

IN SEARCH OF I LIVING WATER

**Biography of
Susanna Mehitable Rogers Sangiovanni Pickett Keate**

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Susanna Mehitable Rogers Sangiovanni Pickett Keate

“No woman was ever properly dressed for any occasion in her home without her apron: checked, figured, or gingham for work, white with lace or embroidered trim for dress. Susanna Rogers Keate is shown here in an afternoon dress of black alpaca with front buttoned basque, silk shoulder shawl, and gray checked percale apron, busy working on an elaborate bedspread. Her hair was brushed smoothly back and worn in a knot at the nape of her neck. Back and side combs helped hold it in place.” Mable Jarvis, neighbor to Susanna

PREFACE

They weren't much in a worldly way: a pewter cream pitcher and sugar bowl, a switch of light brown hair, a hand embroidered white bedspread, a finely crafted baby shoe and a piece of silk made in Utah's Dixie, but they brought close to me a great-great grandmother I've never met in person.

As a young girl listening to stories of Susanna Mehitable's life I felt strongly "This is a story that needs to be written". The years have passed, and through experiences with children of my own, I have come to appreciate even more the legacy left me and countless others by this remarkable lady, and felt an even stronger desire to know her better.

Researching and gathering information for Susanna's story has been a labor of love. Each new treasure of information gleaned brings a greater appreciation for her strength and courage in adversity and her abiding faith in her friend and Savior, Jesus Christ.

At first I wondered why she had to suffer through so much fear, rejection, loneliness, and so much hunger and poverty throughout her life. It became apparent that she made the choice to leave a life of physical comforts because her soul thirsted for God. Although during the rest of her life she was denied much of the world's luxuries and many times even sufficient food and water, she was spiritually fed. "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." John 6:35

Her life is a testimony to us, her descendants, that Christ lives; that his truths are worth any price that may be required of us. No force other than faith in the Living God could have influenced Susanna's decisions to choose the difficult paths she did; and no other power could have brought her through them successfully.

Legacy of Faith

Today I stand with gratitude
An image of the past,
A part of many noble lives
Whose influence long will last.

Exceptional men and women
Who weren't afraid to dream
Made a place for my existence
In God's eternal scheme.

I. LAKE CHAMPLAIN, CANADA

"For in Him we live and move
and have our being." Acts 17:28

Susanna held tightly to the sides of the little skiff as it dipped and swayed in the waves along the Canadian shore of Lake Champlain. It was late summer of 1818. She had turned five years old July 5, but it took weeks of pleading to convince her mother, Martha Collins Rogers, that she was old enough to spend the day on the lake with her father tending his trap lines. She felt quite grown up in her new red plisse cape sewed by her mother as she carried their basket of lunch and bid her mother, two-year-old Charles, and baby Amelia good-bye.

They rowed from trap to trap, enjoying the sunlight dancing across the rippling water, the gentle breeze in their faces, and the chatter of squirrels in trees along the shore. Beaver, mink and ermine were plentiful in the green forests fringing the blue water. David White Rogers' trap line was only thirty miles from the Northwest Trading Company in Montreal, Canada, where he could sell the furs at a good price.

The lake extended southward for 125 miles, dividing the states of New York and Vermont. A strategic route into Canada, it had been the scene of an important battle in the War of 1812 four years before. Forty one years earlier, Fort Ticonderoga on the southern tip of the lake had changed hands several times between British and American soldiers fighting in the Revolutionary War.

In contrast with the enjoyment of being with her father, was the poignant suffering Susanna endured every time a limp little furry form was tossed into the boat. Her father confessed that it hurt him too, and was a distasteful occupation, but there was good money in the trapping business, and women would wear furs.

"I'll never wear any furs," said Susanna, and she never did. On the way home a furious little squall came up and Susanna nearly upset the boat by her frantic efforts to keep her beloved new plisse cape from getting wet.

David and his wife Martha Collins Rogers had begun their married life in Canada, moving their little family from place to place around the lakes and streams to find better trapping. For a time they lived in a little clearing known as Roger's Rock. They were living in Montreal when Susanna, their first child, was born July 5, 1813 (at three a.m. according to her father's handwritten records). The Rogers had to leave the city when Susanna was a year old so that David wouldn't be forced to fight in the war of 1812 against his countrymen. In 1814 the war reached them when Napoleon was defeated, and Britain was able to send 11,000 troops into Montreal and launch an invasion by way of Lake Champlain. Fortunately the British were defeated there.

