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84/111 c	Hillabold, Adam	1850 letter - 1 page	Xerox
82/62 c	Gridley, George	1850 letters - 12 pages	"

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Mariner's Grove
Cedar County, Iowa
March 31, 1850

Dear Brother,

In compliance with your request I sit down with
pen in hand to inform you of our whereabouts, - our
journey, doings, & c. of the last week. We are all
well with the exception of some bad colds, all in good
spirits, strong in the faith, -determined to persevere,
press on and if possible reach the "promised land" of
gold.

For information in regards to the rout (sic) we have
come, rate of traveling per day, state of the roads,
country passed through, & c., since the date of George's
letter, I will give you some extracts from a sort of
traveling journal which I am trying to keep.

Monday, 25th. Traveled 25 miles, by Shabnees
Grove - Pawpaw Grove. At night, put up at night at
Melugin's Grove, Lee Co. Road good - Excellent country -
Prairies large, but interspersed with fine groves of timber.
Three other California teams in company. Tuesday 26th.
Traveled 26 miles - Roads fine - Weather rather cold -
Passed through Inlet, Kennebee (2 small towns), ferried
Rock river at Dixon. Put up at Sugar Grove 5 miles west
of Dixon, in Lee Co. Wednesday 27th. Made 25 miles -
Roads fine - Went through Sterling and Como (small towns
on Rock river). Put up at Unionville, Whiteside Co.
Country between Rock and Mississippi rivers sandy, sterile
and thinly settled and poorly cultivated. Thursday 28th.
Traveled 22 miles - Crossed the Mississippi at Fulton
City, Whiteside Co., Illinois. River here is 95 rods
wide, 20 ft - deep in the channels - takes about 10
minutes to cross over one team. Paid two dollars for ferriage.
Landed at Lyon (Clinton Co.) a small town on the Iowa side -
Put up at night 12 miles west of the Miss. Road generally
good, some very bad places - Country very thinly settled.

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Friday 29th. Traveled 25 miles. Roads very bad -
crossed many small streams - much wet and rotten prairie.
First 10 miles no inhabitants - Passed through DeWitt
County seat of Clinton Co. Saw Hankins of McHenry there.
He had been laying at D. W. 2 weeks and was going to stay
there until the first of this week - Crossed the Wapsipi-
nicon, a stream about 10 rods wide - deep and rapid -
Ferryage \$1.20. Staid (sic) near the river, in Scott Co.
Saturday 30th. Made 19 miles. Roads generally
good - Very few inhabitants. Large prairies, timber and
water very scarce. Grain and hay dear, not much to be
had at any price. Oats 31 cents, corn 37 1/2 cts. per
bushel. The Californians have drained the country of
nearly all the hay and grain there is in it. The
emigration through here is immense. Fourteen teams staid
at this place last night. Every road, tavern, and place
where it is possible for a man or beast to stay is literally
thronged with the gold hunters; and without the country
beyond here is better supported with provender than this,
I don't know but we will have to wait for grass before we
reach Councils Bluffs. There are many who having started
too early are now lying by; and we do not know but we
shall have to do so too. We are now about 25 miles
east of Iowa City. from there to Councils Bluffs is
275 or 300 miles, if we keep on traveling at the rate we
have we shall reach it in 14 or 15 days. We intend to
reach Iowa City tomorrow, where we shall have to determine
upon the course to be pursued. We have not yet laid in our
supplies of horse feed and have not made up our minds upon
what we shall get nor where we shall get it. We bought
oats and corn in Lee Co. Ill. to last up to this time, -
paid 22 cts. for oats, 25 for corn. We feed about a
bushel of oats and corn to each span of horses - feed but
twice a day. Our teams are in about the same condition
they were when we started; We have generally bought one
meal a day and have lodged in houses when we could - Some
of us have slept in our waggons for the last three or four
nights - have had our stove out but once. The provisions

we started with are about half gone; we foot it most of the time and have the very best of appetites. Our traveling Expenses up to this date amount to forty dollars. By the distances in our journals we have traveled 199 miles, averaging 20 miles per day, Sundays included.

Chancy Hoffman overtook us at Samonauk, a week ago today and has kept with us since Avila. Rose's Company is now with us, but we have not been together all the time since we started. Mr. Kieffer thinks he will not write to his folks till he reaches Council Bluffs. Tell his folks he is well, and merry as ever. Upon the reception of this, if you will write immediately and direct to Council Bluffs, Nebraska Ter., your letter will probably get there before we leave the place - Write and give us a full account of matters and things at and around home.

