

# **From the Kennebec to California; reminiscences of a California pioneer. Selected and arranged by Lucy Ellis Riddell. Introduction by Robert Glass Cleland. Edited by Laurence R. Cook**

WESTERN HERITAGE SERIES I FROM THE KENNEBEC TO CALIFORNIA

*from the KENNEBEC to CALIFORNIA Reminiscences of a California Pioneer by HENRY HIRAM ELLIS 1829-1909 Selected and arranged by Lucy Ellis Riddell Introduction by Robert Glass Cleland Edited by Laurence R. Cook*

Warren F. Lewis, *Publisher Los Angeles, California*

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY MURRAY & GEE, INC.

## **Preface**

Some 40 years after the passing of my father, looking over the contents of an old camphor chest, a collection of old newspapers, books, magazines, family papers, letters and clippings of a lifetime, I found the beginning of a manuscript of his life.

Jotted down on the backs of letters, scrap paper in account books, diaries and envelopes were notes of much more of his early life, with newspaper clippings of his public life and services in San Francisco.

Among this unorganized material I came across these prophetic words: “Old age and waning powers, which I fully realize, make me know that I cannot hope to write my simple story and make it interesting to my children; yet 'tis a duty I owe to those who will come after me to encourage them to fix their eyes on noble aspirations and to believe in the family motto, *Nil Desperandum.*”

And so I take up the task and joy of piecing together some of the unusually interesting facts and experiences found on these fading bits of paper.

*Yes, Father, before more weight of years falls upon me, I will endeavor to carry on and make of these many sketches the “Story” you wanted to leave to your children.*

I dedicate it to them and their progeny, hoping some will find in this tale of a self-made man, a pioneer and patriot, inspiration to attain, by the principles and ambition which guided his life, something above mediocracy.

LUCY ELLIS RIDDELL *Altadena, California*

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## **Introduction**

Born in Waterville, Maine, June 15, 1829, Henry Hiram Ellis arrived in California in July, 1849, shortly after his 20th birthday.

Thereafter he was, in succession, a gold miner, owner and captain of a Sacramento River boat, owner and captain of a Pacific trading vessel, laborer at odd jobs in San Francisco, policeman, captain of detectives, Chief of Police, merchant, and U.S. Consul at Turks Island in the West Indies.

He was an active participant in the times of the Vigilante Committees of '51 and '56, and, as Chief of Police, had an important role in the Safety Committee of '76.

During the Civil war he served as U.S. Marshal of Northern and Southern California.

In January, 1849, Ellis and his father, Charles Henry Ellis, left Boston for California as passengers on the sailing vessel, *North Bend*.

They arrived in San Francisco separately, however, under circumstances related in this book and also in the diary of the elder Ellis, which appears in the book, "*California Gold Rush Voyages, 1848-1849*" (Huntington Library, 1954).

His father was born on Cape Cod (Ellisville) Massachusetts, April 9, 1806, a descendant of Lieut. John Ellis who came from Plymouth, England, in 1630 to the Colony in Massachusetts. Though born of a seafaring race, C. H. Ellis had no love for the sea and after a few voyages, became a merchant and lumberman. None too successful as a business man, he went down in the great panic of 1837 and never recovered from the blow and thereafter his family saw him infrequently and received but little support from him.

Henry H. Ellis' boyhood days were spent in poverty, his mother struggling to support herself and her two sons. How he overcame all difficulties and made a place for himself in the affairs of men, will be told in the following pages.

The publisher assumes (on Mrs. Riddell's assurance) that the material in this book is original and accurate, but recognizes that the unorthodox method of its preparation may have offered opportunities for inaccuracies to slip in. If such there be, the publisher will not be held responsible.

ROBERT GLASS CLELAND *San Marino, California*

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FROM THE KENNEBEC TO CALIFORNIA

## Chapter 1

In December, 1848, believing that the confinement of city life was impairing my constitution, I permitted my yearning for the sea to return. Nineteen years old, I had neared the top in foundry work and had fulfilled my promise to my mother to give up the sea for awhile and work ashore.

At that fateful moment my father came to Boston to see me and announced that he had taken passage for California in January in the brig *North Bend*. At once I decided that I too would seek my fortune in the west. Having become engaged to Elizabeth Capen of Boston, I was eager to establish myself financially, and this seemed a providential opportunity.

It was not so much that I believed all the wonderful stories that were told of the gold discovery; rather it was that the writers described California as a country of romance and great opportunity for young men. If it did not prove to be just that, there was Mexico next door, where there must be employment for skilled mechanics. And if that failed, was I not a sailor, able to land on my feet wherever I should fall?

So I said to Father, "I'll go with you."

But Father said "No," because I was doing well where I was, and there, he felt, I should remain, taking care of Mother. I disregarded his advice, which was also a command. My resolve had been taken, my years of probation were long past. The very next morning I presented myself to the captain and agent of the *North Bend* as an applicant for the position of second mate, which I had learned was not filled.

My bleached face and my shore togs were not the best recommendations to present to a shipping office, but I was put through a thorough nautical examination and was questioned about my experience and the ships on which I had sailed. <sup>4</sup> Though I was confident of my ability, my appearance discredited all the evidence I could give that I was a sailor. I was told to call the next

day, and when I did I was accepted, at wages of \$18 per month, to be paid in San Francisco, after the cargo was landed.

Immediately after the agreement had been concluded, my father walked into the office. Amazed at what had taken place, and seeing that I was determined to go, he proposed, after a conference with the captain, to pay for my passage, if a vacancy in the passenger list should occur.

Luckily, in a few days, by unexpected turn of fortune, there was a cancellation.

Any chance of getting into the cabin by other than the traditional sailor's route had never occurred to me. To me the captain's cabin had always been a sanctum sanctorum. Passengers I had looked upon as favored mortals, to be envied. And now here was I, ready to enter the cabin as a gentleman passenger instead of as a member of the crew, cap in hand.

Cost of the passage was \$600. Later I paid this debt, with interest, to a creditor of Father's.

When we sailed, on January 16, 1849, I was the proudest and happiest man in all that ship's company.

The crew consisted of ordinary seamen only, plus boys. During the voyage the crew's inability became evident when we encountered heavy weather. It became necessary to strengthen the watches by using some of the passengers who could do seamen's duty, and of these, of course, I was one. The duties were light until we reached the Straits of Magellan, through which the captain had unwisely determined to pass. Struggling through the Straits in a square-rigged vessel in the teeth of a constant gale was no easy task. Often the sea was blown almost smooth; there the ocean breathes deeply. To take advantage of the tides, we were obliged to work night and day, letting go, heaving up anchor. Working ship was the order of the hour.

I had had an experience off La Plata which convinced me I was earning my passage. At night, while reefing the foresail, I lost my hold and my balance through the sudden filling of 5 the sail. Finding

myself about to fall, I made a spring sidewise and was fortunate enough to catch the back stay, saving myself from certain death.

After three weeks of hard work we reached Port Famine, a convict settlement, the “Van Diemen's Land” of the Government of Chile, situated on the north shore of the Strait, at the southern extremity of Patagonia.

Of the inhabitants, the greater portion were the worst class of convicts, though there was also a little community of free people, mysteriously gathered from all nations and climes. The colony was under the despotic sway of a governor, who had a company of soldiers and numerous petty officers and under-strappers. They were a tough lot of citizens, little better in appearance than the prisoners they guarded. What induced them to stay and how they lived were beyond the ken of man.

During the delay caused by a search ashore for food and water, the volunteer crew members enjoyed their liberty. To even the score, the rest of the passengers brought the supplies aboard.

At ebb tide we would land, to hunt and explore. One day we landed in a little bight, between rocky headlands, to intercept a number of sea loins, some brown and some white, that were basking in the sun on an elevation near the shore. The entrance was narrow, only about 20 feet across. Landing and firing into them was the signal for the animals to head for deep water. Our presence did not hinder them in the least. The frightened beasts, with loud roars, plunged pell-mell into the water, overthrowing several of us. Bruised and half drowned, we made safety in a wild scramble.

Another time, four of us landed and made our way into the interior, where we discovered a herd of llamas feeding on pampas grass. In the excitement of the chase, and because of the grass, which was higher than our heads, I became separated from my companions. Not until sundown did I think of returning. Then, in much trepidation, I made my way rapidly to the coast, realizing that time and tide wait for no man. Perhaps the brig had sailed!

I directed my course to intercept her, and sure enough, as I climbed a ridge of hills overlooking the Straits, miles from 6 where we had landed, lo, there was the brig under full sail passing by! Parties

had landed, scoured the country, fired guns, and spent the afternoon looking for me. Now they made me out, backed the foretops'l, lowered a boat, and sent the mate, Fieldstead, to take me off.

When I landed on deck, Captain Higgins blessed me in true nautical style. Father, however, was delighted, and I soon forgot my recent peril.

It was at Port Famine that I determined not to continue in the *North Bend*. My gorgeous dream of a passenger's heaven had been dissipated. If I was to work my passage after it had been paid for, I could do better, I decided, and reach my destination more quickly, aboard some fore-and-after-rigged vessel which could more easily make its passage through the Strait—and most of them did so.

So, quietly, I made my arrangements with a young Englishman (George) of the Governor's household, who agreed to keep me. Meantime our only two able seamen—a New Hampshire man, Griffith, and a Portuguese called Joe, a Western Islander—had provisioned a boat and left for parts unknown in the direction of the Atlantic. They were never heard from again. It was supposed that they fell victims to the Tierra del Fuegians, who were more than suspected of being cannibals.

When the day of sailing arrived, George was alongside with a boat. When the anchor was weighed and the brig was paying off, I jumped under her jib to the gangway ladder, cried out to Father, “Good-bye, I'll meet you in California,” and to Captain Higgins, “Good-bye, sir, I'll beat you to San Francisco,” and leaped into the boat.

Paying no attention to the captain's urgent command, “Come back,” I grabbed the second pair of oars, and my new friend and I soon covered the distance to the shore.

My father had been speechless, for though I had confided to him my intention, if opportunity offered, to desert the brig for a faster sailing ship, he apparently did not think that the opportunity would offer, or, if it did, that I would really take such a chance. I interpreted as consent his slight interest in the matter.

I have before me Father's diary of the entire voyage.\* I should like to quote from the diary at length, but will say only that the *North Bend* was nearly lost off Cape Horn, where she was driven by bad weather. Finally, in July, 1849, she arrived in the harbor of San Francisco. After I left her at Port Famine, I never saw her again, though some of her passengers and crew met in reunion in after years.

In 1954 this diary was published by the Huntington Library in the volume, *California Gold Rush Voyages, 1848-1849*.

My new friend, George, the Englishman, was interpreter and major-domo to the Patagonian Governor. Sharing his room and bed of skins, I was well satisfied with the change from the crowded cabin and miserable fare of the brig to large quarters, fresh guanaco meat (llama), and vegetables. A few days were pleasantly passed in hunting guanacos and in fishing.

On Sunday evening everybody attended a fandango, and a motley gathering it was: women of every shade, type and color, in whose veins flowed the blood of the ancient Incas, the Moors of Granada, the Castilians from Andalusia, the sturdy Breton, the lively Frank, the persistent German, and the omni-present American. As for the men, they were shipwrecked and runaway sailors, ticket-of-leave men, convicts who had served their time, and a number of no particular calling. No doubt the majority had left their country for the country's good.

Time passed pleasantly. I had not yet wearied of the strange, novel life when one pleasant April morning a convict came running from the beach shouting, "Um pile hata! Um pile hata!" (A schooner! A schooner!). All hands rushed for the embarcadero, where a boatload of people had just landed from the most beautiful specimen of seagoing architecture I had ever seen: the New York pilot boat, *William G. Hackstaff*. I went to the beach to meet the people, and an astounding experience befell me.

Let me go back two and a half years to the fall of 1846, to Wharf No. 7 in Boston, during my unsuccessful endeavor, at 17 years of age, to ship on a deep sea vessel. It was a dreary rainy evening. My old schoolfellow and shipmate, Neal Nye, was getting his dunnage aboard the new

ship *Boston*, 8 bound for Galveston, as one of her crew. I was to follow as soon as I was paid off and an opportunity came to sail that way. We were to meet in Galveston or New Orleans and put into execution a half-formed, wild scheme of privateering, to make reprisals upon the enemies of commerce. War with Mexico had just been declared, and we expected to make the most of it.

But man proposes, God disposes. In six weeks I was on the Mediterranean, and Neal was with Zachary Taylor on the Rio Grande, doing battle for his country. He saw the war through, then returned home to die, afflicted with that terrible disease, dysentery, which laid low more of our brave countrymen than did Mexican bullets. I was told he had died, and mourned his loss keenly.

Then on this bright morning, at the end of the world, in a convict settlement in Patagonia, Neal and I miraculously again stood face to face!

“Harry Ellis!”

“Neal Nye!”

The exclamations came forth simultaneously. A warm handclasp helped dispel the incredulity on our faces, and an hour's chat cleared all mystery.

“How in the name of fate did you get here?”

“When were you resurrected?”

Similar questions came thick and fast. More important was the question, how could I secure passage on board the *Hackstaff*? But that came after Neal and I had overhauled our logs together and retold our emotions when each thought the other dead, for Neal had not heard of me since we parted at the sailing of the *Boston*, and he assumed I had gone down to Davy Jones' locker long ago. I had been equally certain that he had laid down his moorings in that port from which neither seamen nor landsmen return to give us bearings or distance. But here we were—two dead men!

Would Captain White give me passage? I offered him the watch that had been given me by my father. It was the only valuable possession I had, and I offered it with promises of payment in full for passage when I should gather my share of wealth from the rivers and mountains of California. Neal had offered to share his berth with me, and now I was as eager to get away from the miserable settlement as previously I had been to get ashore. Finally, when I proposed to work my passage, the offer found favor with the practical skipper. I was accepted.

The crew of the *Hackstaff* consisted of Captain White, a New York pilot (Captain Sturgess), the navigator (George Johnson), the mate (Daniel Lane), seamen, the cook, and myself. In addition there were nine passengers, including the captain's son Cornelius, a Captain Simmons, my friend Neal Nye, Geroge Rogers (a sick man), and several others. All hands except the cook lived in the cabin.

The schooner was not only beautiful to look upon, but was a fast, superior vessel. She would lie within three points of the wind and outsail anything we fell in with. Beating through the Strait, Captain White handled her to perfection, but in blue water he was as helpless as a child. Knowing nothing of navigation, he was miserable when out of sight of land.

Captain Sturgess had joined the vessel at Rio de Janeiro, taking the place of a man named Whittlesey, who, off Cape St. Roque, was washed off the bowsprit and drowned. Sturgess, an old shipmaster who had grown grey in the merchant service, had navigated all seas and visited all lands. He was a genial, cautious gentleman.

Captain Simmons, who also had joined at Rio, was an old sea dog. Where he first had seen light he kept a profound mystery. According to his own testimony, and that of many scars and wounds on his body, he had led a lawless life. He had been engaged in the wars between Uruguay and her neighbors, Argentina and Brazil. For years he had taken part in the slave trade between Brazil and the African coast. Rumors of piracy were whispered. To Captain White he became an object of suspicion.

Lest Simmons try to stir up mutiny aboard, Captain White instructed his son to dog his footsteps. Then White managed to get possession of all the firearms belonging to the passengers and crew. Nye and Lane, the mischief-makers, kept the worthy captain in a constant state of alarm, repeating imaginary bloody deeds that Simmons was supposed to have 10 committed—among which throat-cutting and walking the plank were conspicuous. Plots were rumored to be on foot to take the vessel and compel all who would not join the mutiny to walk the plank, as in the buccaneering days of Morgan, Dampier and company.

Poor Simmons, innocent of any such intentions, and at a loss to account for the behavior of the captain and crew, was, like the rest of us, only too eager to reach California and repair his broken fortune. A few months before he had joined the *Hackstaff*, his vessel and cargo of ebony had been captured within sight of Pernambuco by a British cruiser. He and his crew had escaped to land with what they had on, nothing more.

These practical jokes worked on the captain's timidity to such an extent that he put in to the Galapagos Islands under pretense of procuring fresh water and provisions. As soon as the anchor was down he called a consultation with a trusted few, revealing his intention to land and then abandon old Simmons, leaving him to his fate.

It took much argument and some threats to make Captain White relinquish his plot to force Simmons to play the role of a second Robinson Crusoe. The islands were not inhabited. When all hands pledged themselves to be responsible for the good conduct of Simmons, White finally gave in. All went well thereafter to the end of the voyage.

While at the Galapagos Islands we captured a large green turtle in shallow water and a dozen terrapin from the high table land. The terrapin were plentiful, some of them three feet across and four or five feet long. They are a land turtle and require no fresh water.

Many whalers were cruising for sperm whales in that latitude; yet every vessel that sighted us squared her yards and crowded all sail, intent upon giving us a wide berth. We were angered

and mortified. Captain White believed with good reason that evidently our craft was an object of suspicion to the blubber hunters. Long and low in the water, with flush decks, raking masts, little or no sheer, and a straight bowsprit, she indeed looked forbidding enough to justify the fear evidently entertained by the “lime-juicers” that she was a pirate.

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In bad weather, on the wind with a head sea, she was a diving bell, her deck under water most of the time. In very heavy weather the jib had to be triced up the forestay to prevent its being washed away. This business, a tough job, usually fell to me, as an extra hand working his way on ship. To do the job it was necessary to go out to the end of the bowsprit, outside the stay, with a bunch of spun yarns, and, beginning at the head of the sail, to gather and knot it together between each hoop. As work progressed, the sail was triced up the stay.

Meantime the vessel would plunge into the sea, burying me at times fathoms deep—or so it seemed. Claspings the bowsprit with my legs, clinging tightly with my arms to the stay, I would hold my breath until she showed her nose above water again. Coming to the surface was most trying of all, for as she brought her nose upward, the weight of water, pressing my body against the stay, almost squeezed the life out of me. It was under just such circumstances that poor Whittlesey had been lost off Cape St. Roque, as above stated.

Fortunately this operation was required only four or five times and, fortunately, too, I had recovered from an illness which came near sending me to Davy Jones' locker shortly after leaving the strait. Simmons and I succumbed to a common ailment aboard ship, where fresh vegetables and fruit were not served the crew, and, as a consequence, constipation is suffered to the extent that the bowels do not function at all.

Our navigator, Captain Sturgess, had a hard time with the captain, who was determined to make the land and run up the coast. No argument the old seaman used made any impression on the captain, a harbor pilot, who, as I have already said, was miserable when out of sight of land. Upon various pretexts of the navigator, and under loud mutterings of the passengers, the vessel held her westing

until we reached the latitude of Point Conception. From there we made a free wind of it and then a dead beat to San Francisco Bay, which we entered on June 25, 1849.

Going up the harbor, the captain, wishing to make a display, set every stitch of canvas he could crowd on her, although the wind was dead aft. The result was that, rounding Clark's Point, and hauling our wind, we found ourselves 12 suddenly in the midst of a great fleet of vessels of every kind, size, and nation.

We were obliged to let everything go by the run, and by the sudden jibing of the foreboom I was struck on the head and knocked senseless into the waist, with half my body hanging over the rail. Had it not been for the prompt aid of Lane, I would have finished my career then and there. My quick recovery was the subject of good natured raillery from the ship's company. The assured me they had no fears for my safety, for "one born to be hanged will never be drowned."

I might say here that the *Hackstaff* met with a most in- glorious end. Captain White took her to Shoal Water Bay, Oregon, where she anchored. The ebb tide left her aground. Several canoes manned by Indians paddled out to her, probably out of mere curiosity, but Captain White and his son, panic-stricken, took to their boat and pulled away. Finding her abandoned, the Indians plundered and burned her to the water's edge. That was the end of "the finest specimen of marine architecture" of her class to enter San Francisco Bay to that date. Captain White and his son became Columbia River pilots. Both were lost on the bar when their boat capsized.

Thirty years later, 11 members of the passengers and crew of the *Hackstaff* met, as we had from time to time. Now I have outlived them all. Several of the crew met violent deaths. One was washed overboard near the Ladrone Islands. Another, his brother, was knocked overboard and drowned in Suisun Bay. A third is buried in the Convent Burial Ground, just below our home in San Francisco. A fourth reached his home in Connecticut to lie with his ancestors.

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## Chapter 2

THOUGH I HAD sailed for California with little faith in the gold stories, when I landed my skepticism turned to amazement. Strange sights greeted me everywhere. Already gathered here were representatives from many nations. For the most part they lived in adobe houses, shacks and tents, from the waterfront to Telegraph Hill (then known as Loma Alta), over the sand dunes west for several blocks, and south in a sort of valley to California Street.

Vivid impressions remain: Goods piled up on the streets and sold there . . . everywhere piles of gold dust, from fine scale river gold to coarse nuggets mixed with quartz . . . everywhere gambling, coins of every kind piled on gaming tables . . . men with their buckskin bags bursting with the yellow dust . . . silver selling at 16 ounces to one of gold . . . silver of any kind, from the “tin” of Peru to the English shilling . . . a rupee at 50 cents . . . money changers of the streets thriving and waxing fat . . . the dispenser of liquids, taking a pinch of flake gold out of the miner's bag for every drink . . . traders weighing out fine gold in grains or pennyweight . . . paying \$5 fare to go to, or come from, a vessel . . . mechanics getting \$20 a day . . . chickens selling at \$3 apiece, eggs at 50 cents apiece, drinks at a dollar.

The harbor was full of abandoned vessels, perhaps 900 of them. Masters and crews had gone to the mines. In some cases masters were left with their ships on their hands. Hundreds of these abandoned ships, such as the *Mada Kay*, and old slaver, rotted and sank in the bay, and today (1904) many hulls lie under the lower streets of the city, having been moored at the wharves and abandoned.

Seventeen months earlier, when some shiny flakes, tied up in a dirty rag—flakes which “might be gold”—were brought 14 into Sutter's Fort, an army was started on its way to California. Sailing from every port, crawling over desert and mountains in prairie schooners, Americans, Mexicans, Russians, Hawaiians, Chinese, Australians and many others, with their strange tongues, costumes and countenances, met in this melting pot in a confusion indescribable.

In 1848 Yerba Buena had a population of about 50 people; in 1849, when the gold rush was on, it was estimated at 20,000, coming and going. Even navy and army posts were deserted, and

the population of San Francisco was correspondingly increased. It was predominantly a male population, living turbulently under the rule of a disorganized army.

(I quote Major Roger Butterfield. Incidentally, when I brought my bride to San Francisco four years later, in 1853, she was fearful to go out on the streets alone, so unusual was the sight of a woman, especially a modest one, in San Francisco.)

And this was Eldorado!

The very next day after we arrived, several of us from the *Hackstaff* took passage for Sacramento on a 15 ton sloop loaded with Chilean flour. The 20 passengers were crowded on the deck, for, as the sloop had been a longboat, she had no cabin.

We made good progress until we reached the slough. There the large trees which overhung the banks literally took the wind out of our sails. Since the sails were of no account in the narrow slough, it took us a week to work our way through. We lived on a stew composed of bacon, flour, beans, fish, birds, and chili peppers, too hot for most of us to stomach.

Captain Simmons was almost eaten alive with mosquitoes, which clouded the slough. So distorted was his face, it lost the semblance of humanity. So badly was he poisoned, he could not protect himself from further attack. I saw him black with the pests. On landing, we had to carry him ashore in a hammock. A few more days on the slough, and the mosquitoes would have been the death of him.

(So bad were the mosquitoes, even boatmen would abandon the river boats for other jobs.)

When Captain Simmons was able to travel, we set out for 15 Lacy's Bar on the North Fork of the American River. While the rest of us walked, the captain rode in a Spanish oxcart as part of the freight. The carretta, for the service of which we paid 20 cents per pound, had solid wooden wheels on wooden axles, which shrieked loudly enough to wake the dead.

After a long trek through valleys and over mountains, we arrived at Lacy's Bar and prepared for our mining operations by making two rockers of tree trunks.

In our mining we met with fair success, never taking out less than one to three ounce per day per man. For a week Lane and I each took out 18 ounces a day.

The first gold I panned out, about half an ounce, I put in a letter and mailed to a certain young lady in Boston. Six months later the treasure, in a dirty, dilapidated, torn envelope, reached its destination. Evidently it had been carried about in the pocket of the man who had undertaken to deliver it. Though the gold lay loose in the folds of the paper, not one scale was missing. That identical gold is preserved today.

It was during this period, on August 18, 1849, that my mother wrote me the following letter:

“My Dear Child: I have at last received a letter from you, although you are at the ends of the earth, as it were. Need I tell you how anxious I have been ever since you left, more especially for six weeks past?

“I heard a long time ago of the *North Bend* being in the Straits of Magellan. Gilman wrote me of seeing the printed news in a paper 20 of July, and where you could be after that I could not tell, unless you were shipwrecked. But your letter has come at last and I received it with rejoicing and thankfulness, as I believe everybody else did, for no sooner did the news come that a letter was in the office from California than men flocked to hear and see who it was from. It was all over town in five minutes.

(She then mentions a number of local people and other letters received from California.)

“Mr. Crosby is on his way to San Francisco in the *Mayflower* from New York. He is hired by William and Daniel Moors of Waterville to run a steamboat up the Sacramento River, and they carried the boat on board the *Mayflower*. Mr. 16 Crosby is to see to the putting of it together and is to have \$1,000 a year for his services.

“My dear child, I wrote you a letter by him and he said he would try and get it to you. I am thus particular to write you about him because I want you to see him. His advice, you may depend upon, will be very valuable to you. He calculates to be gone from home two years. He made himself well acquainted with that land before he started. Tell him his family were all well the 17 of August and hoping to hear from him as soon as possible.

(After several paragraphs of purely personal interest she continues.)

“Do right and you will reap the reward. It am fully sensible that you will have to undergo some hardships and privations of daily comforts in that new country, however beautiful and rich it may be in gold. I want you to be prudent and not expose your health. What will you do for a house to sleep in, what for a bed to lie on? I am in the dark as to what they do there.

“I think the best constitution will be broken down by exposure to night air. If you have a tent, will it be comfortable for your health? Will it be secure from robbers and all those evils a new country is exposed to? I wish you had let me know you were intending to go there. I could have provided you a good many necessary little things, which I know you forgot in your sudden departure.

“I charge you again about your health. Don't go without your regular meals on any account, no, not if you could get a peck of gold dust while you were eating. Your health is more valuable to you than all the gold in California.

“And again, your morals are next in danger. Be careful you are not led into difficulties by not knowing your associates, not trusting anyone until you have tried and proved them. I think that was your motto.

“I do not blame you for going to California. I know it held out temptation for a young man who has his fortune to make. Still, I wish you had been contented in Boston. It may all prove for the best yet.

“Again I say, write as often as possible and give some 17 description of California, that our editor may have the pleasure of publishing something from the land of gold. You have had my prayers for

your success and still have them. Yes, my child, you shall still have them. Write again. I say write and I will pay the postage with pleasure.\* Describe your country a little.

There were no stamps or postal facilities. Letters were personally carried and delivered. Letters were folded, addressed on blank side of sheet, sealed with wax, and later on amount of postage was marked on the outside.

“Do not work on the Sabbath, my child.”

The 18 ounce finds were beginners' luck and bad for us, for when the finds fell off to three ounces, we were willing to listen to the tale of discovery of “the source of gold,” the famous “Gold Lake.”

Excitement over this supposed find had broken out about the time of our arrival in California. It was generally believed that such a head did exist, the fountain source from which all the gold in California had issued. It was reported that a certain woman, the first white woman to arrive in Sacramento by the mountain route, had the proofs of the existence of such a lake and was willing to divulge that information.

From our company of 30, five of us were selected to interview her. We waited upon her and she showed us two large bags of coarse gold. Remembering the strange sights in the big city, we were ready to swallow her story as literal truth. All of us were rather short in our knowledge of geology. I, the youngest on the bar, not yet 21 years old, was a youthful enthusiast.

Her story was that she and her husband had left the Missouri River with a company of 50 or more. Upon reaching the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the two of them had turned off and had entered a canyon in search of food for their weary animals. Taking turns riding their horses, and leading their three pack mules, they had wandered from one canyon to another. Finally they had thrown away most of their heavy provisions, caching one lot in a lateral canyon and making short rations of the remainder.

One night they had camped in a little valley where there was good feed and water. Then, wandering on as before, they had come to a lake about a mile long and a fourth of a mile 18 wide. On the shore of this lake was an Indian village, the dwellings of which were made of white rock (quartz) full

of free gold. A ledge of this rock jutted out into the lake, and at the base of this ledge the woman asserted they had gathered enough gold to load their animals, throwing away more provisions and giving many of their trappings to the Indians to save weight.

Realizing at last that they had lost all trace of the main party, they had set out across the mountains and after untold hardships had reached Fort Sutter. Her husband had gone on to San Francisco to purchase provisions and to outfit a company to return to the lake, where they expected to gather a few golden millions and then go back east.

She could give only indefinite directions as to the location of the “find,” but she said it was about 30 miles east of Steep Hollow, near the summit. Steep Hollow was a well known spot on the Emigrant Road. Travelers would cut down trees in the mountains and attach them to the after ends of their wagons, to prevent them from ending over while descending the long, steep declivity into the “hollow.”