Charles and Amelia, Susanna's brother and sister were born at Queenstown, Upper Canada after the war, July 28, 1816, and April 21, 1818. At that time the province of Quebec had been divided into two parts. "Upper Canada", the region along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, was settled mostly by British and Americans. Queenstown was one of the bustling little communities along the U.S./Canada border connected by narrow dirt tracks through the forest. Each town held a weekly market day when farmers and buyers, together with their families, met and exchanged gossip. Some were loyalists to England's King George. Others were pro-American, hoping to make the area part of the United States. As a result there was a great deal of conflict and tension between the two factions. "Lower Canada," actually above it on the map, consisted of the French settlements in Canada's northeast.

II. LAKE ERIE

"Lo children are an heritage
of the Lord." Psalms 127:3

When Susanna was seven years old, her father gave up the trapping business and moved the family to Pomfret on the western border of New York State. It must have been quite an undertaking, traveling 250 miles on roads that were little more than tracks through the wilderness. Her brother Ross was born in Pomfret February 11, 1821.

During the summer of 1822, when Susanna was nine years old, the family moved four miles north to Dunkirk on the shore of Lake Erie, where they lived eight years. Four more children were born to the Rogers family at this place: Gleezen, December 2, 1822; Hester, March 23, 1825; Caroline, March 26, 1827; and David, July 7, 1829.

It was important to the Rogers that their children receive an education. Each of them was sent to a school in Dunkirk as soon as they were old enough. Even Caroline, at age three, was allowed to visit the classroom with her older brothers and sisters. Her visit was short, however. She ran around and disturbed the scholars till the distraught schoolmarm threatened to cut her ears off. In those days, many citizens considered it a waste of time and money to educate girls in public schools, but Susanna did well with her studies, particularly math.

The house was built on a high bank overlooking the lake. From the front porch they could watch boats sailing below, fishermen plying their trade, and swimmers enjoying the clear blue water. Nearby, a small stream made its way through a lush meadow, orchards, and gardens. Years later, Charles, Ross, and Caroline wrote in separate accounts of their idyllic childhood in this place close to family and dear friends, and spoke of their longing to return to those happier times. Caroline expressed her feelings in verse:

How oft' with my playmates in childish abandon
I've roamed through the valleys, new pleasures to find.
The murmuring streamlets, the birds singing gaily
Would chase all the gloom and the care from my mind.

Oh those cool shady grapevines and swings we made in them
Now come to my mind with those memories dear.
How we played there at evening, our tasks then all ended
With naught but sweet pleasures, with never a care.

The Rogers family traveled over 300 miles to Ticonderoga in 1825, and was there when Lafayette came to visit. Ethel Bennett says,

"He was conducted from town to town, a veritable triumphal march, visiting old Revolutionary War battle-grounds and the tomb of Washington. He was received with great ceremony and genuine welcome, for many were still living who remembered the dashing and youthful hero who came of his own accord, without the consent of his King, to aid in the cause of freedom. He believed with such fervor that he interested his own country in providing thousands of French soldiers and shiploads of munitions to assist the colonies.

"In Ticonderoga a banner was stretched across the street with the words 'Welcome Lafayette' outlined in flowers, and every soul in the town who could

move or be moved turned out to meet the beloved old Frenchman. He was then about 68 years old, but still hale and handsome. Young ladies in white with arms full of flowers marched down the street, sowing a carpet of blossoms for the feet of the grand old man, who had dismounted and was being escorted down the line, greeting here an old comrade, there a disabled veteran, kissing all the babies and shaking hands with everyone.

"The Rogers family were all there: David; Martha; Susanna, who was then about 12 years old; Charles, age 9; Amelia, age 7; Ross, age 4; Gleezen, age 2; and baby Hester. Susanna stood beside her mother as the patriot came up to their group; and when he kissed the baby she said half aloud, 'Oh, I wish I were a baby.'

"Lafayette, who had heard, spoke directly to his little worshipper. "My dear, you honor me." In true courtly manner and with great deference as though he were saluting a queen, he doffed his hat, and bowing low kissed the hand of the embarrassed little girl. His visit over, Lafayette departed for France on board the Brandywine, a vessel requisitioned for his use."

Gleezen Filmore died in Dunkirk the following December at age two and a half. In Susanna's papers is a tribute to him, faded by time. We can sense their grief, but also their faith that they would see him again in a higher sphere.

