that heaven and earth can bestow on them and the same for yourself and all that are yours.⁷

is the sincere wish of your
TRUE FRIEND
H. Burns

Notes to Chapter 4

1. Chinook Indians lived along the banks of the Willamette; Burns's Multnomah City was evidently the site of a burial ground. Still used as trade items in 1850, blue beads were advertised that year in the *Sacramento Placer Times*.
2. An early sidewheeler built in 1844 for the Portland Steam Packet Company in Maine, the *General Warren* was wrecked at Clatsop Beach, south of the Columbia, on January 28 1852, with the loss of 42 lives.
3. The *Juliet* was lost south of Yaquina Bay on the Oregon coast; the *Seagull* on the Humboldt Bar, off the northern California coast, on January 26 1851.
4. The copy of the original pamphlet is in the John Marsh Smith papers of the Oregon Historical Society. The script was written by Breakspear; the characters are thinly disguised members of Oregon's political community, including Asahel Bush, Matthew Deady, Asa Lovejoy, and A.N. King.
5. Land holdings had been in dispute for years. The Donation Land Law of September 1850 granted every male settler over 18 who was a U.S. citizen, or who declared his intention of becoming one by December 1 1851, 320 acres if he were single and 640 acres if he were married within a year of that date. Claims were to be filed with the surveyor general within three months.
Burns and Moore had long rivaled each other, not only over their land claims, but also over the ferry license and the siting of the provisional government at their respective town sites.
6. A Hudson's Bay clerk in 1837, Richard Lane later assumed ownership of the store in Oregon City. He was also a lawyer, and in 1847 was appointed as judge in Vancouver County. Lane survived his suicide attempt of 1852, and moved first to Olympia and later to The Dalles, where he died in 1877 of an overdose of morphine.
7. Martha Tyson Smith was born on June 28 1852.

CHAPTER FIVE

1853-1857



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San Francisco, January 14, 1853

To John Marsh Smith

DEAR JOHN

Your favor of Oct 16th, Nov 25th I received by last steamer.

The ship *James Conner* has arrived and was berthed at the wharf yesterday, not yet discharged anything. I note in your instructions relative to the disposal of the goods and will follow them and do all I can to make a good sale. Altho I cannot hold out any expectations of your realizing much of the shipment, I will as you well know do all I can to further your interest.

Burns is in town and doesn't seem to be particularly remembered. He brought the boy down to school and has placed him in the Mission until March when he says he will start for the States. I delivered your messages to him. The old fellow appears to think a great deal of you John and to regret your not becoming an Oregonian.

The two prominent pillars of this glorious Republic that you mention, Sanders & Dungan, expect to be taken down in a few months and I am not disposed to regret it.

You must have a nice time travelling thru Juniper [illegible] & swamps, but you can stand it as you had a glimpse of several Elephants while in this country.

Tom Hamilton has arrived out with his wife and her sister, also Bob Bennett's wife so you see we are obtaining additions to the female society from Balt[imore]. Peter Strobel will leave here on the first in the *Monumental City* for Panama & a market, from thence home. So you will see the lucky gentleman soon.

I have no news. Everything is dull and mud abundant. Long boots outside the pantaloons are the *reigning* fashions. Sacramento City has been burned down and overflown twice.

My regards to all your family, to a good yr my dear fellow and remember me always as your very true friend.

Abe

.

Dalles of Columbia, May 28 1853

To John Marsh Smith
MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have no doubt but you have long since forgotten me, but as I have just met with an old Baltimorean on his way home I could not resist the opportunity of intruding myself again on your notice. I have thought perhaps a word or two from an old acquaintance might not prove unacceptable.

There has been quite a number of changes in Oregon since you left us, but I expect some more regular correspondent has kept you pretty well posted; however as news is scarce I will write whatever I may find it convenient without regard to what others may have written. For my part I am the same old *two* and *six* that you left me, and am as anxious to get back to old Maryland as ever. I have been farming ever since you left, but I found it a dull business especially as I had to *batch it*. So I have changed my tactics and am about entering into business at the Dalles with Mssrs. Allan McKinley Co. I am sure I cannot tell you how it is going to pay but at any rate I will hope for the best.

Portland has very much improved and there are some fine houses here now. Some of your old friends still remain, viz Marge, Barnheart, Norris, Robert Thompson, Couch, Flanders, Ogden, etc.¹ Barnheart is doing a fine business and Norris is clerking for him. Thompson is a candidate for the Legislature and I believe the others are all doing well.

Oregon City looks pretty much as it did when you saw it last. There has but a few new houses put up until recently. There are two large wholesale houses being put up there now just above Abernathys. Linn City came very near being washed away last winter, but there is a company putting up some fine mills on that side now. Dr. McLoughlin looks as natural as ever, he made Seventy-five thousand dollars by his mills last winter. Flour was \$20 per cwt. Dan Burns and family live at their new place on the hill. Mr. Burns talks sometimes of going to California to live. Mr. Hugh Burns I have understood has gone to the States, if so I suppose you have heard of the death of poor Tom Collins & Ned Beard, both of whom were lost at sea. Gerry Collins is still sailing between Portland and San Francisco.

