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A TEXAN IN SEARCH OF GOLD

Edited by David P. Smith

In 1856 the call of gold and adventure from California still summoned men from the farms and towns across the nation. This golden magnet was also felt among the pine thickets and red clay of Nacogdoches County in East Texas. From such a rural community journeyed twenty-five year old William Jacobs to make his fortune and a new way of life in the gold fields of California.¹

Jacobs was born to James and Mary Chisum Jacobs in Madison County, Tennessee, in 1830.² The Jacobs family entered Texas on Christmas day, 1836, and soon established themselves in the eastern portion of Nacogdoches County near present day Woden, Texas.³ The settlement that grew up here was known as Jacobs Community until the name was changed to Woden in the early 1880's.

The nine letters that have been preserved from Jacobs' western adventure are notable for the observations made of life in the gold fields of California and British Columbia during the 1850's. The rush of '49 was over, but the appeal of a fortune to be made overnight was no less real. Constant concern for his family and friends in Texas is evident in his letters as Jacobs inquires of acquaintances and "connections." His description of life in the mining camps and disappointments in his search for gold on the west coast lend a touch of reality to a romantic era in American history.

Not finding the El Dorado of his dreams, and learning, as he says, that "everything that glitters is not gold," William Jacobs returned to Texas in 1860, in time for his last adventure.⁴ Volunteering in the Confederate service, Jacobs enlisted in the Eleventh Texas Infantry in February 1862, and just four months later suffered the same fate his four brothers were to meet during the war; William Jacobs died of "disease" on June 10, 1862, in Navasota, Texas.⁵

Jacobs' spelling is generally good for one of limited education, although the editor has at times noted missing or confusing words with brackets. Periods have been added to provide continuity, as the only punctuation Jacobs seems to have known was the comma and dash. Misspelled words have been left intact, as with "dele" for deal, "mout" for might, and "hear" for here. Of the nine existing letters, eight are addressed to Jacobs' elder brother and the last to his father, both of whom lived in the Jacobs Community. The only two existing envelopes, however, are addressed to Melrose, Texas, site of the nearest post office.

New Orleans, La.

May the 19th/56

Mr. E. Jacobs⁶

Dear Brother since my arrival hear I have written to a good many of my friends and relations. I havent any thing of importance to communicate to you. We had a tolerably pleasant trip thus far, though some what fatigued from loss of sleep while traveling on stage. we landed at this place about 3 O'clock the morning of the 10th.

The Empire City, the vessel we contemplate going out on, landed here on the 15th bringing a large number of passengers from California.⁷ forty five or fifty of them stoped at the house at which I was boarding. I interrogated

David P. Smith is from Nacogdoches, but now resides in Dallas.

several of them in relation to the chances for making money in California. some of them report that the chances are favorable and others to the contrary.

The first one that I talked with on the subject was a man from western Texas. he told a very discouraging story. he said he would advise any man who has a home [in] Texas or any of the old states and is making a comfortable living to stay on it. then I talked with a couple of men who live in Missouri and they stated that times ware rather dull but for want of rain and that there would be a change for the better as soon [as] they can get water. they said that they averaged five Dollars per day when they worked but that there was many there who would come home if they had the money to pay their way — my health has been rather bad since I stoped here. I had light fevers for three days but I procured medicine and took it which broke it up, and I am at present doing finely — there is nine or ten of us boarding at the same house who are waiting for the steamer to start for California, one of them turned his cours for home the other day. he was a young man from Kentucky rather wild and reckless. he went out to one of those places of gaming and lost his last cent and had to borrow money to pay his tavern bill & passage round. At 8 O'clock tomorrow morning which will be the 20th the vessel that we desire going out on leaves.⁸

Give my best to Elizabeth and inquiring friends and accept the same your self & be Ever and forever yours

Wm Jacobs

P. S. I dont suppose that I will have an oppportunity of writing to you again before I reach my place of destination.

Yours
W. J.

