

## *The Other Southworth and a Life of Melancholy*

By Ron Polito © 2025

Stimpson's 1843 *Boston Directory* placed a "Sidney Southworth" at Albert Sands Southworth's daguerreian studio.<sup>1</sup> Sidney was Albert's half-second cousin, and his employment at the Southworth firm short-lived. Unlike Albert, a legend in photographic history, Sidney is but a comma—yet emblematic of many who were drawn to a new and seminal industry during a time of considerable economic, social, and cultural change.

*Boston in the early 1840s was a city of contrasts: reform-minded and deeply traditional, prosperous yet crowded with poverty, unified in civic ambition but increasingly fractured by class, ethnicity, and religion.* (Perplexity.ai; see caution in endnote)<sup>2</sup>

*Into the practice of no other business or art was there ever such an absurd, blind, and pell-mell rush. From the accustomed labors of agriculture and the machine shop, from the factory and the counter, from the restaurant, the coach-box, and the forecandle, representatives have appeared to perform the work ....* (Albert Sands Southworth)<sup>3</sup>

*The apparent simplicity of making sun pictures led to a great variety of talent to engage in the business. Many believed it was a field in which there but little labor, and much profit; that required neither capital nor brains, and was just the kind of work for those who had failed in every other enterprise.* (J. B. Gardner, New York City daguerreian)<sup>4</sup>

The lure of economic success, with little "heavy lifting," drew many to this new and emerging industry, although many would soon leave, as illustrated clearly in a letter from painter George Fuller to his father. On April 11, 1840, the 18-year-old Fuller reported that he and his half-brother, Augustus, had just visited Francois Gouraud's Boston exhibition of daguerreotypes<sup>5</sup> and

*... were much pleased; our ticket would entitle us to one of the lectures, but we were too late, as they had ceased delivery then. Now this [the daguerreotype process] can be applied to taking miniatures or portraits on the same principle that it takes landscapes. M. Gouraud is now fitting up an apparatus for this purpose. If he can raise a class of ten or fifteen, he will give instruction or private lectures, making them perfectly acquainted with the art. The plate [metallic] costs about \$1.50, and it is easily prepared; but two minutes time is required to leave a complete impression, perfect as nature can make it. He will give me instruction for \$10.00, and the apparatus will cost \$51.00, making it all \$61.00 only, for the whole concern. He has shown me the machine, and I think it is very low at his price. We can afford to take a perfect likeness for \$7.00; the plate and glass will cost \$2.00, leaving \$5.00. With custom [patronage] enough fifty could be taken in one day.*

[Fuller's letter continues, reflecting perhaps the daguerreotypes' principal attraction and commercial promise in 1840:] *This is a new invention, and consequently a great novelty, of which every one has heard, and has a curiosity to see. It is just what the people in this country like, namely something new. I think anyone would give \$7.00 for their perfect likeness. We would clear ourselves of all expense in two weeks!*<sup>6</sup>

Fuller did purchase the necessary equipment, taking it back to his home in Deerfield, Massachusetts. Whether he purchased lessons and his equipment from Gouraud is not known, and by June 1840, A. Davis was advertising daguerreotype apparatus for \$25, undercutting Gouraud’s price by 50%.<sup>7</sup>

Reportedly, Fuller used his camera once, producing a view of his family’s farmhouse, before taking up a lucrative career as an itinerant portrait artist.<sup>8</sup> That Fuller quickly abandoned photography as a commercial venture was not uncommon; it was a competitive and transient profession. Of the 77 Boston studios established before 1850, 47% closed after one year, 19% were still active after five years, and only 9% survived 10 years or more.<sup>9</sup>

### Sidney Southworth and the Term, “Photographer”

This essay traces some aspects of early photography in Boston, Sidney’s connection to Albert Southworth, his brief role as an employee in Albert’s studio, and, more significantly, how his life reflected the dramatic changes in New England society during the 1840s and the context in which photography developed.<sup>10</sup>

“Sidney” appeared in the resident section of the 1843 Boston city directory as a “photographer” in Albert’s studio, which advertised “Daguerreotype Miniatures.” In the early 1840s, the designation “photographer” was relatively rare in the United States and even less so in Boston. Between photography’s introduction in that city in 1840 until 1850, the term, with one variant, appeared only seven times in city directories, all in the resident listings, while variations of “daguerreotypist” were applied to all other practitioners.<sup>11</sup> (Figure 1)



Figure 1. “Photographers” identified in Stimpson’s Boston Directory, published in July of each year. (Design by C. DeCillo)

In other parts of the United States, the term photographer was often applied to anyone engaged commercially in paper-based photographic processes. In early Boston, however, the designation appears to have marked a distinction between the principal figure in a studio and someone of lesser standing. In Figure 1, Joseph Pennell—listed in 1842 and 1843—was A. S. Southworth’s silent partner and left the firm in 1843.<sup>12</sup> Sidney Southworth and Henry Manchester (both 1843), as well as Nathan S. Bennett (1844), were all associated with unmistakably daguerreian establishments. Marcus Ormsbee was not operating a Boston studio in 1843. He has been

mistakenly credited as the first Boston studio owner to offer paper photographs that year, but he did not introduce paper photography until considerably later.<sup>13</sup>

The lone one exception is the 1843 resident listing for Marsena Cannon as a “photographic artist.” Cannon’s career, however, has been well documented and every reliable reference identifies him only as a daguerreotypist. One source noted, “By 1843 he was established in the trade in Boston, where he worked as an operator for the [daguerreian] gallery of John Plumbe.”<sup>14</sup> A detailed series of 1841 advertisements in the Salem, Massachusetts, newspapers placed him in the daguerreian studio of Keen and Cannon.<sup>15</sup>

### **Sidney [aka Sydney] Southworth**

Tracing Sidney Southworth’s life is complicated by his preferred and later, more frequently used spelling, “Sydney.” Short-lived in photography, short-lived in life, Sydney Southworth died tragically at age 32. The details of his brief life reported here derive from public records, family genealogies, and brief citations in newspaper articles. In addition, several 20<sup>th</sup>-century writings about the nation’s utopian movements provide a slightly closer look at one of his undertakings.

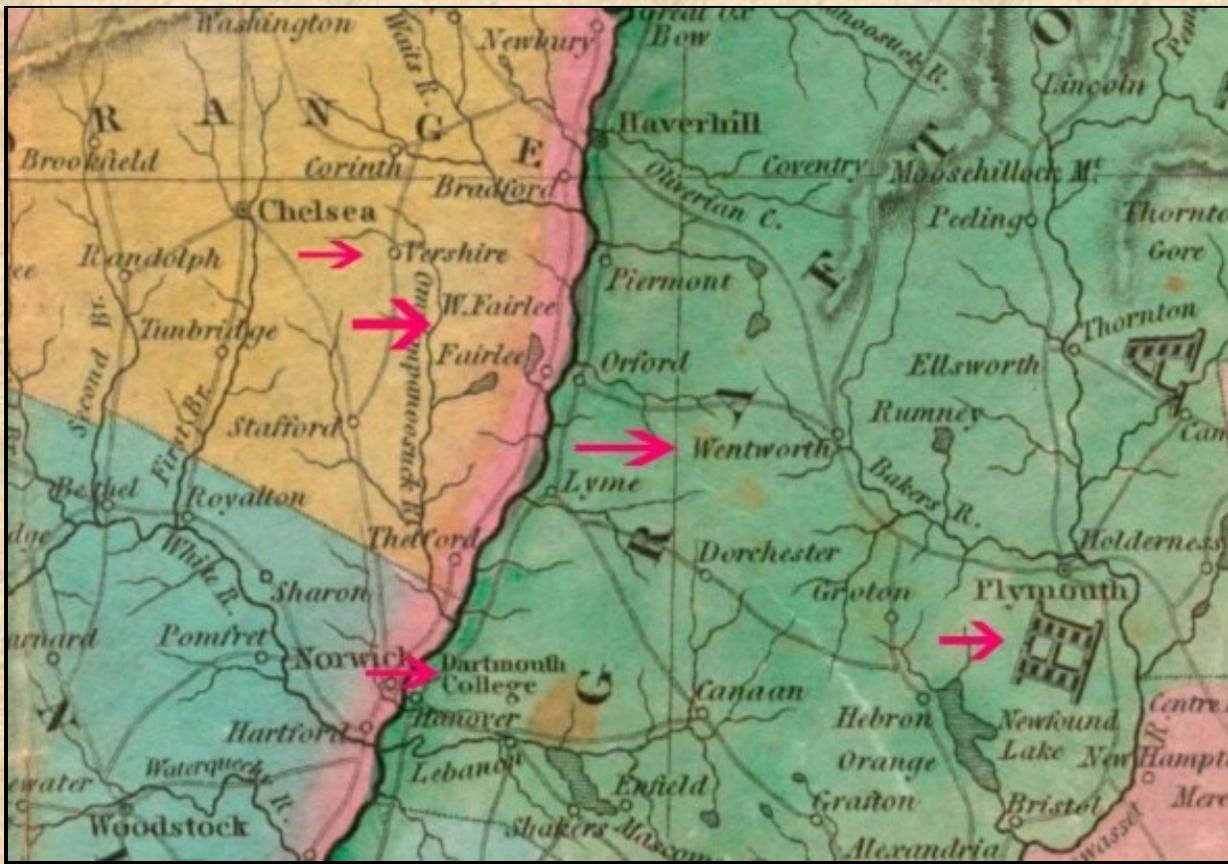
Far more revelatory, however, are 22 letters written between 1839 and 1845 to his close friend George Shepard Burleigh.<sup>16</sup> These letters reveal a principled, educated man, committed to social reform but struggling, at times despondently, with his place in a world of religious, social, and cultural change. Sydney shared long and, at times, meandering tracts on what he viewed as social ills and often referred to his writings and manuscripts. He did publish, but only one article written before his later life has been found.<sup>17</sup> He was clearly a product of turbulent times and his unsettled—and unsettling—personality.

The following sections detail key aspects of Sydney’s life. It is my hope the excerpts from his letters retain his voice and, by transference, echo the voice of his generation, who, leaving the homogeneity of the farm for the economic potential of the city, often found a troubling diversity of change.

### **Sydney’s Early Years and His Connection to Albert Sands Southworth**

Albert Southworth and Sydney were half-second cousins; their grandfathers, Asa (Senior) and Ralph Southworth, respectively, were half-brothers who shared a common father, Josiah Southworth, but different mothers. All were part of a large and extended New England family, English in origin going back centuries and tracing its American roots to the Pilgrim migration of the early 1600s.<sup>18</sup>

Albert was born in West Fairlee, Vermont, on March 3, 1811, almost seven years before Sydney; his parents were Asa Southworth, Jr., and Nancy Niles. Little is known of his early childhood other than that he was the oldest of five children: Samuel Niles (January 8, 1814), Asa (December 18, 1815), Benjamin Niles (January 27, 1818), Nancy Niles (May 20, 1820), and Mary Niles (June 1822), who would die in November 1823.<sup>19</sup> (**Figure 2**)



**Figure 2.** Detail from the *Map of Maine, New Hampshire, And Vermont, Compiled from the Latest Authorities* (Philadelphia: S. Augustus Mitchell, c. 1820–1829). (Map reproduction courtesy of the Normal B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.)

Sydney was born Algernon Sidney Southworth on November 13, 1817, in Wentworth, New Hampshire, some 25 miles east of West Fairlee, Vermont, where the official records of his birth were recorded eight months later. He was the first child of Phinheas (spelled “Phineas” in many records) and Sinthia Hidden, who married in West Fairlee on January 30, 1817. Their three subsequent children were born there; Laura Ludden in 1819, Moses Eaton in 1824, and Sabrah Munn in 1829.<sup>20</sup> In an 1843 letter to Burleigh, Sydney described a difficult relationship with his family, especially his mother:

*... I received yours of the last of February just as I was just starting to go to Vermont to let my friends see me—my relations rather, for I do not regard them as friends, strictly speaking; you know why. Friendship is not with me as with some; I care but little about my relations as such—I have not a friend among my relations. A person has my esteem and love, solely for his virtue, and in proportion to his virtue. ... But some think me a queer chap for not loving my relations more than other people. ... I suppose one reason this is the case with me is that I have been long been away from my parents, &c., and when I was a child I hated my mother, because she was severe in governing me, and I hated my oldest sister for some reason—or no reason. ... I can see that I have been deprived of much because the family from which I sprung was not what families should be. But I do not blame any of them, they did their best for me.<sup>21</sup>*

Given that their families were related and West Fairlee a small town (population 841 in 1830<sup>22</sup>), it is reasonable to assume that, despite an age difference, Albert and Sydney knew one another before Albert employed Sydney in 1843.<sup>23</sup> Albert attended Bradford Academy (likely in Haverhill, Massachusetts) in 1829 and Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, from 1833–1835. In 1839, he established a drug store in Cabotville (now Chicopee), Massachusetts, followed by a daguerreian studio there in 1840.<sup>24</sup>

Even after leaving West Fairlee, Albert maintained close contact, later hiring two of his siblings, Asa and Nancy, to work in his Boston Studio. In November 1842, he married Louisa Dwight in Vershire, Vermont, a town only seven miles northwest of West Fairlee.<sup>25</sup> When Sydney left West Fairlee is not known, but he was in Brooklyn, Connecticut, before March 6, 1839.<sup>26</sup> At that time, he would have been 21 and Albert 28.

