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Extracts From the Journal of Nathaniel K. Fairbank 1850-1852

Introduction

Among the most rewarding aspects of work in local history is the rare appearance of hitherto unknown manuscript materials which cast light on life in the distant past. Diaries, journals, and letters preserved in families for generations often as not are devoid of great political or social significance. The information they contain, may, however, prove valuable in its very ordinariness. Such might be said in behalf of the diary kept by Nathaniel Kellogg Fairbank in 1850-1852 during his sojourn in Rochester. His account of daily encounters with friends, relatives, and persons at work provides a sense of the rhythm of life of a young man in pre-Civil War Rochester.

It is important to keep in mind that Fairbank, who was but twenty years old at the time of the first entry in the surviving diaries, could little have thought of the possibility his jottings would someday be the subject of publication. His journal, kept faithfully on a daily basis, contains many repetitious entries and includes a good deal of trivial information about social engagements and the like. For these reasons, it has seemed appropriate to extract only a portion of the diary—perhaps 10% of the whole—for this issue of *Rochester History*. Elisions are punctuated in the usual fashion. A typescript of the entire journal, three small diary books in manuscript form, will be preserved by the Rochester Public Library.

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The typescript was supplied by Lady Helen de Freitas of Cambridge, England, granddaughter of the diarist and owner of the manuscript. Her visit to Rochester in the summer of 1977 while engaged in genealogical research was the occasion for the "discovery" of the Fairbank journal. Lady de Freitas has been most gracious in arranging to have the complete typescript prepared, and is the author of the following brief account of Fairbank's life.

Biographical Notes

In the 1820s the little settlements in New York State were peppered with Kelloggs. The Kellogg family, typical of the migrants of this period, were restless settlers. They thrust westward, built and plowed and settled, and then a score of years later they or their children felt the compulsion to move on west again. Sodus, in Wayne County, N. Y., was the stopping place for at least one of these Kellogg families. Nathaniel and Mehitable Kellogg and some of their children arrived there from western Massachusetts in 1816. They came the hard way, overland—the Erie Canal was not yet started. They built a little frame house at the southwest corner of Main and Mill Streets, they acquired a good 100 acres of land, and they settled. Nathaniel was a carpenter and builder as well as a farmer. There was plenty of work.

Eleven years later, in 1827, another Mehitable, the daughter they had left behind in Williamstown, Mass., came to visit them. She travelled by the Canal to Lyons, and by stage from there to Sodus. She was soon followed by her husband, Stephen Fairbank, who brought their seven-year old daughter Cordelia, and they all moved into the Kelloggs' little house on Main Street. Stephen was also a carpenter and had been brought up as a farmer so he was a welcome addition to the household.

In 1829 Nathaniel Kellogg Fairbank was born. He grew up in a houseful of adults. His sister Cordelia was nine years older; a younger sister died in infancy. His father and grandfather were staunch pillars of the Presbyterian church. Stephen was a Deacon and Clerk of the Session. The weekly session of the Elders took place generally in the parlor of Deacon Fairbank's house. It was not a gay carefree atmosphere for a small boy, but it may help to account for his obvious mastery of his "3 R's" and for his deep sense of Christian values.

When NKF ("Kell") was eight his sister married Henry S. Vanderbilt and went to live in Lyons. Vanderbilt was a builder and a

mason. So when Kell finished school at 15 he was sent as apprentice to his brother-in-law in Lyons. Henry Vanderbilt's sudden and tragic death—a shooting accident—in February, 1845 cut short the apprenticeship but Kell carried on as a bricklayer in Lyons and Dansville for a year or so. His mother, Mehitable, had died in 1837, and his father and Cordelia would both die in 1850. Mrs. Aaron Erickson of Rochester, formerly Miss Hannah Bockoven of Lyons, was a first cousin of Vanderbilt's, and she and her husband now stepped in and offered to look after the lad if he came to Rochester. They found him a job as a bookkeeper in the firm of Northrop and Chappell, shipping brokers, in South Fitzhugh Street, and he became a cousinly member of the Erickson family for the next few years.

Aaron Erickson (“A.E.”) was a wool-merchant who had been in business in Rochester since 1823. His mansion, built in 1842 on East Avenue (then the eastern portion of Main Street) near Alexander Street, now houses the Genesee Valley Club. In 1850 there were two Erickson daughters close in age to NKF, Carrie and Libbie, and the large hospitable house was a center of lively social life for the young. Caroline Erickson later became Mrs. Gilman Perkins; Elizabeth married William S. Nichols. They remained lifelong friends of NKF and his family.

The shipping business was a seasonal affair and there were many days when the young man noted in his diary, “another day of rest. Very little business to do.” It was a time for sowing oats, though they were not very wild ones.

Mr. Erickson presently took NKF into his own office. At that time he was setting up a Boston branch of his business and was away in the East a good deal so it was useful to have a young man on hand to look after the office and to help Mrs. Erickson manage (?) the girls. And in 1852, apparently reckoning that he had let him fool around long enough, Mr. Erickson took him seriously into the business “to learn him something.” The teaching must have been successful because three years later NKF moved to Chicago as the western representative of David Dows & Co., a New York grain and commission firm.

NKF left Rochester behind and arrived in Chicago just as that city's expansion was beginning. He became a member of the Board of Trade, of which he was Vice-President in 1863 and President in 1878. After working for David Dows for ten years, he set up a lard refinery which in time became a large concern, N.K. Fairbank & Co., with branches in St. Louis, Omaha and New York and world-wide sales.

They introduced the manufacture of soap in connection with the business and in about 1883 the “Gold Dust Twins” (a pair of golliwogs) appeared on the orange packets of the new Gold Dust Washing Powder. Was this perhaps the first “logo”?

NKF extended his interests to wheat and other provisions. He invested in railways and mines in Arizona, in the Elks Rapids Iron Co. in Michigan and in Louisiana pine forests. He was a prime mover in the establishment of the Chicago Club and was its President for many years. His love of music led him to encourage Theodore Thomas first to do summer music festivals in Chicago, and eventually to found the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The Auditorium, Orchestra Hall, and St. Luke’s Hospital were among the institutions he generously supported.