Shaws Flat, Ca.⁹
Aug. 2/56

Mr. E. Jacobs

Dear Brother

With much pleasure I address you these lines that it may inform you that I am yet a live and kicking. my health has improved amazingly since I came here. I am as fat as a Bear and still improving. C. Chisum¹⁰ Health has been very good allso though we were both considerable amaliated when we arrived here — we have been working very hard since we comenced, though havent done any thing extry yet. we average about seventy five Dollars per month for each of us. out of this has to come our Board and Water bill which is considerable item though we board ourselves and I dont suppose it costs us more than three \$ per week for each of us and the water we use is second[hand] which they charge \$ 2 per day for. But we havent had to pay near that for it.

A great many have had to quit work here on the account of [the lack of] water. The vigilance committee are going on with their work. They gave a couple of men the benefit of the halter a few days since at San Francisco. they were hung for murder. they were by the names of Hetherington and Brace.¹¹

I want you to write me as soon as this comes to hand and write me all about maters and things. Give my best respects to Elizabeth and accept the same your self. Yours Respectfully

Wm Jacobs

P. S. C. Chisum sends his best respect to both of you — you will Please direct your letters to Shaws Flat

Yours,
W. J.

Shaws Flat Cal.
Oct. the 13/56

Dear Brother

yours of the 10th August is at hand and with pleasure I prepair an answer. yours came to hand on its place of destination about the first but in consequence of my being absent at the time I couldnt answer it by the return mail — The persual of your letter afforded me much pleasure although it contained news which was not very good. that is the dry weather and inferior crops, for I was strongly of the opinion that you would all make fine crops from the flattering prospects you had when I left — and it is to be hoped that it will not always be so and the only alternity is to try a gain — there was a while that I did nothing only stroll and I soon found that it was not paying, so I pitched in to getting out dirt which I designe washing as soon as water can be had — from the tenor of your letter I observe that none of the Girles has married since I left, you must inform them that they are too fastidious in making selections or I may accuse them wrongfully as they may not have had an opportunity — a great dele of eaxitement here in relation to the Presidential election. it seems to be the chit chat of the day, all the boys from Texas are in favor of Buchanan with the exception of a few who's pregadices are so strong against the bloody Irish that they caint give over¹² — Times are dull here at this time, miners are not doing much for Want of Water — my health is very good, C. Chisum and Wm L. Wilson¹³ helth good allso — C. Chisum joins me in his respects to you all — I have no news to communicate to you that would interest you — Give my respect to Elizabeth and all enquiring friends and accept the same your self. Your Affectionate

Brother Wm Jacobs

Elijah Jacobs

P. S. If you havent obtained the patent to the tract of land we purchased of Stephen Yates, you had better attend to it and try and get some reliable person to see to the getting of it — and, I will pay my part of the expences.¹⁴

Yours with due respect
Wm Jacobs

P. S. I want you to write to me as soon as you get this — Tell W. H. Sternes¹⁵ that I would be pleased to hear from him — from the Postscripts that I have added one many reasonably suppose that it was written by an absent minded chap,

Yours Respectfully
W. J.

Shaws Flat, Cal.
December the 14/56

Dear Brother

Your kind letter of Sept received by last mail reminds me of my duty of writting to you in which I have been tolerably prompt. The persual of your letter gave me much pleasure and particularly to learn that the citizens of Pea Ridge¹⁶ have enjoyed such excellantly good health, my health is very good. C. Chisums' health good allso. Claiborn and myself are working the claim that we purchased shortly after we came here. We have had quite an unfavorable time for business for the last month owing to bad weather, have had a great

dile of both snow and rain which makes greatly against the miners — Times are not as brisk here as I anticipated finding them at this time of the year, I think a great many would return to their homes if they could make a decent rise, or at least they express themselves that way — you spoke of having a fine son and that you have given him the name of William,¹⁷ I guess I will have to fork over something to him. I am in receipt of a letter from Pa under date October the 4th which contains the sad news of the death of Dr. Johnson¹⁸ and various others some of which you mentioned in yours — It appears as if marrying has gon out of fashion in Texas as none of you mention any marrages that has taken place for sometime. it seems as though some of the Boys mout scare up a wedding where there is as many pretty Girles. I would like to see some of the Girles of Old Nacogdoches Co. for they are to me as the blue breake of beauty in the Cloud — C. Chisum sends his best love to you all — I want you to write often and I will do the same. Give my best love to Elizabeth and all the conection and friends and accept the same yourself — and believe me ever your affectionate Brother

