

Day-by-day account of trip to California, October 3 to November 2, 1854, via Isthmus of Panama.

Written by **Martha Ann Grover Smith** (Mrs. Edward Hall Smith).

[October 3] Left Boston for Fall River the third of October and arrived at half past seven and took the steamer Bay State for New York. Had a very rough passage and arrived at half past ten a.m. Was quite seasick during the night. At 4 went aboard the Nicaragua steamship Star of the West with Edward, He having previously purchased tickets for us to California three o'clock for Nicaragua. All hands aboard and all things ready. The signal was given to turn on the steam. A port gun was fired and off we started amidst the deafening cheers and goodbyes of a large concourse of spectators who had gathered to bid their friends a safe passage and good luck to _____. The weather is cloudy and windy and the water quite rough.

October 5, it is a year ago today since Edward started for California. He has returned and is now on his second voyage. It is a beautiful day. The sun shines brightly except an occasional cloud. It was rough last night. Most of the passengers were seasick. Edward _____ been seasick yet. We have passed several crafts this morning bearing in different directions.

October 6, weather cloudy, wind east. Passed Cape Hattaras last night between ten and twelve o'clock distance 865 miles _____. The Star of the West is a double engine steamer of two thousand tons _____ and a fine sailer.

October 7, Weather cloudy, wind east, heavy seas. We are crossing the Gulf Stream, seven o'clock p.m. wind shift to the south sea moderate, have about 350 passengers. Most of them have got over seasickness. Edward and I have been well since we left New York.

October 8, today is Sunday. The steward distributed tracks among the passengers. I got five. The weather is changeable, wind south, ten o'clock a.m. passing a ship to the seaward of us bearing south. Sea quite calm. Had a sermon this forenoon from a colored preacher.

October 9, weather mild, wind southeast. Four o'clock p.m. passing east of a schooner bound north. Passing west of the island of Marquesas. October 10, weather fine, passing a schooner to the seaward bearing south, making the eastern extremity of the island of Cuba. Eleven a.m. passing between Cuba and Haiti. Cuba is a splendid looking island 670 miles long and a trib__ to Shain. Edward is 24 years old today.

October 10, weather cloudy, wind east. Passed the island of Jamaica last night. The atmosphere is very warm. We are crossing the Caribbean Sea. The officers of the boat are weighing the baggage preparatory to crossing The Ithmus. They charge 15 Cents per pound for all the baggage we have got. 58 pounds. This Company are a set of pirates. They will cheat you out of your last Dollar _____ then steal your clothing. They deserve the kaller? for their impostions. This afternoon Coaster bound for Kingston, Jamaica.

October 12, weather cloudy and very warm water smooth as a Karron? Examined a flying fish this morning. It was about 8 inches long shaped like a _____, a bluish color with fins about 5 inches long on each side just below the _____. The sailors say they make an excellent dish when cooked.

October 13, weather warm and cloudy.

October 14, weather warm and cloudy, reached San Juan Del Norte this morning at six o'clock and anchored of Point Arenas. At nine o'clock got into a stern wheel boat and started up the Rio Del Norte. The scenery on this river surpasses description. The banks are lined with flowers of every hue and description and in the rear on either side rises beautiful forests of Suycamore, oranges, spimone, _____ pine, _____ and _____ resounding with the _____ of monkeys, the whistling of parrots, and the melodious songs of a multitude of birds of every description.

October 15, weather cloudy. Reached Machusa Rapids about twelve last night. Started this morning at five and reached Castilla at seven. Left at eight and reached the foot of Lake Nicaragua at half past one a distance of ninety five miles from San Juan Del Norte. We started again at four to cross the foot of the Lake a distance of eighty miles. The accomodations of this boat are miserable. It rained torrents all night. Passengers got drenched to the skin.

October 16, reached Virgin Bay this morning at five and got into an iron boat and went ashore. Took breakfast at the California House. After breakfast I took a seat in a wagon attached to six mules. After waiting about three hours we took up our march to Del Sud a distance of twelve miles. Our progress was very slow. We dined at the half way house at six. It has been raining all day and we are wet through. We took a room at the Pacific House. The fare here is miserable with but a sack in bottom to sleep on and all of our blankets wet.

October 17. Rained hard all day waiting for the steamer Cortes gone down to Salinas Bay to load on provisions. Had plenty of oranges and bananas.

October 18, windy and rainy looking. The steamer Cortes hove into sight at one p.m.. Went on board at five and started for San Francisco a quarter to eight.