You will probably hear from some of us about every week.

After reading our letters, please send them to William and Mary. Give my love to Father and Mother and all the rest of the folks; tell them we are bound to see the elephant, and when we get a sight of him we will let you know how he looks.

Your affectionate brother,

John T. Gridley

To Elisha Gridley

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Placerville, California

Aug. 4th/50

Brother Elisha,

After a long and somewhat tedious journey, I have the pleasure of informing you that we are at length safely arrived at the diggings of California. We came by the way of Salt Lake - arrived there June 19th - left the 25th, and arrived here the 31st of July. We have all been in good health, and spirits, with very few exceptions, ever since our departure from home. George had an attack Cholera morbus on the Platte river. Mr. Parsons, Linebeck, C. Clingman and myself were all sick a few days, between South Pass and Salt Lake with a mountain fever. Otherwise, we have been in perfect health. We left our waggon and tent a few miles this side of the desert and packed the rest of the way through. We lost none of our horses that we started with from home. An old broken-down horse that we bought at the Bluffs gave out on the Humboldt river about 400 miles back. The others were very much reduced when we got through. We sold all but one - they brought from 16 to \$35.00 each.

We have been here but 4 days and cannot yet give you much information about matters and things in California. We have not received a line from home since we started - I shall send to Sacramento City for letters, by a man going there, tomorrow. We found J. Howard at this place and a number of other acquaintances - some from our vicinity have got through and some are still on the road. Mr. Barnes from Antioch came through this season - has been here a few days - has seen enough of California, and sets out upon his return tomorrow. Thinking that you would be anxious to hear from us I have written these few lines to send to you by him. For further information and particulars you must wait until we have had more acquaintance with

the business, circumstances and operations of the country.

Say to the friends of the others of our mess, that they may expect to hear from them soon. We will all write soon as we get letters from home, or as soon as we can give you a fair description of matters and things here - As for myself I am not in the least degree homesick and have never for a moment regretted my embarkation in the expedition - I hope soon to hear from you and I will write you a longer letter as quick as I conveniently can.

The most of this was written in the dark of the evening and all of it in a hurry as the writing plainly evinces, excuse the errors and brevity and oblige your Affectionate Brother.

John T. Gridley

To Elisha Gridley

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Dry Creek, California

Oct 14th, 1850

Dear Father,

By my long silence you may have reason to think that I may have forgotten all about our friends at home, but such I assure you is not the case. The society of friends, the comforts and endearments of home have been often brought to remembrance amid the toils, privations and wanderings of the last half year of my life Not even the luxuries (sic) of life in California (as Elisha mentioned) have been able to make me forget home.

You have probably ere this received the few lines I sent by Mr. Barnes written upon our arrival. George has written twice since, one letter was directed to Fredrick Ormsby with the bad news of Mr. Hickox's death, the other was written to Elisha from Nevada City about five weeks ago. If these have been received you are already acquainted with our doings and journeyings up to that date. A day or two after George wrote I was taken with bilious fever, was quite sick for four or five days but soon recovered. We stayed at Nevada about ten days, but could find nothing that would pay us for working, the mines have been very rich about that place so that thousands have rushed in there and everything worth working is occupied and claims are held very high.

George and Charles worked a few days while I was sick but could not make more than three or four dollars each, per day, not being satisfied with such pay, we concluded to look for diggings elsewhere. So we sold our tools, took passage in a waggon to Sac. City and left. A drive of two days and a half brought us to the City, a place pleasantly situated on a beautiful stream and surrounded by a large extent of open country called the Valley of the Sacramento. In size it will compare to what Chicago was eight or ten years ago. In business it will vie with any place its size in the States. We here sold the horse, which was on a ranch five miles above the City. We got

