

Rockyford, Miss.  
Feb., Thurs., 23-55

Dear Parents

I received yours of the 21 of January this morning and I take this opportunity of replying.

I am in as good healthy as I ever have had and I was glad to find that you were all well.

I am doing nothing or but little at my business as there has been no rain and consequently the river is low and unnavigable.

The overflow always comes about Christmas but the river has been down at low water mark ever since the first of August. No year ever passes without an overflow but it has delayed so long this year that some of the people think that there will be no overflow at all and if there is not all my labor and existence will turn out most beautifully unprofitable and I will make nothing this year. Commonly there has been two rises up to this time. But I think that it will come the more it don't come the more there will be when it does come.

I was surprised on receiving the ring in your letter and was almost disappointed in not finding a gold one. I knew what it ment instanter and must acknowledge mothers laconic way of telling me that rings can be sent home by mail as well as her economical plan of proveing it. I disposed of it according to directions as soon as I got home and next Sunday it will attract more attention than the sermon.

I cannot however return one conveniently at present for there is none that can be had about here. In Holly Springs I could get a ring but they sell to high. Also in Oxford and Pontotoe City but they are one hundred percent higher than on the Ohio. But I do not expect to be in a commercial city till I go home and then I will get mother a ring and one for Henrietta.

I received a letter from D. M. Breister of Grenada & one of the filibustering leaders of Miss. He wrot for me to come down to see him at his plantation near Grenada on the Yallobusha.

I went accordingly and was at his house the last week of January and the first one of February he wanted me to go to Cuba and superintend a sugarhouse on one of his farmes. He has three farmes or part of them one thirty miles from Havana one near St. Jago on the south western end of the Island and the other a few miles of Matanzas he has lately purchased a cargo of slaves fresh from Africa and has devide them over his farms. He told me that one fourth of the farms in Cuba were owned by Americans and they can make money by raising sugar but the Catholic and Spanish control restricts them too much. Col. Gordon of Ala. holds a vary amount of property in Cuba. So does Gen. Quitman of this state. Briester told me there was a party organiseing in Kentucky near Mugsorte to go to Cuba and disperse over the farms and also one in Arkansas and another in Texas there are many property owners in Cuba so that are citizens of the united states and their appeals to the Americans will not remain unnoticed much longer. Breister made me no offer to go, but I know he would give me a good price. This main object is to get men enough in Cuba to manage the Spainard at the next expedition which I think will take place next fall. This was all told to me in confidence and you must keep it within your circle. I declined going for I want to come home in the spring and finish my business here. But notwithstanding these things I would have liked the trip very much; but cannot go. If the expedition gets along very well by next fall I want to raise a few boys at home and go there if possible for I am an out and out filibuster as long as the United States will not purchase Cuba.

D. M. Breister has 150 head of slaves on his farm near Grenada and this year he raised 500 bales of cotton and 3000 bushels of corn. He thinks his share of the sugar in Cuba will be 800 hogshhead but the

expense is so great there that he will not make more than \$6000. A bale of cotton is worth 50 dollars here but Breister and Gordon do no realize more the 30 dollars per hoghead of sugar while if Cuba belonged to us they would get at leas 100 dollars and they say it would rais the price of tobacco up to ten or twelve and corn to one dollar per bushel for years to come this seems reasonable and the sooner Cuba is ours the better. Corn is one dollar per bushel here now and pork is worth six cts and oats is worth 50 cts per bushel for seed wheat 3.00 dollars and flour ten dollars in Memphis and twelve out her freight 3.00 dollars to New Orleans for cotton and 5.00 to Memphis on wagon oxen 60 dollars a yoke mules from one hundred and thirty to two hundred and twenty horses from one to three hundred dollars. Mr. Prayne has sowed his oats for this year. Wheat has not done very well on account of the Hessian flies.

I thank you a thousand times for your mules but I will never take them as my own property but I would like to bring them here and sell them. This is a good country for me to live but I do not know whether I will come here next time or not you have let me go as my own man before the time and I don't think I will ever want any more I have born among to fund me one very well and that will help me on.

E. S. Baker

E. S. Baker Collection, Manuscripts and Folklife Archives, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY.