

## X

1862–1869

### Letters from Cambridge and Troy — Part Five

THE Civil War and “reconstruction” dominated America between 1862 and 1869. Antietam, Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, conscription, Vicksburg, the burning of Atlanta, the Emancipation Proclamation, Appomattox, and President Lincoln’s assassination were names and events that everyone talked about. General Burnside’s victory at Roanoke Island might not have concerned many in the North, but it had greatly affected one family in Virginia. The period of “reconstruction” following the war was very different for the two sections of the still united country. Victorious in the war, the industrial north prospered while the defeated and much less industrialized south struggled under greatly changed economic circumstances.

America continued to grow and change. Congress authorized “greenbacks,” a new 5¢ coin, the “nickel,” and *In God We Trust* to be on all coins. The newly completed transcontinental railroad network became the single most influential factor in the emergence of the new industrial age, and passenger travel was greatly improved when George Pullman built a comfortable sleeping car. Nevada and Nebraska became states in 1864 and 1867. In 1863 scarlet fever killed 30,000 people in England, and a cyclone in India in 1864 killed over 70,000. A fire in Quebec destroyed 2,500 buildings in 1866, and in 1868 an earthquake in San Francisco caused over \$3 million in damages. Two other events in 1868 would soon begin to have a profound impact on the American workplace: First, Congress passed legislation providing for an eight-hour day for federal employees, and secondly, Christopher Sholes received a patent for the first practical typewriter.

Often the letters and diaries describe events and activities that are no longer a part of our lives. For example, there was “sleighing.” Francis Thayer’s diaries contain many such comments such as— “good sleighing,” “sleighing very good,” “Sleighing very good about the city,” “Sleighing all gone,” “About ten inches of snow this morning which makes beautiful sleighing,” and “Weather mild & pleasant. No sleighing for Christmas.” This is a lost tradition and pastime— America has changed.

*Letters & diaries by:*

Edwin McKie

James McKie

Catherine McKie Thayer

Francis S. Thayer

*Letters and diaries written from:* Troy and Cambridge, New York, and Chicago.



1862

*January 1, 1862.* New Years Day— happy to many, sad also to many... Little do we know whether we shall be spared to see the close of this year. God grant that we may be enabled so to spend our time and talents that when the Messenger of Death shall arrest us, we may be found of Christ Jesus in peace without spots and blameless, prepared to render up our account with joy and now with grief...

*February 24.* A soft morning, rained some, changed toward night. Major John McKie came up at 2 o'clock. I took him to William's. I had the most tedious ride home I have had this winter, or for a long time. It snowed fast, the wind blew hard and cold. I am fifty-seven years old this day. God in his Providence has spared me to see another Birthday. May he enable me so to live henceforth, that if he shall call me hence, ere another Birthday, it shall be my infinite gain.

*February 25.* A cold day. A great change from yesterday. I recd a letter from Katy Thayer.

*March 11.* A beautiful day... News today of a naval battle on Saturday last, at Hampton Roads. The rebel Ironclad steamer *Merrimac* sank our ship, *Cumberland* and took the ship *Congress*, burnt her. At that instant our iron gunboat *Monitor* came up and fought the *Merrimac* and finally compelled her to haul off. The *Cumberland* carried down 1 or 200 men with her.

*March 25.* A pleasant morning... Clark has gone out from home to begin his fortune in the world. May God protect him, shield him from the temptations of the world and lead him into the way of life everlasting. Enable him to fulfill well, his day and generation and finally prepare him for mansions in glory... —*Diary of James McKie.*

*January 16, 1862.* At Cambridge. Weather quite cold... Kitty quite sick with croup, sent for Dr. Mosher at 10 P.M. He came at 11 & in two hours the dear creature was relieved.

*January 17.* Up all last night with Kitty & Oh how anxiously we watched over the dear little one. Dr. Mosher stayed all night & when he came down in the morning he assured us that she was out of danger. God grant that it may be so. In the Home most of the day.

*January 19.* At Cambridge. Weather stormy, nearly a foot of snow. Kitty better today & we hope the dear creature is out of danger. Our hearts have been very anxious & Oh how thankful we feel that God in His mercy & goodness has spared the little darling...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

### ☞ Death in the family:

*Tuesday, April 15, 1862.* Weather very mild & pleasant. River rising very rapidly. There is a large body of snow up north and it is coming down in the shape of water.

*Wednesday, April 16.* Beautiful day... Kate took 6 o'cl. train for Johnsonville to go home to see poor sick Niel. At store until 10 o'clock.

*Thursday, April 17.* Charming day. River still rising, three or four feet over the docks...

*Saturday, April 19.* Weather pleasant but a little cooler than yesterday. Very high water up to within 7 inches of the lower floor at Mill... Kate came from home per morn cars. Niel very feeble. At 3 P.M. left for Cambridge with horse and carriage. Roads very good. Arrived at Cambridge 1/4 past 6. Dr. Cook of Troy up to see Niel.

*Sunday, April 20.* At Cambridge. Weather mild & pleasant. Up with poor Niel until 10 o'clock this morning. He is very feeble and I fear he is near his end. I pray God that he may be prepared for that great change which waits us all...

*Monday, April 21.* Weather cloudy & cooler. Up with Niel from 1 o'clock until 6. He is no better At 1/2 past 9 A.M. left for home with John, Ellen & children. Kate stays with Niel...  
—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

Troy. April 22nd, 1862, Tuesday.

Dearest Kitty— We arrived home safely a little after 12 o'clock. Frankie and Kitty were full of fun... I am almost afraid to hear from you— the last look I gave poor Niel went to my heart and seemed to say to me, this is the last of that noble generous hearted fellow. God grant that he may give his heart to Him who will save to the uttermost, I hope and pray that he may be spared and that his life may be useful and happy. I hope and trust that you will not expose yourself too much. Take good care of yourself and let me hear from you as often as you can. I am more than ever your own *Frank*.

Cambridge, 4 o'clock, Thurs. aft. April 24, 1862.

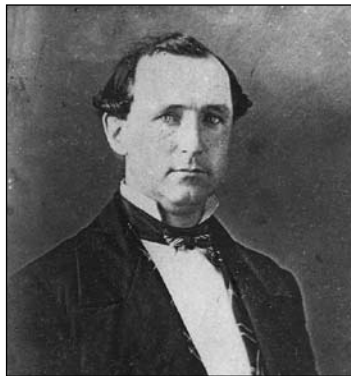
My Dear Frank— I found Niel more comfortable than he was on Tuesday. Today he seems weaker than yesterday. He takes very little nourishment and coughs a great deal more than a few days ago. Last two nights coughing prevented his sleeping... Poor Niel has not been willing to think that he would not get well or better but this morn he said to me the Doctor can't cure this cough. In conversation with me, he said he would try to pray and trust in the Savior. Oh let us pray for Him as we have not prayed before. If it seems best I will come home Sat morn. or the day or aft. for the Sabbath. It seems to me that Niel may live some days and still he may fail as fast as he has in a week and drop away very soon. May God spare him to give him the joy that comes from sins forgiven. Kiss the precious children for me. I want them to see N— *once more* still I think they could not stay more than come one day and go back the next. I wish you could step in and stay a few hours any time. Mother very well, and all as kind. With all the love of your *Kitty*.

*Thursday, April 24, 1862.* Weather continues quiet cold, ground frozen hard this morning... Recd two letters from Kate saying Niel was no better. Eve at store until 10 o'clock.

*Friday, April 25.* Pleasant spring-like weather. Business improving a little...  
—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

Sat morn. April 26th, 1862 1/2 past 11.

Dear Frank— Poor Niel is living and yet he is passing away. He may drop away any moment and he may live a few hours... We send Edward fearing that my letter sent yesterday may not reach you in time. We think your best way is to come back with Edward and come up with him from Johnsonville. Bring Frankie with you. *He never* will forget what he sees now and will make no trouble for anyone. Dear little Kitty, how I want to see her, still I do not think best for her to come. Ellen will make her just as happy as she can be... I would like you to bring— my hat in closet of silk, one with veil on it and black veil in Band box on upper drawer of same closet. My cloak. Frankie's



Niel McKie died when he was forty-seven years old and is buried in the Whiteside Church Cemetery in Cambridge, New York. The Decree of Final Settlement of his estate, dated May 27, 1895, is in the files. At that time his estate was distributed to his half-sister, Catherine McKie Thayer, 1827–1901, by then of Colorado Springs, and the two surviving daughters of his brother Edwin, 1818–1895, Florence Marguerite McKie, 1873–1959, and Katherine Whiteside McKie, 1874–1953.

low rubbers, and if he has not drawers enough clean or hose, Margaret will have them ready to send by John... The air is chilly. Let Frankie wear his fur coats and big scarf or bring his common coat— he will need it when he runs out. Ellen will put up Frankie's suits for him. I wish you would get a pair of cloth or leather slip for poor Niel, large enough and bring with you. I am writing in the parlor and hear every breath— oh this last passage, we must all make it once... —Love Kitty.

*Saturday, April 26, 1862.* P.M. Ed Hunt came for me & Frankie. Poor Niel is almost gone. Took eve. cars and arrived Cambridge at 1/2 past 7. Niel knew me but could not speak. Up with him until 2 o'clock in the morning.