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eighty dollars for him. After remaining in the City a day or two we took passage on a loaded wagon for this place. We arrived here three weeks ago last night and have been to work here ever since. The mines here are not rich and consequently are not as badly crowded as they are in many other places. The miners here are making from three to eight dollars per day - we have not averaged more than five - some days we get but two or three dollars and some times eight or nine - small business indeed for those who expected to make a fortune of four or five thousand the first three months but as I was not quite as sanguine of success as some, the disappointment to me is not as great as it is to many others. People who have come to California this year find it altogether different than what they had pictured in their imaginations, instead of a land so rich in gold that they had but to stoop to pick up a fortune - where gold was so plenty that it was impossible to miss it they have found a place where others have been before and made their fortunes and have merely left the gleanings for them. All the rich placers have either been worked out or are held by men who came in last year. Men who were in the mines last year supposed them to be inexhaustable, but of all who came here this year none are so much disappointed as those who were here last year; upon returning to their old diggings they find that others have discovered them and worked them out. There is scarcely a ravine, gulch, bar, or stream in California but what has been thoroughly prospected and every place that will pay well which has not been worked out is crowded with miners, and thousands of men are traveling in every direction over the country hunting for places to dig, We have not yet determined where we shall work next winter- we have laid in our supplies and provisions and bought us a tent here - we bought six hundred lbs. of flour for which we paid nineteen and 1/4 dollars per hund. and half a barrel of pork at twenty eight dollars, 65 lbs. of potatoes at 18 cts. per lb. The prospects for winter diggings here are rather poor. The creek is now

nearly dry so that the bars and bed of the stream can be worked, but after the rain commences these will have to be abandoned and mining operations will have to be confined to banks of streams, and ravines which are now dry. We intend to work here awhile yet, then look around some and if we can find a place where we think we can do better we shall move to it. But we find traveling and prospecting is too expensive - it is better to stay in one place and work for small wages than to spend time and money looking for rich diggings. It cost us to travel from Hangtown to Nevada City, a distance of 70 miles, about 30 dollars each. From Nevada to Sacramento, 80 miles, we paid 8 dollars for our passage - meals cost 75 cts. \$1.50. For passage from Sacramento to this place we paid \$10.00 each. Our winters provisions, tent and what we have eat since we have been here have cost us somewhere about eighty dollars each. Our tent (a very good one, about 12 feet square) cost us \$50.00 It will take some time the way we are making money now to cover the costs of coming out here, getting back again and pay us for our time besides. I want to stay here long enough to make that if I can and then, without I can see better prospects than I can now, I shall be satisfied to go home and stay there. While I was writing this a man by whom we had sent to the City for letters, arrived bringing a long and interesti-g letter from home. It is impossible to concieve with what pleasure a letter from distant home and is received and read, it makes me feel almost as though we were at home again. If I could have one to read every Sunday and some newspapers to read evenings I do not know but I should forget that I am in California 2500 miles from anyplace where a human being ought to live. By the way, I wish you would send me a paper or two now and then, the smallest favors from home will be thankfully and gladly received. At all events do not neglect to write often to.

Your affectionate son

John T. Gridley

Give my love to mother and all the family.

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Dry Creek, California

Nov. 25, 50

Dear Friends,

I have put off writing hoping to hear from home and answer you at the same time. J. wrote 5 weeks ago. Since then we have been well and hearty, have worked steady but not made a pile, the mines here are not rich and I don't (sic) know where they are. Last week we made about 100\$. week before 300, before that 150 and 7\$ is the most that we have taken out in a day.

We were driven out of good diggings week before last by the water, shall go prospecting this week, which is dull business. The weather was fine up till last Thursday when it began to rain, the streams are rising fast. There has been a good many deaths by Cholera in Sac. City, some in the mines, there is none now.

We have paid 23 1/2\$ for a sheet iron stove with dishes for six which with a good tent will make us comfortable. We have our provisions laid in, so we can live well if we make nothing. We paid 31 cts. for apples, potatoes 28, sugar 23-5, flour 17 - 18\$ P cwt, cheese (sic) and butter 75 - 80, raisins 50 cts. The rest of the men from our place I know nothing of. Charles is well except the toothache.

Linebeck was here the 1st of Oct, he had made nothing, but was bound to make a pile before he went home. I make no calculations for a great pile though a man can clear 3\$ a day and not half try.

You asked how long our co kept together - Parsons left at Salt Lake, divided on Sunday and went with Lathrop, much to the satisfaction of all. the rest of us divided 12 miles this side of the desert where we left the last waggon (sic) and tent.

I am anxious to get a letter to know how you all get along and how the crops came in - if there is not money to

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pay Schurtz and the other debts from them we must send home some; if it is not needed we had rather keep it by us for we may want to use it next summer.

If Mr. Kieffers want (sic) to have the house finished off I would like to have you make arrangements for it, by selling such stock as you think proper or paying in the fall - the latter I prefer unless Andrew wishes to get them off his hands; if Andrew wishes to dig a well or do any other work let him do it and pay in stock if the crops will not.