Wm Jacobs

Elijah Jacobs

P. S. The great political excitement seems to have abated to a considerable extent though the news from the Atlantice States by last steamer gave the democrats much relief. they devoted nearly one whole nite in firing cannons at Sonora, Collumbia and Springfiel. the vote of Shaws Flat nearly equally divided five hundred votes polled. the democrats had a magority over the K. N. [Know-Nothing party] of about a doz., and the K. N. a small magority over the Republicans, the State went democratic by twenty thousand.¹⁹

Yours W. J.

Shaw's Flat Cal.
February 1st '57

Dear Brother —

Your kind letter of December 21st is at hand the persual of which gave me much pleasure and to learn that you are all enjoying good health, my health is good. C. Chisum's health good allso. we are driving on doing tolerably well making from three to five Dollars per day though having to pay such exhorbitant prices for provisions necessarily takes a great dele of a man's money, so taking the mass of men here and they dont save more money the year a round than they do in the states. I will give you an account of the prices of the leading articles. Flour 8 & 9¢ per lb. Bacon 30 & 33¢ per lb. Molasses \$1.50 per gallon. Coffee 20(¢) per lb. Beef 16¢ per lb. Board per week 7 & 8 dollars. dry goods much cheaper than they are in Texas. I had the pleasure of meeting with some of the Boys who are direct from Texas, a couple of Jefferson Walling's sons.²⁰ A Mr Richerson²¹ and various others. some of them are not very well pleased, I think from the way they express themselves — I observe from your letter that quite a number of the youngsters has marrie[d] and a flattering prospect of more marriages. I wish them great success so long as they dont interfear with my choice or encrouch upon my civil rights — I wrote to several of the Boys at the time I wrote you in Oct and have received answers to all. I wrote with exception of W. H. Sternes though it may be that he didnt get mine — I send this with its imperfection upon its head as I havent time [to] look over and correct the errors. I want you to write often and I will do the same — so give my

best respects to Elizabeth and all enquiring friends and accept the same yourself and ever believe me your loving Brother

Wm Jacobs

Elijah Jacobs

Shaw's Flat, Cal
March the 16/57

Dear Brother,

I am in receipt of your of Jan the 25rd which is a source of especial pleasure to me to hear from you and particularly to ascertain that you are all enjoying good health. my health is very good at present. C. Chisum and W. L. Wilson's health good also. from your letters and others that I am in receipt of contains the interesting news of weddings.

I haven't received a letter for sometime but contained the announcement of marriages. I sometime to my sad regret apprehend that the Girls will all be married off before I get home though I appeas those fears by reflecting and thinking of the yong ones that are not yet in market. Claiborn has been for sometime between a wild and a shy for fear his favorite will forget him —

C. Chisum and myself are at our old stomping ground where we located when we first came in to the country though we havent been working together for some time — we are making three and four dollars per day when we work. times are tollerably flush and money more plentiful at this time than it has been since I have been here though this country for mining purposes has been greatly overated, but a man can make money here if he will use untiring energy and perseverance and economy. it requires manual labor [to] make money far moreso than most any other country for the fact it being laborious work. we have had to pay exhorbitant prices for provisions owing to the bad weather and rough roads. \$10 per hundred [lbs.] for four, 30¢ per lb. for Bacon and other articles in propotion. I have never received a scratch of a pen from W H Sterns in reply to the letter I wrote him in October. I wrote several other letter at the same time and have received answers to them all. I don't think I can write him until I get an answer. C. Chisum sends his respect to you all. Give my best love to Elizabeth and all the connection and accept the same yourself and believe me ever your affectionate Brother.

