Oak Forest 3d Sept. 1849

Dear Hart.

I wrote to you a few days ago but forgot to mention one matter to you which I then wrote, hoping in every event your convenience to attend to it.

Last Summer whilst in Lexington your Sister showed me all the papers about the business of the Chicago property. I saw it was becoming complicated — since that time I do not believe she has any satisfactory settlement with her agents in that City. It has shown one of sense & determination to bring the business to the light & to have it settled — Sarah has had to trust to those who have no interest in her affairs & I do not see how she can get the business settled as it need affairs are made to appear. Could you not go to Chicago & attend to the business? It may be very important to her that it should be settled at once.

I at first thought it best to withhold your last from Fobian but as he seemed to magnify the thing so much that I at once gave him the letter to read.

The temperature is now delightful & cool & pleasant — It keeps one busy to keep every branch of business active — It is the beginning of our harvest. Corn, Hay, Rice, &c We are now excavating our sweet potatoes — weather fine health perfect.

McKinley is on a visit to the City. Fobian is here. Charlie also begins to convalesce from his sickness.

I intend to write but a word

Yr. ever affte. Father

I have not written a word to Sarah on the subject of this letter —

T. Tobey

To

Wm Hart Gibson

Lexington

Ky.

VILLE
30

Oak Forest 6th Jany. '69

Dear Hart

I suppose you were quite alarmed at the flight of Fabian in N. Orleans. I don't doubt he did every thing to create consternation in his way. I want to grant your apprehensions if he could create them. From McKinley might to have been back on Sunday — but I have no idea that a single Negro who intends to leave by reason of his absence I don't doubt we shall have plenty of hands. All belonging to this place & several others have got the wagons & will be here tomorrow or that day. Wesley says we need not be uneasy. Green wood will have plenty. Fabian misfortune seems done good humor he betrays too much anxiety. They have confidence but all will come right

any field work was done.

I shall give very attention to the securing of hands for G. wood & when we get to work that a fair division of the cane is made. I will not be responsible for Fabian's mismanagement but I am perfectly sure if any thing goes wrong it will be laid at my door. I hope for the best — I feel sincerely for your interest but Fabian is the most unfortunate & unfortunate in statement of any one I ever had any thing to do with. I am thankful every day that McKinley fed to my lot.

I trust you are all safely at home — healthy & all things doing well. I leave a heavy fall cold.

This is a bright morning warmest love to Mary & kisses for her & the children

Yours affectionate Father

F. Fabian

The sight of the back of the old Lion back heads returning will start them up fast enough.

Now about the horses. They did not get here till after the first so that whether they were paid one or two days earlier or later was of no consequence. I have no idea there will be any difficulty. The business will be attended to today. I understand Tobias stated that he would not let him have a buggy. He is emphatically a buggy man in view of this I gave him the note for buggy provided he would allow the rest of us (three) to keep the other very well, I am in the habit of keeping buggies & carriages washed & clean as well as the harness. & to prevent his using both & keeping all dirty and out of fix I made the offer. well when it was proposed that he should go to Hanover to pay the taxes some one told him his buggy was out of fix. I told him to go & see what was the matter then he would not do so. I sent for the blacksmith George who had it all right in a few minutes but it didn't suit him then to go so off he went to the city after Nelson.

It takes two horses & two buggies to keep him up so in the future I am determined that one buggy & two horses shall do him. So far as I am concerned let what will come. Mountain cow after murder of Mole hill & the worst thing yet & Sarah could have done way to supply him with two such animals. Horses - dog & buggy I have undertaken to be kept at S. wood & not to have my quiet disturbed by these annoyances - Cows -

This week & until Wednesday the 11th no work will be done, last year it was the 13th of June I. before

what may be her own, then she never can.