### Sydney's Boston Years: 1840–1843

Albert's long photographic connection to Boston began in the spring of 1840, when he attended one of Francois Gouraud's lectures and demonstrations of the daguerreotype process.<sup>27</sup> Soon after, he established the daguerreian studio in Cabotville and then made plans to relocate the business to Boston, a process during which he must have visited the city with some regularity. In *Young America: The Daguerreotypes of Southworth & Hawes*, Grant Romer wrote:

*By April 1841, the decision had been made. Southworth traveled to Boston and from there wrote [his sister] Nancy: "We are about moving our miniature apparatus to Boston. Our prospects are at present flattering. ... We hope to have our rooms ready in less than a month. ... my partners are in Cabotville and will remain there until fitted up here."*<sup>28</sup>

Sydney also appeared on the Boston scene in 1840, but he was far less focused and confident than Albert. He spent his time prior to arriving in Boston roaming and questioning his self-worth. His first known letter to Burleigh was dated "Brooklyn, Conn, Jan. 21," but no year was given. Sydney wrote: "I left my school this morning.<sup>29</sup> ... I am on the eve of leaving Brooklyn for the present. I expect to start for Boston tomorrow for the purpose of laboring in the anti-slavery [word illegible]."

On March 6, 1839, he wrote to Burleigh on stationery bearing the anti-slavery logo. (**Figure 3**) Both letters are signed "A. Sydney Southworth."

*After I saw you in [illegible] I went on my way as before, spying out the abolitionists of the land, and surveying the state of Abolition. I found the soil rather rocky generally with but a few arable spots, and those spots which bore the name of being able to produce fruit too often on examination I found to be totally worthless and unproductive.*

[The letter indicates he was selling subscriptions to anti-slavery literature in the Sturbridge, Massachusetts, area (possibly the Boston-based *Liberator*), but with little success, after two weeks only nine had been sold. He later states:]

*The Liberator is the most unpopular paper in New England. The clergy are almost universally opposed to it, and of course most of their people must follow them and what they say, without inquiring whether they are right or wrong.*



**Figure 3.** Anti-slavery logo on stationery used by Sydney Southworth in a letter to George Burleigh on March 6, 1839. (Manuscript Collection, John Hay Library at Brown University.)

In a May 10, 1840, letter to Burleigh, Sydney recounted his recent travels through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Boston, and eventually to Worcester, Massachusetts, where he stated:

*... and I am now working at my trade. Tomorrow, instead of going to N. York to help fight that battle [likely an anti-slavery event], I have got to go into the shop to work. A severe disappointment this is to me: ... but I have not enough "filthy" lucre to go ....*

*I expect to be in Ct. in the course of a month, but know not what arrangement I shall enter into. I think some of going to Lowell [Massachusetts] next fall to take up my abode, but it is uncertain: I move about from one place to another like a log on the bosom of the deep, tossed about by circumstances. ... I long to taste the sweets of social life and be freed from the fluctuations of which at present attend me.*

[While much of this letter deals with Sydney seeking fulfillment, one section reflects back to his disdain for organized religion.]

*The bells are ringing, the people are rushing to with one accord to the holy sanctuary on this holy sabbath, to hear the "vicegerent" declare the truth to poor sinners; but I who am a sinner above all others, am wicked enough to remain in my "sky parlor" and thus neglect the means of being converted to a man-killing, man-stealing, sabbath observing, ceremonial, outward show religion, a christianity which scorns the narrow sphere of the [illegible] of the heart, but must gratify its pride by showing itself in the public sinagogue [sic], in sitting on cushioned seats, in a costly edifice, ... instead of hearing from the plain practical truth of Christianity, from Christ ....*

By November 1840, Sydney had relocated to Boston, where he would stay until at least October of the following year. During this time, his name appeared in 10 issues of William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, *The Liberator*, as one of many participants active in several social reform

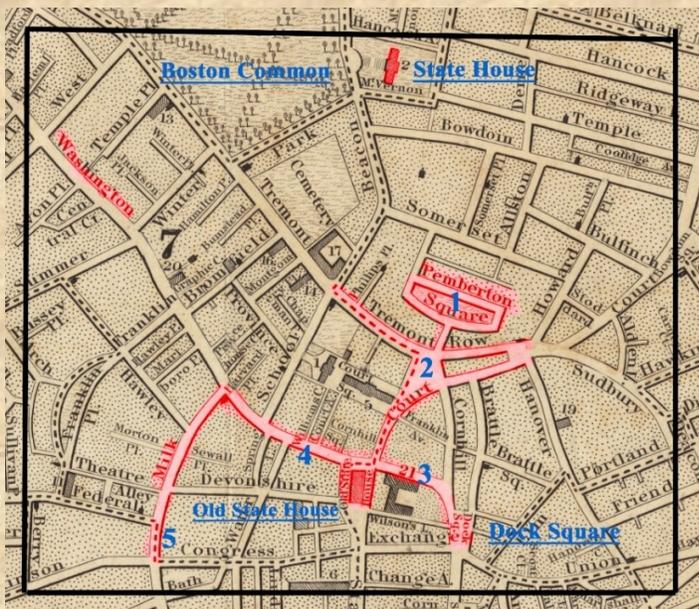
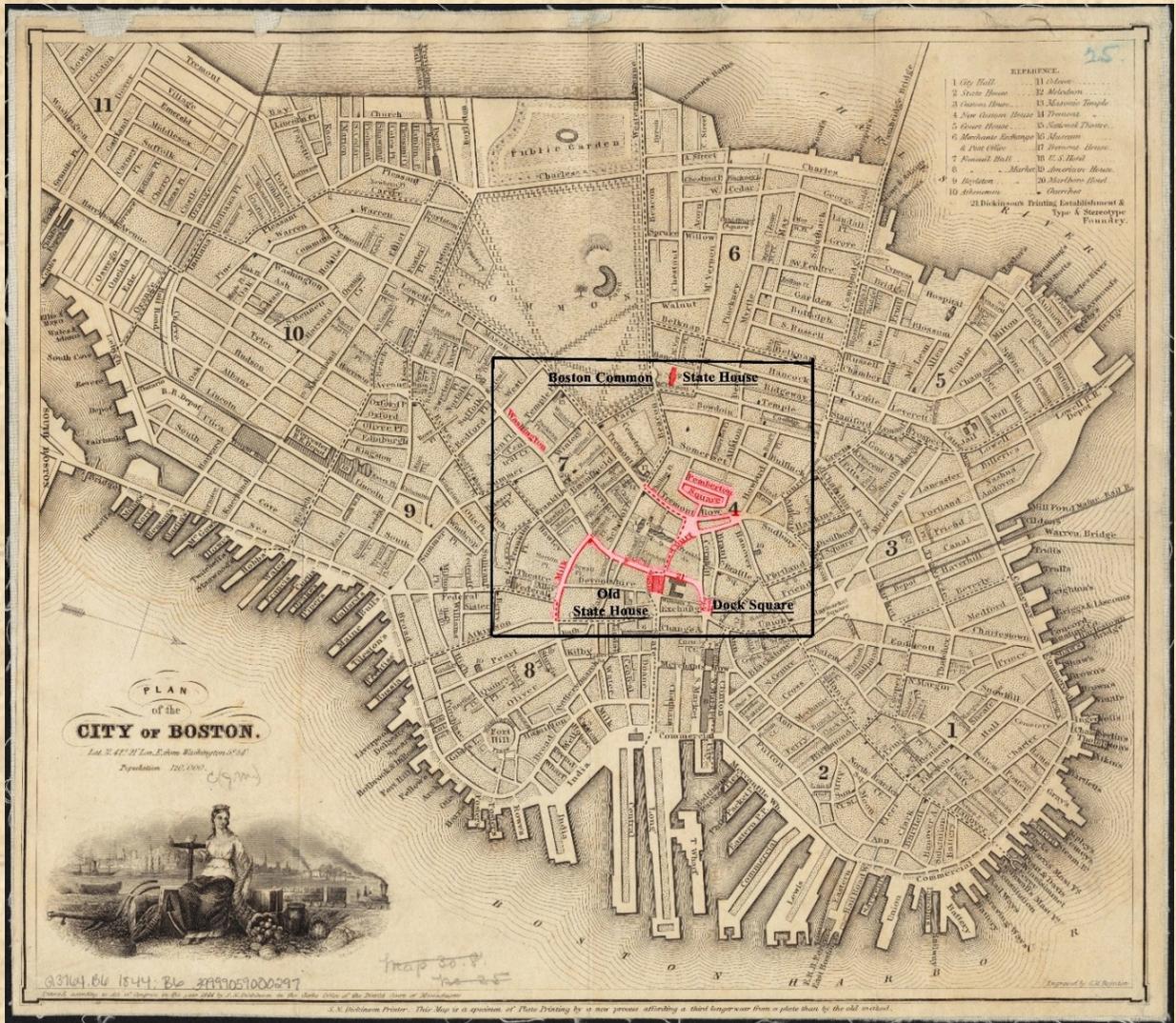
organizations: The Church Ministry; Sabbath Convention, where he served as co-secretary; the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society; the New England Anti-Slavery Society; and later, the New England Non-Resistance Society.<sup>30</sup> Clearly committed to these causes, he also appeared more socially engaged than ever before. The following is excerpted from a December 29, 1840, letter:

*I have some good times with ultraists [likely Garrison reformers<sup>31</sup>] and we have many debates at the G [rest of name illegible, possibly Garrison] house. We have a great variety of sentiments ... but there is no unkindness or harshness of feeling. [Sydney also indicated he was working in an unidentified shop and also heavily engaged in doing phrenology readings with considerable economic success.<sup>32</sup>] I enjoy myself pretty well, on the whole, have examined more than two hundred heads, and have got fifty or sixty dollars for it. But it is all gone for board and other expenses.*

[Reporting that his board was \$2.50 per week, exclusive of washing, Sydney's "other expenses" must have been considerable. Sydney pauses the letter at this point and returns to it the next day, discussing his own writing.]

*My Ultraist [possibly the title of a publication] does not get along very fast since I left Plainfield. The third No. is filled, except for the last page and I want a sonnet from you to accompany that. I have written a little in the fourth number .... I suppose you saw one article copied from a number into the Health Journal. Another piece Wall wanted for the Reformer<sup>33</sup> and I let him have it. My Phrenology Box is full, and I have commenced a [illegible] to it called Specimens of Phrenology. I write all amusing and remarkable items of phrenology in there.*

Sydney's next letter to Burleigh was not until September 12, 1841, where he indicated he was soon leaving for the West Indies, apparently to do missionary work, and would not likely return until the following spring. He then made a very interesting request, indicating he was acquainted with photography far earlier than his 1843 employment at the Southworth studio: "... send me my chest as soon as possible. ... You will, if you please, direct it to me, to the care of J. Plumbe, Jr., Photographic Institute, Pemberton Square, Boston." Plumbe's studio was one of the first commercial photographic ventures in Boston, known to be in operation by November 1840, where he was an "attraction" at the Harrington Museum, 76 Court Street; Sydney was giving phrenological readings there, days and evenings. Plumbe remained at the museum making daguerreotypes until at least May 1841; by Sydney's September letter, he had relocated to over the nearby Whig Reading Room.<sup>34</sup> (**Figure 4**)



**FIGURE 4.** Plan of the City of Boston with approximate locations of the five photographic studios confirmed active in 1841. Boston maps of this period did not show street numbers, and the city's street numbering system did not follow modern conventions. The locations here are interpolated from a street index printed in Stimpson's 1841 Boston Directory. See numbering key below for specific studio names and addresses. Map created by George Boynton; publisher, S. N. Dickinson, Boston, 1844. (Map reproduction courtesy of the Normal B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.)

## 1841 Key to Figure 4 map

The following table provides the locations for the five photographic studios confirmed as active in 1841. Frequent changes, especially at 123 Washington Street, clearly illustrate the industry's turbulence in these early days of photography and echoes the quotes by Albert Sands Southworth and J. R. Gardner which open this article.