There is considerable excitement in the Territory now about the election for delegates which is to come off on the sixth of June. Gen. Lane and Judge Skinner are the candidates. I intend to vote for Skinner although I think Lane will be elected, he arrived here with his family about two weeks ago.²

Mr. Simpson, the gentleman who will take this to you, came out here last summer across the plains. He has traveled over the greater portion of the Territory and now he is on his way back, he tells me he used to be in the Indian Rubber business on Market St. just below where Fields used to keep. I expect he can tell you a great deal about Oregon, as he seems to be pleased with the country and its future prospects.

How are things progressing in old Baltimore? Have you ever met with any of my old friends and acquaintances? I would be very glad indeed if you would write to me and let me know if you have as many pretty *Pretty Girls in Baltimore* as ever, and if there is any use in *my holding on* until I get back. Girls are getting more plenty in Oregon than they were when you were here, but they cannot compare with what I remember our Maryland girls to be. And as soon as

I make money enough to support myself and some poor white girl I am coming back to Baltimore to be a neighbor to you. Should you meet with any of my friends, you will remember me to them. You must answer this scroll and I will continue to let you know how things progress at the Dalles. I must now bid you good bye. Hoping to hear from you soon. I remain Sincerely

YOUR FRIEND,
John A. Sims

.

[Part of several letters on one]⁵

Multnomah, September 6 1857

To John Marsh Smith
FRIEND JOHN

I received a letter from you sometime ago back last April. Well, I kept putting off[f], and from mail to mail until now, waiting to have some news to tel you, & I have not much and that is painful. Dr. John McLoughlin is no more, he died the 3 int at 11 o'clock in the fore noon, and was buried yesterday the 5 in the Catholic Church yard in Oregon City and carid on men shoulders from his house to the grave.

It would be a useless task for me to undertake to tel you that mans worth for I have not the capacity, but the time I hope is not far of when some American historian will do him Justice. I say American *historian* because it is from the American people and the American government that he had received the basest kind of ingratitude—so much that it was the slayer of that Powerful mind and Body such as but few men has ever possessed. And I have no doubt it was this ingratitude from a people whoes government he adopted and loved that shortened his life at least twenty years.⁴ Some may say that his mind could not be strong if such things Prayed on it. I say to such that Base ingratitude such [as] fell to his lot has and will destroy the strongest minds that ever has or ever exist. No mor[t]al man can bare up against it, and I firmly believe that it has the distroye[d] him.



**Matthew Smith, 1779-1865, and Catherine Marsh
Smith, 1790-1870, parents of John Marsh Smith**



Thomas Marsh Smith (Little Tommy), 1848-1908, the younger of the "dear little boys"



Gilbert Tyson Smith (Gilly), 1846-1911, the elder of the "dear little boys"



Elizabeth Brooke Tyson Smith, 1808-1905, "Dear Lizzie"



Martha Ellicott Tyson, 1795-1873, mother of Elizabeth Brooke Smith



Frederick Tyson, 1828-1901, younger brother of Elizabeth Brooke Smith



**Janie Gambrill Smith, 1864-1954, youngest of the Smith children
and donor of the John Marsh Smith papers to The National Society
of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Oregon**



**Martha Tyson Smith, born in 1852 after
John Marsh Smith returned home**

For the last 15 years I know him well and was much with him. Years past he would speak of the ill treatment he received but would not campaign or blame any person, yet I knew full well that it was destroying him, but the last few years at times he would complain of his ill treatment most bitterly. Then I knew the once noble heart was destroyed in the years 42, 43 & 44. That man while at the head of the Hudson Bay Co in this country gave out suptgs [supportings] to the Americans Eimagrants \$8500. I mean that amount is yet unpaid and never will for they plead limitation, that they done. The Hudsons Bay Co holds him responsible for it. I come to this country in 42 and I know that if it was not for that man, Dr. McLoughlin, that many that came in the years 42, 43 & 44 that is now wealthy and wont pay for the flour that kept them & familys from starving. I say without fear of contradiction that was it not for that man their bones would be bleeching on the banks of the Columbia and Willamette rivers. And how did the[y] pay him? I have told you before, with base ingratitude, so much so that it has caused amany another minded American to bow his head in shame for the shamefull conduct (to say the least) of his countrymen. And what class of the American people has done this? Is it the low elettered [illiterate] not them for most of them has done what all men should do. It is what is wrongly called a better class & many of them preaches of the Gosble of God, that has done it, for it was their vilans [villainous] fallshoods to the government and to Chongress that made that Body take from him his land claim.