I write plainly & kindly looking at things as R. says "square in the face" — You know it is my earnest desire to do for the best and advise as my judgment dictates — I think all danger of water present & future is at an end for us and I do not see why you should restrict yourself & family, push your credit & may be embarrass yourself for the interest you have here — let the business support itself as it can will do, and all live not in extravagance but in as much comfort as possible for all —

The weather this morning is cool, the effect of a general rain — We are all but on making corn corn corn and as much cane & sugar as we can (but corn we must have). We have yet no overseer but the hands do very well without — J. Wood is better off as Fisher has now, as I think a very good young man — energetic & attentive — How I am to get away this summer I can not see — Everything is yet to be done at the sugar house — The negro cabins also not to build — Everything here in the yard to be done yet &c. &c. &c.

You see my paper is full — so I must quit. I do not know what I think, I only think that is if his case — sequence so I give you the pros, that is what you ought to have. Regardless of the result — except as you need them for your guidance & action

Much & sincere love to Mary & Kate for the children

Your ever affectionate Father
J. Gibson

Oak Forest 1st May 1849

Dear Kate

Yesterday for the first time in weeks we had a fine rain. It was much wanted and will do immense good — Randall & Mary came soon after, all well — R. is starting his improvements up all magnolia for with such as are on the place he can get his hands. He gets his lumber delivered at Tigerville from a saw mill in the neighborhood — I can see plainly enough we have never overestimated the cost of improving that place — it will be a round sum before it yields any valuable returns.

The land cane was so bad and the season has been so unfavorable that the plant cane on this place (35 acres in all) is so defective that we should sell cane & plant about 1/3 of it corn. I shall be glad if it yields up 25 acres of good cane. How it is at J. Wood I really do not know for I have not seen it except from the public road & might sight days not enable me to tell anything about it — I hope the cane is better there though I am entirely ignorant, much as I feel interested in the matter —

Well, by great perseverance, the places have been surveyed by Sela Renshie & the division lines designated & on Thursday three interested here, namely, Fisher McKinley & Lewis, are with Randall to meet Mr. Goode in N. Orleans on Tuesday to consummate

the business on the basis of 3 shares in Lewis Cook – 3 in J. Wood & 1 in Old Magnolia – presuming that Lewis Cook and J. Wood have equal front & nearly if not quite equal Superficies & of course rated as of equal Value. Any material deviation from this presumption to be equalized by Regulation of the joint management let it be one way or the other.

I desire now to say a word about the proceeds of the crop – 1/3 of which still remains unsold: The first payments out of the crop were to be the disbursement to those who advanced the money to make the crop & then the the debts common to all as far as this was practicable. Sarah & Randall have been paid – the first in full with 8 p.ct interest & the latter all but the 1 p.ct special tax which by R.'s buying up proceeds saved our two hundred dollars, but he is in advance for this over six hundred dollars now due: besides it has been necessary to make cash advances for Leila to something over 500 dollars say at present 555. The payments to Tobias for Mrs H. in N. Orleans will reach to this date with money to pay hands to date 1250 to 1300. Now my fear is that, the sugar market having declined rather than improved, the proceeds will not meet the demands upon it – The tax which is a common debt of the property must be paid out of the common funds – so that in case the crop is insufficient to advance for Leila the amount must come out of your advance of last year or advance by you this, or Tobias must do like the last of my Randall and open a credit with a Merchant to make the necessary advances on the crop – This is a Mystery & an Enigma to her part & a much more trouble one in my opinion – because otherwise she appears in the light of a Stipendiary without the privilege of realizing a reasonable amount to make the proper expenditures & to keep in society as other young Ladies in her condition of life: Not one of us is able to do for her what I doubt not she can do for herself with the credit that can be established & must necessarily be for her unless you find it convenient to make the advances far better in my opinion to have a Merchant to do all the business in N. Orleans & as Tobias is the responsible manager here let him act in this matter subject always to Leila's control as to you as one of the partners – I state this to be adopted the only course to be adopted. Tobias is close enough but no absentee can judge intelligently of what is necessary to a business like this from day to day or even month to month. Leila has debts in Lexington yet unpaid. this if continued would amount to a stigma – She must have money for the Summer – There is no use in trying to get around things that are unavoidable, each one has his own load to carry or his own cross to carry out – Leila must live independently on the credit of her own just as we are all doing & not as a burthen to any.