October 19, wind west, sea heavy, twelve p.m. made 160 miles since starting.

October 20, wind west, sea heavy. Made 212 miles since twelve yesterday.

October 21, wind northeast, sea heavy, made 216 miles since yesterday.

October 22, weather fine, sea calm, wind northwest. Today is Sunday. Had a sermon on the forecastle by the colored pastor. Made 230 miles since yesterday.

October 23, weather fine, sea calm, running up the coast of Mexico, can see the _____ Mountains quite plain. Quite a number of the passengers are sick with the Panama Fever. We have made 200 miles since yesterday.

October 24, weather fine, sea calm, wind northwest. We are just entering the Gulf of California. We have made 200 miles since yesterday.

October 25, weather fine, sea calm. We are in the Gulf of California. One of the sailors died last night of the Panama Fever. He was buried in an ocean grave. This morning there are one third of the passengers and crew sick with the fever. We have made 280 miles since yesterday.

October 26, weather fine, wind northwest. Made Cape St. _____ about three o'clock this morning. Passed a brig last night. Spoken? a schooner this morning and took a letters? for San Francisco. Passed to the seaward of a whale ship. One of the waiters died this morning of the fever. He was thrown overboard before he got cold. It looked very brutish to me (_____). Made 230 miles since yesterday. At seven o'clock we passed the island of San Margarita.

October 27, weather fine, quite cool, wind northwest. Made 316 miles since yesterday. Mr. Edward Fletcher, an Englishman, and an noble hearted fellow died this evening of the fever. He had been to California and returned for his wife. She is a very amiable and kind hearted lady and I fear the affliction will destroy her reason. He was buried at eight o'clock p.m.

October 28, weather fine and cool, wind northwest. Made 212 miles since yesterday.
October 29, weather fine and cool, wind northwest. Two of the passengers died last night. NE One of them was Mr. Henry More of Chicago, Ill as very skillful engineer, a fine man. His widow is on the boat. The other was _____ of Maine and a Mr. Uriah Higgins of Belmont Maine has just died. The bodies are thrown overboard before they get cold. It seems awful some of the sick are getting better. It is a very peculiar fever and generally proves fatal. It resembles the Irish Ship Fever. The victim is attacked with severe pain in the spine and head, incessant vomiting which results in copious discharges of blood from the head and stomach until insanity ensues and they die in awful spasms. I forgot to mention that we passed San Diego yesterday, made 240 miles.

October 30, in sight of the Faralone Islands at daybreak. Entered the Golden Gate about ten and came in sight of the long looked for San Francisco. weather fine, wind northwest. One of the passengers named Mr. Wm. G. Stearns of Ohio died this morning. We have made 200 miles since yesterday and we are 2000 from San Juan Del Sur to San Francisco.

October 31, weather fine, wind north. Came at a quarter to eleven when we fired two port guns at a quarter past eleven were moored at Jackson Street Wharf. We started for Hillmans Temperance House, number 80 and 82 Davis Street and took a room. After dinner we took a walk to see some of the Edward's acquaintances. First we called on Mr.

Moses Hadley in the New World Market. He is a fine man belongs to Charlestown, Mass. Next we called on Mssrs Samuel and and Turel Bradshaw Wholesale Groceries on Battery and California. _____ they do and excellent business. They belong to Somerville, Mass. Returned to the hotel at five took tea and wrote a letter to mother. Retired at eight.

November 1, weather fine, awake and dressed at five. Took breakfast at six. Started with Edward at half past six to take a walk. Went up Clay Street to Montgomery Street to the P.O. opposite the Plaza. Met Mr. Furgurson one of the passengers who came with us. Went to the market saw a Valparaiso Squash that weighed 88 pounds and a Turnip that weighed 21 pounds. The vegetables in San Francisco are the largest and handsome I ever saw. Hillsman House is a Number 1 house and is well deserving of the patronage it receives. The rooms are large and airy and the tables are set with the best the market affords served up in a style to satisfy the palate of the daintiest epicure. At five p.m. we took passage in the steamer Bragdon for Sacramento.

November 2, arrived at Sacramento. This morning at five took the Coloma stage for Green Springs a distance of 40 miles from Sacramento where we arrived at one o'clock. After refreshing ourselves we started for the residence of my brother in laws place in Kanaka Valley a distance of four miles from Green Springs. We had a delightful walk reached the valley at four.

Martha Ann Smith