Location on Map	Studio Name & Address	Confirmed Dates of Activity in 1841*
1	<b>John Plumbe, Jr.</b> Harrington Museum, 76 Pemberton Square, <i>then</i>	November 17, 1840 to May 8, 1841
	<b>Photographic Institute</b> (John Plumbe, Jr.) Over Whig Reading Room, 75 Pemberton Square	by July 14 to end of year & beyond
2	<b>A. S. Southworth &amp; Company</b> Scollay Building, 60 ½ Court Street, <i>then</i>	paid first rent, June 1
	<b>A. S. Southworth &amp; Company</b> 5 ½ Tremont Row	date of move not known, to end of year & beyond
3	<b>Hale &amp; Smith</b> (Charles E. & Ralph Smith, Jr.) 36 Washington Street, <i>then</i>	October 16 to November 6
	<b>Charles E. Hale</b> (alone)	to end of year & beyond
4	<b>J. (John) S. F. Huddleston</b> 123 Washington Street, <i>then</i>	July 20 to August 28
	<b>A. E. Emerson</b> , <i>then</i>	August 30 to September 1
	<b>H. (Henry) I. &amp; Able &amp; Company</b>	September 2 to end of year & beyond
5	<b>T. H. Darling</b> 62 Milk Street. <i>then</i>	June 29 to August 25, possibly longer
	<b>Marcus Ormsbee</b>	to end of year & beyond

All the photographers above, except for A. E. Emerson and Marcus Ormsbee, exhibited daguerreotypes at the 1841 Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Fair, held in Boston's Quincy Hall on September 20<sup>th</sup>. An additional three daguerreotypists were represented: John A. [Adams] Whipple was working as a chemist at the time and would later become a major Boston photographer; nothing more is known about W. M. Weston or Gerrould & Smith.<sup>35</sup>

\* A Caveat: The studios cited above are drawn from listings in city directories, supplemented by newspaper advertisements, tax records, identified images, and other sources. Counts should not be seen as finite as unknown studios still come to light, and emerging information more accurately defines specific dates of activity. While Boston, like other large cities, had fewer traveling photographers than rural towns and villages, they did exist, especially in the early years. In addition, the larger cities drew those who entered the profession to test the economic waters, and when found lacking, moved on to other towns or other professions. Neither the itinerant photographer nor the short-timer left much of a modern trace. Even reasonably established photographers did not always take listings in the business directories; even fewer advertised in newspapers, relying on word-of-mouth or walk-by traffic to survive — certainly possible in a small, compact city like Boston.

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Sometime before the spring of 1842, Sydney returned to Boston and on June 12<sup>th</sup> wrote to Burleigh, describing several of his occupations, which, given the shifting New England economy, was a common occurrence for many of his generation.

*"I fare well enough;" as the mouse said when borrowing in a cheese, how fare you? My name is Sydney Southworth, A sojourner on the Planet Earth: I am a carriage maker; that is to say, "so to speak," I spend my sunny hours in a carpenter's shop where two of us carry on several kinds of business; such as building all sorts of wooden ware except navel vessels; neuologising, phrenologising, taking boarders, &c.*

[He continues with an exceptionally long treatise on philosophy and religion but reveals little of his trip to the West Indies, except to say, without explanation:] *Had I died in Jamaica there would have been no cause of complaint, because I violated the laws of*

*nature in going there, Nor did I have a right to desire death, as I did, to get rid of enduring life; ....*

*[And a year later, on June 3, 1843:] When I was in Jamaica I used to go and stand along on a rock where the billows smashed their heads into foam, thundering out their pain in growling moans, and make a speech till I was too hoarse to talk loud enough to hear myself; and the day I left the missionaries, in the mountains, I went out and stood on one of the numerous boulders among which the ugly rivers dashed ocean-ward, and bade farewell to those mountains and valleys. I thought of you then; but I little expected to ever see you, or my New England ~~home~~ ....*

The optimism that tried to emerge in his December 1840 and September 1841 letters had apparently evaporated, and Sydney returned to his pattern of peripatetic wandering and self-doubt. The June 1842 letter continued:

*As to news—let's see. I know not as there are any worth revealing. My health was never apparently better. I live on a simple vegetable diet, only I surfeit [overindulge] too much; work from ten to twelve hours daily, and have little time for study. I think, some of going to Maine to work in the course of a month, if things come round right. Otherwise I shall probably work out at haying. I am resolved to first at something till I get even with the world any how. What I should do next winter is a query ....*

*Literary matters are dull now-a-days with me; I have started a series of papers in which I insert my stuff. I have gotten off three letters about my late tour, &c. Will you send something; sonnets would be acceptable. ... I received a package of the Wampanoag<sup>36</sup> the other day, with proposals to act as traveling agent for it. and the Mechanic, a book of J. H. W's, and other publications she has in contemplation to publish soon.<sup>37</sup> but I am good for nothing at such business—nor scarcely anything else. I would to be something, but a shrub oak can never become a large tree, cultivate it as you will. I want to go into something permanent, be settled, and not dog round as I always have.*

There is one section of Sydney's next letter to Burleigh on July 12, 1842, that would have great significance in his future:

*Marriage—An unnecessary ceremony of words over a couple of human beings, on the strength of which they live together and call themselves, husband and wife. This often takes place when the parties are uncongenial as oil and water. They are not united; only come in contact; and a [illegible] repulsiveness existing between them, forever prevents any mingling of soul, and makes life intolerable. This kind of matrimony is generally betrayed when the ardor[?] of the animal feeling is at its highest pitch. People should treat this subject more philosophically and with more seriousness. Half of these "marriages" are not such in reality. Marriage is a congenial mingling of two harmonious souls, brought together by the mutual attraction of pure philosophical, virtuous love. It needs no outward ceremony to consummate it, it can only take place by the combined consent of both parties, as they agree before God to be one for life.*

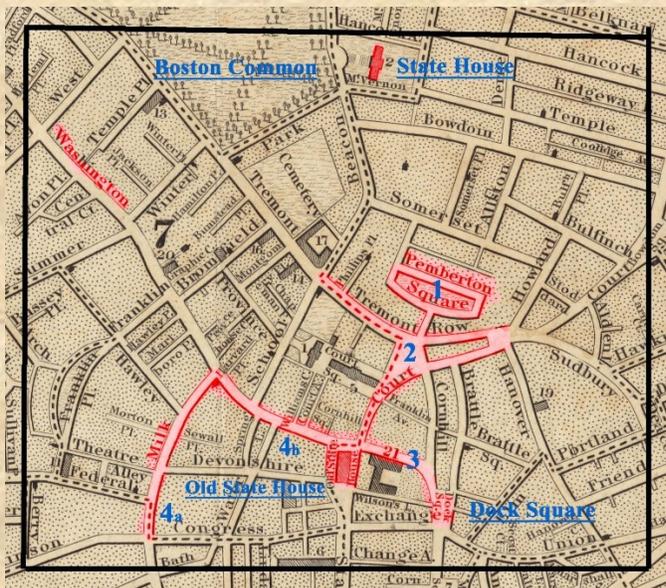
By November 1842, Sydney had once again left Boston and was now living in South Woburn, Massachusetts.<sup>38</sup> His occupation there is not known.

Much of a very long letter to Burleigh, started on January 23, 1843, and ending February 3, is a sympathetic elegy on the death of Ellen Byrne, a close friend of Burleigh's.<sup>39</sup> However, Sydney also revealed a recent personal event of some sadness:

*Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>.—Well, I have had no opportunity to finish this till now .... I will tell you (silence.) that since I wrote the above [the letter has three separately dated sections], I have started a long, reverie—you know that the domestic is strong in me, and that it is ever roaming about this firmament in search of a kindred star;—well, I thought I had found one in Lydia—; but the attraction on my side is insufficient;—you may imagine the rest. Do not think I am becoming mad; I stand under it like a philosopher; even now I see it is best as it is, though I once would have made any sacrifice to make it otherwise. I can now say sincerely I am glad the matter has terminated as it has. It is trying to a man's philosophy to love, as I have loved, unsuccessfully ....*

On May 1, 1843, Sydney told Burleigh that he was back in Boston and working for Albert Southworth:

*So you see I have changed my locations again; change, change; I am passed about by my circumstances, or change is in the hands of jockeying yankees, or a class of gamblers. I am now working for Southworth and Co., daguerreotyping—probably shall remain during this season, if business is good [emphasis added]. (Figure 5)*



**FIGURE 5.** Plan of the City of Boston with approximate locations of the four photographic studios confirmed active in 1843. Boston maps of this period did not show street numbers, and the city's street numbering system did not follow modern conventions. The locations here are interpolated from a street index printed in Stimpson's 1843 Boston Directory. See numbering key below for specific studio names and addresses. Map created by George Boynton; publisher, S. N. Dickinson, Boston, 1844. (Map reproduction courtesy of the Normal B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.)

### 1843 Key to Figure 5 map

The following table provides the locations for four photographic studios confirmed active in 1843 and two possibly active.

Location on Map	Studio Name & Address	Confirmed Dates of Activity in 1843*
1	<b>Photographic Institute</b> (John Plumbe, Jr.) Over Whig Reading Room, 75 Court Street, Pemberton Square	entire year & beyond
2	<b>A. S. Southworth &amp; Company</b> 5 ½ Tremont Row	entire year & beyond
3	<b>Asa White</b> 20 Washington Street	by July to end of year & beyond
4a & 4b	<b>Charles E. Hale</b> 20 Milk Street <i>then</i> 109 Washington Street	relocated from 36 Washington Street by March 25, 1842; moved to 109 Washington Street by January 1844, possibly earlier
	<b>Possibly active in 1843 (not marked on map)</b>	
	<b>Alexander G. Nye</b> 62 Milk Street	by January 1844, possibly earlier
	<b>Horatio H. Long</b> 96 Washington Street	by January 1844, possibly earlier

\* See caveat on 1841 Key to Boston Map.

Notably, Sydney’s use of the term “daguerreotyping” implies an active participation in the process as opposed to other studio functions—for instance, office work, Southworth’s supply business, maintenance, etc. (In his letter to Burleigh the following month, Sydney wrote, “I took a picture for Walter, as you requested.”)<sup>40</sup>

At this time, Southworth & Company was under the direction of Albert and his soon-to-leave partner Joseph Pennell. Sydney’s specific role in studio operations is not known, but in an 1853 advertisement, Southworth made it quite clear that he and his then partner, Hawes, were solely responsible for posing their clients: “One of our partners is a practical Artist, and as we never employ ‘Operators,’ customers receive our personal attention.”<sup>41</sup>

It is quite possible, then, that Sydney was principally involved in the backroom aspects of making a daguerreotype: preparing the plate, developing and fixing it after exposure, mounting it in a preserver and in a case chosen by the customer.

The second phrase in Sydney’s May 1<sup>st</sup> letter—“probably shall remain during this season, if business is good”—indicates clearly that he sees his time in Boston as another waystation on his quest for a more fulfilled life. Later in the letter, he wrote of his disappointment with social justice organizations, in which he had been quite active, and the lure of utopian movements, which were expanding at this time:

*These anniversaries and conventions are worth but little after all—I am nearly sick of them.<sup>42</sup> I am thinking much nowadays about association and community [emphasis added], &c. though it has long been an interesting subject with me. I intend, if I do not wreck, to enter something of the kind as soon as next spring. I am in the fire now, and if I*

*jump I may fall into the frying pan—I am as badly off as I can be now .... I am nothing but a particle of dust in the universe .... There have been times within a very few months when I wished a blast of annihilation would sweep me away.*

A month later, Sydney told Burleigh of his growing frustration at Southworth & Company.

June 3, 1843, in reference to “Walter” cited above: *He is a glorious fellow. Contrast him with my daily associates—O it makes me sick to look at it.*<sup>43</sup>

June 26, 1843: *I have had some good times with Wattles<sup>44</sup>—I never came into contact with a spirit I liked so well on such short acquaintance. When I spend a season with such souls, and then return to my daily routine, a vacuum is created within which the events and appurtenances of everyday life altogether fail to fill. My daily associates are hardly endurable ....*<sup>45</sup>

The June 3<sup>rd</sup> letter also affirmed Sydney’s increasing engagement with the values of the communitarian movement, which Perplexity.ai defines as:

*The communitarian movement in the United States during the 1840s was a wave of utopian experiments focused on communal living, social reform, and collective economic cooperation. inspired largely by European thinkers like Charles Fourier and Robert Owen. These communities, often referred to as "colonies" or "phalanxes," sought to de-emphasize individualism in favor of shared labor, property, and daily life, aiming to model alternatives to what they saw as corrupt economic, social, and political systems.*

Sydney wrote:

*This trading and propertyship is not so easy in matters of mind and soul, as in [word illegible] but it should exist in neither case. I believe man has no right to retain anything in his possession, (his owning it is not to be admitted at all,) which another wants more than himself.*

And he later described a spirited two-evening meeting on the issue of property whose principal speakers included J. O. Wattles, J. A. Collins, N. H. Whitney, and Adin Ballou,<sup>46</sup> after which Sydney stated:

*It is every man's duty to produce just enough for the supply of his own wants; if one does more or less he violates the laws of his being. ... You know how I have for a long time been sick of this money getting, and almost everything in society; and it is growing upon me. If I was not in debt I would not stay in this city another day .... O it is so groveling, so soul damning, to conform to the ordinary methods of getting a living, that I would rather die than "get" such a "living." I am sure I now see the remedy for all these evils in society, and it is community. I have been thinking much about this subject for a year; and now I am ready to go into it. ... I have faith in the principle of community; and I predict for it triumphant success.*

## Wandering Once Again and “At Home,”—Briefly

By late October 1843, Sydney had left Boston and appeared to be teaching school in South Attleboro, Massachusetts [then spelled Attleborough]. In a letter to Burleigh dated October 22<sup>nd</sup>, he wrote:

*Yesterday, having no school, I repaired to my pedagogic palace at the usual hour for the purpose of reading or writing; but could do neither .... [Much later in the letter, he writes:] I am in the fog at sea—my crazy vessel is surrounded by icebergs, breakers, sand banks, maelstroms, &c. I cannot move without being in great danger of wrecking myself, or running afoul of somebody else of more consequence than myself. But I cannot lie to; for a chance of destiny is blowing a gale.*

[In another section of this letter, dated October 23<sup>rd</sup>:] *I must make some move of that kind in the spring. I am now entirely out of debt; and if I have good luck I shall find myself the first of February, afloat with twenty five or thirty dollars worth of filthy lucre.*

Sydney did not wait until spring to act. His next letter to Burleigh, dated December 1843 (“At home, Northampton Community”), reveals that he has joined this Massachusetts communitarian association (**Figure 6**)—and is *almost* at peace:

*I don't know as I have anything to say except that I am here, enjoying myself quite well; have enough of victuals, raiment, work, &c. to make the physical comfortable; and good society to gratify the social; and many resources for the gratification of the mental and moral. ... I haven't been in a place for eight years which seemed so much like home; **and this is not the home I wish** [emphasis added]. You know something of my ideas of a community. I like this better than I expected to; there are many things and persons quite enduring, and somewhat pleasant. **I think I shall stop here until something better starts up** [emphasis added]. I hope much for this association; though it is now rather unpromising to one who can see only the now.<sup>47</sup>*



**Figure 6.** View of the Mill Pond at the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, date and photographer unknown. (David Ruggles Center for History and Education, Florence, Massachusetts. My thanks to Kim Gerould and Steve Strimer for providing this illustration.)

