

Date? Nov. '43

Dear Aazuo:

I just finished reading this letter over and thought to save you a lot of time I had better say just the most important things here then you can take your time about reading the rest of it.

Sam is anxious to know what kind of a deal you will give him. He has no idea as to what he could do - said that your grandad had told him once that if he fertilized it well, sprayed, pruned and took good care of it, that would be enough. To be honest about the whole thing - I have had five inquiries about the place to date, nobody with any direct offers as to terms, but all willing to talk terms any time. My honest opinion is that Sam will take much better care of it in this way - he can prune exactly as you want it. He expects and understands that he can use any and all the equipment and he should do a good job of cultivating and spraying. Just who he will have in with him, I am not prepared to say - I do know that he won't undertake it alone for he has said so. Told Joe that he knew of someone with plenty money to finance it and that he could get him as a partner. Also told him about Smith being interested as a partner. I firmly believe that he expects the dryer to be thrown in with the deal, whether it be for nothing as he sort of expects - or on shares or cash rent. I also know that if that is left up to me he will not get the dryer thrown in - that dryer should always be rented by the ton - it is the only fair way to handle it.

I hope you can picture things here - I am at his mercy in more ways than one. If he doesn't get the place and smells a rat in the way he may get mad and move off and then I wouldn't have anyone there at all unless I could locate some decent couple. So far I haven't found anyone that I could safely trust that would live there. The kind of trash that would live in his cabin would be the kind that bears watching. This is no ex reflection on you folks - I know the element that is drifting around at this time. Anyone that is halfway proud is working for high wages and living in town or running a ranch to keep out of the army. I have looked for an old couple to put in the house, but due to the lack of cooking facilities excepting with wood and the bathroom without a modern tub, they turn up their noses.

On the other hand if he takes the place I believe it won't be long before the place will be infested with Filipinos and I don't know how the citizens around there will like that. There is considerable talk about them around here now and the majority of the growers won't have one on the place right now. A number who have had them in the past have taken on Mexicans and have openly declared at meetings that they will never have that race again. As I expected, they got too damned cocky and are going to pay for it in the end. Now, of course, they have that dryer at Forestville - this year 22 of them were tangled up in that and they ran quite a number of ranches. Their idea is to run more ranches next year and in this connection I think Sam is making plans so I won't guarantee who will be going in and out of the place next year if he has it. Today when he made me mad about the wages he later mentioned the place directly to Joe while I was there and said he would like to have it for 4 or 5 years straight. I told him then and there that the court would not sanction such terms and that furthermore I didn't blame them. I told him there was too much chance for funny work without recourse and that no matter who took that place next year I intended to watch it very closely and any time I thought something went on that I didn't approve of I intended to say something about it. He just looked at me and grinned, as usual. Of course, he thinks I wrote you long ago and is wondering why I haven't had a letter from you begging him to stay there for nothing.

My idea is this - I think he should be given the place next year - if you wish for nothing, it is alright with me, but he should pay taxes,

MATT SMITH

FILIPINOS

all insurance premiums, all expenses incurred in the operation of the place. In other words, the checking account should not be touched during the year for anything that has to do with that place. At the end of the year the place shall be looked over, the equipment looked over, and if found to be not just right, he shall make it right, unless he can show figures bearing out the fact that he has taken a direct loss due to loss of crop, etc., not due to his method of operating same.

In that case, I will see that all the equipment is checked before he takes over, the tractor, sprayer, disc and harrow and the truck. We had to use the Studebaker this summer and had trouble with the gas line which we had fixed. The battery for it was completely gone and we got a second hand one for it. When we got through hauling to the packing houses we used it for the gravensteins as long as we had to use the tractor and our orchard truck, then when we could drive our Ford in the orchard we used that. We kept the Studebaker right here in our yard and used it to haul our dried apples to town once a week since Johnny's Chevrolet went haywire the last part of September. It needs a rear wheel pulled and we can't get a garage around here to do it. Joe intends to have it taken care of as soon as he has time to scout around and find someone with a big enough wheel puller. Anyway, we have used the Studebaker for that work and have made a number of trips to Graton with juice apples within the last three weeks. I believe it will be fair to assume that the use of the Studebaker will be offset by the use of our orchard truck all summer, the use of our Ford all summer and the use of Johnny's Chevrolet which we pay for by the mile and which was used right along with our Ford to haul to the packing house until we took the Studebaker out on July 27th. From the 14th to that date our two trucks did it all, both packing house apples and dryers. I have the exact number of trips made by all the different machines and will show Geary when I take it up with him. If he feels that we owe something for the Studebaker we will be glad to pay it, but I am sure that when he sees it he will be satisfied that it is a fair exchange. On top of this we paid for the battery and paid for the small repairs done on it.

