Collection Summary

Collection Title: Samuel W. Brown diary and letters
Date (inclusive): 1848-1859,
Date (bulk): 1849-1850
Collection Number: MS 236
Creator: Brown, Samuel W., 1802-1862

Physical Description:
Extent: 2 folders
(0.2 Linear feet)
Repository: California Historical Society
678 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA, 94105
415-357-1848
reference@calhist.org
URL: http://www.californiawhistoricalsociety.org/

Physical Location: Collection is stored onsite.

Language of Materials: Collection materials are in English.

Abstract: Diary (181 p.) handbound in six sections, describing Brown's voyage from New York to San Francisco via Cape Horn aboard the bark Selma with the Fremont Mining and Trading Company, of which he served as chairman of the board; and letters to family and friends, also detailing his trip. The diary focuses on daily shipboard life and problems with crew members, while the letters also include descriptions of Rio de Janeiro and Chile; San Francisco housing, population statistics, lynch law, and prices; and a squatters riot in Sacramento in 1850. Includes a printed notice (May 25, 1859) to Brown from John Ferguson, indicating that Brown was Postmaster in Petaluma. Letters include a pictorial lettersheet with view of San Francisco.

Physical Location: Collection is stored onsite.

Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Samuel W. Brown Papers, MS 236, The California Historical Society.

Scope and Contents
Diary (181 p.) handbound in six sections, describing Brown's voyage from New York to San Francisco via Cape Horn aboard the bark Selma with the Fremont Mining and Trading Company, of which he served as chairman of the board; and letters to family and friends, also detailing his trip. The diary focuses on daily shipboard life and problems with crew members, while the letters also include descriptions of Rio de Janeiro and Chile; San Francisco housing, population statistics, lynch law, and prices; and a squatters riot in Sacramento in 1850. Includes a printed notice (May 25, 1859) to Brown from John Ferguson, indicating that Brown was Postmaster in Petaluma. Letters include a pictorial lettersheet with view of San Francisco.

Arrangement
Arranged in two folders: Diary in Folder 1; Letters in Folder 2.

Biography of Samuel W. Brown
Brown was a California forty-niner and physician from Connecticut.

Benicia (Calif.)--Description and travel 1849 October 20
Indians of North America--California 1849 November 29
Prices--California--San Francisco 1849 October 18
Riots--California--Sacramento 1850 August 14
Sacramento (Calif.)--Flood, 1850 1850 January 8
Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog:
- Fremont Mining & Trading Company.
- Selma (Bark).
- Diaries.
- Gold miners--California--Correspondence.
- Gold miners--California--Diaries.
- Pictorial lettersheets.
- Voyages to the Pacific coast.

Folder 1
Folder 2
Diary 1849
Letters 1848-1850, 1859
1848 October 13
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife, Hannah, before journey to California. Poem praising God's work.

1849 March 28
Scope and Content Note
Memorandum of agreement regarding shares in Fremont Mining & Trading Co.

1849 April 10
Scope and Content Note
SWB to son, Mason, detailing commencement of journey, seasickness, etc.

1849 April 15
Scope and Content Note
SWB to family from Rio de Janeiro, including pen and ink sketches of Cape Verde Islands, as seen from the Bark Selma.

1849 May 9
Scope and Content Note
SWB to family from Rio de Janeiro, including pen and ink sketches of Cape Verde Islands, as seen from the Bark Selma.

1849 June 14
Scope and Content Note
Short vignette of Brown's experiences as a physician in Connecticut, "Reminiscences No. 2: The Factory Girl, By a Voyager 'Round Cape Horn". Brown hoped his wife could get it published.

1849 August
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife, recounts trouble with drunken, abusive officers on ship.

1849 August-September
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife, describing coast of Chile, visits there with friends from Connecticut. Calls journal he's keeping a "daily record of events, thoughts and feelings".
1849 October 1
Scope and Content Note
SWB to board of directors of Fremont Mining & Trading Company, detailing disciplinary action taken against crew members in July.

1849 October 7
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife from San Francisco harbor, describing port and city.

1849 October 18
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife regarding cost of living in San Francisco.

1849 October 20
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife describing Benicia, Sacramento Valley. Outlines advantages of life in California--good climate, terrain, outlawing of slavery.

1849 November 9
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife on cost of living.

1849 November 20
Scope and Content Note
SWB to friend, providing excellent physical description of San Francisco. Observations on housing, lynch law, prices, population statistics.

1849 November 29
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife from diggings on American River. Poignant episode with Indians. Vivid description of primitive living conditions of miners.

1850 January 8
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife in despair. Has not heard from her; reports on devastating flood of Sacramento.

1850 January 25, February 1
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife concerning his resignation from executive board of Fremont Mining & Trading Co. Resolves to mine only long enough to secure a stake. Plans to set up medical practice in San Francisco.

1850 February 16
Scope and Content Note
SWB to son, written on lettersheet with view of San Francisco, Feb. 1850. Gold going for $16 an ounce.

1850 August 14
Scope and Content Note
SWB to wife details trouble in Sacramento. Land speculators allegedly bought deed from Capt. Sutter which included city of Sacramento. Riots break out as "squatters" refuse to leave their land.
1859 May 25

Scope and Content Note
Document indicating Brown was postmaster in Petaluma.