He had married Miss Helen Livingston Graham of New York in 1866 and brought her to live at 1801 S. Michigan Avenue. They had five sons and three daughters—and a happy and zestful family life. His wife died suddenly in 1895 after an appendectomy. NKF retired then from many of his business and philanthropic concerns, and himself died in 1903 at the age of 74.

Helen de Freitas
Cambridge, England

Diary for 1850

Saturday 16 February. A beautiful day. Sleighing good etc. Worked in the office during the forenoon. Afternoon Jerome Croul called for me to ride. . . .

Had a very noteworthy conversation with Miss G. on a highly exciting topic. Satisfied myself that this was a conditional engagement between her & WC. “He was the beau ideal as far as *love, goodness* and *home qualities* go but not *a man*, not one to be proud of and look up to, should not want to say exactly to the world and friends this is the man above all other I have selected. He loved her apparently with the utmost sincerity, she loved him for that earnestness & sincerity.” Also conversed on many other subjects and gained a good deal of instruction.

Sunday 17 February. Sunday morning. I find myself looking horridly but not feeling quite so bad as my looks would indicate. Mrs. Murray refused to show one of my friends up as my appearance was so hard. Got a severe lecture from Helen on dissipation in which Ann joined. Got out at noon. Afternoon Bill Cutler called up to the

Chappell [a sort of club house maintained by NKF and his male friends]. Present Chas. Jerome Pete Bill and self had a good time. In the evening heard Rev. Shaw on the crucifixion of Christ.

Monday 18 February. Worked in the office in the forenoon & part of afternoon. 3 o'clock Jerome called with Tony Linas horse to ride. Went out on the plank coming back met Lib & Sally & several their conclusion was probably that we were on "a bender". . . .

Tuesday 19 February. Today has been nearly a blank in my existence; how many such days pass away without our storing away one more thought than when the day began. Evening heard Doct. Lords lecture on California. Had a good time with Sallie & Lib. The lecture was a sort of "a chery tour & spit fire" affair, with a high conception for pioneer life & the present age. The Lord reserved California for the people of this century, twas the Ophir of this land. On the whole I think I did get a *few new* ideas.

[On February 26 NKF travelled east on business in Troy and visited assorted Kellogg relatives in Sheffield]

Friday 8 March. Rose from my couch of palm leaf about 9 o'clock feeling hard. Tramped all through West Troy. Visited Menileys Bell foundry which is well worth the time occupied. Afternoon called at Townsends where I found my uncle O. Kellogg. Staid to tea and visited with him. Evening Mr. Chappell & daughter returned from New York. Spent the evening at Hookers office & Troy House.

Saturday 9 March. At seven o'clock AM left the city of Troy for Rochester nothing of note ocured. . . . Only amusing that ocured was this an Old ugly woman with a Baby stood near some Gents waiting the offer of a seat which not getting she handed the baby to one saying "if you won't give me a seat you must hold the young 'un" upon which he vacated. Arrived home by tea time.

.....
Thursday 14 March. Today I had a conversation with Mr. Chappell in relation to myself. He said he was prejudiced against me etc. on account of my being gone so much. I talked to him just as I felt about it & cooled him down considerable. Evening was to spend with Molly but did not. Went to theatre.

Friday 15 March. About these days my time is so unoccupied I can't fill up my Journal with my actions & doings so I must take thoughts on some subject. But space won't permit. Afternoon rode out on the plank with NB Ellison. Conversed mostly about business. I have made up my mind to devote *the whole* of my time to my business this summer come what may.

.....

Tuesday 19 March. At 7½ was awake by Thad Hewlett who brot me a letter from home with the sad news of my Father's severe illness requesting me to come home immediately if I would see him alive. Set out at 9 in the stage, never saw the roads worse in my life. Arrived home at 7 PM. Found Father very low indeed.

Wednesday 20 March. Father no better. Had a conversation with Doct Cook who considers his recovery very doubtfull. My poor sister Cordelia to will not live but a short time. We have indeed a sorrowfull house. . . .

Thursday 21 March. Spent most of last night watching with my Father & Sister. This AM find my Father failing. Today is the saddest one I ever spent, to sit by the bedside of a dying Father & receive instructions to be attended to after his death is to much for my philosophy. He told me to give Mother [NKF's stepmother] the bal. of his property after settling his debts. . . .

Friday 22 March. Called up at 4 o'clock AM Father worse. He recognised me and called me by name. At 6 o'clock he died suffering very little pain. Wrote Mr. Chappell.

Saturday 23 March. Doctors Cook, Olin and Gaylord today held a post mortem examination on the body of my Father. Found the bowels very much diseased & also the lungs left lung entirely and right one about one fourth diseased.

Sunday 24 March. Today buried my Father. Sermon preached by Revd. H. Kittredge. Text Rev. 9-19.

.....
Friday 29 March. Mr. Chappell has finally concluded that there is nothing in the way of our making a bargain but the price. He offers \$400 for 10 months. Told him no. Afternoon had a fine row. Launched our boat for the first time this season. . . .

Saturday 30 March. This morning made a bargain with Mr. Chappell for another year. He gives me \$400 for the season and if I do every thing right and conduct myself satisfactorily \$500, and I here *resolve* to attend to business strictly and to give it my whole attention for this business season and to let acquaintances pleasures &c go to the ----. I will attend to business!!! Started for home, broke down and did not get off again until 3 o'clock. Arrived home at 9 p.m.

Sunday 31 March. As I am in Sodus I can't write a very long paragraph should I even record the doing &c of all the people in town. . . .

[NKF remained in Sodus until April 8 attending to family matters]

Tuesday 9 April. Commenced my labors with Mr. Chappell again have done nothing special. After tea called on Sallie to explain an

unpleasant impression she got from my letter also called on Lib. Returned and spent remainder of eve with Miss Phelps and Ann. About 9 P.M. went to the Tremont with them and had some oysters and ale.

Wednesday 10 April. Diverted myself by cleaning my room, shaking my carpet &c & so on. Remained at home this evening for the first time in a long while. Played euchre with Pete Charley and Lathrop at the "Chapel" played for the ale and elected Pete.

