

Autobiography of John Theophil Strentzel

29 November 1813 – 31 October 1890

I was born November 29th, 1813 in the city of Lublin, Kingdom of Poland. My father John Strentzel was born in Pomerania, in the year 1771. My mother's maiden name was Sophia Meizner. She was born in Lublin in 1785. They were married in 1803. They were extensive owners of city property. They had a large family of children, but all died before reaching maturity, except myself, a sister and our brother. My parents and grandparents were Protestants, and brought up their children in the Lutheran faith, although residing in a Catholic community. Several of my uncles served with distinction in the Polish army, two as surgeons and my great uncle reached the rank of General of Commissary department in the Russian army.

The domestic conditions in my family were favorable, being attended with all desirable comforts. My parents lived very harmoniously. They were kind but firm with their children, order and decorum being observed at all times. My father owned an orchard and fruit garden near town, thus engendering in his children a love for country life and horticulture. My school days commenced at the age of six years, continuing uninterruptedly until my 17th years. My father intending me for a physician, my course of studies was directed to that end. My schoolmates and associates

were the sons of officials and nobility. The revolution in Poland of 1830 changed the whole tenor of my future. I entered the army of volunteers and served until its final disbandment in 1831. The younger men who had joined the patriot forces were immediately incorporated into the Russian army. With me it was either this or exile from my native country. I chose the latter alternative, which was accomplished under serious difficulties. By the good offices of influential friends, I was permitted to reside in Nappan Hungary for several years gaining information in the wine trade and vineyard culture. I resumed my medical studies, in the University of Pesth, and was awarded a medical diploma.

Broader fields of action now seemed offered by emigrating to America, and in the year 1840, I, with my brother left Europe and came to the United States, landed at New Orleans from there went to Louisville, Kentucky , joined the Peterson Colonization Company, went with them to the Trinity river in Texas. I built a cabin on the site of the present city of Dallas and remained there one year, but the company failing and dispensing, I gave up and returned to the settlements. My stay on the Trinity River was very interesting. Fortunately the Comanches were at that time several hundred miles farther west on the plains, but left numerous camps full of bleaching bones. Buffalo in large herds roamed the country. My reminiscences of

this frontier experience would be incomplete without mentioning a few of the sturdy pioneers with whom I was brought in contact in those days: Capt. Baily English, Dr Rogers, Messrs. Gilbert, Jonson, Montague and many others, who have long since departed to happier hunting grounds.

On returning to the settlements I located in Lamar County, following my profession of physician and surgeon, and purchased a homestead of 500 acres. On the 31st of December 1843, I married Louisiana Erwin, born the 31st of October 1821, in Lawrence county, Tennessee, which proved a most happy union. My wife's father, Samuel Erwin, was a Virginian, who, when a young man emigrated to Kentucky, resided there a few years, married the daughter of Gen. Rife, but she dying in about three years, he then went to the new Chicasan Purchase, on the Western district of Tennessee, followed surveying for a number of years, married the daughter of Mansel Crisp, and in 1837 removed with his family to Fannin County Texas, where he resided until his death in 1854. He was a large fine looking man, well educated, gentlemanly and courteous in deportment and one of the most upright honest men I ever knew. The mother was a delicate refined woman, very domestic in her tastes, very religious, a member of the Christian Church, and thoroughly devoted to her family.

The masterly and glowing description of the climate and resources of California, published in 1846 by Capt. Fremont, first drew my attention to the Pacific Coast, but the great distance and unsettled state of the country at that time, prevented me from attempting to go there. The discovery of gold in 1848, ensuring a rapid emigration from every part of the world to that far away land, offered to me an unexpected opportunity of going. Early in the spring of 1849 a company was organized in our immediate vicinity consisting of about 135 persons, including myself and family, all well equipped to emigrate to California.