Let me in conclusion say that Leila knows not one word of this writing & is not to know – but I do know that she feels much embarrassing embarrassment in her present situation & I feel sympathize with her – It is not her desire to be extravagant but the contrary & if she can not wear, if she has the credit to do so, live on


To
Colo. Hart Gibson
Versailles
Ky.
UNITED STATES
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THREE CENTS

Luckily we shall have an abundance of every thing more than we can gather — I wood buy nothing but Corn & Cows & not too much of either — but enough of this —

The question to be considered now by you is — Will you grind my Cane? and Can you raise the means to pay the expenses — Arrangements must be made — so as to know what to calculate. If you will grind — here is the place to do it but I fear would not harmonize with him or here and I am determined not to be worried with him & his nonsense. He will begin in a few days — Lis Dale Newit Made & Sam Cropper are here all a drift & in boggery — I am not afraid after this year Nor I fear I shall be able to see if I were bodily able to turn Regular overseer as I have done then & the last Reason to have to regulate without the person to compel obedience in management — Our expenses will be heavy this March — Lumber, Sugar hoes — including Kettles, cooling boilers, Rebuilding House, Chimney Stack, they have to be recovered if possible, &c &c — We keep two White Carpenters busy — These things are obliged to be done — and the Waggons since 10 or 15 years have to be stripped up — We shall need that up than a dozen good Mules — These bits Crops wont pay expenses — We have a large bill for extra pay the Hands for the back wages as well as Mules — Magnolia has a fine Crop & the improvements going on Cribinds — but at heavy expense —

Oak Forest 29th July 1849

My Dear Hunt.

It often happens that the discharge of duty comes counter to our inclinations — nevertheless Conscience demands the performance of this duty — Some things you ought to have understood & acted up to yourself under the advice I did not fail to give in the most explicit and established manner at the different Meetings of the family; & you Knew enough of your own knowledge to satisfy yourself that neither your experience Natural Capacity or habits of life was your brother fitted to conduct your business here: In the beginning I advised you to get the best Man without regard to cost & that Man in charge of I. wood. You not only did not do this, which you had a right to do as the only one interested in the place that could supply the means to carry it on but did worse, you allowed Fabius to tell you that if I had any thing to do with the place by going upon it or directing in any Way he would be good — this ought to have satisfied you at once of his utter incompetence. Not to use harsher terms — your duty then was plain, seize the occasion eagerly to get a competent Man. but unfortunately you lost your

& you have now to reap the consequences — My letter to that business had changed — it was my duty as well as due to self, despised to keep off if the promises had not without the power to do good I should be held responsible for all the bad. This I knew because I had experienced enough the year before when during the whole time of getting wood for sugar making & in my absence he had not gone once to where the hands were working, & yet he claimed the credit of that crop all the time, by claiming for labour &c.

Early in the winter or spring, whilst you were at Frankfort I wrote to you that as soon as you could leave your public duties to come at once & see to your business — you did not heed my advice, I did not write lightly or without reflection — I knew full without going to the place that matters were not managed, it all depended on planting the cane properly. We acted on that principle — I knew what this required — my personal attention was given to this as it had been in planting the crop of '55 down in the Fall of '57 — I felt confident. I knew Fielding knew little about it but hoped by close personal attention to it feeling it more responsibly, he would in this way supply the deficiency — but alas! he got a bad overseer at his expense than himself & stupid workhands; after a month's planting he discharged him, but not to matter too long in story the whole planting was a total failure — after cutting two acres of cane, I determined to plant one fifth of the cane taking it entirely from Magnolia & leaving all at G. wood — thereby assuring all the handling from that place to this & leaving all of the seed for G. wood on the ground — but all did but little good — there was no real intelligent efficient hand & with bad seed, bad weather & bad management, I do not think there are 20 acres of plant cane on the place!! This I wrote to see for myself whilst he was sick here on Sunday last for the first time — & then as a matter of duty