*Sunday, April 27.* At 7 o'clock Ed called me and said Niel was almost gone. Dressed and went down just in time to see him breathe his last at 35 minutes past 7 o'clock of one of the brightest and most beautiful mornings that ever shone upon the earth... Several came to drop a tear over the remains of the poor noble [illegible] Niel.

*Tuesday, April 29.* Rainy day. Niel's funeral at 10 o'clock. Mr. Gordon preached a sermon of 40 minutes... We have done all we can for poor Niel. He was a noble hearted fellow, so kind & so true. We hope that he is in a better world where there is no temptation, sin, or sorrow. —*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*April 27, 1862.* A beautiful day. Lucy, Almy and I went to Church. Mr. Shortt lectured upon the four last verses of 19th chapter of Luke— both services. After dinner Lucy and I went to Sophia's. Neil died this morning in the 47th year of his age...

*April 28.* A pleasant day, rather cool. I wrote William and John Armitage, informing them of Neil's funeral tomorrow. I selected a coffin at Barton's. I got the button-holes in my overcoat worked at Noble's. I paid Fennett 4/ for it, near the rail road track.

*April 29.* A rainy day. Br. William came down and got a horse and took Almy to Neil's funeral. Lucy & I went. Mr. P. Gordon made an address. At evening Lucy, Bell, Mrs. Shermard, and I went to Prayer Meeting at Mrs. Fisher's. —*Diary of James McKie.*

*May 10, 1862.* At about 12 o'clock... a fire broke out in the Rail Road Bridge which was soon consumed together with nearly 700 buildings— the greatest fire ever known here. Loss of property about \$3,000,000 & six or eight lives. An awful day for Troy— at one time we thought the whole city would go.

*May 11.* ...I was out on duty with the National Guard until 3 o'clock this morning as special policeman...

*May 12.* Beautiful day. The City filled with people from far and from near to view the desolated part of our fair city. It is enough to make one sick to see the poor sufferers going about the street... The new firm of Bills, Thayer & Knight commenced today... Eve at store until 10 o'clock examining books. —*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

**DISASTROUS FIRE IN TROY — The Loss Estimated at Two Millions —** A terrible fire is now raging at Troy. The bridge over the Hudson River took fire about 11 1/2 o'clock, and has been consumed. At this hour (1:30 P.M.) the fire has communicated to various parts of the city, and will destroy hundreds of thousands worth of property... The fire spreads so rapidly that but little property can be saved. One quarter of the city has already been destroyed... It is certain that some lives have been lost and rumor places the number at 10 to 15. The fire is still raging fiercely, and buildings are now being blown up. —*The New York Times, May 11, 1862.*



Crystal Palace Mills, Bills Thayer & Knight, 1862–1866, Troy, N. Y.

THE REBELLION — The news this morning is of the most glorious and exciting character. Within the last forty-eight hours great blows have been struck against the rebellion, which make it reel and totter to its very foundation. Norfolk, Portsmouth and the Gosport Navy-yard have been captured, without bloodshed; the *Merrimac*, the “Terror of the Roads,” as the rebels were pleased to style her— has been destroyed, and the triumphant march of McClellan’s army has been continued almost to the threshold of the rebel Capital, while on the Mississippi, another is added to our numerous victories.

—*The New York Times*, May 12, 1862.

*May 10, 1862.* A cool day. Edwin McKie here to dinner. A great fire in Troy, a large part of the city destroyed. The fire commenced in the Rail Road Bridge, by a spark from an engine. The loss at 5 o’clock, was estimated at 2,000,000 dols...

*May 25.* A clear cold morning. Had a frost which killed cucumbers, squashes, beans and some corn... A collection was taken up for the Troy sufferers by late conflagration. 26 dollars and a little over was raised. We gave 5 dols & Almy the same.

—*Diary of James McKie.*

*May 31, 1862.* Warm & pleasant. Jim & wife [probably James Thayer, Francis Thayer’s brother] & Ada Wood here & spent the day. Took Jim down to J. S. Grimwold’s office & then up to mill. Jim says our govt never will pay its present debt. I say he is mistaken. Very good week for business...

*June 15.* At Hoosick, weather quite cool... Spent a very pleasant Sabbath with my near & dear friends.

*July 4.* In Chicago. The sad news of McClellan’s repulse makes every Patriot mourn this anniversary of our country...

*July 6.* ...The news from McClellan’s army is bad enough. His loss is from 10 to 15,000. Rebel loss still more...  
—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*July 5, 1862.* A warm day, a shower afternoon... A trial of mowers was had between Woods & Hubbard.

*July 12.* A fine day. Frank Thayer called this morning on his way from Hoosick to Salem to see some horses. He bought two single horses. He called at evening. Almy came home with him.

*July 19.* A pleasant day. Doctor Smart put into the vault today, we all attended the funeral service at Coila Church... He was a good man. I witnessed a post mortem examination of the body by Doctor Kennedy. The disease was inflammation of the spleen...

*July 25.* A fine hay day, the first this week. I recd a letter from Jas. B. Jermain wanting a boarding house for 2 or 3 weeks...

*July 31.* A clear warm morning, rained hard at 1/2 past 12. James B. Jermain called, he was looking at rooms at Doctor Coulters for his girls for a few weeks...

*August 6.* A warm day... Jas. B. Jermain brought his family to Doctor Coulter’s. He staid with us all night...

*August 7.* A warm day. Mr. Jermain, daughters & Mrs. Dunlop here to tea, he all night. A heavy shower in the night.

*August 9.* A very warm day, a heavy shower at 3 o’clock. James Jermain staid here last night, he went home this morning...

*August 11.* A cool beautiful day... Jermain girls called.

*August 14.* A cloudy day, a little rain at evening... Katy Thayer, her Mother, Children & nurse & driver here at 11 o’clock A.M. for the night... Edwin & wife here to tea...



*Bills, Thayer & Knight, store on River Street, 1862–1866, Troy, N. Y.*

This refers to the battles around and near Richmond, Virginia.

*August 27.* A very warm day. James B. Jermain gave me 15 dols toward paying for Clark's military suit...

*August 28.* A cloudy day, a fine rain afternoon... I paid Mr. Noble for Clark's Military suit, almost 30 dols. I paid Mrs. Fuller 3/ for lining Clarks blanket and mending pants.

*September 1.* A cloudy day, a nice rain at evening. Clark left home this morning for the last time, for the War. God grant that his life & health may be spared, and that he may be kept in His fear and be enabled to walk in the ways of holiness and righteousness, and ere long be returned to his home in circumstances of Mercy. Lucy & I went to Salem afternoon, took tea at William's.

*September 4.* A fine day. Lucy quite sick of cholera morbus. Edwin here to dinner...

*September 5.* A warm day. I went to Troy, from there to Salem. I took farewell of Clark, perhaps forever. May God protect and preserve him, and return him to his home in due time. May he be an object of God's especial Mercy and Grace...

—*Diary of James McKie.*

The Battle of Antietam, where each side lost over 10,000 killed and wounded, was being fought at this time.

There were over 12,000 Union soldiers killed and wounded at Fredericksburg and over 5,000 Confederate casualties.

*September 11, 1862.* ...War news looks gloomy...

*December 14.* Weather mild... streets very muddy... Recd news of a great Battle at Fredericksburg. Loss heavy on both sides, without much advantage on either... *December*

*15.* Weather mild... Recd news from Burnside at Fredericksburg. I fear he has been badly beaten. Eve at home...

*December 17.* Weather milder. Everybody talking about our shameful loss of men at Fredericksburg. O' is the man who can lead our noble army on to honor & victory. Let him come forth...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*December 22, 1862.* Not quite as cold. I went to Thos. Reed to see the situation of his farm with reference to taking a mortgage upon it. We have the account of John McKie being wounded at Fredericksburg.

—*Diary of James McKie.*

*December 31, 1862.* The last day of the year is upon us and the [illegible] question is, are we better than at its commencement. This year of war & bloodshed has carried mourning to many households, & now as we look ahead all seems dark & gloomy. God grant that ere long this wicked war may be brought to a close & the Union preserved. We have been blessed with health & prosperity, only two visits from the Doctor...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

## 1863

*January 3, 1863.* ...Business this week very good, selling quite as much as I desire. I have no doubt prices will be higher.

*January 8.* ...Business very good for the season...

*January 14.* Weather mild & rainy. Great excitement in the Stock Market in New York...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*January 8, 1863.* A good winter day...I recd letter from Chas. Cray, also one from Jas. B. Jermain enclosing a check for 67.88 dollars for interest on two R. R. Bonds. He kept the bonds until I send for them.

John McKie became Captain of a company of 90 men from the Cambridge, New York, area that he raised and was later part of the 22d N. Y. Regiment.

*January 23.* A beautiful day. William came down and took our horse & Almy and went to see John McKie. John is here for the night. Some 30 or 40 gentlemen and ladies came in to see him. Mr. Mr. Taylor made an address to him...

*January 24.* A fine day. John left this morning for Washington. May God protect and preserve him...

—*Diary of James McKie.*

*January 28, 1863.* Weather mild. Our dear children are not as well. Kitty has high fever & difficult breathing. Frankie is much the same 'tho not as bad. Most of the day at home with the children...

*January 31.* Weather mild & pleasant, sleighing... Children very sick, particularly Frankie whose symptoms are alarming. God grant the dear creature may soon be restored to health & strength.

*February 2.* Weather pleasant. Frankie about the same— still very sick. May God bless & spare the dear little fellow. My whole time is with the dear one, day & night...

