A Guide to the Alexander McFarlan journal recorded on board the California Packet (built 1849; ship, 3m)

HDC0210

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, National Park Service

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Title: Alexander McFarlan journal recorded on board the California Packet (built 1849; ship, 3m)
Date: 1849-1850
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Abstract: The Alexander McFarlan journal recorded on board the California Packet (built 1849; ship, 3m) (SAFR 17627, HDC 210) describes the author's journey from Machiasport, Maine to San Francisco, California aboard the CALIFORNIA PACKET (built 1849; ship: 3m) from December 1849 to August 1850.
Physical Location: San Francisco Maritime NHP, Historic Documents Department
Language(s): In English.
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Preferred Citation
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Acquisition Information
SAFR-00001
The journal was originally donated to the San Francisco Maritime Museum. It was transferred to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and finally to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.
Historical or Biographical Note
Biography: Born July 23, 1828, Alexander McFarlan was 22 years old when he boarded the CALIFORNIA PACKET (built 1849; ship, 3m) at Machiasport, Maine on December 28, 1849 to California. Piloted by Captain George Kimball, with 80 passengers on board, the ship sailed for California. En route the ship stopped in Boston, Rio de Janeiro, and Valparaiso. Mr. McFarlan wrote of weather, location, food, other vessels encountered, bed bugs, passenger debates, participating in the on-board infantry which had regular drills, washing and mending, playing the fiddle to entertain crew and passengers, the time spent reading and writing, rounding Cape Horn, nearing the "promised land", and how the San Francisco Bay and port appeared at first site the day of arrival, the last entry of the journal on August 24, 1850.
Collection Scope and Content
The Alexander McFarlan journal recorded on board the California Packet (built 1849; ship, 3m) (SAFR 17627, HDC 210) describes the author's journey from Machiasport, Maine to San Francisco, California aboard the CALIFORNIA PACKET (built 1849; ship, 3m) from December 1849 to August 1850.
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In the author's hand, the title of this journal is *Alexander McFarlan's Book: Boston, February 25th, 1850*. A page later, after the initial entry regarding boarding the ship at Machiasport, Maine, an additional title reads: *A journal of Alexander McFarlan's life during a voyage to California*. The original journal was given a second supporting binding, date unknown, by the author's nephew, George A. Knight, and given an expanded title which now reads: *Logbook from Boston to San Francisco via Cape Horn 1849 ship California Packet by Alexander McFarlan a true pioneer of the olden day*. The collection is fully processed and available for research.

**Collection Arrangement**

This collection consists of one journal.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Diaries
- Ocean travel
- Sailing ships
- McFarlan, Alexander
- California Packet (built 1849; ship, 3m)
- Machiasport (Me.)
- Boston (Mass.)
- San Francisco Bay (Calif.)
- Diaries