Gleezen Filmore is his name
 Lovely and beautiful his frame.
 Engaging countenance and mild
 Lies here our beloved child.
 Eternal bliss he now has found
 No more to dwell on lower ground
 From the blest regions of love
 In mercy an angel came down
 Led his spirit to worlds above
 Lest in sin he might be drownd
 May we with love and awe adore
 O Lord thy goodness and thy grace
 Redeemed by thy love and power
 Even now he's gone to see thy face.

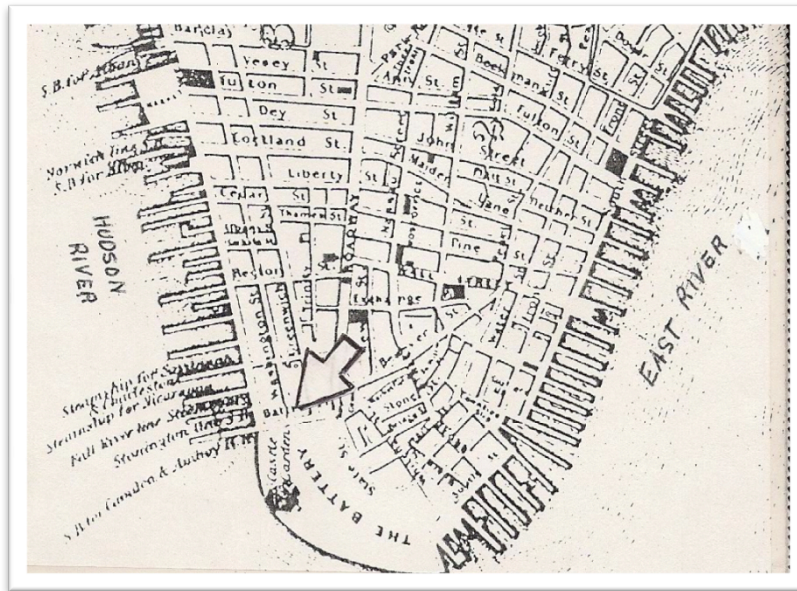
Family relationships were very important to the Rogers Clan as evidenced by letters still in existence from David's father, his brother Samuel, Martha's father, her sister, and the Rogers children. Susanna wrote: "When I was 14 years old (1827) I went with Father and Mother to Ohio to visit their relatives. Uncle Joseph then lived in Ashtabula County near Grandpa Collins. I was at his house and at Aunt Anna's. Aunt Katy lived some distance away. Father's brother George lived near there too." (This trip would have been approximately 150 miles travel one way.)

David was unable to provide enough for his family in Dunkirk, so in the spring of 1830 he made a trip to New York City to check work opportunities. In the fall he sent a letter to Martha telling her to bring the family and join him there. The family was destitute, but Martha, with characteristic determination, prepared for departure. Susanna was seventeen years old and David, the baby, was one year old when Martha and her seven children left their home in Dunkirk and set out for the unknown. Ross describes their departure.

"Neighbors came out to the wagon to bid us a last farewell. Some were so affected they wept with sorrow, for my Mother was greatly beloved by all who knew her. We carried our luggage in a borrowed wagon, while we drove the livestock and trudged along 45 miles to the city of Buffalo, New York."

At the Niagara River near Buffalo, they boarded an Erie Canal barge, one that took on freight as well as passengers. They had only a few feet of allotted space to carry their baggage, bedding, and food for the trip. Barges crowded the four feet deep waterway, transporting fuel, wheat, molasses, and timber bound for the eastern markets. They traveled one and a half miles per hour pulled by mules walking along the bank of the forty-foot wide canal. Scheduled stops were made along the way to change mules and take on and disembark passengers and freight in such towns as Tonawanda on the western end and Amsterdam in the east. Otherwise the boats traveled night and day.

After traveling 363 miles, a two-week journey, the Rogers reached Troy, New York. It was necessary to take a towboat of the Swift Line to reach New York City, but the family had no money to pay for their passage. Martha arranged to pay the tickets when they reached New York, using their baggage as collateral. They had boarded and were ready to sail when one of the agents came around collecting passage money. He was angry when Martha tried to explain their arrangements, and threatened to put the family off the boat. Finally, a satisfactory settlement was reached, and the family arrived at their destination safely.



Most of the Roger's homes were on the southern tip of Manhattan.
Arrow points to location of their home in 1833

III. WATERWAYS TO THE WORLD

"The rich man's wealth is
his strong city." Prov. 10:15

New York was the biggest city they had ever seen, with numerous tall buildings and a population of almost 300,000. When the boat got near enough to the landing, fourteen-year-old Charles and nine-year-old Ross jumped on shore and started up Water Street in search of their father. Martha and Susanna remained at the wharf with the other children, worrying that the boys would lose their way in the unfamiliar streets crowded with carriages, horses, and masses of people.