On the 22nd of March, all being in readiness, we bid adieu to our friends and homes and commenced the long and perilous journey. There were 9 women and 25 children in the train. The women were Mrs Strentzel, Mrs Doustine, Mrs Harrison, Mrs. Davis and her niece Miss Helen Petty, Mrs. Moss, Mrs. Bouds, Mrs. Mudgett and Mrs. Shackleford. I think I have never known greater courage than was evinced by these brave women, in undertaking, against the entreaties and advice of friends, to go with their children on a trialsome journey of more than 2000 miles, over a trackless wilderness, through the midst of hostile Comanches and Apache Indians! We had not even a guide to direct us the way. Nothing except a map and compass to go by. The country was entirely unknown to us, not one of the party ever having been

through it. The first 300 miles of the route lay through a fertile country, finely wooded, and excellent grass and water, and we were unmolested by Indians, but traveling was necessarily slow on account of heavy spring rains and severe storms. But the rest of the way, 500 miles to El Paso was mostly an arid plain, with little or no timber and great scarcity of water and grass, the water in many places so strong with alkali and salt, that we could not use it.

About the last of May, we all came near being lost for want of water. We travelled two days and one night without finding any, and the camp had been at a salt spring, so brackish we could not possibly drink it. We had made it a rule to take with us from camp every morning some water in canteens in case we should find none through the day. Fortunately we had a little which we brought from the camp three days before. My wife had been ill for some time with a severe attack of gastric fever. The second day, the weather being extremely warm, having only one quart of water left, I would give to her and the two little children each a spoonful at a time to moisten their throats. Late in the afternoon our teams became so exhausted that they began to reel and stagger, seeming ready to drop down, and we had almost given up in despair, the water hunters who had been constantly searching, miles away from the train, came riding up,

waving their hats and shouting water, water, water. The joy and gratitude of that moment, no one can ever understand, unless they have passed through the same, or a like experience. They had found pure fresh water standing in pools, in a ridge of sandhills, about ten miles away. The wagons were stopped and the teams and other stock driven to the water. Some of them were so weak and exhausted they did not reach the water until near morning. While many of the men were attending to the stock, others were bringing water in kegs and canteens to the camp, and all alike forgetful of Indians. The next day the teams were brought back and the wagons taken on to the water.

That afternoon there occurred a fearful thunderstorm and a regular downpour of rain and hail. My wife was so prostrate with illness and fatigue that I had little hope she could live, but after a few hours of rest and quiet, she revived and finally recovered. We rested at this place one week, resolving not to leave camp in the future without being assured of water at the next. About two weeks previous to this, while we were resting in the camp over Sunday, a band of Indians came dashing up in the afternoon, stampeded the animals and driving off before our eyes about 35 head of horses and mules. It was all so sudden and our people so taken by surprise, that for the moment they could do nothing. The first thing thought of

was to get the women and children inside the corral of wagons, and prepare for battle, for we know not how many Indians were surrounding us, the camp being near a stream of water, with timber and underbrush obstructing the view on every side. A consultation was immediately held, and it was decided to follow the Indians, and if possible to bring back the animals, for we could neither go on or return home without the teams. Within a short time 60 men had volunteered to go, the rest were to remain in camp to protect the women and children. They hastily armed and equipped themselves, selecting the best horses left, in less than an hour were in the saddle and off on the Indian trail. Those left at the camp hurriedly brought the remainder of the stock, and tied them securely to the wagons, then placed sentinels all round to give the alarm in case of an attack. Thus was the night passed in the greatest suspense. The men in pursuit of the Indians, rode all night long, coming upon the Indians early next morning. Our men were ready for battle, but the Indians, evidently surprised, sent a flag of truce, and met them with protestations of friendship, agreed to give up the stolen horses, saying they mistook us for a caravan of Mexicans with whom they were at war, expressed contrition at having robbed us, and to prove their love for the Americans, the Chief and about 20 others kindly escorted our men back to camp and as further proof of their

affection, remained with us two days going from tent to tent, eating and feasting upon the best of our provisions. Although grieved to see the depletion of our stores, we dared not refuse them, for being in the heart of their country, we knew we were completely in their power. On the 20th of May, shortly after the Indian episode, we had a sad duty to perform.