The woman's story sounded plausible. There was the gold to corroborate it, in such quantities that it must have been gathered some place. Moreover, she was well informed, talked modestly, using good language, and was about 25 years old. If the spot she described could be located, each of us could help himself to whatever gold he wanted and then return home—for no man would wish to remain in this country, where no rain fell for six months!

Thirty of us thereupon formed a company, returned to Sacramento, and purchased a pile of provisions as big as a house, consisting mostly of Chilean flour and peppers, Oregon bacon, Sandwich Island coffee, and saleratus that was weighed ounce for ounce with gold dust. Other purchases included rockers, tools, pots, pans, 30 horses and an equal number of mules, to make up the pack train. All this we piled beneath a grand old oak tree while we made ready for Gold Lake.

Every morning several horses would be missing from the remuda, but the Mexican vaqueros would finally round them up and return them to us for an ounce of gold dust a head. 19 The regularity with which this performance was repeated pinned suspicion on the Mexicans themselves. We organized

a guard and informed the vaqueros that if the animals “stampeded” again, some of the men would be suspended between heaven and earth. We lost no more stock.

We packed the mules and started, but in about 15 minutes some of the packs loosened, others came in contact with trees or with one another, animals stampeded, smashing cradles, ripping open the sacks and strewing the trail with flour, beans, and the rest of our provisions. After a week, this state of affairs ended in a grand row, and the company broke up. The common property was divided, and five of us formed a new group and started for this new “Eldorado.”

We got on well, becoming expert at packing our little train. Packing is an art—and some of our company had never seen a mule before they arrived in California!

When we arrived in Steep Hollow we met returning prospecting parties. They were a miserable, forlorn-looking lot, half starved and used up. Like us they had left “good diggings,” spent all their money, lost half their animals, and thrown away their tools. Now they were returning, sick, ragged and hungry, uttering curses loud and heavy on the woman who was author of the swindle. Three-fourths of these miners were suffering from dysentery, the disease from which thousands of California pioneers died, as the result of poor food, hardship, and exposure incidental to such a life.

It goes without saying that we abandoned our expedition, disillusioned and disheartened; then set about making new plans. To the time of this writing I have been at a loss to understand the woman's motive for circulating her hoax, which was believed because men's heads and judgment were not entirely level and sound. Tall tales had affected them so that her magnificent fabrication of falsehood was swallowed without salt.

We moved our camp east a few miles from the Emigrant Road, and from there made prospecting expeditions to the headwaters of the American and Bear Rivers. Having heard of the rich finds at Foster's Bar on the Yuba, we continued on there, traveling through wilderness where white men had never set foot, crossing streams large and small. We found some gold in all of them, but not in paying quantities.

Because of our ignorance of roadcraft and mountain travel, we made hard work of our travels. Like the King of France, we would march up one side of a mountain, then down the other side, instead of around it, wearing out ourselves and our animals in the process.

One night, after an unusually hard day, I discovered that my pack horse must be abandoned. Several days before, he had been cut by the ironshod rocker of a cradle, and a gash six inches long was infected with maggots. The poor beast seemed to be on his last legs, but I washed and thoroughly cleaned the wound, bound a piece of bacon rind on it with a piece of sacking, and left him in a well watered valley, where there was abundant grass.

He had been a fine animal, and, as we had been companions night and day for weeks, I was much attached to him. When traveling, I did not picket him but gave him his freedom. When he had had his feed he would return to camp and remain near me until he was wanted. One can imagine my sorrow on abandoning him. I hoped, but did not expect, to see him again.

One day, as we were winding around the base of a mountain, shortly after leaving Emigrant Road, the sharp crack of a rifle suddenly broke the stillness. Its echo had hardly died away when another shot ran forth. A ball passed through the cradle and perforated the washpan, which was slung to our pack animal. Nobody was to be seen, nor were there any indications of Indians or whites. Moreover, the Indian trail we were following had apparently not been traveled that year. We were nonplused and have been ever since. Who was the huntsman and what was his motive?

We had another surprise that day, a pleasant one. Toward nightfall, turning into a natural roadway or pass, we were astonished to find fresh wagon tracks. Soon we came upon a camp of seven missionaries, just arrived from their journey across the plains. In search of grass and water for their poor animals, they had strayed with their two wagons into this 21 out-of-the-way place. As we came upon them they were preparing supper, and when they invited us to share it with them, we accepted gratefully. On food from combined stores, prepared by their leader, "The Parson," we made an excellent meal there beside a running brook. That spot, framed by high mountains

that were covered with tall, dark, thickly clothed pines and other evergreens, was one of the most beautiful we saw in all our wanderings. To us weary travelers it was a veritable paradise.

One of the missionaries showed to Claudius Hoag, one of our party, a quantity of coarse gold which had been found in the creek at the head of the valley, but we had traveled a day's journey before Hoag mentioned the fact to the rest of us. He was severely taken to task for his stupidity, and some of the party were ready to turn back, but as we had covered many difficult miles, the majority decided to go on.

We made our way to the forks of the Yuba River and Foster's Bar, prospecting the streams as we went along. As we knew nothing of dry digging, it never occurred to us to look elsewhere than in beds on the bars and banks of waterways.

At the Forks we found a tent store that was kept by a man named Winslow, who lay helpless with a broken leg. His partner, a victim of the scourge, dysentery, lay dead. Our arrival was most welcome, for we buried the body of the one, and as far as possible made the other comfortable. Then, replenishing our haversacks, we resumed our way to Foster's Bar.

There we found a crowd of people who had pre-empted all the ground that looked promising, and as our party had no money with which to buy claims, we started on our return to the Forks and the South Fork of the Yuba.

Another disagreement as to route separated us. Ralph, a German, and I headed one way; the other five another. Endeavoring to follow Indian trails, we went astray. After two days we saw from a high ridge a large river a mile below us, which we believed to be the Yuba. With difficulty we led our horses down the mountain as far as possible, made them fast on a little bench, and continued on foot. Ralph agreed to go 22 down the stream, I up, in search of the Forks or a traveled trail.

When darkness overtook me I retraced my steps to where we had parted and then began the dangerous ascent to the bench. To reach solid ground it was necessary to climb an almost

perpendicular, 100 foot cliff of loose shale. I made it, but with cuts and bruises. Climbing to where the horses were fast, I sat down to await Ralph.

Two hours must have passed, when at last I was overjoyed to hear Ralph's whistle directly beneath the bench. The whistling continued for half an hour while I shouted myself hoarse in answer. At length, hearing no more, I concluded he had fallen from the ledge of rocks and hurled to his death on the boulders below. Never before or since, as the tedious hours dragged their slow length through, have I passed such a night of misery.

I knew that Ralph was the embodiment of stored energy, that difficulty and danger only stimulated him to greater exertion, that to him there was no such word as "fail," and that he had the endurance of an Apache. Yet in my imagination I could see my wonderful companion lying mangled on the rocks. What was I to do with his body and his effects? And how was I to get out of this trackless wilderness alone? Fears, anxiety, and the howling of coyotes tortured me all the night.

At the first streak of dawn I began the descent again. Halting, considerably unnerved, on the little ledge above the cliff, I feared to look down on the horrible picture I had so vividly seen in my mind.

Suddenly a crackling noise broke the stillness. With bated breath, every function of my body becoming eyes and ears, I watched and listened. A short distance down river, a moving object stirred the thick underbrush. Then Ralph appeared!

Up to that moment I had remained comparatively firm, but now his sudden appearance, alive and well, unmanned me. I wept like a child.

The joy of that hour will live with me always. It seemed I had nothing more on earth to ask for. He was alive; my cup of happiness was full. I made a rush for him and in my youthful enthusiasm would have hugged him to my heart. But my 23 friend was made of sterner stuff. Shaking me off, he began cursing energetically and volubly. It was probably the best treatment for me, but, in addition, he had good reason to swear.

“You damn fool, for what a fire you not make already? All night in the river you leave me mit cold to die. Why a fire have you not made?”

I saw my mistake and confessed my stupidity, but the day passed before he forgave me my blunder. In my disturbed emotions I had forgotten that while I could hear his signals, coming from below, he could not hear mine, as I was half a mile above him. Nor had it occurred to me to build a fire.

Having heard nothing from me and seeing no signal fire, he had attempted to cross the river, which was shallow and rapid at that point, to reach fires on the other side which he could see but I could not. He had slipped off the rocks and been carried down stream a quarter of a mile before he was able to gain the shore. Half drowned and fearfully bruised, he had lain down on a flat stone, covered his breast with his blouse and haversack, and shivered through the long night.

My lesson was painfully learned. By evening I was forgiven for “one damn big fire not making,” and having struck a well traveled trail during the day, we soon were back at the Forks.

We found Winslow, the storekeeper, getting about on crutches, with a man to assist in his tent store. Replenishing our haversacks again, we continued on to our rendezvous near Steep Hollow.

There, several days later, we found that our companions had been awaiting us three days. All of us (except Ralph, whom nothing seemed to affect) were thoroughly used up, for want of food and because of the hardships we had undergone. An added annoyance at night was the coyotes—bold pests that howled and barked continually and even tugged at our saddles under our heads.

Next day Ralph was off for Sutter's Fort. I never saw him again, but later I heard he had kept a hotel. It is safe to assume that he did not keep it for long, for such a restless spirit would ever be eager to be off on a new adventure. A 24 born leader, bravest of the brave, he was also gentle as a child.

A few days of rest and food, and we were off again for the South Fork of the Yuba. There we settled on a small series of bars a mile long. So steep was the descent to the river that we could not

get our animals out over the same route, and accomplished it finally only by working them slowly down stream. Meantime the long grass on the river banks furnished them abundance of feed.

In this deep gorge, where the sun shone but a few hours of the day, we mined until late in November. During all that time we did not see another human being, and yet in the mountains above the stream, in a spot where I supposed nobody had ever been, I found in a cleft in a rock a piece of newspaper. It was a Dublin paper, and on it were these lines by Shelley: “How beautiful this night! the balmiest sigh Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear Were discord to the speaking quietude That wraps this moveless scene.” “Heaven's ebon vault, Studded with stars unutterably bright, Through which the moon's unclouded grandeur rolls, Seems like a canopy which love had spread To curtain her sleeping world.”

Evidently someone else had been enchanted with this spot, as was I.

There was a ranch and store, called French Corral, about 15 miles distant, where Lane had left our animals, but we never visited it until we left for good. Since our mining was only moderately successful, when the first rains came we left hastily for French Corral. We had been told that it was dangerous to remain in a canyon during the rainy season, as the river would rise from 20 to 40 feet in a single night—a wall of water which would sweep everything before it.

It was in this location that I made a remarkable find. Some distance upstream from camp, a large rock in the middle of the river had roused my curiosity. I determined to investigate it. One Sunday, a day we always took for rest, I swam out to the rock and found on its far side a broad, flat surface, just above water line, with a round hole about three feet in diameter and about as deep. Such a cavity, called a well-hole, is worn by the action of swirling, eddying water, aided by sand and perhaps stones.

This one was filled with gravel and small cobbles held together by rust. I broke up the particles with my pick head and washed out nearly two ounces of coarse gold, all as rusty as iron. It must have

been deposited in its remarkable hiding place ages before. Because it held great interest for me, I have kept some of it, along with my first clean-up on Lacy's Bar.

When Lane left us at French Corral, he started out to find my old bay, the horse we had abandoned. Strangely enough he did find him, right where we had left him three months before, but now entirely well and fat as a seal. We rejoiced, of course.

At French Corral we were told marvelous tales of rich diggings to be found about Deer Creek and Grass Valley; so we turned our steps that way—and found it to be the identical spot where The Parson had camped in August. But what a transformation! The beautiful vale was changed into a busy, ugly mining camp. Nearly the entire valley had been dug over. Shafts and holes were scattered over its once smooth grass surface. A canvas town had sprung up amid the debris and ruins of Dame Nature.

The spot we had christened Grass Valley was now known as Deer Creek.\* At least 2,000 miners were now at work in the neighborhood. It was one of the richest camps ever known. Millions had been taken out. All the creeks, gulches, and dry watercourses were found to be immensely rich, and the country for miles around had been taken up in claims. We were told that The Parson's party had carried away a fortune, and we were shown holes 50 to 100 feet square where from 50 to 100 pounds of gold had been taken.

And now again as Grass Valley.—L.E.R.

Over this untold wealth we had passed without a suspicion of the precious deposit literally under our feet. We had left the golden bed to tramp weary miles, to toil and slave out of sound of fellow man for an ounce or two a day!

To say we were heartsick, discouraged and bitter at our ill 26 luck, at this opportunity lost, does not convey our feelings. But the most miserable of all was Claudius Hoag, who had seen the gold gathered by The Parson's party, but had not been sufficiently impressed to report it to the rest of us.

Poor fellow! We had not the heart to upbraid him, for his distress was pitiful. A fortune within our grasp, thrown away! We all felt guilty of a crime.

There was much sickness among the miners from the scourge of fever and dysentery, and the fatality rate was high. That and the fact that our little valley was now covered with claims, plus the nearness of the rainy season, made us decide we had had enough, and we headed south for Sacramento.

Soon after leaving Deer Creek we fell in with two teamsters who had erected a large tent. At their invitation to share it for the night, we gladly spread our blankets beneath its shelter, for it was raining heavily. Except for the blue arch of heaven, it was our first covering in months, or since we had left with the mining expedition. About midnight, however, we awoke to find ourselves in about six inches of water, our blankets dripping. We were glad to retreat to the shelter of the oxcart.

Morning revealed that the tent had been set up over a bowl-shaped hollow, and all the water that was shed from the canvas flowed directly into the tent. This was our first and last night under such a shelter.

Arriving at Sacramento, we placed our animals—four horses and three mules—on the little peninsula called Boston, formed by the junction of the Sacramento and American Rivers and the slough. By building a brush fence about 40 rods long, we secured them in good quarters with plenty of feed.

That night we enjoyed the privilege, with 50 others, at a dollar a head, of spreading our blankets on the barroom floor of the United States Hotel. Packed together like sardines, we were insured warmth as an offset to other discomforts.

Dan Lane and I parted company in Sacramento, he to go to New York via Panama on the bark *Brontes*, then lying at Sacramento, to complete his apprenticeship with the New York pilots. As his leave had expired, he resolved to return to 27 something definite after the wild goose hunt in California.

He and I owned seven animals over in “Boston,” and he suggested that I buy his interest for six ounces of gold. I replied that I was done with horses and mules and never cared to see another, that he could have my half to do with as he pleased. He persisted, and the upshot was that he talked me out of the six ounces. Even “Big Bay,” the horse we had abandoned and then rescued, and of which I was very fond, I abandoned again. Hard times make hard decisions.

Meantime, poor Captain Simmons had contracted poison oak to a serious degree. His body swelled so badly that on our return to Sacramento we found him at death's door. Making a bed of boughs and brush in an oxcart, we placed him in it and shipped him to Sutter's Fort for medical treatment.

Michael Fitz Simmons must have been born under an unlucky star. Though I never saw him again, I learned that he prospered for a time in San Francisco, where he bought up all the deserted whaleboats in the bay and then rented them out. Bad luck trailed him, for the first norther of the winter knocked his boats into splinters on the rocks off Clark's Point.

Later he went to Sydney, purchased a cargo of potatoes and returned. On the very day of his arrival home, in an altercation with the ship's surgeon, he was stabbed to the heart and instantly killed. So ended the fantastic career of a colorful old salt.

28

### Chapter 3

THE MORNING FOLLOWING Dan Lane's departure for New York, I purchased the *Gazelle*, a schooner of 160 tons, for \$6,000. As I had only 125 ounces of gold (\$2,000), I was obliged to take two partners, Daniel and Orlando Stoddard, brothers, and they provided most of the remainder. On the deferred payments we were to pay interest at 10 per cent per month. On this ship I would be at home, on “solid ground,” in my element, though the deck floated on water.

We made a trip to San Francisco Bay and returned with a full cargo. We netted \$6,500, and this within three weeks' time—which, in our opinion, was better than mining.

Another thrill at this time was finding, while wading knee-deep in mud on Front Street, Sacramento, an old schoolfellow, Hooper Sheldon. We took him to San Francisco in our boat.

Not all trips in the *Gazelle* were so fortunate. In fact, our experiences discouraged us. It rained every day. Our cabin was drenched, as were our clothes. We worked like galley slaves, night and day, till all of us were suffering from fever and ague. The surprising thing was, not that we were sick, but that we survived the hardships and exposure of that rainy season.

“Stuck on the hogback” was a common experience for those ships plying between San Francisco and Sacramento, for both “windjammers” and steamers carrying mail and the wealth of the mines ran onto the sand bars in that old river.

An experience around Christmas, 1849, and New Year's, 1850, will illustrate. I had taken on a load of wood on the American River, and because of rising water (it rained incessantly) was obliged to drop down off Sacramento, where I came to anchor about sunset. I saw the town adrift and afloat. Some shanties were capsized, floating at angles through the 29 streets. Masses of people were crowded into boats, or were floating on such makeshift rafts as were available, heading for the natural levees along our inland streams.

I took a boat for the shore and had no sooner reached there than I was nearly swamped by desperate people wading through mud and deep water to reach the boat. The river bank was piled with boxes and bales of goods of every description. To add horror to the scene of general misery, half the population were victims of hunger and the ever-present sickness, dysentery, and death was taking a large toll.

Three times I attempted to land, and each time was nearly swamped by the rush of frantic people for the boat. When no more could crowd in, some of them even clung to its sides. I abandoned the idea of landing, upped anchor and drifted away in the darkness from the heart-rending scene. Our decks were overloaded by those who scrambled aboard and by our freight, which covered deck and hold, leaving no accommodations for passengers. Nor were we provisioned for any extras.

Just before daylight, Christmas morning, I drifted broad-side onto an island, covered with tall sycamore trees, that stood at the head of the slough. (No vestige of such an island has been visible for many years.) Our vessel was drawing 12 feet of water, and we were broadside to the tide, which was running fast. Our hold and deck were filled with wood, except for an opening for the man at the wheel, and our small cabin was crowded with passengers with neither food nor bedding. We discharged the deckload of wood, giving some relief to the passengers if not to the vessel

That afternoon the steamer *Senator* from New York, making the trip from San Francisco to Sacramento, while attempting to pass, was borne down upon us by the irresistible tide of the main river. Our jibboom rammed her wheelhouse full length, snapping off at the bowsprit cap, winding her foretopmast stay around the wheel shaft of the *Senator*. The topmast bent like a whipstaff and was carried away at the masthead. It described several circles in the air, passed outside the main rigging and descended end foremost through the companion hatch, remaining upright in the cabin deck. 30 At the moment of the crash, a passenger saved himself from instant death by a jump from the cabin. It was fortunate that no one was injured by the freak accident.

The next day, as if to add insult to injury, the steamship *McKimm* (Captain Farnam of New Orleans), on her first voyage, with passengers for Sacramento, had no sooner poked her nose out of the slough into the main river than the strong tide caught her and bore her down on top of us. She cleared by taking all the stanchions clean from the waist to the knight-head.

The *McKimm* and the *Senator* attempted to pull us off the next day, but, after twice parting the cable, gave it up. The situation was gloomy. Short on grub, long on water, fast on an island! A view from the crosstrees showed the great, angry river bearing down upon us with the wreckage that accompanied such floods: trees, whole shanties, lumber, dead animals, everything that could float. A little to the west was the yawning opening of the old river, and between, a dense thicket of tule grass, covered as far as the eye could see with a seething, roaring waste of water.

After we had discharged most of our cargo, the *Senator* made a final and successful attempt to pull us off. It was then New Year's Day—1850! Two days later we landed at Benicia, the first bit of

terra firma we could reach. There I landed most of my uninvited guests, some 50 or 60 as forlorn-looking wretches as ever walked ashore in a mud bank. Some never survived their experience. One of the passengers, a Mr. Hutchings, who had become a mere bundle of bones, I put on board the *Mary Ellen* in San Francisco Bay. The wood I sold for \$40 a cord.

In later years I met Mr. Hutchings several times and we talked over our experiences on the Sacramento.

At sea there is something sublime in riding out a storm. The cockleshell that man has presumed to thrust between the great forces of nature and himself would seem to be utterly crushed and overwhelmed by the warfare of the elements raging around it. Nevertheless, man and his cockleshell generally manage to pull through. This experience on the river, 31 however, was a battle without any romance, and it left me disillusioned.

Life was adventurous and hard. My last trip to and from Sacramento involved two near-tragedies. Because of the scar-city of seamen, I picked up a crew of "Sydney Ducks," or Australian ticket-of-leave men. At Sacramento they refused to discharge cargo. After giving them due notice, I employed men from the levee at \$12 a day to take their places. The Australians made threats against me. Knowing well what type of men I had to deal with, I settled with them pistol in hand. Later, after we had gotten under way and I was at the wheel, several shots were fired at me from under cover of the wooded banks. The shots missed me and passed through the mainsail. I could not see my assailants, but I knew my late crew were endeavoring to "square the yards" with me.

Not long afterwards, coming down the river, our vessel fouled with a big sycamore. I took an ax up the tree to cut away a large limb. The limb gave way, and down I plunged with it, head foremost, striking the rail of the vessel and falling stunned into the river. After sinking twice, I was fished out and hauled aboard more dead than alive.

Often have I pondered over my escape, convinced that a little cherub sits aloft, watching over poor Jack!

To recall and write of these incidents is pastime now, but then they were grim events indeed. My experience was that of most of the gold seekers. While the few made fortunes, the majority went through tragic experiences similar to my own. The flotsam and jetsam that crowded the cities, having lost the little they brought, were reduced to living by their wits, and not always were the wits good.

Difficulties of freighting on the river, including trouble with boats, men, and the elements, played no small part in my determination to abandon that trade and turn my efforts in another direction. Also, larger, steam-propelled vessels put us windjammers in the background, for steamers were not retarded by adverse tides and winds, although they, too, sometimes failed to clear the hogback in the river. Another factor involved was our miserable health. All of us, as the result of 32 the constant rains, were to some extent ill with fever, ague and dysentery.

I had experienced such rains, floods and mass evacuation in my shipping on the river the winter previous, but being at sea I did not know at that time (1850) that it was here that my father, Charles H. Ellis [See *California Gold Rush Voyages*, Huntington Library Press, 1954], died of cholera at 44 years of age. He and his brother Russel, trading in and out of Humboldt Bay, were caught in that evil tide. Uncle Russel cared for my father and escaped the disease.

On my return to San Francisco another uncle and his son succumbed to it. It took me all day to get through the sand roads to the graveyard and return to Bay State Row. The burial ground on Market Street where the City Hall now stands (1904) was full of water. Uncle Thomas built Bay State Row, but Ellis Street is a better memorial to the Clan of whom there were many who came to California.

I decided to return to the sea, with its fascination and its good returns for one's labor. My years of experience from boy-hood up had taught me that freighting by water was the cheapest kind of transportation and that there was money to be earned as long as there was freight to be moved and as long as supplies were the dominant need in this undeveloped country.

And so I turned my eyes to the trade of the Coast and the Sandwich Islands. Ports in Mexico, on the Gulf of California and in Lower California were readily accessible and offered various products for export which were needed in the Gold Rush days. So after buying the brig *John Dunlop* from Mr. Morris and Lieutenant Blair, I made voyages to Cape St. Lucas, San Jose, Loretta, San Blas, Guyamas, and Acapulco, and longer ones to the Sandwich Islands. I remained in this shipping business till 1854.

My cargoes were varied: Passengers, shipwrecked crews, provisions (from onions and potatoes to flour, spice, coffee and sugar), even cats! I shall tell about the cats later. Off Monterey, on one voyage, I picked up many bags of flour, jettisoned, probably, but good for immediate use. In my own vessel I was most successful in this coast and island trade, 33 but investments with others proved my undoing.

Excerpts from a letter I wrote my mother from San Francisco on October 28, 1850, will tell of other experiences which quickly matured a 21-year-old boy:

“After a voyage of three months, I arrived here yesterday, from Oyster and Markie Islands in the South Pacific, with a cargo of fruit, pigs, poultry and other products too numerous to mention. I wrote to you after my voyage to the Sandwich Islands, but did not inform you of this voyage, thinking it might worry you.

“Yesterday, the day we arrived, was a day of great celebration, marking California's admission into the Union as a state.

[Note—After President Fillmore signed his approval of statehood for California, September 9, 1850, the news did not reach San Francisco for over a month. Signal arms on Telegraph Hill announced the coming of the mail steamship *Oregon*, which fired salutes as she entered the bay. The populace turned out in an uproar. Bonfires were lighted on the hill, Rincon Point and the islands, and cannon roared all day. A grand ball climaxed the celebration.]

“It was as grand an affair as I ever beheld, equally as interesting as any Fourth of July I ever witnessed, but I have not time to give you all the particulars. I refer you to the public journals.

“The day closed mournfully enough, and it was my painful duty to assist saving survivors of a terrible catastrophe.

“About five o'clock in the afternoon, I was standing on the deck of the *Niantic* with some friends, when we were startled by an explosion near us. Cannon had been firing all day and it still kept up. In half a minute came the cry 'A steamer has blown up!' from every quarter. We hastened to the scene of the accident at once, and, oh, horror of horrors, the sight which presented itself baffles description.

“The steamer *Sagamore*, about the size of your Kennebec steamers, crowded with over 150 passengers, was leaving the dock for Stockton when the boilers burst. The boat was splintered to atoms and sank to the bottom, leaving the water dyed with human blood, and dotted with arms, legs, and trunks of 34 bodies. Horrible sight! My companion and I took my boat and assisted in saving survivors, four men and two ladies, all of whom were injured. One man said that he had been blown ten feet in the air; another was blown through the cabin window; many were scalded on faces and exposed parts of the body. It was supposed that 50 were alive and 30 injured.

“Darkness closed over the scene before all was over and the human fragments gathered into barrels. I hope never to behold again such a sight, but am thankful that I was made an instrument to assist the survivors. One man had embarked on the steamer *Mariposa* two days before and she had gone to the bottom, no one knowing how many lives were lost. He tried again on the *Niantic*, and within five minutes he had been hurled through the air to land unharmed on the dock!

“I am sorry to inform you that cholera has made its appearance in our state. There are a few cases in our city, but it can never obtain a strong hold here, because of the strong daily sea breezes.”

During my voyages I met with many interesting and sometimes dangerous experiences. It was in 1851 that I took a party of passengers, including a tough lot of miners 'tween decks, 45 in all,

to Mazatlan. They were mostly Southerners headed for Texas by way of Mexico. Arriving at Mazatlan, we found that cholera was raging. The wheat crop in the State of Sonoma had failed and famine was abroad. In its wake thousands of victims died of the plague.

My passengers were imprudent, indulging in excesses of many kinds. As a result, 17 of them died before the party left the plague-stricken city, and probably more died before they got home. I had an attack myself. While I was confined to my room in the home of Dr. Bevans, to whom I had brought a cargo of drugs, news of the number of dead gathered from the streets, and of the deaths of my passengers, would be brought to me daily. Dr. Bevans was an old mountaineer and trapper who had settled in Mazatlan 25 years before.

Ned Bevans, a nephew of the doctor, was very ill and given up by the doctor, for after the cramps had subsided he collapsed. But after the doctor's aide had poured a bottle of 35 brandy down his throat Ned recovered from the remedy and the disease, and when I last heard of him, in 1876, was still living in Mazatlan.

In my illness I was provided with a nurse girl, Trellisfera Salico by name. Coming in after an errand outside, she was apparently as well as usual, but in half an hour she was rolling on the floor in mortal agony. That same afternoon she was carried out dead.

James Gill, manager of the estate for Dr. Bevans, lived through the plague, only to die of sunstroke while riding horseback from Mazatlan to San Blas.

Practically none of the Mexican ports on the Pacific had harbors. Vessels had to stand off shore in open roadsteads and run small boats ashore with passengers and freight. La Paz was such a port. It was while at anchor there off a small, rockbound cove, awaiting a cargo of onions and other products, that I had a thrilling and fearful experience.

Mr. Campbell, a passenger, rode down with me to the boat landing, where I set the usual signal for the boat, hoisting a flag. It had been our habit to take a swim in the cove while awaiting the boat.

We knew that sharks abounded on the coast, but as none had ever appeared in the cove, I plunged in as usual. Mr. Campbell declined to take a dip.

I swam about until the boat neared the entrance to the cove, when the whim seized me to swim out to meet her. Reaching the entrance, I turned to meet the boat broadside on, when I heard Campbell shout, "Sharks! Sharks!" Then he leaped up and ran for the beach.

I was abeam and two fathoms (12 feet) distant from the boat when Tom Woolwich, later captain of the port, who was steering with a long oar, lifted it and threw it overboard, hoping to distract the sharks' attention from me. One of the oarsmen did the same, while I made three or four long, hard strokes, enabling me to place my hands on the gunnel of the boat. Exerting more than usual strength, I flopped into the boat, just as three huge sharks set the water in a foam and passed under us.

Woolwich sank back in the stern sheets as white as a ghost, terrified and helpless as an infant. I laughed at him as I helped recover the last oar. But when I reached shore, reaction set in. My legs refused to bear me, and it was some time before I recovered from the shock of my narrow escape.

In the same year, 1851, I was lying in the harbor of Acapulco when word was received of the wreck of the *North America*, one of the Vanderbilt Nicaraguan steamship line. I was chartered by Clapp & Co. to go to the rescue of Captain Blethen and his passengers. The ship was reported to be lying about 10° south of Acapulco. This information proved to be wrong, but on the strength of it I sailed nearly to the Gulf of Tehuantepec.

