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Farrar, John C., Diaries, 1852-1854, 1857, 1859  
2 volumes

## MICROFILM

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### INTRODUCTION

Diaries of a California gold miner from Perryville, Perry County, Missouri. The entries begin with Farrar's journey overland on the Oregon Trail and continue through his mining ventures at Hangtown and Tuttletown, California. He notes daily events, profits, roads, and other miners in the vicinity. Volume 2 also contains lists of male and female children and doctors' visits for 1857 and 1859.

### DONOR INFORMATION

The John C. Farrar Diaries were loaned for microfilming to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia, by Alice Henson, on 27 July 1990 (Accession No. 4968).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

On 28 March 1852, John C. Farrar left Perryville for the California gold fields. His journey overland began with a wagon train on the Oregon Trail, then continued by pack mule and on foot. He arrived in California on 12 July 1852. Farrar preferred mining in partnership with at least one other man, and at times two. They shared housekeeping duties, cooking, prospecting, building flumes and the actual work of digging and washing dirt for gold. Farrar's first partners were a father and son who absconded with the profits. On 1 January 1853, Farrar settled in at Tuttletown in partnership with John J. Norris of New Jersey. On 17 January they were joined by James M. Kelsey from Vermont. It is unclear when these partnerships ended. On 31 January 1854, Farrar acquired two new partners, John Beasy and Charles Beavans. Farrar remained in the Tuttletown area, prospecting frequently for new claims, until March 1854 when he returned to Perry County.

### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Volume 1 contains the details of the overland journey made by Farrar from 28 March to 12 July 1852. His entries record the weather, landscape, road conditions, prices, discarded belongings of previous travelers and Indian encounters. Volume 2 begins on 23 September 1853 and continues through 12 March 1854, with his departure for Missouri. After his arrival in the gold fields, details concentrate on the weather, daily mining profits, the lack of water for washing the dirt, and local entertainments. There are graphic descriptions of a beating, a suicide and an attempted murder and subsequent medical care. Farrar also wrote of his visits to Sonora, friends, an art exhibition, and Christmas celebrations.

Generally, the entries are blank and lacking in detail. Exceptions include his poetic description of the landscape and his horror over the violence he witnessed. The spelling in both volumes is imaginative and vaguely phonetic.

No journal was kept from July through December of 1852 but Farrar wrote a summary of events during those months before beginning his daily entries in January 1853. Volume 2 was

evidently transcribed, and perhaps edited, after his return to Missouri. At the end of volume 2 are unexplained lists of male and female children and doctors' visits for the years 1857 and 1859.

Also found in volume 2 are two detailed sketch maps of the California gold fields in the vicinity of Sonora pin-pointing the locations mentioned within the journals, and a sketch of Farrar in his mining gear. There is also a four page list dated 20 February 1853 entitled: "Ounces of gold on hand."

## VOLUME LIST

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