The Northampton community, officially known as the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, was founded on April 8, 1842; Sydney joined formerly as a probationary candidate

on January 27, 1844.<sup>48</sup> His sense of the community's fragility was well placed. The association had a debt of \$25,000, and Sidney worried that stock might have to be sold to people outside the community to meet its obligations, in direct opposition to his views about property and ownership. Unable to manage this debt, the Northampton Association was forced to close in November 1846.<sup>49</sup> As described in Christopher Clark's *The Communitarian Moment*:

*The fifty-nine or so [U.S.] communities founded between 1840 and 1849 lasted, on the average, two years or less. The Northampton community endured longer than forty-three of them. Over its four-and-a-half years at least 240 men, women, and children lived at the community as members, probationary members, boarders, scholars, or employees, though the maximum resident at any one time never exceeded 120.*<sup>50</sup>

As the communitarian movement in the United States and the Northampton Association are well documented,<sup>51</sup> this essay only sketches the context of Sydney's involvement and eventual removal, although it continues to draw heavily on his letters to Burleigh. In his next letter, dated January 12, 1844 ("Promised Land Northampton"), Sydney wrote of options offered and decisions made, at least for the short term:

*That long expected letter from our brother, J. O. Wattles has arrived. He has not joined Collins as we feared.<sup>52</sup> He is in Ohio at work for the "same good cause" as he calls it. He urges me to go out there. He says there is a field opening there worthy the devotions of a great soul. Two communities are now out selecting locations, one in Ohio and one in Indiana; and are to meet and make arrangements this winter, and intend to commence operation in the spring. [In an echo back to Sydney's concern with Northampton:] He says "Never join a community which has not love enough to trust each other without buying and selling, keeping daybooks, yardsticks, and balances." ...*

*During the summer and fall I intended to go there in the spring, if there should be a fair prospect, as there now seems to be. But I don't know now whether I shall stay here or go there. There is much in favor of both. The longer I stay here the more it seems to be my place; and I don't know but I shall propose myself tomorrow evening for permanent membership. (I don't know as I should be admitted.) ... [Later, in a section of the letter dated January 14, Sydney stated:] **I am becoming more and more convinced that my place is here** [emphasis added].*

In his next letter, Sydney was even more optimistic about his future in the Northampton community, yet the perpetual undercurrents of his self-doubt continued:

*To G. S. Burleigh from Sydney Southworth.*

*Brothers, and Sisters—how much more of meaning there is in these two words, to me, than ever before. ... Since I have been here the social part of my being has expanded more than I ever dreamed it could. ... My atmosphere is different. ... I now see how part of my being has run to waste by being so long without loving or being loved. I now see more of its living reality, what I have heretofore only seen through the medium of mere cold philosophy. ... You know I have been longing for a community. I think I have now found my home; yet my nature is so disturbed that I may be mistaken, But I will use it as*

*such until I find out it is not so. [The letter is later signed] Promised Land, Northampton, Mafs [Massachusetts], February 11, 1844.*

Sydney's use of "love" here reveals his emerging embrace of the Northampton community; events soon intensified its meaning. On April 10, 1844, two abolitionist sisters from Bath, Maine, entered the association: Lucy Hayden and her younger sister Harriet. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Harriet was formally admitted to the community, and on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, she and Sydney quietly exchanged marriage vows without benefit of clergy or a justice of the peace—an act which punctured even Northampton's quite flexible boundaries:<sup>53</sup>

*Sidney [sic] Southworth and Harriet Hayden held no ceremony at all in July 1844; they merely gave written notice to the secretary, which he entered in the association's records, "that they had consummated the marriage relation, having found each other of one spirit."*<sup>54</sup>

As noted earlier, the communitarian movement sought egalitarian alternatives to what it viewed as a flawed social order. Two enduring concerns were equality between men and women and the traditional institution of marriage, which often placed women in a subservient role. Most communities, however, sought a balance that would not bring increased uneasiness from the outside world about the social structures they were trying to create. When it came to marriage, Northampton tread softly. In *The Communitarian Moment*, Christopher Clark cited two such examples:

*Nonsectarian, nonresistance principles and avoidance of superfluity also marked ... marriages and funerals. Hall Judd and Frances Birge married in June 1842 with exemplary simplicity. A justice of the peace, Oliver Warren, waited in the front room in Hall's father's house in Northampton. Judd and Birge arrived, "in their common dress," accompanied by George Benson.<sup>55</sup> Hall's father and three others "happened to be present," but his mother "was very busy sweeping, &c. and did not come into the room." The couple sat, Warner "obtained from each a promise to perform their conjugal duties" and pronounced them husband and wife." The ceremony was over in about a minute." ... George Ashley's marriage to Eliza Forward at the community one Sunday two years later took longer .... Members gathered under the famous pine tree. In due course a justice of the peace, "in the briefest way," obtained the couple's pledge of fidelity and pronounced them legally married, but not before George Benson had given a lengthy address on the duties of husband and wife, explaining (in nonresistant terms) that marriage was "an institution of heaven," with which no human action could meddle, and in which the magistrate had no real part to play.<sup>56</sup>*

At Northampton, discussion and debate about marriage, its manner and meaning, rights and responsibilities, were frequent topics, and Sydney's views of organized religion and marriage seem well known. In a June 16, 1844, letter to her husband James, Dolly Stetson<sup>57</sup> recounted the following (note: spelling and grammar in all the Stetson letters quoted here are as written):

*... I see by your last letter that your mind is much exercised about the stand this Association intended to take upon the marriage question I have heard but little said upon*

*the subject they had a discussion one Sunday afternoon but I was not present I questioned Sydney about his views understanding that he took what they called the no marriage side. He said that he did consider marriage a sacred institution that a man or woman could be married but once, that those that were holden together merely by fear of legal punishment were not married in the highest sense—but he considered legal restraint necessary for those who know no higher bond of union—<sup>58</sup>*

Sydney apparently felt he understood this “higher bond” (see the previous excerpts from his letters of May 10, 1840, and July 12, 1841) and that the association would accept the construct of his marriage to Harriet. He was terribly mistaken.

In a July 26<sup>th</sup> letter, Dolly Stetson responded to her husband’s question about whether the “marriage question had been settled:”

*I don't know as it has been settled in any way or even discussed. ... Lucy Hayden returned from Bath the day you left—She sayed that she felt very unhappy ever since she had received Harriets letter and did not know what to make of it—but when she returned home and found how the matter was she sayed that she considered them engaged and nothing more—she says that as long as they do not live together as man and wife they have not sinned but she thinks they have acted foolishly—Lucy is not willing to go to Ohio with them so it was indefinitely postponed. [Sydney, Harriet, and Lucy had apparently made plans to join or at least visit Wattle’s Ohio community, in contrast to Sydney’s letter of January 12, 1844, cited earlier.]*

*David Ruggles<sup>59</sup> told them the other day that he knew from the opinions he had heard expressed by a great many that they could never be admitted here as members and that they had better go while the weather was warm and not wait until fall when Sydney’s [probationary] year was up. that set them in motion again to go but about this time Harriet was taken rising blood from her lungs [tuberculosis] and has raised more or less every day since —I do not know how the matter will end ....<sup>60</sup>*

Sydney’s long-time friend George Burleigh must have learned of Sydney’s situation and had written to him. Both Sydney and Harriet respond in a letter dated July 30, 1844:

*... thy letter was a gospel to ~~me~~ us, we have so little sympathy, and even tolerance. It strengthened us in what we were already established in. ... We can stand though all the world is against us; but if some will stand by us we can sustain ourselves easier. Harriet’s friends are all against her, except a few who are here. They say many harsh things to her, but she is getting to hear it as Jesus bore all advises [?] of a similar kind. As for me, thee knows I couldn't care if I wished to. We shall not be tolerated here after our year's membership expires, if we should wish to stay. We have not yet commenced living together as married people generally do; and the moment we do that, a storm will come to which the other was "but a drop before a more plentiful shower." That we can face as unmoved as Mt. Washington endures the [illegible] storms. But we shall not furnish them with the occasion; for I am going to start for Ohio next week Monday and*

*she will go in the fall. She has more been associated here, more than I unqualifiedly. ... But I have never felt deeply, and without an effort that this was my home. ...*

*I want you to send my manuscript books to the care of Thomas Hill, 2 1/2 Hanover Street, Boston, by express, and they will come to Harriet. ... [Sydney signs off, and Harriet continues the letter:]*

*Dear Brother George,*

*My whole soul giveth thee a sister's blessing for thy good letter. ... When, in a cause we are convinced is right, we are opposed with severity by some, entreated with tears of affection by others, so much exertion is required to maintain our position .... And though I have found the blasts of opposition hard to face and endure, I feel they have all been blessings to me, for they have revealed sources of strength within, of which I was before unconscious. When a few weeks ago, Sydney proposed going to Ohio alone, I could not endure the idea—now, though it is far as ever from my wishes, it is less painful—I see it to be necessary, and can submit—the firm belief that we shall be soon reunited in Prairie Home [community], or in the spiritual world, sustains me. ... I do not like the idea of his going all alone, for his health is in a poor state. [The letter is signed] Thy sister Harriet [and on the following page,] Sydney wishes me to copy the following from my Idea Cage. [Some of her spiritual/philosophical writings follow and the address panel states,] Post Master, do not read this.*

In an apparent change of plans, an August 4, 1844, letter from Almira Stetson to her father, James, reported that Sydney, Harriet, and her sister Lucy were all leaving for Ohio in two weeks. This was confirmed in an August 7<sup>th</sup> letter to James from his friend Giles B. Stebbins, who added:

*I think the marriage discussion has done good, and will put a stop to any farther proceedings like those of Sydney and Harriet. On the whole I do think your people here are growing more rational, and nearer what I think is right.<sup>61</sup>*

### **After Northampton**

The Southworths left the Northampton community to join Sydney's friend John Otis Wattles in Ohio.<sup>62</sup> Like Sydney, Wattles was an ardent abolitionist and, "... influenced by the era's reformist spirit, was deeply involved in a range of movements, including abolitionism, women's suffrage, and diet reform." He was a principal figure in creating the Prairie Home Community, a recently established utopian society in Logan County, which sought "... to create a haven from the perceived greed and inequality of mainstream society, seeking to model a new, harmonious social order based on cooperation and shared values."<sup>63</sup> It was a haven for Sydney and Harriet as well, but like so many of Sydney's endeavors, short-lived.