The fact was, the *North America* had gone ashore about 50 miles from the port, and, as the coast tends sharply to the east there, I passed her the first night out. Returning, we found her, but by that time the passengers had gone to Acapulco by shore. I returned to port and fitted my brig for passengers.

On the beach lay an abandoned bark that had been built in and had sailed from Cincinnati, down the Ohio and the Mississippi, through the Gulf of Mexico and around South America. She was the only ship that attempted that route from so far inland, a long passage. After touching at Panama, she was 90 days making Acapulco. As she was not coppered, she had been eaten badly by teredo worms, and of course was leaking badly. Also, she was out of water and provisions. A floating coffin, she had lost a third of her crew and passengers during the voyage.

From this wreck I took mahogany ceiling planks and fitted up berths and water tanks. The water in the tanks became bad and caused some dysentery, but "Dr." Jaby Waters and the medicine chest patched them up, and we lost none of our passengers en voyage to San Francisco. On the other rescue ships there were a number of deaths.

(Jaby Waters was an old schoolmate. He had lost one hand and was ill, so I took him along for his health. The title of "Doctor" was my own idea.)

Ten days out, we were 10° south of Acapulco, and this position becoming known to some of the passengers, they held the usual indignation meeting indulged in by landsmen 37 who have no nautical knowledge, demanding that the vessel be put about and headed for the coast. Obviously such a course would have been fatal, and I told the committee so. They could see only that the vessel was heading south, which was not the direction to San Francisco.

Mutterings, complaints and all but open mutiny went on for several days, when fortunately the wind gradually hauled, and the vessel headed north, bowling along with the trade winds. We ran alongside Long Wharf without letting go anchor and landed every man in good health, only 35 days out from Acapulco. It was an excellent record.

These people had sailed in midwinter, and the dreadful heat of the tropics, the change of diet, the lack of restrictions as to indulgences, and the inadequate exercise had laid them open to the epidemic of cholera that was raging the length of the coast. Though I had a full crew, the consul, Captain Rice, forced me to take two of the shipwrecked crew aboard. One of these men I made

mate. I never received anything from the government for this service, for Thuller and Sanger of the steamship line entered suit against Clapp & Co., my charterers, and won the suit, under a law of the United States providing for the relief of destitute sailors.

The cargo of onions was a bad investment for my charterers, but the cats from Acapulco did better. I sold them at \$1 per animal in rat-ridden San Francisco. The rats in the city had become a menace, not only because they were destroying food, but because they were vicious and had bitten several persons. No doubt they swam ashore, except where hawsers, connecting ship and shore, provided runways.

Bringing produce from the interior of Mexico was difficult. The onions referred to above (from Guadalajara), fruit, flour, beans, dried and smoked meats, sugar, and coffee had to be transported in crates of 100 pounds on the backs of mules over mountain trails from the inland valleys to the coast. There were no roads.

When I, with my 100 words of Spanish, attempted to tell the natives about railroads, saying they were “ships that ran on wheels on the land,” I was discredited and accounted the gringo Munchausen.

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Heat and humidity probably accounted for the losses in some merchandise. Miners' supplies came mostly from South America, because, for a time after Sutter's Fort was abandoned, there was no more manufacturing of machinery and tools in California.

I accepted commissions for freight from any port and for any articles. Bringing oranges from Loretta, I bought wrapping paper from a priest. These papers proved to be church records of births, deaths, and marriages of the district parishioners.

One of my charterers was a Mr. Pierce from Bombay, India, an indigo planter who sold his plantation for 60,000-pounds, and brought \$300,000 to San Francisco. In San Francisco he became

a drunkard and, figuratively speaking, died in the gutter, leaving his widow, one of the most beautiful women I ever saw, entirely dependent on friends.

Since most of my trade was chartered, I ran no risk, but I made more money when I carried my own cargo. On one trip chartered by Clapp & Winslow I took a general cargo from Mazatlan, including some wine and liquor. My steward was a Negro named Paris O'rea. During the voyage he broached an \$18 case of brandy, and followed that with English ale. Of course we found him drunk in his bunk with a dozen empty bottles. For safety's sake we secured him spread-eagle, but he escaped from the brig and swam ashore. A year later, in San Francisco, he was arrested, and my friend Sam Harding, constable, fined him \$100 for the ropes which he had cut to escape.

There was a good deal of smuggling going on, and through some women passengers aboard my ship I became involved in it. The United States and English consuls were very helpful in time of need, as were the captains of port. The Mexican Government was all for getting out of such incidents all the duties and fines that were possible. Baron Forbes & Co. of Tepic and Guadalajara, kings of production in that area, played host to me for two months as a "safety" measure.

In those days, smuggling was considered a just and moral business in Mexico and indeed in all Spanish-American states. <sup>39</sup> There was a saying, "A people who can and won't trade must be made to trade."

Ten years' imprisonment, plus heavy fines, were the penalties imposed on a ship's master for smuggling. The guilty parties, Schendorff, a Hungarian (who had picked up Spanish in a month's time), Campbell and Hogan, disappeared. The latter went into Sonoma, Mexico, in the interior, and was never heard from again. Hogan and the Hungarian were sent to prison in San Francisco. Later, Schendorff, a hot-headed fellow, killed a Chinaman, Hop Ken, in San Francisco. On one occasion I salvaged a cask of Jamaica rum, covered with grass and barnacles, from a derelict off the Mexican coast.

The brig *Fortune* was twice seized with a cargo of flour at San Jose and Mazatlan by English steam warships, but was released at both ports without trouble.

Like everyone else, I found the Sandwich Islands fascinating and the amphibious natives a curiosity. Their water feats, of surf-riding, diving through the great rolling konas and from 100 foot cliffs into the sea, their sailing and rowing in their native dugout canoes with outriggers, were amazing. My boat, swept by a kona onto a coral reef, had her bow stove in. I had it repaired by Campbell of Lahina, the coffee port. Campbell made a fortune there in sugar. Later, in San Francisco, he was kidnaped and held four days. His kidnaper was apprehended and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

While waiting for the repairs on my boat, I lost my watch in 20 fathoms (120 feet) of water. It was recovered by one of the natives.

In 1890 I revisited the Islands with my daughter Lucy and identified old ports and scenes.

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## Chapter 4

I HAD DONE well in my freight and passenger shipping, and now I looked forward to the time when I could return to Boston and claim the girl I left behind me. But I could not follow the sea and leave her meanwhile in the rough, frontier city of San Francisco, with all its hardships. Marriage would mean I must give up the sea. I had attained one ambition: I was master and owner of my vessel. Why not pursue another ambition on shore, where I could have a family life?

So it was, in 1853, that I went on to Boston and married Elizabeth Capen. Shortly after, we sailed for California on a long, hard passage with about 200 other brides and grooms, across the Isthmus via Nicaragua. When at last we arrived in California, I sold my vessel, and with the money made some investments which proved to be unfortunate. One of these was the building of a trading post at Humboldt Bay, from which we operated a pack train to the Trinity mines. My partners were

Captain Miller (who had sailed with me as mate, and whose daughter later married our eldest son, Harry) and Edward Sanger, another friend.

The failure of this enterprise, together with the rascality of another business associate, my partner in the transportation of stone from Monterey for the construction of Fort Point, San Francisco, crippled me financially, and induced me to make assignment to my agents, Mason, Durand & Co. I was left without a dollar, with a wife, and with a baby in the offing.

Though I had seen a competency melt away in a few months' time, my determination and energy were undaunted. Since I had decided to live ashore, I fell back on first principles: manual labor at whatever came to hand. It was not easy. Shore duties proved hard for me after spending all my time aboard ship for five years, and before that having stolen 41 away to sea at every opportunity ever since I was 14 years old.

I worked in a lumber yard and a furniture warehouse. I outfitted vessels. I carried newspapers. I did a little of everything, and my labor was well paid. Three times I lost all I had accumulated, but through it all my wife and I were optimistic. I just worked harder and longer.\*

Mother often spoke of the times when the going was hard and the cupboard pretty bare. "Several times your father picked up gold coins from the street," she told us, "and they were godsend indeed." I do not remember that she mentioned the value of the coins, but probably it was not large. Gold coins were common currency. Silver dollars were unknown, and there was no paper money on the coast for many years. Some of the \$50 gold slugs of the period that found their way east were to many men strong inducements to join the gold-seekers.—  
L.E.R.

In September, 1854, I wrote to my mother:

"On Thursday the 27th we met with an accident. However, fortunately, no damage was done.

"Our house was being lowered to the grade of the street when the underpinning gave way, letting the house fall about eight feet into the street. The house was smashed up, but Lizzie and the baby were not hurt in the slightest degree. Lizzie was upstairs in her chamber, with the baby in her lap,

just ready to put it into its morning bath, when the house fell. Lizzie was not a bit frightened, but took some pains and time to hunt up something to wrap up the baby. And the baby did not even cry.

“We will not lose anything, for the landlord makes our loss good. About \$50, furniture and dishes, all that was broken. We will be settled in three or four days.”

I will add this line written in another letter:

“Lizzie was not only perfectly calm, but on going to the door, she quietly asked, ‘Is anyone hurt?’ The workmen, frightened for her, were speechless with amazement.”

Another incident proved me to be an amphibious creature, not to be drowned. While I was stowing lumber in a scow alongside a large ship in San Francisco Bay, an unusually long board came over the side. As I walked backward, stepping upon a single board, it snapped off and I went down the weather end of the lighter.

As the tide was running a strong ebb, I knew that if I failed to catch the end of the board when I emerged from under the lighter, I should be chilled to death before making 42 the nearest ship's cable to leeward. All this, and more, passed through my mind in the half minute I was under water. I was fortunate enough, however, to catch the lumber and scramble up in time for the next board that came down. No one on board knew anything about my involuntary bath, nor was I any the worse for it.

Another time, in the Bay of Monterey, where I was loading stone for Fort Point, San Francisco, I attempted to land in a heavy surf in a yawl with four oarsmen. I was steering with a long oar. We were caught by an outer roller, and the boat fairly ended over, but without breaching to.

I came to the surface near Scotty, a beachcomber and one of the four oarsmen. I asked him if we should make for the boat or the shore, but got no reply. He was half strangled. Realizing just then that a heavy roller was about to break behind me, I remembered my experiences on coral reefs and was afraid that I would be taken down by the comber and ground up on the bottom. I let myself

down, therefore, and the comber passed over me. When I came out on the other side, I noticed that the distance between Scotty and me had greatly increased. I hailed him again, and he told me to swim for the land.

Around my waist I wore a long Spanish *banda*, or silk sash, six or eight feet long. One end of this sash got adrift and wound itself around my legs, impeding me greatly. Meanwhile, too, I was repeating the process of letting myself down whenever a comber came upon me, and I was rapidly becoming exhausted.

I managed to get clear of the *banda*, my boots, and pants, but even then could make no progress toward the shore, for, though I was a good swimmer, the heavy undertow was taking me out as fast as I could swim in. There I was, held in the outer rollers, exhausting my strength and realizing I could hold out but a short time longer. When the next roller came I knew my only chance was to try keeping afloat instead of submerging, and let the roller push me toward shore. This it did, but with such speed that I was half drowned when I finally got a footing, and when I got on shore I could not stand. Scotty, who had reached shore long before I did, came 43 to my rescue and supported me as I struggled toward solid ground.

I remember how troubled I was because my underdrawers were green instead of white. Then the color faded to black, and I knew no more for the next hour. The other three crewmen were never found.

It may be in order here to indulge briefly in a retrospect of the days of '49 and what followed upon the great tidal wave of the human sea that overflowed this then practically unknown shore of California. I quote in part from an address I gave in 1894 before the Pioneer Society in San Francisco

“California came to us by the strongest of all measures, the fortune of war. After our conquest of Mexico, we paid \$15,000,000 for what belonged to us by the law of nations. In the world's history no parallel case can be found.

“Since the migration of the Children of Israel, there was never such an exodus out of all lands as was seen in the year 1849. Prior to that time, a few whale ships from Nantucket had made voyage to Yerba Buena, or San Francisco. A dozen or two huts and two or three adobe buildings near the bay shore constituted the town. Fifty years later that little hamlet had grown to a city of 350,000 souls, famous the world over.

“Marshall's discovery of gold set the world ablaze. Ships from every port in the world poured their living flood upon the golden shore of California. At one time more than a thousand ships rode at anchor in our grand bay. Very few could get away, owing to the crews' leaving for the ‘diggings.’ Many of the officers also took French leave. Many vessels were quite abandoned and many never left port. Some were hauled upon the mud flats and converted into storeships, lodging houses, saloons, etc., as for example the *Apollo*, the *Tamaroo*, the *Niantic*, the *Susan Drew*, and the *Euphemia* (later the prison brig, *Oporto* ).

“Later on, many vessels could be seen surrounded by streets, filled in by leveling the sand hills. Never before was seen the spectacle of ships, other than phantom ships, looming up in the heart of a city. Battery Street to this day is paved—not on the surface, but at the bottom—with hulls of vessels.

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“In 1851 I filled my water cask from the first artesian well bored in California, under the stern of the *Niantic*, now the northwest corner of Clay and Sansome Streets. California and Liedersdorff was a landing place, and for a long distance out in the Cove there was built the most unique wharf ever known. It was composed of anchors, chains, machinery, hardware and boxes of every species of merchandise known to the commercial world. A few years ago much trouble was encountered in laying a sewer through this accumulation of lost and abandoned cargoes.

“Thousands of men and one or two hundred women from Mexico, Honolulu and Spanish America, whose presence was anything but elevating to the reckless, cosmopolitan population, could be seen night and day at the general meeting places: gambling saloons. Of homes there were none. Men

lived on hulks of ships, in canvas tents and board shanties; others in their blankets wherever night overtook them.

“Goods were heaped in huge piles on the streets and vacant lots. Currency was coin and gold dust. Everything near the size of our dollars, halves and quarters passed without question. High boots cost from \$30 to \$100 a pair (and everybody wore them). Flour sold at \$40 a barrel; saleratus for equal weight in gold dust. It was economy to buy new shirts instead of washing old ones, as washing cost from \$12 to \$20 for a dozen pieces. Fifty vara water and sand lots increased from \$12 to \$10,000. When buildings were finally erected, rents were enormous. The Parker House opposite the Plaza brought \$120,000, the Miners' Bank \$75,000, the El Dorado \$40,000 per annum.

“The gambling houses were gorgeous in decorations, mirrors and paintings. Fine music was given by skilled musicians. Women acted as cashiers (croupiers) at the gaming tables, and every game of chance known was played. I saw Briant, who ran for Sheriff, stake \$10,000 on the turn of a card. He lost. The tables groaned under the weight of the golden piles heaped upon them.

“The better class of gambling houses were admirably conducted and quiet. Drunken men were thrown out. The choicest of wines and liquors were served with suppers. Low class 45 houses were Hell. Their ‘ropers’ brought in victims to be plundered and often murdered. The Barbary Coast with its bawdy women, drinking, fighting, dueling, and gambling was a primary factor in the organization of the first Vigilance Committee.

“Hundreds of professional men were obliged to turn their hands to manual labor for the first time in their lives, and every man was as good as, or better than, his neighbor. Preachers became waiters; doctors, cooks; lawyers, faro dealers. Carpenters' wages were \$15 a day; laborers', \$10. At night the entire population assembled at the gaming halls to enjoy fine music and to look up friends, but mostly to woo fickle Fortune.

“A band of ticket-of-leave men, or Sydney Ducks, from the convict settlements of Australia, together with criminals from all lands, organized for plunder. They called themselves the ‘Hounds,’ and later the ‘Regulators.’ All were public robbers, with their worldly estates on their backs— and

their purse was every honest man's pocket! They paraded the streets with fife and drum, armed to the teeth, and they robbed at night.

“Their murders and robberies became so bold and frequent that the citizens called a meeting on the Plaza (at that time used as a corral, horse market, and general stamping ground). They appointed my cousin, A. I. Ellis, sheriff with 230 constables under him. Many of the Regulators were arrested and put on board the warship *Warner*. They escaped final punishment, for the alcalde was but a figurehead and there were no prisons. The determined vigor of the improvised police force broke up and scattered the gang.

“That winter of '49 was very severe for rain fell in torrents and continuously. Streets became quagmires. Horses and mules were lost in the unfathomed depths of Montgomery Street.”

This was the crude city where we were to make our home. Come weal, come woe, I was henceforth to be identified with San Francisco. I believe I participated in, or was an observer of, all the major events of the exciting period of the city's great development. Moreover, as a member, and later Chief, 46 of the San Francisco Police Department I was in a favorable position to know the inside story of much that went on.

It was in 1855 that I was appointed a member of the police force. Since childhood I had been a student of men, and at last I had come into my own. I could glance at a man and instantly note his characteristics of countenance, manner, dress, and carriage, and could recognize a person from his back as readily as from his face. This was a valuable asset in the game I was to follow. Long a reader of Charles Dickens, I had studied his keen analysis of character.

Early in my detective work a San Francisco newspaper said of me:

“Henry H. Ellis, one of the sharpest detective policemen of San Francisco, has recently unraveled a carefully conceived swindling transaction, greatly to the satisfaction of all honest men and the admiration of his friends.”\*

Years later, in 1909, when my father died, another newspaper said of him: "He figured actively in most of the criminal cases, not alone in San Francisco, but also in all sections of the state and our neighbors both north and south and over our country. That was at a time when crime and criminals were rampant and desperate, and officers were daily called upon to show the physical and moral stuff of which they were made. It may be said that he helped build the state and was proud of the part he had played."—L.E.R.

It was in June, 1851, before I had joined the police force, that the first Vigilance Committee was organized. I had become a member of that committee, had participated in its activities, and had been one of the men who affixed their signatures to its constitution.

I should like to emphasize that the Vigilance Committees of 1851 and 1856 were not composed of ruffians. On the contrary, their membership included most of the good, solid citizens of San Francisco. The members were serious and thoughtful, and the committee activities were for the most part supported by the constituted authorities. Indeed, during the existence of the Vigilance Committee of 1856, I was a member of the police force—yet was in full sympathy with the committee's objectives.

After my first appointment to the force, I did not have to wait long to see action. In November, 1855, U. S. Marshal William H. Richardson was murdered by the gambler Charles Cora, but because Cora was wealthy and a man of influence, <sup>47</sup> he was not convicted. He was tried, it is true, but the jury disagreed, and he was returned to jail.

It was at this juncture that James King ("of William"), editor of the *Daily Evening Bulletin*, was murdered because of his criticism of the lawless elements of the city and his denunciation of corruption. The murderer was James P. Casey, a corrupt politician whom King had attacked in his newspaper columns, revealing the information that Casey was an ex-convict from Sing Sing Prison.

The shooting of King—whose editorial courage had made him a hero—resulted in an immediate outburst of popular indignation. Casey was hustled away to jail, and I was one of the officers delegated to guard him. But the rapidly swelling crowd, intent on lynching Casey, made it evident that he would have to be moved to a better protected building. We rushed him to the county jail,

then placed ourselves on guard on the jail steps, where we were subjected to insults and threats from the mob.

In the midst of mounting excitement, the Vigilance Committee of 1856 was born and James King died, six days after the shooting. His death intensified the resentment against both Cora and Casey. They were tried before the committee, found guilty, and hanged—on the very day and at the hour of King's funeral.

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## Chapter 5

THE 22 YEARS (1855 to 1877) that I spent on the police force were spectacular in the growth of the city. The mention of a few case records will show the development in crime and the organizations formed to combat it.

When I joined the force it was a body of only 50 men; at my retirement as Chief there were over 150 regular police officers and 300 specially appointed men. At no time was the force adequate to combat the depraved members of society who flocked to this haven of easy riches.

Let me try to give some idea of the range of cases I worked on. I cannot include all; they would fill a volume.

“Theft” included everything from petty larceny to grand larceny, from pickpockets to horse thieves, from bank robberies to piracy; “Murders” everything from children to adults, in high and low places, on land and sea; “Confidence Games” everything from gold dust to gold bricks, embezzlement, forgery, and counterfeiting. And always there was the “Chinese Question,” a problem in murder, gambling, assault, theft, smuggling, prostitution, and disease. A perhaps equally difficult problem was “Hoodlumism,” which had grown with the years: young scoundrels who defied the law and officers of the law, and who indulged in most of the crimes of the calendar.

It was into this maelstrom of ambition, despair, mental and physical disease, perversion and scum that I was launched at the age of 26.

Counterfeiting, forgery and confidence games of all kinds required more time, patience and skill to expose than did other crimes. Many such were thrown into my lap. I shall cite one case. It became known to Chief of Police Burke that a quantity of bogus coin and greenbacks was afloat in San Francisco, 49 and Captain Lees and I were assigned the job of discovering the counterfeiters.

It was a month before we spotted our suspect, by name William Farrel, lately returned from the east, bringing \$10,000 in bogus coin and \$500 in greenbacks.

Lees and I employed a “decoy duck” whom we named Smith, known as a sport and not too dependable, but who would appeal to Farrel. Smith managed to meet Farrel, won his confidence, representing himself as one of the “brotherhood,” and bought \$100 worth of “queer” for a double eagle (a \$20 gold piece). Later Smith bought more bogus money, in both coin and paper money, which gave us the evidence we wanted to convict Farrel.

But Smith was now under suspicion by the regular police as a companion of Farrel, and under advice of attorney and judge, Lees and I delayed revealing his true identity. We then brought into the case a new man, whom we called Crawford. Crawford represented himself as a friend of Smith, a “koinicker” and jailbird who had had his wits sharpened by solitary meditation, coarse fare and hard work in the east. He was en route to Idaho and new fields and wished to purchase some queer for which he would pay well in watches and jewelry brought from the east. Actually Robert Crawford was a private clerk and friend of Chief Burke.

Farrel queried Smith about Crawford, but Smith cunningly replied that he would not lie to him, and certainly would not tell him the truth, for in his business it was necessary to keep secrets. Farrel had his spies watching Crawford, but as he and Smith were in constant company, frequenting gambling halls and other questionable places, Farrel concluded that Crawford was all right and consented to give him the coin.

At their next meeting Crawford showed him a steamship ticket for Portland, on a vessel sailing next day, and over a game of cards “stolen” jewelry was exchanged for \$1400 in bogus coin. On the day following, Farrel accompanied Crawford to the steamer and saw him off. Crawford immediately changed his clothes, removing his disguise, and was put ashore at Fort Point. Two days later Farrel was arrested on the charge of receiving stolen watches. Farrel claimed he had gotten them in trade from a man named Crawford.

“Crawford!” said Captain Lees. “I have heard of that man and am eager to catch him.”

“But he took the steamer for Oregon,” said Farrel.

“Maybe, but I think a man of that description is under arrest now,” said Lees; whereupon I was sent out to investigate, and in a rather rough manner brought Crawford in. Farrel claimed that Crawford had sold him the watches, while Crawford claimed that Farrel had paid him in queer and had lots of it on hand.

Still playing his part, Crawford was taken off, to the pretended indignation of Lees and me. Farrel was willing to testify against Crawford, and Lees convinced him it would be to his best interest to relinquish the coin and surrender himself. Farrel revealed a “plant” of coin in the sand hills, but on digging for it we discovered it had been removed, by an “accomplice.” Farrel tried to escape, but Lees' pistol dissuaded him, and Farrel thereupon revealed the true location of the queer.

The game was won. Farrel realized he had been outwitted. He was tried and sentenced to six years in prison. “Smith” abandoned his shady companions, went east, and occupied a respectable position in business and society. “Crawford” resumed his clerkship for Chief Burke.

In the case just related the actor was really a “fence” for a counterfeiter, but in the next one we shall see a genuine counterfeiter at work. Then a captain, I was able to prevent two Chinamen from flooding San Francisco with \$37,000 worth of bogus bank notes on the chartered bank of India, Australia and China, one of the most extensive and clever forgeries ever consummated in this city.

Two natives of the Flowery Kingdom, leading spirits in the transaction, with lithographic plates, finished and unfinished notes, paging machines, and other equipment, had been captured just in time to prevent their escape to China.

It was a curious coincidence in my routine life that first gave intimation of the bold scheme. Having occasion to visit an engraver on a personal matter, I was shown some fine 51 specimens on copper plate, new work of which the engraver seemed unusually proud. I commented on the work, asking for what purpose it was to be used, while I noticed on another bench a die on which was engraved the figure 5.

The engraver stated that the order had been given by a Chinaman wishing only the figure 5, which he wished to use on a brand of fine tea. Later, the Chinaman had said, he might use the dollar sign as a price mark.

I pondered the matter, intuitively feeling there was crooked work and something more in the wind than the scent of tea. After consulting my chief, I was given orders to ferret out the matter. In my investigation I discovered that several other lithographers had made similar dies and that George D. Baker's establishment was then at work on a series of bank notes ordered by a Chinaman, Ah Tuck. Baker had questioned Ah Tuck about his authority for ordering the notes. Ah Tuck claimed that his father, one of the directors of the Bank of India, wanted to learn if the work could be as well done in California as in London. Ah Tuck claimed he had consulted a lawyer who told him the work was legal. Thereupon Baker had begun the work.

Ah Tuck frequently came to examine the work as it progressed. On discovering any discrepancy he would become excited, criticizing Baker and threatening him. One day when I was calling on Baker for further information, the door was suddenly thrown open and Ah Tuck entered. I left immediately, whereupon Ah Tuck questioned Baker about his visitor.

“Just a customer for whom I have done some work,” said Baker.

Pointing to one of the notes on the table, Ah Tuck demanded, "Did he see this?"

"No, no, he didn't see that."

The Chinaman seemed satisfied, grumbling, "Very well, but I want you to know I will not put up with any treachery."

I detailed officers to shadow Ah Tuck and his confederate, Ah Sam, at the same time laying the conspiracy before the officers of the Bank of California.

The man behind the scene was found to be a Chinaman in London named No How King. Through Ah Tuck he had contracted with Baker for \$30,000 in \$5 bills. After this information had been given the parent bank in London, a cabled answer was received to seize everybody connected with the affair, together with all paraphernalia used.

Correspondence between Ah Tuck and No How King revealed the difficulties they had encountered in securing paper that would produce good impressions. Finally they had brought paper from England, and also from there a machine that would do the work, the only machine in the United States being in official use in Washington. \* Baker had wished to withdraw his contract, but under threat had to go on.

The heading at the top of one of these letters is interesting: "Eleventh day of eleventh moon, eighth of Tong-Chee." In other words, December 8, 1869.—H.H.E.

Shadowed by the police, Baker delivered to Ah Sam 1,242 counterfeit bills. Ah Tuck appeared shortly, demanding the notes and copper plates and threatening to shoot Baker if he did not recover them from Ah Sam. Whereupon Baker made his exit through a rear door and reported to the police.

While this was going on, Chief Crowley and I appropriated the first buggy we came to and followed Ah Sam to the place where the Chinaman lived. Feigning sickness and ignorance of the English language, Ah Sam was stretched upon a bed. A search revealed the notes hidden between sheets of fine rice paper. Ah Tuck, awaiting Ah Sam and the notes, was easily apprehended. Claiming he was

a “very sick man,” he was quite concerned because his clothes were “all aboard steamer,” as indeed they were, and as Ah Tuck, also, would have been, had we not acted with alacrity at the right time.

Another clever theft concerned, not a gold brick, but a box of \$3,800 in gold coin, shipped by the firm of Hop Yik & Co. to a branch in Hong Kong, on the clipper ship *Sea Serpent*. On opening the box at the port of consignment, it was found that it contained, not gold, but San Francisco paving stones. Box and contents were shipped back to San Francisco, and the captain of the vessel, held responsible, was obliged to pay the loss of the \$3,800.

For six months no light was shed on the mystery. Officer Gammon and I were assigned the case. Our newspaper advertisement for the identity of the drayman who had hauled 53 a box to the Vallejo Street wharf in September, 1866, for shipment brought us our first clue, the one which opened up the mystery.

Sup Lum Kee, known as “Charlie,” a young, educated business man, confidential clerk of Hop Yik & Co., was as keen as any Yankee. By employing a number of draymen he had the box delivered finally to his own house, where he substituted another box stencil-marked in Chinese. The second box he transferred by still another drayman to the vessel, during the rush hour of departure. The bill of lading given the drayman was filled out by Charlie himself for his firm.

Drayman No. 3 had become a little suspicious at this unusual procedure, and when Charlie had tried to bribe him to leave town after the advertisement had appeared in the newspaper, the wise drayman communicated with us, but became “invisible” to his Chinese employer.

Finally confronted with the evidence, Sup Lum Kee confessed and was convicted on his own evidence. He had collected \$4,000 in insurance and in his affluence had taken unto himself a small-footed damsel from the Flowery Kingdom. But his prosperity was short-lived.

It was in the sixties, too, just after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, that a San Francisco black-lined newspaper carried the headline, “Search of J. A. Booth's trunk.”

This heading and the article under it were concerned with the fact that Officers Lees, Ellis and Rose had been ordered to search for the trunk of the brother of the assassin of President Lincoln. J. A. Booth had departed from San Francisco for the Atlantic states by the last steamer. After a long search we found the trunk, but nothing in it that would implicate J. A. Booth in the horrible transactions of his brother, though there were letters expressing Copperhead and Secession sentiments.

