



8-7-1854

Letter from John W. H. Baker to Julia Ann Baker, 1854 Aug. 07

John W. H. Baker

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Recommended Citation

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Mokelumne Hill, August 7th, 1854

My Dear Wife

I am still in the land of Indians, Chinese, Negros, Spaniards, Germans, French, English, etc, etc. In seven days more a space of time marking the lapse of one year will have gone since I left my dear Wife and much loved children for the purpose of obtaining the means for our mutual advantage and support in life. I have passed through many scenes since that time which were new and wonderfull to me. I have become acquainted with some of the customs and habits of various nations, in fine I have recieved a very enlarged view of the manner in which other prople than those of my native State live and flourish and in some cases, die. I had very little idea of the difference of climate, soil and productions. (in fact no one can realize the actual differenc in those things without actual observation) of the different portions of the earth previous to my leaving my N. England home. I have seen times when I would have given all I had of earthly goods to have been with you and my children. Again I have thought it my duty to persevere in my undertaking hoping it would prove successfull. So far I must say I have been more successfull than I had thought I might be when I left home. You have probably ere this time recieved some \$300 which I sent out on the 1st of July and which testifies as to some parts of my success. I am yet doing very well and have now some \$400 on hand which I think I shall send you about the first or middle of September. I am indebted to no one here, except Johnson & Co. (Druggists of San Francisco) of whom we purchase our Drugs&Medicines I am no owing them some \$75, which I stand ready to meet at any time that they present their draft. I have debts due me as my share probably of \$1500, of which I may possibly be able to collect \$500. the remainder is worthless. then I possess property to the amount of \$1000 (&which I think will sell for that at almost any time). From this statement

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of my progress in business you can percieve that I am advancing a little. I now reckon myself worth about \$2000. whereas when I left Meriden I could only reckon myself at \$600 or \$700, which was the amount I had cleared over and above my support and necessities for the long space of nine years accompanied by the severe labor and many hard usages of a N. England Physician. I now think if my life is spared and prosperity given me, I shall be able to return in a year or a year and a half from this time with a property worth from 3 to 5 thousand dollars. with which I think I can locate myself very comfortably. But every such calculation is shrouded in darkness and uncertainty and we can only talk of them with a hope to realize them, or as we usually term it, anticipate the enjoyment of such things.

You wrote me that you recieved the miniature which I sent, but that the box contined no presents for the children. I put in two pieces of Gold coin valued at \$2.50 each and marked them with the children's names, and then over the box I put a strong leather cover, sewing it thoroughly in every part, marked the leather with you name and residence. then over that a wrapper of white paper sealed with wafers and sealingwax, and then superscribed with you name and place of residence, and if the box was opened, when all these precautions were taken, and the coins removed, I can only say they are welcome to the money, while I must believe them a pack of thieves. I paid the express charge here of \$2.50 for the safe delivery of the package, and have their reciept for the same. But if they are so mean as to open and remove money from such packages I have reason to think they might have demanded pay of you for the transportation of the same. Did you pay anything for the package? if so, how much?

Satur day Morn, Aug. 12th. I have been pretty busy since I wrote the above. We are having some cases of Remittant & Intermittant Fever

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which is giving us a little increase in our business. We have done (up to this morning) during the present week over \$300 worth of good business and of that amount have recieved \$200 in cash. That I think is pretty well for less than one week. But with all that I do not think "my Pile" will be made any too quick.

I wrote you in my last that Dr. H. might possibly buy me out, but from some circumstances which I have observed since I think he would not do so. His wife is so homesick that I think he would be discouraged from the idea of any further outlay of cash although in six months he would be able to pay for my share and in one year would realize a profit of nearly \$2000, without any doubt. So from these appearances I shall probably remain in Co. with him for some time, and I do not know that I could do better than to remain where I am, for change of location in California is a very poor place as a general thing, the more so especially if one is doing well where he is--

I should not think strange if Holbrook would be ready to return with me if I remain here untill a year from next Spring, (the time I have limited for my stay in California), The Dr. has just returned from a ride of some 16 miles distant for which we are to recieve \$50. Night before last I rode out about 7 miles and recieved before starting from my office \$32 in coin--Such business beats old Meriden. I write you some of the particulars with the expectation that you will like to hear them, and not from pride. I do not want you to report such things and expect you do not. I would send on another draft immediately but I wish to hear from the reception of my last before sending more--If that comes to hand safely you may expect another, as soon as the time for it to go is sufficient after the news of its arrival. I shall expect to have a return from the draft as soon as the first of Sept.

In my letter to you I suggested the settlement of O's

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affairs by an administrator. I wish the friends there to do as they think best in that respect without regard to what I say. John Storrs says he recieved a Power of Attorney from O. before he left. if so he can collect every thing which is collectable here, but it is my opinion O's family will never realize a dollar from anything of his debts here, as they are all of the poorest kind--John Storrs says as far as he is concerned O' shall not loose a dollar by him, but he says he would not give much for the debts due him here.

Tell the children I am very sorry that their presents are lost. If I have an opportunity to send them a present some other time I will do so, otherwise they must be very good children and when I return I will try and bring them a very pretty present, (Perhaps a ring)

Give my very best respects to Jane & Hannah. I am sorry to hear that Jane is so feeble in health and hope soon to hear that she is improving--Mr. Baldwin it appears is still afflicted with sickness in his family which I am pained to hear. I had sincerely hoped they would be permitted to raise their present children, to see them well and robust, and have them as a consolation and support in their approaching age--

Tell them that I sympathize with them and if it were possible I would rejoice in being able to relieve the sickness of their child. Give them my best respects with a hope to see them again before many years pass by--I would like to know what Mr. Wingate is doing. When is he going to locate in business? Remember me to him and the whole family. Where is A. Winkley and what is he doing since he sold to Cole? ~~Remember me to him and the whole family~~ Is Justine Spaulding at Meriden? Why does he not write me? Give my kind regards to Uncle Spaulding and

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family. Do you hear from your relatives in Chesterfield? Where is Sarah? I wrote Brother Silas some time since but have no return from the letter. Do you hear from Him? Are Geo. & Diana at Hamilton yet? I have made various inquiries concerning the people about you and your relatives, as you have said nothing concerning them in your letters for some time past, and with these inquiries I close my letter hoping to recieve every thing in the way of news by your letter after the reception of this,

From your Affectionate Husband

Mrs. Julia Ann Baker
Meriden, N. H.

John W. H. Baker