Mr. M. S. Syrus, one of the company who had been in bad health before leaving home, thought a trip across the plains might be beneficial to him, but instead of being restored as he had hoped, he gradually grew worse and died in less than two months. There were three ministers in the train, and after holding religious services, the body was laid coffinless in a deep dug grave, carefully covered, and then all the wagons in the train driven over it, so as to obliterate the site as much as possible to prevent desecration by Indians. Mr. Syrus was the first of six of our little band who died on the way, one of whom was Frances E. Harrison, leaving a widow, now Mrs G. W. Brunch of Modesto, Calif, mother of Leon Branch of San Francisco.

On leaving camp at the sandhill pools, the next water found was the Puenco or Pecos River, about 30 miles distant, a narrow, deep, swiftly flowing stream. How were we to cross this river? Not a stick of timber for ought we knew within hundreds of miles, large enough to make a

raft. But such men as these are always ready for any emergency. They selected two close wagon beds, caulked them tightly so they were perfectly waterproof, tied empty kegs on each side to buoy them up, fastened ropes at each end, then two men swam across the river with ropes, and by pulling the boats back and forth everything was ferried over. The animals were driven into the river and swam across, and by evening the whole train was safely over and ready for marching. We caught a number of fine fish in this river, and also in other streams on the way, and occasionally killed deer and antelope and other smaller game, but never saw a buffalo or elk the whole route.

Soon after crossing the river, we came onto a good road, made by a large train of emigrants from Western Texas, who had passed only three days before us! What joy to know there were friends so near! And like ourselves traveling in these wild wastes. And what a relief to have a fine road ready made for us. From here to El Paso, a distance of 200 miles, we met with little or no trouble, except from scarcity of water. The last 80 miles there was so little water we were forced to divide the company and travel in small parties of a few wagons, so that all might have a sufficiency.

We arrived at El Paso, the 2nd of July, and celebrated the 4th in camp. The Mexicans were very friendly and

hospitable. We purchased from them supplies of fresh vegetables, fruits, poultry, etc. which we gratefully enjoyed after our three months journey in the wilderness. El Paso was truly an oasis in the desert. We remained at this place until the 14th. While here the company broke up and scattered. Some few gave up and returned home (by way of San Antonio). Many sold their wagons and other effects for what they could get and went on with pack trains. A few remained in El Paso, while the men with families, and a few others, patient and level headed men who were willing to travel slowly, organized and resumed their wearisome journey through the hostile Apaches, to the gold fields of the Pacific Coast..

We crossed the Rio Grande about 100 miles above El Paso. The river was very full from the melting of snow in the mountains, and the turbid waters running swiftly making the crossing dangerous, even in a good ferry boat. But we were forced to cross on a frail raft, made of a canoe, with a log pinned on each side, and on these empty kegs fastened to prevent sinking or upsetting. The animals were driven into the river and swam across as at the Pecos River. How little the people of the present day think or know of these things as they ride along in their fine palace cars, and cross these rivers on the grand trestle bridges.

From the Rio Grande to the Gila River, the journey was very pleasant. Although in the cactus country, there was an abundance of grass and water, and we were undisturbed by Indians. We rested a day or two at each Mexican village on the way, Santa Cruz, Tucson, etc. Went into and viewed the old Mission Church of San Xavier, passed several old deserted ranches with orchards full of luscious peaches, found plenty of game- a number of wild cattle being killed by the party. Altogether this part of the route was like a pleasure trip.

But the journey down to the Gila to the crossing of the Colorado, was extremely difficult and laborious. A great portion of the way was sandy, and the heat and dust at times almost insupportable and the teams suffered greatly for want of grass. On reaching the Pima villages, we purchased wheat to feed them, taking with us all we could haul. The seeds or beans of the mesquite tree, growing near the mouth of the Gila proved to be a most nutritious food for horses and mules.

On arriving at the Colorado, we found that a company of soldiers under Lieutenant Conte were stationed at the crossing for the protection of the immigrants. This was a great blessing for the Yumas are a treacherous people, and were literally swarming on both sides of the river. One of our party, the Rev. Mr. Paine, a Methodist minister, who had travelled on ahead of us arriving at the river some

time before we did, rode out alone on horseback one afternoon to hunt. Failing to return to camp, diligent search was made, but he was never seen or heard of more. It was supposed that the Indians killed him for his horse, gun and clothing, hiding them away until the immigrants had all passed. At this river there was a small flatboat to cross in, some little improvement on our former experience in crossing rivers.