What I have to say now is that I consider it folly to think of grinding a stalk of that crop if you are to make a crop next year. This is my judgement — sober judgement in such matters of war I do not write from impulse — Now for our oak. As I have stated to you we planted some 35 acres certainly not more 10 of that are bad — good size but few or rather no stand — we have no good stand of this year's planting — our stubble is much smaller than it was last year and with seasonable rains may yield 1½ to 1¾ Hhds. our plant cane will be about a reasonable quantity for planting next season. I do not think we shall be able to make any planting this Fall or very little — the crop is in perfect order & need only rain — We shall have the greatest abundance of corn, peas, sweet potatoes &c &c

We begin to cut wood on Monday the 2nd August — deficient cane has kept us back — teams broken down handling & planting cane with a deficiency of feed. Some dead from drudge but more from overwork —

Saturday 31st

Sibran is clear of Shellings – had only one or two returns of chill & fever – We have had two weeks of dry weather, till we are wanting rain – we had the rain out of season – so that both dry & wet deal or does harm – It rained last night & we shall have enough No doubt. We are prepared for it to a T – at 12 O'clk. all is over in the field – The Cane wants any quantity of rain to give it Size – the want of Size is the general complaint – The crop is in every Stage – our Steel grinding for both places will be out of our hands & Cane –

If Green Wood is not to grind or to grind only a few days at this Sugar house, that matter should be determined as soon as possible – every thing should be made for planting by the middle of Oct.r – breaking up the land thoroughly & ditching out the old ditch, so as to have a perfect drainage – Mr. Knight who is now on the place is young but in other respects good – the best that can be got now –

We are ready to turn every thing to your assistance if you determine to make any sugar & by joining force & team can go on very rapidly, but with the hands as now at G. wood it will consume time enough to get the wood & haul it. I confess the failure at G. wood complicates matters & embarrasses exceedingly It requires prompt action & good management to retrieve the fortunes of that place. The management of this Farmer must not be expected. I am as ready as ever to share fortunes with my children, but

Not when they are about & in the field – It is very pretty to talk about the damp morning air & hot noon day sun, but all must become accustomed & inured to the necessary duties of life – It is the fresh bracing air of the morning which I am persuaded has kept me up so long & the umbrella to keep off the mid day sun – Without practice we can expect to do nothing –

Earnest Bourguin was here the other day you know he managed at J. wood one year & knows all the property Wally & Tobin was very desirous to get his opinion about the place – To the question – What is your opinion of the relative value of L. Oak & J. Wood just as they stand boundaries & improvements as they are? Answer "I consider J. wood worth from 15 to 20 thousand dollars the most" Question "Can you make as much sugar to the acre on J. W. as L. oak?" Answer – "I can make more at J. wood – because the land is richer – the wood is more convenient & the facilities greater" they were enough for J. the day was saved – he found no apology for his failure – With proper management I do not know so valuable a single plantation in the Parish taking location soil wood & improvements combined – but it will be neglected all ruined if not managed.

I hope we may stay upon but this is all I expect if we have sold to increase our crop as we must do to live. –

But enough – I have said very strong no kindness, for it is true kindness to speak the truth – J. Tobin

Oak Forest 12th May 1870

Dear West

It has been some time since I wrote to you & I think it right occasionally to let you know exactly how things are doing –

Since the rains the grass has made its appearance & as I would say badly cultivated last season it has its fall share – Nothing is plowing done to the cane as fast as possible now that the weather is dry – We have had to plant over some corn and have sides towards all the stubble cane with corn – so that I trust we will make a full supply for the coming year. It is now begining which is a thing I think ought never to be done & would not be done but for the management of last year at that place both here & at Magnolia there will be enough to do till corn in the field can be used – Your Mules are doing very well & all remain at home because I think it best as they can be changed in such a way as to give relief to those working it – We have lost several old ones which were really not worth the corn they consumed –