Another notice in the same column is interesting:

“The wretch Donovan, who was held yesterday to answer before the County Court for expressing joy at the assassination of Lincoln, was previously notorious. About two years ago he was arrested in this city by Captain Lees and Officer Ellis for killing a man in Aurora, and was sent there for trial.”

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Enumerating sundry crimes from which Donovan had escaped punishment, the article ended: “What else could be expected of such a man, and who but an outlaw and murderer could rejoice at such a foul and bloody deed, as that which causes a whole nation to mourn?”

Parenthetically, not all the excitement of those days was of human origin. The earthquake of October 1868 so alarmed my mother that she wrote me an anxious letter from New England. In reply I wrote her:

“Your two or three recent letters on earthquakes and other interesting subjects came to hand in due course.

“I regret very much that you people in the east take such a despairing view of our gentle undulations. You ask me to give you my ideas concerning our recent shake-ups. First as to facts. On the 21st of October last, about 8 o'clock a.m., we were visited by a shock that did damage to property to the amount of about \$300,000 (owners' estimate) and caused the loss of five lives. Damage to buildings was confined to poorly constructed walls and foundations, almost entirely

on made land. Wooden houses were not injured in the least. The loss of life was occasioned by frantic individuals who, seized by panic, did what persons usually do—rushed into danger instead of remaining quiet or moving off to a place of safety.

“Sensational stories about great fissures in the earth vomiting forth smoke, fumes of brimstone and other villainous smells have emanated from the frenzied brains of those people who were simply getting in advance a taste of what is possibly in store for them in the future. All moonshine, my dear mother. This country has been known to Europeans for about 300 years, and was colonized by the Spaniards about 100 years ago. During the first 150 years, say, earthquakes were of frequent occurrence and always most severe in Southern California.

“The history of earthquakes since the formation of the Missions by the old padres shows that they are slowly decreasing. In the year 1812 was the only shock attended by loss of life to any extent, since the great Cortez discovered and named the Vermilion Sea (Gulf of California). In that year on a Sunday at the Mission of Santa Inez, Valley of San 55 Buenaventura, a church was thrown down, burying in its ruins some 30 persons, mostly Indians. Since the American occupation, now 22 years, a half dozen lives and not to exceed one half million dollars in property loss have been lost through earthquake.

“Can you of New England who are making such a dismal howl about what you are pleased to call our ‘misfortune’ make so good a showing?

“As to sacrificing property, as you call it, I assure you we have no necessity for so doing. The value of real estate has not been affected by the great quake except a narrow strip of made ground immediately on the waterfront, and we have full faith and confidence in the bottom upon which we stand. Affectionately your son, H.H.E.”

The pickpocket has always found his trade lucrative, and some professionals in my day kept the larger cities busy apprehending and jailing them.

“Cockney Jack’s” specialties were the uncontrollable mourners during funeral services, the deeply religious at church, and the highly emotional in the theater. Detective Rose and I were alerted at the funeral of Rev. Starr King, for years a Unitarian minister in San Francisco. I was particularly happy to be on hand, for I had attended King’s church services whenever possible and was a great admirer of him. There was a large crowd at the services and Jack had made several hauls before he was arrested.

In St. Mary’s Cathedral during High Mass for the repose of the many who perished in the burning of the cathedral in Santiago, Chile, Cockney Jack again demonstrated his prowess by committing several robberies. He had served several terms at Blackwell’s Island, from which he had also made two or more remarkable escapes. Once he had swum the bay to New York; at another time he and “Big Sam” tied their chains around their necks and swam Long Island Sound to Green Point, compelling a blacksmith there to knock off their shackles. In one winter season two of them escaped by jumping the blocks of ice in the Hudson River under fire from the prison. His arrest in Philadelphia (for theft of a 56 watch on Second Street) prevented him from following Abraham Lincoln in March '61.

Such criminals challenged the San Francisco officers of the law.

There was one daring swindler named Veldhingsen who signed checks of from \$350 to \$450, forging the name of J. P. H. Gildermeister, Consul at San Francisco for The Netherlands. All the checks were endorsed as partly paid, and this fellow had the audacity to send from Santa Clara by Wells Fargo Express for the collection of a balance of \$40 from Gildermeister himself\*

Veldhingsen was a native of the Island of Celebes and was of Dutch extraction. He was a penman by profession and while serving his prison sentence wrote personal cards equal to copperplate in their fine execution. Among these papers I found one of some he had made with Father’s name.—L.E.R.

Seeking to avoid trouble with the police, Veldhingsen had shifted his base of operations from one suburban town after another, but I continued hot on his heels, and finally caught up with him on a

country road, where Veldhingsen, to escape detection in a public conveyance, was traveling in a farmer's wagon. I arrested him, took him to San Francisco, and helped send him to prison.

On another occasion the trail of a criminal who had absconded with a large sum of money took me into Utah. After I had secured my man, I returned to California with him as my prisoner, only to encounter in Sacramento the most difficult experience of the entire chase. Because the crime had not been committed in San Francisco but in Sacramento, the Sacramento police, as I learned, were out to take my prize away from me. There was a considerable award involved in the capture, and there was also the prestige attached to the successful conclusion of such an important case. Though the Sacramento police were my friends, I determined to outwit them.

As the stage on which my captive and I were passengers approached Sacramento, I concluded that my only hope was to put my trust in the prisoner. I therefore confided to him my dilemma, assuring him that his best chance for a light and just sentence lay with the San Francisco police and courts. To avoid capture in Sacramento, therefore, I urged the man to cooperate with me in a plan I had devised. He was more than willing.

The prisoner left the stage before it reached Sacramento. The plan was for him to hire a horse and thus proceed to a place below Sacramento. There he would take a boat for the remainder of the trip to San Francisco, where I was to meet him.

Thus I arrived in Sacramento alone. When I stepped off the stage I was greeted, as I had expected to be, by several of the Sacramento policemen. With downcast countenance I remarked that the trip had been a hard one.

“But where is your prisoner?” asked one officer.

I shrugged my shoulders. “Gone.”

“You mean you let him get away?”

“Looks like it, doesn't it?” I answered. Then, showing a little annoyance, I continued, “I don't want to talk about it. So if you gentlemen will allow me to go to my hotel, I'll get some of this grime off my skin.”

After thus eluding the Sacramento officers, I took the night boat, and finally arrived in San Francisco, anxious lest my prisoner not turn up. But the man kept his word. He arrived on schedule, and, being able to restore the sum he had taken (which I had secreted on my own person), he drew a comparatively light sentence. Thereafter he regarded me as his friend.\*

Father had the faculty of winning the trust of his prisoners. He claimed he had never handcuffed a prisoner when in public. He always appealed to the self respect of a man and was always ready to aid him. To make good with a criminal record took more courage than most men had, said Father, but he would encourage them, nevertheless, and secure positions for them.—L.E.R.

A similar case was a chase for a fleeing cattle-thief, which was written up in the *Chicago Lakeside Monthly* of July, 1872, under the heading, “A Bit of Early California,” as follows:

“As fast as stage horses could travel, I took off for Salt Lake City. A hunt in that city for an absconding cattle-thief convinced me that I had passed my quarry. So I backtracked by next stage, which had but one other passenger, a well-built, intelligent young man. The stage was otherwise filled with sides of bacon, with which we constantly fought as it slithered 58 about with every lurch of the coach. There was little rest, and no sleep, as the greasy pieces would descend upon us unawares if we so much as closed our eyes.

“Gathering clues along the way, I was convinced that I would find my man in a new Nevada town, which we reached at nightfall next day. It would be difficult to hold this man as my prisoner, for he had absconded from British Columbia, had only passed through San Francisco, and I had no authority to apprehend him, commissioned only by the victimized cattle owners.

“I easily spotted my man in the barroom and finally persuaded him that he would be better protected under my care than to run the risk of lynch law as a cattle thief in Nevada or California.

Approaching the head bully in the barroom, I explained to him that I would need his assistance to protect the prisoner from the 'roughs' while we got a little sleep, awaiting the next stage.

"I then went to my companion of the coach, enlisting his interest in a plot to spirit away my prisoner. He was quite ready to enlist on the side of law and order and secretly secured a vehicle to take him and the prisoner to the next town, 30 miles west.

"Meanwhile, I joined the men in the barroom, where, between drinks, they questioned me about the prisoner and the money, whether any part of the latter had been recovered. 'Not a cent of money has been recovered yet,' said I, with \$35,000 tucked away in my clothing. Drinks were freely imbibed. Calling the leader, I reminded him of his assurance of help should any of the rascals attempt to get my man. I then went upstairs to get a little rest, aware that a counter plot was hatching.

"From a sound sleep I was awakened by blows on my barricaded door. Knowing well who my callers were, I was ready with my six-shooter when I opened the door to my visitors. After some hard swearing and bloody threats, the gang realized that they were dealing with the 'Law' and withdrew to continue to try to outwit me.

"I did not think they would pursue me, but beside the road as I mounted the stage next morning I saw the wreck of 59 a turnout. The night being dark and their heads very light, they had run into a tree, killing one horse and scattering the occupants of the vehicle onto the roadside. At the next stop my new friend, my prisoner, and Bully No. 1 and two others mounted the stage. I was apprehensive lest they consult authorities on reaching Sacramento and accuse me of unlawful custody of the prisoner.

"Confiding my predicament to my friend, we made new plans. Hastily leaving the stage on reaching Sacramento with this friend securely handcuffed, we made for the boat, while our tough companions sought authorities in town. As we gained the gangplank, a rough hand was laid on my shoulder, and we were marched off to the Justice, I violently protesting. The gathering crowd followed to watch proceedings, thus covering the easy escape of the real prisoner.

“Upon questioning us, the judge learned that the ‘prisoner at the bar’ had never absconded with anybody’s money, and far from being restrained from his liberty, he had accompanied ‘The Captain’ just for fun.

“‘And the handcuffs?’

“‘Oh, I just wore them because they were an easy fit.’

“‘And what is your name?’ thundered the judge.

“‘Henry Fitzpatric, Your Honor. I fell in with Captain Ellis at Salt Lake City and thought I would like to go all the way in his company. Sorry you delayed us, gentlemen, for we both have urgent business in San Francisco!’

“‘Having overplayed their hand, the Roughts were intensely disgusted, for meantime the real thief was headed down stream for San Francisco, where he met me as planned.

“‘Shortly after, I entered the office of a good friend and was surprised to see the ‘prisoner’ of my late trip.

“‘Well, well, Captain, so you brought Harry home with a pair of handcuffs! Allow me to introduce my partner, Mr. Henry Fitzpatric McDonald.’

“‘Happy to meet you again, Captain. It was fun while it lasted, though I didn’t think it necessary to give those inquisitive chaps in Sacramento the benefit of my full name! Should I ever run for office I didn’t want it said that a 60 McDonald had been led through the country in a pair of handcuffs!’”

In running down criminals, I traveled horseback as far as Los Angeles and San Diego. I had become acquainted with some of the great rancheros and enjoyed their hospitality. Once, at the end of the season, I visited the Casa Grande of Jose Marc Castro in Pajaro Valley. Here were gathered the Castilian families from leagues around for a grand rodeo, feast and fandango. It was a gay affair, with the senors in Spanish dress costumes, set off by brilliant silk bandos. The senoras were even

more colorful, but were dignified and matronly, watching the gay señoritas and their antics with the young males of the company.

Among other Americans present was Judge Watson of potato fame, afterward an apple grower who settled near the mouth of the Salinas River and founded the town called Watsonville.

The old don had three hand organs of Italian type, which he exhibited with pride. These and most of the house furnishings had been brought around Cape Horn by Boston hide-droghers, who traded “notions” for hides and tallow. Thousands of cattle were slaughtered yearly for this trade, the carcasses being useless. In '49 I had asked permission to kill a steer on the coast shore and was told by the owner, “You are more than welcome to the meat, but be sure you do not mar the hide.”

The Chinese were a law unto themselves, played well the game of “No savvy,” hadn't the faintest idea of the laws of sanitation, and were clever enough to smuggle large amounts of opium, fine goods and women into the city from boats which were examined on leaving China and again before docking in San Francisco. These goods, including women, were walled in behind false partitions in the baggage holds of ships and spirited out and away in small boats (even when the vessels lay in quarantine, because of smallpox and other diseases). Some men on shipboard would abet this kind of smuggling, for a price, which added to the difficulty.

Gambling, which often led to murder among themselves, could not be suppressed. As one Chinaman said, “Chinaman 61 no gamble, he die!” Their dens were far below the ground surface, with trapdoors and mole-like passageways for escape, which could not be followed.

Out of a force of 150 police, but 12 could be assigned to the Chinese quarter, and often these had to be withdrawn for some emergency elsewhere. Nevertheless the police were accused of neglect of neglect of duty and disregard of our laws, “our fair city becoming a sink of corruption, a nursery of loathsome crime and practices most vile in the history of mankind.” When this diatribe was addressed to me (this was after I had become Chief) through the *Chronicle*, I replied:

“It is probable that in area and population the Chinese quarter requires double the police force that would be required for the same area and population of whites. It is difficult to be positive even on this point.

“They have to be protected not only from their own disorder, but from the equally disorderly whites. It takes constant surveillance to keep the filth of the Chinese quarter down to an endurable limit. Special police there detailed hire their own dustmen to remove rubbish and accumulations. It is next to impossible to find out anything from the Chinese themselves.”

Immigration was at its peak at the time of my service, and the Mongolian problem was a major nightmare. Chinese were variously employed. They were hard workers and served the public in many capacities. With two huge baskets suspended from their shoulders, they were the street cleaners. Carrying similar baskets, they were the vegetable, fruit, and fish vendors from door to door. They did most of the laundry work, the law requiring that they work in sight of the public. They could be seen through window or open door, sprinkling the clothes by blowing the water in a spray from their mouths. In railroad-building, hordes of them did good work, under hard conditions.

Many were domestic servants, and very fine ones, if trained or experienced, outdoing the mistress in buying and managing kitchen accounts, as well as in cooking. In some cases they became valued members of the household. Such was the case with a connection of our family who had such a servant for over 20 years. When illness and death came, the servant stepped in and shared the burden. In this particular case, “Charley” became assistant nurse, lifting and caring for a case of total paralysis as if it were his own mother.

Yet some of their cold-blooded murders and other crimes were terrible, for the Chinese devised devious ways with their special instruments for killing: long knives, hatchets, and barbed leather, which in a single blow could rake a head or face, destroy sight, and disfigure for life.

Officer Rose and I cleared up several such cases of attempted murder, committed in order to rob the victims. One of these was a young couple in Alameda who were slashed in their sleep at dead

of night. After failing in his attempt to secure the money (hidden under the mattress), the Chinese houseboy showed such horror and sympathy that he put the officers off his track for several weeks.

When he and his accomplice were finally apprehended, one newspaper said: "H. H. Ellis has been indefatigable in the search, and to him is due directly or indirectly all the credit for the discovery of the criminal."

In a case nearer home, a nephew, also a police officer, detailed for work in the Chinese section, was about to capture his man when the Chinaman struck at him with a long knife and laid bare his cheekbone, fortunately missing his eyes. Ned carried the scar for the rest of his life, but the assassin paid for his crime.

The Chinese were expert thieves, burglars, and smugglers. Smuggling was the art by which they managed to get opium, and also prostitutes, into the city. On one raid in Chinatown, five cases and 20 jars of opium were found, stolen from the ship *Reindeer*.

When the ship *Lord of the Isles* brought 1,012 more coolies into San Francisco, the anger of the people mounted to threats. To cope with whatever unpleasantness might arise, I stationed a squad of men at the wharf and placed others along the route that the Chinese would follow to reach their quarters. Word had reached me that the Kensington Club of the Mission had assembled and were planning to march down to the steamer. But though crowds gathered along the 63 way and pelted the Orientals with mortar from flour barrels, only one arrest was made, for the supply of mortar was soon exhausted, and thereafter the crowd contented itself with hooting.

The Chinese were both sinned against and sinning. They needed protection from the hoodlum element, which persecuted them at every opportunity.

The Mongolian wore his native clothing in those days: baggy trousers, loose jacket, native shoes, long white hose, and a long queue or pigtail, with colored silk braided into the very end. Those queues offered convenient holds when anyone wished to subdue the wearer, and the bad element

among the white population used such holds at every opportunity. To throw mud into a laundry door and so distress the "heathen Chinese" was good sport. "China boy" had little redress.

On one occasion, two white men walking behind a Chinaman on one of San Francisco's principal streets felled the Chinaman with a blow on the head. He fell on the cobblestones, bleeding profusely, while his assailants watched from the curb 20 feet away. The Chinaman died on the way to the hospital, yet, though crowds gathered, the assailants were allowed to make their escape. The one person, a woman, who witnessed the attack, fearing for her own future safety, asserted she did not see the attackers clearly enough to identify them.

Nor was this an unusual incident. Many a poor Chinaman was found dead in street or alley, sometimes the victim of his own kind.

Brought into the country because of our necessity for laborers, especially for railroad work, the Chinese now refused to return to their native land, and we found it impossible to rid ourselves of an ever-growing menace.

To do justice to the law-abiding element among them was as much a duty, I felt, as to capture and punish the lawless. In this effort I had the collaboration of the Six Companies, a body of high-class Chinese, who represented law and order to their people and whom I admired and respected. Evidently they felt some debt of gratitude to me, too, for 64 they presented to me a large document, expressing, in Chinese and English, appreciation and gratitude for justice done in their behalf. Beautifully framed, it hangs in a conspicuous place among my lodge and other membership certificates.

In my contact with the Chinese in California and also abroad in their own country, I learned to admire the better class, and never have I had occasion to change my mind. They were the embodiment of honesty. Their word was as good as their bond.

At times, in my search for fraud and theft, I was obliged to turn from the land to the sea.

Once, news reached San Francisco of the wreck off Santa Cruz of the schooner *Sarah*, waterlogged and capsized in heavy seas, with two of her men washed overboard and lost. Captain J. W. Swann reported that he, the first mate, the second mate, and the cook had landed in a small boat at Santa Cruz, and that the cargo of spirits (insured for \$16,000) was floating on the sea in all directions.

On the day of the report, the *Mary Ellen* came alongside the *Sarah*, attempting to tow her into Santa Cruz, but was unable to manage the waterlogged vessel. The wrecking schooner *A. J. Wester* was immediately dispatched to Santa Cruz to salvage as much as possible of the cargo and the vessel, but found no wreck and no floating spirits. Meantime Captain Swann had “found” the wreck and moored it off the mouth of the Salinas River. Mr. Ringot, sent by the underwriters, got the *Sarah* onto the beach and freed her of water, but found no trace of a cargo. A few casks branded “Alcohol” lay on the beach, but contained only water. The vessel was then towed to San Francisco for investigation.

Here is where Captain Lees and I came into the case. A report which seemed reliable stated that the *Sarah* had been seen near Drake's Bay, north of the Golden Gate, during the time she was reported absent. The four officers of the *Sarah* were arrested, and at midnight the *Waylander* carried Captain Lees and me to Drake's Bay.

Under Point Reyes we found a curious rock-bound cave, the entrance of which could be approached only with difficulty in the rolling surf. In the upper part of the cave we found, 65 covered with sailcloth, a part of the cargo of the *Sarah*, 100 cases and 24 barrels of spirits, ships' stores, and ropes by which the cargo had been rafted ashore.

Captain Swann claimed that on her first attempt to sail, the *Sarah*, after several days, had returned to port for some minor repairs, and that it was during that interval that a part of her cargo was removed and dummy barrels of water were substituted. She had been flooded by the removal of bolts in the casing of her centerboard. Also, the masts had been removed in a crude manner. She was seized as she lay at anchor, most of her cargo was recovered, and an attempt at piracy foiled. The daring scheme would have netted the conspirators the tidy sum of \$90,000, to be bled from the

owners, insurance, customs, and underwriters. Both insurance regulations and United States laws had been violated.

Almost as bad as the slayings of Orientals and whites were the cases in which ship captains would shanghai men from the San Francisco waterfront. Because many men would desert ship in San Francisco to go to the mines, the captains were at times desperate for hands, and there were shore men who practiced a lucrative trade in capturing men in saloons, on the waterfront, or alone on the streets at night, drugging or crippling them, taking them aboard ships that were about to sail.

In one such case in 1869, a man named Charles Cahill mysteriously disappeared, leaving a family in great distress of mind and destitute. It was thought at first that he might have fallen off the wharf where he was employed, but a cannon was fired over the spot and the area dragged without result. Suspecting that Cahill had been shanghai'd, the Chief of Police telegraphed to other ports on the coast to place them on the alert and wrote to United States consuls in foreign ports for the same purpose.

It was in Callao, Peru, that Cahill was finally rescued, after four months of enforced labor aboard the ship *Garibaldi*. In San Francisco he had been walking along Davis Street on Saturday afternoon after work when he met two acquaintances. After they had drunk together, Cahill became unconscious, evidently drugged. When he came to his senses, he found himself at sea as a sailor on the *Garibaldi*. At Callao, the ship's captain, when confronted by the consul, released Cahill, but paid him nothing for his services. He was given a free passage back to San Francisco, and there Officer Sallenger and I arrested the two who had shanghai'd him.

In those days, Captain Isaiah W. Lees, whose name has been mentioned in these pages, was a central figure of the detective police. Appointed to the force in 1853, he became assistant captain three years later and retained that position till the Vigilance Committee assumed control of government. By the Vigilantes he was reduced to the rank of detective, but was reappointed to his former position by Chief Curtis.

I was a year older, and together we formed a team. In 1866 Lees was appointed Captain of Detectives by Mayor Coon, Chief Burke and Judge Rix. He followed me as Chief of Police.

As for myself I quote the *Evening Post* of November, 1874:

“Henry H. Ellis has regular features and dark whiskers and moustaches which entirely conceal his mouth. His nose is somewhat aquiline, his expression is keen and searching, and from his sharp eyes nothing escapes detection. He is methodical and stately in manner, uses enough words to convey his meaning and no more, and works on his cases so quietly that half the time his confreres never know what he is doing. He is a prominent member of the Society of Pioneers.

“Captain Ellis is a native of Maine, a mariner by occupation, and before his connection with the police force 19 years ago had attained the position of master and owner of his vessel. Captain Ellis' forte is the mysterious. He is never so much at home as when gathering the disconnected details of a startling crime and weaving them into an unbroken chain of evidence. Poisoning cases, in which analyses, motives, and doubts are mixed up in inextricable confusion, and which require the utmost precaution and ingenuity to unravel, are also among his strong points. Much of his time is taken up with cases which never appear in newspapers.”

A few years after my appointment to the force the following item appeared in one of the San Francisco papers:

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“Captain Ellis was appointed to the police force in 1855 and since then has filled the positions of license collector, deputy provost marshal during the Civil War, and deputy U.S. marshal under Marshals Raabe and Rand. For the last few years he has been connected with the detective branch of the department, engaged in ferreting out and bringing to justice the perpetrators of some of the most extensive crimes committed on the coast. Chief Crowley has appointed him bailiff of the police court, and the bestowal of this honor on one of the most popular and experienced men in the department will be hailed with general satisfaction.”

On New Year's Day, 1866, this testimonial appeared in the papers:

“Officer Ellis of the San Francisco Police Detectives today received a magnificent badge of solid gold in the shape of a shield beautifully enameled and surmounted with a diamond-eyed eagle, holding a star in his beak. This testimonial was given by the bankers of San Francisco in acknowledgment of valuable services rendered, and was manufactured to order.”

Accompanying the badge was the following letter, engrossed on parchment, with the autographs of 16 bankers appended:

“We the undersigned bankers of the City of San Francisco take pleasure in presenting the accompanying testimonial, a gold star, to Detective Officer Henry H. Ellis as an expression of our high appreciation of the skill and industry he has displayed in the detection and conviction of various forgers and counterfeiters within the city in the last few years.”

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## Chapter 6

POLITICS HAS ALWAYS played a large part in municipal affairs, and San Francisco in the early days was no exception. In 1875, after serving on the police force for 20 years, I was nominated for Chief on the People's Independent Ticket, and was elected on my record, the last Chief to be elected by the direct vote of the people. “The Ring,” as the political machine was called, temporarily lost out. It was an advantage for me to be elected on an independent ticket, for I thus had no obligations to any member of the Ring.

When I was nominated, the *Bulletin* said editorially:

“Henry H. Ellis, our candidate for Chief of Police, is a native of Maine. He is of the sixth generation of a race of seamen, and naturally took early to the sea. He has filled every position on board ship, from boy to master. He arrived in California in June, 1849, a youth of 20, and before he was of age

was master and owner of a vessel engaged in the Island and Mexican trade out of this port down to 1854.

“He has during this time engaged in other enterprises. In early days he was engaged with a partner, established a trading post at Humboldt Bay, and aided in building a pack trail to the Trinity mines. They were among the first to take up and improve land in the same vicinity. He has also been prominent in other industrial enterprises.

“He is the head of a large family, all born in this city, and is thoroughly identified with the city's material interests and prosperity in every way. He is a man of good habits, character and repute, and has hosts of friends who have charged themselves with the task of electing him on Wednesday next.

“Ellis has been a member of the police force for 20 years continuously in this city. He has filled all grades up to 69 captain, and for many years he figured prominently in most of the cases of importance. During the latter portion of the reigns of Crowley and Cockrill his duties have been of a more private character, and therefore he has not been so prominently before the public as formerly.

“His entire record in this city for 26 years, as a private citizen and officer, has been above reproach. His capacity and integrity are undoubted. He will make an excellent Chief.”

Above this editorial appeared two scathing articles about the incumbent Chief and one of the candidates for Mayor, denouncing them as candidates of the Ring. It was this opposition bloc which I had to fight.

To quote the *Bulletin* of February, 1876, only a few months after my election:

“Chief of Police Ellis entered upon his duties with a full understanding, from long practical experience, of the needs of the city in his responsible department. It was anticipated that Mr. Ellis would make a good officer, and thus far he has realized every anticipation that was entertained of his sterling ability.”

About the same time the *Alta California* made these comments on my work:

“The police department, which lately seemed to run itself (toward the ground), gives every indication of having a head. The force had stagnated, and the moral scum which covered it is evaporating under the freshening breeze of business. Chief Ellis is doing what a chief of police is supposed to be elected for—giving the affairs of his department his personal supervision and making that his exclusive business. The effect is apparent in every direction. Not a man on the force but is stimulated by his superior example, either to renewed effort or to mind his P's and Q's.

“The Chief yesterday made an order relieving the supernumerary force in his own office and on the harbor force, ordering them to report for street and patrol duty. New assignments are intended to strengthen the street force in the western and southwestern sections of the city. The changes caused a good deal of fluttering, but no doubt the policy 70 of the new regime is ‘acquiescence or resignation, and no back talk.’”

On my accession the police force numbered 155 effective men. I did not contemplate increasing its number, but rather its efficiency. I differed with the Mayor, elected at the same time, in his opinion that the special police, a force of 300 or more men, should be abolished, for to do so, I felt, would leave a vacuum not easily filled. I promised that an earnest campaign would be at once organized against the hoodlums of the city, who actually were more troublesome than the older criminals. Also I vowed that every effort in my power would be made to suppress gambling.

The many wharfs along the growing city front were intended at first merely to enable the deep-water ships to discharge their cargo. Gradually, however, the piers, which were built wide for the purpose of loading and discharging cargo, were extended till they supported small shops and stores. Open spaces in between were filled with refuse and sand from excavations, so that new land was created from Montgomery Street to the present Front Street.

In the early days these piers provided a covering for the poor, the criminal, the hunted. They supplied even more—a playground. “Wharf Rats” became a general name for the frequenters of this rendezvous, including children of tender age, hoodlums, and escapees from justice.

A reporter from the *Bulletin* made a trip with an officer through this subterranean area. Taking bits of candles for light, they scrambled down the rocks at Union and Front Streets and beheld nothing but rocks and dull, repulsive, sluggish tidewater swishing about, bringing to light bits of broken bottles, iron, and refuse of all kinds. Crawling and squirming some 200 feet from the water's edge, they came to an abandoned thieves' nest, with four crude coffin-shaped beds of stone filled with rice matting, and fastened to planks overhead a piece of coarse canvas, screening the lodgers from observation. After his investigation the reporter wrote:

“Few will comprehend the extent and accessibility of the subterranean retreat along the city front. Before the bulkheads were built, boats could be rowed up to a point on 71 Pacific Street above Davis, and shanghaing of seamen was easily accomplished. Trapdoors and sliding panels exist even at this writing in some of the sailor boarding houses on the street, but no craft can reach the spot. Stolen or smuggled articles may be spirited through these open sesame arrangements.

“At low tide we traveled for an hour and a half as far as Commercial Street, without so much as wetting our feet, and were glad to come to light of day, stand upright, and straighten our backs.

“Around this waterfront, sent out by their parents, were many little children, ragged and shoeless, armed with baskets, ropes, and sacks, wandering among the sawmills and railroad tracks, sent out to gather anything loose enough to appropriate: shavings, bits of wood, coal, salt, lumber. Some followed the coal carts to salvage any lumps that might fall from the load, and to beg for bits from the drivers. Some pried chips of bark from the lumber piles; others picked up fallen fruit or vegetables from the streets. At one time as many as 200 of these ‘rats’ were sent out as scavengers, to mingle with the depraved of both classes.