While we were encamped on the river bank awaiting our turn to cross, there occurred a terrible accident. Capt. Thorn, who was on his way to California with a company of U.S. Dragoons accidentally fell from the boat with three of his soldiers, and all were drowned. Capt. Thorn's body was recovered and sent home to his family in New York. We crossed the river on the 19th of October, landing in safety on California soil, just 7 months after leaving home. But we yet had several hundred miles to travel before reaching our destination, and the great Mojave desert, the worst part of the route, was still before us.

In the meantime woeful accounts of the desert were reported by returning gold seekers that the way was strewn with dead animals and wagons, that thousands of dollars worth of property of all kinds had been abandoned on the road side, that there was great suffering among the people, many having lost everything, were trying to make their way on foot to the settlements. These reports were

very disheartening to us, yet seemed to stimulate us to renewed effort.

There was no alternative. We were obliged to go on all hazards. We could not remain at the Fort, as the soldiers were soon to return to San Diego. I had commenced the journey from home with three wagons, two large ones with a four mule team to each, and a strong light running carriage for my family to ride in. Unfortunately losing several head of horses on the way, I was forced to leave our wagon and go on the rest of the journey to the Colorado as I still had the two wagons and eight fine mules. We remained at the river two days, purchasing supplies of provisions at the Fort, gathering quantities of mesquite beans for the mules, and repacking the wagons, throwing out boxes, chests, utensils and everything we could possibly dispense with, to lighten the load, and with hearts full of courage and hope, we set out to cross the long dreaded Sahara.

We traveled slowly, mostly in the mornings and evenings to save the teams, for we knew all depended on them. We were twelve days in crossing. The first five days we got along quite well, found sufficient water, though muddy, at wells along the way, and occasionally small patches of grass. On the fifth day we arrived at New River. Here the water was pure and fresh, and grass abundant. We rested at this place for two days. Should

have remained longer, but all were so eager to go on. From here to the end of the desert , the way was fearful. Very little water and not a blade of grass. Nothing but a wild waste of sand . In many places for miles at a time the teams would sink in almost halfway to the knees at every step, and the wagons halfway to the hubs.

The fifth day after leaving New River the teams began to fail so I was obliged to stop the wagons, and send the mules on ahead six miles to water. The wind had been blowing a perfect hurricane all day, and clouds of dry sand almost blinded us. The storm was so furious that it was impossible to stretch a tent, or build a fire to cook by, even if there had been any fuel. Our children were all day without food, the faithful cow which had given them milk all the way from home, now failed us in this blighting desert. We quieted the little things as best we could through the night, and early next morning Capt Fruitsfelt who was traveling with a party of Germans, called to see how we fared, and learning the situation brought a small cake of cornbread, his only store of cooked food, and presented it to our children. Their mother saved a bit of this bread in a small glass case as a memento of those times. It kept almost perfect for over 20 years in the glass.

The teams were brought back about ten o'clock, and we traveled on reaching the end of the desert that afternoon. We now had plenty of water and grass, and

our hearts were overflowing with joy and thanksgiving that we had at last reached the land of our hopes and had nothing more to fear.

From here we went on slowly so that the teams might have time to recuperate, arriving at Warner's Ranch, (called by the immigrants, "Haven of Rest.") on November the 8th. Col. Warner was very kind and obliging to the immigrants and having long been a resident of California, was able to give us much useful information. We rested at this place one week, and finally decided to go to San Diego, sell our wagons and teams, and go by water to San Francisco, but on arriving at San Diego, found that so many others had followed the same plan, that wagons and mules were worth little or nothing at that place. I was offered only fifteen dollars per head for fine mules that I afterwards sold for two and three hundred in the mines, and wagons could hardly be given away.