.....
Monday 22 April. Today the Erie Canal opened and Navigation is again resumed. Today I am by virtue of a resolution of mine made the 30th day of March to bid adieu to all but business. I hope I may keep it. So my little diary will hereafter be more of a business memorandum than anything else. So goodbye "Fun." I'll see you again in about 8 months.

Tuesday 23 April. Now that I have bid adieu to Fun and his companions Prodigality and others to bad to mention I summon all my guardian spirits and good angels to help me withstand my money spending propensities &c. Today I know I have done nothing to interfere with business except to chat a minute with Sallie on the walk which most anybody would do. Closed my labor at the office 10 P.M.

Wednesday 24 April. Canal business is a "tremendous little" business so far, with a prospect of it's reaching the superlative degree of that adj. before harvest. . . .

.....
Saturday 27 April. Nothing of note occurred to me today until five o'clock P.M. when I started for Sodus. Called at A.E.'s saw Lib, was introduced to Miss Treadwell of Boston!!! &c and so on. Arrived home 9 P.M. found my sister had failed very much since my last visit.

Sunday 28 April. Never has what little fortitude and philosophy I possess been so severely tried as today. Spent my time wholly with my poor sister. At 3 P.M. bid her "good bye" never to (see) her again alive, I fear. She is *all* on this earth that I love with my *whole soul*. Death is relentless. So I'll not murmur. I care not now what happens to me, the worst has come. I've lost a Father and shall in a few days at the most lose the only remaining "great Treasure" I have. My aspirations have been to please them always. May I have none but for self. I do not by any means feel reckless or anything of that nature, but I feel that I cannot say how precisely but the simple word Alone says all I would say.

Sunday 5 May. Spent today in rather an irreligious manner that is by working at the office, but as it was rather a case of necessity it is partially excusable. Boats were just coming through from break all in a huddle. About nine o'clock P.M. Morris Jewell came in from Sodus to inform me of the death of my sister who died this morning about eleven o'clock.

Monday 6 May. My business being so very urgent I did not start for home until 6 o'clock P.M. . . . Mr. C. Said if I would wait he would pay all my expenses. Arrived home 11½ P.M. Had a conversation with mother about death of my sister. She suffered much for two or three days previous to her death though *without complaining* which she was never known to do through the whole of her long sickness. Her suffering was caused by ulcers on her lungs breaking.

Tuesday 7 May. Today buried my sister Cordelia the only one left on earth that loved me or that I loved. . . .

Wednesday 8 May. Have merely worked all day as hard as I was capable of doing, consequently have seen no one nor done anything especially worthy of record.

Thursday 9 May. Another day of ceaseless labor. . . .

.....
Saturday 11 May. The rush is over and today I am "out of the woods" and can see through. . . .

.....
Monday 13 May. Wrote to my Grandmother Fairbank. Today has been a very quiet easy day for me—matters jog on smoothly and pleasantly with me here at the office. Mr. Chappell is *very clever & agreeable*. Has not found a word of fault with me as yet which is the result I suppose of the good resolution I made at the commencement of business in the spring, and as it works so well I will adhere to it. Girls &c "go to grass" I haven't time to attend to you.

.....
Wednesday 29 May. This morning recd. news of a tremendous break in the canal at Bushnell's Basin, which will give me some leisure as it will take at least two weeks to repair it. Embracing the privilege which this accident gives me I strolled down street came across Nell G., had a pleasant walk than dropped into Dutton Music Saloon and had a pleasant chat of an hour. Eve at Chapel. . . .

Thursday 30 May. Visited the break. . . . Found a great hole 100 rods long & 40 feet deep about 700 men at work on it. . . .

Friday 31 May. Pete Charley & Myself have been undergoing the perfectly awfull task of trying to look well while we were having our ugly Phizes transferred to a silver plate by a chemical process and the

effect of the Light of Heaven. In short we sat in a group for our Daguerreotype Likenesses.

.....
Monday 3 June. Have not been doing much today, the break in the Canal gives me a breathing space. But this evening think I have done—well, I don't know exactly whether to call it a silly, funny or perfectly foolish thing. I guess it must be funny, for I have laughed ever since. I called on Nell Gifford at 9 P.M. had gone to concert, spent the evening very pleasantly with Jennie. About ten Nell returned when I had one of our long talks which lasted until 1 o'clock in the morning. Nell has a deal of confidence in me and to increase. For the first time in the whole course of our acquaintance I told her I loved her. I never meant to say it but had too good an opportunity to let it pass so out it popped. . . . Can't tell what the effect will be though at the time she appeared very well & but little affected. Of course blushed a little &c. I think now I shall follow it up.

.....
Wednesday 5 June. We are now in the midst of the hottest sort of weather. Great night for saying pretty things. . . . I find in reviewing this affair I write too much about girls, but then business is too dry, and as for thoughts on abstract subjects I have none.

Thursday 6 June. While the break in the Canal is unfinished I have just enough to do to keep me comfortably busy. Day times that's all. Evening I resume my former acquaintance, as during the rush of business I broke things off almost. This evening I went to the fine Garden with Will Croul, very pleasant, found Ann M. there with her brother. I relieved him of his charge and took her under my own wing.

.....
Friday 14 June. Recd. a call from Lizzy E. with invitation to the Girls' Reading Club. Mary O'Riley there. Should liked to have seen her. About a year ago I took quite a fancy to Telegraph stock. [NKF is being quite figurative; Henry O'Reilly had six daughters, none of them a Mary.]

.....
Thursday 20 June. This morning the corner stone of New Court House was laid Carrie the Misses Chappell and Miss Bacon (Fanny) came to the office to witness the ceremony. Of course made myself as agreeable as possible. But sad fate decrees that I can't go out to the orchard to tea.----the luck. . . .

Sunday 23 June. This has been a very pleasant day for me indeed. Read Ivanhoe forenoon wrote to Sallie in the afternoon didnt finish don't know when I shall. Went out to the orchard to tea. Picked strawberries with Lizzie &c. &c. After tea adjourned to a delightfull little clump of bushes and had a long & interesting converse on just such subjects as anyone would naturally think of under the circumstances.