On the first of this month old Mr. Moore of the founder of Linn City [West Linn] died. He was older than Dr. McLoughlin, he being 75 yrs old & Mr. Moore 80 yrs old. Did you [know] Mr. Moore when here, he owned the claim above mine on the river and came one year before me.

I have but little news to tel you. The convention to form a State Constitution is now in session at Salem, so that we may become a state this winter and yet. not withstanding the constitution, I think will be a good one yet it will be voated down by the people for the black republickens is moving heaven & [e]arth to stave it off[f]m not withstanding they hav their regular ticket at the election.⁵

What has become of Jim Lea, has he gone home? When he left

here he promised to do some business for me in San Francisco, but I have never heard of him since he left here.

We are all well and hope this finds you & family the same, my wished to all your friends, wricht soon.

YOUR FRIEND
H Burns

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Captain John H. Couch, of Newburyport, Massachusetts, made his first trip to the Oregon Country in 1839, sailing the brig *Maryland* around Cape Horn. He left after establishing a claim in 1845 at the site of present-day Portland, and returned in 1849 with his brother-in-law, George H. Flanders, in their bark *Madonna* with a shipload of goods for sale. Couch became a merchant and banker, and Flanders established a San Francisco-Portland run on the *Madonna*.
2. General Joseph Lane, a southerner and a staunch Democrat, was appointed the first territorial governor by President Polk, a position he held from March 1849 to June 1850, when he was replaced by Gaines (see Note 5, 1851). Judge Alonzo A. Skinner, a Whig, had been appointed circuit judge by Governor Abernethy, and served as Indian agent in the Rogue River area.
3. Several typed copies of letters from Hugh Burns to JMS, but not the handwritten originals, are in the John Marsh Smith collection. Dated from May 1853 to February 1856, they are mainly about Burns's own affairs, and have not been included in this publication. Some are devoted to his concern for a family down on its luck, to his provisions for the education of two orphaned nieces, and to his arrangements for deeding a section of Multnomah City to JMS. Burns took the papers for this transaction (now in the collection) "to the states," when he went east in May 1853. He also took more trade beads to give Martha Ellicott Tyson, to whom he eventually sent a quiver and arrows.
4. Although McLoughlin became an American citizen in 1851, having initiated steps to do so in 1845, he was not permitted to keep the lands he had acquired.
5. The issue of slavery was a bitter one as Oregon moved toward statehood. The Democratic candidate, Lane, was careful to avoid commitment on the subject. Skinner's Whig party had splintered over the slavery issue. The anti-slavery group evolved into the Republican Party and was known as "the black republicans."

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FAMILY TREE

Matthew Smith
1779-1865
married
August 23, 1809
Catharine Marsh
1790-1870

- Thomas Marsh Smith (The Elder)
born August 6, 181_
- JOHN MARSH SMITH
born August 20, 1818
- Hannah Ann Smith
born April 26, 1821
- Mary Marsh Smith
born October 14, 1823
- Anthony Marsh Smith (Tony)
born May 29, 1826
- Sara R. Smith (*married Robert Tyson*)
born April 5, 1830
- Catherine Ellen Smith
born September 14, 1831
- Matthew Marsh Smith
born January 21, 1834

Nathan Tyson
1787-1867
married
September 27, 1815
Martha Ellicott
1795-1873

- James Tyson
born August 21, 1816
- ELIZABETH BROOKE TYSON
born March 3, 1818
- Henry Tyson
born November 18, 1820
- Isabelle Tyson (Belle)
born March 17, 1823
- Anne Tyson
born February 26, 1825
- FREDERICK TYSON
born April 17, 1828
- Robert Tyson (*married Sarah R. Smith*)
born March 25, 1830
- Lucy Tyson
born March 20, 1833

John Marsh Smith 1818-1890 <i>married</i> May 23, 1843 Elizabeth Brooke Tyson 1818-1905	—	Gilbert Tyson Smith (Gilly) born April 30, 1846 Thomas Marsh Smith (Little Tommy) born January 28, 1848 Martha Tyson Smith born June 28, 1852 Janie Gambrell Smith born March 8, 1864 <i>(donated papers making this book possible)</i>
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Martha Tyson Smith 1852-n.d. <i>married</i> April 11, 1877 Samuel Hopkins n.d.	—	Samuel H. Hopkins born June 7, 1878 Matthew S. Hopkins born December 30, 1879 Elizabeth Schofield Brooke Hopkins born December 8, 1882 Mary Randolph Hopkins born December 1, 1888 Alda Tyson Hopkins born March 13, 1891
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Alda Tyson Hopkins 1891-1969 <i>married</i> n.d. James Clark n.d.	—	JOHN L. CLARK born December 15, 1914 James Clark, Jr. born December 19, 1918 Joseph Hopkins Clark n.d.
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APPENDIX

Excerpts from

ELDORADO

or

Adventures in the Path of Empire:

comprising

A Voyage to California, via Panama;

Life in San Francisco and Monterey;

Pictures of the Gold Region,

and

Experiences of Mexican Travel.

by

Bayard Taylor

Chapter I: From New York to Chagres

On the 28th of June, 1849, I sailed from New York, in the U.S. Mail steamship *Falcon*, bound for Chagres....