I felt that the sacrifice would be too great, and so concluded to go up the coast by land. It has ever been with me an unsolved problem, whether I should have sacrificed everything and gone to San Francisco at that time. Of course the future of myself and family would have been entirely changed, but for better or for worse I can not tell. We stayed at the old Mission of San Diego about six weeks, and on the 7th of January continued our journey up the coast.

Traveling was delightfully pleasant a great portion of the way, when the weather was clear and warm. The hills and valleys were covered with green wild oats and clover being several inches high, and varied fields of wildflowers in the greatest profusion everywhere, the endless masses of escholtzia appearing at a distance like blazes of fire. We were in no hurry, but went along slowly, staying a few days at each town along the way. The only trouble met with was from swollen streams and boggy roads after heavy rains.

We arrived on Tuolumne river April the 14th; were very much pleased and concluded to settle down. This ended our journey of nearly 13 month. (Can now go on cars to our old home in four days!) I selected a beautiful location about 2 miles below Lagrange, the nearest mining camp, established a ferry, hotel and store of general merchandise for trade with the miners, put up large tents on canvas houses for all needs, as boards or planks were not to be had. Paid all hired help 125 dollars per month. Flour \$30 dollars per sack of 50 pounds. Milk \$1 per quart, fresh butter \$3 per pound and provisions of all kinds proportionately high.

Our experience at this place was varied and exciting. There was a great deal of travel at that time from Stokton and dother points to the Mariposa and Burn's mines, and one day we would entertain Col. Fremont, Lieut. Beal,

Gen. Miller and other noted persons, and probably the next a lot of desperados passing through the country for the purpose of murder and robbery. Often a party of 15 or 20 miners came down and called for dinner. Then a band of digger Indians came to trade. All manner of people coming and going at all times of the day and night. One evening a party of five or six Mexicans rode by and camped for the night near the river in sight of the house;. Early next morning about the same number of desperate looking white men rode up and asked if the Mexicans had crossed the river, and on being informed that they had taken the river road and were camped nearby, they went on and in a short time we heard in quick succession, about a dozen pistol shots. I knew what this meant, and hurriedly took my wife and children to the boat, telling the ferryman to take the across to the other side until the trouble was over, while I returned to the house to await the result. But my wife was so anxious for my safety that she begged the man to take them back, saying it was better for us all to die together. In less than half an hour the white men came back to the hotel and ordered breakfast. They were very boisterous, and said the Mexicans had stolen their horses and refused to give them up, and so they had killed two or three of them, and even exhibited the belts of gold dust taken from the bodies of their victims. The Mexicans fled, taking with them their dead and wounded,

and we never knew how many were really killed. We afterwards learned that the Mexicans were on their return home from the mines, and were supposed to have a large amount of gold with them, that the story of the stolen horses was a fabrication and the sole object in following them was robbery. Some time after this a Mr. Rundle left his home on the Merced to purchase supplies in Stockton, and was killed and robbed in broad daylight within a few miles of our place. Such occurrences were frequent both in the mines and the country. No one was safe traveling alone in those times.

I must not omit to write something about the grizzly bears which infested this region in those early days. There was a great danger in hunting them. Mr Mudgett, one of our comrades, whose wife had died on the journey, settled with his children a few miles below us on the river. One day while out hunting, he shot a huge grizzly, wounding it severely, and before he could escape, the animal jumped upon him and tore him so badly that he died in a short time. Not long after this an Indian was attacked by a large bear near Lagrange, and so severely hurt that for a long time his life was despaired of, but he finally recovered. The bear was killed, and weighed 400 pounds.

I myself met with a narrow escape from some grizzlies. I was riding over to Hornitos, late in the afternoon

and when not from Don Pedro's bar, was going over a rising ground, I saw down in the valley about 80 yards ahead of me what I supposed to be some cattle browsing, but on taking a second look, discovered three large grizzlies, one in the road sitting on his haunches, the other two standing near by. I quietly turned by mule round and cantered home, happy in having avoided a near catastrophe.