Prairie Home quickly attracted 130 members but failed before the end of its first year, only a few months after the Southworths arrived.<sup>64</sup> Nothing is currently known about their activities there, but in a November 4, 1844, letter, Dolly Stetson of the Northampton Association wrote:

*And first of all news has arrived that the community at Prairie Home is blown up entirely—they found themselves unable to meet their payments and the former proprietors would not trust them.*

*Sidney Southworth and Harriet have obtained a situation as teachers in a family .... [location not cited].<sup>65</sup>*

Likewise, there is no currently known information about Sydney and Harriet in the six months that follow the November letter, but on May 22, 1845, Dolly Stetson wrote that while the Northampton Association was experiencing its own financial issues, internal tensions, and declining enrollment, Sydney and Harriet had returned:<sup>66</sup>

*What ever we must do we must do soon or decide to do soon—it is said that the factory must be emptied by the first September—Mr. Mack's family lieve in July we are to have no more schools after June. ... and I know not but all in the house lieve with Mr. Mack or before Sydney and Harriet have returned right glad I think to find a shelter over their heads. Harriet is very low in consumption and Sydney has had the chills and fever hold of him and looks miserable. They are at the Macks. Sydney dined here the other day and went into the consumption of Fish grease and butter at a great rate—<sup>67</sup>*

[And then, the inevitable, Dolly wrote on June 19, 1845:] *Harriet Hayden died last Saturday [June 14, 1845] and was buried the night before last by moonlight I did not go to the funeral myself but those that were there said the severcis at the house were very appropriate and the burial very solem and impressive .... Sydney is very much out of health and looks as if he would follow her to the spirit land soon—<sup>68</sup>*

Sydney once again left Northampton and before September was staying with transcendentalist Bronson Alcott and his family in Concord, Massachusetts. In describing Hillside, the Bronson residence, and drawing on letters by Alcott's wife, Abigail, to her brother Samuel Joseph May, historian Robert Ronsheim wrote:

*Hillside would have been crowded by August unless bedrooms had been added. In addition to the six Alcotts, there were Miss Ford, Sidney Southworth, Charles Lane and son, and in September, a George Leach arrived.<sup>69</sup>*

In his letters, Sydney never mentioned the Alcotts, but finding him at Hillside after Harriet's death is not surprising. The Transcendentalists and the social reform movements, so much a part of Sydney's life, shared many common values. More important, Samuel May had worked closely with William and Charles Calistus Burleigh, George Burleigh's older brothers, during his time as a Unitarian minister in Brooklyn, Connecticut.<sup>70</sup>

Sydney soon left Concord, and in his short and last known letter to George Burleigh, dated September 22, 1845 ("Boston"):

*... I am packing up to go tomorrow to South Attleborough, to take charge of a small backwoods school for a time. [Sydney had likely taught in South Attleborough before; see*

his October 22, 1843, letter.] *I don't know as I shall be able to do a thing at it—it is a false position. I have lost almost all disposition to do anything nowadays.* [But it appears he may have been actually considering a return to the Northampton Association.] .... *W. B. thinks rather unfavorably of going to Northampton. ... I send you two of my manuscript books for you to look over. You may send them to the Office at Providence, or bring them at the time of the R. I meeting. I shall be only six miles from P.* [Signed] *Cyd South.*

By March 1846, Sydney was back in Boston, where he wrote a scathing condemnation of Boston theatre for the periodical *The Friend of Virtue*:

*I spent the evening at the National Theatre, in company with some friends. ... The more I visit the theatre, the less I am inclined to go. ... In the intermission one of the friends and I went up to the famous—in-famous—“third row,” where men and women who have abandoned themselves to the most loathsome of all vices, frequent.<sup>71</sup> I had before heard reports of this place; but I saw degradation I had not dreamed of .... I resolved to spend a whole evening there, to see the character of the place; not to see the play. I spoke of it and my design to Mrs. L. when she wished to accompany me; which proposition I gladly accepted.*

The article continues with a curious mix of moral indignation, voyeurism, self-loathing, and misogyny. The entire article can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Sydney's movements now became more difficult to trace. June 1847 found him still engaged in the communitarian movement as a member of both the Boston Religious Union of Associationists and the Fourierist American Union of Associationists.<sup>72</sup> In September of that year, the Massachusetts Mechanic Charitable Association's annual fair reported that a Sidney Southworth (note spelling) exhibited “4 frames containing specimens of sea flowers.” Whether this is Sydney cannot be confirmed.

By April 26, 1848, Sydney appears to have reached another low point in his life, posting the following plea in Boston's *The Daily Chronotype*:

**TO LET** — *A quantity of human brains and sinews, which contain some energy; now idle. The proprietor wants a chance to employ them in something useful to himself and the world. He is destitute of bread, and all chances to earn or raise it. Address, immediately, through the Post Office.—SYDNEY SOUTHWORTH.<sup>73</sup>*

By late 1848, his prospects had improved, and between October 1848 and March 1849, he published four articles and six short marginal fillers under the name Charles Worth in *The Univercoelum and Spiritual Philosopher*<sup>74</sup> (see [Appendix B](#) for an overview of their content). After March 1849, Sydney goes absent for a year, as noted in *The Univercoelum*: “By the way, we hope our friend, CHARLES WORTH, has not entirely forgotten us.”<sup>75</sup>

Late in the spring of 1850, ever restless and now apparently on better financial footing, Sydney left for California, traveling by land over the Isthmus of Panama rather than sailing around Cape Horn. While saving some two months of travel, it was a difficult and dangerous journey but

increasingly popular after 1848 in the rush to the gold fields of California.<sup>76</sup> It is not known whether Sydney sought gold, as did his former employer, Albert Southworth, a year before<sup>77</sup> or sanctuary in one of the utopian communities that had formed in the West.

The journey from Boston to San Francisco could take between one or two months, depending on conditions. Sydney's first leg would be to sail to the east coast of Panama and the mouth of the Chagres River. From there, jungle travel by dugout canoe, barge, mule, or foot moved as far west as possible, further when the river conditions allowed.<sup>78</sup> This passage could take between four to eight days, the last portion of the route often by land, ending in Panama City on the Pacific coast. From there Sydney boarded the brig *Gulnare* for California—but fell ill and died at age 32. Months later the death listings in *Boston Daily Atlas* noted only,

***On board brig, Gulnare, at sea, July 22d, Mr. Sidney Southworth, of Boston.***<sup>79</sup>

### **Coda**

Despite the cold brevity of the Boston notice, the brig *Gulnare* and Sydney are remembered in detail elsewhere. Disease was common in the Isthmus land crossing and especially in cities on the Pacific coast, exacerbated by the influx of those seeking riches in California. Often referred to as “Panama Fever,” there was a wide range of illnesses, frequently cholera. Crowded and often poorly maintained ships moving people to the gold fields spread these diseases rapidly<sup>80</sup>—the *Gulnare* was one of these.

***The Brig Gulnare—Great Sufferings and Mortality among her Passengers, &c.***  
*[The following letter has been handed to us for publication by the gentleman to whom it was addressed:]*  
*San Francisco, Cal. Sunday, Nov. 10, 1850.*

*I will endeavor to give you a history of our friend C. B. Randall so far as is known since I left him at the Isthmus, at which time I wrote you. He left Panama on the 2d day of July in the brig Gulnare for this port direct. When one day out, the passengers, about one hundred and forty in number, were put on short allowances. The Captain was inefficient and the passengers, in view of small quantity and the bad quality of provisions, were soon in a state little short of mutiny. Sickness, as might have been expected, soon ensued, and as the vessel was a slow sailer it soon became evident that they must seek some near port for supplies. They therefore sailed for the port of Acapulco. Two physicians (passengers) were on board, one of whom died on the passage from Panama, and the other in port at Acapulco. On the arrival at that port they had lost but one passenger, the physician above mentioned. The vessel lay in port about three weeks, during which time some thirty more are reported to have died, some of them of cholera, then very fatal at Acapulco, but most of them by fever and sickness induced by the bad condition of the vessel and provisions.*

*[The preceding is an excerpt from an article on the *Gulnare* that appeared in the *New-York Daily Tribune* on January 11, 1851; see [Appendix C](#) for the full article.]*

While Sydney was not named in the *Tribune* article, the *Gulnare* leaving Panama City on July 2 fits the timeline of his death on July 22. Both the *Boston Atlas* and *The Sacramento Transcript*

cited this date, the *Gulnare*, and reported Sydney died at sea,<sup>81</sup> but it is far more likely he died while the *Gulnare* was stranded in Acapulco. Perplexity.ai reports the average sailing time between Panama City and Acapulco was 10 days on a steamer, longer on a sailing vessel. The *Tribune* article noted that the *Gulnare* left Panama City on July 2, was “a slow sailer,” and, after it docked in Acapulco, remained there three weeks, during which time 30 passengers died. Allowing even 15 days for the *Gulnare* to reach Acapulco, it would arrive on July 17 and not leave until 21 days later, well beyond the date Sydney died.

As for Sydney, *The Spirit Messenger* published a poem in his memory on December 21, 1850. The closing stanza reflects Sydney’s letters—and closure to a restless life

[Letter to George Burleigh, May 10, 1840:] *I move about from one place to another like a log on the bosom of the deep, tossed about by circumstances.*

[Letter to George Burleigh, June 3, 1843:] *When I was in Jamaica I used to go and stand along on a rock where the billows smashed their heads into foam, thundering out their pain in growling moans, and make a speech till I was too hoarse to talk loud enough to hear myself; and the day I left the missionaries, in the mountains, I went out and stood on one of the numerous boulders among which the ugly rivers dashed ocean-ward, and bade farewell to those mountains and valleys. I thought of you then; but I little expected to ever see you, or my New England.*

[Letter to George Burleigh, October 22, 1843:] *I am in the fog at sea—my crazy vessel is surrounded by icebergs, breakers, sand banks, maelstroms, &c. I cannot move without being in great danger of wrecking myself, or running afoul of somebody else of more consequence than myself. But I cannot lie to; for a chance of destiny is blowing a gale.*

*A TRIBUTE, by S. H. Lloyd*

*To the memory of my friend, Sydney Southworth, who died at sea,  
on board Brig Gulnare, bound to California.*

*Our hearts are hushed as now we go  
Where by his side the billows lave,  
And as all solemnly and slow  
They pillow him beneath the wave;  
And yet in faith we look above  
And listen not old ocean's moans,  
But follow him on wings of Love*

(The full poem is reprinted in [Appendix D.](#))

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<sup>1</sup> *Stimpson's Boston Directory* (Boston: Charles Simpson, July 1843), resident listing, p. 457.

<sup>2</sup> Summary from Perplexity.ai in response to the question, “What were the social, economic, political, and cultural conditions in Boston during the early 1840s?” Increased internet-search capabilities, and the even more recent introduction of AI, have greatly expanded the information available—with some serious caveats. While the use of OCR programs helps parse volumes of online material, the programs are not perfect, finding and yet often missing the same search term within a single document. AI cogently reports on volumes of diverse sources within minutes but sometimes confounds unrelated data.

<sup>3</sup> Polito, Ron, “The Emergence of Commercial Photography in Boston: 1840–1841,” in *The Daguerreian Annual 2006* (Pittsburg: The Daguerreian Society, 2006), pp. 168–169.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> The first known exhibition and demonstrations of the daguerreotype process in Boston.

<sup>6</sup> Howells, W. D., “Sketch of George Fuller’s Life,” in Josiah B. Millet, editor, *George Fuller: His Life and Works* (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, The Riverside Press, 1886), p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Confirmation of purchase from Howells, W. D., “Sketch of George Fuller’s Life,” p. 15. For information on A. Davis, see Polito, Ron, “The Emergence of Commercial Photography in Boston,” in *The Daguerreian Annual 2006* (Pittsburg: The Daguerreian Society, 2006), p. 151.

<sup>8</sup> Howells, W. D., “Sketch of George Fuller’s Life,” p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> As used here “established” means a new studio or change in ownership or partnership, not a change in location. These figures should be seen as reflective of available data, and not definitive. The summary numbers derive from my original analysis of studios listed in the 1993 *A Directory of Massachusetts Photographers* and adjusted here to reflect new information available. (*A Directory of Massachusetts Photographers: 1839–1900*, Picton Press, Camden, ME). An online version, without illustrations, is available at Internet Archive (archive.org) or at <https://openarchives.umb.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15774coll12/id/98/rec/1>. For more detailed information, on the development of early Boston photography, see the following: Polito, Ron, “The Emergence of Commercial Photography in Boston,” in *The Daguerreian Annual 2006* (Pittsburg: The Daguerreian Society, 2006); Polito, Ron, “Early Boston Photography: Charles E. & Luther Holman Hale—Brothers in the Art of Daguerre,” in *The Daguerreian Annual 2014* (Pittsburg: The Daguerreian Society, 2014). Note: some of the information reported in these two articles has been updated here, based on the author’s more recent research.

<sup>10</sup> My search for information about Sidney Southworth has been elusive, gathered slowly and sporadically since the late 1970s. I first noted his Boston directory listing in my 1980 edition of *A Directory of Boston Photographers: 1840–1900*.

<sup>11</sup> Until the late 1850s, the term “photographer” was used sparingly in the Boston city directories, often combined with “ambrotypist” to designate someone specializing in the increasingly popular cased-image alternative to the daguerreotype and paper photography, especially the carte de visite.

<sup>12</sup> Pennell was Southworth’s first partner beginning in Chicopee, Massachusetts, in 1840. They opened a daguerreian studio there and worked to refine the daguerreotype process and its equipment before moving to Boston in 1841. For more information on Pennell and his relationship with Southworth, see Moore, Charles Leroy, *Two*

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*Partners in Boston: The Careers and Daguerreian Artistry of Albert Southworth, Volume 1* [PhD dissertation] (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1975), pp. 26–40.

<sup>13</sup> Marcus Ormsbee operated a daguerreian studio in Boston during part of 1841–1842 before joining John Plumbe’s Daguerreian Gallery, where he was likely still employed when his name appeared in the resident section of the 1843 Boston city directory. By December 28, 1843, he had relocated to Portland, Maine, remaining there until his return to Boston in early 1851. Ormsbee first appears in the business section of the 1842 *Boston Almanac* under Daguerreotype Miniatures. His studio address, 62 Milk Street, had previously housed T. H. Darling’s daguerreian rooms until the late summer or early fall of 1841. Because the *Almanac* was issued in January 1842, with business information gathered months earlier, it is highly likely that Ormsbee began practicing photography in late 1841.