Wm Jacobs

Elijah Jacobs

Shaws Flat Cal.
July the 14/57

Dear Brother —

I have yours of May the 13th, is before me. it came to hand by last mail though not in time to prepair an answer by the return mail. The persual of your letter gave me exquisite pleasure to ascertain that the connection and friends wer all enjoying good health though it filled me with sorrow to hear of the death of Uncle Wm. P. Chisum²² who has left a family of children entirly bereft of father and mother to mourn his loss — I left these parts about the midd[le] of June with the intention of returning home but on arriving at San Francisco and deliberating seriously upon the trip, I concluded it would be expedient to abandon the trip until fall or next spring, return to the mines and try my luck again and, I am quietly located at my old stomping ground. C.

Chisum and myself are not sto[m]ping together now, he is at french camp²³ som Eight miles distant from this, with some of the Texas Boys. I have been thinking of leaving the mines and going to the Valleys and work on a farm untill the rainy season, I had a good offer made me, I am stomping with Wm. G. Martin²⁴ and W. L. Wilson. they are enjoying good health. my health is tolerably good. C. Chisum health was good when I heard from him last which has been but few days ago, — I would be much pleased to see all of my connections and friends — I am anxious to know what has become of W. H. Sternes as I havent heard from him in the last twelve months in no way, shape nor form. I received a letter from him under date of July — which I answered forthwith, with the request that he should write to me again but have never received the scratch of a pen from him as yet. my reasons for first replying to him was that, I had always regarded him as an intimate associate and a bosom friend and by his not writing it is presumeable that he dont wish to be trifled with my letters and I am not the person to truble any one with communications where they are not wanted and consequently, I havent writtin but the one which was in anser of his of July.

I will close as I have nothing of [interest] to write you — you will have to guess at half of this letter as, I have bad ink. so give my best love to Elizabeth and the connections and frends and accept the same yourself and believe me ever your loveing Brother,

Wm Jacobs

Elijah Jacobs

Victoria, Vancouver's Island²⁵
June the 28th 1858

Dear Pa

I am again reminded of my duty of writing to you again. I arrived here on the 21st after a fatiuing voyage of five days on board the steamer Republic. she had some thousand or eleven hundred passengers a board. her decks were so extensively crowded that there wasent room for the passengers to sit much less lye down.²⁶ as good luck would have it we had no rough sea to encounter with and consequently the voyage was more pleasant than it otherwise would have been. Victoria is quite a small place but improving rappidly. it is a beautiful site for a city though rather undulating — a great many new buildings are under construction and will be completed in short time — it is on British teritory — it hasent many facilities for a sea port City. the gulf a cross the mouth of the sound is said to be terrific for small Boats — great many persons are leaving here enrout for the mines some up the [Fraser] River in small Boats which is a dangerous rout. a great many who have started that way have gon to the botom. the steamer Surprise runs from here as high up as fort Hope²⁷ which is within fifteen miles of the main of the digging regions, That is the way I contemplate going. since my arrival here I have had interviews with several persons who came down from the mines. they speek in the highest terms of the mines. they say the gold is there and plenty of it but whether it be the case or not is something that I cannot tell as yet. But if I am lucky I will know before a great while — there is the greatest rush and excitement that I ever knew. there is not a steamer or sailing craft that leaves San Francisco bound for this place or Billingham Bay²⁸ but that is crowded — If I have any luck when I get in to the mines, I think I will then leave for Texas as I am eager to get back — my health is good. C. Chisum is in good health — Provisions are much cheaper here than

I anticipated they would be. meals are from fifty to seventy five cents. Flour ten dollars per hundred [lbs.] Bacon thirty five [cents] per lb. the Hudson Bay company are selling at the above prices. other speculators are trying to raise the prices — in the mines any thing in the way of provisions are selling at a Dollar per pound — we are going to cary about three months supply of provisions up with us — the idea of having [to] pay a foreign Tax is one item that I dont much admire. have to pay a tax of five Dollars a month.²⁹ I will write you again as soon as I get settled — give my best love and respects to mother and all the family and accept the same yourself and Believe me ever your affectionate Son.