*February 7.* Pleasant & mild... Frankie better & begins to have a better appetite.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

### ☞ Death in the family:

*February 24, 1863.* This is my Birthday. God in his goodness has spared me fifty-eight years in the Land of the Living. May he enable me by his Grace so to live henceforth, that when he shall call me hence I may be found blameless in the all seeing eye of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The day has been chilly. Capt. Hall called. Lydia McMullan here to dinner. Henry Dunham to tea.

*April 12.* A warm day, prospect of rain. Lucy went to Church alone in the morning. She came home at noon. I staid home alone. Mr. Shortt contrary to expectation preached two discourses. A man came from Salem (Mr. Nelson) with a letter from Almy informing us that Wm. was sick. Edwin went up with him.

*April 13.* A chilly day. I recd a letter from Edwin this morning saying that William showed no change. John Whiteside called.

*April 14.* A beautiful day. Lucy & I went to Salem and saw Br. William, we fear for the last time. He is very low of typhoid pneumonia. May God have mercy on him...

*April 15.* A mild day. Our dear Brother William died this morning of pneumonia after a sickness of 5 days. May God give us grace to be resigned to his holy will and enable us to give diligence to prepare for the coming of our Lord and Master. Almy & Edwin came from Salem tonight. Lucy & I went to Quasacoke this afternoon.

*April 16.* A chilly day, some rain during the day... Almy has gone to Salem this evening to attend the funeral of Bro. William tomorrow... I rec'd a letter from Clark today.

*April 17.* A mild day. Lucy & I went to Salem to attend the funeral of Brother William. I did not go to the Church where the body was taken, neither to the cemetery, on account of my weakness. Mr. Forsythe gave an address... There was a large audience and deeply affected. Mr. & Mrs. Thayer called this evening. They came down with Edwin's folks from Salem.

*April 18.* A mild day. I went to Salem to Julia's. I took possession of Wm's. Papers. Mr. Crary read his Will in which I am named as Executor with Brother John.

—*Diary of James McKie.*

*May 5, 1863.* Cloudy & a little rain. Business dull. News from Hooker's army is encouraging. It looks as tho' he would gain a victory. God grant that he may...

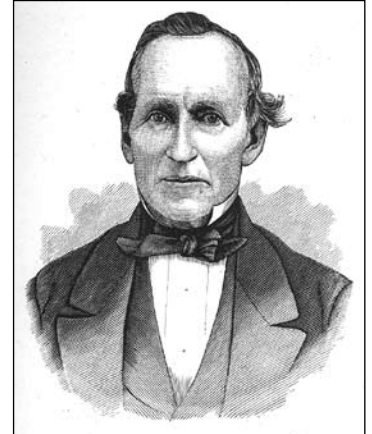
*May 7.* Rainy day. Recd the awful news that Hooker's Army was defeated in the great battle near Fredericksburg. It is too bad, I am almost discouraged...

*May 8.* Cleared off pleasantly... News from the Army don't look quite so blue...

*May 20.* ...Paid D. Malley (unknown person) \$4500 for 3 vacant lots on the east side of Washington Park... Demand for flour very good.

*May 25.* Delightful weather. Good news from Vicksburg. Grant will take the place if the news is reliable...

*May 26.* ...News from Genl. Grant not fully satisfactory. I am afraid he has not taken Vicksburg...



*William McKie, 1795–1863. Photo from Crisfield Johnson's History of Washington County, New York, 1737–1878.*

*Brother William* William McKie, 1795–1863.

The journal contains many comments about the settlement of William McKie's estate which was left to the "most needy" of the "heirs at law and nearest of kin" and to public charities that the executor deemed "worthy." The vague language was confusing, and the will was ultimately declared null by the Courts.

Over 50,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed at Gettysburg. On November 19, 1863 President Lincoln delivered one of the most important speeches in American history at the dedication of the military cemetery on that infamous battlefield.

*May 29.* ...News from Genl. Grant not very encouraging. I hope & pray for the best...  
*June 11.* Weather warm & pleasant... News from Vicksburg encouraging— I believe Grant will take the place before the 4th of July. Genl. Lee seems to be on the move— I trust Hooker will keep close watch of the fellow.  
*June 20.* ...It looks as tho' we should have a desperate battle before next Saturday night. May God grant that victory may be ours...  
*June 22.* Cool & pleasant... War news doesn't look very good. I am afraid Lee will be too much for Hooker...  
*June 23.* Weather cool... News from Penn. Looks bad enough. Lee is there having his own way & no one to stop him. God grant that he & his rebels may be put to flight. Where is Hooker...  
*June 24.* Weather hot & dry... Rebels marching north. I hope they may come so far this way that they will never get back...  
*July 2.* Weather very warm and awful dusty. News of a great battle going on near Gettysburg Pa. God grant that victory may be ours.  
*July 5.* Rainy A.M., very few out to church... Glorious news from the army of the Potomac, Mead has gained a great victory & I thank God for it...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

#### THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

—*Abraham Lincoln.*

#### ☞ Summer vacation:

*August 1, 1863.* ...Arrived at Long Branch at 1/4 to 7 P.M.

*August 2.* ...This is my lazy plan— nothing to do except to eat, sleep & loaf.

*August 3.* ...Spent the day as usual eating & loafing...

*August 4.* Weather very warm... In bathing as usual. Poor Frankie is so timid that he don't enjoy bathing or going near the water, hardly dares wet his feet.

*August 5.* At Long Branch. Nothing out of the ordinary routine of affairs today— Eating, bathing & sleeping the order of the day. Nothing new in the papers from the Army. Would that we could have a little exciting news to stir us up...



*August 8.* At Long Branch. Weather hot & showery... Took Frankie into the water much against his will— very sorry he is so much afraid of the water...

*August 12.* At Long Branch, weather very hot indeed. Mercury up to about 90° & no wind. Kate packed up & is determined to leave tomorrow morning. I would like much to stay longer. Frankie mastered courage enough to go in to his neck & seems to enjoy it...

*August 13.* At Long Branch. Weather quite comfortable. Concluded to remain here until Saturday & then go directly home...

*August 15.* Weather very warm. At 11 o'clock A.M. left Long Branch for home... arrived home at 1/2 past 7 & found everything at the home in good shape. We have been gone three weeks & one day.

*August 16.* At home again & it seems good to be in our pleasant home after being cooped up in little 7x9 rooms...

*August 30.* Charming day... Ed came over from Cambridge & stayed until after dinner. It was pleasant to be at the Old Home again but O' how changed. We feel it at every step & turn. Children are perfectly happy here. Gave Frankie & Kitty a ride on the old mare.  
—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*November 17, 1863.* A cloudy morning, rained hard all of the afternoon. Lucy & I went to Troy, took dinner at Thayer's... went to Jermain's for the night.

*November 21.* A cloudy day— rained afternoon & evening... I foddered the cow for the first time this fall.  
—*Diary of James McKie.*

*December 31, 1863.* Weather mild... Business dull as normal at this season of the year. At the close of another year I have great reason to thank God for all his mercy & goodness towards me & mine. We have had some sickness, but life has been spared. My business has been prosperous & we have been blessed... May we indeed feel thankful & praise Him the giver of every good & perfect gift.  
—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

## 1864

*January 2, 1864.* A very cold day, merc at zero. I am much better having been unwell for a few days. I mailed a letter to Clark, enclosing silk thread, needles & 25 postage stamps.

*January 21.* I again commence a journal after having been sick since the 4th day of the month of Billious Fever: But through the tender mercies of my Heavenly father, I am much better and hope to be restored ere long to my accustomed health. God grant that the affliction may be sanctified to me, and that I may be more and more fitted to serve God here, and finally prepared to enjoy him in his heavenly Kingdom. I recd papers from National Bank.

Due to James McKie's illness, there are no entries in his journal between January 4th and January 21st.

*January 25.* A sloppy day, ice melting fast... I mailed the deeds today to Mr. Thayer asking him to forward me his check for the amount 1600 dols, being 10/acre for 1280 acres...

*January 27.* A beautiful day. I mailed a letter to Frank Thayer... I also rec'd a letter last night from F. S. Thayer acknowledging receipt of Deeds of Iowa lands and promising to pay for them (1600 dols) on 1 April next...

*January 28.* A very fine day... I rec'd a letter from Thayer enclosing a note for 1600 dols for Iowa lands.

*Iowa lands* One of the assets included in William McKie's estate.

*January 29.* A mild day. I mailed a letter to Mr. Thayer.  
—*Diary of James McKie.*



Mary Ball Thayer, 1795–1864, is buried in the Maple Grove Cemetery in Hoosick, New York.

Fence around Washington Park, Troy, N. Y.



March 14, 1864. Left Rochester at 7:40 with a heavy & anxious heart fearing that I may not find my good mother alive. Met Kate & children & Port (brother, Porter Thayer) at the Troy Depot. Mother was more comfortable this morning. Port & I took eve cars for Hoosick, found Mother very feeble, still she knows us & was glad to see us. I thank God that she was spared to see me again.

March 15. This bright & beautiful morning at 15 minutes past 8 o'clock our dear Mother's great spirit passed to a better & brighter world I trust. Her last words to me were— *All is bright in the future. Jesus is all sufficient. He will receive me.* So the dearest of Mothers has passed away. P.M., returned to Troy to get things for the funeral.