For Ormsbee’s employment at Plumbe’s, see Chris Steele, *Pioneer American Photographers, 1839–1860* (online at <https://pioneeramericanphotographers.com/2022/11/25/marcus-ormsbee/>). For a discussion of the early Boston use of the term “photographer” and Ormsbee’s place in that development, see “The Development of Paper Processes in Early Boston Photography,” *New England Journal of Photographic History*, Issue 183 (Photographic Historical Society of New England, 2025); and Ron Polito and Marcel Safier, “Simon Wing. The Early Days in New England,” *New England Journal of Photographic History*, Issue 180 (2022), Appendix A, “Early Days. Simon Wing / Albert Sands Southworth / Marcus Ormsbee,” pp. 94–97.

<sup>14</sup> Palmquist, Peter E., and Thomas R. Kailbourn, *Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary: 1840–1895* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 148.

<sup>15</sup> Steele, Chris, *Pioneer American Photographers, 1839–1860*, online at <https://pioneeramericanphotographers.com/tag/marsena-cannon>.

<sup>16</sup> The letters reside in the manuscript collection of the John Hay Library at Brown University and, to this author’s knowledge, have never been transcribed or published elsewhere. My thanks to the Hay Library and especially for the assistance of Laurie Rossi, Senior Library Expert-Manuscripts.

*George Shepard Burleigh (1821–1903) was an American writer and poet noted for his work before and after the Civil War. Born in Plainfield, Connecticut, and later residing in both Connecticut and Rhode Island, he was part of an activist family but carved his own niche in literature, rather than public oratory. Burleigh was associated with the Transcendentalist movement, and his early works gained attention for addressing reform, especially issues of gender, race, mental health, and abolition. [George was not as well-known as his two older brothers, Charles Calistus and William Henry.]*

*Burleigh’s career split distinctly between a politically-charged, reform-oriented phase and a later period characterized by more sentimental, less politically engaged poetry. His literary legacy resides in his nuanced, reformist, and sometimes biting verse and prose that reached a broad readership during the nineteenth century. (Perplexity.ai)*

<sup>17</sup> In several of his letters to Burleigh, Sydney included samples of his text and poetry. Six examples of long verse, written between November 1838 and April 1839 under the penname Rhymeus, are included in his letter of April 30, 1839. At times, he asked Burleigh to review his manuscripts and mentions work sent to publishers. Some of this work appeared in *Reformer* and Wall’s *Health Journal*, but these publications could not be located. The only currently accessible example of his work before his later years is “Apostrophe to Truth” in *Practical Christian*, December 23, 1843. The first two sentences of this short essay reflect Sydney’s abolitionist bent and provide a sense of his overall writing style: *O Truth! Let the universe behold thy final, successful conflict with Error; then the peans of an emancipated race shall fill all space like the mighty voices of the million ocean waves, when roused by the renovating spirit of the storm. Let thy march be onward like the comet in its track; as like lightning shot among the clouds at random; for wherever thy light can flash, there are clouds of ignorance, error and sin to be riven and dispelled.*

<sup>18</sup> Albert and Sydney were direct descendants of the Constant Southworth branch of the family. Constant was born in Leyden, Holland, in 1615 to Edward Southworth, then an exiled English Pilgrim, and Alice Carpenter Southworth. After Edward died, Alice left her children in her sister’s care and came to American in 1623; soon after,

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she married William Bradford, governor of the Pilgrim Colony in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Constant and his brother, Thomas, joined her in 1628.

Information for this section comes from several family genealogies (in which there are some variants in the information reported). Online from: Wikitree.com; the Internet Archive (archive.org): Webber, Samuel G., *A Genealogy of the Southworth's (Southards): Descendants of Constant Southworth With a Sketch of the Family in England* (Boston: The Fort Hill Press, 1905); Southworth, G. C., *Genealogy of the Southworth Family* (Grove City, PA: self-published, 1915), and from the New England Historical Genealogical Society library (americanancestors.org), *Southworths in England and America, 1189–1968*, compiled and arranged by Bess Miner Johnson, Orange, California, 1968.

<sup>19</sup> Webber, Samuel G., *A Genealogy of the Southworth's (Southards): Descendants of Constant Southworth With a Sketch of the Family in England* (Boston: The Fort Hill Press, 1905), pp. 261–262.

<sup>20</sup> *Vermont Vital Records 1790–1954* and *West Fairlee (Vermont) Birth Records 1857–1957* (scan of original entry) both record Sydney's birthplace as Wentworth, New Hampshire, some 25 miles east of West Fairlee. *Vermont, Births and Christenings, 1765–1908* records West Fairlee as his birthplace. Likely an error, the Webber genealogy (cited in endnotes 18 and 19) identifies Sydney's mother as Susan Jenkins, p. 227.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Sydney to George Shepard Burleigh, Plainfield, Connecticut, dated May 1, 1843 ("Boston").

<sup>22</sup> See *Explore the History of West Fairlee, Vermont, USA: Postcards, Stories, Ancestry, News, Travel, and Photos*: <https://greenerpasture.com/Places/Details/2710>.

<sup>23</sup> The 1830 federal census for Orange County, Vermont, has both Albert's and Sydney's families living there, along with other Southworth households: a total of three in West Fairlee, seven in Fairlee. The 1840 census has eight households, all in West Fairlee; Fairlee is not mentioned.

<sup>24</sup> Moore, Charles Leroy, *Two Partners in Boston: The Careers and Daguerreian Artistry of Albert Southworth, Volume 1* [PhD dissertation] (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1975), pp. 24–25. The location of Bradford Academy is not given; however, a Bradford Academy in Haverhill, Massachusetts, was founded in 1803, one of the earliest coeducational institutions in New England (wikipedia.org.). Dates for Southworth's drug store in 1839 and his daguerreian studio with Joseph Pennell by September 1840 from Sobieszek, Robert A. and Odette M. Appel, *The Spirit of Fact: The Daguerreotypes of Southworth and Hawes, 1843–1862* (Boston: David R. Godine; and Rochester, New York: The International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House, 1976), pp. xii–xiii.

<sup>25</sup> Vermont, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1732-2005. (FamilySearch.org)

<sup>26</sup> Sydney's second known letter to George Shepard Burleigh, Plainfield, Connecticut, was dated March 6, 1839 (Brooklyn, Connecticut). His first known letter to Burleigh was dated January 21 (also Brooklyn, Connecticut), but no year was given. Both letters are signed "A. Sydney Southworth." For possible reasons why Sydney moved to Brooklyn, see endnote 29.

<sup>27</sup> For more detail on Gouraud's time in Boston and Southworth's reaction, see Polito, Ron, "The Emergence of Commercial Photography in Boston," in *The Daguerreian Annual 2006* (Pittsburg: The Daguerreian Society, 2006), pp. 154–173.

<sup>28</sup> Grant Romer and Brian Wallis, editors, *Young America: The Daguerreotypes of Southworth & Hawes* (New York, NY: International Center of Photography; Rochester, NY: George Eastman House; Gottengen, Germany: Steidel, 2005), pp. 26–27; Southworth letter in the Southworth & Hawes manuscript collection, George Eastman House, Rochester, NY, box 7, item 51.

<sup>29</sup> Whether Sydney had been attending or teaching school in the Brooklyn area is not known, but he mentioned "leaving Plainfield" in a December 1840 letter. There were a number of public district schools and 4 academies: Brooklyn Academy in Brooklyn itself; Plainfield, 9 miles from Brooklyn; Windham Academy, 14 miles, and Woodstock Academy, 12 miles from Brooklyn. The Plainfield and Woodstock Academies were the most notable (Google Maps and Perplexity.ai). Only Woodstock still exists, but the academy's Bracken Memorial Library could

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not confirm that Sydney was there. In addition, a number of Sydney's extended family lived in the area, and one, Roger Southworth, had been associated with the early days of the Windham Academy, and George Burleigh's father, Rinaldo, had been a principal figure in both the Plainfield and Woodstock Academies. (Larned, Ellen D., *History of Windham County, Connecticut. Volume II. 1760–1880*. Self-published, printed by Charles Hamilton, Worcester, MA, 1880).

<sup>30</sup> Sydney's name appeared in the following issues of the *Liberator*: November 27, 1840; January 1, 1841; February 5, 1841; March 26, 1841; April 9, 1841; June 4, 1841; June 11, 1841; September 17, 1841; October 1, 1841, and October 15, 1841. Later, in the November 25, 1842, issue he appeared in a list of donors to the New England Non-Resistance Society. In these notices, variants of his given name were used: A. S. and A. Sydney in 1840, afterward just Sydney. Note: while OCR word searching is a marvelous tool, it is also problematic. The dates listed here were found by repeated searches of *Liberator* holdings on DigitalCommonwealth.com. Using "Southworth" as the search term, some dates appeared in all searches, while some appeared only in others.

<sup>31</sup> *The most prominent group called ultraists were the radical abolitionists, especially followers of William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison himself, with his newspaper The Liberator, was commonly described as an ultraist for his immediate and uncompromising call to end slavery.* (Perplexity.ai)

<sup>32</sup> Phrenology is the study of the shape and contours of the skull based on the belief they reveal mental faculties and character. (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*)

<sup>33</sup> Likely Joseph Southwick Walls of Worcester, Massachusetts, publisher of *The Reformer* periodical; see <https://archive.org/details/reformer00wall/mode/2up>. As noted in endnote 17, only one of Sydney's early writings has been found.

<sup>34</sup> *Boston's Daily Evening Transcript*, November 17, 1840. Sydney's name here is spelled, "Southwork," but corrected to "Southworth" in subsequent advertisements. Plumbe's activity at the Harrington Museum was advertised in the *Transcript* until May 8, 1841. After that and sporadically until December 1841, he advertised his "Photographic Institute" in the *Transcript* but did not give an address. However, a September 3, 1841, advertisement in the *Barre [Massachusetts] Gazette* indicated that Plumbe had "Removed to the Spacious Hall over the Whig Reading Room, Pemberton Square [75 Court Street, Boston]."

<sup>35</sup> *The Third Exhibition of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association*, September 20, 1841 (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin, 1841), pp. 87-100.

<sup>36</sup> Likely a journal out of Fall River, Massachusetts, *The Wampanoag, and Operatives' Journal, 1842–1843* (Library of Congress; see <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn94055551>).

<sup>37</sup> There were a number of 1840s publications with "Mechanic" in the title. Sydney's handwriting is difficult to read here, and no reference could be found to a publisher with the initials J. H. W, possibly T. H. W. or F. H. W.

<sup>38</sup> The November 25, 1842, issue of *The Liberator* noted that Sydney Southworth, of South Woburn, Massachusetts, donated 50 cents to the New England Non-Resistance Society.

<sup>39</sup> Ellen Byrne of Windham, Connecticut, died on December 27, 1842, at age 24, and was the daughter of John Byrne. (Perplexity.ai)

<sup>40</sup> Part of Sydney's June 3, 1843, letter to Burleigh.

<sup>41</sup> 1853 *Massachusetts Register*, advertising section, p. 326. Southworth expanded on this in a later address to National Photographic Association of the United States: *When my sitters come into the room I want to be acquainted with them. A card with their names on it would not suit me at all. I would take them by the hand, and relieve them of their drapery that they wish to lay off; make them comfortable; point them to the room where they can take care of and dress themselves as appropriately as they please; then I ask them into the light-room. I do not leave them always in the dark. I bring them into the light-room that their eyes may be accustomed to the light in which they are going to sit. You go around into the room, and show them the objects of interest; view their faces in different lights, and get familiar with their countenances, and endeavor to call out their ideas. Remember that expression is everything in a*

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*photograph. All else—the hair, jewelry, lace-work, drapery of dress, and attitude—are only aids to expression.* (Philadelphia Photographer, Volume 10, Issue 117, September 1873, pp. 433-434.)

<sup>42</sup> A month later, however, he stated: “We had a glorious Anti-Slavery convention last week ....” and described it in detail (Letter to Burleigh, June 3, 1843).

<sup>43</sup> Letter to Burleigh, June 3, 1843.

<sup>44</sup> John O. Wattles, a prominent figure in the communitarian society movement.

<sup>45</sup> Letter to Burleigh, June 26, 1843.

<sup>46</sup> John Otis Wattles, John Anderson Collins, N. H. Whitney, and Adin Ballou were all significant participants in the American communitarian movement of the 1840s, each associated with specific utopian communities or reformist currents. (Perplexity.ai)

<sup>47</sup> Sydney’s sense of the community’s fragility was prescient; unable to manage its debt, the Northampton Association closed in November 1846. Sheffield, Charles A., editor, *The History of Florence, Massachusetts* (Florence, MA: self-published, 1895), p. 101.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>50</sup> Clark, Christopher, *The Communitarian Moment: The Racial Challenge of the Northampton Association* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> The following sources are well worth consulting: Clark, Christopher, *The Communitarian Moment: The Racial Challenge of the Northampton Association* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1995); Clark, Christopher and Kerry W. Buckley, editors, *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843–1847* (Amherst, MA, and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), and Sheffield, Charles A., editor, *The History of Florence, Massachusetts* (Florence, MA: self-published, 1895). Also, *Historical Sketch of Florence* [MA], reprints of newspaper articles appearing in the *Hampshire Gazette and Northampton Courier*, November 1, 1858, the *Hampshire Gazette*, April 2, 1867, and the *Northampton Free Press*, May 9, 1862; a booklet was available in 2009 from Collective Copies (<http://www.collectivecopies.com>). Also see the *David Ruggles in Florence, Massachusetts* (<https://davidrugglesinflorence.blogspot.com>) blog entry titled “David Ruggles/Hannah Randall House, Florence, Massachusetts, Part Two.”