That is another thing that I think should be made pretty clear to Sam - the equipment shall be used on that place only - if that gang operate many ranches I won't sanction the use of your equipment on any of them. If he could convince me that he would be perfectly fair and square about it and could produce facts and figures to show it I wouldn't be so skeptical about him, but he impresses me as wanting to get all there is in it for Sam and let the devil take the hindmost.

Please bear with me in this - picture first what I am up against - without him on the place I could not guarantee to do the pruning as he would do it - the rest of the work doesn't bother me until harvest time. Without someone on the place my troubles increase, especially after the fruit is ready to harvest - everybody helps himself without mercy! With him on the place I still have worries, especially if he lets somebody else lead him around and run him, but if you sanction it, then I will be happy and will feel lighthearted about it, at least knowing that you wanted it so. Weigh the matter carefully - please don't give him anything that you will be sorry for later - tie him down as you would anyone else and try him out for one year only, it may be the solution, but let's give it just one year's ~~six~~ trial, don't you think? I have him believing that the court won't allow more than that at any one time. If he does what is right he can always renew it the next year.

As I mentioned in my other letter, I hope you do not let this get back to him as it would make it very uncomfortable for me. Keep as much of it as possible to yourself and if you have to explain any of it to Grandad tell him to be careful when he writes Sam in regard to anything.

I paid him nearly \$900.00 this morning, besides over \$300.00 that he drew ahead. He is taking the rest of the week off and I'll bet a big part of that will be gone by Monday morning. Some of the boys here think it is awful the way he lets them take his money in the games, but he seems to like it.

JUDGE
GEARY

See

Now, I'll go back to Forestville again. Two days after the fellow moved out mysteriously I had reason to go into the house. We were just about nuts for want of a fan over the tray filler to drive away the fumes coming from the apples as the tray filled. I scouted all over Santa Rosa and tried to get one from every friend we had but no luck. When Joe told Sam that we just had no solution he told us that somewhere on that place there should have been one that you folks used to have in the dryer and he thought we should go up and get it. Well, I never had any recollection of seeing one but we went up and hunted around. We looked all through the packing house and then went to the house and after looking in the hall closet went into your room. The minute we entered it we could see that something was wrong. Joe spied the box on the floor first - the cover was still over it, but instead of being piled high as ~~xxxx~~ before, the cover was way down into the box. Gosh, I had been looking for trouble ever since you left and every time any place got ransacked I made a trip up there and looked over the windows and doors, but never found a trace of trouble at any time. When we ran into this it just made me feel kinda weak and Joe, too. Well, we lifted the cover and sure enough - things that we were sure had been there were gone. For instance, I am sure that both Joe and I during the time that we searched so diligently for those damned ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ wrenches that have never appeared, we saw a tool kit, and maybe two, in that box. We also remembered seeing a hatchet there and it was gone. I don't know what else because I had no inventory of any of that stuff and the only way would be if you asked for something. Then we proceeded to look around and noticed that the fishing rods that you had leaning in the corner were gone. All this time no idea how anyone ~~xxxx~~ ever got in there because those men were right there in the yard and I was there every day working in the orchard. Well, we made a hurried search of the rest of the house, everything was in order, but every room had been visited. When you asked for that incense burner for Grandma I was all through her bedroom, closet and dressers and in the closet I remember seeing some pruning shears on one of the shelves. They were gone, also a pair of leather boots that were on the floor in the corner of same closet. From there we went upstairs and looked all around up there. Where all that stuff was stored over the kitchen I couldn't tell what was missing - the only thing that was left disturbed looking was a straw suitcase that had been untied and left that way. What was in it, I don't know, but it was still full and untied. After examining all the downstairs doors and windows and finding them O.K. I decided that someone had a key and I certainly stewed the rest of the day. Two days later I went up to pay the men and was sitting in the barnyard looking towards the front of the house while talking with them. I just happened to glance up at the small window that goes into the room over the kitchen and noticed that the screen was loose and partly opened. I didn't say a word to them - when I got through I went up there and sure enough - the window had been jimmed and that is the way he got in. I sent word for the sheriff to come out and he was out right away. By that time I had made up my mind that the ~~xxx~~ guy that had left with such a small excuse had done it and I told them all about him. They agreed that it sounded probable and possible and said they would try to catch up with him and question him. They went up to the place and questioned everyone around there, but satisfied themselves that the culprit wasn't around. I finally got up enough spunk to talk about it with the three fellows that were left and they admitted that the guy was acting darned queer lately and that he had made a hurried trip to Sacramento a few weeks before he left and that he acted very funny about the trip. After I told them what had happened they decided that he probably went there to sell whatever he got away with. I told all this to the officers, but they said that inasmuch as there were no identification marks on anything that I knew of, it would be pretty hard to identify anything if they did locate it in any shop. They promised me they would try to find him, how-
~~xxxx~~ ever, and the last I heard from them they had found somebody by that name and asked for a description of him so they could check. They told me