Ross tells us they walked up Water Street to the Battery (park), then up Washington Street to Cortlandt.

"There was an alarm of fire, and for the first time in my life I saw a fire engine. I thought it was the strangest sight I had ever seen. The engine was highly ornamented and drawn by forty men, two abreast, each man holding to the rope attached to the front axle. Each wore a broad brimmed stout leather hat with a large front piece painted with the number of the engine. The men were going down Cortlandt Street at the rate of about eight miles per hour. As they whizzed past me I began to think I was in danger of my life. Because my brother was five years older than me, I trusted him to pilot us through the living mass that thronged the street. We walked up Broadway to Exchange Street, then to New York Street and number 34. My brother pointed to my father's sign, ROGERS AND SON HOUSE CARPENTERS AND JOINERS. The building was one of those old steep tile roofed Dutch Buildings. The first story was occupied by a hackney coachman stable. The second was a hayloft, and the third was a low roofed garret where my Father lived.

"We found him cooking his supper of salt mackerel and a boiled sweet potato over a wood shavings fire. He was surprised to see us as we weren't expected till later. We soon started back to where mother was anxiously awaiting us. Father procured a cart man."

Delivery carts were driven by white smocked cart men who were the terror of all because of the speed at which they traveled the congested streets.

It was after dark by the time the baggage was redeemed and loaded into the cart. They started up the street, not knowing where they would find a house. Luckily, they found one on New York Street, not far from David's shop. By ten o'clock, they were settled in "as well as those who had never been outside the city."

The city was full of new sights. Washington market was a mass of humanity crowded together purchasing food from a multitude of vendors. Every variety of meat, fish, vegetables, fruits and breads were available there. Of particular interest were the gaslights illuminating the streets for miles.

The winter of 1830-31 was the worst on record. Four feet of snow lay on the ground until February. Blizzards whipped through the city leaving the family imprisoned in their home for days at a time.

In May of 1831, the Rogers moved to a better home on the banks of the Hudson River near the docks. (Ross says they moved every May when their lease expired.) After school and work were done, the children loved to sit in the nearby Battery Park and watch the big ships come in, but it wasn't always pleasant. Caroline says,

"Steamers landed at the docks all the time. It was exciting. I remember one day looking over the railing into the river. There I saw the body of a dead man which had floated up to the docks all bloated, an unsightly thing to behold. Some men in a boat were trying to get the body aboard. I became frightened and ran away."

There was plenty to keep them busy. Charles and Ross helped their father in the cabinet shop during the day when they weren't in school, while the girls helped Martha with the housekeeping and baby tending. The family spent long winter evenings by the fireplace, visiting, doing homework, sewing, or reading the Bible. The children memorized whole chapters of the New Testament. David was a class leader in the Methodist Church. Caroline described their home life in verse:

That dear cherished homestead! How often at evening
We talked o'er our pleasures and each had a share.
In the parlor we gathered, with ne'er a chair vacant
And bowed 'round the alter in family prayer.

And our father, invoking the blessings of Heaven
To rest on his household, his girls and his boys,
For the blessings of health, for our food and our raiment
And thanked Him for all of our manifold joys.

The year 1832 was a difficult one for them. David was prone to severe headaches and often had a doctor bleed him to get relief. Caroline describes going to her father's bedroom.

"The first thing that met my eyes was the doctor bleeding him and some person holding a white bowl to catch the blood. I was almost frightened to death. I thought they were killing him... Mother said that Father had over sixty scars on his arms where he had been bled." (Later David became a "doctor" and no longer believed in bleeding.)

Sally Maria was born January 10, and Martha never seemed to regain her strength. In the spring she became very ill with Typhus Fever. A Cholera epidemic raged in the city. Four thousand people died in June alone. Doctors forbade the people from eating melons or fruit of any kind, but David felt they were healthful. Ross said they had never eaten so many melons in one season in their lives because they were so cheap.

Each day, Martha called the children to her bedside and asked, "Does your head ache? Do you feel sick anywhere?" The sound of the "dead wagons" making their rounds night and day struck fear in the heart of every member of the family.

Little Sally Maria died October 23rd of that dreadful year at age nine months, and David Preston died December 13, age two and a half. It was up to 19-year-old Susanna and 14-year-old Amelia to nurse the sick, prepare meals, do the housekeeping, and tend Hester, 7; Caroline, 5; and David Preston, 3. Caroline tells how Susanna handled part of her responsibilities:

"I remember my sister Susanna taking my dress off me to keep me from running off to play with a little friend of mine. That saved her a great deal of trouble chasing after me to bring me home again."

