

Sebastopol, Calif.
February 8, 1943.

Dear Aggie:

I started a letter to you about a week ago - started, and that's all then I got busy with all sorts of things and didn't touch it again so now I'm starting from scratch as long as I received your letter and have question to answer. I was telling you in the letter about the roof on the packing house and dryer. The funny part of it all is that we had a terrible storm about the 20th of January and we thought sure something would blow off at that time I went up as soon as it quit blowing hard and looked everything over and couldn't see a sign of damage with exception of a lot of eucalyptus limbs and leaves and some small branches of the old oak tree all over the ground. None of the limbs are big, but they look unsightly and I am going to build a fire in the middle of the barnyard and burn them all up when we go up for the brush job. Well, Sam and Al didn't move while it rained so much but they did go up on the 29th and get settled. It rained that day and all night and the wind blew quite hard, then it cleared up for a day and then poured again. Sam came down last Friday night and told me that the roof on the packing house was bad and that it leaked in where the packing house joined the dryer along that seam. I went up and looked it over and then realized that I would have to get Joe to go there and get up on the roof to see the extent of the damage. He had to wait until yesterday to do that and although it was quite rainy he was able to get around on the packing house and measure for the new shingles to patch it. The dryer roof has a lot of ~~skin~~ shakes off of it, too and Joe is going to do those when he gets the ~~stangix~~ shingles which I think will be this afternoon. Gosh, Joe was supposed to get through two weeks ago and then it rained so much he couldn't finish up so he had to go back until Saturday night. Today I will be busy as the dickens for his first day of freedom. Samuel Jose's dad died Friday night and is being buried this morning. Joe is one of the pall-bearers. When he gets through there he is coming home for the truck and then going after the material for the roofs and the belt eliminator we had made for the dryer. Weeks called and said they were at the depot so we will get both ours and Silva's while he is at it.

Sam is doing fine ~~fix~~ with the pruning up there despite the rainy weather. He and Al were alone for a few days and now they have two more fellers helping and are really getting over it. I don't know either one of the new guys, but Sam said they have both been pruners for years and are good ones so I am just taking his word for it. The trees look fine and the only damage done in the orchard is across the ditch - one old tree fell over and another one split with half of it falling on the ground. It won't take us long to rake the brush up there as there are very few limbs and there is no tall grass anywhere. As soon as we get the brush up we are going to try to get two of the fellows to help us with the fertilizer up there before they leave for the hops. Things are surely in fine shape - we thought we had Sam and the other guy at our disposal to help with spraying and any other work we might need them for, but a couple of weeks ago Sam told us that he had decided to go to the hops with the gang as he could go to work there by the day at from 90¢ to ~~1.00~~ \$1.00 per hour and could come to help us when we needed him for spray or other work. Of course, I don't blame him for taking a better job, but it puts a crimp in our plans as when we do need him we will hate like heck to get him away from wages like these and we can't afford to pay them here. It just seems like the farmers are trying to see which one can pay the most and take help away from the other fellow. Joe is going to try and get an old fellow who used to help us spray a few years ago and if he can help us then won't bother Sam until he is through at the hop field. We have been very thankful for having him this long and I am tickled to death that he got help to do that pruning up there so we don't want to be too tough on him. We may need him worse later on and don't want to make him mad in any way. He really has been very decent about the wages and seems to be taking interest in everything

and has been very helpful with suggestions and hints which are very valuable to us. He says he will move over to the Jones ranch and we can get in touch with him anytime by phone in case we need him. As soon as he is through with the job there he will move back to Forestville and do whatever is necessary to do there. I am sure that all will be O.K. - we are fortunate to have the two of them when we urgently need them, so many orchards are being nothing done for lack of help. Just to show you how tight things are - one of the new boys that Sam got is living on the Warren Jones ranch and drives to your place every day to work. Well, he held an A card which entitles him to only 4 gallons per week and he went in to the ration board today to get supplementary gas to drive to work with. Kelly gave him a paper to bring out here to have signed showing that he is working for us. He took that back and came right back here with the request that I write a note to Kelly stating that he was working for us, because the Phillie said, 'Kelly didn't believe that Joe signed the other sheet'. Of all the red tape! I called the Board and explained that the fellow was pruning for us and that he had to drive at least 14 miles per day in order to work and that we had a hard time getting him and didn't want to lose him just on account of the damned gas, etc.etc. Well, Kelly didn't answer the phone - Mr. Spillers answered and he is pretty nice to reason with. He kidded me and told me to watch out that he might want to steal the tractor from us. Gosh, even these damned restrictions are against us, although if the local board wants to it has the power to fix things up. A lot of the trouble arises right here with the local set-up and old Kelly is so damned stinking with his decisions. He wouldn't give me anything but an A card on the Buick and you know damned well that I can't make very many trips to Forestville on that many gallons per week I told him that I had two places to look out for ~~and~~ he said inasmuch as we had a truck at the place I would have to use that. Well, so far we are not worrying because we get our gas in the tank and we are not using the truck so I just pump it into the Buick instead. Later on when we do use the truck and tractor it will be taboo for the Buick, but then the weather will be better and whenever I have anything to haul I will use the truck. As far as going up there to pick up the brush and do other jobs where Joe has to be we will go in his Ford.