After doubling Cape Hatteras, on the second day out, our monotonous life was varied by the discovery of a distant wreck, Captain Hartstein instantly turned the *Falcon's* head towards her, and after an hour's run we came up with her. The sea for some distance around was strewn with barrels, fragments of bulwarks, stanchions and broken spars. She was a schooner of a hundred tons, lying on her beam ends and water-logged. Her mainmast was gone, the foremast broken at the yard and the bowsprit snapped off and lying across her bows. The mass of spars and rigging drifted by her side, surging drearily on the heavy sea. Not a soul was aboard, and we made many conjectures as to their fate....

[After lying of Charleston and Havana, the *Falcon* reached New Orleans.]

I found New Orleans remarkably dull and healthy. The city was enjoying an interregnum between the departure of the cholera and the arrival of the yellow fever. . . .

The *Falcon* was detained four days, which severely tested the temper of my impatient shipmates. . . . The hour of departure at length arrived. . . . Our deck became populous with tall, gaunt Missippians and Arkansans, Missouri squatters who had pulled up their stakes yet another time, and an ominous number of professed gamblers. All were going to seek their fortunes in California, but very few had an definite idea of the country or the voyage to be made before reaching it. There were among them some new varieties of the American—long, loosely-jointed men, with large hands and feet and limbs which would still be awkward, whatever the fashion of their clothes. Their faces were lengthened, deeply sallow, overhung by straggling locks of straight black hair, and wore an expression of settled melancholy. The corners of their mouths curved downwards, the upper lip drawn slightly over the under one, giving to the lower part of the face that cast of destructiveness peculiar to the Indian. These men chewed tobacco at a ruinous rate, and spent their time either in dozing at full length on the deck or going into the fore-cabin for 'drinks.' Each one of them carried arms enough for a small company and breathed defiance to all foreigners.

We had a voyage of seven days, devoid of incident, to the Isthmus. . . .

Chagres lies about eight miles to the west of this bay, but the mouth of the river is so narrow that the place is not seen till you run close upon it. The eastern shore is high and steep, cloven with ravines which roll their floods of tropical vegetation down to the sea. The old castle of San Lorenzo crowns the point, occupying a position somewhat similar to the Moro Castle at Havana, and equally impregnable. . . .

We came to anchor about half past four. The deck was already covered with luggage and everybody was anxious to leave first. Our captain, clerk, and a bearer of dispatches, were pulled ashore in the steamer's boat. . . . The clerk, on his return, . . . told us that the Pa-

cific steamer would sail from Panama on the 1st of August, and ... the only canoes to be had that night were already taken. ... We resigned ourselves to another night on board, with a bare chance of sleep in the disordered state-rooms and among the piles of luggage....

Chapter II: Crossing the Isthmus

I left the *Falcon* at day-break in the ship's boat. ... Piling up our luggage on the shore, each one set about searching for the canoes which had been engaged the night previous, but, without a single exception, the natives were not to be found, or when found, had broken their bargains. Everybody ran hither and thither in great excitement, anxious to be off before everybody else, and hurrying the naked boatmen, all to no purpose. The canoes were beached on the mud, and their owners engaged in re-thatching their covers with split leaves of the palm. The doors of the huts were filled with men and women, each in a single cotton garment, composedly smoking their cigars, while numbers of children, in Nature's own clothing, tumbled about in the sun. Having started without breakfast, I went to the "Crescent City" Hotel, a hut with a floor to it, but could get nothing. Some of my friends had fared better at one of the native huts, and I sat down to the remains of their meal, which was spread on a hen-coop beside the door. ...

A returning Californian had just reached the place, with a box containing \$22,000 in gold-dust, and a four-pound lump in one hand. The impatience and excitement of the passengers, already at a high pitch, was greatly increased by his appearance. Life and death were small matters compared with immediate departure from Chagres. ... The boatmen, knowing very well that two more steamers were due the next day, remained provokingly cool and unconcerned. They had not seen six months of emigration without learning something of the American habit of going at full speed. The word of starting in use on the Chagres River, is "go-ahead!" Captain C____ and Mr. M____, of Baltimore, and myself, were obliged to pay \$15 each, for a canoe to Cruces. ... Our luggage was stowed away, we took our seats and raised our umbrellas, but the

men had gone off for provisions and were not to be found. All the other canoes were equally in limbo. The sun blazed down on the swampy shores, and visions of yellow fever came into the minds of the more timid travelers. . . . Our own men appeared towards noon, with a bag of rice and dried pork, and an armful of sugar-cane. A few strokes of their broad paddles took us from the excitement and noise of the landing-place to the seclusion and beauty of the river scenery. . . .