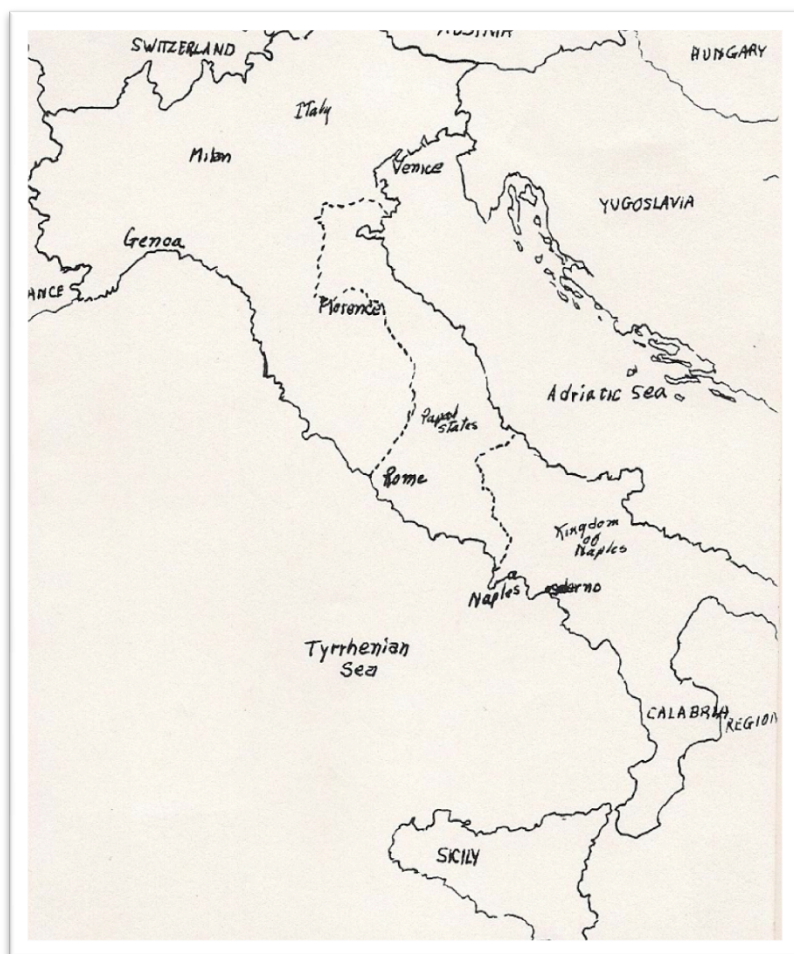
She needed to "save all the trouble" she could. Meals were cooked over a fire in the fireplace and laundry was done by hand on a scrub board. Water had to be carried from a pump on the street corner and heated in the fireplace. It was saline water, and "physic" in effect. More palatable water for drinking was carried to the homes in hogsheads and sold for a penny.

In May of 1833 David took over a respectable but unpretentious boarding house on the Battery at the corner of #1 Water Street and Castle Gardens. Caroline mentions having a colored maid. It was common in those days to have a live-in helper who received board and room in return for their work. Slavery was against the law in New York at that time.

They had a modern, up-to-date fireplace with a brick oven built in the wall. Hot coals were placed inside and stoked to a flame, then the door was pushed forward forcing smoke and fumes up the flue. When the oven was hot enough, the coals were removed and bread was placed on bricks inside to bake.

In mid-October of 1833, a stranger came to their door asking for lodging in correct but heavily accented English. His dress was unusual and as strikingly foreign as his manner and speech. Susanna wrote about him many years later in a letter to her son G.G.R. Sangiovanni. The following chapter is taken from this letter, with a few clarifications added.

IV. BENEDETTO SANGIOVANNI



MAP OF ITALY

The kingdom of Naples, covering the lower half of Italy, was ruled by the Bourbons. The Papal States were in the center, and Austria ruled North Italy.

"He maketh himself rich, but hath nothing." Prov. 13:70

Benedetto was born in 1781 near Salerno, Calabria in the kingdom of Naples, 10 miles from Mount Vesuvius. He was the youngest of three sons. His only sister died when she was a young woman. His eldest brother was l'Abate Sangioanni, an Abbot. The other brother Giosue was an M.D. and also a professor of natural history. For many years he served as Director of the Royal Museum of Natural History in Naples.