Louisa says she would go to School if we done well or if the crops came in well. I want her to go in any case, be prudent and improve the time. Sell something of John's or mine to pay the schooling.

William and Joseph must write us some letters. When we write to one we write to all. It is hard work to write - our table is made of willows with a cloth over them and has got the rickets, and my back is broke leaning over the pork barrel. I hope Papa will write and give us some good advice - but I don't know as we could follow it here - my love to all.

G. G. (write often)

To All the Friends at home,

As George has left a vacant half of the sheet, I will occupy a part of it, though I have nothing of importance to write. Elisha thinks shooting buffalo on the plains is no very big business after one gets used to it. I never tried it but half a day and came to the conclusion that the business was a little too big for me. One morning when we were in the buffalo range about 200 miles up the Platte, I left the camp in company with 4 or 5 others, and set out upon a hunt. It is not like hunting deer or other game at home; there the first thing is to find them; but here the difficulty is in killing. We left the road which winds along the river bottom and went out among the sand bluffs to the north; here I saw a sight which was beyond anything I had ever seen in the line of stock - every hollow and ravine, far as eye could reach was a living, moving, mass,

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of buffalo meat. It was no trouble to get within close shooting distance, but our bolts seemed to have no other effect than to make them shake their heads, lift their tails and run in with the herd, after chasing them nearly all the forenoon over the hills of sand and wounding many of them; we succeeded in hitting a large bull in a vital part and brought him down; each one took as much meat as could be conveniently carried and started to overtake the teams. after walking rapidly as we could for three miles through the sand we came to the river bottom which was here 4 or 5 miles wide and covered with a heavy growth of grass we took an oblique course across the flat so as to intercept the teams at a point where we thought it would be likely to wait at noon; but we had to run around sloughs, wade creeks, tramp through the tangled grass and shoot at wolves (the large kind-very numerous) and did not reach the teams until 2 or 3 o'clock - it was the hardest day's work I ever done - You ask how the meat relishes, is better than good fat beef? It is about as fat and tender as old Van Burens would be after running all winter to grass.

Charlotte wishes to know if we had as easy times as we expected - I never expected easy times - travelling 30 miles a day - walking 2/3 of the time - taking care of the team and being on guard nights, is anything but easy - We had but very little hot weather during the whole journey - in Salt Lake valley and along the Humboldt we had some rather warm days - the weather here though warm, is not as hot as it frequently is at home - It is said to be as cold now as it will be anytime through the winter; and the weather is about the same as it is in Oct. at home, freezes a little nights, in wet places, when it does not rain, but is quite warm in the middle of the day.

Tell Barbara that I am not sure of getting that lump of gold but I think George can give her a setting out when he gets home, if he takes the pewter plates, tin

cups and sheet iron stove with him - It was naughty in Michael to fool the girls so about getting married - he is old enough to be in earnest about such things - Louisa wishes to know how we think she and Barbara would stood the journey if they had started - I think, that like many of the horses, they would have given out before they got half way here - California is a hard place and but few women would be contented to stay here long enough to make anything although their labor is valuable - We have not made any calculations as to the length of time we shall stay here - may stay 2 or 3 years if we can do well, if not we will not want to stay as long - We have about 600 dollars on hand now. Best wishes to all.

Best respects to all,

John . Gridley

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Sacramento City

Dec 10th, 50

Dear Brother,

Your welcome letter of Sept 10th we got 2 weeks since. We have just written you that we wished to keep our dust to operate on, but the failure of the crops, the losses by storm, and disease among the stock compels to send you some of our sub soil. 300\$ I pay 8pct, 24\$ and you get 300 clear. I send by Adams Express to the mint at Phil., Penn.

Pay my debts. The rest do as you see fit with and keep a fit act. I am sorry for Andrew and the rest of the farmers, but we have failures here too - if you can let my house, job and pay in the full from crops or in stock do so if you think best - We prospected on Sutters Creek last week, cost us 30\$, came back to Dry Creek where we shall winter. have had a weeks rain, the roads now are good, the weather for 10 days has been cool freezing nights. Our prospects for the winter are poor.

It is night and I must close - Give our love to all the folks. Speaking of fitting Black H. - a bad business, hardly know what to do with myself. rocking with horses, ha! do you rock yours by the horsepower? I will describe in my next the mode.

I got here today 1 o'clock leave in the morning - it looks dark and rainy.--I hear that Russell Easton is dead. Rice was not expected to live when he left.

Goodnight.

Geo Gridley

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