. . . There is nothing in the world comparable to these forests. No description that I have ever read conveys an idea of the splendid overplus of vegetable life within the tropics. . . .

In the afternoon we reached Gatun, a small village of bamboo huts, thatched with palm-leaves, on the right bank of the river. The canoes which preceded us had already stopped, and the boatmen, who have a mutual understanding, had decided to remain all night. . . . Two wooden drums, beaten by boys, in another part of the village, gave signs of a coming fandango, and as it was Sunday night, all the natives were out in their best dresses. They are a very cleanly people, bathing daily, and changing their dresses as often as they are soiled. The children have their heads shaved from the crown to the neck and as they go about naked, with abdomens unnaturally distended, from an exclusive vegetable diet, are odd figures enough. They have bright black eyes, and are quick and intelligent in their speech and motions.

The inside of our hut was but a single room, in which all the household operations were carried on. A notched pole, serving as a ladder, led to a sleeping loft, under the pyramidal roof of thatch. Here a number of the emigrants who arrived late were stowed away on a rattling floor of cane, covered with hides. After a supper of pork and coffee, I made my day's notes by the light of a miserable starveling candle, stuck in an empty bottle, but had not written far before my paper was covered with fleas. The owner of the hut swung my hammock meanwhile, and I turned in to secure it for the night. To lie there was one thing, to sleep another. A dozen natives crowded round the table, drinking their aguardiente and disputing vehemently; the cooking fire was on one side of me, and everyone that passed to and fro was sure to give me a thump, while my weight

swung the hammock so low, that all the dogs on the premises were constantly rubbing their backs under me. I was just sinking into a doze, when my head was so violently agitated that I started up in some alarm. It was but a quarrel about payment between the Señora and a boatman, one standing on either side. From their angry gestures, my own head and not the reckoning, seemed the subject of contention.

Our men were to have started at midnight, but it was two hours later before we could rouse and muster them together. We went silently and rapidly up the river till sunrise, when we reached a cluster of huts called Dos Hermanos (Two Brothers.) . . . By the time we had gained the rancho of Palo Matida a sudden cold wind came over the forests, and the air was at once darkened. We sprang ashore and barely reached the hut . . . when the rain broke over us, as if the sky had caved in. A dozen lines of white electric heat ran down from the zenith, followed by crashes of thunder, which I could feel throbbing in the earth under my feet. The rain drove into one side of the cabin and out the other, but we wrapped ourselves in India-rubber cloth and kept out the wet and chilling air. During the whole day the river rose rapidly and we were obliged to hug the bank closely, running under the boughs of trees and drawing ourselves up the rapids by those that hung low.

I crept out of the snug nest where we were all stowed as closely as three unfledged sparrows, and took my seat between Juan and Ambrosio, protected from the rain by an India-rubber poncho. The clothing of our men was likewise waterproof, but without seam or fold. It gave no hindrance to the free play of their muscles, as they deftly and rapidly plied the broad paddles.

. . . We stopped the second night at Peña Blanca, (the White Rock), where I slept in the loft of a hut, on the floor, in the midst of the family and six other travelers. We started at sunrise, hoping to reach Gorgona the same night, but ran upon a sunken log and were detained some time. . . .

The character of the scenery changed somewhat as we advanced. The air was purer, and the banks more bold and steep. The country showed more signs of cultivation, and in many places the forest had been lopped away to make room for fields of maize, plan-

tain and rice. But the vegetation was still that of the tropics and many were the long and lonely reaches of the river, where we glided between piled masses of bloom and greenery....

We stopped four hours short of Gorgona, at the hacienda of San Pablo, the residence of Padre Dutaris, curé of all the interior.... I slept soundly ... and only awoke at four o'clock next morning, to hurry our men in leaving for Gorgona.

As we neared Gorgona, our men began repeating the ominous words: "Cruces—muchacha colera." We had, in fact, already heard of the prevalence of cholera there, but doubted, none the less, their wish to shorten the journey. On climbing the bank to the village, I called immediately at the store of Mr. Miller, the only American resident, who informed me that several passengers by the *Falcon* had already left for Panama, the route being reported passable. In the door of the alcalde's house, near at hand, I met Mr. Powers, who had left New York a short time previous to my departure, and was about starting for Panama on foot, mules being very scarce.... [However, Taylor and his companions were able to obtain horses.] Next morning at daybreak ... we started off with a guide, trusting our baggage to the honesty of our host [the Alcalde of Gorgona], who promised to send it the same day. The path at the outset was bad enough, but as the wood grew deeper and darker and the tough clay soil held the rains which had fallen, it became finally a narrow gully, filled with mud nearly to our horses' bellies. Descending the steep sides of the hills, they would step or slide down almost precipitous passes, bringing up all straight at the bottom, and climbing the opposite sides like cats. So strong is their mutual confidence that they invariably step in each other's tracks, and a great part of the road is thus worn into holes three feet deep and filled with water and soft mud, which spirts upward as they go, coating the rider from head to foot.