“There are numerous thieves and vagabonds, both boys and men, who deposit plunder under the rocks and bide their time to carry it away successfully. Every few weeks the harbor police capture some of the vagabond boys who sleep in the hay or under the wharf and bring them to court as fit candidates for the Industrial School. Generally orphans or runaways, these lads are often ahead of the older rascals as far as brazen effrontery, hardihood and cunning are concerned.”

The Chinese problem and hoodlumism, fostered by the condition described above, were two major problems in the seventies, when I was Chief. Children so raised could hardly escape growing into evil adults. As for the older hoodlums, they were a menace to all the city. They would collect in gangs to attack pedestrians, rob houses, terrify women, smash up stores (including saloons which refused to give them liquor), and even shoot and kill.

It was almost impossible to secure evidence against them, for a squealer suffered further harm at their hands. Neither 72 would they squeal on one another. Almost daily the papers would carry headlines such as “Another Hoodlum Outrage” and “Hoodlums on the Rampage.” It might be the stoning of a Chinaman, the beating up of some citizen who had made efforts toward smashing the gang, robbery with violence, or some deed of blood, even murder.

“For its size,” said one editorial, “our police department is exceptionally efficient; its members are brave, determined, persevering and intelligent; and its directors willing to do right and secure captures and convictions wherever possible. But for the population of this city, our force is ridiculously inadequate. The mere handful of men whom Chief Ellis has at his disposal would require more than human ability could they be at hand to suppress the constant outrages which disfigure our civilization from the Potrero to Hayes Valley, from the Mission to North Beach.”

The deadly viciousness of these attacks finally gave the hoodlums the name of “White Sioux.” They had not hesitated to shoot at officers and even hand-grapple with them, sometimes taking the officers' weapons and using them against their owners. Almost weekly there was a murderous attack, which finally resulted in my calling my entire force together and addressing them as follows:

“The late murders on our public streets, and the consequent alarm of peaceable citizens, make it imperative for me to address you for the fourth time on this all-important subject. All other classes of criminals sink into insignificance before this gigantic curse. Peaceable citizens live in a constant state of terror, and from fear of personal violence are deterred from giving testimony. The residents of Hayes Valley are talking of banding together as a vigilance committee for mutual protection.

“What a commentary on our efficiency as guardians of the public safety! I am ashamed—and I hope that you are—that the people should consider such action necessary for the safety of their persons and property. Commencing with the assaulting and stoning of Chinamen, in which they were too often encouraged by parents and hoodlums of larger growth, they have proceeded to felonious assaults on citizens, 73 culminating in robbery and in many recent instances murder. Aye, murder, for the pleasure of killing—as witness the unavenged Page, Taafe, and Earl. The police are charged by the citizens and press with apathy or something worse.

“Professional thieves and burglars, as a class, are nothing when compared with these White Sioux, who are reared in the shadows of churches—outlaws that are like human wolves, hunting their prey in packs, more cowardly than the beasts they imitate in their bloody instincts. They dare not attack a man single-handed, but in gangs they are devoid of shame, and know no mercy.

“From this loud-crying evil the reputation of our fair city and state is suffering abroad. Our citizens have moved in the matter of the evil of Chinese immigration, and an able committee has laid the grievance before the government at Washington. Both houses of Congress joined in appointing a commission of three members to come amongst us and investigate the matter, with the power and will to aid us to throw off the evil if we deserve any consideration.

“What showing can *we* make, what relief obtain? None whatever if the hoodlum evil continues to overshadow all others.

“Good citizens are amazed at the merciless doings of these devils and wonder that they cannot be stamped out. It is neither merciful nor charitable for parents to allow these young hoodlums

to escape punishment. On the contrary, it is both merciful and charitable to bring them to justice. Many might be saved from a future career of crime, and parents might be brought to realize the dangers surrounding their sons, and so lift them out of the groove into which they have fallen and which leads to the penitentiary and the gallows.

“Every officer will understand that a record is being kept of the duty he performs. The deserving of the department will surely be rewarded. Dereliction of duty will also receive its deserts, but I hope there will be no occasion to record any instance of it. One hoodlum of pronounced type—young or old—disposed of is of more importance than the capture of 74 half a dozen ex-convicts. You have filled the jail to overflowing, but the task is now to fill the House of Correction.

“It is much to be regretted that citizens too often are averse to giving testimony in cases where hoodlums are defendants. In such exigencies it devolves upon us to swear to complaints and to bring the reluctant witnesses into court to testify. Only last night a citizen was knocked down and robbed at the Mission by young hoodlums, and the act was witnessed by another citizen who refused to testify in the matter. An officer swore to the complaint, the parties are under arrest, and the reluctant witness to the affair will be brought into court.”

At the same time that I made the above statement to the officers, I appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the officers in breaking up this reign of terror by appearing as witnesses when called upon. Without witnesses, the hoodlums could not be prosecuted.

Before my election as Chief, several papers had censured the police, and the *Bulletin* of November 24, 1875, on the eve of my taking over, criticized the outgoing Chief as unqualified for the office, as he had been a merchant before his election, with no police experience.

“In this respect,” said the *Bulletin*, “the new Chief will be a great improvement. He has for years been connected with the police department in various capacities. He is an officer of experience and tact. He will also be sure of support in the Police Commission for any changes in the discipline or organization that he may think it advisable to introduce. He and Judge Louderback

are representatives of the People's Party, and with them the removal of the police force from all political influences is a cardinal doctrine.”

There were several administrative issues on which Mayor Bryant and I differed. Possibly the most important was the special police force to reinforce the regulars.

Said Mayor Bryant: “I shall oppose the system of special policemen and shall endeavor to have it abolished. If any citizen wants an officer, let him send to headquarters and get one of the regular force. There are some 300 or 400 of 75 these special policemen in the city whose duties should all be performed by the regular force.”

The opposing view is expressed in a newspaper article of the day:

“Chief Ellis, in his annual report, shows that the force, though far smaller in proportion to the size of the city it protects than any similar body of police in any other large city, has done more real work and under greater disadvantages than are met with in other places. There are 154 names on the roll as against 2,159 in New York, 1,089 in Philadelphia, and 8,833 in London. In the opinion of many persons in San Francisco, this city needs a considerably stronger protection in proportion to the inhabitants than any of these other cities. Its criminal element is of a more desperate, aggressive kind and it has a vicious class almost peculiar to itself.”

Again:

“Chief Ellis's system of grading the efficiency of his subordinates by the number of arrests made is a good one, although at times it has been abused.\* The Chief was compelled to resort to it on finding, when he assumed control of the force, that some of the names on the roll were credited with no arrests, a fact which indicated that these officers were not making themselves particularly useful. When the record system was introduced, a gratifying improvement was noticed.

This system had been vigorously opposed.—L.E.R.

“Proof that the assertion that the police of San Francisco are as efficient an organization as can be found elsewhere is the fact that 50 per cent of property stolen was recovered and that the arrests per officer were 141 as against 37 in New York, 8 in London, and similarly small averages in other cities. The force has been drilled in the use of the police baton, and the value of this instruction was demonstrated in the recent riots.

“Among minor improvements suggested by the Chief, we are glad to note that he recommends the adoption of a uniform of the style worn by the police of New York. That which is worn here is about as ugly and as little adapted to its purpose as could be imagined. If the police are to be uniformed at all, it should be in a distinctive way. There is no special reason why the uniform should be hideous.

“There is no doubt that the usefulness of the force has been largely increased under the skillful management of Chief Ellis, whom the city has to thank for his painstaking and well-directed efforts to improve the force.”

Politics ruled the municipal jobs in San Francisco, as in other cities; and of course with changes of administration, no continuity of action could be maintained, as the Chief of Police was elected every two years. My predecessor, a business man, did not and could not bring to the office first-hand knowledge of criminal life as I, with my 20 years' experience, could.

Whigs and Democrats fought out their battles, and both had much to say of an administrator who had been elected by the People's Independent Ticket. Even the new Mayor would not too greatly oppose the prevailing sentiment. He was too shrewd to enter upon a course such as had wrecked a previous administration.

The Police Department is the test and standard of good municipal government. As one newspaper article of the day expressed it: “Without a reliable system, very little can be effected, even by so competent an officer as Mr. Ellis.”

In the preceding administration it would seem that there was little or no cooperation between the officers of the law and the courts. According to Judge Louderback:

“Justice is nearly as bad as it was in 1856. Then the Roughts had the city, and it was impossible to convict one of them. Now the Gentlemen have the city, and all efforts to secure a conviction of anyone of that class are futile.”

Public officials are ever under attack, even after they have retired. In June, 1889, after a man named Rice had been killed by an ex-officer, the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* carried an item to the effect that applicants for positions on the police force, “when Ellis was Chief,” paid \$500 each for appointments to duty. I immediately wrote the following letter, which the *Bulletin* published:

“My term of office as Chief of Police expired December 3, 1877, and my associates in the Police Commission were 77 Mayor Bryant and Judges Wright, Louderback and Farrell. Police appointments were not sold during my term. The person arrested for killing Rice was appointed on the 4th of May, 1880, two and a half years after I ceased to be Chief of the department.

“You will understand that it is of grave concern to me that 12 years after I severed my connection with the department my name should be coupled with the disparaging rumors of nine years ago, and that through the columns of the *Bulletin* —a blow from an unexpected quarter. Will you please give this the same publicity that was given the rumor?”

In reply the *Bulletin* said:

“We have to speak a good word also for ex-Chief of Police Ellis, and must say he was the best Chief that ever ruled in San Francisco or perhaps ever will. He was a simon-pure American, and it was Americans who voted him in!”

Then followed a list of bosses, religious groups “and hundreds of others who have helped to make San Francisco a political Hell.”

One of the important events during my period as Chief was the organization of the Safety Committee of 1877. The story is told by William T. Coleman in the *Century Magazine* of November, 1891. Mr. Coleman had been chairman of both the Vigilance Committee of 1851 and that of 1856. I quote from his article:

“For 21 years the good influence of the great Vigilance Committee (of 1856) endured. Then came a movement in July, 1877, the importance of which has never been appreciated, either in California or elsewhere. It was the direct out-growth of the railway strikes and socialistic agitation in New York, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and other large eastern, cities.

“At first it was thought no outbreak would occur in San Francisco, even though the Chinese question was troublesome, but on July 23 Mayor Bryant and Chief of Police Ellis, having unmistakable evidences of very serious trouble, called on General McComb, Commander of the State forces, and requested him to hold his entire force in readiness to support the peace officers.”

Fearing that the militia would not be able to cope with 78 a large riotous element, General McComb in turn requested a public meeting of leading citizens, and asked their organized aid in protecting the city. The work was in many respects a repetition of that of the earlier Vigilance Committee, unhampered by any opposition within or without. Governor Irwin came promptly to the city. Urgent messages were sent to President Rutherford B. Hayes and to the Secretary of War, asking for arms and ammunition from the Benicia arsenal and for the presence in the San Francisco harbor of the United States vessels at Mare Island Navy Yard.

Both requests were promptly complied with, and within 24 hours 1,760 rifles and 500 carbines were assembled. Rolls of membership were opened for signature, a password was chosen, badges marked “Committee of Safety” were distributed under authority of the Mayor and myself, and members were sworn in as special police.

It was deemed unwise, in arming all members, to display so large a force of arms, so 6,000 hickory pick handles were converted into large police clubs, and, with side arms, every member was thus

armed. The entire force was organized into companies of 100, which selected their own officers. All were ordered under drill, instruction, and general discipline. By night there was an effective force for duty under my control.

“Under a general authority given by the Mayor and the Chief of Police,” continues Mr. Coleman, “our members sent on duty were sworn in as special police. It was my specific aim, and I made it my duty, to confine the powers of each member to aiding the police; and in the whole action of the force and patrol I allowed no step to be taken except by direction and request of the peace officers, conveyed through me.

“Before night we sent out details for active duty, under orders of the Chief of Police.”

An intense feeling existed throughout the city on the night of the 25th, and as the criminal and lawless elements were gathered in crowds and squads in every part of the city, causing much annoyance and fear, the committee agreed with me that to arrest these people with no adequate means to imprison them would be unwise. The committee therefore requested that war vessels lying off the city front confine such prisoners as might be sent to them, up to 1500; or if there were more, that all Goat Island be placed under patrol. Where large quantities of arms were found, guards were placed with orders to blow up the buildings in case of trouble. There were 1500 men on the outside and an available force of 5000 who could be rallied within an hour.

On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights a feeling of fear was general in the city, fire being most dreaded.

“Much of the information,” says Mr. Coleman, “was received through the Chief of Police, and as such reports of disorder were communicated to me or my adjutant, we either sent telegraphic orders to ward commanders to act, or dispatched strong bodies of men from the main hall to the scene of action. A Cavalry force of 300 patrolled the manufacturing area of the city, fearing the setting of more fires.

“On Friday night we supported the police in the largest and severest engagement of the campaign. We were informed of the enemy's movements, including a proposed attack on our headquarters and barracks. The main attack was designed against the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's properties, because of its connection with the Chinese immigration.

“It began by firing the large lumber yards and surrounding combustible material. The attacking force was large. The firemen and fire brigade were soon in action with all the available police; our forces, numbering 700 men, arrived soon after, on a double-quick in good order (to reinforce the fire brigade). The engagement became general and was stubbornly contested for about two hours, at the end of which time the united forces had routed the rioters in every quarter . . . (and the National Guard took over).

“On Saturday, the 28th, we withdrew all our forces from active duty. . . . The Chief of Police advised me that he was satisfied he could then take care of the city.”

At the expiration of my period as Chief, on December 5, 1877, the entire police force presented me with a gold watch and chain. In the stem of the watch was a large diamond, and on the cover was my family coat of arms. This gift I valued greatly, for it was given me at the *expiration* of my 80 term, when no favors were expected and the donors had no axes to grind.

Commenting on my retirement, the *Post* said:

“Mr. Ellis will be missed. We never had a harder working or more able officer. He will leave the force to his successor in a well disciplined and smoothly working condition. There are still defects to be cured. The special and substitute system is not a good one, and there is too much wire-pulling in the matter of appointments. There are too many cliques, and there is too much diplomacy in retaining positions. Still, these evils have been considerably mitigated lately.

“While we welcome the coming, let us also speed the parting guest. Chief Ellis has stepped down and out. His record is before the public. While we have not hesitated to condemn some of his official acts, on the whole we are bound to credit him with having done his duty under very trying

circumstances, in a dignified and successful manner. This was especially noticeable during the July disturbances, an occasion that called for the display of executive qualities of the highest order.”

I retired from the San Francisco Police Department unhappy in my relations with the professional politicians who surrounded me, but secure in the knowledge that I had done my job well and that my ability, integrity and industry were understood and appreciated by my brother officers and the citizens at large.

In a letter to my mother in November, 1877, before the expiration of my term, I tried in the following words to calm her anxiety, resulting from a misunderstanding of a previous letter:

“I had stated to you that, while Chief of Police, under the law I could not leave the state. That is all. Referring to it, you express the hope that I have ‘done nothing wrong.’

“No misfortune has overtaken me. I voluntarily retire from office at the expiration of my term next month, after 22 years' service, with a clear and perfect record. I declined a renomination on account of ill health, and other reasons equally patent.

“I retire with the proud consciousness of having done my 81 whole duty, and leaving the department as its head and chief. 'tis a matter of pride to me to say that in the various occupations in which I have been engaged I have always become the master. Am I not my mother's son?

“As for committing a crime, with me 'tis simply a moral impossibility. My affairs public and private are in a very satisfactory condition.”

EDITOR'S NOTE: After his retirement Capt. Ellis lived for 32 years. Though a sufferer from inflammatory rheumatism, he embarked in 1878 on a business partnership, joining an old shipmate, his mate when he was sailing the Pacific, in a hay, grain and feed business (Ellis & Miller) at 21 Spear Street, San Francisco.

That same year he took a trip around the world with members of his family, and the following year revisited New England, where he busied himself acquiring family heirlooms.

On his return to California he built a new home in Sunol Glen which was thereafter to be the family seat and which became the major interest of his life.

Two more trips, one to the Hawaiian Islands and the other around the world, were followed by an appointment in his 70th year to a consular position at Turks Island in the West Indies. The experience proved unpleasant, and he returned home after a year.

The remainder of his life was spent quietly. He worked at his memoirs, attended numerous lodge and other organizational meetings, and managed his estate. His death was on December 15, 1909.

Laurence R. Cook *Occidental College, Los Angeles*

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*Henry Hiram Ellis, last Chief of Police of San Francisco elected by direct vote of the people, 1875.*

## MY BOYHOOD and YOUTH

By HENRY HIRAM ELLIS [*Fifty copies of this section, containing information for family consumption only, were privately printed and bound into as many copies of the regular trade edition.*]

### PROLOGUE

“It's a girl, Henry!”

As the opening of the door and the announcement came simultaneously, Henry (my father) looked up from his reading with an expression of relief and pleasure.

“Thank the Lord for a change!” he exclaimed. “Come in, Lottie, and tell me how Lizzie is.”

“Lottie” (“Aunt Charlotte,” father's cousin) came into the library. She might have stepped from an Apache Indian tribe, so lithe, spare of frame and erect was she, with her deep-set dark eyes beneath heavy brows and her coal black hair combed straight back from a weather-tanned face. But the smile and snapping good humor in her eyes and the contour of her head and face, revealed the New England strain of ancestry. Dressed in a calico wrapper of no particular color, which hung “like a yard of pump water,” to quote this nautical father of mine, Lottie nevertheless held one's attention by the grace and poise of body and the strength of her personality.

Clothes were of small concern to this seasoned pioneer, one of the brave women who came West with their men across the plains in covered wagons. Indeed, she drove one of the four-horse teams, enduring the hardships and withstanding Indian attacks. In one such attack, she thrust her four year old daughter between her feet, clamped a wooden water bucket over her head, and whipped her horses into a dead run to join the others. Arrows penetrated the wagon side and cover but missed the driver and her child. Aunt Charlotte was a wonder and inspiration to us children.

“Lizzie is doing fine, Henry,” she answered, “and you have the prettiest baby girl you ever laid eyes on. I haven't time to stop. Lizzie will need me shortly, and I must look after the boys a bit. They mustn't feel their noses out of joint because a baby has arrived, and a girl at that! And be sure Henry, you remember that, too!” With the timely admonition, father was left to himself for it would be indelicate for him to go to his wife's room too soon after the birth of a child. “Babies are all alike anyway, and not interesting until they can talk!” for so he had once expressed himself. Nor was a sixth child any novelty. Another Girl, well he was glad of that and he could take care of her as well as the four boys and their big sister, in fine shape. The room in which he sat was his “Sanctum Sanctorum.” Father was never interrupted when reading (and when was he not!) unless for something important. The details of family life were not important to this man who could spend so few waking hours with it.

Serving on the police force for nearly 20 years and now Captain of the detective force of San Francisco, he was out until the early morning hours. Time for reading, a late sleep, a hurried breakfast of coffee and heel of a French loaf, during which time he scanned the morning paper, and he was off for the day and sometimes evening and night.

His latch-key sounded his return, sometimes while we were at dinner, and the younger children would greet him at the door, and on Saturday nights, maul him for the molasses or peanut candy, a special treat.

No such intimate term as “Dad” ever occurred to us. Children were taught “to be seen and not heard” unless spoken to, to answer respectfully, “No Sir” “or “Yes Ma'am.” This formal respect made a chasm between parent and child, more often bridged by the mother. Obedience without question, respectful silence, were admirable traits in those “Good old days” and I am not sure that a bit of such philosophy would not be a wholesome diet for the growing generation!

Don't mistake me. Father was not unkind or thoughtless of his family. He was a liberal provider both in material things and cultural attainments; his program for his children was an ambitious one; his home, one of the best in the comfortably well-to-do families of pioneers. He was the provider,

and it was woman's work to rear and discipline the family. Indeed, after a few experiences in seeking advice from Father, Mother preferred to do so. If the boys quarreled, as boys will, "Let them fight it out" was Father's advice. "Not in my home!" responded Mother, quite as positive a character as Father. But all had a respectful attitude towards Father's opinions and commands. Example: "Bert, Dot, the clock struck eight!" Enough said. We left play or reading, got our safety kerosene lamp, and with a goodnight to everyone went off up two flights of stairs to bed, but not always immediately into bed, I'll admit.

The one exception to this regulated life was the Summer vacations in the Calaveras Valley home Father had built, and which he enjoyed over the weekends. To reach this home, we crossed by ferry, to the Oakland side, took a train to Niles, and thence nine miles in a spring-wagon (a misnomer for no springs existed under the board seats) through a canyon over the hills; or we took a steamboat to Alviso at the foot of San Francisco Bay, piled baggage, pets, parcels, lunch and ourselves into a "spring-wagon" and rode in the heat and dust, up the valley and over the high hills, and down into our valley. They were larks, those summers! Riding, swimming in the clear sparkling water of the stream which flowed through the valley; hunting, fishing, or just playing with a large Newfoundland dog, always our companion. Sometimes we did not keep our pets long, for poison put out to kill coyotes, which ravished the lambs and calves, often took our pets, and brought tragedy to the family.

The boys were mystified one day by a darting streak of light on the hillside. Hastily climbing the hill, they found our Kitty frantic with her head firmly wedged in a tin can. Kitty survived but never since has any of our family been guilty of leaving a rough-edged open can lying around.

Father owned a large part of this little valley and a large herd of milk cows. Bert and I would waylay the cows en route to the corral for milking and entice one aside with an armful of hay. As she ate, each taking a side, we would milk her as best we could into our tin cups. We selected the wrong cow one day, and she protested the double action and let fly with both hind legs. We landed in the dust of the road.

Country life was simple and primitive in the sixties and early seventies. "Help" was left to care for Father and the city home, to ready it for our return while all helped to carry on in the country. Water was brought from the stream by buckets suspended from a wooden yoke which fitted Phil's shoulders, and he must keep the barrel full. Another boy, usually Capen, had to keep the woodbox filled. The younger ones helped in various small ways while sister Iza and Mother did the main housework. Mother, as you may have guessed, was a thrifty New England housewife. She would brook no fault-finding. If the bread was dry, the meat tough, food too salty, "Drier, tougher or saltier where there's none!" would be all the satisfaction we would get. How often have I blessed her for the practical demonstration of getting along without or of substitution.

Hunting was a delight to the boys, and rabbits, squirrels, quail or on rare occasions, deer added to our supplies brought from the city. The old shot-guns had to have good care. The ramrod was used not only to ram down the shot, powder and wads, but also to clean the long barrel of the gun, with an oiled rag. Cleaning and reloading his gun one day at the kitchen table where Sister Iza was preparing lunch, Capen rammed down the load just a bit too hard, and off went the charge beside sister and through the roof. Iza was sure her head had gone too!

The birds were an endless source of pleasure and we loved those that nested under the verandas, at least until a visitor asked, "Why do you allow those dirty birds to nest under the verandas?"

"Why, we love them, they are so tame and interesting."

"Yes, but they will fill your house with bedbugs."

"Impossible!"

"Yes? Well, then, let me take one down and show you." There were bedbugs in the mud nests.

"Can it be that those are the 'fleas' which have been devouring the baby and which we can not find?"

A search of the tongue-and-grooved pine boards, revealed the miserable things well entrenched.

“Bedbugs come from the pine forests, you know, or you do now,” said our visitor. “Here you have a perfect situation for them.

But not so perfect after Mother and Sister went to work with a feather and corrosive sublimate. It was death to the bugs, relief to baby and all, from the “fleas.”

Our nearest and only neighbor lived a mile away so we had to be well stocked with provisions. There was no borrowing or running to the store for this or that. Our neighbor did borrow occasionally. She sent one of her children for a needle, one day.

“Hasn't your mother any needles?” asked Mother.

“No, Ma'am. She had one, but she lost it.”

This family was always in a predicament of some kind. One day it was to borrow some potatoes.

“You see,” said the child, “Lester shot a chicken for dinner and he hit the kerosene can and the oil ran down into the potato sack and we can't get the taste off the potatoes.”

We bought fruit, vegetables, etc. from this family, but the supply was always doubtful. On sending for butter one day, the children brought word that they didn't have any left 'cause the pigs had gotten out of the pen, knocked over the buttercrock in the creek (where it was kept cool) and eaten it all. They were shiftless but managed to live, however strenuous it was at times.

Neighbor helped neighbor in those days, so it was natural for one of those children to appear one day and call for Mother to “Come in a hurry! Mammy is awful sick,” said the child. “And Pappy has gone to town! Can you come right away?” Of course Mother could, and well she knew the task awaiting her, for “Coming events cast their shadow before.” In her efficiency and knowledge of the family, Mother made a hasty survey of the larder.

“When will your father be back, has he gone for groceries?” she asked of the children. The children didn't know.

“Well Lester, you go and kill a chicken as fast as you can, and clean it too! What do you think your mother is going to eat with only potatoes in the house?”

By the time “Pappy” got home late that afternoon, a brand new baby girl was ready to present to him.

I have said it was a beautiful little valley. The Spring Valley Water Company of San Francisco found in the mountain-setting and clear-running unpolluted streams, utility of more value than beauty. Our valley was condemned and pre-empted for use. While tears ran down our cheeks, the great trees were cut down and a dam constructed at one end, forming a perfect reservoir. We moved out but never found the valley's equal for a summer home.

We must come back to Father, awaiting Lottie's call. Lottie was major-domo in the home now, for Florence Nightingale's work had not extended to America, so that neighbor or relative took over where the doctor left off. That help sometimes cost the worker dear, as when our mother went next door at time of childbirth, to find the expectant mother ill with diphtheria. The infant did not survive. Mother brought home the dread disease to her own family, and though a long siege ensued, we were fortunate in no losses.

Aunt Charlotte gave Father the password and he hurried to call on his wife and new daughter.

“Well Lizzie, Lottie tells me you came through with flying colors and have a girl this time! We'll have to run the flag to the masthead and fire a royal salute! What are you going to call her? Anita? A pretty Spanish name, but you know my predilection for family names and strong ones! She has hair enough for a poodle, but I hope there are some brains in that very small head. Can't say I see very much of a baby bundled up in those shawls, however she will grow in time I dare say.”

After a bit more teasing, Father returned to his book, or possibly to dreaming and reminiscing over his own early life. Planning now for an enlarged family and home was a far cry from his boyhood days in Waterville, when penury was his companion, and his mother was making her heroic struggle to inspire her boys with vision and desire for a better position in life. How far had he come in these twenty years toward the goal he had set for himself? He had done well so far, witness this home he had built on Telegraph Hill, "Loma Alta," in San Francisco; every comfort within and the neighborhood all he could desire. He had chosen this location on the highest hill, for the view was magnificent. From the summit, a signal tower formally announced by means of flags, all incoming and outward-bound vessels.

To the East and North was the water-front, but it would require the agility of a goat to get down there from atop Lombard Street. Beyond, the Bay stretched to the Oakland shore. To the South, the city sprawled over the sand dunes where a new broad Market way was replacing the old planked road to the ocean, and as land increased by filling, the city moved further out into the bay, with docks and wharves extended. We could look west to the Pacific over Meiggs Wharf, the Presidio, Fort, and Black Point guarding the Golden Gate, and to glorious sunsets. To the North and East, were the islands Angel, Alcatraz (The Rock), Yerba Buena (good herb) called Goat Island, with Mt. Tamalpais towering over all in the blue haze.

Could a past mariner have a more fitting setting for his home? It was no wonder the children loved the sea and those white-winged travelers of the oceans!

It had been a good place for the children. To be sure the goats disputed our rights to the top of Telegraph Hill (where Coit Tower now stands), and a street intersection was not the best location for a baseball diamond, but the steep ascent made slow going for two-wheeled carts loaded with coal, or for winded horses as they zig-zagged up Lombard Street, the only street available for residents of the Hill. A few of the city streets were paved with planks or cobblestones, but not Lombard. The heavy rains cut the yellow clay into small ravines, gullies, and holes which wore down somewhat during the long, dry season.

There were broad, planked sidewalks spiked down, but the worn planks and spikes, rising to menace shoes, the split and splintered wood and knot-holes, were a constant source of annoyance. When the street was blasted for sewers and the boys dug in for forts and fights, a dynamite accident occurred. When the warning signal sounded retreat, a neighbor boy was too deliberate and a piece of rock pierced his mouth and chin. The wounded “hero” recovered, however, amid due sympathy.

To interrupt the games and call in the boys, every family used a hand bell and all knew each bell. “There goes Johnsons', Efforts', the Ellis'!” etc. and away they would run.

Meiggs Wharf was another rendezvous for the boys. They might get a chance to go out on a fishing boat, and the sailors were a fascination as were the monkeys and other animals brought from far places.

One might say that the inhabitants of Telegraph Hill were as heterogeneous a lot as the Zoo of Meiggs Wharf, but we will say a cosmopolitan lot. This was San Francisco. The Irish Browns, the English Efforts, and the Welsh Jones were our closest friends. My chum was born of a sweet Scotch mother and a dour Scotch father. Gertrude stayed the night more often with me than I with her. Breakfast was difficult enough at any time but a soup plate of oatmeal with *milk* and no sugar was too difficult for me. Opposite lived a Spanish family, patrician descendants, grantees from the crown of Spain. They retained their courtly manners.

Our neighbor on the south was a Slovene with an American wife. It was she who lost her baby with diphtheria. He was a wholesale fruit dealer, and both finely educated.