"Your father said he never liked to study and ran away from school when he could, into the plantation, out hunting, or to a pipe maker's in the village where he delighted to work in the clay, making pipes with comical heads or figures. Many was the thrashing he got when going home with his clothes daubed with clay. That was where he got his first ideas of modeling, so useful to him when a refugee and exile from home and friends.

"He married when 18 years of age. At that time things were in

a very unsettled state. Austria controlled Italy, who hated the rule of the Hapsburg kings. Secret groups were formed for the purpose of gaining freedom from Austria. Benedetto seemed to always have an ungovernable turbulent spirit, and was sort of a leader in his neighborhood. He held offices of some kind for several years, always favoring the Liberal Party."

Most of Italy was glad when the French navy captured Milan. In 1796 Napoleon led a French Army into Northern Italy and overthrew the Austrians. Wherever he conquered in Italy he set up republics with a constitution and legal reforms. He introduced representative assemblies for the first time since the Roman Empire.

Susanna continues, "In 1807 Napoleon put his brother Joseph on the throne in Naples. I think your father held office under him. After a year, Joseph was given the throne in Spain, and Joachim Murat, Napoleon's ablest field marshal (and also his brother-in-law) was given the throne of Naples. I know your father was Captain of the Provincial Guards under him for I have seen the

papers. His main duty was the suppression of Brigands who were very numerous at that time in Calabria. These men hid out in the mountains and vineyards of Naples and lived by pillage and robbery. That was in the time of the famous Fra Diavolo. Your Father knew him. His name was Michele Pezze. He was always so successful in his exploits, the country people said he was in league with the Devil; and as the Devil and his brothers were invincible, they dubbed him 'Fra Diavolo' or the Devil's brother. I have heard your father relate many anecdotes of him."

Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo in 1815 by the combined forces of several nations. The Vienna congress returned the former monarchs to power in their countries, and Austria again took over Naples. Murat gathered soldiers, intending to recapture Naples and restore himself to the throne. Before he could do so, Murat was captured and assassinated. Many of his leaders were hunted down and killed. Those who escaped had a price on their heads, the most notorious being Sangiovanni.

"Your father was in hiding for three years. For two years he was in Calabria, sometimes in the vineyards among his trusted friends, but most of the time alone in the mountains, often suffering great privations. Sometimes the priests would try to find him and he was afraid to trust them.

"At one time he had a narrow escape from one of the friars. As he tried to approach, Benedetto told him 'If you come any nearer I will shoot you.' The Priest said, 'Oh my son, I want to do you good. I want to give you good council and bless you.' He kept coming, so your father shot him. Upon examining him, he found a stiletto in his sleeve.

"He was in hiding in the city of Naples for a year. He said even his wife tried to betray him for the ransom. At last an American Frigate was in the Bay of Naples, and his brother and some friends interceded with the officers, and got them to take him on board. One very rainy day, disguised as a woman under a closely held umbrella, he walked between his brother and one of the officers down the dock and embarked. His brother could speak English, and taught your father to say "yes" and "very good", so that as they walked along he could seem to be speaking English with them. They had a person waiting to come back with them so that it would not be noticed that three persons went down and only two came back. The ship was searched for refugees before it sailed; but he was hid in a cupboard in the Captain's cabin so they failed to find him.

"I saw a government officer in Florida that was on that ship. His name was Westcoat. He was only a midshipman when your father escaped. The frigate was bound for Algiers. Your father stopped there, but found he was not safe, so he took passage on a merchant ship for New Orleans. From there he went to Mexico and Montevideo (the capitol of Uruguay), then across back to Savannah, Georgia.

"From there he went to New York City, stayed a while, and then went to London. There were at that time a great many political refugees in England and there were societies formed to assist them. Your father was very proud and didn't like the idea of living on charity so he kept looking about to find something he could do to earn a living. One day he saw some clay pipes of fanciful shapes. He said to a friend he thought he could make better ones than that. He got some clay and commenced sculpturing, succeeding as you can bear testimony. His talent was appreciated and patronized. It was a wonderful gift. He could model anything: figures or animals, life-size or miniature. I have never heard of any one that could excel him in his line. He would make busts of persons from memory who he had not seen in years. You remember Madame Pinaldi. He made a bust of her husband who had been dead for years. She said it was perfect.