March 16. Weather cool & cloudy. At store all A. M. Business going along very well... at 4:45 left for Hoosick to attend the funeral of my beloved Mother...

March 17. Weather cool & pleasant. Morning down to cemetery with Ade to open the vault to receive the remains of our dear good Mother. Funeral at 11:00. Mr. D's prayers & remarks were beautiful indeed. Oh how sad to bury a good Mother. Returned to Troy in P.M. Eve at home.

March 29. ...homeowners around the park agree to build a fence around it.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

April 26, 1864. A showery growing day. Katy Thayer & children here to dinner & tea and for the night. I wrote Mr. Thayer this morning...

April 27. A very rainy night, rained a good deal through the day. Mr. & Mrs. Thayer & children here for the night...

April 28. A chilly day, ground white in morning. Mr. Thayer left this morning.

April 29. A chilly day. Katy Thayer & children left this morning...

—*Diary of James McKie.*



Katherine Sophia Thayer, photograph by A. Gobden, Troy, N. Y.

*hard fighting* The Wilderness campaign in Virginia.

May 8, 1864. Extra *Whig* this morning says Grant & Lee have had two or three days hard fighting & Grant has the best of it— six to eight thousand killed & wounded. Awful to think of. God grant that we may have a great victory...

May 9. Weather very warm. B. T. & Knight [Bills, Thayer & Knight] dissolved & Thayer

& Knight commenced business for the year. I have 2/3. Mr. K. 1/3. Up to mill in A.M. to take a/c of stock. War news is favorable for our side. Grant has gained a decided victory over Lee & I thank God for it...

*May 12.* Warm & spring-like. News from Grant's army looks favorable. Old Butler [Major General Benjamin Butler] is down at the gates of Richmond & I hope the Old Fellow will walk in... All the talk now is about the great Battle going on between Genl's Grant & Lee. God give us the victory.

*May 13.* Warm & pleasant... Glorious news from the seat of war. Genl. Grant is the man who under God I believe will give rebellion its death blow. Business very dull, markets declining.

*May 14.* Warm & pleasant. The news from Genl. Grant's army is good & I hope & pray he may go on... until rebellion shall be put down...

*August 1.* At Cambridge, sick in bed all the A.M. Bowels out of order again, took camphor & opium pills which had the desired effect...

*September 3.* At Cambridge. Charming day. Very little rain early in morning. Attended the funeral of cousin John McKie after which Ed took me to Eagle Bridge for 2:15 cars for Troy. Recd the glorious news that Sherman had taken Atlanta. Markets all down...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*September 1, 1864.* A clear pleasant day. Edwin & I went to Wm. McKie's at 6 o'clock this morning. John McKie had died at 4 A.M. His parents and friends are deeply afflicted...

*September 2.* A warm day. Jas. B. Jermain called. I engaged Fowler with carriage.

*September 3.* A pleasant day. Lucy, Almy, Mary Cray, & I went to John McKie's funeral. Mr. Shortt gave a short address... The funeral was the largest ever witnessed on a private occasion, about 100 carriages were there...

*September 7.* A beautiful day. Lucy & I went to Sophia's and took dinner with her and Katy. I attended Prayer Meeting...

*September 8.* A beautiful day. Edwin & I went to Br. John's. He is very sick—we fear unto death. I sent Doctor Gray to see him...

*September 9.* A fine day, a little rain early. Brother John died this morning, aged 75 years. God grant that that the dispensation may be sanctified to us all. I went there today with James McKie—he brought me back...

*September 10.* A clear beautiful day. Lucy, Almy, & I went to Bro. John's funeral. Mr. Shortt gave an address... John Whiteside's body was taken from the vault and buried—both bodies were in the procession from the vault to the graves. It was a solemn sight. God grant that it may be sanctified to us all—especially to Margaret, Almy, & myself, the only ones left of the eleven children of Father & Mother...

—*Diary of James McKie.*

*November 6, 1864.* Weather dark & cloudy. Kate seemed quite bright until she got up in P.M. and then she had a poor turn and she feels almost discouraged. I pray God she may be better soon. Now five weeks she has been sick. P.M. out with the children to see the colts & lambs.

*November 8.* Abraham Lincoln Re-Elected President of the United States. I gave him my vote & I thank God the great & glorious triumph. To Troy in morning & returned (to Cambridge) at noon. P.M. rainy. Kate not as well, sent for Doct. Mosher at eve. He came & said he would have her up & about the Home in a week.

*November 13.* Very stormy day at Cambridge, some ten or twelve inches of snow came. Took all the sheep up & gave them hay. It looks like winter indeed. Dr. Mosher did not



*Francis McKie Thayer, age 6 or 7, photograph by A. Gobden, Troy, N. Y.*

Lt. Colonel John McKie, 1824–1864, had been honorably discharged from the Union Army in 1863 because of a physical disability. He died in an accident when he fell from a wagon that was hitched to a run-away horse.

*Brother John* John McKie, 1789–1864, father of the John Whiteside McKie who had died eight days earlier on September 1, 1864.

*John Whiteside's body* John Whiteside McKie, 1824–1864, had died on September 1, 1864 but his body had been placed in a vault at the time of the funeral service. His father, John McKie, 1789–1864, died on September 9, 1864. They were both buried on September 10, 1864. The elder John McKie had been married to Catharine Whiteside, 1793–1824, daughter of John Whiteside, 1752–1841, and Margaret Robertson, 1754–1849.

come. Good old Dr. Morris died this morning, aged about 70.

*November 20.* At Cambridge. Kate seems better & we all rejoice. I pray God she may go right along gaining and that we may soon be able to return to our home in Troy. The children are well & very happy. Dr. Mosher did not come today. He is very busy & can't come every day.

*December 1.* Winter comes in very mildly... Kate not as well... Glorious news from Genl. Thomas [George Henry Thomas] whose army has given Genl. Hood's [John Bell Hood] a good whipping...

*December 19.* ...Glorious news from Sherman & Thomas...

*December 25.* Beautiful day at Cambridge. Kate feels weak & almost discouraged. The Dr. came in A.M. & said she would soon feel much better, so he has said week after week. God grant that we may soon see a change for the better. Children went to church with Mr. Pitney's folks & had a pleasant time. —*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

## 1865

On March 4, 1865 Abraham Lincoln was sworn into office for his second term as President. His inaugural address established the groundwork for the hard work of reconciliation that lay ahead for the divided nation: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations." The Civil War ended the next month. The diaries written by Francis Thayer, Edwin McKie, and James McKie for that period are on pages ##### -- &&&&&&.

*February 24, 1865.* A cool day. This day I attain to the age of 60 years, few live to that age. God grant that I may not have lived so long in vain. Well does it become me to live continually as they that watch for the coming of their Lord & Master. Maggie Wilcox here to dinner... —*Diary of James McKie.*

*May 16, 1865.* Weather warm & pleasant. Frankie a little better but still looks pale & sick. Had a long talk with Mr. Knight in regard to his ability to attend to business the coming season. He is quite confident he can do it. I am fearful he will break down again. Business very dull. Eve at home.

*May 17.* Weather warm & pleasant... James McKie here to settle the claim Uncle William had in Mich. He got \$4,050, half of which will be divided among the poor or rather most needy relative...

*June 1.* This day appointed by the President as a day of fasting & prayer on account of the death of Mr. Lincoln... Heard Prof. Lewis deliver a eulogy on Mr. Lincoln, not up to my expectations...

*June 2.* Warm & pleasant... Kate, Mother & children went over to Movers to have the children sit for their picture for the first time. Up to mill in P.M....

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*June 12, 1865.* A warm day. I went to Albany, saw the 123rd Regiment. Saw Clark Rice, took dinner at Jermain's. Called at Thayer's etc.

*June 21.* A fine day. A Reception was given to the Returned Soldiers... Mr. Gordon made the Reception Speech and Adjutant Carney replied. A dinner was given to the Military Men. The Ladies in white, the Clergy & invited guests. Refreshments were provided for others at 50 cts each, to be applied to the purchase of Soldiers Monument.

*June 25.* A warm day. Lucy, Almy, Clark & I went to Church... God in his good Providence has returned Clark to us, in comfortable health and to attend Church for the first time in more than two years, having been in the Camp, on the march or the Battlefield, about 34 months... May we all be duly thankful to Him, from whom all Blessings flow.

*June 26.* A warm day, a fine rain toward night. Clark went to Albany and got his pay and final discharge from the Army. I wrote for 2 barrels flour from Thayer & Knight...

—*Diary of James McKie.*

☞ Summer vacation:

“At my old desk in the office” Thursday eve, 7 o’clock, Aug 3rd, 1865.

My dear Kitty, Children & Mother (vacationing in Connecticut)— After a hot and dusty ride I arrived at our delightful home about half past 5 o’clock. After occupying a 6x8 room for weeks it does seem refreshing to step into our large rooms, but the sea air is missing. It is very warm here and I long for a breeze from Old Ocean... Business since I left has been dull, still I guess they haven’t lost any money— about held their own I reckon. I have thought about you all much today. Have Eva keep an eye on the children when they are near the water. If you go out sailing select a day when there is a gentle breeze & keep hold of the children & look out for the boom... It is very warm weather here now & bids fair for a hot spell. I shall go to Hoosick Saturday eve & stay until Tuesday or Wednesday. Now my dear Kitty I hope you will write me a few lines every day or as often as you have time. Be regular in your bathing & lunch & nap and by the time I get back there I hope to see you much better. Don’t be afraid of the whiskey— when you get out of liquor, Jim will replenish your bottles. With a heart full of love to all of you & lots of kisses I am as ever your own *Frank*.