.....
Friday 28 June. A day without anything uncommon to record. . . . At seven P.M. our Boat Club had a most exciting race on the river. We laid them out however.

.....
Saturday 20 July. Had a conversation with Mr. Chappell about my attention to business &c. I commenced by saying my impression was that he thought I was out too much nights &c. but expressed himself very well satisfied and closed up with some good advice about economy said a shilling should look like a cartwheel.

Sunday 21 July. Remained at the office all the morning. After dinner went over to Murrays. Ann said the Old Lady & Gent were in a perfect furor because I went to Mrs. Morrison's saloon. The old man raved particularly. Evening. She will make a splendid girl.

.....
Sunday 28 July. I begin to feel that I fill a place in this world and must have character. Now I have about made up my mind to drop all my boyish follies and see if I cannot build up a reputation and character that will carry me through reputably. . . .I'll try total abstinence.

.....
Saturday 10 August. Left for Lyons on the packet at 7 P.M. to spend a day or so. Hope I have a good time.

Sunday 11 August. Arrive at Lyons 4 o'clock in the morning feeling pretty hard. Took a good nap until 7. Regaled myself with a mighty good breakfast at Landons Hotel. Found all the boys. Also found Warren Clark about ten snoozing very comfortably. Went to the Presbyterian church saw the girls. Afternoon spent at my room with Gray Wells and Warren smoking. . . .

Thursday 15 August. Arrived at Rochester this morning feeling awfully. A packet is not the most comfortable thing in the world to sleep on. I resume my labors this time not to break off untill the close of business. Old Jim watches me close.

.....
Sunday 18 August. Recd. a very impertinent letter from S.A. Dewey, Lyons, to which I gave an equally impertinent answer. Walked home

from church with Lizzie E. Stayed to tea spent the evening and finally stayed all night to protect them from the burglars. Libby and I sit up quite late (1 o'clock) watching. . . . I did steal a delicious sweet kiss as she playing slept on the floor of the back parlour. She passed it off beautifully but I didn't care so long as I got the kiss.

.....
Thursday 5 September. Purchased a beautiful flute of Mr. Henry Dibble for \$30.00. I am aware of the extravagance but "man wants but little here below" and what little we do want we might as well have. I hope I shall have the worth of my money in amusement and it may keep me from something of a worse nature.

.....
1851

Wednesday 1 January. I commence again today to keep a journal. I lost some days of 1850 but shall try and keep posted up during 1851. Spent today after the custom of the present century in making calls in company with my friend Charley Pierce. At A.E.'s was presented with a letter from my dear friend Lizzie. Called at Boody. Introduced each other—passed off well. Went to theater with Theo Irwin, Mot & Charley. Called on M.

Thursday 2 January. Awoke feeling deuced hard hair pulled and all that sort o'thing. Slept at Eagle with Theo Irwin. Evening attended Paddocks dance at the Waverley. . . .

.....
Saturday 4 January. I find myself tonight midway between Rochester & Sodus detained at the Inn of "mine host" Ellsworth by the worst snow storm within the recollection of the oldest inhabitant. I left town on one o'clock P.M. in company with my friend Theo Irwin. And now here we are very comfortably seated in a snug warm parlor while without Boreas is kicking up a "devil of a mess" with the snow & things. My friend amusing himself with some selections from "Knickerbockers New York" while from an adjoining room is heard the warblings of the landlords daughter accompanied by an accordean. Oh! the dulcet strain—Owing to the inclemency of the weather and the mutability of all human things it is mighty uncertain when we shall leave our present quarters.

Sunday 5 January. We took breakfast and our departure from the "Half Way House" about ten o'clock A.M. and spent the day walking through heaps of drifted snow. We came to the conclusion the inhabitants were an ungodly lot of people or they would have been out to church and had the roads broke. . . .

Monday 6 January. Wrote John Paddock at Vienna. [Phelps,

Ontario County]. Called on Mrs. Hulett. Had a lively conversation on the dissipation of young men in cities. In the afternoon I called at the Old School House to see how Jennie was going on. Found a number of my old scholars there. Girls who were thin "little uns" now grown to plump rosy cheeked girls. It was really very pleasant. Quite refreshing.

.....
Tuesday 7 January. Left home for Rochester via Vienna. I while away three hours at the depot reading and smoking. Took the express at 5 P.M. and soon found myself let down in R. A happy transition from dull Sodus to our own happy town. Had a long conversation with Benjamin on next years business. While waiting at Chets for Will Croul to return from his first call on ROSA had a little season with Steve Rimmington crowd of boys Dick Hyde &c.

Wednesday 8 January. Awoke feeling deuced hard in consequence of last night's operations. Labored lightly most of the day. Had a clandestine chat with Sallie in the afternoon returning from school. . .

.....
Sunday 12 January. I have not been to church today sinner that I am. Spent the morning at the house and office. Afternoon I wrote my cousins Jane & Delia. Evening I spent at home doing nothing particular except indulging in a sad though I cannot say unpleasant train of reflection. To think those I love are lost to me is sad. But the hope that they are happy in heaven lightens the sadness and makes it a pleasure to dwell upon "those who ever loved fondly but have gone to repose. Attended prayers in Mrs. Sedwick's rooms by Doct Van Ingen. Afterwards had a conversation on the church of Rome with him.

Monday 13 January. Economy is a virtue I fear I shall never be able to practice. Today I took a trial balance of by Books and I must say the balance of my a/c would be anything but satisfactory to a lover of the above mentioned virtue. Expense for eight months over \$300 dollars awfull. I must retrench, reform, refrain & restrain or repudiate. Called on Carrie E. this evening to play some duets but as I was not in tune our music was more like sawing boards than anything else. Smoked and retired at 11 o'clock.

.....
Wednesday 15 January. . . Attended the theater with Wm. C. Hawley. Mr. Thornes last appearance. Money continues to flow. I wish the weather would freeze up. It might freeze up my pocket too.
.....

Tuesday 21 January. . . . Tomorrow I leave for New York. . . .

