
Finding Aid of Almarin B. Paul's Memoir C058567

Finding aid prepared by Samantha Ronzano

Society of California Pioneers

300 Fourth Street

San Francisco, CA, 94107-1272

(415) 959-1849

pkeats@californiapioneers.org

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Title: Paul, Almarin B., Memoir

Identifier/Call Number: C058567

Contributing Institution: Society of California Pioneers

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 2.0 folders1 typescript memoir (36 pages), 2 letters

Date (bulk): Bulk, 1849-1851

Date (inclusive): 1898

Abstract: Almarin B. Paul's memoir is 36 typed pages in a daily journal from 1898, recalling events from 1849-1851. It details his investment in hardware merchandise to be shipped to California, and his departure with his future business partner Dr. Thomas J. White and his family, across the plains to California, noting the deadly national outbreak of cholera. Paul unexpectedly has to return to St. Louis to settle a problem with his purchased merchandise, and makes new arrangements to reach California via New Orleans to Panama to San Francisco. Once he arrives in San Francisco, he goes to Sacramento where his partner White has settled with his family, and they open their hardware store Paul, White & Co. By November of 1850, Paul convinced his business partners to close their hardware store, and moved to the Nevada City mountains to mine quartz. The are 2 letters in the second folder, both from Paul, having to do with the Society of California Pioneers.

creator: Paul, Almarin B. , 1849-1850, 1898 -- Diaries

Existence and Location of Copies note

The Society of California Pioneers, 101 Montgomery St. Suite 150, The Presidio of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA 94129

Scope and Contents note

Almarin B. Paul's memoir is 36 typed pages in a daily journal from 1898, recalling events from 1849-1851. It details his investment in hardware merchandise to be shipped to California, and his departure with his future business partner Dr. Thomas J. White and his family, across the plains to California, noting the deadly national outbreak of cholera. Paul unexpectedly has to return to St. Louis to settle a problem with his purchased merchandise, and makes new arrangements to reach California via New Orleans to Panama to San Francisco. Once he arrives in San Francisco, he goes to Sacramento where his partner White has settled with his family, and they open their hardware store Paul, White & Co. By November of 1850, Paul convinced his business partners to close their hardware store, and moved to the Nevada City mountains to mine quartz. The 2 letters in folder 2, are from the Calumet Gold Mining Co., on their business stationary, noting Almarin B. Paul, as General Manager. One letter congratulates E.P. Marcellus, on his successful run for Secretary of the Society of California Pioneers. The second letter is one of Almarin B. Paul sending in his application and fee (of \$10) for membership in the Society of California Pioneers.

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Donor and date of acquisition unknown.

Preferred Citation note

Paul, Almarin B., Memoir. The Society of California Pioneers.

Conditions Governing Use note

There are no restrictions on access.

Biographical/Historical note

Almarin B. Paul, of San Francisco, is numbered among the promoters of the substantial upbuilding and progress of California. Coming to the state about the time of the discovery of gold, he has taken cognizance of existing conditions, has labored for their improvement and has instituted many movements resulting in the material benefit of his city and state.

He was born on the 13th of September, 1823, at Bridgeton, New Jersey, and was a son of Hiram and Phoebe (Brooks) Paul. His mother was a daughter of Major Almarin Brooks, an officer of the colonial army in the Revolutionary war. The father's family was established in Gloucester county, New Jersey, at an early period in the colonization of the new world. In the family of Hiram and Phoebe (Brooks) Paul were but two children, the sister of our subject being Sarah C. Paul.

In the public schools of his native town Almarin B. Paul acquired his early education, and when a lad of ten years accompanied his mother and sister to St. Louis, Missouri, where he completed his studies in the St. Louis University, spending four years as a student in that institution. On putting aside his text-books he engaged in clerking in a dry goods store until 1845, when he went to Lake Superior in connection with a copper mining company for the purpose of prospecting and making mineral explorations. There he remained until 1848. In the spring of that year he returned to St.

Louis, and it was not long after this ere he heard the report concerning the discovery of gold in California. He immediately made preparation to start for the Mecca of the west. Previous to this time, while in the Lake Superior region, he had heard stories of the gold fields on the Pacific coast and had organized a party of four to come to Californis and make explorations for gold, but the Mexican war broke out at that time and then plan was banded.

Mr. Paul arrived in California on the 3d of November, 1849, having come by way of the Panama route. Previous to starting he purchased a stock of goods, chiefly building and fancy hardware, and shipped the same around the Horn. He located in Sacramento, where he began business under the firm style of Paul, White & Company, carrying on that enterprise until November, 1850, when he disposed of his interest and turned his attention to mining. Going to Nevada City, he there built one of the first mills in Nevada county and was associated with George Hearst in the conduct of that enterprise for many years, operating in the mines of Nevada county, which is one of the richest quartz-mining districts of California. Although the rock run from \$30 to \$200 a ton, when the average value fell to \$25 a ton it did not pay to work it owing to the inability to save all the gold. So strongly was Mr. Paul impressed with the necessity of improvements in the process for saving the precious metal that in July, 1851, he went to New York city to call attention to the possibilities of quartz mining in California. He found, however, that capitalists were too timid to back an enterprise that they did not then understand, and without succeeding in his attempt to gain the co-operation of wealthy men of the east he returned to California in 1852 and again embarked in business in Sacramento. The routine of a mercantile career, however, did not satisfy him, and in the spring of 1853 we find him bending his energies to the upbuilding of San Francisco.