Saturday P.M. Aug 5th, 1865.

My Dear Wife, Children & Mother— We have another very hot day— mercury up above 90°. I got here just in time for the hottest weather of the summer. I shall go to Hoosick this eve, Cambridge, Monday and home Tuesday. There is very little that can be done to advantage now in the way of business and I see nothing to prevent my return to Guilford a week from today. It was quite comfortable in our room last night— windows all open in both rooms... Tell Frankie that I hope he will be the first one up and dressed in the morning and that he must be a good boy all the time. Kitty I know will be the best and dearest little girl in the house... *Frank*.

September 22, 1865. A pleasant day. I am improving. Mr. Thayer & Family called on their way from Connecticut by way of Vermont in their own carriage. They went to the farm, their mother went with them...



*Katherine Sophia Thayer, daguerreotype.*



*McKie family plot, low stones in foreground, Woodland Cemetery, Cambridge, N. Y. The McKie graves were moved to this cemetery from the Turnpike cemetery, south of Cambridge village. James McKie’s diary records the moving of the remains and the condition of each coffin.*



*View across the McKie family plot to the hills of Cambridge from the Woodland Cemetery.*

*buried in the Old, to the New Cemetery* The "Old" cemetery refers to the Turnpike Cemetery, out South Union Street from the Village of Cambridge. The "New" cemetery is Woodland Cemetery. In the course of this move, the old grave markers were either lost or destroyed, and new markers were subsequently erected.

*October 26.* A cloudy chilly day. We removed the Bodies of our friends who were buried in the Old, to the New Cemetery! Assisted by Edwin McKie & Clark Rice, conducted by the Sexton Henry McQuade & his three men. The bodies removed as follows: Grand Father John McKie who died in 1782 (had been buried 83 years) taking 2 or 3 days. His bones were found entire. Maryann McKie, his wife, died in 1806 (59 years) [referring to the number of years buried], her bones were also entire and hair natural. Grand Father George Wilson, died in 1808, (57 years), bones also entire. (Sarah Dawson, his wife died in Canada, 1797 and was buried there.) James McKie, died 1843 (22 years). Bones found and nothing else but some pieces of coffin. Elizabeth his wife died 1849 (16 years). The coffin & box whole but ready to fall. The body in a state of putrefaction still. Mary McKie died in 1846 (19 years). Bones entire, box & coffin rotten. Ann McKie died in 1856 (9 years). Box & coffin came up whole. Peter McKie died 1856 (9 years). Box & coffin came up whole. James McKie here to dinner.

*October 27.* A snowy morning (the first this season), continued moderately all day... We executed a contract for the erection of a monument in the Cemetery... I paid Mial Barton 3 dols for 3 boxes used yesterday in removing bodies to the Cemetery. I paid him at the Back-yard gate...  
—*Diary of James McKie.*

*December 31, 1865.* ...Another year numbered with the past. O how thankful I am that a kind Providence has smiled upon us, preserved our lives & given us un-numbered blessings. A year ago now my dear Kate was very sick & feeble up at her Old Home in Cambridge & was obliged to stay there until 8<sup>th</sup> March. We spent three months at the seashore & enjoyed the season there very much. Kate improved almost daily & came home much better. Now she is able to walk up to Church twice this day & feels quite well... Our Children have been well most of the time and seem very happy. I pray God that He will guide & protect them always. Took upon myself the office of Elder in our Church, ordained 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in December. I pray that I may honor the responsible office. Let my light so shine that others may be better. —*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

## 1866

*January 1, 1866.* A soft day. Sophia McKie came up in the morning train to see Edwin's folks. We are spared to see the beginning of a new year. Who of us will be spared to

see its close, God only knows. May he of his infinite mercy fit and prepare us for every event of his Providence and finally save us in his Heavenly Kingdom for Christ's Sake. Ada Bishop here to tea.

*January 8.* A very severe morning, merc 15° below zero, many things froze in the house. It continued very severe during the day. I gave Clark my check for 100 dollars to pay L. Wilson for money he borrowed of him on Saturday.

*January 24.* A beautiful day. Clark Rice & Anna Mary Robertson were married today at 11 o'clock by Rev. Henry Gordon. God grant them the influence of His Spirit, to guide & direct them, and an abundant measure of Grace to sustain them in all their relations in life and finally gather them to His Heavenly home for Christ's sake...

—*Diary of James McKie.*

*March 17, 1866.* At Cambridge. Very cold & windy A.M. Over to swamp with Mr. Pitney & Geddes and measured wood, 55 cords cut (on the Cambridge farm) during the winter by Geddes...

*March 24.* Cold & Windy. This has been the dullest week for business I ever knew in Troy...

*April 5.* Delightful day. Mother (Sophia Whiteside McKie) 71 years old this day...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*May 31, 1866.* A clear cool day. Lucy, Clark, & Kitty went to Troy & Albany to stay all night at Jermain's. I have been in bed most of the day with headache, am better this evening. Fred got some chicken feed at Blakely's. He paid him 2 dols.

*June 18.* A growing day... Our monument came today...

*June 21.* A clear warm day. Our Monument was taken to the Ground today & yesterday.

*June 28.* A cool day... We settled with George L. Batterson at the Bank for our Monument— 1,000 dols including Headstones for Old & young... I gave him my check for 480 dols for myself and Laetie. William & James paid 260 each making 520, all amounting to 1,000 dols. Batterson receipted the bill, which receipt William McKie took home with him. I rec'd a letter from Chas. Crary.

*July 11.* A very fine day. Clark & Barclay Jermain went to the ponds fishing. Mr. & Mrs. Jermain & Barclay here to tea...

*July 26.* A fine day. David & Warren Campbell here to dinner. Katy Thayer, children & nurse also. Catherine McKie came in to stay all night. I gave Mitchell my check for 100 dols. A circus performed this afternoon & evening. I attended Prayer Meeting at Church.

*July 30.* A pleasant day. Clark & Anna Mary left this morning for New York to have a bunch cut from the roof of her mouth. Mrs. Greene went with them. May God protect and support her and render their efforts successful, and return them in safety to their homes. A little shower after noon.

*August 3.* A cool pleasant day. Clark & Anna Mary came home today. She underwent a most painful operation...

*August 8.* A beautiful day. I rec'd a letter from F. S. Thayer enclosing a check for 1,000 dols, for which I am to send him his note for 1600 dols, thereby refunding 600 dols on account of Iowa lands being of less value that we anticipated, which I had sold him from Bro. William's estate...

*August 9.* A very fine rain today, most of the day... I mailed a letter to Thayer enclosing his note and a receipt to be signed & returned.

*August 10.* A pleasant day, some little showers... I rec'd a letter from Thayer, enclosing a receipt for 600 dols refunded on his purchase of Iowa lands. —*Diary of James McKie.*



*Mrs. George McKie's Place and Summer Residence of Hon. F. S. Thayer of Troy, N.Y., Hurd's Stereoscopic Views, Greenwich, N.Y. Sophia Whiteside McKie, 1796–1878, in white dress, lower right. The two children are Francis McKie Thayer, 1857–1902, and Katherine Sophia Thayer (Katherine Thayer Hobson), 1859–1915.*

*Laetie Letitia McKie, widow of Peter McKie, 1808–1856.*



Catherine McKie Thayer with her two children, Francis McKie Thayer and Katherine Sophia Thayer. Photographer and date unknown.

August 31, 1866. Weather cool & pleasant. The last day of summer. August has been a very cool month, two frosts but not enough to damage crops...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

November 2, 1866. A beautiful day. Our Dear Anna Mary died this morning after a painful sickness of some months from Cancer in mouth, causing a swelling on the left side of neck 23 inches in circumference at the base. She died in a firm hope of Glorious Immortality— And our loss we humbly trust is her unspeakable gain. May God in his infinite Mercy sanctify the affliction, to Clark and to all connected to her...

November 3. A clear chilly day. Lucy Rice & Mrs. Jas. Jermain came up at 9 o'clock to attend the funeral of Anna Mary at 2 o'clock...

November 24. A chilly day, some snow through the day. James McKie here to dinner... I fed the cow stalks this morning for the first. Cow fodder used first time.

November 28. A fine rain commencing in the night and lasting through the day, thus filling up the springs for winter. I have kept in on account of rain.

—*Diary of James McKie.*

December 31, 1866. Weather quite cold. Streets a good deal blocked up with snow & hard getting about. Business begins to brighten up a little after a month or six weeks extreme dullness... Recd news of Aunt Sally Parsons' death— the last aunt on my beloved Mother's side. Her age was 79. It becomes us at the close of another year to thank our Heavenly Father for all His goodness & mercy towards us during the year which has been a very happy one to us as a family. May God bless us in the future.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

## 1867

January 2, 1867. Weather quite cold. Went to Hoosick per morning train to attend the funeral of Aunt Sally Parsons, the last sister of my beloved Mother. Aaron & Liz intended to go but they were just too late for the cars. Returned in P.M....