Wm Jacobs

James Jacobs

Marlo California³⁰
March the 25 1859

Dear Brother

Doubtless you will be surprised on receiving this letter as it is the only one for several months. I presume you have an idea that I have forgot you. As luck would havit, I am mercifully permitted to remain above ground scramble about and rejoice at the cheering dawn of another spring — I had a severe attact of gold fever last summer and the disease settling in with violent symptoms carried me off to Frazer's River, where I thought I would earn an honest, living by becoming an honest miner. not measly living but a recent rais. I hadn't the luck to accumulate much of that soul curing golden mettal, however, I think I learned valuable lessons by going. I was made to know that everything that glitters is not gold and every thing we see in print or hear is not branded with truth. if so many who went to Frazer's would have had their anticipations realized.

The first mining I done there gave me a flattering opinion of that country and that its mineral resources would be of some note. I arrived there at a season of the year that the River is at its highest. the only chance for mining was on the high bars and banks which prospected well and everyone was of the opinion that when the waters went down they would make their fortunes. had I remained where I first stoped instead of going higher up the River I would have done much better. I left much better diggings than I found above. I was within twelve miles of the junction of Frazer and Thompsons Rivers. divest that Country of its gold and it is the poorest Country that I ever beheld. the highest and roughest mountains only fitten [for] Indians. I think an American is out of his longitude when there. The Indians were not as numerous as I anticipated. neither were they a savage as was told for, They are surpass the Indians of California in many respects. they are intelligent and industrious. The River is very large and rappidz near a half mile wide in places. it is not navigable above Fort Hope owing to the Rappids. I shall not attempt to give you a history of the Country — Grant many were last year speake[ing] of returning this spring. I became fully convinced before leaving there that mining on Frazer was calculated for French and Chinemen. Times has been very dull in California during the fall and winter or untill the later part of the winter owing to the scarcity of water. they now bid fair to get better as we have had abundance of both snows and rain. I am driving a head making some money. I have a show of getting employment at a quartze mill which I think I shall do for working in water dont agree with me. The recently discovered gold mines at Pikes Peak³¹ seemes to be the topic of conversation. if they prove to be of any account I may go there myself as it would

be but little out of my way in going home. My health moderately good. C. Chisum is well and sends his respects to you all. Please remember me to all my old Friends. If any of you write to me you can address me at Sonora. So give my love to Elizabeth and all enquiring Friends and accept the same Yourself and believe me as you affectionate Brother

Wm Jacobs

E. Jacobs

P. S. Write me as soon as this comes to hand. Yours truly W. J.

FOOTNOTES

¹Acknowledgement is made to Mrs. Emmie Jacobs Head of Woden, Texas, for much family information concerning her great-uncle, William Jacobs. In her possession are the original letters from Jacobs to his family.

²Fifth United States Census, Madison County, Tennessee, 1830, microfilm copy in the Genealogy Library, Shreveport Public Library, Shreveport, Louisiana.

³Proceedings of the Board of Land Commissioners, 1837, Volume II, Application for Entrance Certificate, No. 180-184, records of Nacogdoches County Court House.

⁴The date of Jacobs' return to Texas is uncertain. His last letter from California is dated March 25, 1859, and he arrived in time to be listed on the census roll of Nacogdoches County, taken in June of 1860.

⁵Muster Roll for William Jacobs, Captain Milton Mast's Company, Eleventh Regiment, Texas Infantry; original in National Archives, Washington, D.C., photostat copy in possession of the editor.

⁶Edward Elijah Jacobs, brother of William Jacobs, was born in Madison County, Tennessee, on January 4, 1829. A farmer by occupation, he was married to the former Mary Ann Elizabeth Sterne. Elijah Jacobs was destined to fight for the Confederacy, enlisting in Company A, Eleventh Texas Infantry, at Nacogdoches, Texas, on April 28, 1863. Left sick at a private house on march between Trenton and Grand Ecore, Louisiana, he died of typhoid fever at the home of Mary Hawkins, Ouachita Parrish, Louisiana, on July 15, 1864. Fifth United States Census, Madison County, Tennessee, 1830, microfilm copy in the Genealogy Library, Shreveport Public Library, Shreveport, Louisiana; military information found on the Muster Roll for Elijah Jacobs, Captain Milton Mast's Company, Eleventh Regiment, Texas Infantry, original in the National Archives, Washington, D.C., photostat copy in possession of the editor. For information on his death, see Mary J. Hawkins to W. H. Sterne, July 31, 1864, the Elijah Jacobs Papers, in possession of Mrs. Emmie Jacobs Head of Woden, Texas.

