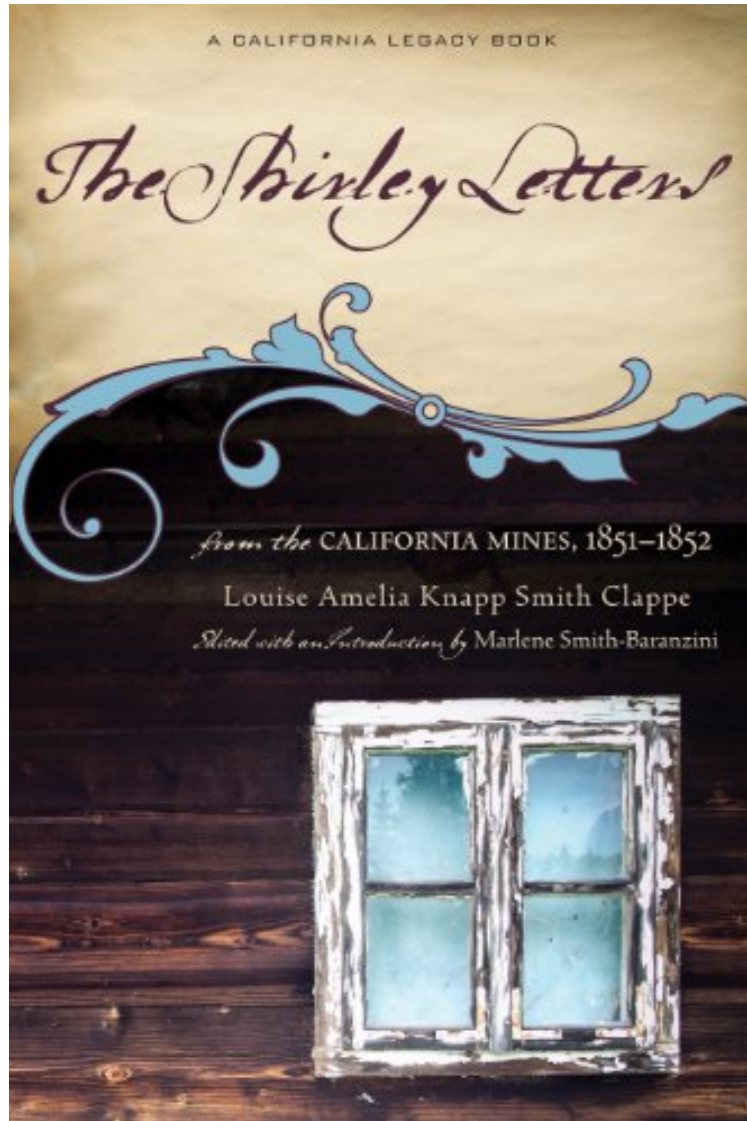


[E-BOOK] The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851-1852

## The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851-1852

*Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe*

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**Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe : The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851-1852** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Shirley Letters from the California Mines, 1851-1852*:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fun reading! By AJ Thompson This is a really fun read for anyone who's interested in California history, especially during the Gold Rush. "Dame Shirley" was quite the observer and storyteller. Though you should probably take her words with a grain of salt, her descriptions of camp life are a joy to read. One note: I started reading from the beginning and was like, "What? These aren't letters." The book begins with a

VERY long essay \*about\* the letters, not with the letters themselves. I thought maybe I had mistakenly downloaded a scholarly study of the letters. Turns out you just have to skip WAY ahead before getting to Dame Shirley's correspondence with her sister. (Also, the letters are a lot more fun and evocative if you imagine them in the voice of Alma Garrett from Deadwood. Trust me.) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Jeffrey Fink Anyone who enjoys the history of the West should get this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating By Lori Harrison S F Opera Fascinating 1st person account of the gold rush

The Shirley Letters, written from the mining camps in 1851 and 1852, are something valuable and rare--a portrait by a woman of an era dominated by men. They offer a vivid picture of gold rush life, from accounts of "murders, fearful accidents, bloody deaths, a mob, whippings, a hanging, an attempt at suicide, and a fatal duel" to bars lined with "that eternal crimson calico which flushes the whole social life of the Golden State," and the rare and welcome luxury of oyster feasts. With the "wild grandeur and awful magnificence" of the Sierra as background, this classic account presents a picture of the gold rush that is at times humorous, at times empathetic, and always trustworthy.

"Of all the writers drawn to California between 1845 and the mid-1860s, [Clappe] speaks with the most original voice. Her only real competition, in my view, is Mark Twain."--James D. Houston, author, *Californians: Searching for the Golden State* "The Shirley Letters is superb reading!" --The Midwest Book From the Publisher A California Legacy book. About the Author Louise Amelia Knapp Smith was born in New Jersey in 1819. In 1848, she married Fayette Clapp and moved to San Francisco, and subsequently to the mining town of Rich Bar in the Sierra foothills. "The Herald" first published Louise's letters and poems in 1851 under the pseudonym of Dame Shirley. In 1856, Louise and Fayette divorced, and she went on to become a well-respected schoolteacher and a leading figure in California's early literary scene. In 1878, Louise moved back to the East Coast, and approximately twenty years later, she retired to Morristown, New Jersey, where she died in 1906. Marlene Smith-Barazini is the associate editor of "California History," the quarterly journal of the California Historical Society. In 1989, she received her M.A. in writing from the University of San Francisco. She is currently working on a biography of Louise Clappe.