We remained at this place less than 2 years, carried on a very flourishing business all the while, and if the mines had held out, could in a few years have made a great amount of money. Unfortunately, my wife became very ill, as I supposed with an incurable disease. She was confined to bed three years and four months, in an almost helpless condition, unable to walk a step in all that time, but contrary to all expectation, she finally recovered, and has enjoyed comparative health every since, and as she required my constant attention, and the most careful nursing I concluded to give up my interests here, and try farming and stock raising. With this aim in view, I, in partnership with my brother, purchased 600 acres of choice land on the Merced River about six miles below Snelling. A comfortable log cabin was on the place, and we hurriedly cleared about ten acres, and planted all the varieties of vegetable and fruit seeds we could obtain, paying the most exorbitant prices for them. Paid as high

as 20 dollars per pound for onion seed. Planted in nursery some fruit trees purchased in San Jose at 3 dollars a piece. Everything grew and flourished most luxuriantly, giving the promise of an abundant harvest, but the floods came and all was lost.

The river overflowed the whole valley on both sides from hill to hill. Our fine garden was completely swept away and destroyed. Not a dollar's worth was left. The water reached a depth of three feet in our house. It commenced to pour in over the floor about midnight. In a little while the fire in the stove was drowned out, and by morning was two feet above the floor, and had almost reached the bed whereon lay my invalid wife. I was entirely alone, my brother and a hired man having gone over on the Tuolumne to drive home some cattle, were caught in the storm and unable to cross the sloughs to return home. We were also cut off from all help from the neighbors, there being no possible way for them to reach us.

The water continued rising, and I, knowing the danger to the sick one if the floods should cover the bed, hastily tore up a floor plank, inserted one end in the wall under the bedstead, raising it half a foot, and placing the other end of the plank on a table. In this way I kept my wife and children above the surging waters.

In the meantime trees and fences and all manner of debris went floating by. Our chicken house with its freight

of poultry was swept away, except a few chickens which flew out and lighted on the trees, and for three fearful hours we expected every moment the house would go. But the house stood, and we were saved. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the waters began to assuage, and by daylight next morning had entirely subsided. The terrible exposure through which I had passed and having to continue living in the damp house, brought on a severe attack of pneumonia, and I lay for about 10 days hovering between life and death. Having naturally weak lungs, I was on recovery left in a very feeble state, and have never to this day been entirely relieved from the effects of this illness. So soon as I was sufficiently restored to be able to travel, I resolved to leave the Merced river forever, and endeavor to find a more congenial home, where overflows could never reach me.

A friend residing in Santa Cruz advised me to go there, and I decided to go. But how to get there with my helpless wife. I prepared a swinging bed in a wagon, took her in this way to Stockton, then on a steamer to our destination. But after a six weeks sojourn in Santa Cruz, found the climate there unsuited to my weak lungs .

I then concluded to go to Benicia. That place had been highly recommended to me as having a delightful climate, a fine harbor, and being centrally located, the commercial facilities were all that could be desired. The

State Capitol had recently been removed to that place, and the legislature was then in session. The future of Benicia seemed indeed to be very promising. On arriving there I met an old neighbor from home, at that time residing in the town of Martinez just across the Straits. He said there was a beautiful sheltered valley back of town that he thought would suit me as it had just the climate that I was seeking. I immediately went over with him to view out the land, and was so charmed with the location, that I at once resolved to make this my resting place. Here was a lovely fertile valley, protected by high hills, from the cold winds and fogs of San Francisco, a stream of living water flowing through it, the hills and valley partially covered with magnificent laurel, live-oak and white-oak trees, and everywhere a green mantle of wild oats from to to 12 inches high. I knew at once that the valley was well adapted to fruit growing and thought "here I can realize my long cherished dream of a home surrounded by orange groves, and all kinds of fruits and flowers, where I can literally recline under my own vine and fig tree." I immediately purchased 20 acres of the richest valley land 2 ½ miles from town, paying 50 dollars per acre, and at once removed my family to the new home, they arriving on the 4th of April 1853.

The valley at that time was known as "Canada del Hambre," or valley of hunger, so named by a company of

Spanish soldiers sent by the Governor of California to chastise some Indians, and failing to obtain a sufficiency of provisions, in their disgust called it hungry valley. Mrs Strentzel, on arriving here was much displeased with the name, and remembering Irving's glowing description of the Moorish paradise, decided to christen our new home "Alhambra," and the valley has ever since been called "Alhambra Valley."