I found Rendall Manager doing worse than nothing & had to discharge him – It was

as I knew you'd be so to get another of the same stamp so I spoke to Shannon as he was so near to visit the place & give directions to old Lewis which will not interfere with his business, at least till some time hence — He consented to do so as a relief to me — & provided you would not complain of it — I told him I would explain the matter to you in full — I saw Mr. G. Wood nearly every day — It can not be doubted that the season has been too dry & cool & that the cane is backward — We are now wanting rain again & the nights are very cool — We should devote ourselves to pushing the cane as much as possible — but the truth is our working force is too small — our quarters are full of idlers, which we can not stand much longer and the only remedy is to send on & get new hands — The Mr. Surgeons all work well & even Dr. Robertson after two or three trips got a supply to stock, & says he can get a supply at any time — I think we ought to combine & send on this Fall for all we may want. This is a matter of the first importance — a matter of absolute self-defence —

Linda & Fobes will leave here for Ky. towards the last of this month going as far as Louisville with Mr. Montgomery who is returning to New York. This I understand to be the programme —

McKinley has gone to N. Orleans to remain how long I can not say. We miss him very much. & I think will miss him still more

I hope you are all well & the little boy flourishing —

You will be in your house before this reaches you & I trust they prove a pleasant & profitable arrangement

Much & affectionate love to Mary & hopes for all the little ones —

Kindest regards for all the Dameron — hoping that Mr. D. may be still improving in health —

Ever Your Affte. Father
J. Gibson

If not delivered within 10 days, to be returned to

To

Colo. Hart Gibson

Lexington

Ky.

TIGLRVILLE
MY
24
LA

UNITED STATES 3C THREE CENTS

Oak Forest 28th May 1870

Dear West.

I do not know if you will see Fabius & Louie before you have read this letter – but I will write being Sunday to let you know how the Crops are with other Matters –

Yesterday Louie & I left here for N. Orleans where they will remain some days preparatory to starting to Ky. They are to stay at Dr. Richardson's in the City. Mr Kirby has at last taken up his residence in the City & as soon as he gets his license will advertise for business – at present he is at No 5 Carondelet Street – I trust our credit may enable him to get along till he can support himself by his profession which he assures I hope, but doubts – That sincerely do I wish it may bring him into business habits, for on plantation he is not well at home. Nor will he be as long as I am present – If I could see the place or was the place self supporting I certainly would get away from the consequences & humiliations which the business must impose –

I wrote you that after the discharge of Edmund Hobart at Allagnolia I had asked Hannah to go there occasionally to give directions till I could hear from you – A day or two ago Hannah said I was going to express the state of things which he saw

P.S.

25th – My letter has been detained for the want of Stamps, as Not one could be gotten here – I wrote to Mr K. to send me some but his head has been so turned by Betty Vernon that he seems to recollect Nothing – He has certainly made a fool of himself and mortified us all but Mum's the word – as your Aunt H. would say. The drought continues & this old Kennel shows it – More than G. Wood or Allagnolia. I suppose when the Rains come there will be a flood – as it was last season

I have not had a letter for some time. I suppose you have been moving.

Elodie came yesterday – with Claude both well. I do not know when Sarah comes or leaving – It is rather costly moving her whole family White & Black – to & fro. by Rail. If I leave at all it will not be before August & not then unless every thing suits exactly. It would help me I know to be able to change climate for a couple of Months or so –

Yours

I disappeared of at G. Wood by the plea of divided attention so I promptly released him from Magnolia & settled with him for what he had done at that place. They of course he did not relish, but I told him his whole attention was as I could see ~~then~~ needed at G. Wood & I regretted I had done what I had. The real secret is that I was rigid in requiring accounts rendered for Pork & Corn at G. Wood & he felt guilty of lavish extravagance, which had to be corrected. I do not believe there is an honest Creole. They are very much like the negroes — prone to petty larceries. He tried hard to get back the business at Magnolia but I was inflexible & returned to 60 Carondelet. I told him they gathered Market a crop, & a crop I must have: a crop I will have if I just throughout there by discharging Harmon. It is downright rascality for him either to consume provisions extravagantly or not to cultivate properly. He is now in trouble by I sent him the accounts yesterday. He feeds 18 hands with 10 ⅌ Pork consumed in a mo. at 5 lbs to every hand each is 90 lbs a week which is 16 weeks 1440 lbs — 10 ⅌ — 200 sa. is 2000 lbs — deficit 560 lbs — over 6 weeks supply! & so of the Corn. I know he is very uneasy & if the thing isn't corrected and a strict account rendered I will discharge him & put straight there. I would not be astonished at this result for I will not stand upon barefaced speculation. He has had some extra hands ditching which I sanctioned, but then he had fewer regular hands & besides, it is no addition of rations as it is the regular hands who ditch. We have had a second long spell of dry weather, & it is growing hot — of course there is but little grass — but the ground should be stirred the more — so as to keep the crop growing. The crop at G. Wood is all very well.