Below them, was a French-German combination, whose children I envied, for they spoke three languages, and employed three maids who spoke the three languages!

*Waterville, Maine, 1850. Birthplace of Henry Hiram Ellis, 1829. (House with cross.)*

Our neighbor in the rear was as Irish as his temper. To punish us for our mischievous boys, Mr. Johnson built a twenty-foot high fence along side our house. It hurt his garden more than us and

when after ten years, father offered to replace it with a more ornamental one of eight feet, the spiteful neighbor was quite agreeable.

Incidentally, after Messrs. Flood, Huntington and Hopkins built their mansions on Knob Hill, a spite fence was built next to the property of one of these nabobs. A tough lawsuit provoked more discussion than did the little incident on Telegraph Hill.

At this time Father added another story to our home by raising the house, and adding much needed rooms; a library, sewing room, for all garments were made in the home, two bedrooms and a storage pantry off the dining room. There was still but one bathroom and weekly baths was the order of the day, but running water in our bedrooms sufficed to keep us respectable. The boys christened the big pantry, "The Tank." Flour, brown sugar (there was no white) by the barrel, and other supplies in quantity were kept there, as well as pies, cakes, cookies baked in week's supply; and Mother only had the key. From time to time cake, pie, nuts or other goodies would be missing, much to Mother's bewilderment. A pie in brother Philip's bureau drawer solved the mystery. When asked how he opened the door, he said: "O, that was easy, Mother, you left the key on the sideboard and I made a duplicate." No deserts for a week for Phil, and all his favorites!

As mentioned, our house was built on a hillside and now the rear was four stories with laundry, coal and wood bins, fruit and wine rooms on the lower level which opened onto a backyard where lived some sickly chickens and a few sunstarved plants.

Mother's ingenious mind conceived the plan to build a platform on the kitchen level, over half of this yard, where the family wash could possibly dry. Brother Bert, as quick to recognize an opportunity as Mother was to make one, turned the lower yard into a pet sanctuary. Beams and planking above were perfect for pigeon cotes; the discarded tin bathtub made an ideal lake for lizards and turtles; mice and guinea pigs were sheltered in cages in the corners, originally intended for, but abandoned by the hens, which hovered instead, in the slim rays of sun, which moved over the half-yard. Always there was a dog, if only a mangy stray off the street. One day, when Mother was resting quietly on the lounge, the menagerie owner came into the room with a shaggy bundle

in his arms: pleadingly he asked, "Please, Mother, mayn't I keep this billy goat, Johnny says it will give milk in a year?"

Rising to her feet, no longer indisposed, Mother exclaimed, "No, run find that boy, tell him we will have no billy goats, milk or no milk!"

Still reminiscing and musing on the years to come, "I must make some memoranda for my book," says Father, "for already in the twenty years, many interesting experiences are dimming in memory's chamber, and I want to leave the story of my life to my children." And so began the accumulation of notes that at odd moments and on odd scraps of paper, were jotted down. It is from those notes, I have woven Father's life story. Now, for the major part of this book, he will tell his own story. I gladly yield the stage to him.

LUCY ELLIS RIDDELL *Casita de Loma Vista Altadena, California*

### **MY BOYHOOD AND YOUTH** By HENRY HIRAM ELLIS

1829—A small craft is launched, and sails through home waters with toil and poverty, imagination and determination.

*"Poverty for a boy is his best inheritance; that is, if he has ambition."*

I had both, yet I write of myself with some misgivings, for I have limited ability and less education. My active, adventurous life has been successful because of the principles I believed in and practiced, and I hope my descendants will find the story interesting and helpful.

My birthplace was a small community of old English, French and Scotch families, set off and incorporated in 1802, from Winslow, Maine, which was settled in 1754 by Captain John Winslow. He built Fort Halifax (a block-house of huge logs) as a defense against the Indians, at the junction of the Kennebec and Sebasticook rivers.

Mother's ancestors, Nehemiah Getchel and Asa Redington, were early settlers. They built a dam and double sawmill on the Kennebec and began lumbering from the magnificent primeval forests of hard woods which covered the country.

Redington had been a Revolutionary soldier, and Getchel a guide for Benedict Arnold's ill-fated expedition up the Kennebec and Chaudiere rivers—the attempt to bring the French to our side in the war. Poorly equipped and trained, battling blizzards, icy waters and starvation, they failed. But it was a bold, heroic move for a man who later betrayed his country.

Our little home was built on the brink of Power's Hill, overlooking a depression, which had been a sort of bay, where, it was claimed, Arnold had built and repaired some of his canoes.

Another ancestor, Mother's father, James Crommett, was a deserter from the English ranks in Quebec. To lose his identity he changed his name from Crommwell to Crommett by a few strokes of his pen—and all for the love of a dark-eyed New England beauty, Anne Delano (French Huguenot, originally de la Noe), who became my grandmother Crommett.

(Sergeant Richard Cromwell fought with Wolfe at the storming of Quebec and was commended on the Plains of Abraham for valor.)

My father, Charles Henry Ellis, was born on the old family homestead in Ellisville, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, March 9, 1806. He was a descendant of Lieutenant John Ellis, who came from England in 1630 to the Plymouth Colony in America.

For eight generations our family had furnished men who “went down to the sea in ships,” but my father had no liking for the sea, and after a few trials went to Boston for commercial training and a business career, extending his interests into Maine, Massachusetts, the British provinces, and the West Indies. He lost what success he had attained in the panic of 1837, the worst known in the country, which ship-wrecked thousands. The panic was brought on partly by the action of President Andrew Jackson who closed the Bank of the United States, and later issued his Specie Circular, which required purchasers of public lands to pay for them in hard cash. Another cause of panic was

the law which divided among the people a \$35,000,000 balance in the National Treasury. (Mother's share was \$600.)

Father never recovered financially from the blow, nor did he recover his initiative. He continued in business, but we saw him infrequently and he contributed little to our support.

My earliest recollection of my father was, when perched on his shoulder, seeing an organ-grinder and his monkey. I came to look upon him as a superior being with his tales of far countries and gifts such as oranges, nuts, and once, English yellow cloth-topped boots for Austin and me.

I meant to imitate him.

Brother Austin Freeman was five years my junior and had an exceptionally fine mind, but not my rugged constitution. He died in his 18th year, probably of shellfish poisoning, in Portland, Maine. It was the greatest blow my mother ever suffered, for she idolized him. After Father and I sailed for California, she was entirely dependent upon him, if one may use that term in relation to my mother.

My only recollection of my sister Helen was her tiny casket placed on our parlor table, and too many people in our small room. I was only two years old.

The better part of us comes from our mothers. Mine was a great woman, strong in body and mind. Nothing could break her heroic spirit. She sat and walked upright as a dragoon. No titled ancestry could have given my mother more dignity and poise. None had a keener sense of honor and character. Only once did she mention to me her days of prosperity.

At the time of national disaster and Father's failure, our home (a gift from her father) was fraudulently taken from her by my Uncle Russ (Russell Ellis). Mother rose superior to the fate which befell her and demonstrated to her little world the heroic blood which flowed in her veins. With two small children to support she opened a dress and millinery shop and won the support of the village folk. (Later, with my aid, she recovered her home, and died in it at 86 years of age.)

Our poverty was the cause of my first shame. When I was at play in the street one day with my crowd of boys, Mother called to me as she passed by, "Hiram, it is supptime. You will find bread and sweetened water [with molasses, for sugar was a luxury beyond us] on the table."

How the boys laughed! I wished that the earth would open and swallow me. Poverty! So mean and degrading! I determined then and there that we would not live so always.

I did all I could to help Mother. I made my own spending money by building and selling box-traps, mending pocket knives, and making candy of Puerto Rican molasses in an iron kettle hung on the crane in the fireplace, cooking myself as well as the candy. But it brought me real money. I dug potatoes which sold for 12 1/2 cents a bushel. For setting up ninepins I earned 6 1/4 cents an hour. For digging potatoes I earned my first pair of boots. They were too small and I froze one big toe running in the snow beside a sleigh.

"No wonder," said Bootmaker McKinnie, "your feet are as big as horse-blocks."

On commencement day at the college, getting up before day for the 10-mile walk to and from the Pond, I gathered hundreds of water lilies which I sold for a penny apiece. Going into the water naked, I would come out with my legs streaming blood from the myriad of leeches fastened to them. At Titanic Falls above the Pond, Frenchmen would gather schools of silver lampreys (eels, called pinkies), which, pickled and hauled in bings to Quebec, were sold for delicacies. Our inherited English prejudices prevented us from trying lampreys as food.

"They are snakes, and nobody but Frenchmen and slaves eats snakes!"

In summer and in winter the woods and waters were the source of our sports and, later, our work. I loved all kinds of sport, but excelled in swimming and running. Once, as a young boy I tried fishing, but fell in reaching for a turtle and nearly drowned. George Spear heard me and pulled me out and carried me home on his back. I took my dose of strap from my frightened mother, as she had forbidden me to swim in the rivers or climb tall trees or indulge in other dangerous sports,

which were a rugged boy's delight. No river was too wide or swift for us to swim, no ice too new for us test, and to run on the underlying timbers through bridges was a challenge we never resisted.

Once I played hookey for a week and spent all the school time in the river or on the sandy shore. Lung power made me a good swimmer and runner. I could run 10 miles to Cousin Chase's farm in Fairfield, and won a bet doing so.

Above the dam the Kennebec River was half a mile wide. A good swimmer could cross it to Tupton Simpson's farm and return without rest, except to tread water, or swim on his back. Dick Knight and I did it over and over again. We could dive under an 18- or 20-foot raft of boards at the mills.

One day I swam alone to the Winslow shore, to the old log fort, or intended to. The current on that side ran strong and swift, carrying refuse from the mills upstream, as well as from Winslow, and it was a feat to get through the drift. As I approached the mill, I saw on top of the of driftwood, edgings and shavings, a long flat wallet.

With a vision of probable wealth within my grasp, I lost my head in pushing frantically into the mass and breaking it up. The wallet sank. Making several attempts to dive for it through the debris, I finally secured it, but came up to the surface winded and somewhat worse for the struggle. But a greater feat was before me. With other boys swimming about and on the shore, how was I to get my prize ashore, naked as I was? Luck favored me. I made the shore, got into my clothes fast, and ran all the way home.

Mother and three girls were at work sewing. Slapping down my prize, spattering everything, I shouted, "Mother, see what I found!" Mother looked at the wallet, slowly arose and without asking where I had found it, began to unwind the long strap. To me it looked as long as a jib down-haul and when the wallet opened and a thick roll of bank bills fell out, I could contain myself no longer. I danced about the room exclaiming, "It's all mine, every dollar!" Aladdin's lamp would have had no appeal for me then.

But my vision of wealth received a terrible shock when Mother calmly asked for her hat and said, “You come with me, Hiram.”

It never occurred to me that the money was not mine. Had I not found it and saved it from the river and a gang of boys? I trembled at the thought that I might lose it. “Where to, Mother?” I asked.

“Over to Bennett's store,” she replied, and I nearly collapsed. I had no need to ask, “What for?” I knew.

Bennett identified the wallet as the property of Walter Getchel and then counted the notes—\$1,200. Walter and William Getchel were the owners of the mill, and my uncles by marriage.

The wallet was restored to the astonished owner before he had discovered his loss. He had thrown his coat over a brace in the mill and the wallet had fallen out to lodge in the floating waste below.

For the recovery of his money this generous man gave me one dollar, of which sum Mother allowed me to keep two bits. Even that sum I failed to hold long, for I invested it in a tame crow I had long coveted.

It was not a happy exchange, for many were the maledictions hurled at “Jack” (the crow) and his owner. He was a cunning and mischievous fellow, stealing bits of food, handkerchiefs from the line, and eggs from the henhouse of a neighbor. He would swoop down for a teaspoon if nothing else was available. Uncle Jake set a trap for him, but Jack was too wise and wary. Then one day Jack disappeared, and we suspected Uncle Jake.

By my twelfth year, I realized that I must make a place in the world by my own unaided efforts. I took on heavier duties, but above all I was still a schoolboy with abounding life and the urge to play. Teddy Roosevelt once said, “No boy will be much of a man unless he is a good deal of a boy.” I fear I was too much of a boy to be a good deal of a man, but my ambition knew no limit. I dislike to enlarge on my boyhood exploits, but to suppress them would be like *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out.

I went to school in winter, but was “bound out” on Clifford's farm in summer for \$2 a month. I became inured to hard labor, breakfast and supper by candlelight, labor in the fields all day, milking and care of stock by lanternlight. I would go to bed dead tired.

I fell off the rack of hay one day and broke both bones in my left arm. I was most impatient at a delay in my work of 10 hours before it was set.

Out of school hours in winter I did chores for Mother, some of which were not easy. I banked the house with snow for the winter, tunneled through drifts which sometimes reached the eaves of our little house to make exit to the outdoors, and brought all water a distance of two blocks in summer heat and winter bitter cold, in buckets suspended from a wooden yoke on my shoulders. I chopped wood, I hauled grain to the mills, returning with slabs, lumber or edgings to be sold, and on Saturdays, when farmers brought produce to town, I would make a stand opposite our house on Silver and Main Streets and help with their sales. When Mother's grain was milled, she had it separated in the bag. Flour, midlings (graham) and bran, all were utilized.

Our yellow school building on the Common had a little portico over the entrance about the size and shape of a schooner's galley, and within, near the entrance, was a huge fireplace with big iron dogs. The room was black with smoke and age. Near the fireplace was a huge desk which would hold three boys. I knew, for once I was locked in it during the lunch hour for some misdemeanor, I doubled my knees under me, when the coast was clear, heaved up and split the top.

[Father must have been difficult for the teacher, who was his cousin, Rebecca Ellis. We have a tiny pipe carved from a knot in his desk in this same schoolroom.—L.E.R.]

There were two meeting houses in the village, a Baptist and a Universalist. Mother belonged to the former, which was

*Coat of Arms of the Capen Family.*

the older and stronger organization. In 1818 the Baptists had come to “establish in the district of Maine (Maine then being still a part of Massachusetts) an institution for the purpose of promoting

literary and theological knowledge.” Under different names the institution has been maintained to the present time. Since the Civil War it has been known as Colby College.

Our Baptist Meeting House was a large building, unpainted within and without, with a large graveyard along the side. In the dim light of this cavern, the roof timbers, as I studied them throughout the long sermon, assumed all sorts of fearful, fantastic shapes, as the preacher from his high pulpit hurled anathemas at sinners. Fearful pictures of a fiery lake wherein the condemned writhed in torture were held up to the view of a sensitive boy. One cannot conceive of the miseries I suffered during a two-hour sermon as I sat in a high-backed wooden pew where my feet could not reach the floor and my wriggling was restrained by Mother's elbow.

Outwardly cleansed to the color of a boiled lobster, I was dragged by Mother to this hideous dungeon, there to be steamed into penitence in hot summer, or, in winter, chilled into confession of my sins or questioned about the text—of which I remained as ignorant as the Apache Geronimo.

It would have been a sin to be comfortable, yet in winter I carried, carefully concealed, a little brass footwarmer for Mother. This little maneuver caused me a deal of conjecture, but my Mother could do no wrong!

Flesh and blood of an innocent boy could not stand it. I was filled with hatred for the preacher and with burning indignation at his doctrines. I remember Mother's tears because I could not “get religion.”

Thus early I became tinctured with unbelief. I could, and did, worship God in His glorious world, which I loved with all my heart, soul and bursting life; but not a theory of a Heavenly Judge who condemned as sinners even unbaptized babes to a fiery furnace!

Rather than endure the tortures of that meeting house, many a Sunday morning I lowered myself from my attic window and spent the day in the woods or on the river with my traps and chums, to return at night, hungry as a shark, take my strapping and go supperless to bed, still feeling I had won out.

Later, on the rolling deep, I studied the laws of God's universe—laws which held in their orbits the heavenly bodies by which I, infinitesimal I, could chart the course in safety, day or night. In their wonder and majesty I found God, learned that His laws were good and that only in violation of them, and His commandments, did we experience hell and damnation. When young people learn these principles, they become the servants of God. There is more of mystery and of God in a blade of grass than ever came out of the box of Houdini.

Throughout my youth, Mother inculcated strong principles and manly behavior in her boys. We dared show no weakness or lack of pride. Well do I remember a tongue-lashing she gave me one day.

“Look at me,” she exclaimed, assuming a round-shouldered slouch, thrusting her hands into imaginary pockets and scuffling her dragging feet. “This was your appearance as you came up Silver Street. It brings the bush of shame to my cheeks to see my straight-backed boy slouching along like a little old man! Aren't you ashamed to disgrace your mother by tramping the public streets in such a vagabond manner? You can never win a prize in the lottery of life, never be a gentleman if you don't hold up your head and stand erect, as God made you!”

As do all boys, we teamed up for competitive games between the gangs of upper and lower town. Snowball fights, in winter with icy balls, sometimes did real damage to property and persons. Harper Sheldon was our captain, the bravest boy I ever knew. We would follow his lead anywhere. A fine scholar, he later became an outstanding engineer.

In one gang fight, I was thrown off a 10-foot bulkhead into a crusted snowbank, and barely escaped death.

We boys declared war on some of our town elders, in particular Dr. T. for taking a poor widow's cow for debt, Schoolmaster McK. for flogging a girl with a rattan; Natty G., who lived on rum, for shooting boys with salt, when they stole his apples; Major D., who hated all boys and caned them—when he could catch them. But the meanest, most miserly, cold-blooded and soulless counterfeit of

a man in Waterville was Dr. T., tall and thin, a straight line without breadth, all keel and no beam. His ferret eyes, hidden in deep caverns under bushy eyebrows, peered out from his long yellow face. His mouth was a gash tightly closed His expression was one of envy, avarice, meanness, greed.

In our days of darkest poverty he hired me to gather apples from one of his dozen farms, wrested from his patients by hard bargaining, or through foreclosure of mortgages which he sold at extortionate rates of interest. My pay was a bucket of miserable windfalls for a day's labor, from daylight to dark.

Another character was anathema to the growing manhood of our village: Mr. B., town trustee, justice of the peace, and a Nero in the public schools. He and his brother, Squire B., both starched with self esteem, dominated the town in politics, religion, law, and morals. One a Baptist, the other a Universalist, and both damned!

But my most fearsome experience was my first sight of a dead person, a suicide who had shot himself. Forbidden to see the corpse, I climbed the shed roof, to look in upon the body and horribly contorted face of George R., whom I had known. I gazed with the same fascination a bird is said to feel under the eyes of a snake. This experience was with me many days; I had but to turn my eyes over my left shoulder, day or night, and the face was there to haunt me.

Soon after this experience, Mother asked me to go to the cellar for potatoes, a place as dark as a black cat. Mother, having no fear, allowed none in others. Passage down was through a trap door, which we lifted and hooked to the wall.

Mother noticed that I did not get up immediately to go. "Why don't you go?" she asked.

I knew that I must. I could brave anyone else, but never dreamed of defying her. I summoned all my resolution, got up, hooked back the door, got a pan and went down—George always with me, over my shoulder. Slowly I went to the bin under the brick arches, determined to be very deliberate, for

if I hurried I knew I would go into a panic. I filled the dish, walked slowly back to the break in the darkness, climbed the steps, and found Mother watching me.

“Hiram, what is the matter with you?”

“Nothing, Mother.”

“I know better. You are as white as a ghost!”

Ashamed of my weakness, I doubt if I could have told anyone, least of all my brave, strong mother.

(In this same cellar, 30 years later, my son Philip found his grandmother's false teeth set in silver. He pounded out the teeth and sold the silver.)

I loved trees to the point of adoration, caring little for short-seasoned flowers. One Sunday I dug from a swamp, and carried home on my back, two elm trees the size of walking sticks and planted them in Mother's yard. Thirty years later I had the surviving one cut down and sawed into planks and joists at Uncle Thode's mill—a great concession on his part, for the trunk was full of knots which did much damage to the saws. I fear Uncle Thode did penance for many years for the picturesque profanity that sounded through the old mill while my elm tree was being processed.

The town refused to take the lumber on the docks, so Cousin Charles Crommett stowed it in the top of his barn, where it remained several years.

When again I visited Mother, I had it shipped for a Cape Horn passage on the main hatch of the ship *Farnham*. The Captain refused at first to ship it as freight, but I found that he had a tender place in his heart for family relics, and I worked that interest to good purpose. We compromised and I saw the lines made fast to the deck ringbolts to secure its passage on deck.

Of all the wood I know, elm is the worst for twisting and warping, and when my tree arrived in San Francisco it looked like a bundle of snakes. The West Coast Furniture Co. (one of W. C. Ralston's enterprises) accepted my order to make it into a piece of furniture. A cold water bath soaked out the

salt, followed by a steam bath to straighten the lumber. Finally it was kiln dried. The result from their shop was a beautiful sideboard which has never sprung or warped in the least.

On a piece of oak from the ship *Kearsage* is the family coat of arms, mounted atop the center cabinet, a piece of walnut from the frigate *Constitution* records the family motto.

The most gratifying fact of the whole operation is that the San Francisco police force, hearing of the enterprise, took it out of my hands. As I was then no longer a factor in that organization, it was a compliment to me and my work when I was its chief.

Heirlooms were always fascinating to me, and I gathered many for our home when visiting our ancestral dwellings.

Rummaging through the garret of the Ellisville home near Plymouth, Massachusetts, I found an old dilapidated maple chair. It was made with rush bottom, one corner in front, the seat gone through, and the wood blackened with the usage of many generations. I coveted it, but dared not ask outright for it. Learning its history, I hinted to my cousin Martha how it should be given a place down stairs and how she must value it. Receiving only non-committal replies, and the time for my departure drawing near, I finally blurted out, "Cousin Martha, will you give me that chair?"

"Why didn't you say so long ago?" she replied. "I'll be glad to be rid of it. But how are you going to get it home?"

"Take it right along with me," said I.

And so I did, lashing it to the dashboard of the buggy, which was to take me to Plymouth station. Cleaned, with a new rush seat and a silver plate on the arm back, naming the eight generations which used it, it proudly sits in a corner on the staircase landing, facing the old grandfather clock for which I had been on the prowl for many years.

I remembered such a clock from childhood, but it had eluded my search until one day, going through the old grist mill on Delano Creek in Waterville, my birthplace, I noted two metal

cannisters attached to a door as gravity pulls. Recognizing them as old clock weights, I began a search for a possible clock. Sure enough, on a closet shelf, peering out from the cobwebs and flour dust, were the brass works. A continued search located the battered case in a pile of discarded lumber. Gathering it all together, I took it to the shop of the old clockmaker, "Uncle Jake," whom I had bedeviled as a boy, with my crow and in many other ways.

Coming in later, the old man gave me a good dressing down. "Don't you know that I am an old man and don't do that sort of work any more?"

"Uncle Jake," said I, "if you can't put that old clock in order, nobody can, for I wouldn't let anyone else touch it. It is my prize possession."

Softening up a bit, he protested, "Probably there are many parts missing, and I couldn't possibly put it in shape to ship with you.

"Time doesn't count, Uncle Jake. Just let me set it up in your shop, and some day when you feel like it, look it over. Of course I will furnish any missing parts, but just work on it when you have nothing else to do."

In a year's time, the old clock was striking the hours in our home in California, as it had done for almost 200 years in other homes.

I had secured my wife's great Capen family clock some years previously and set it up in our dining room, a complete surprise to her.

But back to our story, for I am a schoolboy still, struggling with my dreams, hopes, and fears.

Yes, I had some fears. The basement and my attic room, hung with drying herbs, were dark pockets where shadows wore fearsome shapes. The use of a light would have confessed weakness. Also it would have been unnecessary expense, for even hand-made candles meant work or pennies if bought. Of course we had no heat, though the snow drifted across my bed on winter nights. For her

evening sewing Mother invented a better light than candle, placing a bottle before her candle to magnify the rays.

I have preserved the first whale oil lamps which ornamented our mantle.

Through those days of growing up, of play, labor and learning, I read everything I could lay my hands on. Books were not plentiful. Mother had about a hundred books and the Almanac, which everybody read. My favorites were stories of the sea. It was the highway of adventure, and no doubt the fishermen and lumbermen who plied the Kennebec River helped fire my imagination.

Milling and lumbering were the chief industries of Waterville, but “flats” and small sea-going vessels were built there also. I had never seen a deep-water vessel, and Mother said all she could do to dissuade me from doing so, recounting the dangers of shipwreck, telling of pirates and their bloody deeds, and naming members of the family who had been lost at sea or captured by pirates. Among these was my Uncle Micah Ellis, who, as late as 1818, had been captured with his crew, and made to walk the plank.

All to no avail!

The brightest star of youth is ambition for advancement. It burns in the heart of every boy, and the more it is nurtured, the more intense it becomes, for it grows upon the food it is fed.

Mine was to rise from poverty and obscurity and make for myself a place among men doing worthwhile things. As a barefoot boy I determined to attain this ambition. To me the sea was the highway of adventure and attainment— and my destiny.

Privation at the outset of life teaches self reliance. I was to become a shipmaster, and I held an undefined idea that it was but a ladder to attain better things. But I had to bide my time, earn money, help Mother, and get on with my schooling. I attended the Academy and the Institute for short periods, paying some of the cost by “firing” and cleaning the building (janitor service). There I made more progress in a short time than I made in all the winters spent in the yellow schoolhouse.

About this time I consulted my Uncle William, who had been a seaman, about going to sea.

“Go to Boston,” said he, “and if you behave yourself, you may in time, and with good luck, become a coachman.”

“A coachman!” I, who had dreamt of enchanted isles in the Southern Seas and of wealth untold! No doubt Uncle William was honest, but he had no vision!

Failing to gain Mother's consent to go to sea, I planned to escape. Packing my few belongings in a little hide-covered trunk, I consulted our neighbor, Captain Jewell of the *Titanic*, but did not tell him my determination to get afloat on blue water. He persuaded Mother to permit me to make a voyage on his boat, which plied between Waterville, Augusta and Hollowell, which was tidewater on the Kennebec. She freighted oats, potatoes, corn and wheat.

Captain Jewell paid me \$7 a month—quite a respectable sum for a boy of 14 years. After \$2 on the farm, it seemed munificent to me, and before me was the world of waters. Mother should have half of all my earnings!

I found myself installed as assistant cook and general roustabout, which I discovered meant being a servant to ignorant, brutal men. One of these was a rough Canadian who spoke no English, but could swear a blue streak in English as well as French.

At Augusta the men sent me ashore with two bits and a ten-quart pail for beer. Entering the first saloon I saw, I paid the money and asked for beer. The beer was drawn from a big ironbound barrel, and in my pail was about two inches deep. Till then I had never seen except in bottles.

“Is this all I get?” I asked.

“What do you expect? The whole hogshead?”

The boatmen tasted the beer, spat it out, and glared at me. “What is this? Poison? Throw the stuff overboard!”

When out of sight, I tasted it and found it bitter as gall. The only beer I had known till then was harmless spruce beer, innocent of alcohol.

Captain Jewell treated me well. He was a noble fellow, never allowing himself to show anger, even when raging beneath a calm exterior.

The *Titanic* was flat bottomed, with one square sail. Therefore it could sail before the wind only. We were often at anchor, giving us an opportunity to explore on shore. In two trips in her I gained knowledge and experience.

Our return cargo was West Indian sugar, molasses, codfish and rice.

At Hollowell I had my first view of an ocean vessel. With wonder and delight I wandered over her vast proportions, envying the cabin boys in their conspicuous buttons, and I was fairly dazzled by the captain in uniform. Admirals Drake, Sampson and Howard (a kinsman) became small potatoes before this spectacle. Could I soar to such heights, and wear a gold-braided cap? My determination to get to sea was confirmed.

With this goal in mind, I confided in Captain Jewell, and while remonstrating mildly, knowing Mother's anxiety, secretly he favored my plan and aided me in getting a berth on the schooner *Susan* to work my way to Boston, the mecca of all New England seamen. Aboard the *Susan* I went, agreeing to load and discharge cargo, which was wheat in bulk and handled a half bushel at a time—one man in the hold, another on the wharf.

Then I started looking along the waterfront for a big deep-water vessel that would be going on a long voyage. Although I now had some idea of work aboard ship, and some book knowledge, I was forced to admit I had never made an ocean voyage. I offered to work without wages, but got the same answer always: “You would be of no use on this ship.”

I visited a dozen vessels the first day and returned to the *Susan* discouraged. Another day with the same result. Ordinary and able seamen were a drug on the market just then.

The *Susan's* Captain Weston loaned me his boat, and in it I toured the harbor, boarding every ship which would allow me.

Everyone told me I was “too innocent,” politely saying I

*Capen Farm, Dorchester, Massachusetts, Settled and named by Barnard Capen, 1628. Birthplace of Elizabeth (Capen) Ellis, 1828.*

was a greenhorn. I mentioned my experience on the *Susan* and one mate laughingly said that his captain had gone ashore “to buy her (the *Susan* ) for a longboat!”

No deep-water ship would take me.

After a week of continuous effort, offering to work my way on several Indian and China traders, I was reluctantly compelled to take Captain Weston's advice and ship on a coaster.

Meantime I had written Mother, again asking her consent to go to sea. At that stage, with my determination, she could of course do no less than grant it.