Wednesday 22 January. Called on Sallie previous to leaving R. ostensibly to see if she had any message for Lizzie E. But more particularly to see if she was well and bid her good bye. Met with an accident at Vienna which detained the train an hour. I am in company with Mr. Chappell & daughter & Mr. Northrop. Arrived at Troy 11 P.M. had a very pleasant time with the girls being well acquainted.

Saturday 25 January. New York. Here I am in Gotham for the first time. Well—it is just as I thought it would be a great big town and that is all. I arrived at 5 P.M. booked myself at the Irving. Am in co. with Mr. Northrup, Chappell & daughter & Ch. Foote. Evening went to Burtons heard “David Copperfield” then like a nice young man returned to the “Irving” and *retired*. I don’t like New York there are too many people too many strange faces. Too many men and women that look all alike. Too much noise & confusion too much of nothing and too much of everything. Too much of all! too much! too much!

Sunday 26 January. New York. The fact is I have no time to write out my Journal—did not go to church at all, positively heinous. After dinner Foote and myself got a carriage and rode the town through. Called on Lizzie E. at the Astor House and passed a pleasant evening. A selfish man can be happy here. If I had an income of ten thousand a year or all the business I could do I should like it.

[NKF’s leisurely return from New York included visits with relatives in Troy and Sheffield and his friend Pete in Ovid. February 10 found him again in Rochester.]

Tuesday 11 February. . . . Morning did nothing in particular. Saw Sallie after dinner agreed to go up but did not. Figured up my expenses to New York. Only seventy dollars! Whew!. . . .

Wednesday 26 February. Arose and breakfasted on cold coffee and bread and butter at 9 o’clock rode up to the Orchard with Carrie & Sallie where I had quite a *morning performance*. Carrie perfumed me with rhubarb and Cologne I bathed her head with the same. Guess she got enough. Afternoon heard from Dom & Cary. no go. I talked with Chappell who said he could not pay \$700. All right. I’m on the town. Attended temperance dance Minerva Hall. Bed 4¼.

Thursday 27 February. . . . Awoke at 9 o’clock found myself in Will Crouls room both my great toes fast to the bed post with strong twine. Varney the perpetrator. Feel very well after so hard a dance. . . .

.....

Sunday 9 March. I am surprised to find how admirably I have behaved today. I have positively attended church three times today besides winding up the days worship and solemnities with prayers in Doct. Van Ingen room. One certainly feels better after spending the Sabbath in this way. I retire tonight with a consciousness that the moral condition of my mind is improved. It ought to be after listening to three long sermons and family prayers. Bed 10¾.

Monday 10 March. I seem to be located for the present with Mr. Erickson but what his intentions are I cannot say. I have done nothing in particular except attend to business. Evening remained at home and read "Friends & Fortune" an interesting little work. Bed. 12.

Tuesday 11 March. Mr. Chappell has got Mr. Williams & Ellison to examine my books. They have found nothing as yet at all out of the way. I don't think it will affect my sleep much. Worked lightly at the office during the day. Evening spent pleasantly with Miss Doolittle playing duets and talking about death. Eternity and "protracted meetings." A sensible girl. Bed 10½.

.....
Thursday 20 March. Nothing very important to record today. In the absence of which it may be well to note that there has been something of a change in my mind relative to my habits of life. I find in the way I am living at present that shall never accumulate a sufficient capital to commence business should ever so good an opportunity present. I have therefore resolved to *practice economy* that resolve will include the abolition of smoking drinking diddling dancing. Eating nights &c. Evening heard Geo Briggs lecture. Call on M. Bed 11.

Sunday 23 March. Went to Brick Church with Will Croul & Bradner heard Mr. Shaw deliver himself of a damnation sermon which seemed to relieve him. . . .

Monday 24 March. A magnificent morning. Got up at 6½ o'clock a fact I consider worth mentioning. Nothing particular transpired until 5 o'clock P.M. when I went to the First Church and saw my quondam intimate friend Ellen Gifford joined in wedlock to Wm K. Cutler. See Journal of 1850 for much interesting matter relating to this affair. I fear the poor girl has started on a life that will prove miserable, at least compared to what it might have been had she never seen that *detestable* Cutler family. I think she has sacrificed her future happiness & prospects to a feeling of false independence, to obstinancy and a desire to gratify her animal passions. Time will tell if the predictions of her friend are true. She was laboring under the effect of strong emotions during the ceremony, as she braved the

advice of friends, relatives and parents. Her father and mother would not witness the rites as they thought it was not right. Joy and peace be unto their bed. At 7 o'clock the subscribers to the Gymnasium met and organized and appointed John Rochester Atkinson Whittlesey & myself as a committee. Ed [?] Treasurer Wrote to Peter Schuyler apprising him of Bills marriage and giving him the state of my feelings about it. But the long agony is over the deed is did and she is Mrs. Cutler.

Tuesday 25 March. I see my recently married friends bear me no ill will. I this morn recd. through the office their partnership card directed in Ellens hand. I must call on her. . . .

.....
Tuesday 20 May. Today our town was honored by a visit from President Fillmore. A gay time of course. Some of the young men turned out in a cavalcade of horses I among them. I was especially honored by a kick from the Marshalls horse on the knee. Quite lame went and let Ann bathe it &c Staid at home all the evening wrote Theo Irwin.

.....
Friday 23 May. I am in an awful pickle about changing my boarding house. Mrs. M. says I must come and Mrs. S and all the women in the house say I shall not!!! What the d...l to do I don't know. Today *Daniel Webster* passed through our city. Made a speech &c. . . .

.....
Monday 14 July. Intended to go home but staid to ride horseback with a party. Ward, Pitkin & myself with the trio of girls from the "Orchard." Went to float bridge P. & Miss B in carriage, went over and came home by old dugway where Pit upset spilling Miss B. out. Twas an awfull exciting time. I had the pleasure of picking up the fainting damsel from the ground. Nobody hurt. No blame attached to the driver.

.....
Thursday 17 July. Sodus. Morning went down to Col Irwins to see about shipping mothers goods off. Laid around the Village the rest of the day. Called at J. Rogers saw a lot of married females. . . I understand Mr. Chappell has called a new boat in his line the N.K. Fairbanks! Oh! My!

.....
Monday 21 July. This morning went to the sale of Jenny Lind concert tickets. Never saw so much excitement in my life. After being around in the crowd two or three hours left unable to get any. . . .

Tuesday 22 July. Nothing very special occured. Everybody is talking

about "Jenny Lind" so much that I am sick of it all and have lost my desire to hear her. . . . I anticipated *much* more than I got. I left fully convinced that she *is* human.

.....
Monday 28 July. This has been the pleasantest day I have passed in a long while. Jennie Will Mrs. E. the girls & Sallie & myself went to the lake to bathe and a gay time we had of it. The girls were never happier. We had one of *the dinners* got up at the lake house after which we all took a sail in the "Cygnet." We put "outside" at once and as the sea was quite high of course we had an interesting time of it. Mrs. E was a good deal frightened and made us turn back to the regret of the whole party. The girls behaved like men. The sail was perfectly glorious.

.....
Saturday 6 September. Today I went into an examination of my a/c & expenses of living. Result—from March 1st to date 6 months \$326.25. Pleasant-very-for a young man working on a salary of \$500 or less, perhaps. It beats the *devil* that I can't get along without using so much money but one thing is settled on I am not going to spend another dollar until I bring my expenses down to an average of \$30 pr month. . . .

.....
Wednesday 10 September. Oh! my! aint it hot? How do you live? I'm done up! Sherry & Ice? hey! O yes certainly Sir. Very cooling. Such are the usual colloquys of couples when they meet in the vicinity of the arcade "about these days." This is decidedly the hottest spell of weather we have enjoyed (?) this season. . . .

.....
Monday 15 September. Wrote Henrietta a funny letter alluded to my last visit and told her story of the California widow whose husband had "writ once." The city is rapidly filling up with visitors to the State Fair. . . . Got blow up from A.E. for paying taxes. Whew! Did nothing during the evening.

Tuesday 16 September. The State Fair opens today town crowded with people—great deal of dust &c &c. I think I have made the discovery that Mr. E. is determined not to be suited with me. I can't help it. Blowed me up for leaving the key in the safe &c. says somebody told him I was not there half the time when he was gone &c &c. Well the quicker I leave this town the better. If I do quit here I shall not take any other situation here. If he speaks to me again on the subject I will release him from all obligations.

Wednesday 17 September. Remained at the office all day. Went nowhere and saw nobody. . . . My prospects for the present don't look very bright. I think I do not suit Mr. Erickson and that this year of 1851 will not see me any further up the ladder of my ambitions. I think I will leave Rochester. Spent evening at home and wandering around town &c &c.

.....
Friday 10 October. No sort of a day for stirring events. As perfectly void of incident as a country newspaper. Dropped into the Whig county convention a perfect scene of strife between the "Silver Grays" and "Woolies," the latter however, rode over the former rough shod and nominated their ticket entire which I think will be defeated by the Grays. . . .

.....
Monday 20 October. Remained at the office quite closely all day. After tea went over to Gymnasium with Hobart & remained until 9 o'clock. We had a great sparring match, each of us drew blood. Found Charley P about 10 and we went up to the "Turners" Ball—they are a German society of Gymnasts. Introduced ourselves of Directors of Roch. Gymnasium. Hoffman their President invited us in to the Ball—we drank several bottles of wine with him and had a great time. I had not confidence enough to venture a waltz after the wine.

Tuesday 21 October. . . . Evening went to Gymnasium the Turners didn't come. Went to Thorps with Chet Dewey &c. drank a little hot whiskey and went home. I am near forgetting that this is my birthday. On the 20th October *I am 22 years old!* Now the fleeting years begin to count I am here before I am really made aware of it. I wonder what in circumstance and where 25 will find me. I am going to begin to do something—the past year does not satisfy me. Three years more will probably find me *married* or approximating towards it. It seems quite funny to think about *now* but if I live it must happen and three years will soon come around and Then! Oh! Then!

.....
Monday 10 November. 3 inches of snow fall. Sat in the office all day as usual—horrid dull. After tea beat Miss Cleveland at chess—played "Still so gently" &c remained at home until 8 o'clock a truly marvellous occurrence for me. Went over to Tobinsons dancing school and commenced a course of lessons. Came home about 10 played chess with Hobart until 12 o'clock a good game but he beat me. I don't know whether it pays to write all this down or not.

Tuesday 11 November. Confound the sort of life I am leading. It is

too bad for a young man in perfect health to spend his time in idleness even if he is paid for it. . . .

.....
Tuesday 2 December. This has been a busy day for me in a business way. Evening tried to hear Rev. Henry Ward Beecher lecture but could hardly get in afterwards went home where we had a little dancing party of about 30. . . . It was a very nice party indeed and I am sure was much enjoyed by all present.

.....
Wednesday 24 December. Received an invitation for a party at Montgomery's Monday night. This evening was duly admitted as an entered apprentice in to the Yon Nondio Lodge of ancient and honorable Free Masons. I cannot help but record my first ideas of Freemasonry. The initiation struck me as a *ridiculous performance* rather a kind of grand farce though I can readily see that under some circumstances and differently or rather better performed it must be very impressive and imposing. . . .

Thursday 25 December. Christmas. Went to church in the morning. Dined at home at 3 P.M. the boys got a few bottles of champagne and we had a very pleasant dinner. After dinner adjourned to the parlor. Mrs. Ayrault played for us and we danced until 10½ o'clock. On the whole it was a very pleasant Christmas. . . .

.....
Monday 29 December. Bought pr of boots of Jas. Gray \$6.50. This evening attended a party at Montgomery's which was my *debut* into fashionable life in Rochester. I have been here a long time but never went to a large fashionable party before. I also had the honor of "bringing out" Miss Libbie Erickson, this occasion being her first appearance also. Was introduced to Misses Sawyer, Serton, Riley, Stanton &c. &c. It was a very pleasant party with lots of fun and apple toddy.

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Wednesday 31 December. . . . Well this years well nigh gone—and I do not stand today as high in the world in my own estimation as I did one year ago. I hope it is not so with my friends—the reason this is I have had a situation where I had little or nothing to do—the result is I have learned nothing new about business—have had too much time for amusement and consequently have spend more money than I have earned. I cannot see that I have made any progress in *the world* though I certainly think I have in moral principle and self respect—one thing in relation to my situation with Mr. Erickson. My association both business and social are much better than I have ever

enjoyed before and I believe this good has not been entirely wasted. I have made a good many excellent acquaintances and hope they may prove beneficial to me. But there is one thing quite certain I do not mean to idle away the year 1852 as I have the past—never will I again spend more money than I earn. So mote it be.

1852

Thursday 1 January. Passed the day making calls in company with Ward & Pitkin—this is the first time I ever made a general thing of it—we have to make *eighty calls* and all very pleasant ones too. I have never before passed a New Years Day with which I was so perfectly satisfied as I am with this one. We spent the evening at Mr. Ericksons with Libbie, Carrie & Sallie. I have made up my mind to “go into society” some this year. I don’t anticipate much pleasure from it but as I have time this winter I will gratify a desire I have always had to see what “*the Society*” of this city was made of.

.....
Sunday 11 January. Heard Rev. John Pierpont at Unitarian Church—good but not extraordinary—dined at Murrays with Dea Leach & Charley & no St. Lukes—took tea and spent evening at A. E.’s had animated discussion on Athenaeum relative to old vs young men for officers. A. E. thinks twill run down by electing young ones. Had some church music—I accompanied with flute—got a great drive on Libbie. Speaking of hands she remarked that Mr. Willard had the whitest softest and most flexible hand for a man she ever saw. I simply inquired what she knew of its flexibility!! She had nothing to say *of course*.

.....
Tuesday 13 January. . . . Evening attended party at Potters—a very large one. A good many people from abroad—nothing to be had in the way of drinks—the boys rather languished under such treatment—otherwise we had a pretty good time. Made the acquaintance of Miss Jane Andrews. She said she had quite a curiosity to know me as I was the only gent. . . .

Wednesday 14 January. I feel considerably used up this morning—two nights of dancing in succession is most too much. Denton & Sherman called on me today from Lyons. This evening was made a “Master Mason” this is certainly a beautiful degree and if the degrees keep on improving until we reach the top it must approach very near the sublime and the awful. . . .

Thursday 15 January. A. E. has decided on a party one week from tonight—so he had me close the office and go to the house and write invitations! Oh! Moses what a job!! 350’. If A. E. had taken Mrs. E’s

advice and staid at the office we would have got on better. He is so mighty particular that he kept us in a stew all the while. . . .

.....
Wednesday 21 January. Spent the day at the Orchard help making arrangements for party. Deliver me Oh! ye Gods from married life and party giving. . . .

Thursday 22 January. Busy again all day at the Orchard this evening the party went off—and as far as I could judge with *perfect success*. I had a room arranged in the back part of the house “on the sly” with quantities of good liquor. Kidd got laid out early and had to go to bed—this was the only *unfortunate* occurrence. . . .

.....
Thursday 29 January. Nothing diurnal. All of note that happens *nowadays* (theres a bull) is nocturnal. At 3 P.M. started with Nellie on sleigh ride to “Wimbles” a company of eighteen—great time—trotted horses, danced, supped, sang &c. I went in a cutter Nellie does not hesitate about giving strong indications that my company is quite agreeable. I can’t help loving her and mean to tell her so. There’s no use being so conscientious. I’ll love her and tell her so even if there is not a remote idea of matrimony. Wish twas not so far out there.

.....
Monday 2 February. Had conversaton with A. E. about business thinks he will do nothing next year and if I can get a good situation had better take it. Says I better marry Chappells daughter and go in co. with him. . . .

Tuesday 3 February. Have rushed things through pretty sharp today. Morning attended the funeral of Miss Ema Ward as a bearer—an interesting daughter of L. A. Ward aged 16 a very sad affair. Evening went to lecture by Emerson of Boston. He is perfect Bostonian as the caricaturists make them. . . .About 9 P.M. went to Boodys party. A very pleasant one but did not compare with A. E.’s—didn’t enjoy myself particularly well as to the ladies. . . . After the party Wilder Gelman Rochester & Co. went to Congress Hall where we all got pretty well corned and went home at 3 A.M. It is rather “crowding the mourners” to attend a funeral as bearer in the morning and go to a party and get tight the same night.

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Thursday 5 February. Found Nellie out at the Orchard this morning—she handed me an empty locket—went down to Applebys and had *my phiz* put in by her request. . . .

Monday 16 February. . . . A. E. says *conclusively* and *decidedly* once and for all—That I will never succeed as a business man until I am *constitutionally* changed. *We shall see.* Evening went to Col. Redfields party. . . . Some of the fellows got pretty tight. I kept perfectly sober. Staid till 2 A.M. . . .

.....
Wednesday 18 February. A. E. started for Boston this morning taking Libbie with him. Chappell is at me again about coming with him. . . . Hobart and self went to theater with Louise & Nellie saw Miss Cushman in *Lady McBeth*. I thought a little over acted—returned to Sibleys and had a nice long chat with Nellie made love to her some.

.....
Monday 23 February. . . . Evening went over to Sibleys to see Nellie instead of going to the Military Festival at Corinthian Hall. Don't think I have ever passed many pleasanter evenings than this with Louise & Nellie. It seems to be perfectly understood that we are in love. So I claimed the privileges of a lovers kiss &c. and got them. Well it is rather pleasant on the whole—but how will it end is the question—that I'll trust to fate.

.....
Sunday 29 February. Morning wrote to Libbie E. at Boston. Afternoon went to church—took tea at the Orchard. Evening went to St. Pauls church went home with Nellie & Louise. While at the Orchard, Angerona says to me “Kell, Nellie Parsons has got your daugerotype in a little round gold thing and wears it on her neck I saw it.” I shall probably hear from that circumstance from older heads hereafter.

.....
Sunday 7 March. Went to church in the morning. Dined at the Eagle with Dewey & E. R. Whipple of Boston. Afternoon played chess with Hart at Mrs. Murrays—wrong—Evening Church at St. Lukes. Went up and saw Chappell about tea time. Told him I would not work for \$700. I have got him just where I want him now. Once I had to plead to him for a situation now he pleads to me to come.