Thoroughly understanding the conditions of the west and recognizing in foresighted manner its possibilities, he put forth his efforts along many lines for the welfare and progress of San Francisco. he operated quite extensively in real estate until 1856, when he became an active factor in connection with the famous vigilance committee organized that year. The lawless element seemed to be the dominant one in California and life and property were becoming unsafe. Those who had regard for justice and right, recognizing that a crisis was at hand, banded themselves together to support the interests of those who held themselves amenable to law and the vigilance committee was the result. Mr. Paul in connection with Washington Bartlett, afterwar governor of California, and his brothers, embarked in the publication of a paper called the True Californian, an able and fearless advocate of the vigilantes. He continued in his journalistic enterprise until 1857, when he sold his interest in the publication and again became connected with mining interests, erecting the Oriental Quartz Mill in Nevada county. This proved a very profitable undertaking owing to the perfected methods of saving gold. He conducted this until 1860, when the famous Comstock mines in Nevada were attracting attention. Mr. Paul was among the first to perceive the value of the discovery, and it was he that formed the first company to systematically work the mines. He erected the first mill there--a twenty-four stamp mill--to work the silver ores, which he reduced, at a uniform price to every one, for thirty dollars per ton. In 1865, having realized a fortune from his efforts in this direction, Mr. Paul sold his interests in mill and mines and embarked in the banking business at Gold Hill. He was also the organizer of the Imperial Consolidating Mining Company.

In the year 1867 Mr. Paul sold his banking business in Nevada to the Bank of California and commenced oerations in Inyo county, California, in order to engage in the development of mines there. In 1868 he secured patents on new processes for amalgamating the precious metals. In 1860 he had invented what was then known as the Washoe pan process for working silver ores, whereby the time of work was reduced from thirty days to four hours. This method is at the present time in use throughout the world in connection with silver mining. Mr. Paul operated the first mill of the king in Silver City, Nevada, and in his invention he has given to civilization a most valuable device and one that has resulted in adding millions to the wealth of the country. He has perhaps done more than any other man for mining in California, having made a close study of the conditions and laboring continually to improve these until as a result of his efforts much time and money have been saved in making the metals mined a marketable commodity.

Mr. Paul was united in marriage to Miss Kate V. Mullin, a native of Ohio. They have four children, three of whom are living: Almarin B., who is engaged in the commission business in San Francisco; Jane A.; and Florence K.

Mr. Paul is a stanch advocate of Republican principles, having supported the party since its organization. He was in deep sympathy with the Union cause at the time of the Civil war and became president of the committee having in charge the sanitary fund of the state of Nevada, acting by appointment from Dr. W. H. Bellows, president of the United States commission from 1860 until 1866. The rund was raised for the purpose of paying nurses for the care of soldiers during the Civil war, and Mr. Paul was a liberal contributor to the work. He belongs to the Order of the Cincinnati, to the Sons of the American Revolution and to the Society of California Pioneers. Mr. Paul for fifty years was a constant writer on mining and other matters for the mining and other journals. At one time he issued for free circulation then thousand pamphlets on the find gold questions, which went all over the mining world, and were accepted as authority. His account of the famous Vigilance Committee of 1856 received high commendations from all members of the committee, as also the press of the state.

The days of chivalry and knighthood in Europe cannot furnish more interesting and romantic tales than our own western history. Into the wild mountain fastnesses of the unexplored west went brave men whose courage was often called forth. The land was rich in all natural resources, in gold and silver, in agricultural and commercial possibilities and awaited the attention of man to yield up its treasures. But its mountain heights were hard to climb, its forests difficult to penetrate, and the establishment of homes in this beautiful region therefore meant sacrifices, hardships and oftentimes death, but there were men brave enough to undertake the task of reclaiming the district for purposes of civilization. No story of fiction contains more exciting chapters than could be found in the life record of Mr. Paul if his history were given in detail, for it would present a picture of pioneer conditions in California as well as of its period of prosperity and progress. In his business career he early had the sagacity and prescience to discern the eminence which the future had in store for this great and growing country, and acting in accordance with the dictates of his faith and judgment he has garnered in the fulness of time the generous harvest which is the just recompense of indomitable courage and marvelous enterprise.

(History of the New California Its Resources and People, Volume II. The Lewis Publishing Company - 1905. Edited by Leigh H. Irvine)

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Brannan, Sam, 1819-1889 -- Diaries
Calumet Gold Mining Co. . -- Correspondence
Flushing, L. I. , "Prince" -- Diaries
Paul, White and Co. . -- Diaries
Sutter, John Augustus, 1803-1880 -- Diaries
White, Thomas J. , Dr. -- Diaries
Cholera
Gold dredging -- California -- History.
Gold mines and mining -- California -- History.
Hock Farm
Panama
Pioneers--California
Pioneers--California--History--19th century
Sacramento (Calif.) - History - 19th century.
San Francisco (Calif.) - History - 19th century
San Jose (Calif.)
Sandwich Islands
Yerba Buena (Calif.)