Joe just got home with the shakes, shingles and belts. He got two bundles of those shingles and I believe it will take most of them right now - we will put the rest away for future use. There will be shakes left over, too but they are so damned scarce he got a few extras and we'll put the extras away in the barn. Joe is going to do the patching himself - carpenters are so scarce and expensive, and you can't get one when you want him, anyway. It is still rainy and the sky is terribly dark so I don't think it will let up tomorrow. Joe thinks it is best to wait until the roof is good and dry before attempting to patch it.

The ground is certainly soft up there near the ditch. I walked across there to Sam's cabin yesterday and sank clear over my ankles. Ours is so bad here that we can't get on it to haul out the wood or do anything else. We still have four rows of brush to burn and if this weather keeps up we never will get it burned.

We sold Sam's Chev. to a fellow at Forestville. Joe and I had bought it, but no money was paid to Sam as he said he would only waste it - so of course, we didn't have the title transferred. I am glad we didn't, because soon as we bought this place we knew we didn't need that truck. I wish you could see it now - it is just a shadow of its former self. Sam let his nephew take it down to the valley all summer and a couple of Indian doves drove it all summer long to work. They certainly finished the poor thing - neither one of the doors would close - the top was all torn to the dickens - the engine sounds like it is going to fall out and it smokes so bad that a person can hardly stand to ride in it. After we told him that we would give him \$50.00 for it I drove it down to Johnny's place with some ladders and I nearly smothered with those fumes. I was sorry then and there that we did tell him ~~we would take it~~ we would take it. When we decided we didn't need it Joe told him we would advertise it for sale and give him everything we got over the price we offered him. We sold it a week ago for \$60.00 so that was pretty good considering the shape it was in and how bad the tires were.

Since I wrote you last I have talked to Geary twice and once to Tauzer when we went to see Lloyd at the camp kxxx where Tauzer is stationed. By the way, Lloyd told me to let you know that he still considers himself your friend and wants you to know it, however, he was afraid that he would not be able to write you after he arrives at his new destination and didn't want you to think that he had forgotten - it would only be on account of rules. We haven't heard from him since he left on or about the 21st. Well, back to Geary now. The 1st time I talked with him he still hadn't had time to talk very much with the Judge and couldn't give me any definite dope. He told me to just go ahead with the work as he had done before and that he would let me know just as soon as he was able to do anything about it. That's been over a week and so far I haven't heard a thing. I called him and asked about filing the income tax returns for the estate and he told me to get all the figures together and take them to him and he would make up the report. As far as that is concerned I can file it myself, but there may be some hitch where the attorney has to approve it or something so I will take it to him the last part of this week. At the same time I will go into the matter of running the place again. I am not worried about it as he can go on with the work anyway and do the best we can, as I told you before. Guess you have seen the papers about a group wanting to let it to requisition the stored farm equipment and either appraise it and sell it to individuals or let it out on a rental basis. I told Geary about that and he suggested what Joe and I had already planned - that we take the equipment out and use it on the ranch as soon as we need it and then if anything ever comes up we can prove that it is necessary on the place. Joe intends to weld your disc where it is tied with wire and use that, too, when we need it. That will save us the expense of moving our outfit up there and too, if we find ourselves pinched for fire maybe we can get Sam to do the discing when the time comes. Joe thinks he can handle it all nicely, because he can do so much of our own late in the evenings.

I don't know about your Grandpa's income returns, but I believe he will have to file something or other even if he didn't have much income. It may be that your Grandma can file for the two of them as a joint return. On the other hand, if the old man always filed a single return that is the way it will have to be done this year. If you are sure that he didn't take in more than the \$1200.00 that he and his wife are entitled to for exemption then I wouldn't bother him about a return because if they bothered to check they couldn't find anything against him. But, if either he or your Grandma took in over that amount from any source during 1942 then they must file. I think the papers could be prepared by you and sent to him for signing unless he has all the information there then he can go ahead and have them made up for him right there.