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

January 20, 1867. A pleasant day. Lucy, Almy, Clark, & the girls went to Church. I staid in by indisposition. At noon Clark went to the funeral of George Law's little girl, 8 years old. Her Mother was buried on New Years Day, after being sick of typhoid fever for 8 or 10 weeks. The little Anna took the fever soon after the Mother's death and so soon followed her to the grave. How does it become us, Each one to give diligence to prepare for death, seeing we know not "what a day or an hour will bring forth."...

—*Diary of James McKie.*

February 8, 1867. Mild & pleasant. At 10:30 A.M. recd. telegram from Edwin saying "My wife is dead." Poor Nettie, her years of suffering are now over and she is in heaven...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

February 8, 1867. A mild day. Sleighing spoiled in the street. Antoinette died this morning between 8 & 9 o'clock. I wrote Wm. Wilcox and Wm. Armitage & Julia informing them of the death.

February 11. A cold pleasant day. Edwin's wife buried today, funeral at 11 o'clock. Mr. Shortt gave a short address...

February 24. A mild day... This day I am 62 years of age. *God grant* that it may not be



said of me that I have spent the past year wholly in vain: And if it shall please Him to spare me for another year, may he of his infinite mercy, enable me so to spend it that I may make a years journey heavenward.  
—*Diary of James McKie.*

*February 26, 1867.* Mild & pleasant. Mr. Bills & I met in A.M. at our office & agreed to go on in business together under the firm of Bills & Thayer, half & half...

*February 28, 1867.* Very pleasant day. Up to mill in P.M. Everything in the way of business very dull. Flour, wheat, & corn declining. Mr. Knight very feeble & I am fearful he won't live a month...  
—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*March 4, 1867.* A mild day, some snow during the night...

*March 5.* A pleasant day...

*March 6.* A chilly cloudy day. I have staid in mostly...

*March 7.* A snowy day, sleighs running...

*March 8.* A clear pleasant day...

*March 9.* A mild day, sleighing spoiled...

*March 10.* A mild day...

*March 11.* A sloppy day, snow mostly gone...

*March 12.* A soft snowy day, melted as it came down... —*Diary of James McKie.*

*April 10, 1867.* Cloudy A.M. & raining P.M. At 9:30 A. M. rec'd telegram from Ed saying Carriage house & other building were burned last night. At 1:30 P.M. took cars for E. Bridge where Ed met me. We went over to the Old Home in the rain. We found only six buildings in ashes, loss at least \$4,000, only \$2,000 insurance.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*May 9, 1867.* A pleasant day...I turned our cow out across the road this morning.

*May 13.* A clear fine day mostly. Mitchell's' man ploughed our garden...

*May 17.* A mild day, a little rain at noon...Clark planted our potatoes this forenoon and went to Troy this afternoon to buy goods...

*May 21.* A fine day. Clark planted our sweet corn & beans... —*Diary of James McKie.*

*May 20, 1867.* ...Thayer & Knight dissolved and Bills & Thayer commenced business again as in 1853. Up to mill & took a/c of stock there.

*June 17.* Weather quite warm. Up to Lansingburgh in A.M... Immediately after dinner went to Mr. Knight's and remained there until the good man died at 5 o'clock P.M. It was indeed the greatest triumph over death I ever witnessed.

*June 18.* Hot & sultry in A.M... Spent an hour in A.M. at Mr. Knight's... recalling and writing down some of the precious things Mr. Knight said during the last hours...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

Saturday, July 27th, 1867.

*City Hotel*, Providence Road. Saturday eve, 10 o'clock.

My Dear ones at home— Here I am at last and there is no way of getting to Newport until 10 o'clock Monday A.M. by Steam Boat. We came on to Springfield on time. There we waited some little time for the Presidential train (President Andrew Johnson) to arrive from New York. The Prest. arrived (sober I think) and on the steps of the [illegible] House I saw him make a few remarks— couldn't hear a word. Our train preceded the President's as far as Brookfield then our engine was disabled and we were obliged to let Mr.

Johnson pass us so at Worcester we were an hour and a half late. Providence train had gone, waited until 6 o'clock and took a freight train and arrived here safely about 9 o'clock. Have waked up and had supper and now after writing to you my dear ones I will retire with a prayer that a kind Providence may watch over us and bring us together again in peace and safety... I am sorry I didn't keep straight on to Boston and remain there over the Sabbath instead of coming here. However I must be content. Our detention is chargeable to the Prest. All along the way the people (mostly many black Republicans) were out in great numbers to get a peep at Andy. At Springfield there was a great crowd, streets full in every direction. Tomorrow I shall go to Church... I have been told this is a beautiful city. I shall look about a little in a quiet way so as to tell you of its beauties etc... Now good night. God bless you all. I am more than ever your own *Frank*.

*September 14, 1867.* Weather warm & pleasant... Advised with Mr. Sage & Mr. Bills about my running for Senator (New York State Senate) this fall. They both advised me to accept the nomination if I can get it...

*September 17.* ...County Fair commenced today. Talked with several of my friends today about taking nomination for Senator & they all say go for it...

*October 5.* Rainy day. Senatorial convention met at the M— House and nominated this humble individual for Senator of the 12<sup>th</sup> District. If elected it shall be my aim to discharge the duties honestly & faithfully... —*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*October 5, 1867.* A very wet day, probably the equinoctial storm...

*October 19.* A fine day. I am not very well. I wrote a will today. Mrs. Judson called... Uncle William called.

*November 12.* A stormy day, snow from northwest all day, tedious— much like winter. I still kept in... *Foddered cows first.* —*Diary of James McKie.*

*October 22, 1867.* Cloudy A.M... Democratic conv. To nominate Senator. After talking the matter over they concluded not to nominate so I have the pleasure of running alone...

*November 5.* Weather very pleasant. Election day & I hope for a Republican victory. Spent the A.M. about the City at the different polls... Stayed in home most of the P.M. At the polls until 10 o'clock seeing the votes canvassed. Bad news.

*November 6.* Cool & pleasant. Last night was sleepless. Election news perfectly awful. Democrats carry the state... Old Washington Co. gives me about 1800 which elects me by about 1000... —*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*December 25, 1867.* A cloudy Christmas day, some little rain and sleet falling.

*December 26.* A beautiful sunny day, rained smartly a part of the night... *Hams salted today.* —*Diary of James McKie.*

## 1868

*January 1, 1868.* A stormy day, sleet & rain, 3 inches of snow having fallen during the night. A new year has commenced. God grant that we may be enabled to make a wise improvement of our time, that we may be prepared at last to render up our accounts with joy and not with grief.

*February 8.* The coldest morning since we lived in Cambridge. Merc here 26° below. On north sides of building near depot 36°... —*Diary of James McKie.*



*Francis S. Thayer, elected to the New York State Senate, November 1867. Denison's Photographic Parlors, Albany, N. Y.*

*April 17, 1868.* I hardly know what to say here having neglected to write up this book for several days. Went to Albany in morning & returned late in the evening. I am not conscious of having done anything wrong in the way of legislation.

*April 18.* This has been a very busy week. My work is well advanced and I hope to get everything my constituents are particularly interested in through...

*April 2.* I have neglected to write up my diary for several days & I can only say here that I went to Albany in the morning & returned in the eve. Business in the Legislature is now pressing, New York Rail Road Bills up for discussion. My opinion is we shall pass no more.

*April 22.* This is the anniversary of the death of our dear brother Henry Mathews [McKie], 17 years. Albany in the morning...

*April 30.* This is the eighteenth anniversary of our wedding day and Oh how much happiness has been crowded into these years with my own dearly beloved Kate. Albany in the morning & home late in the eve. I am indeed tired of this hard work & I long for the day of adjournment.

*May 2.* Rainy day... Legislation is going on at a terrible rate. Bills passing without much consideration...

*May 12.* Warm & pleasant... Vote on impeachment postponed until Saturday...

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*May 2, 1868.* A steady rain most of the day. I turned our cow to grass this morning. George Campbell here to tea... *Cow turned out.*

*May 7.* A cloudy, chilly day— some rain. Mr. Griffin assisted Clark in getting out manure on the garden.

*May 19.* A cool day. Wm. T— was killed in the steam mill— his body being sawed completely in two. I gave Clark my check for 60 dols.

*June 1.* A cool pleasant day. Again summer is upon us. The country looks beautiful.

—*Diary of James McKie.*

Troy. May 18th, 1868.

My dear Frank— We were all made glad of the letter to Kittie which came while at breakfast... And so Andy Johnson was not convicted and how wretchedly I did feel Sat eve, nobody to speak to about the matter. Our paper did not come— I thought I would go to the neighbors, Will Eaton would rejoice, course was not at home. Bills would say all right, So I went over to Shepherd's. "She thought they would get in a muddle." He "ya-all" acquitted I suppose." And I came home thinking that men are about as silly as women. Kittie Graves and Emma Mann were here to tea. I said, "Emma, what did your Father say bout impeachment of the President?" Kittie said, "What is impeachment, is he elected, what are you talking about?" Emma said, "Papa said he did not think the Pres would be convicted" —and so after a time our paper came and I saw what was not done. Oh these men— what unreliable stuff they are made of. It makes me think of the epitaph on the young child. "If this was so soon to be done for, What in the world was it begun for?" But so it goes. Edwin has just come in, going to New York tonight. Says all are well in Cambridge... —Yours as ever, *Kate.*

Troy. May 19th, 1868, Tues eve. 7 o'clock.

