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Letter from Augustin Hibbard to Brother [Ashley Hibbard], 1850 Aug. 20

Augustin Hibbard

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Bushy Bar, North fork of the
Middle fork of the American River,
August 20th 1850

My Dear Brother,

Yours of the 6th of May, came to hand yesterday, and, in order that your expectations, may, not be realized, I hasten to reply to it.

I have not written to you, or any, of the family, for more than a year it is true, but you should not conclude from that, I had forgotten, or ceased to think of you. No, my dear brother, that is far from being the case. Many, and, a nights after a days work, hard enough to ensure any man a sound sleep, have I lain awake in my hammock (strung between two trees) and gazed into the starry firmament, above me to distinguish those planets that we had often gazed at in common, at home until I could imagine that my spirit held communion with those loved ones so far away, and, trying to look beyond the stars, often have my midnight supplications, been offered up for the welfare of all of you. But yet (methinks I hear you ask,) why have you not written to me? I must answer, for several reasons, my dear brother. In the first place, you will recollect, that when I wrote you as I was about leaving San Francisco, I told you that I should not write you again until I was able to send you the sum I borrowed of you when I left home, this is one reason, for after I commenced work in the mines, I did very well, making from 10 to \$16 per day,

for some time and as I was in a fair way, to be able to
repay you in a short time and send something home to
assist the family I delayed writing. In the second place. After
working about two months I was taken sick with the fever & ague
followed by inflammation of the kidneys, and dysentery. And for
four months, did nothing. In that four months, I suffered
more than I ever did in my whole life before. I did not
write then, because I would not on any account, that you or
any of the family, should have known my situation then
for it was a critical one. In case of my death. I wrote a letter
for you to be taken charge of by a friend who was very kind
to me, who was to mail it to you with one from himself
giving you the particulars. But a kind providence saw
fit to spare me, and so it was not sent. The place where
I was sick was at Coloma, formerly known as Luther's Mill
As soon as I got able I joined the party with whom I
I had come to the mines, in the mountains. I was then
quite out of funds and in debt to my medical attendant, with
the rainy season, coming upon me, and so disheartening
was the prospect that I could not write to you at that
time although I knew that you must be anxious
concerning me, for I was aware that the truth if made
known to you would only increase that anxiety instead
of allaying it. However, I went to work, as well as I was
able and succeeded in making something, before the rainy
season was over, I had found Chas. May in November & in
January I moved my winter quarters to where he was stopping
I was then, daily expecting to get a letter from you and
others of the family as at that time I had received but one

which was from you and bearing date the 26th of April
weeks passed on and the month of May arrived before I
received any letters from home. Two were from you one bearing
date Sept 27th in which you speak of having written as well as William
by Mr Beauchamp, those letters I never received. The other Oct 4th
sent by Mr Lafleur, in which you mention that you had sent
two by the mail previous including one from Frances
& one from William those I never received. And one
from William by Mr L. O'Dwyer arrived at San Francisco
in June. He visited me week before last, was in good health
and brought me a letter from William & Harriet's likeness
or portrait. You say that you have written fourteen
times & William as many. At present I have received
but six letters from home. Four from you & two from William.

I should have answered them immediately, but have
been deferring it until I should see how this seasons
operations, should turn out. I pray myself & ten
others engaged in turning the stream, that we are
now on, from its bed for about a quarter of a mile
by digging a canal and damming it. We commenced in April
and after four months hard work, have succeeded in getting
the bed of the river pretty dry. It has been an expensive and
difficult undertaking and I do not yet know, whether we shall
get paid for it or not. Although we make some days 30 & \$40 a piece,
there are others engaged in the same operations, both above &
below us on the river, some of whom are making fortunes rapidly.

We are now five Montreuters, strong. Charles Kurezyn
and two young Wicksee sons of weeks the Pottery have bought into
the company. I hope that we shall all do well, but it is lottery a
game of chance.

Charles Perry wishes me to say to you that he has
written to you & will do so again although he has recd.
nothing from you. I hope that will write me on receipt
of this and give me more particulars about the family
and about business. You have never mentioned anything
about your wife and child to me. It was from O'Dwyer
that I learned that you were a father. Let me know
whether you have succeeded in getting our discharge
or not, and how Cairns is getting on I am glad that you
have been able to do something for him, and I trust that
one day we shall be able to pay him & some others.

I have seen nothing of Doctors Babcock or
Adams although I knew that they were in the country
before you wrote. Neither have I seen Laflour. I am in
the enjoyment of the greatest of all blessings here
pleasant health, and trust that our Heavenly Father is
bestowing the same to you all. I shall write again
soon. William may expect a letter from me next
mail. Give my love to Father & Mother and the rest of
the family, tell them all to write to me. Remember me
kindly to Sarah, and give the little girl I have not
seen an Uncle's kiss for me and I remain,

Your affectionate
Brother

Augustus Hibbard