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MC194:Folder 18 to Mudd, George to Brother[Mudd, Stephen?] and Sister, 1880 March 8

This transcription from the original letter contains language contemporaneous of the time and is being presented as part of a historical record.

Germantown is nearer my place than Jacinto so address me there.

Germantown, Colusa Co., Cal,
March 8th, 1880

Dear Brother and Sister

I wrote to you Feb. 26th having received your letter of Jan 14th a few days before and informed you of my send-ing 10£ to you, and telling you how to draw [?] it. I ordered it drawn on the Bank of England but as I told you, when I received the "Second of Exchange" I found it drawn on the "Oriental Bank Corporation" London. You will find it just as good. Don't take any less for it than 10£ if you have not drawn it already. All expenses are paid on it, and it is the same as the gold to any business man. I send you the "Second of Exchange" with this letter. If the first did not come to hand all right, this second will draw the money, but if the money is drawn this one is no value and would not be paid. If you draw the money with this one, then the other would be of no account. The money can be drawn only once. I should like to hear from you again as soon as possible. Let me know what improve-ment you are making, and what the prospect is of a permanent cure? And what your physician has to say in regard to it. I hope your "Strait Jacket" will fix you up again all right. Give yourself good nourishment, now that you have some-thing to buy it with, and if you get so as to get around again pretty well, do not pitch in to work again right off, but give yourself time to strengthen up again. Exercise sufficient to get your body to working again all right, but not enough to retard recovery. And when you do get to work, be careful not to overdo, and do not attempt any heavy lift. It will pay you to do this; for if you cecover you will live and be able to support your family; but if you break down again, you may never recover, and your family will be left without support. Better to have the pinch now, than have the pinch always. If you need any more assistance, let me know in time, so you will not have to wait for it while you have nothing. I do not want you to want or to have to beg, while you are unable to work. I have got no ready money, but will try and keep you supplied with enough to live on, as you may need it. Bro. Will, would send you assistance too, if he could raise any money. He and family are all well. If you were out here, we could support you and not feel it much, but if you need much Doctoring, that would cost a good deal here. If things turn out well after harvest, we may possibly be in a condition to assist you in getting out if you are able to travel.

You think I have got a good deal of land, and wonder how I got it all. I can tell you by hard work, energy, enterprise, perseverance, and industry, and striking or getting to the right place (or right

country) at the right time. I got a start, - by being sober, steady, industrious and economical; and built up a credit and reputation by the same means. You will think it a fine thing to control all this, but if you had it all to manage, you ~~not~~ would find that there was no fun about it. And yet I do not work with my hands a great deal, but have an immense amount of brain-labor to do. I have a great deal of driving or riding to do, (often far into the night) which you, of course, will think is a fine thing; but if you had it to do, and the business connected with it, you would find no easy thing. I started farming with about 220 or 230£, or about eleven hundred and fifty dollars, and part of that was lent out, and I have not got it yet. I shall have been farming here ten years after harvest. The work here is constant, from one years end to the other, but is more severe in the summer than at other times; then it is almost night and day, and it is Sunday and week day too. It is very hot in summer, rising as high as 127 degrees in the shade, but usually ranging from 100 to 112 or 114 degrees in the shade by the Thermometer. If it was a damp climate it would be impossible to work during the heat of the day, but it is dry and cloudless in summer; so that death by sun-stroke is extremely rare; but when it gets up to 120 degrees, or thereabouts, we stop work, as the horses and mules cant [sic] stand it, any more than the men. It wears very heavy on a man who has a large business to carry on. I have to be very careful, since I was so sick three or four years ago, and if I don't get some of it off my hands, it will kill me in a few years. But I'll stick to it till I either make a small fortune or come out with nothing. I have "set my stakes" (you wont understand that) I have laid my plans for from fifty to one hundred thousand dollars, and I will never willingly stop with less than the fifty. I keep from eight to fifteen men during winter, and in summer from fifteen to thirty; in harvest with a full crew, about thirty. I keep about forty head of work stock, horses and mules — no oxen, and a few young stock growing. We keep four or five cows; plenty of pigs for meat. I killed and made into bacon about fifty-five pigs this winter, and will use nearly all of it during the year, besides forty or fifty sheep, the sheep I buy. We can raise all the poultry we have a mind to. We have never sold any eggs (although it is customary to do so). I believe in eating all we want at home, of good things, eggs range in price from 8 pence to 2 S. 1 D a dozen, at different times of the year. My wife sells a few dozen poultry every year, and we have all we want to eat. It will seem to you that I use but very few men to do so much work, but we use labor-saving machinery here far superior to that in England; if we did not we could not sell wheat in Liverpool for less than the England farmer can afford to grow it for, as we now do, and that after traveling by ship 16 or 18,000 miles. We have to pay three or four times the wages that the English farmers does, and if we had to employ as many hands to do the same amount of work we should have to quit wheat raising. One instance of this I will give — here, one man drives six and eight animals, with from two to six plows attached together, called gang-plows. In England it would take four or five men to do the same work. In harrowing, it is the same; and in harvesting everything works on the same principle. We cut, and thrash and sack our grain in the field [sic]; large farmers do all at the same time, cutting it and elevating it into wagons (no binding) and hauling it to the steam thrasher, and feeding it from the wagon to thrasher. Smaller farmers cut, and stack it right in the field [sic], and the thrashers go from one farm to another till all are thrashed. The wheat is then hauled by team and wagons to the railway or to the River, to the steamboats. On very large farms, it is often seen that 1000 to 1500 sacks of wheat containing two bushels and a quarter each, is cut, and thrashed and landed on the Bank of the River, all in one day, and all going through one thrasher. The grain is cut by machines called Headers, cutting a swath of ten to sixteen feet wide. I have two twelve foot Headers, but

generally use three; and one steam thrasher. I cut and thrash all at the same time. A fair day's work for me in good grain is from 1000 to 1500 bushels, but in poor grain, less.

You have got family enough for your age and circumstances. You are like most English people, — your family increases faster than your fortune; but in this country if the children are any account as they grow up; they are a fortune in themselves. California children—a great many of them—partake of the nature of the country, that is, are fast, or as you would express it, forward. I had some pictures taken the other day and if they come to hand before I send this, I will send you one, if they suite me. Will send some of wife and children as soon as I get a chance to have some taken. I carry my age pretty well yet, but am getting somewhat grey headed. I omitted to say, that I have got an orchard and vineyard, all planted by my own hands. Have apples, pears, peaches, plums, prunes, nectarines, apricots, figs, walnuts, almonds, cherries, and grapes. So that I literally “live under my own vine and fig tree” and “no man to make me afraid” except those I owe money to. Tell your Johnnie that when he gets here, he can ride the horses, and drink all the milk he wants.

From your Brother,

Geo. Mudd,

Germantown, Colusa Co.

California, U.S. of America