My dear Frank— Your most welcome letter of Sat eve came to us at breakfast and I assure you it received a most cordial welcome. We were glad and thankful that you had arrived well and safely at one end of your jour-

**kittie dress** put with letter of 5/16/1868



A dress, long stored in a trunk, belonging to Katherine Thayer as a child.

*impeachment of the President* President Andrew Johnson was impeached by the House of Representatives early in 1868 and the trial in the Senate went from March to May of that same year. Nine of the eleven articles of impeachment centered on the Tenure of Office Act and the other two related to Johnson's behavior toward Congress. Johnson was acquitted by the Senate by a margin of one vote. Whenever Francis Thayer wrote of either the impeachment or of the 1868 Republican Convention in Chicago, which he attended as a delegate, he abbreviated President, "Prest."

ney... Nothing new to write you. Kittie had a hard headache yesterday morn and some fever last night, but she has been out some today, but not to school, and I trust will go tomorrow. She is now at her spelling lesson and Frank sits here busy with his Geography... I must say that it has grown so dark that I cannot see the lines. I send Frankie with this to the Office— with Kittie's letter. Mother with children and myself join in tenderest love to you— with much love to Porter. —Your *Kittie*.

*May 19, 1868.* Rainy day. On the cars all day between Detroit & Chicago, 284 miles. Ran over an old man & killed him in Canada this morning & knocked a young man off the track in Michigan & injured him badly. President Johnson acquitted on the 11th article & this will end the matter.

*May 21.* In Chicago. Weather mild & spring-like. At 10 o'clock A.M. the great convention met and, after adopting a most excellent platform, Genl. Grant was nominated for President unanimously, receiving 650 votes on the 4th ballot... Left Chicago at 9:30 feeling well about the nomination. —*Diary of Francis S. Thayer*

Chicago, *Sherman House*, May 16th, 1868.

My dear ones at home— [Written while Francis Thayer was attending the 1868 Republican National Convention as a delegate.] ...Men are here from all parts of the country to attend the convention. I have just been talking with two men from Georgia and they tell me that the news from Washington today in regard to the impeachment will embolden the disloyal people down south and that they greatly fear that it will be worse than ever down south. I hope and pray that God will deliver this Nation from evil. Perhaps He has not punished us sufficiently yet. I do pity the loyal people in the Southern States. No one is talked of for President except General Grant... It is now almost 12 o'clock and I am tired and sleepy so good night my precious ones at home, one and all. May God watch over us and bring us together again in His own good time, well and happy... —*Francis*.

*Sherman House*, Chicago. Monday P.M. (May 18, 1868) 4 o'clock.

My dear ones at home— This is a bright & beautiful day, rather cool however. The city is full of people from all parts of the country. Almost every state has a candidate for vice Prest... I had thought the failure to convict the Prest. would throw a damper upon the spirit of the Convention, but I find I was mistaken. The spirit of the Convention today is eminently American, ie, forgetting the past and looking forward with hope and confidence, awaiting patiently for honor & victory. We are on the side of right and altho' dark days may intervene, still I see the bow of promise— "There is a silver lining to every cloud." ...I didn't think of writing a political letter when I started but you know I am now in that atmosphere and you will excuse me this time... —I am as ever your own *Frank*.

Headquarters — Vermont Delegation. *Sherman House*, Parlor No. 10. Thursday evening 7 o'clock. (May 21, 1868)

Dear ones at home— Well tomorrow at 12 o'clock we all go into the convention after hard work laying our plans three or four days. Grant will be nominated without opposition. There are at least half a dozen candidates for Vice Prest. ...The telegraph will inform you of the result before this reaches

you so I will not speculate upon the subject.— This A.M. I visited the Water Works and looked about the city a little. Went with Porter over to his factory where he keeps about 100 men at work making furniture of most every variety, some very handsome... The weather is cool but pleasant... Mr. Townsend is at my side and says “Stop writing to Kate and go and see my wife,” so I’ll go. Good night darling ones. I am more than ever your own *Frank*.

*June 20, 1868.* Quite warm. Recd a letter from Ed saying Aunt Almy was very low so at 2 P.M. Mother, Kate, children & self all went to Cambridge— found her very feeble but perfectly ready to go...

*June 24.* ...Aunt Almy died at 2 o’clock this morning...

*June 25.* Very warm. To Cambridge per morning cars to attend Aunt Almy’s funeral....  
—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*June 18, 1868.* A very warm day. Equal to yesterday. Almy not much better... I sat up with Almy.

*June 19.* A warm day. Doctors. Gray & Kennedy operated upon Almy for strangulated hernia. She very low during the day.

*June 20.* A very warm day. Almy a trifle more comfortable. Wm. Wilcox, George Wilcox, wife & daughter, Thayer family here. Sophia staid with Edwin. Mary Crary came from N. York at 11 last night. Edwin & Mary Crary sat up.

*June 21.* A cool cloudy day... Almy a good deal relieved thanks to a kind Providence...

*June 23.* A cloudy day, beautiful rain during the night. Almy still lives but sinking. May God of his infinite mercy remove her gently to the Eternal World. Margaret Barkley & Clark sat up last night.

*June 24.* A damp morning, heavy rain in the night. Almy died at 2 o’clock this morning when her spirit we hurriedly trust winged its way to mansions on high. Mrs. Seabring left at 2 o’clock. I paid her 5 dols. I paid Sexton 3 dols...

*June 25.* A beautiful day. Our Dear Sister Almy was buried this afternoon. Mr. Shortt made a prayer, no other services. Friends present as follows: Mr. Thayer & family, Edwin McKie, Wm. & Margaret Wilcox, Geo. Wilcox, wife & daughter Maggie, Bell Shepherd, John & Wm. Armitage, A. Barkley & daughter Maria, Wm. McKie & wife, mother & daughter, Geo McKie, Mother & two sisters, Chas Crary & wife, Mr. Thayer’s family & Crary left by 2 1/2 o’clock train. All others left but Mary Crary who stays until next week. I had three carriages from Stroud. I paid him 10 dollars on Stroud’s steps. I had one carriage from Randler, paid him 4 dollars. (Clark paid 1).

*August 4.* A cloudy day. I went to George McKie’s and settled with them the amounts left by Almy, viz 1,000 dols each. I gave Elizabeth the watch & took their receipts for all. George came and got the furniture & clothing. Lucy & I took tea at Sayles Robinson with Mr. & Mrs. Beals...

*August 25.* A pleasant day. Old Joshua Ripley and I went to Missiquoi Bay in Canada. I saw my cousin Almira Wilson, aged 62 years. I visited the graves of Grand Mother Sarah Wilson and her sons George, John, & James.  
—*Diary of James McKie.*

### ☞ Summer vacation:

*August 14, 1868.* At Fire Island. Pleasant company here & we are having a very nice time. This sea air seems to be just the thing for my dear Kate and the children are doing well— out sailing & fishing, not much luck...



*Thayer & Tobey Furniture Co., Chicago. Owned by F. Porter Thayer, brother of Francis S. Thayer.*

Almy McKie, 1802–1869.



*Grave of Almy McKie, 1802–1868, Woodland Cemetery, Cambridge, N. Y.*



*Soldier's Monument, Woodland Cemetery, Cambridge, N. Y. "To the Memory of Soldiers who died in the service of their country, 1861–1865. Erected by the Citizens of the Old Town of Cambridge 1868." The monument includes the names of forty-eight soldiers from the towns of Cambridge, White Creek, and Jackson who died during the Civil War, and there are twenty graves in this plot. The Woodland Cemetery contains the graves of 157 Civil War veterans. To put these numbers in perspective, the combined 1875 census figures for those three towns show the following: male population, 3,322; female population, 3,251; school age population (5–18 years), 1,743; landowners, 861; illiterates, 87; and voters, 1,744.*



*August 27.* At home once more. Weather is delightful and really I think there is no place quite equal to our own Sweet Home. Business very dull...

*August 28.* Charming weather. At Store all A.M. looking over what has been done during my absence. At 1:30 P.M. left for Cambridge...

*September 11.* At Cambridge all day. Rained hard in A.M. and Eve. I am 46 years old & I feel truly thankful that a kind & merciful heavenly Father has watched over me another year & I pray for His blessing in future. P.M. worked with Frankie in big meadow cutting & drawing off willows.  
—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*November 5, 1868.* A rainy morning, cleared up at 2 o'clock, at which time I went to the meeting for the Dedication of the Soldier's Monument. Mr. Gordon gave an address in White Church. The soldiers then formed a procession and marched to the cemetery where Mr. Eaton made some remarks, and the monument was unveiled. Russell Bank gave the music...

*November 18.* A white ground, rained afternoon. Cow foddered first regularly. I gave Edwin 35 dols to pay for cloak in Troy. *Cow fed.*

*November 21.* A mild day. Clark & I put in double windows...

*December 5.* A snowy day, mild throughout. Clark & I washed our wagon. Lucy & Lucy Rice went to Prayer Meeting. Alfred Fassett came from N. York.

*December 16.* A fine day. Lucy Campbell Rice here to dinner. Lucy Rice went to Prayer Meeting... *Hams & Beef salted.*

*December 21.* A mild thawing day. I mailed a draft for 10 dols to *New York Tribune* for paper for 1869. Lucy & Lucy Rice gone to Prayer Meeting.