The mountain range in the interior is broken and irregular. The road passes over the lower ridges and projecting spurs of the main chain, covered nearly the whole distance to Panama by dense forests. Above us spread a roof of transparent green, through which few rays of the sunlight fell. The only sounds in that leafy wilderness were the chattering of monkeys as they cracked the palm-nuts,

and the scream of parrots, flying from tree to tree. In the deepest ravines spent mules frequently lay dead, and high above them, on the large boughs, the bald vultures waited silently for us to pass. We overtook many trains of luggage, packed on the backs of bulls and horses, tied head-to-tail in long files. At intervals on the road, we saw a solitary ranche, with a cleared space about it, but all the natives could furnish us was a cup of thick, black coffee.

After ascending for a considerable distance, in the first half of our journey, we came to a level table-land, covered with palms, with a higher ridge beyond it. Our horses climbed it with some labor, went down the other side through clefts and gullies which seemed impassable, and brought us to a stream of milky blue water, which, on ascertaining its course with a compass, I found to be a tributary of the Rio Grande, flowing into the Pacific at Panama. We now hoped the worst part of our route was over, but this was a terrible deception. Scrambling up ravines of slippery clay, we went for miles through swamps and thickets, urging forward our jaded beasts by shouting and beating. Going down a precipitous bank, washed soft by the rains, my horse slipped and made a descent of ten feet, landing on one bank and I on another. He rose quietly, disengaged his head from the mud and stood, flank-deep, waiting till I stepped across his back and went forward, my legs lifted to his neck. This same adventure happened several times to each of us on the passage across . . . we finally struck the remains of the paved road constructed by the buccaneers when they held Panama. I now looked eagerly forward for the Pacific, but every ridge showed another in advance, and it grew dark with a rain coming up. At last [our guide] put on a pair of pantaloons. This was a welcome sign to us, and in fact, we soon after smelt the salt air of the Pacific, and could distinguish huts on either side of the road. These gave place to stone houses and massive ruined edifices, overgrown with vegetation. We passed a plaza and magnificent church, rode down an open space fronting the bay, under a heavy gate-way, across another plaza and through two or three narrow streets, hailed by Americans all the way with: "Are you the *Falcon's* passengers?" "From Gorgona?" "From Cruces?" till our guide brought us up at the Hotel Americano.

Thus terminated my five days' journey across the Isthmus—decidedly more novel, grotesque and adventurous than any trip of similar length in the world.

Chapter III: Scenes in Panama

Some of the passengers ... were obliged to remain in Panama another month, since their luggage did not arrive before the sailing of the steamer.

The next day nearly all of our passengers came in.... There had been a heavy rain during the night, and the Gorgona road, already next to impassable, became actually perilous....

The roads from Cruces and Gorgona enter on the eastern side of the city, as well as the line of the railroad survey. The latter, after leaving Limon Bay, runs on the north side of the Chagres River till it reaches Gorgona, continuing thence to Panama in the same general course as the mule route. It will probably be extended down the Bay to some point opposite the island of Taboga, which is marked out by Nature as the future anchorage ground and dépôt of all the lines touching at Panama. The engineers of the survey accomplished a great work in fixing the route within so short a space of time....

Panama is one of the most picturesque cities on the American Continent.... There is one angle of the walls where you can look out of a cracked watchtower on the sparkling swells of the Pacific, ridden by flocks of snow-white pelicans and the rolling canoes of the natives—where your vision, following the entire curve of the Gulf, takes in on either side nearly a hundred miles of shore....

There were about seven hundred emigrants waiting for passage, when I reached Panama. All the tickets the steamer could possibly receive had been issued and so great was the anxiety to get on, that double price, \$600, was frequently paid for a ticket to San Francisco. A few days before we came, there was a most violent excitement on the subject, and as the only way to terminate the dispute, it was finally agreed to dispose by lot of all the tickets for sale. The emigrants were all numbered, and those with tickets for sailing vessels or other steamers excluded. The remainder then drew, there being

fifty-two tickets to near three hundred passengers. This quieted the excitement for the time, though there was still a continual under-current of speculation and intrigue which was curious to observe. The disappointed candidates, for the most part took passage in sailing vessels, with a prospect of seventy days' voyage before them.... I was well satisfied to leave Panama at the time; the cholera, which had already carried off one-fourth of the native population, was making havoc among the Americans, and several of the *Falcon's* passengers lay at the point of death.

