

Virginia, Cal..
Mar. 18 1860

Father & Mother

Having a day or two ago rec'd a letter from Bro Tho's and he saying you wished me to write. I write with pleasure notwithstanding I wrote to you only a week or so ago.

I am glad Mother has got well and that all are in good health. Well father no doubt you think strange why I don't tell you plainer or more about how I am doing and what I making but it is just this way a person mining never knows one day what he may do the next when I wrote to you before I was doing better than I have ever done. Since that time I have not done so well – this week I have done better than expected. I may do well from this on and I may make nothing – I took out the largest piece of gold today that I have ever taken out it weighed an ounce (being worth \$16.50) I think it likely that my claim will pay well from this on but as to being certain I can't. I can only wish for the best and work for the result. My living (that is provisions) costs me about \$4.50 per week. That has to come every week whether I make any thing or not—then our water (for mining) costs from \$10.00 to \$18.00 per week besides a great deal of other expenses such as lumber picks shovels and so on so you see there is a great expense attached to a living here.

Sometimes provisions are tolerably low here and again very high – there is no standing prices for anything Beef is 12 ½ cts – Bacon 25 cts Pork from 15 to 22 ½ cts Butter 50 cts. Eggs 50 cts and about that way every thing else rates - If a person wants to work for the wages he can get about \$30.00 or \$35.00 per month so you see wages are low—up in the mountains wages are higher- A man can make a little__ working for wages but a man of any enterprise wont do it unless compelled to –I have long since resolved to work myself and not for others if there is anything to be made on my work I want to make it myself so if I work for wages here it will be when I cant help myself My claim which I am now working I think will last about 4 months. My partner (Mr Andrews) will continue working it (with hired help) and I am going to open another claim which I think is good it will cost us about \$400.00 to open it—so you see all I have is in Mining claims and if they turn out well I am in fair circumstances if they dont my time and the money it will cost will be lost.

Well Father I have now told you what I am doing and what I think I shall do. but tomorrow every thing may be changed. Mining is so uncertain that a man cant tell how long he will work at the same place- It is now very warm here. I would like to go to the mountains to spend the Summer as it is much more healthy up there but the way I am situated I shall most likely stay here all Summer.

There is a great talk and excitement about secession. I am not streaneous at all but will go with the South should there be a dissolution of the Union..

My friend Mr Brodie is going to return home next fall and wants me to go at that time but I cant tell yet how it will be if I have good success this Summer I may go and if not I shall not Mr Brodie lives near Van Buren Arkansas he was up today to see me he starts in a few days for the mountains to spend the Summer.

I hope all are doing well at home. Tom says you don't receive but few letters from me I dont know why it is for I write very often I shall continue to write regularly. I wish all to write often as I am always glad to hear from home

I close wishing all good success

Yours affectionately
W P Jones