"Prince Aquilar Murat, son of the former King of Naples, settled in Florida, twelve miles from Tallahassee. He had a large plantation there and 400 slaves. In 1830, when Don Carlos of Spain was trying to get the throne, Prince Murat went to Europe, and entered into a treaty with Don

Carlos to help him in his enterprise. In return, Don Carlos should help Murat to regain the throne of Naples.

"In England many of the Italian refugees were ready and eager to help the Prince whenever called upon. Your father was told to be ready to raise a company and join Don Carlos and Murat when called upon to do so. He wound up his affairs in London and went to Paris to be near at hand when needed.

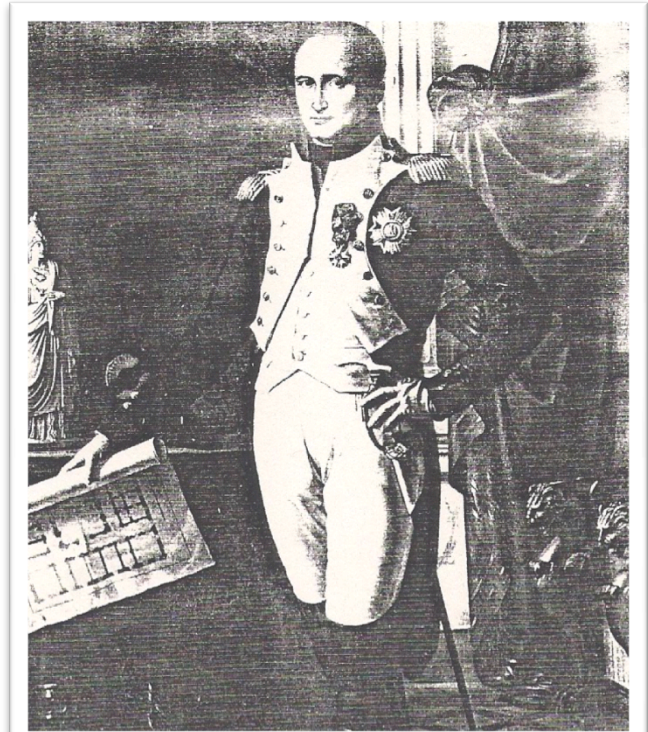
"Government spies sent word to the Chief of Police in Paris that the notorious Sangiovanni had gone to Paris for the express purpose of shooting the King, that he had a rifle that would carry a mile, that he was an unerring shot and never missed his mark. The police waited upon him, told him what he was accused of and ordered him to leave Paris in 24 hours and France in 20 days; and said he would be put in prison if found in France after that time. They shadowed him till he embarked at Bologne for England.

"After Don Carlos lost, Prince Murat came near falling into the hands of the Austrians. He disguised himself and shipped before the mast as a common sailor. I heard him telling the circumstances and laughing about how nice he looked in his red woolen shirt and knit cap. He said when he went on the ship, the captain looked at his hands and said, 'Young man, your hands don't look like you had ever handled tarred ropes.' 'Oh,' he said, 'I have been out of practice for some time.' The Captain did not put him to any work and he wondered at it; but after he got out to sea, out of reach of land, the Captain took him into his cabin and told him he recognized him. He treated him well and landed him safe in England.

"When Murat left England to return to America he told your father if he would come to Florida he would give him land and help him build a house. Again he wound up his affairs and started for the 'land of the free and the brave'. "He arrived in New York somewhere about the middle of October, 1833 and came to our house to board. I remember how he impressed me the first time I saw him: a tall, dignified looking man wearing a long navy blue cloth cloak, faced with crimson Genoese velvet. It was finished with a large fur collar, fastened with cord and tassels, and decorated with gilt ornaments. I thought surely he was some grandee. I was rather afraid of him. I would hardly speak to him, but my father took a great fancy to him.

"For several days he remained mostly in his room, receiving important looking strangers most every day. Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, called upon him, and stayed a few days. Divining that he might appear as an adventurer to us, Benedetto secured letters from men of prominence in

New York to prove his identity."



Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother,
who visited the Rogers household

V. SEA, SAND, AND SWAMP

"When thou passest through
the waters I will be with
thee." Isa. 43:2

Henry Clay's birth on October nineteenth confined Martha to her bed, but David and the children were fascinated with the mysterious boarder. They listened with rapt attention as he recounted his exploits, gesturing dramatically as he spoke.