We were sorry to hear that your horse in Woodford had been robbed. I hope there was not much lost.

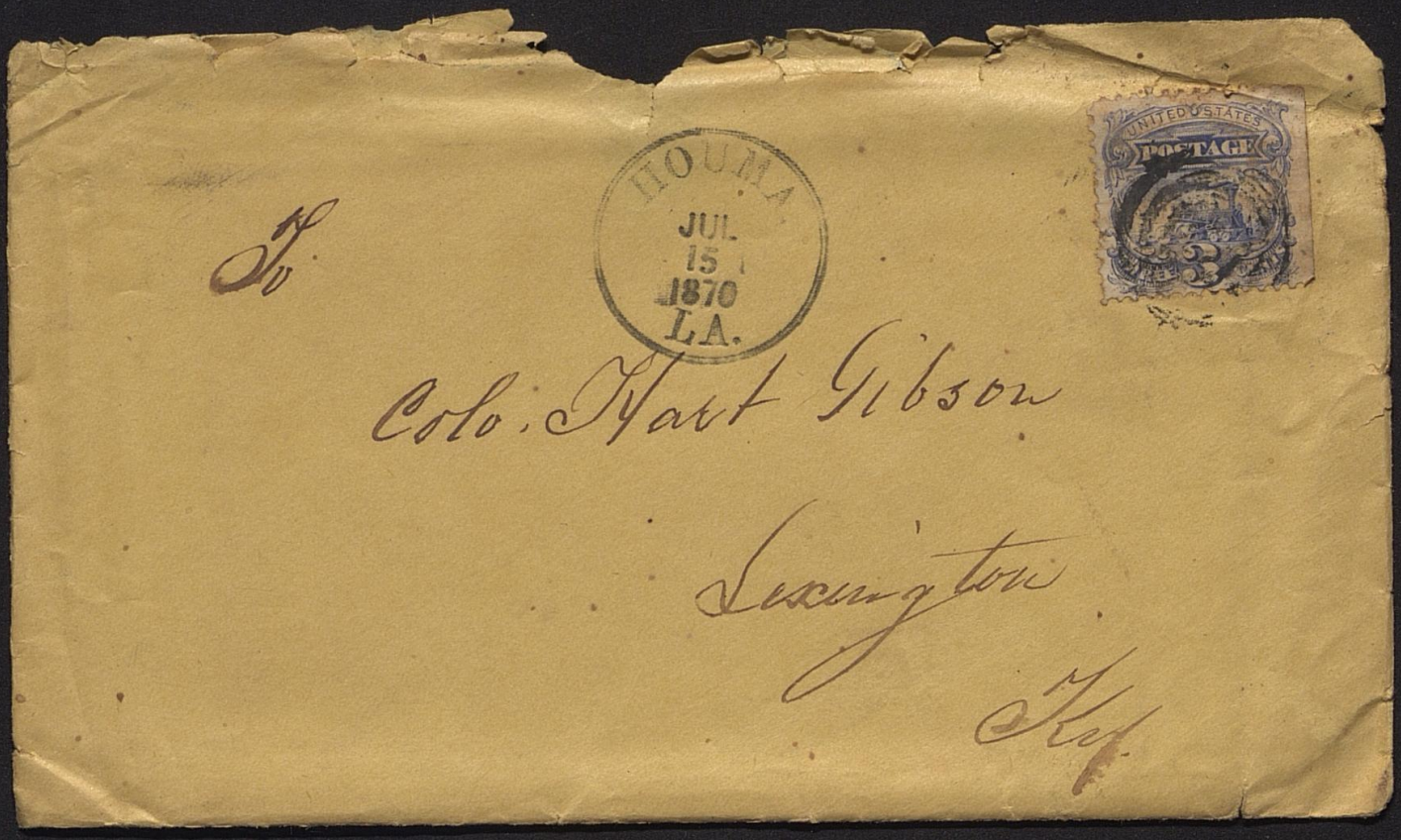
Peter Kendall claims 50 ⅌ deficit in last year's payment. How is it? I shall go to the City the 1st Jan. to purchase goods for the Negroes. When yours to have 3 suits? 2 for summer & one Winter? I have had nothing done to the portable saw & engine — it is still in Orleans. It costs G. Wood nothing to have the grinding done here & until lately not even the wood. We number all told, 28 rations for the field hands & big & 2 of them water carriers, 4 others little girls & sandy the little boy — so really we have but 17 efficient hands. G. Wood 18. They are getting 15 ⅌ ⅌ month. Instead to measure or go over every acre of land in cultivation at each place. My section is we have 50 acres more than at G. Wood. I am determined to ascertain the truth. Your plant Corn looks well & stubble rather poor. Corn young & can't stay yet the weed out Cane. I shall use buggy & horse both so as to keep things straight. Answer the case of N. L. G. 5 Carondelet St. N.O.