But to get into a good coaster I found as difficult as to make a Calcutta voyage. I went to a shipping office that I had noticed on Commercial Street now Atlantic Avenue and met the shipping master. He told me he would take me as a landsman on a whaler for a three months' voyage on the Pacific. He told great tales—how he had come to Boston, shipped aboard a whaler, and returned with \$5,000. I could do the same. The ship was at New Bedford and he would pay my passage there.

He also confided that when he first saw a ship he had to ask what it was. I knew he lied. He sounded too unreliable to suit me. I told him I would come next day, and I did, bringing with me a boy whom I had met, also looking for a voyage. The fairy tales of this plausible talker captivated the lad and he signed articles at once. I refused.

Turning to my friend, the shipmaster said, "You, my boy, will come back home with a fortune, but that boy (meaning me) will never amount to shucks!"

Convinced that to become a thorough seaman I must gain actual experience in vessels of all rigs and sizes, I shipped on a little ten-ton fore-and-after, the *Atlantic* for New York, going through Long Island Sound. From there I took a fine, large schooner, the *Surprise*, for Philadelphia. Then I shipped on a full-rigged brig, the *Fanny Coit*, to Baltimore and Charleston. There my kinsman, Lieutenant Charles Howard (afterwards lost at sea), secured a berth for me in the *Ann Welch*. (The son of this Charles Howard was General Charles Howard of the Marine Corps. I met him later in Waterville in 1904.) The *Ann Welch* took me to Apalachicola, Pensacola, Mobile, New Orleans and Galveston.

Again I shipped on a coaster plying between Calais, Maine, and Galveston, Texas. My pay was the sum of seven dollars a month. Though but a boy in years, I did a man's work, and it was difficult to wait till I could demand an able seaman's wages. On deep-water ships, boys are the fags of all the crew, from master to fo'cs'l, and must take a lot of unmerited abuse. Taking in cargo with the crew, stowing and discharging it was a man's work. Stowing and handling the winch were accomplishments which merited promotion, and I determined to master the job.

Experiences on the coasters live vividly with me to this day. On the *Atlantic*, the crew consisted of Captain Simms, whose normal condition was drunkenness, one able seaman, and two boys, Jim and me. The ship was unseaworthy and should have been condemned years before.

Returning from Eastport with a cargo of lumber, the deck piled high with laths, we encountered a gale which parted the outhauler of the mainsail. English Bill, the seaman, to save himself, jumped into the boat hanging from the stern davits. The ringbolt drew out, letting the bow of the boat and Bill into the sea. Weighted with oilskins, heavy boots and sou'wester, Bill was unable to swim in such weather. I at once put the helm into the becket and threw overboard several bundles of laths.

Captain Simms, realizing that the vessel was going about, and seeing the laths in the water, turned savagely to me and threatened to throw me overboard unless I put the vessel back on course instantly. I could but obey the merciless command, though I saw poor Bill, arms extended, go down into the sea. I have seen many a poor fellow make passage across the dark river, but never have I been so affected as by Bill's drowning.

Meantime, everything aloft on the *Atlantic* became a wreck. Halyards parted, sails split from clew to earing, and the vessel rolled fearfully in the trough of the sea. She was held together by 10 heavy iron bands running across decks down over the bends, rivited through her timbers.

I concluded my only hope of safety was in the boat, which was hanging by one davit and plunging her full length at every swell of the head sea; but I was ordered to go overside and pass a line around her bow. Though this was a difficult and dangerous order, I obeyed with alacrity, hoping the boat would break adrift and enable me to part company with Captain Simms and the *Atlantic*. However, I managed to pass the bight around the bow and to reach deck again, half drowned.

We cleared the wreckage, and she got off again under part sail, though with difficulty, for the main peak forethroat and jib halyards were parted and the rigging not being ratted down, we could reach the masthead only by shinning up the shrouds. Then, ordered to make some coffee (having no galley, we cooked in the cabin), I found the cabin filled to our knees with water. With pumps we freed her of water by midnight, Jim and I working on our knees, under the jaws of the main boom.

The misery of that day and night can never be obliterated from memory. Our diet on days following was cold meat and hardtack soaked with salt water. Captain Simms required Jim and me to work the vessel as best we could. When drunk, Simms was a devil incarnate, and drunk he was most of the time. That we finally reached Boston was a miracle.

There were pleasant experiences which offset ones like that related above! Luscious Jersey peaches! Baltimore bacon! Hunting wild pigs in Pensacola, the land of shanties, song and cotton—those heavy bales which we loaded all day long! The thrilling sight when the mighty *Great Western* came

majestically up New York Harbor to Peck's Slip, where crowds awaited her, one of the first steam vessels to cross the Atlantic! The fire in Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, when the crew of the *Fannie Coit* was called to help in the rescue of those overcome by smoke, one of whom was a very pretty girl indeed!

Not so pleasant was loading pig iron in the Baltimore Basin when it was so hot and stormy that lightning played along the ship's chains.

That same night, running up the coast for New York, we ran into a dense fog. About midnight a cry rang out sharp and clear, "Keep off, keep off!" We could discern nothing, but again the cry, "Keep off, keep off!"

From which quarter did it come?

Suddenly the collision! A French ship off our bow! Our anchor, torn from the fo'cs'l deck, fell onto the Frenchman, one fluke piercing the deck. It took six hours of night work to clear, and we made port running up Long Island Sound.

At last I realized my dream of sailing the ocean blue in a full-rigged ship. She was the *Neuduh* bound for Amsterdam, Holland.

By 1847 I had sailed in everything from flat river-boats to a full-rigged ship, visited all ports from Calais, Maine, to Galveston, Texas, ports of the West Indies, South America and Europe, and risen to the position of second mate at 17 years of age. Also I had gained experience and knowledge from all sorts and conditions of men on both sea and land.

In the spring of that year, having been away for more than three years, I made a visit home. There had been times when this roving sea life with its hardships had discouraged me, but this visit to my native village convinced me that never again could I be content with such a humdrum existence. Imagine, then, my dismay when Mother exacted from me a promise that I would remain ashore two

years—where, she did not care so long as it was on terra firma. It seemed the death knell of all my hopes, but reluctantly I gave her my word.

Going to Boston, I secured employment in the bell foundry of H. N. Hooper & Co., on Causeway Street near where the great North Station now stands. My advance there was rapid, satisfactory to my employer and myself. I worked like a slave, never taking a vacation save when burned by exploding molten metal.

I had found a real home almost in the shadow of Old North Church (of Paul Revere fame), and the Baldwins became as second parents to me. Near by was Copp's Hill and the old Salem Burying Ground. Also near was the home of Joseph F. White, where I met Elizabeth Capen, his niece and my future bride. They were descendants of *Mayflower* ancestors. [See Genealogy, White family.]\*

A letter from H.H. Ellis, aged 18, to his mother, written from Boston, November 22, 1847, reads in part:

“I conclude you wish to hear how I got the situation I now hold. I went up to the foundry and was told by the office clerk that they did not want any apprentices, as business was very dull—and if they did, I was too old by three or four years.

“But I did not make up my mind to learn that trade for nothing; so I asked him where Mr. Hooper was. He was out. Then I asked for Mr. Blake. He was busy. Lastly I asked to see Mr. Richardson. As good luck would have it, he came in from the finishing room. He asked me the same questions and ‘guessed they did not want anybody.’ I then asked him to give me some work. He said he was busy, but to call on Monday morning and he would let me know. The rest I will tell you some day.

“Congratulate me on my promotion to the rank of caster. The day I wrote you last, the ‘Old Man,’ as we call Mr. Richardson, put me to casting. That is three steps from moulder. I took the place of a journeyman who had been at the place seven years. I have charge of a trough and a man under me, who has been at work 12 years. In the foundry, apprentices who were here before me are still

moulders, and I have been here barely five months. They call me a fool for killing myself, but I laugh at them.

“I have not told you all this to boast, but to satisfy you that I am doing well.”(end of footnote)

This home of cultured people, with their discussions of literature, travel and the arts, opened new vistas to me.

A rabid reader of the few books hitherto available to me, I now became a gourmand, with the Boston Public Library my treasure house of literary edibles.

[The story is continued in the main part of this book.]

Thirty years after my work and life in Boston I revisited my “second home” there. The Baldwins were the same good people, changed physically, of course—but then, everything else seemed changed, too. What had happened to the house? Had the rooms been divided? How shrunken they appeared, as compared with my memories of them!

Elizabeth and I were married in Gardiner, Maine, in 1853, and immediately thereafter we sailed for California with 200 other newly married couples. She was the daughter of General Aaron Capen and Izannah White Capen. Both the Capen and the White families had settled in New England in the 16th century. [See Genealogy.]

## **EPILOGUE**

Again we return to Father as he sits reading late in the afternoon. No longer did he burn the midnight oil as he read till the wee hours; yet, a habit of many years was not to be broken easily, if ever. He usually joined us at breakfast now; we became intimate and were able to know the depths of his character.

Hardships of early sea life, labor in pioneer days, the exacting, strenuous duties of twenty-two years of detective work, always on the alert, nights more than days, contending with political factions and

baffling problems of crime in a new, almost unorganized city, began to take their toll before the office of Chief ended. Acute attacks of rheumatism became more frequent, severe, and of longer duration so that leisure was a relief he coveted. However, active he must be, at least in mind.

Partnership in the firm of Ellis and Miller, "Hay, Grain and Feed" gave an interest without entailing active duty, and provided an outlet for mind and resources. Also it brought together two old shipmates who had sailed the seas together when trading on the coast and islands of the Pacific in Pioneer days.

It was natural for Father to turn to the sea as a source of rest and relaxation; so, it was but a few months after his term of office expired before he was again on the rolling deep, taking sister Iza and brother Bert on a warm voyage to the Far East, China and Japan, via Hawaii, Australia and the isles between.

An entry in Father's diary dated May 24, 1878, written at sea, reads: "Homeward bound; will arrive tomorrow. Since we left home, Dec. 5, we have completed more than the circuit of the globe, in miles about 26,000. We have visited the islands of Hawaii, Navigators, New Zealand, Tasmania; cities of Sidney and Melbourne, Australia, and the entire eastern and northern coast of that island continent; also New Guinea, Java, Sumatra, Timor, Madeira; countries of Siam, India, China and Japan. We have traveled hundreds of miles into the interior of the countries by rail, steamboat, carriage, jinnricksha, canoe and by our own feet. We have sailed under the American, Dutch, English, Chinese and Japanese flags, become acquainted with the people of many nations, had our ideas enlarged, liberalized, and the provincial rust pretty well rubbed off! We have gathered a fund of inspiration which will be a well-spring of pleasure on which to draw for many years to come."

On board one of these ships, several second class passengers were fatally poisoned by hostile passengers. Father was helpful to the Captain when passengers and crew demanded that the bodies be buried at sea, as it was in the tropics with no facilities for embalming. Father pointed out that it was necessary for prosecution to save all possible evidence and persuaded the Captain to retain all corpus delicti until he could make port and prosecute the murderers.

We are fortunate enough to have some of these interesting travels in newspaper articles, as well as trophies to illustrate and highlight them. Shells and corals, native costumes, silks and laces, bronze gods from Buddhist temples and ten foot spears from the Maori tribes of Australia, to mention but a few.

Mother and Father celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary by taking a European tour. They brought back bits of marble, granite, silver and gold work, small paintings, fabrics and laces and of course useful gifts. These little souvenirs illustrated the arts and industry of the ancients, and told their history in a fascinating way, as woven by Father. His genial personality, his ability to relate a good story, life's experiences, to contact people of all walks of life, opened doors and made friends wherever he went. Travel with him was exciting and interesting.

While in England, Father, who was a Knight and Shriner of the Masonic order, was presented with a chart showing the growth of Masonry from the Middle Ages, or as some claim, from the building of King Solomon's Temple. Masonry was shown as a river with its branches and tributaries; and it was so unusual, Father presented it to his Lodge in San Francisco.

A piece of granite shaft of Cleopatra's Needle, on the banks of the Thames, London, and a Masonry brick from the Great Wall of China were precious to us. The former had been given Father and Mother in 1878, when, because of erosion in the damp climate of England, it was necessary to square its rounded base for a better setting. Pieces thus chipped off were carefully guarded on a canvas cloth surrounded by a fence. The huge brick, as a piece of the oldest construction extant, B.C. 243 or earlier, was sent from China by one of our traveling companions who lived in Peking.

On this trip abroad my parents took me across the continent and dropped me off in New England to visit my Yankee relations. The C.P. and Union R.R. had been built but 10 years and traveling was by no means de luxe. No rock-balasted roadbeds; only wooden coaches with hard seats, and a strip of carpet down the center. No dining cars and Boston was eight days away! But the travel was wonderful to an eight-year-old girl who saw her first snow in the Sierras as our train chugged

in and out of the long snowsheds, and who gazed wide-eyed at herds of buffalo and antelope as they streaked across the plains.

From a huge provision basket Mother provided wonderful meals with food and drink heated on a very small alcohol stove, set surreptitiously in the hand basin in the wash room. A single track served the greater part of the long haul and when we were sidetracked for a train going in the opposite direction, this enthusiastic young traveler gathered a souvenir, if but a stone, a piece of sagebrush and once a horned toad.

“New England” was a general term for a visit to friends scattered from Maine to Cape Cod; whether to study old genealogies, visit deserted graveyards or to purloin pieces of antique furniture from unsuspecting relatives, who had relegated to dusty attics crippled pieces adjudged unsightly for the “Parlor.” In this manner Father acquired a seven generation old maple chair from his ancestral home in Ellisville, Plymouth.

Discovering the chair in the attic, its rush-bottom falling out, he hinted all day about how much he would value it and bring it down stairs were it his, etc., but to no avail. About to terminate his visit, Father blurted out, “Aunt Martha, I want that chair!”

“Why didn't you say so! I'll be glad to get rid of it.”

It went along with him, lashed to the outside of the

*Family of Capt. H. H. Ellis, San Francisco, California, 1869. Left to right: Iza Vesta; Capt. Ellis; Robert Ellis; Henry Cromwell; Franklin Capen; Lucy; Elizabeth (Capen) Ellis, wife of H. H. E. and Philip Austin.*

board of the buggy. Always on the hunt for his ancestral grandfather's clock, he noticed some canister weights hung to a door in the Delano grist sawmill on Delano Creek near Waterville, his birthplace. Surmising that they might be from an old clock, he looked about for more evidence and found the works veiled in dust and flour on a closet shelf. The old case was rescued from a pile of old lumber. Gathering his precious “find” together he took it to Uncle Joe Crocker, the old clock-

maker, whom he had bedeviled as a boy. The old man gave him a dressing down. Didn't he know that he was an old man, and couldn't do that kind of work anymore!

“Uncle Jake,” said he, “if you can't put that old clock in order nobody can! I wouldn't let anybody else touch it. It is my prized possession.” Softening up a bit, he protested, “I never could put it in order for you to ship on this trip.” “Never mind time, just let me set it up in your shop, and some day when you feel ambitious just look it over; I will supply any missing parts. Just tinker with it when you feel like it. In a year's time the old clock came boxed to me in San Francisco and has been running ever since.”

From Mother's birthplace, the Capen Homestead in Dorchester, now Boston, came the ancestral clock, a four-poster bedset, a Duncan-Fyfe rosewood table and a large square drop-leaf mahogany dining table.

When in America on his second visit in 1826, General LaFayette had dined at this table with Gen. Aaron Capen who had reviewed the troops on Boston Common for America's friend, LaFayette.

Living with these antiques bred in us a reverence for the ancestry they had served. They fairly breathed the life of the departed and became almost personages to us.

It was not difficult to see how Father's mind freed of routine duties, led him into cultural things and domestic life.

His Masonic Lodge, the Knights Templar gatherings, Pioneer Society, Native Sons and Sons of the Revolution, even State of Maine picnics were a joy to him.

About this time, Mother's health became poor because of a hemorrhage of the lung, and Father's arch enemy pursued him from time to time, so a change of climate was advised. This move gave Father an opportunity of carrying out another life-long ambition. He took a boyish delight in planning a home in Sunol, a tiny valley tucked in behind a spur of Mt. Diablo which effectually shut off the winds and fogs of San Francisco. This valley was reached via Alameda Canyon or over

Mission Pass which the Padres traversed to reach Sacramento Valley from Santa Clara. This was to be a stone house, built for the ages and furnished with the family heirlooms. Father watched the fashioning and placing of every stone in the heavy walls. It became to him a living thing, "His last child," as he expressed it. Mother had done the planning of the sixteen rooms, large halls, seventeen closets and broad stairways with low risers. On the stair-landings stood the grandfathers' clocks, and opposite one, the old rejuvenated maple chair with a silver plate naming the eight generations which had used it. The house completed, Father delighted tinkering in his workshop, planting trees, building stone flumes and drains for the Spring freshets, gathering fruit or driving about in a little spring-wagon.

Life's experiences came fast and the 1880's were busy years, marriages of children, and the coming of the grandchildren to brighten the declining years of the old folk. After four years of study in France and Germany, brother Harry began the study of law, but never robust in health, it was too confining and, having married Jennie Miller, the daughter of Father's old shipmate, now a business partner, he was given an interest in that firm.

Sister Iza had married Dr. Ledyard, and had her home within Elliston's grounds, where their two daughters were often with us. Capen and Phil had learned the trade of plumbing and gas-fitting, and had installed the water system in the new home. Not happy in their work, Capen chose cattle raising on Sky Ranch, and named his own white horse, Perigrine White, because of family tradition. Tiring of the isolation, he went to Los Angeles, became manager of the city's sewer system and married Christina Behne. Bert and Phil went into merchandising, both marrying girls in the community, the former, Gertrude Steane, the latter, Carrie Bell Deal. Bert had tried the sea, once on a cod-fishing expedition in the Okotz Sea and again to Amsterdam with grain, returning with coal from New Castle. It was Bert who deserted Father and Sister in Sidney, Australia, on the voyage to the Far East, to return home on the same steamship.

Father delighted in the new generation growing up and the new home, but never lost his early love, the sea. He made two more voyages, one by steamship to Hawaii, the other by sailing vessel around Cape Horn to England and thence by steam through the Mediterranean Sea, Suez Canal, Indian

Ocean, Malay Straits, China and Japan Seas, thence home across the Pacific completing the circuit of the globe. I was the fortunate companion on these two voyages and what a rich experience it was! This was in 1894 while China and Japan were at war, and bubonic plague raged in India. Though we could not enter all ports, at least we had a glance through open doors. If not helped greatly physically, emotionally such travel gave Father a new lease of life, and opened for me a new world.

When he was ill, we read to Father hours at a time, the only diversion which alleviated the pain. His enjoyment was as keen as his suffering, and tears would stream down his cheeks over some affecting scene, usually in Dickens' stories! "Bleak House" he had read many times. If children entered his room, he would cry out in alarm.

"But we haven't touched you, Grandpa!"

"No, but you are going to," he would reply.

When well Father was still ambitious, and in his seventieth year sought and secured a consular position in the East Indies, on Turks Island. It was a grievous mistake, for Mother could not accompany him, the climate was detrimental to his health; the duties were superficial and companionship limited. We were relieved when he arranged to return the following year. He joined Mother, my husband and me in Chicago for a short visit, but thereafter was quite content to travel from his armchair.

More improvements on the place, more memoranda for his "Story," more reading (his eyesight never failed), too much time for regret over lack of accomplishments, self-condemnation for his irritability due to infirmities, and criticism of those about him, made him realize that the sands of time were running low. To his daughter Lucy, he wrote:

"Time ploughs furrows in our brains; hopes and dreams written in our youth on the tablets of the imagination are never entirely obliterated. At nearly eighty years of age I am writing this story of dreams, hopes, and struggles, but memory is not quick and fancy begins to cloy. Though battered

by the storms of three quarters of a century I still have the spice of salt in me; but, shall I ever complete this story? In each man's heart, tides ebb and flow, as in the ocean. At flood, how full of hope; at ebb, come musings and anxieties; and at dead low, disappointment and failure do surge like storm-driven waves on a rocky shore, and man feels no longer a world unto himself. I fully realize that for me the voyage of life is nearly over. When well, I feel almost immortal; I enjoy life, I am interested in all affairs. My little improvements about Elliston give me great pleasure, and are a labor of love; therefore, I love Elliston dearly and am anxious that it remain in the family in the hands of my son who holds the deed. My heart fills with happiness to think how descendants will look with affection on this beautiful home. What a blessing it is that in age, the fear of death loses its terror. We call it death, but do we not change only this garment which we have outgrown? The soul never dies, for like unto God who gave it, it is eternal.

“My life now is uneventful; my chief pleasure is in my books, in the thoughts of great minds who have accumulated the wisdom of the ages from the dead past.

“I feel that I shall soon finish this last voyage, and find safe anchorage in that final Harbor.”

I shared Father's dream for Elliston, and grieved deeply at its loss; but realized as he did not, that in so different a world and age, all material possessions are insecure; and that only the buildings not made with hands, endure. Father's character and sentiment were our heritage from him, great spiritual values which could never be taken from us and which have deeply enriched our lives. So, Father, you have builded beyond your dreams!

Testimonials to his character and attainments came rapidly. Three beautiful gold badges, diamond studded, from the Police department, the Bankers Association, and the department of Detectives; a gold diamond ring given him by Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil. Refusing personal reward for services, the Emperor spoke a few words to his aide-de-camp who took the ring from his finger and slipped it onto Father's. It was a prized possession. At the termination of his term as their Chief, the entire Police force presented him with a gold watch and chain. All the amount given could not be

put into the watch, so a large diamond was set in the stem, and the Ellis Coat of Arms was engraved on the back cover. Said Father, "I am glad it is a parting gift of appreciation, rather

*"Elliston," Sunol, California. Home built by Henry Hiram Ellis, 1890. Named for ancestral village, "Ellisville," settled by ancestors on Cape Cod, near Sandwich, Massachusetts, 1830.*

than one to curry favor on my accession to office."

He greatly prized also a testimonial given by the Six Companies, a ruling body among the Chinese, through which Father worked to attain ends otherwise impossible.

Days of weakness and pain overtook this active, ambitious man, whose family motto, "Nil Desperandum" had been so well exemplified throughout a lifetime. Now, when the worthy vessel, battered by winds and tides of Time, drifted on the ebb to that uncharted horizon, I know that my Father could look into the encircling gloom, as, when a lad, he looked into the vastness of the heavens to chart his course on the boundless ocean, and trust the Great Pilot to bring him into a safe eternal Harbor.

And what of his companion for fifty-six years? Daughter of an army General who was also a New England farmer, a girl of seventeen left to raise three younger children by the early death of her mother, and be a companion and help to her father. A seaman's wife; a pioneer with her husband in the hardships and turbulent conditions of a new country; a devoted mother to six children; a practical, resourceful woman withal, mastering her difficulties, as did her husband. In all circumstances, she glorified the name "woman." Both she and Father retained their faculties, unimpaired to life's end.

A Masonic service paid the last tribute to Father. Supported by brother Bert, Mother passed on in the bed on which she was born. Their ashes, also those of grandfather, Hiram Henry Ellis, who died in California in 1850, rest in a niche of the columbarium of Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland, California, which commands a view of the peninsula and bay of San Francisco, the scene of Father's

activities for sixty years. It is a fitting resting place after their fourscore years of unusual and dramatic lives.

We are proud of Father's accomplishments for he had climbed to eminence from the lowest rung of the ladder. We valued too, the rich testimonials given him for distinguished service, but more, as expressions of esteem he had earned in the hearts of his countrymen.

## **GENEALOGY**

### **GENEALOGY OF THE WHITE FAMILY IN AMERICA**

*Accompanying a gift of oil portraits of his father and mother, (Capt. John White and Vesta [Dunbar] White), Joseph F. White gave the following memorandum to Elizabeth (Capen) Ellis, his niece, (daughter of his sister, Izannah [White] Capen.)*

“Dictated by my parents at Poplar Street, Boston, Mass., 1847: My father, Capt. John White, was born in Randolph, March 9th, 1777. His father's name was Lott White. His grandfather's name was Micah White, who, with his ancestors, belonged to Weymouth and originated from the Whites at the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. Perigrine White was the first White child born in New England. His (Capt. John White) mother's name was Polly (Mary) Tower before marriage. She was born in Braintree, now Randolph.

Mother's name was Vesta Dunbar, born in South Bridgewater, Apr. 6, 1779; moved to Warren, Maine with her parents when six years old.

My grandmother, Mary (Tower) White, died at Dorchester, Aug. 1804, aged 49 years. My grandfather, Lott White, died at Dorchester, 1820, aged 70 years. My mother (Vesta [Dunbar] White,) died at Charleston, May, 1855, aged 76 years.”

(Signed) Joseph F. White Charles Street, Boston 1847

“This additional record made by me for Henry H. Ellis and Elizabeth (Capen) Ellis of California. Elizabeth is the daughter of Maj. General Capen of Dorchester and grand-daughter of Vesta Dunbar White, and my niece. I desire this paper to accompany the portraits of my father and mother, heretofore presented to the Ellis family of Elliston, California.

(Signed) at Boston this 20th Nov., A.D., 1892

Joseph White said that his parents claimed direct descent from Perigrine White of the *Mayflower*, but as all records of White and Capen families were destroyed when lightning struck and burned the Capen home on Deer Island, Maine, in 1858, I have so far been unable to prove this claim.

This much of the White genealogy is vouched for by several sources.

1. Micah White, b. Dec. 10, 1721; m. Susanna Eager, daughter of farmer of Braintree; Micah d. 1802, Titticut; his son
2. Lott White, b. 1748/9; d. 1820; m. Polly (Mary) Tower. His son
3. John (Capt.) White, b. 1777; d. 1847; m. Vesta Dunbar; b. 1779. Their daughter
4. Izanah White, b. abt. 1800; d. 1844; m. Maj. Gen. Aaron Capen.
5. Elizabeth Capen, b. Dec. 22, 1828; d. Sept. 13, 1913

QUOTE FROM THE BOSTON TRANSCRIPT OF DEC. 3, 1906.

“Ebenezer Gay White, born in Gardiner, Me., May 6th, 1796, married Izanah Capen. She was the daughter of Major General Capen. Her mother's maiden name was White (Vesta Dunbar) and she was a direct descendent of Perigrine White, the first child of English parents born in New England on board the *Mayflower* lying at anchor.”

## **GENEALOGY OF THE CAPEN FAMILY.**

FIRST GENERATION BERNARD CAPEN, b. in England; m. Joan, dau. Oliver Purchase, 1596; d. Nov. 8, 1638, aged 76 years; Joan, d. Mar. 26, 1653, age 75 years. Their children:

SECOND GENERATION 1. Ruth, b. Aug./Sept, 1600, in England.

2. Suzannah, b. Apr. 7, 1602; d. Nov. 13, 1666.

3. JOHN (CAPT.), b. Jan. 12, 1612. (Came to Dorchester with parents in ship *Mary and John*, May 30, 1630); d, Dec. 1690; m, 1st, Redigon Clapp, Oct. 20, 1637; Redigon d. Dec. 1645; m. 2nd, Mary Bassett of Braintree, Sept. 20, 1647; Mary d. 1691. Two children of John and Redigon: 1. Joanna, b. Oct. 8, 1638 2. John, b. Oct. 21, 1639

Eight children of John and Mary Bassett:

1. SAMUEL, b. July, 29, 1648 2. Bernard, b. Mar. 24, 1650 3. Mary, b. July 6, 1652 4. James, b. Nov. 17, 1654 5. Preserved, b. Mar. 4, 1656 6. Joseph, b. Dec. 1659 in Dorchester; graduated from Harvard College, 1677. Minister in Topsfield (Administrator); d, 1725 7. Hannah, b. Oct. 1, 1662 8. Elizabeth, b. Oct. 29, 1666

THIRD GENERATION SAMUEL CAPEN, m. Susanna Payson, Nov. 2, 1670. They had twelve children:

1. Samuel, b. Mar. 12, 1673/4 2. Samuel, b. Nov. 4, 1676 3. Hopedill, b. Oct. 13, 1677 4. Mary, b. Sept. 23, 1679 5. Ebenezer, b. Apr. 30, 1682 6. EDWARD, b. Sept. 24, 1683 7. Samuel, b. Mar. 1, 1686 8. Susanna, b. Nov. 10, 1688 9. Jabesh, b. Mar. 3, 1690 10. Jonathon, b. May 17, 1691 (Moved to Stoughton, Mass.) 11. Susanna, b. Sept. 5. 1693 12. John, b. June 19, 1696

FOURTH GENERATION EDWARD CAPEN, m. Patience Tollman, abt. 1740. Their children were: 1. Susanna, b. May 10, 1741 2. Edward, b. July 1, 1743, d. 1763/4 3. JOHN, b. June 3, 1745, d. Mar. 15, 1829 4. Patience, b. May 17, 1747 5. Mary, b. June 17, 1750

FIFTH GENERATION JOHN CAPEN, m. Patience, dau of Deacon Aaron and Mary Davis of Roxbury, Mass., Dec. 1772. John d. Mar 15, 1829; Patience d. Nov. 1819. They had eleven children:

1. Edward, b. Aug. 19, 1775; d. Oct. 1760 2. John, b. Feb 9, 1778; d. Oct. 1, 1760 3. John, b. Apr. 9, 1780; d. Feb. 9, 1883 4. Susanna, b. June 24, 1806; d. Aug 31 1814 5. Mary, b. Sept. 5, 1784; d. Mar. 20, 1806 6. Hannah, b. Sept. 19, 1786, d. Feb. 11, 1851 7. Lemuel, b. Nov. 25, 1788; d. Aug. 28, 1858 8. Patience, b. Apr. 3, 1791; d. Aug. 4, 1813 9. Lydia, b. Aug. 20, 1793; d. June 12, 1812 10. AARON, b. Apr. 10, 1796; d. Apr. 25, 1886 at Gardiner, Me. 11. Joel, b. Aug. 25, 1799; d.....N.D.