Oh yes, I mailed Mrs. Itt's stuff the other day and put in the little jar of onion seed that you asked for sometime ago. I forgot to tell her that it is for you so I hope she didn't dump it out by this time. I am going to get your Dad's things down to the hell as soon as the weather is good enough to move the stuff without getting it too wet. I didn't do it before because I had to wait for Joe to help move it around.

As I go on here I think of more and more to tell you. I can't think whether or not I told you about the outcome of the batteries we brought down to be charged. The Buick battery never did take a full charge and it went right down in a couple of days of setting around. The other one took like charm alright and the last time it was checked it was still O.K. but may be ready for another charge right now. Joe sent for a charger for the ranch and if we get it, which is very doubtful, he is going to put that battery right on it. It seems hard to get rid of because it is big. In fact, we haven't advertised it, we have just asked this one and that one if they could use one that size thinking we can get more out of that way, but as time goes on we may be better off getting rid of it before it dies a dirty death like the other one. Later on when these farmers start using their trucks it may be easy to sell it to someone for that purpose.

It is surprising how few things a person can buy now. We had to go to Oakland on the ranch deal so thought we would bring home all kinds of stuff from Wankey's or Sears' and believe me, ~~EX~~ we come home with nothing at all. Joe was looking for all sorts of gadgets for the truck that Harry bought and could 'nt get a thing in that line. Then he looked for lots of things that he wanted to use in fixing up the dryer for power equipment and found nothing there either. He looked for barbed wire and couldn't get that without a ration card which we didn't have with us. The place is just about bare in the hardware department. Joe is just a little worried about getting the dryer fixed up and is anxious to get started so he can determine what things he needs and get his order in, but from the way things look right now he won't be touching the dryer for a couple of months. We were told, but didn't see anyone, that there were some parties around to the various dryers checking on the set-up and telling the farmers that the dryers would have to be modernized and made very sanitary in every respect, presumably painted white, with the help wearing white aprons, etc. Sounds a little far-fetched to me, but the government is going to take the stuff 100% and they might go to extremes even on the ~~cardit~~ sort of establishments they will receive from. They were also checking up on capacity, how many tons were produced last year and how many could be put out this coming season if the help was available. Our machines are coming through alright and Joe has ordered a slicer already which we are pretty sure we are getting. The beltings, pulleys and little gadgets are the stickers right now.

I am doing this in very poor light and just noticed that I picked up a yellow sheet instead of a white one, but I hope that won't bother you too much. I am not going to go this over as it is bad enough now. The kids play with this machine so much that the keys stick and pile up all the time and it certainly makes a neat job. Hope you won't mind too much - believe me, I am doing good to get it written at all. Gee, I know of at least ten parties I have to do income returns for and haven't worked on any as yet. Haven't even got ours all figured out as yet. Joe and I will have to part with quite a bit this year and if ever we are going to miss it this is the year. Just when we need every penny so badly, but that dryer deal just put us over the top and that 13% on every dollar left over after the personal exemption surely counts up fast. We didn't make very many hundreds, but every hundred is good for \$13.00 plus 6% on top of that and it surely counts up mighty fast. Without figuring at all, I think you kids will have to pay quite a sum, too. Well, I am not kicking at all, we are lucky to have the privilege of making money and should be thankful to pay something for that privilege.

The ranch deal is about closed - in fact, the papers are being recorded and I still have insurance policies and a few other papers to get straightened out then we are through (excepting for the paying of it, which will probably take the rest of our lives.) It has certainly taken a lot of my time the past month, running around here and there to talk it over and have papers signed. Tomorrow morning I have a dentist's date from 9 to 10 and I need it badly. I lost a filling during dryer season and got a cavity, probably from eating so many freshly dried apples, but anyway, I have never had the time to get it taken care of and now I can hardly chew my meals so decided it was time to get something done, especially before starting the spraying.

I hope this finds everyone well there. You spoke of how cold it was, well, it's been darned cold here even with the rain. Today it snowed all around us and tonight (right now it is 11:00 P.M.) it is terribly cold even here with the heater going full blast. Guess it is a fine thing for the trees, inasmuch as we won't get them taken care of early. Every day we hear of more dryers getting power machines and there will be practically no hand peelers working this coming season if it keeps on this way. The ~~Hixxxx~~ Hankins boys that live near us are going to operate the Joe Valentine dryer and the Joe Cordoze dryer both with ~~xxxx~~ ~~maxx~~ power machines and the El Central orchard is building a dryer with power machinery. Barlows are building over their old outfit and putting in new machines. Altogether weeks alone has sold over 40 machines so you can see what is happening around here. A lot of paper and getting sleepy so may as well quit. Say hello to everyone and take care of yourself as ever.

Lea Perry

TAXES

GOOD TO PAY?

POWER PEELERS