<sup>52</sup> John Anderson Collins (whom Sydney refers to in his May 1, 1843, letter) was a prominent American communitarian leader in the 1840s, closely associated with radical abolitionism and utopian socialism. Born in Vermont in 1810, Collins worked initially within Christian circles but soon embraced atheism and more radical social theories. He was a general agent and vice president of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, mentoring figures like Frederick Douglass and advocating for the abolition of slavery and the reorganization of society.

In 1843, Collins founded the Skaneateles Community in Mottville, New York, aiming to build a society rooted in the abolition of all privately held property and direct democratic principles. This experiment was influenced by Fourierist and Owenite socialist movements but distinguished itself by its commitment to atheism, free love, vegetarianism, and rejection of government authority. The community peaked at about 90 members and officially began operations in 1844 but dissolved in 1846, mainly due to internal divisions and waning enthusiasm for socialistic ideals.

Collins edited the periodical *The Communitist* and, after the failure of the Skaneateles Community, became disillusioned with communitarian doctrines, eventually renouncing them as misguided in both theory and practice. (Perplexity.ai)

<sup>53</sup> The dates of the Haydens’ arrival and Harriet’s marriage to Sydney are from Sheffield, Charles A., editor, *The History of Florence, Massachusetts*, pp.104. The date of her formal admission to the association is from Clark and

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Buckley, editors, *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843–1847*, p. 36. Once the marriage was known outside the community, it raised considerable and sustained interest, even well after the Northampton Association had closed. In 1862, the *Northampton Free Press* printed a lengthy, highly fictionalized sketch of Sydney and Harriet’s relationship, complete with imagined dialogue and setting events in 1842, two years before they occurred. *Harriet Hayden, A Story of Florence in the Days of the “Old Community,”* by “Richard”, was promoted in the May 9<sup>th</sup> issue and appeared on May 16<sup>th</sup> (see *Historical Sketch of Florence* [MA], cited in endnote 51.)

<sup>54</sup> Clark, Christopher, *The Communitarian Moment: The Racial Challenge of the Northampton Association*, p. 114.

<sup>55</sup> *George William Benson (1808–1879) was a prominent American Quaker abolitionist and social reformer. ... He is best known as one of the founders and leading figures of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry.* (Perplexity.ai)

<sup>56</sup> Clark, Christopher, *The Communitarian Moment: The Racial Challenge of the Northampton Association*, pp. 113–114.

<sup>57</sup> *James A. and Dolly W. Stetson were notable members of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry. ... Dolly played a significant role in community life, working in the Household Department where women received equal pay and voting rights, a radical practice for the era.* (Perplexity.ai)

<sup>58</sup> Clark, and Buckley, editors, *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843–1847*, p. 43.

<sup>59</sup> *David Ruggles was a notable Black abolitionist who became a member of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry. ... Ruggles joined the association when his health was in decline and his activism in New York City had begun to take a toll. In Florence, he participated not only in the anti-slavery cause but also in the Association’s unique communal living and its emphasis on progressive healthcare, particularly hydropathy or the “water cure,” which he later shared with other members. Despite near blindness and failing health, Ruggles continued his Underground Railroad work in the region, supporting fugitives from slavery and encouraging local Black and abolitionist activism.* (Perplexity.ai)

<sup>60</sup> Clark, and Buckley, editors, *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843–1847*, p. 48.

<sup>61</sup> Both the Stetson and Stebbins letters can be found in Clark and Buckley, editors, *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843–1847*, pp. 53, 56.

<sup>62</sup> Wattles was frequently mentioned in the excerpts from Syndy’s letters throughout this article.

<sup>63</sup> Information from Perplexity.ai.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Dolly Stetson to her husband, James, November 19, 1844, in Clark and Buckley, editors, *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843–1847*, p. 77.

<sup>66</sup> Information on the Northampton Association’s struggles to survive from Perplexity.ai. Charles A. Sheffield’s book cited in endnote 51 provides great detail about the association and its financial struggles.

<sup>67</sup> Dolly Stetson to her husband, James, May 22, 1845, in Clark and Buckley, editors, *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843–1847*, p. 114.

<sup>68</sup> Dolly Stetson to her husband, James, June 19, 1845, in Clark and Buckley, editors, *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843–1847*, p. 118. As noted in endnote 51, in 1862 the *Northampton Free Press* printed a highly fictionalized and melodramatic sketch of Sydney’s and Harriet’s relationship and her burial.

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<sup>69</sup> Ronsheim, Robert, *The Wayside: Home of Authors*. Minute Man National Historical Park, Historic Structure Report, Part II, Historical Data Section (Washington: U. S. Department of the Interior, February 29, 1968), p. 58. Ronsheim noted that “George Leach appears in Mrs. Alcott’s letter of September 19, 1845, to S. J. May.”

<sup>70</sup> *Memoir of Samuel Joseph May* (Boston: American Unitarian Society, 1876), pp. 148–150, and May, Samuel J., *Some Recollections of Our Antislavery Conflict* (Boston: Field, Osgood, & Company, 1869), pp. 62–66, five pages under the heading, “Charles C. Burleigh.”

<sup>71</sup> According to [www.fastslang.com/slang](http://www.fastslang.com/slang), the term referred to the back row of a theater or public space. “However, the meaning behind this term is not as innocent as it may seem at first glance. In fact, the Third Row is often associated with sexual activities and deviant behavior. It is said that people who sit in the Third Row are looking for sexual encounters or are there to watch others engage in sexual acts.”

<sup>72</sup> Sydney’s name appeared in the membership list for the Boston Union of Associationists (1846–1851) published in Appendix B of Delano, Sterling F., “The Boston Union of Associationists (1846–1851): Association Is to Me the Great Hope of the World,” in Joel Meyerson, editor, *Studies in the American Renaissance* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1998), pp. 5–40. Membership in the Fourierist American Union of Associationists from Clark, Christopher, *The Communitarian Moment: The Racial Challenge of the Northampton Association*, cited in endnote 50, p. 190.

<sup>73</sup> *The Daily Chronotype*, April 26, 1848 (Boston: White, Potter & Wright, 1846–1851). My thanks to Steve Strimer, David Ruggles Center for History and Education, Florence, Massachusetts, for alerting me to this notice.

<sup>74</sup> *The Univercælum and Spiritual Philosopher* (New York: An Association, 1849).

<sup>75</sup> In the “To Correspondents” section of *The Univercoelum*, April 28, 1849, p. 347.

<sup>76</sup> [Perplexity.ai](http://Perplexity.ai).

<sup>77</sup> Even though economic conditions in Boston at this time were very good and the daguerreotype firm of Southworth & Hawes quite successful, it was likely the lure of gold that moved Albert Southworth (and Sidney’s half-second cousin) to leave the business in the hands of his partner, Josiah Hawes, in March 1849. He was not very successful and returned to the partnership in 1851 (Romer, Grant and Brian Wallis, editors, *Young America: The Daguerreotypes of Southworth and Hawes*, pp. 33–36.)

<sup>78</sup> A railroad across the Isthmus was in the very early stages of construction at this time; when it opened in 1855, travel time was cut from 4–8 days to about four hours. ([Perplexity.ai](http://Perplexity.ai))

<sup>79</sup> The term “brig” most often refers to a two-masted sailing ship ([Perplexity.ai](http://Perplexity.ai)). Sydney’s death notice appeared in the *Boston Daily Atlas*, October 23, 1850.

<sup>80</sup> “Panama Fever” was a term widely used in the 19th century to describe the fevers—usually malaria, but sometimes yellow fever or cholera—that struck travelers crossing the hot, humid jungles of Panama. The region’s dense vegetation, stagnant water, and intense heat created an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes and the transmission of these diseases .... These fevers causing rapid onset of chills, fever, intense thirst, and pain. Travelers frequently died within days of contracting the illnesses. Cholera arrived in Panama in 1849 during a global pandemic, likely carried by steamships, and caused devastating epidemics among both locals and travelers. ([Perplexity.ai](http://Perplexity.ai))

<sup>81</sup> The date of Sydney’s death was reported in *The Sacramento Transcript*, September 11, 1850, as well as in the *Boston Daily Atlas*, October 23, 1850.

Appendix A. "The Third Row," article by Sydney Southworth, dated March 1846 and published in *The Friend of Virtue: A Semi-Monthly Periodical, Devoted to the Cause of Moral Purity* (Boston: North East Female Moral Reform Society, Volume IX, Number 10, May 15, 1846), pp.146-147. (Courtesy of the Boston Athenaeum.)

it would not be soon over, feeling life, in so much mental misery, insupportable, though death must introduce his soul to misery still more dreadful to endure.

The good missionary had exhausted all his powers of persuasion to win this poor sinner to the Savior, and despairing of his salvation, sat in the dark chamber of death, overpowered with his own emotions, and listening to the half uttered lamentations of the sufferer. The dying man would repeat his shameful story as if the repetition would relieve his heart, and as he mentioned one sin of peculiar guilt, he cried out, "That's the load that weighs on my conscience!" Rising suddenly and summoning his last energies, he threw off the clothes from the bed and gazing round the room said to the minister at his side, "Oh sir, that's a mighty idea! to go and throw one's self down before God, to see what is to be done with us. Yes, sir, it's to see what is to be done with us." He tossed himself a little longer on his bed of thorns, raved of those whom he had ruined, screamed for mercy, though no mercy came, wept and prayed, and groaned and died.

\* "THE THIRD ROW."

FRIEND CLAPP:—I spent an evening at the National Theatre, in company with some friends. The play interested me but little. The scenery was grand, and afforded food for my artistic taste. The best part of the play was a short dance of fairy-like girls, which was a scene of graceful beauty, when I imagined it diverted of its theatric paraphernalia.

The more I visit the theatre, the less I am inclined to go.

In the intermission one of the friends and I went up to the famous—*in-famous*—"third row," where men and women who have abandoned themselves to the most loathsome of all vices, frequent. I had before heard reports of this place; but when I came to see it for a few minutes, I saw a degradation I had not dreamed of; though I thought I had seen about as much vice, and participated in it, as almost any one. I resolved to spend a whole evening there, to see the character of the place; not to see the play. I spoke of it and my design to Mrs. L. when she wished to accompany me; which proposition I gladly accepted.

Since then we have been there; and—O,

God!—the profanity and obscenity we heard, which were but an adumbration of the profaned and polluted soul within, surpasses all description. The moral scenery was a dismal place to indulge in prophetic dreams of human purity and exaltation. I could not have imagined that feminine lips could give utterance to such horrible filthy thoughts.—I have been conversant with the vilest of men, those who had trampled their own deity out of existence (if such a thing is possible.)—I have been among them, and of them, and *one of them*; and I supposed I knew the *bottom* of that *depth* to which mankind could sink. But it yet remained for me to see woman in her worst state; and I could not suspect that beneath man's depths was a lower one, and that was woman's. But I saw it to be so. I was surprised and confounded—my brain whirled with astonishment, in contemplating such exhibitions of depravity. The vilest of men were there; and they were civil and decent, when placed in juxtaposition with those women. I saw some of them blush, when they were so outdone. The men have to make no advances, for the women do all the talking and soliciting.

There are many things in human character which I cannot comprehend. I see the facts, but cannot interpret them. And how woman can do such profanation as to talk to men as we heard them, I cannot divine. I cannot recite what we heard. If I should report it in detail, in precise language, it would still be a bad imitation, and give no faithful idea of what it is. To be known it must be seen.

It is with difficulty that I credit my senses in the matter, on remembering it. I felt, while there, as if I was in a lower mode of being, far beneath this, deeper than all graves of pollution I had ever known. But my senses so reeled and my sensibilities were so shocked, that I did not fully realize what I saw till I got home. Then it seemed as if I had just awakened from a maniac's dream of hell and found myself half insane. I could not make myself believe that it had not been a horrible farce played to the life, conjured up by a fertile imagination, from below the superlative depths of possibility. All the next day I could not feel like myself till evening, when I sought, in the society of dear sisters, who are pure as the breath of love, a contrast to the women of the proceeding night, to drive away the thoughts of those, which

haunted me like memories of witnessed tortures in an inquisition.

Place one of these poor women, from whom the soul of purity has fled, (alas! has it fled forever?) by the side of one who is beautiful in soul and pure in heart, and what a contrast! The comparison enables me to pity those more, and love these better. O, Purity, whenever I meet her, I must rise and stand up a man in her presence, and offer the incense of a pure affection, and the adoration of an unspotted, brave life. And I can appreciate her more truly, and worship her more sublimely, for having myself been a degraded wallower in the low puddles of vulgar pollution. How many times, since seeing that, I have remembered the time when I could have plunged down into all that pollution—I was rife for it, and only wanted an opportunity, and I should have gone down—a sensation of shivering faintness almost overwhelms me when I think of it.—The blood forsakes my face, and strength leaves my nerves. And I tremble for those young men who are enticed to such a hell. I would give them a warning if I could.—What I saw there is to ordinary impurity, which the world sees, as the Inquisition is to common punishment.

