

Levi Baker Letters

Capt. Edward Baker Collection, DAL.MSS.045

Capt. Levi Baker (1835-1869) was born in the Crooked Lane neighborhood of Duxbury (North Duxbury). He was the son of Daniel Baker and Zeria Walker. These letters are written from the ship, *Waldo*. His wife, Mary Jane Bonney Baker (1840-1915) and two children, 7-old Agnes and 4-year old Edward, accompanied him. The voyage began in New York in November, 1867 and took the family to Vigo in northwest Spain; Cadiz in southwestern Spain; Montevideo and Paysandu, Uruguay; and Queenstown (Cobh) and Belfast, Ireland. Upon returning to the Duxbury, Levi fell ill with typhoid fever and died on July 14, 1869. His third child, Levi, was born seven months after his death in February, 1870.

Capt. Levi Baker (Cadiz, Spain aboard *Waldo*) to Capt. Edward Baker (Duxbury, MA), Jan. 29, 1868

Dear brother Edward,

Now after so long a time neglecting you I will try and make up in part for it by writing a few lines. We are loaded for the River with salt and tomorrow morning set sail once more I hope. I am tired of this now three months since we left New York had a long and exceedingly rough passage to Vigo then had to lay there twelve days Quarantine. Mary & the children stood the bad weather very well and the former is very well indeed for her. This climate agrees with her I think, she is now standing near admiring some fine Oil Paintings which I bought today very cheap. I hope to hear from you in Montevideo. Daniel wrote me that you had become a storekeeper or rather you had bought a store I hope you will prosper with it. I wish I had some business on show. Going to sea these times is thankless business nothing to be made all you can do is to try and see how little you can lose instead of how much you can make I have got a fair freight to the River but tis a long voyage and much time is used already hope shall succeed in getting a freight from there. Your namesake is getting to be a great sailor I caught him up in the spanker gaff yesterday loosing the spanker. We have been doing caulking here and yesterday he wanted to know if I had had it well hawsed in he is pretty old and as good as ever. You must excuse me from writing much more tonight as it is now near morning and we have to get under weigh early. Mary says tell Edward and Sophy she joins me in sending much love and best wishes for this life and the life to come. I must stop now so good night Edward and Sophy.

Your affectionate brother

Levi

Capt. Levi Baker (Paysandu, Uruguay aboard *Waldo*) to Capt. Edward Baker (Duxbury, MA), May 31, 1868

Dear Brother,

As it is now nearly four months since I have written to you I will do so now I wrote you just before leaving Cadiz. I have had one letter since arriving in the River from Daniel and that is all none from you none from Mary Jane's family and we do not know anything about what is going on at home. We have discharged our cargo at this place 250 miles up the Uruguay river and are now chartered to take a cargo of Tallow to England at a very low rate. It is all I could do 30 per ton Queenstown or Falmouth for orders probably go to Liverpool to discharge Business is very dull here indeed. The Cholera was very bad here indeed – and the Paraguay war still goes on and there is

nothing offering to the US by way of freight so it is go to Europe for a low freight or go home in ballast I should like to know how you get along with your business hope you prosper and make money don't you want a partner I should like to change my business for a time for there is no money in vessels at least none in the *Waldo* she is not a lucky vessel as regards making money. I hope some one will want to buy me out when I get home again if I ever do. I do wish I could hear from you and from Father and Mother and I think it strange that we have had no letter from any one since arriving here. Mary Jane & children are well and the former is growing quite fleshy for her and is in quite good health for her but we all want to get away from here and get home again once more but it will be along time first I fear don't know what we shall do when get to England I hope we shall be ready to sail from her latter part of June. I should like to send you a little money from here perhaps I shall before I leave. Mary Jane sends love to you & Sophy says tell you we have got a menagerie Dog, Cat, Canary, hens, etc. she has set one hen and hopes to raise some chickens she has got a lot of plants here and they are growing finely has two Gold fish also. She has the promise of a young Ostrich but I don't know whether she will get it or not. Suppose Father & Mother ride to Plymouth occasionally now instead of going to Fords to trade I should like to know where it is your store is located and all about it but don't suppose you to mean to write me again or any one else. Daniel always writes plenty of letters but none from him even now I would like to know how they are getting along I think they are rather pushed but hope not I wish I could get one extra freight with this vessel to help her up but I don't see any prospect of it perhaps it will come some time it's a long road that has no turning but I think this sheet is nearly full so sending you & Sophy much love and wishing you much prosperity – I will bid you Good bye for the present
Your aff'te brother
Levi Baker

Capt Levi Baker (Belfast, Ireland aboard *Waldo*) to Capt. Edward & Sophy Baker (Duxbury, MA), Oct. 10, 1868

I rec'd your kind letter yesterday and hasten to answer it, I have been very anxious to hear from home as it is now quite a long time since we have had letters I arrived in Queenstown some ten days ago and was ordered here from there I have commenced discharging. Had sixty six days from Montevideo to Queenstown. I have no idea where I shall go from here but I have a letter from N York saying that I must come there if I can get any thing which will pay but that is out of the question getting any thing that will pay to NY. I wish you had written me all the particulars of that murder, it seems such a strange thing what could it have been for money or what. Mary Jane was very much struck up about it she says that Mr. Andrews was one of most quiet meek men that he knows any where I wish I could see some newspaper account of it. Seems to me strange things are happening, women robbing their own husbands and running away. By the way Edward could you not make the grocery business pay? I suppose not or you would not have sold out again. I shall take that little hint from you very kindly about my wages and if there is any money left when I leave here shall send you a little perhaps. I want when I get home again to get me a house of some description I can get one and mortgage it I suppose. I want to feel that I have a home I shall try to get you some cloth to suit you about a silk dress for Sophia can get a good one for 5 shillings per yard. I saw one of your old shipmates in Montevideo he was in the Kennebec Asst. Engineer he told me Robinson is his name he spoke very highly of you liked you very much he is now in the Shamokin at Montevideo or was when I left although his time was out and he expected to go home very soon. I am very glad indeed to hear that Father & Mother are so well. I want to see them so very much. This is the shortest year to look back on that ever I passed it is now a year since we left home and still I think I have had as many perplexities packed into it as any that ever I had passed but we have all got

to have our share of them. I wish I could have another letter from you I am very thankful indeed for good kind brotherly letters like yours that I don't like fault finding letters some that I have, but I don't take them to heart much go in one side the head and out the other. The owners have had all the money there has been earned on the Voyage except paying in her way along and if there is any left here I think I will keep it myself I must write to Father & Mother today or tomorrow I suppose you see them often if you keep a house I wish I could be at home this fall and winter but I don't know what I shall do yet perhaps come to NY with a cargo of grain that's not pleasant in winter. I must stop writing now I believe but will write you again bye & bye. Mary Jane and children are well and join n sending you & Sophia much love to you Agnes and Eddy have grown considerable since you saw them. Eddy is as good as ever. Give love to all enquiring friends.

Your affectionate Brother

Levi