Finding aid to the William and Mary Monroe Correspondence MS Vault 173

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URL: http://californiahistoricalsociety.org/
**Contributing Institution:** California Historical Society  
**Title:** William and Mary Monroe Correspondence  
**Creator:** Monroe, William, 1818-1908  
**Creator:** Monroe, Mary Jane Beebe, 1822-1903  
**Identifier/Call Number:** MS Vault 173  
**Physical Description:** 2 folders  
**Date (inclusive):** 1850-1851  
**Abstract:** William Monroe (1818-1908) was a Wisconsin doctor who went to California during the Gold Rush, where he worked as a gold miner and physician. The collection contains fourteen letters, dated 1850-1851, mostly exchanged between William Monroe and his wife Mary Monroe (1822-1903). Letters written by William Monroe to his wife document his overland journey from Mineral Point, Wisconsin, to California (April-August 1850); and his experiences and observations as a gold miner and physician in California’s gold region, specifically in Hangtown (Placerville), Sacramento, Tolles New Diggings, and Quartzville (August 1850-December 1851). Letters from Mary Monroe illuminate the experience of a woman who served as the head of household back home while her husband sought his fortune in California, and her struggles to manage the family farm and household while grieving the death of her seven-year-old child, John Monroe.  
**Language of Material:** Collection materials are in English.  
**Conditions Governing Access**  
Collection is open for research. Researchers are encouraged to use facsimiles stored in folder 2.  
**Immediate Source of Acquisition**  
Gift of S. Catherine McIntire, 2018.  
**Biographical Note**  
William Monroe (1818-1908) was a Wisconsin doctor who went to California during the Gold Rush, where he worked as a gold miner and physician. Born on July 30, 1818, in Ohio, William moved with his mother, sister, and stepfather Dr. John Loofbourow, to Mineral Point, Wisconsin, in 1831. He engaged in lead mining near Mineral Point while reading for the medical profession, commencing his medical practice in Fayette, Wisconsin, in 1844. He married Mary Jane Monroe née Beebe (1822-1903) in 1841; they had ten children, four of whom survived to adulthood. In 1850, William left Wisconsin for California with a party from Mineral Point that included his brother-in-law Robert Gray, leaving behind his wife Mary and two children, John and Harriet. Between 1850 and 1851, William worked as a gold miner and physician in California, while Mary ran the family farm and household in Fayette.  
**Preferred Citation**  
[Identification of item, date]; William and Mary Monroe Correspondence, MS Vault 173; California Historical Society.  
**Content Description**  
Contains fourteen letters, dated 1850-1851, mostly exchanged between William Monroe and his wife Mary Monroe, with three letters written by relatives and neighbors John Loofbourow, Rebekah Loofbourow, and Henry Howe. Letters written by William Monroe to his wife document his overland journey from Mineral Point, Wisconsin, to California (April-August 1850); and his experiences and observations as a gold miner and physician in California’s gold region, specifically in Hangtown (Placerville), Sacramento, Tolles New Diggings, and Quartzville (August 1850-December 1851). Letters from Mary Monroe illuminate the experience of a woman who served as the head of household back home while her husband sought his fortune in California, and her struggles to manage the family farm and household while grieving the death of her seven-year-old child, John Monroe. The collection includes two bereavement letters, Mary’s letter of 1851 May 1 informing William of John’s death, and William’s long reply of 1851 September 15, written in a black pocket letter book. The collection also includes biographical and genealogical material about William Monroe and his family supplied by his descendants.  
**Conditions Governing Use**  
Materials in this collection, which were created in 1850-1851, are in the public domain in the United States. Permission to publish or reproduce is not required.  
**Subjects and Indexing Terms**  
Gold miners -- California -- Correspondence  
Overland journeys to the Pacific  
California -- Gold discoveries  
Women -- Wisconsin -- Correspondence
Bereavement