Chapter IV: The Pacific Coast of Mexico

... A voyage from Panama to San Francisco in the year 1849, can hardly be compared to sea-life in any other part of the world or at any previous period. Our vessel was crowded fore and aft: exercise was rendered quite impossible and sleep was each night a new experiment, for the success of which we were truly grateful. ... Coffee was served in the cabin; but, as many of the passengers imagined that, because they had paid a high price for their tickets, they were conscientiously obligated to drink three cups, the late-comers got a very scanty allowance. The breakfast hour was nine, and the table was obliged to be fully set twice. At the first tingle of the bell, all hands started as if a shot had exploded among them; conversation was broken off in the middle of a word; the deck was instantly cleared, and the passengers, tumbling pell-mell down the cabin-stairs, found every seat taken by others who had probably been sitting in them for half an hour....

Among our company of two hundred and fifty, there were, of course, many gentlemen of marked refinement and intelligence from various parts of the Union—enough, probably, to leaven the large lump of selfishness and blackguardism into which we were thrown. I believe the controlling portion of the California emigration is intelligent, orderly and peaceable; yet I never witnessed so many disgusting exhibitions of the lowest passions of humanity, as during the voyage. At sea or among the mountains, men completely lose the little arts of dissimulation they practise in society....

The heat, during this part of the voyage was intolerable. The

thermometer ranged from 82° to 84° at night, and 86° to 90° by day—a lower temperature than we frequently feel in the North, but attended by an enervating languor such as I have never before experienced.

After a week of this kind of existence we passed the sun's latitude, and made the mountains of Mexico. The next night we came to at the entrance of the harbor of Acapulco, while the ship's boat went to the city, some two miles distant. . . .

On the third morning from Acapulco, we saw the lofty group of mountains bounding the roadstead of San Blas on the East. The islands called Las Tres Marias were visible, ten miles distant, on our left. . . . [At San Blas we] were soon . . . visited by the Alcalde, who after exchanging the ordinary courtesies informed us there were plenty of provisions on shore, and departed, saying nothing of quarantine. . . . We landed on a beach, ankle-deep in sand and covered with mustangs, mules and donkeys, with a sprinkling of natives. Our passengers were busy all over the village, lugging strings of bananas and plantains, buying cool water-jars of porous earth, gathering limes and oranges from the trees, or regaling themselves at the fondas with fresh spring-water, (not always unmixed,) tortillas and fried pork. . . .

In company with some friends, I set out for the old Presidio on the cliff. The road led through swampy forests till we reached the foot of the ascent. . . . Up we went, scrambling over loose stones, between banana thickets and flowering shrubs, till we gained a rocky spur near the summit. Here the view to the north, toward Mazatlan, was very fine. Across the marshy plain many leagues in breadth, bordering the sea, we traced the Rio Grande of the West by the groves of sycamore on its banks; beyond it another lateral chain of the Sierra Madre rose to the clouds. Turning again, we entered a deserted court-yard, fronted by the fort, which had a covered gallery on the inside. The walls were broken down, the deep wells in the rock choked up and the stone pillars and gateways overrun with rank vines. From the parapet, the whole roadstead of San Blas lay at our feet, and our steamer, two miles off, seemed to be within hail.

This plaza opened on another and larger one, completely covered with tall weeds, among which the native pigs rooted and meditated by turns. A fine old church, at the farther end, was going to

ruin, and the useless bells still hung in its towers. Some of the houses were inhabited, and we procured from the natives fresh water and delicious bananas. The aspect of the whole place, picturesque in its desolation, impressed me more than anything on the journey, except the church of San Felipe, at Panama.

... Few ports present a more picturesque appearance from the sea than Mazatlan. The harbor, or roadstead, open on the west to the unbroken swells of the Pacific, is protected on the north and south by what were once mountain promontories, now split into parallel chains of islands, separated by narrow channels of sea. Their sides are scarred with crags, terminating toward the sea in precipices of dark red rock, with deep caverns at the base, into which the surf continually dashes. On approaching the road, these islands open one beyond the other, like a succession of shifting views, the last revealing the white walls of Mazatlan, rising gradually from the water, with a beautiful back-ground of dim blue mountains. The sky was of a dazzling purity, and the whole scene had that same clearness of outline and enchanting harmony of color which give the landscapes of Italy their greatest charm. As we ran westward on the Tropic of Cancer across the mouth of the Gulf, nothing could exceed the purity of the atmosphere.