Monday 8 March. Chappell sent to me five different times today to drive & hurry me into accepting his offer—he can't do it. . . .

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Wednesday 17 March. Came to a final conclusion with Chappell this A.M. He would not offer me but \$700. I would not take less than \$750. So we did not make a bargain. I may be sorry but I was not going to “knock under” to any such man. I guess I shall turn out an

honester man in the end if there is anything in example. . . .

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Saturday 20 March. Chappell sent for me again this morning. I won't work for the old hog if I can get along possibly without it. I may be compelled to accept his offer of \$700 yet. . . .

Sunday 21 March. Attended church this morning. Afternoon had an interview with Chappell about business. Took tea at the Orchard and spent the evening. Old folks went to bed early. Libbie and I adjourned to the back parlor. Mrs. Taylor brought out some cake and wine. *I lit a cigar* and we seated ourselves for a talk. . . . Mrs. E. smelled the smoke through four partitions and summoned Libbie to see who was smoking—I vamoosed—I expect a blessing.

Monday 22 March. Saw Chappell at cars told him I would take the \$700 (d--n him) learned he had written Heath to come on so it is uncertain yet. Had conversation with A. E. about business. Told him if he did any business I wanted to stay so as to *disappoint Chappell*. Said he would try and make some arrangement for Sexton and me to go on together with sheep skin trade. . . . A. E. has not said a word about smoking in the house last night.

Tuesday 23 March. Wrote Jerome a short letter. This afternoon A. E. gave me an awful talking to. In my talk with Libbie I said but for him and Mrs. Roberts Nellie and Dome would [have] been married perhaps—She mentioned it & he *made* her tell who told her. Of course I had to suffer. Saw Libbie shortly afterwards—says it has learned her one lesson she is eighteen years old and her Father never will *compel* her to tell anything again. . . .

.....
Tuesday 30 March. . . . Mr. Drewlar of Kimberly Pease & Co. Buffalo called on me to go and keep their books. I ask him \$800 this year & \$1000 next. I like his looks and think the place would please me. He is to write me Thursday. Wrote A. E. about it. Evening went to Em Pecks wedding with Libbie—dull time—stupid affair.

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Friday 2 April. Left for Buffalo this A.M. Jones went up as far as Batavie. Saw Kimberly P. & Co. they will give me \$750. Must let them know Monday. Wrote A. E. and left my case in his hands. Called at Mrs. Matthews to engage room. . . .

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Monday 5 April. Recd telegraph from A. E. has not seen Sexton yet. Says better not wait for him—so today I wrote Kimberly Pease & Co. accepting *the situation with them*—this is quite an important day in my life it will probably change the whole current of it. Spent the

evening with Lousie Sibley—the old gent bored me until 11 o'clock with politics and telegraphs. So I did(dnt) have much of a time with Louise.

.....
Tuesday 13 April. Commenced with Kimberly Pease & Co. this day. I see I am going to have all the work I can attend to. So I mean to devote myself exclusively to business we will see how well I shall succeed. Evening remained at home i.e. at Mrs. Mathews—smoked read the papers &c. I think I shall like Buffalo though it is a little dull here just now.

.....
Friday 16 April. . . . I find masonry pays now I am among strangers.
Saturday 17 April. A rainy day passed at the office. I mean this year to earn a business reputation for Buffalo. If I succeed I can see my way clear for a while. . . .

Sunday 18 April. Attended St. Johns church and again heard the Magic Voice “Nellie G”—now unfortunately Mrs. C— it is a great pity that she should be so attached irrevocably married to such a clog—All my former enthusiasm is awakened. . . .I think it was the great mistake of my life when I gave her up to him.

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Wenesday 21 April. I wish navigation would start I am heartily tired of doing nothing—d—n—Buffalo so far—I may like it better when business begins—but this living in a city without acquaintances or business is dull work. . . .

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Thursday 29 April. This about the first day I have had anything to do. Recd letter from Will Croul. He thinks I had better come back A. E. is afraid he can't fill my place. I don't know what to think of it. . . .

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Sunday 2 May. Today seems like the times when I was with Chappell & Co. instead of going to church I went to the office and got off a boat—this transportation business is death to a mans religion. After tea wrote Libbie a good long letter. Recd letter from her also this afternoon. Have not been to church at all—would have went but Mrs. C wasn't there so I didn't.

.....
Sunday 9 May. My diary begins to look as it did when at Chappells—work work nights—Sundays—and all the time. Spent forenoon at the office at *work*—afternoon went to church. . . .

Thursday 13 May. A. E. passed through here on his way west—left word with me to meet him at the St. Bt Buckeye—wants me to come back to Rochester with him—told him how I was situated here & what my prospects were then left it with him. Said if I came back and took hold right he would do something for me—think I will go—he has found out at last that I am *independent*. Wrote Will Croul & Carrie each a short note.

Friday 14 May. Talked with K. P. & Co. about leaving they are disposed to be very [?] and are willing I shall go as soon as they can fill my place—Telegraphed A. E. at Cleveland that I would go back—So the thing has gone up—and I am to move again. I have lost nothing by coming here. It places me in a much better position with A. E. a more independent one.

Saturday 15 May. Today I am feeling well with the prospect of going back to Rochester. I mean to work hard however to please A. E. and am satisfied I can do it if I only have a chance. *Go it destiny!* I am in your hands—hope I shall come out well. . . .

.....
Tuesday 18 May. Recd letter from A. E. hoping I had done nothing *definite* in relation to going back. This is decidedly pleasant—after all I have done—he is still undecided. If I slip up on this I swear I will go to St. Paul, Minnesota or as far away as I can get. Wrote him I had taken him at his word and acted decisively and promptly and made arrangements to go back—recd letter from Nellie Parsons—a careful one—very good.

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Wednesday 2 June. Commenced my labor with Mr. Erickson again—I mean to try & suit him—shall do all in my power at all events & if I fail I fail with a clear conscience and give up entirely trying to please him. Spent the evening at the Orchard very pleasantly—it seemed quite like old times. . . .