*December 31.* A mild day... This is the last day of 1868. Another important portion of our time is gone to the Records of Eternity. God in his adorable Providence has spared our lives, and has in his sovereign wisdom removed our dear Sister Almy to the Eternal World. We humbly trust that our loss is her infinite gain. May God enable us to follow her in so far as she followed Christ; and be prepared at last, to join those dear friends who have gone before us, in his Kingdom above.  
—*Diary of James McKie.*

*December 31, 1868.* The last day of another year has come and naturally our mind goes back over the past. The first four months of the present year were spent at Albany in the Senate and I discharged the duties devolving upon me honestly and conscientiously and I trust satisfactorily to my constituents. Our business has been very poor, all the year we have had declining markets and our losses will be quite heavy— I reckon not less than \$20,000— The first year in twenty-two I have lost money. Mr. Bills, Robert & I feel pretty blue & I don't like it very much. However we are much better off than many others in the business. I have a great many things to be truly thankful for... My dear Kate's health is much improved & our dear children are well & happy... Aunt Almy has been taken to her reward in heaven & we all miss her delightful visits. Now goodbye old year. God forgive the sins of the past & help us to live nearer to Thee in the future.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

## 1869

*January 25, 1869.* Weather cold. Up to Mill in A.M. with Mr. Bills. We talked about business matters for another year. Concluded to go on as we are & try it one more year.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

*February 24, 1869.* A beautiful morning, snow squalls after noon. This day makes me 64 years old. God, in his adorable Providence, has spared me another year, while many

have been called to The Eternal World. Should he spare me another year, may He, in his infinite goodness & mercy, enable me so to live that I may promote his Glory and the well being of my immortal soul.

—*Diary of James McKie.*

*April 3, 1869.* At home. Talked over business matters with Mr. Bills. I told him that I would not place myself in a position so that I could not hold any political office if I chose to do so....

*April 5.* At home until evening & then went to Albany to attend evening session... Had a little talk with Mr. Bills about business. He hardly knows what to do or say, first one thing & then another.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

### ☞ Death in the family:

*April 28, 1869.* A Beautiful day. I wrote Mr. Thayer by Edwin on Charter matters...

—*Diary of James McKie.*

*May 6.* Uncle James McKie died yesterday at 6 P.M., aged 64 years. The last of my Father's brothers.

*May 7.* Uncle James buried today in A.M. Kate & children up. Very large funeral... Kate & children went down on 2:40 train. Beautiful day.

*May 8.* Fine, clear & beautiful day... went to prayer meeting at eve & called on Aunt Lucy in AM & PM.

—*Diary of Edwin McKie.*

*May 13, 1869.* Charming weather. At office most of the day. Mr. Bills made a proposition to go on in business together which I shall not accept. I feel quite independent...

*May 14.* Delightful weather. Had some talk with Mr. Bills about business— told him I would like to rent my half of the mill for three years and I hope he will find a good customer...

*May 19.* Weather quite cool for the season. *Troy Times* came out with a very flattering notice of my Senatorial record. Had some talk with Mr. Bills in regard to business matters. I am not inclined to go on with him. I wish to get out for two or three years.

*June 4.* Weather hot in A.M... Mr. Bills & I sat down to bid for the mill but after talking a while we thought best to go on in business together, which perhaps is the better course...

*June 5.* Weather cool & pleasant, at store all day. Wrote a circular for the new firm & took it to the Printer's office. Mr. Bills I think feel pleased in regard to the new arrangement. Business very dull.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*

### ☞ Summer vacation:

July 21, 1869, Troy.

My Dear Boy— [Francis Thayer to his son] I have you & your dear Mother in my minds eye, hold of hands on the dock in the full blaze of that bright light. When I could no longer see you I walked upstairs into the saloon with moist eyes and if I am not mistaken you watched the steamer with anxious eyes & heavy hearts. I hope & pray that within a few days we may meet in the full enjoyment of health & happiness. We had a pleasant passage to New York where I spent the day yesterday & came up the river on the Albany Boat last night and from Albany I came up in the cars. You cannot tell how lonely it seemed to me to walk upstairs & not find the loved ones there. It is the living presence of loved ones that makes the house joyous & happy. I hope & pray



Grave of James McKie in the McKie family plot, Woodland Cemetery, Cambridge, N. Y.

James McKie's entry for April 28, 1869 was the last entry in his diary in his handwriting. The diary continues for a short period in an unidentified handwriting.

### Goochland could go here?

*Goochland County, Virginia.*  
 "Erected by the Goochland Chapter United Daughters of the Confederacy, June 22, 1918 – To the Glorious Memory of the Confederate Soldiers of Goochland County, 1861–1865 – Lest We Forget."

A second in Virginia— See page ####.

our Heavenly Father will watch over us & bring us together again in our own homes all well & happy and I trust we all look to God for His blessing... You will I am sure be a good boy, take good care of your dear Mother & darling sister. Please tell your Mother to write me what she wishes me to bring in the way of clothes etc. I trust you will answer this the day you receive it. I wish you to keep me well informed of what is going on at the *Pequot*. I have not more time to write now. With much love I am your devoted *Father*.

July 21, 1869, Troy.

My Darling little Daughter— [Francis Thayer to his daughter] I have written to Mother & Brother and now I will write a few lines to you. That sweet little Pink you gave me for Grandma looks quite fresh yet, and it is just as sweet as ever. I shall keep it in water until I go up to Cambridge which will be Saturday if not before. I arrived home safely this morning & you cannot tell how lonely it seemed. I hope & pray God will watch over us & keep us in health & strength to meet in our own dear home again. I think we have the sweetest home I know of. Don't you? The girls are well and everything looks nice about the House. I have no more time to write now. I hope you will answer this soon. My best love to Mother & brother and the same to you my precious one. —*Father*.

At Home. July 28th, 1869. Wednesday evening.

My own darling Kate— ...The political cauldron in this Senatorial District is boiling a little. My friends tell me that my re-nomination is a fixed fact— in fact nothing will prevent it if I want it. The knowing ones say the course is clear for me. Fox I think would like the nomination, but he can't get it with the Whig's help. The Wash. Co. papers are out in my favor. Tell Frankie that I shall expect to see him swim very well by the time I get back there. —Your own devoted *Frank*.

Troy, Aug 19th, 1869. Thursday P.M. 3 o'clock.

My own dear Kate— I went to the mill this A.M. & did not find time to write a word to you before dinner. Now I am just up from dinner & will improve the few minutes before the mail closes in saying a few words to you & our darlings. Well, I hope you are in the enjoyment of health & comfort this hot day. This is the warmest day I have seen in a month. No doubt you have a cool and invigorating breeze which I wish you could send along up this way... I am going to Hoosick tonight & shall return in the morning. I know you will expect me Saturday eve and you know too that I would come if practicable. It is better that I should accommodate Mr. Bills as he has been here most of the time through the summer... Please remember me very kindly to all inquiring friends and a heart full of love to you & our dear darling children. —*Frank*.

Friday morn.

August twentieth and very hot— Would that I were at the *Pequot* with wife & children very dear... Friday morn

My own dear Kate— Your precious letter of Wed eve was rec'd this morning... Your stay at the sea-side is drawing to a close & I hope you will make the most of every passing hour, each refreshing and invigorating breeze. I



expect to spend the Sabbath with dear good Mother & Edwin. A heart full of love to you all. Your own *Fraddie*.

Troy. Aug 23rd, 1869. Monday noon.

My own dear darling Kate— ...Now I don't feel like advising you to stay until next week, but you are doing well I take it and *I am more than ever anxious that you should receive all the benefit the air and place can give you*. No doubt we shall have hot weather this week, there is every prospect of it, and I think for you to come back in the midst of a heated term it would put you back. If you have pleasant company and can enjoy it, stay another week and I will come on Saturday, stay a very few days & will come home together. Think of this my darling and act as your own good judgment may dictate. If you are *doing well*, gaining flesh & strength why stay another week. ...Remember that the salt air has done much for you & that you should be perfectly contented when you are *building a foundation* for health & strength.... —Your own *Frank*.

*September 14, 1869.* Very warm... At 2 P.M. we went to Hoosick to attend the funeral of Cousin Asa Thayer who died this morning. Returned at 5 o'clock, eve at home.

*October 5.* We are in the midst of a great flood. Terrible accident on the T&B RR [Troy & Boston Railroad] last night. Dr. & Mrs. Fowler & Mr. A— drowned in the Hoosick River. Business suspended. No mail or trains from anyplace...

*October 6.* Cool & pleasant. Flood subsiding. Nothing doing in the way of business. First train from New York in three days. Flour & wheat markets dull...

*November 9.* Cool & pleasant. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I am re-elected Senator...

*December 31.* Weather delightful for the season, mild & pleasant as autumn. No sleighing. A little snow to be seen off on the hills. Spent the A.M. at the office. Business very dull & I can see nothing in the future to encourage us... This has been another disastrous year for the milling business. We have, I think, lost some money & worked for nothing. Markets have been declining... God in His mercy has been pleased to smile upon us as a family... My darling Kate is better now than at any time before... In closing the record of the year I thank God for all His mercies and Pray for the health, happiness & prosperity in the coming year.

—*Diary of Francis S. Thayer.*



*Thayer family cemetery plot, Dummerston, Vermont. The land transfer records in Dummerston, Vermont show that in the early nineteenth century several branches of the Thayer family lived there in addition to Adin Thayer and his family. The Thayer plot in the Dummerston cemetery includes this monument with the inscription, "Asa Thayer, died at Hoosick Falls September 14, 1869."*