THEFT!
IN FOREST-
VILLE

they would check and if he was the man then they would go up and question him. To date I haven't heard anything more and I have come to the conclusion that it is all a futile effort. If they did find him, he would deny everything and how could I prove anything. Nobody saw him do it and nobody knows exactly what was taken. Pruning shears all look alike and I couldn't prove that any pair they might find in a second hand store were yours. The sheriff told me that I was very fortunate in not having the whole interior of the house damaged. He said one lovely home near Petaluma was almost completely demolished by vandals and they never did find them. He told me of a number of homes that had been wrecked and said they tried hard to find who was responsible but had never been able to get much cooperation from anybody. I know that they tried to run him down, because they had his initials and without my telling them where he had told me that he hung out around Sacramento they called me and told me they had found that name and address at that street. I am sure they went that far, anyway...whether they could pin anything on him or not, I don't know - evidently not, or I would have heard from them. I have been sick about it all summer and every time I think of anyone being so downright crooked I could die, but every time I went on that place I walked around that house and always found everything just so, I got so I wasn't looking for any trouble, least of all, when I had someone parked right there that seemed so decent. Even the Nortons told me how swell the fellows were and had them over doing an odd chore or two one day. I never have told them about what happened, I didn't want to worry the old folks while people were camping around there and since then I have been there twice but each time she was gone. When I do find her home I am going to tell her about it. I forgot to tell you that what we finally decided was that he got up on the roof with a ladder from the orchard at night when the rest were asleep and probably did so more than one night. He slept in his own camp wagon and the oldest fellow in the gang that I still think was one swell guy told me after he found out what had taken place that the guy that beat it used to have the habit of getting up a lot at night and going to the toilet, or at least, that's what they thought he used to do. They wanted me to search their belongings and wanted to get out right away when I told them about it...they really felt terrible, about it. I needed the help very badly and felt sure that they were honest about it, so begged them to stay and told them to tell the sheriff what they knew about him. They cooperated wonderfully, but we didn't get anywhere. Guess by now you are wondering why I haven't told you all this before. For two reasons, - first, I had intended to just airmail you a short note the day following the discovery, then decided it would only upset you and wouldn't do a thing to help matters - I would wait until I had time to explain everything. Secondly, I thought the sheriff would get some dope, or might even get the guy to tell what he had done with the stuff, then I would paint a little brighter picture for you. When I wrote Tsugive one time I told her that I would have some bad news along with good for you when I found time to write, but that was as far as I dared to go on the subject. To tell you the truth, I haven't felt like discussing the matter at all, even with you. It is something that everyone that I have told it to tells me I had to be expecting and they even tell me worst things, but nevertheless, I had hoped I would be spared any embarrassment of this sort. A lot of things came to me at the time, maybe I should have let the Mexicans and Filipinos move in when they asked for the house, however, after observing them some, I think perhaps more things would be missing by this time. Joe and I fixed the window so it couldn't be entered again without breaking the glass and since then everything has been very normal around there. As soon as we get caught up around here I am going up to burn up the dry leaves and trash in the yard. We still have all the props to put back into place and all the small boxes to patch and put inside. I put the peelers and all the extra trays in right after Henry got through, but we haven't had the help