It would lengthen this narrative to too great dimensions were I to write of all the ups and downs, trials and vicissitudes which I passed through during the first years of my long residence here of nearly 37 years, of the many difficulties I had to contend with in that early day in obtaining the right kind of seeds and trees for planting, often receiving invoices of trees and plants untrue to label, off the many losses and disappointment through inexperienced and unreliable help, but by energy and perseverance, and unremitting attention to business, I succeeded in overcoming all obstacles.

When my first tract of land was filled out, I purchased more and continued to purchase when needed, or opportunity offered and planted from year to year up to the present time.

My brother continued with me until his death in 1865. He was very energetic, a kind hearted benevolent man, and being my only relative, his death was a great blow to

me. But the greatest trial of our lives was the death of our only son, a bright promising boy of nine years, who died of diphtheria in September 1857. For years we were inconsolable. The light and hope of our lives seemed to have gone out with him. And now in our old age, we feel the need of him even more than we did at first.

Our daughter Louie Wanda was educated in Benicia, at the Atkins seminary for young ladies. She is very intelligent and intellectual, a great lover of the beautiful in nature and art, and is passionately fond of flowers and music, is benevolent and kind to everyone, ever ready to relieve suffering and to assist in all good works, is social and amiable in disposition and a most devoted mother. She is married to John Muir, the well known Geologist and Botanist, has two lovely little daughters, Wanda and Lillian, but no son. She always has been and still is a great comfort and help to her parents.

On her marriage I gave her the old home, and built up for myself a new one down the valley, one mile nearer town. My faithful companion and I live very comfortably and quietly in our declining years. We have a commodious house with pleasant surroundings, in the midst of orchards and vineyards in full view of Martinez and Benicia, and the two overland railroads, the Central and Southern Pacific. We do not travel or visit much, but take great pleasure in having our friends visit us. In

politics I am a Republican, have always taken a deep interest in the continued welfare and prosperity of my adopted country, have an abiding faith in the permanency of American institutions and the perpetuity of the Union.

The Chinese question is not receiving that earnest consideration that its giant form looming in the near future should require. The Tartar invasion of Europe brings to mind historical data , which can be repeated in our day on a larger scale. A population assumed to be four hundred millions are getting rapidly educated in the ways of aggression. A leader is apt to arise who can handle and throw this potent force for the invasion en masse of the Pacific states. This horde of locusts is already spreading over the country in their insidious way, crowding out of employment our own people, and securing the outcrop of their labor for investment in China, a manner of depletion of our resources not permitted to the same extent by any other people or nation. A time will come when they can do this forcibly, if not timely restricted.

I have always been a Lutheran, but feel very liberal toward all denominations, and have ever stood with an open hand ready to assist in building churches and aiding all religious and educational institutions tending to the amelioration and happiness of mankind. I have no faith in creed and dogmas, but believe in pure religion that teaches love to God and our fellow man. Have a firm and

enduring faith in immortality , and believe with St Paul in the living identity of the spirit body after death.

I have taken active interest in the Grange , or Order of Patrons of Husbandry, ever since its organization, have been for many years Master of the Subordinate Grange, and President of the Grangers Business Association of Martinez. The Grange being a social and educational institution, I believe much good can be accomplished through it, if the original inceptions of its founders can be faithfully carried out.

I am also President of the Martinez Gas and Electric Light Company, and a stockholder in the Martinez Bank. This is about all the office holding that I have ever engaged in, not having a penchant for such things.

I am of medium height, light build , blue eyes, brown curly hair, now very white, florid complexion. Am earnest in conversation, abstemious in diet, do not use alcoholic stimulants or tobacco. Through life I have endeavored to act fairly and equitable with my fellow men, strictly following the Golden Rule, and taking pleasure in assisting the needy, according to my ability.

We begin to realize that our life/s work is drawing to its close, that our journey is almost ended. We feel that we are nearing the borderland, and are calmly and peacefully awaiting the summons to cross over the river.