⁷The steamer, *Empire City*, captained by H. Windle, arrived at New Orleans in the early morning of May 15, 1856, with 230 passengers. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 15, 1856.

⁸The *Empire City* sailed from New Orleans at 8 o'clock on the morning of May 20th. The immediate destination was Havana, Cuba, where the 92 passengers for California were to board the *Philadelphia* and continue the journey to the west coast via the Isthmus of Panama route. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, May 20, 1856.

⁹Shaw's Flat, California, was a mining camp located just south of the Stanislaus River between the towns of Sonora and Columbia. At the time of Jacobs' arrival the principal buildings extended for some two miles along the main road. Located where Mandeville Shaw planted an orchard in 1849, it was here in 1855 that gold deposits were discovered in the bed of an ancient river channel. During Jacobs' stay, most of the mining done in the region was "deep diggings" (where pay dirt is twenty-five feet or more below the surface), and occasionally paid well. See Pringle Shaw, *Ramblings in California* (Toronto, 1856), 117; and Harry Hansen, ed., *California: A Guide to the Golden State* (New York, 1967, Reprint), 495-496.

¹⁰Claiborne Chisum, son of Elijah Chisum, Sr., was born in Covington County, Mississippi, in 1824. Chisum was the half brother of William Jacobs' mother, Mary Chisum Jacobs. Information based on records in James Madison Chisum family Bible, in possession of Miss Jodie Chisum family, Whitesboro, Texas.

¹¹The reference is to the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance of 1856. Joseph Hetherington and Philander Brace, convicted by the Committee for the murders of a Dr. Andrew Randall and a Captain West, were hanged on the afternoon of July 29, 1856, just outside Fort Vigilance. See the New York *Daily Times*, August 30, 1856; for further reference see Stanton Arthur Coblenz, *Villians and Vigilantes: The Story of James King of William and Pioneer Justice in California* (New York, 1936), 232-234.

¹²In the presidential election campaign of 1856, James Buchanan ran on the Democratic ticket, John C. Fremont on the Republican and Millard Fillmore on the American or Know-Nothing ticket. The Know-Nothing party, with nativism ingrained into its conception, grew in part out of the anti-foreign, anti-Catholic rage that had swept many parts of the country in the early years of the decade. See Robert J. Rayback, *Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President* (New York, 1959), 375-381; and Philip Shriver Klein, *President James Buchanan: A Biography* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1962), 248-260.

¹³William L. Wilson, a fifty-four year old Georgian who had moved to the Jacobs community, was to return there to a life of farming by the end of the decade. Wilson was married in 1848 to William Jacobs' aunt, Polina Clementine Jacobs. Information obtained from the King Family genealogical record, in possession of Miss Eddie Mae King, Nacogdoches, Texas.

¹⁴The only reference to be found for any transaction between Stephen Yates, a resident of the Jacobs Community, and the Jacobs family is a deed, dated October 12, 1854, transferring a tract of land on Carrizo Creek, near the community, from Stephen Yates to Elijah Jacobs for \$550. Photostat of deed in possession of the editor.

¹⁵William H. Sterne, formerly of Alabama, had attended Nacogdoches University in the early 1850's. Sterne was a brother of William Jacobs' sister-in-law, Mary Ann Elizabeth Sterne Jacobs.

¹⁶Pea Ridge was the local name given to an area located just two and one-half miles south of present day Woden, Texas.

¹⁷William J. Jacobs was born September 27, 1856. Information from tombstone inscription, Jacobs' Chapel Cemetery, Woden, Texas.

¹⁸Dr. Thomas Jefferson Johnson, son of Gregory and Sarah Tucket Johnson, was born in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, in 1805. Moving to the Melrose, Texas, community in 1841 to practice medicine, he later married Amanda Engledow. He remained a respected and prominent resident of Nacogdoches County until his death on July 25, 1856. See Gladys Hardeman, "History of Melrose" (East Texas Collection, Stephen F. Austin State University Library, 1964-1965), 17.