PROPERTY
VANDALS

THREE

free to do the longer jobs. Tomorrow I am taking 3 Mexicans up there to do the props and we will sort all the boxes we can and stack them on the porch. A big portion of them are in our dryer as they came down with the late stuff and stayed here. Those darned things go to pieces quickly and whenever I had time I kept up with them pretty well, but along toward the last they started losing nails and staying that way, nobody had time to take care of them. I plan on doing the patching myself as I think I will make a better effort to save the hopeless looking ones than some guy that I might hire and furthermore, it won't cost anything if I do it, and further than that - I love to drive nails! I wish I had nothing else to do but patch boxes, I would really enjoy it. I kept all the lug boxes patched all summer and I still have a goodly number of them to fix before I deliver all of my Dad's that I rented. I don't worry about our own, but I don't like to turn back the rented ones in bad shape.

If the Mexicans stick around for a while I will be able to have all the work up there completed by the end of this month, that is, by being able to spare them here a few half days or so. Outside of them there isn't a man in sight for any kind of work, except the Filipinos and nobody knows what they are planning. We don't dare ask them anything about their future plans as they always just look at us and grin and say they don't know what they are going to do. Our night man told Joe the other day that Sam had asked him to come back to prune your place for him this winter. When Joe told Sam that Tom said he was coming back to prune for him he denied it, said Tom told him that he was coming back to prune for us. Can you beat it? I am getting more and more so I don't trust them at all....and people have the nerve to tell us that a Jap can't be trusted. My answer has always been and will be for a long time to come, that we had many dealings with Johnny and we would not want to meet a more trustworthy person. I have to smile when such talk goes on and I consider who is doing the talking - more ~~than~~ often than not, it is one I wouldn't trust any farther than I can throw a bull by the tail. Everyone I have met that ever did business with your Grandad more than one season swears by his honesty and don't worry, there are many people who wish you were right back there running your business as usual. The sentiment seems to be the other way, however, and nobody knows what will happen in the end. Things like the incidents at Tule Lake make it so much harder for the good people and that propoganda spreads like wildfire when it wants to. I personally believe a small portion of that. My contention is this - if it is ~~xxx~~ true, take care of those responsible, but for God's sake, don't condemn the rest of the innocent ones! Such a world we are living in! Sometimes I wish I were miles away from a radio or people so I could rest my weary mind for a few hours - it gets so tired from all the things I have to remember and figure out and then all this bad feeling and mean things happening, I wonder how I keep halfway sane. I guess I let it get me too much, I am just built that way and can't help it.

Just to wind up on Sam - here is the final touch. After the incident up there, especially, I told him that I didn't think I could stand much more happenings around there - that I thought he should save his money this summer and try to run it next year so he would stay right there the year around and watch out for the place as your Grandad had asked him to. He wouldn't give me any satisfaction either way, just shake his head and grin. All the time he has been here in the dryer he has never said a word to me about it, but told this to Joe the other day. Why he has never discussed it with me, I don't know. He evidently asked Joe to tell me to write you because for the past two days he has been telling Joe that he wished I would get a letter from you expressing your views on the matter. I should have written before, I guess, but I felt that he should ask me to, not tell Joe about it.

Now I am going to end this - I hadn't intended to go into so much detail, but now that it is done, I feel much better. There is still so much to tell about the past season that it would take as many more pages and altogether ~~at~~ too much of my time - for this time it will have to do.

As ever,

Lee

TULE LAKE
INCIDENT?

FEELINGS