



2-24-1854

## Letter from John W. H. Baker to Julia Ann Baker, 1854 Feb. 24

John W. H. Baker

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Mokelumne Hill Feby. 24th 1854

My dear Wife

I once more in good health and spirits write you from my California home, for I must call my present temporary residence in Mok. Hill my Home. But when I reflect upon my Home in Meriden and all its surrounding attractions of family, friends and pleasant associations I can but call this a pilgrimage and think longingly upon the time it will close. I like most of mankind am led into this separation by my desire for the accumulation of money, and am willing to undergo the privation of social and moral Comforts for the sake of bettering my ability to support and educate those dependent upon my efforts. With such a design for the basis of my desires I intend to return to the enjoyments of my family so soon as I think I have accumulated an amount sufficient to carry out that design. that the time required for that may be short I am desirous as you can be. I am in the luck to receive your letters every two weeks or as regular as the mail arrives, and they are a source of great comfort to me. I suppose you can form but little idea of the real conditions of California and in fact no one can who has not seen the reality. We who are situated in the Villages, or even many of those who live at a distance from town in the smaller mining camps have all or can have all that is necessary to eat, drink or wear. As to food they can enjoy luxuries even, and drink is too abundant, especially those of an intoxicating character. Clothing is the principal article of trade, one would suppose in passing through our town and seeing the Jew Shops that they were in a town entirely composed of Merchant Tailors. clothing can be obtained nearly as cheap as in N. York city. in fact it can be purchased in the city of San Francisco quite as cheap. You wish to know how I get along with my washings, as to that we have an abundance of washermen and women, who are about town almost every day enquiring for clothes to wash. I have sometimes employed a Chinaman and at

others a negro woman to do mine. they both do the washing very well, but the doing up the bosoms & collars cannot be equaled to the polish of home style. I usually let my clothes go for 3 or 4 weeks and then gather them all up and have a large washing. in that way I get some of the smaller things such as Handkerchiefs & socks in the wash without counting ~~x~~ them for at the rate of \$3 or \$4.50, which I have paid, my washings are pretty expensive things. I paid for my last washing \$5.50 for some 20 pieces. The rate of washing is by the dozen. As to the amount of clothing I have a plenty for present use and think when I desire more if it is best to send for them I will write you particularly, but I do not think it would pay as clothing is now selling. I percieve that some of the neighbors are mindfull of you at least so much so as to give you a call. I am sorry to learn that Amelia is no better. I had hoped that she would have recovered from the disease ere this if she did not entirely recover the use of the eye. but it was an ugly disease to treat and required the most rigid observance of rules in such cases in order to accomplish any thin. and I am fully aware of the many obstacles in the way of manageing her case. give her my best wishes for her prosperity and happiness. Tell Col . Colby and wife that I almost envy them the happiness of their old Homestead, for in my estimation he is as happily situated as any one could be in the enjoyment of a good farm from which he can obtain an independence if he is only contented with the slow method of such operations in N.H. I think he would enjoy life there much better than he would that of ranching in the mountains of California. His Apple orch rd could not be found in California, but if I had the produce of his orchard here in good order I would not ask a more productive mine than that and I would leave California in six months with enough to buy two such farms as that.

I suppose you see old Mrs. Wingate & old Mrs. Shattuck occasionally. I wish you to say to them that in my memory of Meriden and its associations I am not forgetfull of them, and with my best wishes for their good health I send them my kind regards. I sometimes think

I will write concerning my kind friends and relations in Meriden, but when I call to mind my almost motherly parting with my dear and cherished Aunt Spaulding, and my farewell shaking of hands with my kind and beloved Aunt Duncan, wishing me success and the blessings of God upon my spiritual as well as temporal condition, I cannot indulge in these reflections without tears in my eyes and a feeling that I have left a community behind me who will have some interest in hearing from me, and in extending to my family in whose society I have left them, the hand and heart of consoling friendship & love.

I know that I have left strong and enduring friends in Meriden and could it have been shown to me that I would have been as prosperous or a little more so than I was the last few years of my residence there I have no doubt I could have enjoyed life there as well as in any place in the world. Give my kind regards to Mr. & Mrs. Blanchard. Inrelation to money matters, I send you some by this mail.

I do not know when Mr. Wingate will go but as it will make no difference in that matter I thought I would do as I said and you can then be sure of your money in season. As to the amount I send you can keep that as much to yourself as you choose as I shall not disclose the amount to any one. I have written Cousin Oliver and Sister Julia a letter which in shall send by this mail.

The amount of the Draft which I send is \$200, and I wish you to expend \$10 or more if necessary in enclosing the plot of ground where our beloved George is buried. that is a thing I ought to have had done long since. I want you to purchase yourself a nice silk dress and have it made in such taste as shall suit you, and the



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remainder I desire you to keep to be expended as is necessary for yourself and the children. Pay mother a years interest on my note, and if she wants any more make her such presents of money or other things as she may desire or need. I believe I am owing Dennison a few dollars. I would like to have you pay him. Send me a little account of your expenditures as I should like to see it. By the time this amount is gone I hope to be able to send you more--If you are at any time short obtain more as I have directed and I will send funds to pay it up--You had better send your draft to Lebanon Bank and get it cashed, or if Stevens is about sending to Boston it would answer the same purpose as the cash to him and perhaps he would pay you the money for it. I think Uncle Duncan would be the best man to send to the Bank by as he is interested in the banking operations and would be as likely to succeed in the obtaining the funds for you as any one I know of--The interest on the amount remaining after making the payments spoken of would be of small account, therefore I would keep the money by you and pay your little bills as fast as you contract them. Give my respects to all enquiring friends. Accepting this

From your Husband

Mrs. Julia Ann Baker  
Meriden, N.H.

John W. H. Baker