¹⁹In the election of 1856 the Democratic candidate, James Buchanan, was elected with a one-half million popular vote edge over his nearest rival, John C. Fremont. The vote of Shaw's Flat appears to be in proportion with the vote of California as a whole. The Democrats actually polled approximately 53,000 votes, the Know-Nothing party 36,000 and the Republicans 21,000. — United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, D.C., 1960), 689.

²⁰Edmund Pendleton Walling was the eldest son of Thomas Jefferson Walling, a resident of the Jacobs Community who moved to Texas in 1836. Edmund and his brother, Thomas Jefferson Walling, Jr., journeyed from Texas to the California gold fields in early 1857. They remained there for nearly three years before returning to Texas. See Maudie W. Walling, "The Walling Family" (East Texas Collection, Stephen F. Austin State University Library, n.d.), 81-85.

²¹A search of the 1850 and 1860 census for Nacogdoches County fails to identify this particular Mr. Richerson or Richardson.

²²William P. Chisum was born December 10, 1810, in White County, Tennessee. He moved to Texas in 1836 and married Louisa Brimberry in Nacogdoches County in 1837. Chisum died in May of 1857 at his home in Rusk County, Texas. Chisum's sister, Mary, was the mother of William Jacobs. Information from the King Family genealogical record, in possession of Miss Eddie Mae King, Nacogdoches, Texas.

²³Of the several places in the area named French Camp, the one probably referred to here was located approximately ten miles northwest of Shaw's Flat, in the watershed of the Calaveras River. See Owen Cochran Coy, *Gold Days*, in John R. McCarthy, ed., *California series* (Los Angeles, 1929), 74.

²⁴William G. Martin, born in New York in 1820, had engaged in farming near the Jacobs Community prior to his California adventure. Seventh United States Census, Nacogdoches County, 1850, microfilm in the library of Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas.

²⁵Victoria, major port of Vancouver Island, and later capital of British Columbia, became the center for American miners heading northward from the west coast to the gold diggings discovered on the Fraser River in British Columbia during 1857 and 1858. For reference, see Dorothy O. Johansen, *Empire of the Columbia: A History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York, 1957), 321.

²⁶The great rush to Victoria and the gold fields began in April of 1858. By June of that year over 7,000 miners had arrived by ship from San Francisco. — David Sievert Lavender, *Land of Giants: The Drive to the Pacific Northwest, 1750-1950* (New York, 1958), 319.

²⁷Fort Hope was located in British Columbia on the left bank of Fraser River at the mouth of the Coquihalla River. Established in the winter of 1848-1849, Fort Hope was an old Hudson Bay fur company trading post where the steamers made their terminus landing from Victoria, Vancouver Island. — Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., ed., *The Golden Frontier: The Recollections of Herman Francis Reinhart, 1851-1869* (Austin, Texas, 1962), 106.

²⁸Bellingham Bay, located on the coast of the state of Washington, twenty-eight miles south of the Canadian border, was the site of Fort Bellingham, established in 1856 under the direction of Captain George E. Pickett, later of Gettysburg fame, as protection for the settlers from the Bellingham Bay Indians. During the summer of 1858 the rush to the Canadian gold fields increased the population of this area from less than 100 to more than 15,000. See Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Washington, *Washington: A Guide to the Evergreen State* (Portland, Oregon, 1941), 178-179.

²⁹All mineral deposits could be mined only under license from the British government, to be obtained at Victoria from James Douglas, governor of Vancouver Island, at a cost of twenty-one shillings or about five dollars a month. — Lavender, *Land of Giants*, 318.

³⁰The envelope for this letter is postmarked from Sonora, California.

³¹In July and August of 1858 gold taken back to Kansas City from the Russell party diggings near Pike's Peak caused the first excitement on the Missouri in the fall of that year. By the winter of 1858 the number of gold seekers into the area had increased, finally to swell into a flood by the spring of 1959. For further reference, see LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859* in the *Southwest Historical Series*, IX (Glendale, California, 1941), 34-74.