O, to see woman so transformed by vice—all her delicacy of sentiment; her refinement of feeling; elegance of deportment; gracefulness of mien; gentleness of behavior, and purity of character—all that is beautiful and lovely in her nature, so erased from her being, so that all that remains of her is dross, lees, refuse;—what a scene to behold!

Will she ever rise out of it? It requires a great nature to rise, alone, out of such depths of degradation, and stand among the gods, and look them in the eye, without withering under their scrutiny. The man must be endowed with no ordinary degree of heroic self-reliance, to get out of the slough of a filthy moral character. When a man does it, he has done a deed which is not a mere matter of the hour—a trivial act of to-day.—It goes out into the heart of the ages, and thrills them with electric life. Whenever I see such a manifestation of character it makes me breathe freer and deeper; my eye acquires another beam of lustre; and another nerve is added to my sinews. A great, heroic struggle with one's own foul nature, always imparts new vigor to my being.

To every height there is a correspond-

ing depth. As woman is of a more delicate organization than man, finer strung, of a more refined essence, so she can be lower, more degraded, and viler, when she sinks. As love is the highest, purest, divinest element in the universe of soul, so is lust, its opposite, the deepest, blackest, most leathsome.

SYDNEY SOUTHWORTH.

Boston, March, 1846.

#### EXPERIENCE OF HOWARD THE PHILANTHROPIST.

(FROM PRATT'S GLEANINGS, 1796.)

He was a singular being in many of the common habits of life; he bathed daily in cold water; and both on rising and going to bed swathed himself in coarse towels, wet with the coldest water; in that state he remained half an hour or more, and then threw them off, freshened and invigorated, as he said, beyond measure. He never put on a great coat in the coldest countries; nor was ever a minute under or over the time of an appointment for 26 years. He never continued at a place, or with a person, a single day beyond the period prefixed for going, in his life; and he had not, for the last 10 years of his existence, ate any fish, flesh, or fowl; nor sat down to his simple fare of tea,\* milk, and rusks, all that time. His journeys were continued from prison to prison, from one group of wretched beings to another, night and day; and when he could not go in a carriage he would walk. Such a thing as an obstruction was out of the question.

Some days after his first return from an attempt to mitigate the plague at Constantinople, he favored me with a morning visit to London. The weather was so very terrific, that I had forgot his inveterate exactness, and had yielded up the hope of expecting him. Twelve at noon was the hour, and exactly as the clock struck, he entered my room; the wet—for it rained in torrents—dripping from every part of his dress, like water from a sheep just landed from its washing. He would not have attended to his situation, having sat himself

\* A celebrated writer, speaking of Howard in terms of high commendations, remarks:—"Yet with all the practical good sense and wisdom of this philanthropic man, there is every reason to believe that he fell a victim to his free use of ea."

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**Appendix B.** Overview of Writings by Sydney Southworth for *The Univercœlum and Spiritual Philosopher*, published under the pseudonym Charles Worth.

Six Fillers; full text and four Articles, excerpted.

(Full texts at the HathiTrust Digital Library: <https://tinyurl.com/nh8yudx3> )

**October 28, 1848** (p. 352), Article excerpt—1 ½ columns, total.

Title: EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO A FRIEND

“Dear Nell —

I want to speak to someone; but, as one is in the mood to listen to such as I have to say, I feel like writing to thee. May be I can't say a thing—I can say one word, thought—Beauty,—and that with as much emphasis as I could ever utter it; for I have been conversing with the soul of all Beauty this afternoon, though through a far-fetched medium. I have been examining some agates and crystals with my microscope. ...”

**November 25, 1848** (p. 402), Filler.

“REALLY, does no one love you? Well, they would if they could. The fault, or virtue is yours; not theirs. If you impersonate their ideal of a lovely character, they couldn't help loving you devotedly. Are you beneath this ideal? You are in fault—if anybody. Are you above it? So much you can credit to yourself—if to anybody; and for such credit you can pay the price. You can do without their love—unless there be an affinity between you and them all love would be false.”

**November 25, 1848** (p. 409), Filler.

“CHRISTIANS use their bible much as lawyers use their statute book; believing in their own immortality same as the Spaniards did their *wishes* about El Dorado. ... But the *man* (who is more than a Christian,) reads the bible as he would a novel; and believes in the soul's eternal being somewhat as Columbus did in the existence of a new world.”

**December 2, 1849** (p. 3), Filler.

“REFORMERS Whose lives are clothed with an aspiring enthusiasm, wonder why men do not come into their ideas of right sooner; and believers in progress are often puzzled by seeing men retrograding; but they have not learned that in the eternity a day and a thousand years are alike. Nor have they made use of the lesson taught by the decomposition of matter, in its passage from one development to another.”

**December 2, 1849** (p. 6), Filler.

“THE true life of the soul is prefigured in the healthy body. Like the unconscious, involuntary beatings of the heart, and motions of the lungs, are the steps and deeds of progress in the high world.”

**December 16, 1848** (p. 38), Filler.

“It is and old and true saying, that divinity is omnipresent and omnipotent. Of course it is in all human climates, however cold, gross, rocky, marshy, or barren; and it will fructify them in due time. It is seldom seen in the acorn.”

**December 30, 1848** (p. 80), Article excerpt—3/4 column, total.

Title: REFLECTIONS

“... And, as I contemplated those orbs twinkling in that pure cerulean, I thought of man's *celestial* destiny. As this earth prefigures his *terrestrial* history, so do the stars predict concerning his state that is to be, millions of ages hence, when this earth shall have passed into a higher form of organization, and all we shall have experienced on it shall be forgotten in a sublimer portion of our career; even as our infancy is forgotten in our manhood. It will be as much greater than our present experience, as this vast space, into which I gaze in bewilderment, where dwell Depth and Silence, is vaster than it seems. O Vastness! O *Infinity!* O God!”

**January 20, 1849** (p. 119), Article excerpt—1/2 column, total.

Title: THE TRUE MAN'S COURSE

“ ‘Look not downward to thy happiness and wants, but upward to thy dignity and mission.’  
Schiller.

WERE is there a more noble sentiment than that, ... What an ignoble life this is which is seeking for happiness by whatever means, and that without regard to harmony. It must ever be annoyed by a painful insufficiency; haunted by a still lingering unrest; a yearning of the soul for more. ...”

**January 27, 1849** (p. 114), Article excerpt—3/4 column, total.

Title: THE SOUL'S ORIGIN AND ESSENCE

“It must be that the particles of matter of which my body is composed, are as old as any thing—old as every thing. Matter rests nowhere long; but is every laying off one form, dispensing with the accompanying conditions and assuming others. ...”

**March 24, 1849** (p. 273), Filler.

“Smoke wreathes up into the eternal blue as beautifully when proceeding from a vile tobacco pipe, as when piously ascending from incense burnt in admiration of the Gods. *Intrinsically* they go up alike; but their *occasions* make them appear different to us.”

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**Appendix C.** “The Brig Gulnare.” Article Transcribed from the *New-York Daily Tribune*, January 11, 1851. (*Library of Congress, Chronicling America Newspaper Collection*)

**The Brig Gulnare—Great Sufferings and Mortality among her Passengers, &c.**

[The following letter has been handed to us for publication by the gentleman to whom it was addressed:]

San Francisco, Cal. Sunday, Nov. 10, 1850.

I will endeavor to give you a history of our friend C. B. Randall so far as is known since I left him at the Isthmus, at which time I wrote you. He left Panama on the 2d day of July in the brig Gulnare for this port direct. When one day out, the passengers, about one hundred and forty in number, were put on short allowances. The Captain was inefficient and the passengers, in view of small quantity and the bad quality of provisions, were soon in a state little short of mutiny. Sickness, as might have been expected, soon ensued, and as the vessel was a slow sailer it soon became evident that they must seek some near port for supplies. They therefore sailed for the port of Acapulco. Two physicians (passengers) were on board, one of whom died on the passage from Panama, and the other in port at Acapulco. On the arrival at that port they had lost but one passenger, the physician above mentioned. The vessel lay in port about three weeks, during which time some thirty more are reported to have died, some of them of cholera, then very fatal at Acapulco, but most of them by fever and sickness induced by the bad condition of the vessel and provisions.

On the arrival of the Gulnare at Acapulco, Randall was sick with the Panama fever, but regarded then as convalescent. The brig having sealed papers some difficulty was experienced getting her clearance. Another difficulty also occurred. She was short of Provisions with no money to purchase and no means to obtain a credit but that of security upon the vessel, which was in reality unseaworthy, and narrowly escaped condemnation while lying in port. The urgency of the passengers, many of whom being without a dollar, is said to have turned the scale in her favor, and saved her from being condemned. The passengers were unwilling to be left at Acapulco moneyless while the Cholera was raging fearfully. The brig required ballasting and as the Captain had no funds to hire Mexicans the passengers did the work, during which several of them were seized with the Cholera, of which some died. At length a supply of provisions for perhaps ten days was obtained, and the Gulnare put out to sea again.—In the meantime the steamer Sarah Sands stopped at Acapulco and all who had the means took passage in her for this port. Among them was H. H. Byrne, Esq. of New-York, who was a fellow passenger with Randall from New-York to Chagres and also from Panama to Acapulco, and from whom I obtained these facts. He states that before he left Acapulco Randall had relapse and was lying in a very low state. Whether he had died at A. or upon the ocean, or having endured thus long, the second season of privation and misery, is still alive, and if so where, are matters of painful conjecture.

The Gulnare is said to have been spoken<sup>1</sup> since she left Acapulco, and supplied with provision—The only record I find of it states that she was seen Sept. 20 in lat. 19, long. 118, which was not far from Acapulco. Whether she can possibly reach this port remains to be seen. She may perhaps have changed her course to the Sandwich Islands.\*

Yours, always, J. S. Platt. C. L. Merriam, Esq.

P.S. *Moc.* 12. [sic., *Nov.*?]—Full reports are in this morning of vessels at Honolulu—*Gulnare* not among them. She may be spoken by the steamer hence to-day, the report of which would reach you sooner than me.

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\*The *Gulnare*, as was stated in *The Tribune* of the 7th inst.<sup>2</sup> was at Mazatlan [Mexico] on the 15th of November last, (three days after the date of the above letter,) having put into that port on the 25th of October short of both provisions and water, after a passage of 115 days from Panama. Eighteen days previous to her arrival at Mazatlan the passengers were put on an allowance of bread and water. *Ed Trib*

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<sup>1</sup> When referring to ships, the term "spoken" means that the ship has been met and communicated with—usually at sea—by another vessel or party. This usage appears in ship logs, reports, or historical records to indicate that direct contact or exchange of information took place between ships on a certain date or location, often as part of routine navigation and reporting. (Perplexity.ai)

<sup>2</sup> The term "inst." (instant) refers to dates in the current month

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**Appendix D.** Transcription of a Tribute Poem to Sydney Southworth, Published in the Periodical *The Spirit Messenger*, December 21, 1850.

*A TRIBUTE*

*by S. H. Lloyd*

*To the memory of my friend, Sydney Southworth, who died at sea, on board Brig Gulnare, bound to California.*

*Thou now art home, where fairer lands  
Now ope before thy wondering soul,  
Than that upon whose golden sands  
Thou here didst seek to find thy goal;—  
No more does Hope delusive sway  
A heart attuned to higher spheres,  
Thy soul now drinks the living ray  
That turns to gems thy falling tears.*

*Too pure wert thou for this dark scene,—  
To live amid its strife and care,  
Yet deep within its living sheen  
Thou hadst a soul to do or dare.  
Allured by Art, by Beauty won,  
Transfigured by the Future's sky,  
A voice within did lead thee on  
To where thy soul's sweet landscapes lie.*

*A thirst for Joy so strong hadst thou,  
Of Harmonies that never sleep,  
That when the storm-cloud made thee bow  
Thou hadst a soul too proud to weep;—  
And when the world would jostle thee,  
As though it had for thee no room,  
Thou still an Inner-World couldst see  
That filled thy soul with sweet perfume;*

*And thus with patience kept thy heart,—  
“The plant will flower in its time,  
Ne'er from the roots the blossoms start,  
All things in life must surely rhyme,”  
Thy soul wouldst say, and drank the cup  
That sorrow lifted to thy lip,  
As brooklets drink the rain-drops up,  
Or violets their dew-drops sip*

*And thus it seemed when on the Past  
Thine eye looked back to scan it o'er,  
"What good it had, my soul now hast,  
So in its mines I'll delve no more."  
His soul was ripe for that sweet land  
That long had met him in his prayer;—  
Where wrecks are none upon the strand,  
He finds his El -Dorado there.*

*Our hearts are hushed as now we go  
Where by his side the billows lave,  
And as all solemnly and slow  
They pillow him beneath the wave;  
And yet in faith we look above  
And listen not old ocean's moans,  
But follow him on wings of Love*

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