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## **Finding Aid of the Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild Memoirs C005491**

Finding aid prepared by Nick Scales

Society of California Pioneers

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**Title:** Fairchild, Mahlon Dickerson Memoirs

**Identifier/Call Number:** C005491

**Contributing Institution:** Society of California Pioneers

**Language of Material:** English

**Physical Description:** 1.0 box(6 folders)

**Date (inclusive):** 1849-1866

**Abstract:** Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild's "Pioneer Reminiscences" is a 175-page, typed, manuscript describing, in rich and interesting detail, his journey from New York to California via Panama in 1848. He also describes his prospecting and mining adventures in California, Nevada, and Arizona from 1848 to 1866. Trained as a newspaper man, he often worked for his brothers as a correspondent for papers they published, but "Reminiscences" is primarily focused on his mining activities, including: early gold panning on the American River; hydraulic mining in Nevada County, California; prospecting for copper on the Colorado River in Arizona; and, searching for salt deposits in the basin and range country of Nevada. The box includes handwritten drafts of portions of the work from which the completed work was created.

**creator:** Fairchild, Mahlon Dickerson, 1827 - 1913

**Conditions Governing Access note**

Collection open for research.

**Conditions Governing Use note**

There are no restrictions on access.

**Preferred Citation note**

Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild Memoirs. The Society of California Pioneers.

**Donor**

Donor and date of acquisition unknown.

**Biographical/Historical note**

Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild was born on September 7, 1827 in Oneonta, Otsego County, New York, the son of David Fairchild and Deborah Palmer. His father was a newspaper publisher in Western New York State, and each of the six sons were trained in the trade. Mahlon Fairchild came to California via the Isthmus of Panama, arriving in San Francisco on the whale ship "Sylph" on July 26, 1849. During his early years in the West, he actively pursued prospecting and mining, while serving as a correspondent for his brothers' newspaper, the Daily Reese River Reville. For the last 25 years of his career, he worked in the Land and Surveying Department of the Southern Pacific Railroad. He lived in Rocklin, Placer County, California. He wrote an extensive history of the state of Nevada and a history of Placer County, California. He was a member of the Society of California Pioneers. Fairchild died in Oakland, California at the age of 85 on April 8, 1913. He was survived by his wife, Mary E. Fairchild; two sons, William F. and Mahlon David Fairchild; and, three daughters, Mrs. Theodore H. Thomas, Mrs. R. Masson Smith, and Mrs. Frank Hall Watters.

**Scope and Contents note**

Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild's "Pioneer Reminiscences" is a 175-page, typed, manuscript describing, in rich and interesting detail, his journey from New York to California via Panama in 1848. He also describes his prospecting and mining adventures in California, Nevada, and Arizona from 1848 to 1866. Trained as a newspaper man, he often worked for his brothers as a correspondent for papers they published, but "Reminiscences" is primarily focused on his mining activities, including: early gold panning on the American River; hydraulic mining in Nevada County, CA; prospecting for copper on the Colorado River in Arizona; and, searching for salt deposits in the basin and range country of Nevada.

With a group of 12 other New Yorkers, Fairchild formed the Ganargawa Mining Company, and they travelled on the steamer "Crescent City" to Panama. They arrived in San Francisco on the whaler "Sylph" on July 26, 1848. Outfitting at Sutter's Fort, they prospected and panned for gold at Blue Canyon, Bear River, and Finley's Camp. They spent the winter in the Sacramento Valley, "hunting for the market," and lost a companion on a bear hunt. In San Jose in 1853, they witnessed cattle ranching and rustling at the ranchos. In 1855, Fairchild undertook hydraulic mining at North San Juan in Nevada County, California. Working with his brothers who published the "Semi Weekly Observer" in Placerville, he went to the diggings in Nevada, where it was said that black sand and rocks were choking miners' rockers. These were later found to be rich silver deposits unrecognized at the time. Fairchild's companion, Eugene Ange, was killed in the Ormsby Massacre, and afterwards, Fairchild left to prospect for copper along the Colorado River, working with the Mohave and Chemehuevi Indians. He formed the Mountaineer Mining Company. He was working for the "Reese River Reville" in 1865 when he was asked to investigate the stock company, "Monte Christo Gold and Silver Mining Company of Nevada." Fairchild spent the winter of 1866 prospecting for salt (important for refining ores), other minerals, and timber in the basin and range country

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of Nevada.

**Existence and Location of Originals note**

The Society of California Pioneers, 300 Fourth St, San Francisco, CA 94107

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Gold mines and mining -- California -- History.

Journeys to the Pacific Coast

Mines and mineral resources--Nevada

Pioneers--California--History--19th century

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