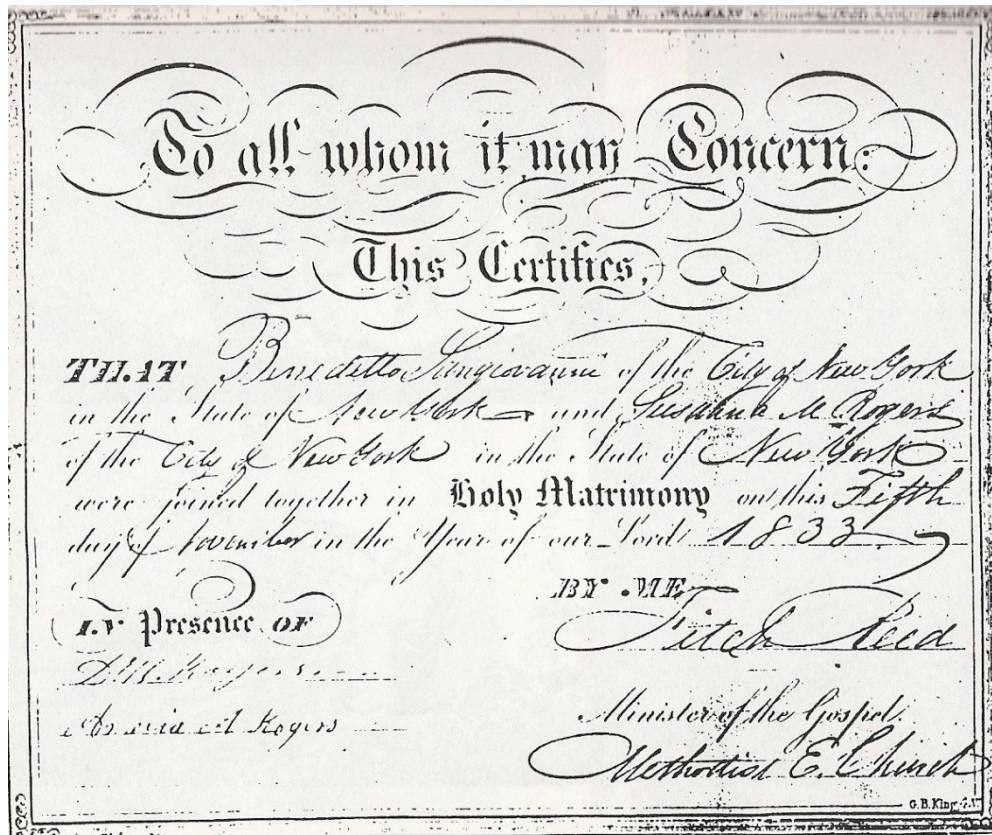
Susanna avoided him when possible, feeling shy and tongue-tied in his presence, and uncomfortable with the way his eyes followed her movements. He was intimidating, yet fascinating.

What a contrast he presented to her father, who was nine years younger. David possessed a calm, quiet strength not easily provoked and could be depended on under any circumstance, while Benedetto seemed excitable and unpredictable.

It was a great compliment to David when this 52-year-old friend of kings asked for his daughter's hand in marriage. Susanna says, "When he proposed for me, Father was pleased and used all his influence to get me to consent."

Both her parents were happy that their daughter would be spared the rough life of a frontiersman's wife. Susanna felt her parents knew what was best for her; nevertheless, she was full of trepidation. How could a twenty-year-old country girl hope to please such a worldly and sophisticated man?

After a three-week acquaintance they were married November 5, 1833, at the Methodist Church in New York City by the Reverend Fitch Reed. She was a beautiful bride, with blue eyes, and light brown hair long enough to sit on; however, she was not a happy one.



The new Signor and Signora Sangiovanni remained in New York for two weeks following their marriage, and then boarded a ship for Florida. Her family came to see them off—Martha trying not to cry; Charles age 17, Amelia 15, Ross 12, Hester 8, and Caroline 6, behaving as if it were a funeral. Susanna stood at the rail with this man she hardly knew, and waved goodbye to all she had known and loved. Tugs moved the ship out of the harbor. The chill November wind filled the sails and they were on their way to a new life. New York's skyline became less distinct, then blended with the gray of the ocean and disappeared.

Susanna wrote, "We went by sea to Savannah, Georgia. While there we saw some Italians your father had known when he was there before. From there we took a stage across the state to Tallahassee, Florida, arriving there (by way of St. Augustine road) a few days before Christmas. Madame Murat was in Tallahassee attending the horse races and other holiday festivities."

The town of Tallahassee centered on capitol square. At the time the Sangiovannis were there, the territorial capitol building was a small two-story wood structure with front porches up and down. The two principle streets running north and south were Monroe and Adams. An early painting of Monroe Street shows wood clapboard shops lining