Chapter V: The Coast of California

"There is California!" was the cry next morning at sunrise. "Where?" "Off the starboard bow." I rose on my bunk in one of the deck state-rooms, and looking out of the window, watched the purple mountains of the Peninsula, as they rose in the fresh, inspiring air. We were opposite its southern extremity, and I scanned the brown and sterile coast with a glass, searching for anything like vegetation. The whole country appeared to be a mass of nearly naked rock, nourishing only a few cacti and some stunted shrubs. At the extreme end of the Peninsula the valley of San José opens inland between two ranges of lofty granite mountains. Its beautiful green level, several miles in width, stretched back as far as the eye could reach. . . . The scenery around it corresponded strikingly with descriptions of Syria and Palestine. The bare, yellow crags glowed

in the sun with dazzling intensity, and a chain of splintered peaks in the distance wore the softest shade of violet. In spite of the forbidding appearance of the coast, a more peculiar and interesting picture than it gave can hardly be found on the Pacific. Cape San Lucas, which we passed toward evening, is a bold bluff of native granite, broken into isolated rocks at its points, which present the appearance of three distinct and perfectly-formed pyramids. The white, glistening rock is pierced at its base by hollow caverns and arches, some of which are fifteen or twenty feet high, giving glimpses of the ocean beyond. . . .

Two mornings after [the 12th of August], I saw the sun rise behind the mountains back of San Diego. Point Loma, at the extremity of the bay, came in sight on the left and in less than an hour we were at anchor before the hide-houses at the landing place. The southern shore of the bay is low and sandy; from the bluff heights on the opposite side a narrow strip of shingly beach makes out into the sea, like a natural breakwater, leaving an entrance not more than three hundred yards broad. The harbor is the finest on the Pacific, with the exception of Acapulco, and capable of easy and complete defense. The old hide-houses are built at the foot of the hills just inside the bay, and a fine road along the shore leads to the town of San Diego, which is situated on a plain, three miles distant and barely visible from the anchorage. Above the houses, on a little eminence, several tents were planted, and a short distance further were several recent graves, surrounding by paling. A number of people were clustered on the beach, and boats laden with passengers and freight, instantly put off to us. In a few minutes after our gun was fired, we could see horsemen coming down from San Diego at full gallop, one of whom carried behind him a lady in graceful riding costume. In the first boat were Colonel Weller, U.S. Boundary Commissioner, and Major Hill, of the Army. Then followed a number of men, lank and brown "as is the ribbed sea-sand"—men with long hair and beards, and faces from which the rigid expression of suffering was scarcely relaxed. They were the first of the overland emigrants by the Gila route, who had reached San Diego a few days before. Their clothes were in tatters, their boots, in many cases, replaced by moccasins, and, except their rifles and some small

packages rolled in deerskin, they had nothing left of the abundant stores with which they left home.

We hove anchor in half an hour, and again rounded Point Loma, our number increased by more than fifty passengers. . . . Taking them as the average experience of the thirty thousand emigrants who last year crossed the Plains, this California Crusade will more than equal the great military expeditions of the Middle Ages in magnitude, peril and adventure. The amount of suffering which must have been endured in the savage mountain passes and herbless deserts of the interior, cannot be told in words. . . .

At last the voyage is drawing to a close. Fifty-one days have elapsed since leaving New York, in which time we have, in a manner, coasted both sides of the North-American Continent, from the parallel of 40°N. to its termination, within a few degrees of the Equator, over seas once ploughed by the keels of Columbus and Balboa, of Grijalva and Sebastian Viscaín. All is excitement on board; the Captain has just taken his noon observation. We are running along the shore, within six or eight miles' distance; the hills are bare and sandy, but loom up finely through the deep blue haze. . . .

An hour later; we are in front of the entrance to San Francisco Bay. The mountains on the northern side are 3,000 feet in high, and come boldly down to the sea. As the view opens through the splendid strait, three or four miles in width, the island rock of Alcatraz appears, gleaming white in the distance. An inward-bound ship follows close on our wake, urged on by wind and tide. There is a small fort perched among the trees on our right, where the strait is narrowest, and a glance at the formation of the hills shows that this pass might be made impregnable as Gibraltar. The town is still concealed behind the promontory around which the Bay turns to the southward, but between Alcatraz and the island of Yerba Buena, now coming into sight, I can see vessels at anchor. High through the vapor in front, and thirty miles distant, rises the peak of Monte Diablo, which overlooks everything between the Sierra Nevada and the Ocean. On our left opens the bight of Sausalito, where the U.S. propeller *Massachusetts* and several other vessels are at anchor.

At last we are through the Golden Gate—fit name for such a mag-

nificent portal to the commerce of the Pacific! Yerba Buena Island is in front; southward and westward opens the renowned harbor, crowded with the shipping of the world, mast behind mast and vessel behind vessel, the flags of all nations fluttering in the breeze! Around the curving shore of the Bay and upon the sides of three hills which rise steeply from the water, the middle one receding so as to form a bold amphitheatre, the town is planted and seems scarcely yet to have taken root, for tents, canvas, plank, mud and adobe houses are mingled together with the least apparent attempt at order and durability. But I am not yet on shore. The gun of the *Panama* has just announced our arrival to the people on land. We glide on with the tide, past the U.S. ship *Ohio* and opposite the main landing, outside of the forest of masts. A dozen boats are creeping out to us over the water; the signal is given—the anchor drops—our voyage is over.

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