SIXTH GENERATION AARON CAPEN, m. Izanah, dau. of Capt. John and Vesta (Dunbar) White., Oct. 3, 1821, at Dorchester, Mass. Vesta d. 1845, Gardiner, Me. The nine children of Aaron and Izanah were:

1. Aaron, b. Oct. 11, 1822; d. 1891 2. Izanah, b. Sept. 13, 1824; d. Feb. 20, 1905 3. Vesta, b. Oct. 24, 1826; d. Jan. 10, 1915 4. ELIZABETH, b. Dec. 1828; d. Sept. 13, 1913 5. John, b. Mar. 4, 1831; d. Dec. 12, 1831 6. John, b. Feb. 2, 1833; d. Dec. 18, 1850 7. George, b. Mar. 10, 1836; d. Sept. 8, 1840 8. Mary, b. Aug. 28, 1838; d. Mar. 2, 1892 9. Lucy Davis, b. Feb. 20, 1842; d. Dec. 12, 1882

SEVENTH GENERATION ELIZABETH CAPEN, m. Henry Hiram Ellis. SEE ELLIS GENEALOGY.

NOTES ON THE CAPEN FAMILY John, called "Capt. John" came with his parents, Bernard and Joan Purchase, in the ship *Mary and John*, in 1630 and with others settled and named Dorchester, Mass. He was a freeman and grantee of Crown lands. He was a Selectman for 16 years; Representative for 6 years; Town Clerk for 13 years and military officer, 50 years. John and his mother, Mrs. Bernard Capen, gave and signed compact for the FIRST FREE PUBLIC SCHOOL in America at Dorchester.

His son, Joseph, graduated from Harvard College, 1677; became Administrator, (Minister) in Topsfield, Mass. and was called "Parson Capen." The original house was still there in 1955. (Visited by a family connection, Mr. and Mrs. G.M. Oschier, 1955).

Samuel G. was the first Unitarian minister in South Boston, and his son Charles J. was Master of Boston Latin School for 50 years. (He was called "Cudjo" by the students. Also a musician, he was organist for 20 years in the Unitarian Church, Dedham, Mass.)

In Gardiner, Me., stands a town monument, inscribed: "MASSACHUSETTS YOUNGEST MAJOR GENERAL—AARON CAPEN."

General Capen was in command of troops when the Madawuska War was threatened, and considered inevitable on the Eastern border of Maine, owing to disputed boundary between Maine and British Provinces. (Above item taken from an old manuscript by Gen. Aaron Capen) H.H.E.

General Aaron Capen was Major General of Massachusetts Militia at 32 years. He was in command at the time of the visit of Gen. Marquis de Lafayette in 1824 the troops on Boston Common. General and led the escort to Boston and reviewed Capen entertained the French General in his home in Dorchester.

REPORT AT ADJUTANT'S OFFICE, taken by George B. Grant (grandson), of GENERAL AARON CAPEN, BOSTON, MASS., DEC. 13, 1880. Aaron Capen of Dorchester, Mass., b. Apr. 10, 1796; d. Apr. 25, 1886. *Ensign* 1st Regiment 1st Brigade 1st Division.....May 7, 1822 *Lieutenant* 1st Regiment 1st Brigade 1st Division....Feb. 20, 1823. Transferred to Rifle Company, May 5, 1823 *Major* —Same Company as above, Sept. 26, 1823 *Colonel* —Same Company as above, June 21, 1824 *Brig. General* —Same Company as above, April 9, 1827 *Major General* — Same Company as above, Feb. 22, 1829 He was long associated with the principal military and civil officers of Boston, and neighboring town and was noted as a prompt and energetic officer.

The Capen farm in Dorchester was jointly owned by Aaron and his younger brother, Lemuel. After his mother's (Joan, wife of John) death, his father, John, asked Aaron to take charge of the farm. Against his own judgment, he consented to do so.

He raised the farm to a high state of cultivation, increased crops and livestock; cleared 8 acres of pasture land, and blasted rock (boulders) to build 120 rods of double stonewall across front of entrance. (See illustration.) It was said that one could trot a horse on this wall. Aaron also built a barn on the marsh, and other out buildings.

By a combination of fraudulent circumstances, his brother, Lemuel forced Aaron, who had put so much labor and his own means, after his father's death, on the property, while Lemuel had done neither, to relinquish the property to him, Lemuel. See STATEMENT OF AARON in pamphlet, several copies of which are in hands of Ellis descendents.

Aaron moved his family to Maine, 1834. From the government he purchased two islands of nearly 8,000 acres, covered with timber, for \$1.25 an acre. He became Agent to the logging interests on the Kennebec River (whose source is Moosehead Lake). He built a home on Deer Island, which was struck by lightning and destroyed, June 1858, and with it all family documents, including those showing his legal interest to the Dorchester property. Courts had confirmed his rights to the property, but on the evening before the decision was to be rendered, Lemuel, committed suicide by drowning.

“THE OLD CAPEN HOMESTEAD AT DORCHESTER” “The *Capen Farm* has been in possession of the family since 1630, a period of 240 years. Its extensive and symmetrical area, its sightliness and healthful elevation commend it favorably to the committee. The price, moderate, 5 1/2 cts. per foot.” *Quotation, in part, from a Boston paper, dated 1870.*

Thus the *Capen Farm* became the Home for the Tubercular of Boston.

## **GENEALOGY OF THE ELLIS FAMILY IN AMERICA**

( *The original Norman name as recorded in the Dooms Book, 1188, was Ellese; Elice; Els.*)

FIRST GENERATION LIEUT. JOHN ELLIS, b. in Kent Co. (probably) England, abt. 1599; Came to Lynn, Mass. abt. 1630; removed to Sandwich, Mass., 1635; d. Dec. 1677; m. 1645, Elizabeth, daughter of Edmund Freeman 1st and granddaughter of Gov. Prince. Children were:

1. Mordecai, b. 1651 2. John, b. n.d. .... 3. Nathaniel, b. 1656 4. Samuel, b. n.d. .... 5. MATHIAS, b. June 2nd, 1657, in Sandwich, Mass.

SECOND GENERATION MATHIAS, called Junior, son of Lieut. John; m. 1678, Mary, daughter of John Burgess and granddaughter, Peter Worden; Mathias, d. Aug. 21, 1748. Their children were:

1. Freeman, b. 1683 2. Mary b. 1685 3. Mathias, 2nd, b. 1687; d. Aug. 30, 1748 4. Experience, b. 1687; m. 1708, Stephen Churchill (shipmaster lost at sea) 5. Malachi, b. 1689; m. Jan. 3, 1715, Jane Blackwell 6. Remember, b. 1691 7. Benjamin, b. n.d..... 8. WILLIAM, b. 1693 9. Samuel, b. 1699

THIRD GENERATION GENERAL WILLIAM 1st, son of Mathias; m. abt, 1718; Jane, daughter, Isaac Allerton; William d. 1790, Plymouth, Mass. Their children were: 1. WILLIAM 2ND, b. 1719, Sandwich, Mass; d. Plymouth, 1790 2. Experience, b. 1722 3. Eleazor, b. 1724 4. Thomas, b. 1726

FOURTH GENERATION GENERAL WILLIAM 2ND, son of William 1st; m. abt. 1743, Patience Bruster. Their children were: 1. THOMAS, b. 1745 2. Betsy, b. 1748; m. 1768 Ezra Harlow 3. Lydia, b. May 20, 1750; m. 1775, Thomas Clark. 4. Mary, b. 1753 5. Lucy, b., n.d.

FIFTH GENERATION GENERAL THOMAS, son of William 2nd; m. 1767, Jerusha, dau. Israel and Deborah Pope Clark; d. 1800. (Thomas and Israel served in the War of the Revolution). Their children were: 1. Betsy, b. Apr. 2, 1768; m, 1785, Nathaniel Swift. 2. Lydia, b. Jan. 21, 17....; m, Mr. Morley 3. Polly, b., n.d. 4. Lucy, b. n.d. 5. Nathaniel, b. Jan. 10, 17....; m. 1810, Remember Smith. 6. WILLIAM 3RD, b. Dec. 15, 1771 7. Thomas, b. 1782; m. 1802, Rebecca Burgess.

SIXTH GENERATION GENERAL WILLIAM 3RD, son of Thomas, m. Feb. 28, 1793; Hepsabeth Blackwell, b. 1772, Sandwich Mass; Hepsabeth d. Aug. 23, 1829, Waterville, Me. William 3rd d. 1810, Port Royal, Jamaica, West Indies. Their children were: 1. Russel, b. Feb. 12, 1794; m. Caroline Swift, June 4, 1815; d. 1869 in New Jersey. 2. Micah, b. Oct. 3, 1795; d. at sea by pirates, 1819. (See notes). 3. William, b. Sept. 24, 1797; d. 1864; m. Rhoda Ann Colcord 4. Cynthia, b. Nov. 10, 1799; d. Aug. 15, 1837; m. Edmund Hinkley 5. Lucy Ann, b. Apr. 9, 1802; d. 1862, Lane, Illinois; m. Enoch Hinkley 6. Thomas, b. Apr. 9 1804; d. Aug. 19, 1850, San Francisco. (Also his son Edwin, of cholera). 7. CHARLES HENRY, b. Apr. 6, 1806, Ellisville, Mass 8. Hiram, b. Jan. 17, 1808; d. Mar 12, 1884; m. Mary Burgess, 1883.

SEVENTH GENERATION GENERAL CHARLES HENRY, son of William 3rd; m. June 9, 1827, Cynthia Irish, dau. James and Anna (Delano) Crommett. (See Delano notes). Cynthia, b. Waterville, Me., June 15, 1794; d. same place, 1880. Charles Henry, d. Sacramento, Calif., Aug. 1850, of cholera. Their children were: 1. HENRY HIRAM, b. June 15, 1829, Waterville, Me. 2. Helen, b. Feb. 4, 1831; d. in infancy. 3. Auston Weston Freeman, b. Mar. 15, 1834; d. 1851, Portland, Me.

EIGHTH GENERATION HENRY HIRAM, son of Charles Henry; m. July 5, 1853, Gardiner, Me., Elizabeth, dau. of Gen. Aaron and Izannah (White) Capen of Dorchester, Mass. (See Capen and White notes). Henry Hiram d. San Francisco, Dec. 15, 1909; Elizabeth d. Sunol, Calif., Sept 13, 1913. Their children, (all born in San Francisco), were: 1. IZA VESTA, b. June 7, 1854; d. 1931; m. Dr. William E. Ledyard, Dec. 22, 1882. Had 2 children, Lucy Elizabeth and Grace Camden. 2. HENRY CROMWELL, b. Dec. 5, 1855; d. Easter Monday, 1913; m. Jennie Coit, dau. Capt. John and Jennie (Coit) Miller. Their children were: Ruth Capen, b. Mar. 9, 1883. Henry Hiram Jr., Nov. 24, 1884; m. Amy D. Baker; d. Jan. 5, 1956. Genevieve, b. Apr. 13, 1887; d. circa 1893. Gertrude, b. Sept. 4, 1890; d. circa 1894; John Winthrop, b. Sept. 2, 1891; m. Mildred .....; Howard Coit, b. July 6, 1894; m. Dorothy M. Dunning; Marguerite, b. Feb. 23, 1896; m. Ed Edices; Guerdon, b. June 30, 1898; m. Emma White. 3. FRANKLIN, b. Oct. 3, 1860; d. July 21, 1951; m. 1st, Anna Christina Behne; their children: Nina, b. June 5, 1889; d. Sept. 23, 1955; m. W. E. Anderson; Lucy, b. Oct. 26, 1892; m. Harold A. Riley; Walter Capen, b. Sept. 23, 1893; m. Anita .....; Second

marriage, Cora .....; no issue. 4. PHILIP AUSTIN, b. July 14, 1862; d. Aug. 11, 1945; m. Carrie Belle Deal. Had two children: Grace Elizabeth, b. Apr. 24, 1885; m. Carroll Locher. No issue. Austin Deal, b. Dec. 24, 1889; m. Gladys .....2nd m. Ella Spurbec; no issue. 5. ROBERT, b. Apr. 17, 1867; m. Lydia Gertrude Steane. No issue. 6. LUCY, b. Apr. 18, 1869

NINTH GENERATION LUCY, daughter, Henry and Elizabeth Ellis; m. Charles Riddell, Dec. 22, 1898; Their children were: 1. (Twin) Jean Dinsmore, b. Sept. 12, 1900; m. Jesse Lee Wilson. No issue 2. (Twin) Elizabeth Frances, b. Sept. 12, 1900; m. George M Ocshier; they had one daughter, Glenna Jean. 3. Helen Roberta, b. July 20, 1903; m. Dr. Byron W. Gutheil. They had two children: Byron W. Jr.; m. Mary Anne o'Connor Charlene Helen; m. James Mathias 4. Grahame Ellis, b. July 22, 1905; m. Madeline McLinn. They had three children: Lucy Ellis, 3rd, b. Oct. 9. 1943 Mary Lynn, b. Oct. 11, 1944 Grahame Ellis, Jr. b. Aug. 8, 1946 5. Lucy Ellis, b. Feb. 15, 1910; m. Donald Ellis Huntington. Their three sons were: Donald E. Jr., b. Oct. 11, 1934 Charles Riddell, b. Feb. 20, 1938 David Riddell, b. June 13, 1944

## **MAYFLOWER DESCENDANTS AND OTHER FAMILIES ALLIED TO THE ELLIS FAMILY**

Philip Warren; John Howland; Samuel Fuller; Richard Gardiner; Miles Standish; erton; Thomas Rogers; John Alden; Edwin Henry Sampson; George Soule; Isaac Alerton; Thomas Rogers; John Alden; Edwin Leister. Perigrine White claimed as ancestor of Elizabeth Capen through her mother Izanah White.

Phillippe Delano was ancestor to mother of Henry Hiram Ellis, she being daughter of Anne (Delano) Crommett. The Delanos were large farmers in Sidney, Me; also early settlers in Waterville. They descended from Jean de Launy and Marie C. Mahun, Huguenots driven from France, by persecution, to Leydon, Holland, where they joined the Walloon church. They gave several hospices for the persecuted, also built a church in which Phillippe was christened in 1603. They came to New England in the ship *Fortune* in 1624.

The original name, *de Launy*, became *de la Noe* and finally Delano Philip m. Hester Dewbury from Gloucester, England. Duxbury is a corruption of her name. Philip m. 2nd, Mary Churchill. They had nine children. The family was one of the position and means. Jonathan was one of the purchasers of Dartmouth, 1652. Philip and Benny gave permission to build on their land, "Front of ye gallerie of Town House", 1714.

Judah in 1773, addressing the people, said, "Liberty or death", for a war cry. His daughter Priscilla, m. a Sanford; 2nd, Dr. Spooner. She d. Kent, Ohio, in her 95th year.

Pegleg 1st, b. Dartmouth 1761; d. Sidney, Me., 1854, at 92 yrs; m. Sarah Sampson. Their children:

Benjamin, Ruby, Pegleg Jr., Able, Silas, Anna and Anna 2nd, b. Sidney, Me., Sept. 20, 1774; d. Aug. 19, 1808; m. James Crommett Jr., son of James and Abigail Pinkham Crommett of Waterville, Apr. 14, 1793. Their daughter, Cynthia Irish Crommett m. Charles Henry Ellis, who became the father of Henry Hiram Ellis. Pegleg 1st built a grist mill on Delano Brook, near the bank of the Kennebec River, Waterville. It was on this gristmill where Henry H. Ellis found the Delano family clock, and Galusha, daughter of Sarah Elizabeth Delano gave it to him. Pegleg Jr., had four sons in the Civil War. Nathan was a naval captain in the Revolution; Samuel was killed in King Philipp's war; Zabdial was killed at Harlem battle, Sept. 16, 1776.

Amassa, was a famous navigator; commanded one or more English ships of discovery and published a book of voyages and travel in 1817; joined Privateers War (22 guns of Boston) and served 9 months at Fishkill. In 1775 Jonathan Delano served in Pegleg Wadsworth's Company; Malachi, Luther and Samuel served in Andrew Sampson's Company.

(Above records were taken from *History of Duxbury; Revolutionary Records; Dooms Book, 1188*; grave stones at Sidney, Me.; *History of Winthrop, Me.*, Maine State Library; others from Savage's *Genealogical Dictionary*; Farmer's *Genealogical Registry*; Davis' *History of Plymouth*; Davis' *Ancient Landmarks of Plymouth* and from many other sources.

Records of Ellis family in England say that John Ellis was Dean of Hereford, A.D. 1559. ( *Wills and Cathedrals*, p. 64. Barry's *Genealogy* mentions the Ellis Coat of Arms, Bangs, Kent Co., England.) In 1643 Lieut. John with others between ages of 16 and 60, able to bear arms, were commanded to hold themselves in readiness for a call to arms at Plymouth. Arthur Ellis came to New England, 1630; Edwin in 1652; James of Stonington, 1653. John of Dedham (freeman) went to Medfield, 1653; m. Susan Lumber; m. 2nd, widow of John Clapp of Dorchester.

Most of the Ellis families settled in Plymouth, Sandwich and Ellisville, so named from these settlers, many of whom followed the sea. Father visited the old ancestral home in Ellisville, Sandwich, Cape Cod, many times. I was with him in 1889, and was awed by the size of the huge chimney. The house of hand hewn timber seemed to be built around the fireplace. It was a yawning cavern, 11 ft. between the breast, a large brick oven on one side and a swinging crane. It held easily a half cord of wood. I walked in and looked up through the chimney, to see stars.

Floors and ceilings were of oak showing still the marks of the ax blows. Backlogs were hauled by oxen with a chain stretching across the floor, oxen on one side of the house, log on the other. When opposite the fire place it was then rolled into the back of the opening, to last for some days. On the stairway landings, built around the chimney were closets which would hold, so it was said, a full company of soldiers. Built about 1690 it was still occupied when destroyed by fire, 1900.

Forests were of oak originally, after clearing pine growth. Being near Cape Cod, the estate was intersected by sloughs which furnished eels—and the bogs, nearby, cranberries—both sold on the New York Market.

Many deeds and other documents of 1600 and 1700 proved the family to be “freemen”—not indentured servants.

## **GENEALOGY FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE D.A.R. AND THE SOCIETY OF DAUGHTERS OF THE MAYFLOWER.**

(Lucy Ellis Riddell, member, June 1954. State No. 1898; National No. 20341) 1. Francis Cook of the *Mayflower*. His daughter was 2. Jane Cook who m. Experience Mitchell, and had 3. Sarah Mitchell, b. abt. 1645; d. on or after 1689; m. abt. 1661 to John Hayward, b. at Duxbury, Mass., abt. 1642; d. at Duxbury, 1710; their son 4. Thomas Hayward, b. at Bridgewater, Mass., Jan. 10, 1674/5; d. at Bridgewater, Mar. 20, 1741 in 67th year; m. at Bridgewater, Mass., on June 5, 1706 to Bethiah Brett, b. at East Bridgewater, Mass., on Aug. 14, 1745. Their daughter was 5. Mary Hayward, b. at Bridgewater, Mass., Jan. 4, 1718/9; d. at Bridgewater, Mass., Feb. 3, 1793, age 74; m. at Bridgewater, Mass., on Feb. 11, 1745/6 to Samuel Dunbar, b. Bridgewater, Mass., on May 17, 1704; d. at Bridgewater, Mass., on Apr. 17, 1786; son 6. Daniel Dunbar, b. at Bridgewater, Mass., Aug. 13, 1748; d. at Warren, Me., Sept. 30, 1824; m. at Bridgewater, Mass., or Brocton, May 2, 1773 to Abigail Kingman; b. at Bridgewater, Mass., Sept. 4, 1749; d. at Warren, Me., Sept. 24, 1830. Their daughter 7. Vesta Dunbar, b. at South Bridgewater, Mass., April 6, 1779; d. Charlestown, Mass., May 18, 1855; m. at Warren, Me., 1797; d. at Boston, Mass., July 1847, Age 70. Their daughter 8. Izanah White, b. Milton, Mass., Mar. 11, 1801; d. Gardiner, Me., on May 11, 1845, age 44 years; m. at Dorchester, Mass., October 3, 1821 to Aaron Capen; b. at Dorchester, Mass., Apr. 10, 1796; d. Gardiner, Me., Apr. 25, 1856. Their daughter 9. Elizabeth Capen, b. at Dorchester, Mass., Dec. 22, 1828; d. at Sunol, California, Sept. 16, 1913; m. at Gardiner, Me., July 5, 1853 to Henry Hiram Ellis, b. Waterville, Me., June 15, 1829; d. at San Francisco, Dec. 15, 1909. Their daughter 10. Lucy Ellis, b. San Francisco, April 18, 1869; d. ....; m. at Sunol, California, Dec. 22, 1898 to Charles Riddell, b. Allegheny (Pittsburgh) Penn., July 4, 1867; d. ....

## **GENEALOGY FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.**

(Henry Hiram Ellis elected to membership, November 19, 1902. National No. 14722. California State No. 447.) Henry Hiram Ellis, b. Waterville, Me., June 15, 1829; m. Elizabeth Capen, July 5, 1853; son of Charles Henry Ellis, b. Apr. 6, 1806, Ellisville, Mass., m. Cynthia Irish Crommett, June 9, 1827. Son of William Ellis, 3rd; b. Dec. 15, 1771; m. Feb. 28, 1793, Hepsibah Blackwell, b. .... 1772, Sandwich, Mass. Son of Thomas Ellis, b. 1745; m. 1767, Jerusha Clark, dau.

of Israel and Deborah (Pope) Clark. Son of William Ellis, 2nd; b. .... 1719, Sandwich, Mass.; m. abt. 1743, Patience Brewster. Son of William Ellis, 1st; b. .... 1693; m. abt. 1718, Jane Allerton. Son of Mathias Ellis, b. June 2, 1657, Sandwich, Mass., m. 1678, Mary Burgess.

Thomas Ellis, Private in Capt. Nathaniel Hammond's Company (4th Plymouth Company) Lieut. Col. White's Regiment. Enlisted July 30, 1780. Service, 9 days at Rhode Island on Alarm.

### **RECORDS OF SERVICE FOR SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.**

Thomas Ellis and Israel Clark (father of great grandmother of Henry H. Ellis) enlisted in Plymouth, in Oct. 1777, for five months service to guard prisoners who surrendered with Gen. Burgoyne.

Elizabeth (Riddell) Oschier, daughter of Lucy Ellis Riddell, who is a daughter of Henry Hiram Ellis, joined the Daughters of the American Revolution Apr. 16, 1949. National No. 384743.

Descendents of Lucy Ellis Riddell eligible for membership in Daughters of the American Revolution through her mother's line (Capen) as follows:

JOHN CAPEN, b. June 3, 1745, in Dorchester, Mass., was private in Capt. Lemuel Clapp's 1st Dorchester Co., March 4, 1776 which took Dorchester Heights. Col. Benjamin's Regiment, May-Aug. 1779; Sergeant in same company, Nov. 1779-Jan. 1780-May 1780; as Corporal Aug. 1—Oct. 16, 1780. AARON CAPEN, son of John Capen, was b. Apr. 1796, Dorchester, Mass; his dau. Elizabeth Capen, m. Henry Hiram Ellis. Their dau. Lucy Ellis, m. Charles Riddell. (See genealogies for details.)

HENRY ELLIS CAPEN, deceased, nephew of Elizabeth Capen Ellis, was a member, Maine State, S.A.R. from June 1904/5. He was son of Aaron Capen, b. 1822, who was son of Aaron Capen, b. 1796, who was son of John Capen, b. 1745. (See Capen Genealogy.)

### **MAXIMS AND EPIGRAMS. H.H.E.**

A GOOD LIFE. Bulwer Lytton said, "Birth is not valuable in itself but as transmission of great qualities which descend from our ancestors and should be perpetuated."

WELL-BORN is something to be proud of; remembered at all times, one cannot descend to dishonor; he must act the part of great ancestors whose blood runs in his veins. Some men owe all to ancestors nothing to themselves. Delving deep into our family history, I find no shadow on its bright escutcheons; Keep them so. The Alexanders, Caesars, Napoleons, Bacons, Shakespeares, Darwins, Howes and Moses were the accumulated creations of the ages.

TITLES, if worn by one who earned them, should be respected, but titles inherited are the gift of ancestry who earned them the hard way.

A GOOD NAME is better than riches, says the bible; it gives credit, which is the best capital. Again the bible teaches "As thou sowest, so also shall thou reap." Man is the son of his own deeds.

BELIEF IN GOD, the Great Creator, is the wing on which we mount to Heaven. Once an unbeliever, it was in the silent watches of the night, studying the glittering lamps of Heaven, it dawned upon me that here was order, system, and harmony which a great Architect must have created and now ruled. Light broke in upon my soul and converted me from unbelief to worship and adoration of the Builder of the universe. After the storms of life, may I die glorifying Him. Make me a witness of His truth!

A GOOD LIFE. Lead a good life O my children; be honest for honesty's sake, and you will find also, that it is the best policy.

GENTILITY. No man can be a gentle-man unless the instinct is inborn. Varnish cannot hide the grain of the wood. Gentle heartedness is the desire to serve and please others in modesty, not display.

DUTY. Do your duty to God and yourself, by visiting the sick, feeding the hungry and binding up the wounds of the afflicted; wherein you are rendering more homage to God than by loud-mouthed

professions before the multitudes. When the ledgers are made up by the recording angel, may an entry be found to my credit.

KNOWLEDGE. Man know thyself, was the old teaching; man improve thyself is the thought of young ambition. When we realize how little we know, hope dawns, and improvement begins. To improve one's self is both easy and pleasant. When contact with cultured people made me aware of my ignorance, it sent me to the library, avid to learn, and my appetite grew as I fed it. Books opened up a wonderful world to me. Later, I found with Pope, that "The proper study of mankind is man."

INTELLECT. One who does not improve his intellect, is sure to be relegated to the rear of his fellows; man must progress or he retrogresses, and culture banishes vice.

IDLENESS is the mother of dry rot, a curious disease in men; decay from within.

AMBITION is often allied to avarice, though ambition is ashamed of the relationship.

POWER OR FAME do not bring contentment or peace of mind, yet we strive, slave and shorten our lives to become great and powerful;

WEALTH—it is the poverty of the rich!

PRIDE OF CHARACTER. We can not have too much, but give it not much tongue. Rather, yet your conduct give the world the knowledge of it.

TRUTH is the foundation of honor; nothing is more murderous of self respect than lying. The liar is a coward, and given opportunity will become a thief.

GAMBLING. That absorbing passion will drive the victim to crime. The race track is the most seductive and dangerous of gambles. The gambler is ever on the downward path of dishonor that generally leads to prison.

HYPOCRASY is a cloak for all vices. It was hypocrisy in two men of my childhood, which turned me from church and religion.

FRIENDS. Dwell often on the graces and virtues of your fellows. When one speaks often, or thinks evil of his kind, he dives deep into vice and is not one to make friends. My heart will be cold in death when it warms not to my friends or to those I love. Never be mean, false or cruel in any way, and you will have many friends. Is there a difference between the enemy who does not harm me, and the friend who does not serve me?

ENEMIES. Yes, I have had many of them; without them, man does not develop strength and purpose.

Silence and reticence eventually breed suspicion, a canker that destroys faith in one's fellow beings. They are the weapons of the weak.

PROCRASTINATION is one of the greatest curses of mankind. "Manana" says the Spaniard, but tomorrow never comes. The unfortunate who so reasons is always a slave to the work which always eludes him. Procrastination, truly is "the thief of time!"

POVERTY is an inspiration to one who has ambition. Dining on bread and sweetened water was good for me. Want and hardship round out one's character. I did not reach the quarter deck through the cabin windows, but through all grades from Boy to Master Mariner.

INTEMPERANCE never claimed me. My good mother taught me to look with horror on crime and intemperance. I have lived in dangers of sea and land, but neither the tumultuous sea, nor the roar of the multitude's passion, had power to change my determination to rise superior to evil influences.

IMAGINATION. The most glorious faculty given to man; it causes thought to breathe.

SOLITUDE. It is good to be alone sometimes; to reflect, to dream. Self-communion has a good effect upon a mind that has experienced sorrow and misfortune, as well as joy. Shakespeare said,

“In the sleep of death, what dreams may come!” But I thought, in the sleep of life, what dreams do come!

MARRIAGE. Good women save men from perdition. In a happy home the wife must be a full partner. A great soul may not marry with a small one; if so, misery will follow, for they have nothing in common and remain as wide apart as the poles. One reaches heavenward, the other has his eyes on the ground. If such wed, the inferior must rise to the level of the superior or the superior must fall to the inferior level. There are rare exceptions. Charles Dickens said, “The most unfortunate of all marriages is one of unsuitability of mind and purpose.”

DEVIL—the worst devil I know is a devil of a temper! I found it in myself!

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