

UC Davis Special Collections

D-329 2:51: Transcription of Letter from John B. Lewis to Elizabeth Lewis, August 30, 1849

This transcription contains language contemporaneous of the time and is being presented as part of a historical record. Please note that the transcription has not been reviewed for final editing.

San Francisco Aug 30, 1849

My Dear Wife

I have just arrived safe and sound after a long and tedious passage of 102 days. We left Accapules the 16th of July supposing it would take 15 to 20. We there took on Bread and Pork which lasted about 25 We then we had to go back on our old Pea bread, musty, mouldy and hard as a rock. Pork was middling. We have had pretty good water and Provisions, enough such as they were, although they were not fit for a hog at home. We are here in good spirits. I never was as fat before and perfectly heathy. G. Bement, we hear arrived here some 4 weeks since and has hired out at \$1000 for four months, gone to the mines, all machines are thrown away; Gold in plenty, a person is sure of 1 ounce per day and a chance for 20. Property is lying around exposed, everything upside down, everybody tells a different story. I have been ashore a few moments.

The G. Cosster has arrived with our boats and we have one here in use. Most of our goods are here. I wish they were all back in N.Y. Lumber is worth \$100 for a 100 feet, and a Dry Goods Box brings \$8 to \$10. Every Company has disbanded; every man on his own. Carpenters get 12 to 16 dollars per day. Common laborers get 8 to 10, Board \$2 per day. The mail closes to-morrow and I must send this to-night ashore, so I will write you again and have more particulars. I am now writing in the Storage on a box. Sometimes I can see and sometimes not. There has been all kinds of rumors here about our thinking we were lost. We had five clear all the time since we left until we came on the coast, it was so misty all the time, so we were four days looking for the harbor, anchoring at nights and sending out our Boats. I know you are anxious to know new but I can not tell you much now. Those who came across the country offer very much. They held a meeting to-day on shore to send to relieve those who may come across the desert. I got two letters, one from you dated May 21st, one from Wm June 25 perhaps there are more in the office for me' it is so dark I can see no more, so Good by my dearest one, I was thankful to hear you were well and little sonny. Give my love to all friends. I will try and write a few lines more, in this a thousand kisses for you and our dear little son from your affectionate husband.

John B. Lewis

Friday Morning

I've a few moments to ad a few lines. Everything is quiet and peaceful on shore and at the mines, All property is perfectly safe left in your tent as they have good laws and no one dares to make any disturbance. There has been two men hung for Stealing. We find all nations represented, two vessels came in with us from New Zealand and four to six are coming in every day. Many passengers were up all night writing, we will be obliged to tend out for the present. I

wish Mr Cowles would say to Mr. Hutchcock that it would be a good speculation to send around a few of his cheap wash stands and chairs. The stands will bring some \$5 to \$8 each. I will write him about the particulars. Bureaus are not worth much. There are a few frame Buildings. They were brought from the states. Most of them are merely small frames with Canvas stretched over them. They are made in the same way as a safe. I am in such confusion I do not know what I am about. Will write again immediately.

From your aff Husband

J. B. Lewis

Mr Hawes Is well, have lost one of our lamps; M Lohmangs he come around the home.

Sunday eve, Oct 16, 1849

Dear Lib.

I went to the city to day hearing that the Cal-Mail had arrived last night and found this letter—which I hasten to send to you. The mail leaves Monday next and I am sorry that I have no letter of yours to send. I am writing myself, to John and shall tell him that you will soon be here, when you will take the opportunity to write by _____ Steamers. Jane, Cousin Rebecca and little Henry are here, all in good health and spirits. We have taken dinner and tea at the Mansions by invite and spent the time quite pleasantly. They took the ladies out to ride in their carriage and are very attentive. Jane says she will write soon, wishes her husband to recollect it come after her when she gets ready to leave. I cannot write much now, hope you will be prepared to return as soon as Jane gets back Kate may come up with her, such is now the calculation I shall be lonesome enough while she is gone.

Love from all

Mr H. W. m Bement