The money has been at 98. Much love to Mary & the little boy.

Ever your affte. Father

J. Gibson

over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Colo. Hart Gibson
Lexington
Ky.

exploded from the field & only remembered to be avoided in the future just as I hope to live to see Steam take the place of Mules & horses — I can see no substitute however for cutting cane for the Mill as each cane has to be cut at top & stripped of the leaf by itself & by an amount of intelligence which can as quickly as the hand throws decide where to cut this cane only to be done to advantage whilst the cane is standing — When so stripped & cut at top — Machinery could easily perform cutting at bottom & placing the cane it might be inside the wagon — which would be a great saving —

If I go to Va Jenny return through Lexington — I could not leave here under a month from this time, directly for the heat of Va if at all.

Much & warmest love for Mary & little One —

Your ever affte Father

A. Gibson

Park Forest 12th July 1870

Dear Hart

Yesterday Sarah & family left for Kentucky to leave N. Orleans this afternoon by Rail — but before you receive this you will have seen them at Waverly where it was her purpose to stop on head quarters —

The situation of our affairs does not permit according to my humble judgement for me to be away & so unless we can raise money to go on with hands I shall not leave home — Incidentally our expenses are so great that without an object of compensation I think it would be crazyish in me to leave — I know how demoralized men of all colors & race have become & I know enough of overseers that we already have, who if we could do now what in former times we dared to do would not remain very long in my service — It is not a question with me at least, whether we shall make a sum more or less surplus, but it is whether we can make enough to meet current engagements — I am no gambler & can not live on the Speculation. It would be the sort of pleasure to me to have business set before me when it was an even chance if things did not

forever to be a lurking poison at the bottom – I have lived & flourished on credit when I could sustain credit by honest means but it is not so now – We are subject to disappointment at every step – For instance – We have lost from this place 5 boys since the beginning of the year. John for the house & Phill plow boy, run off to the city – Geo. Wilson, Winston (Austin's eldest son) & Sandy the apprentice – none such can be counted on. Green Wood changes but retains about 16 full hands & the women & junior occasionally – our force combined as they now stand are not equal to the task of taking off our crop, washing & – they want 450 to 500 Hands according to the seed put up & without any chance of planting this Fall – Now in view of this situation I proposed to ask the Dividends common upon merchants to furnish the money enough to go or send on to Va to get for this place from 12 to 18 good field hands – I have every attempt to get what we must have here will be a failure, great importation is the only chance – Every body is upon hands & competition is to carry prices above all reason & beyond any profit. –

Now for other matters – Our plantations are all to be fenced anew – & they by outside labor in other words by contract. I say all because none can lie unprotected when the others are made secure & the stock running at large – Green Wood has some old fences remaining but Lin Oak has none any where – but if we fence up on this side of the bayou & put our stock back on front it leaves us worth our land on both sides for cultivation which if we retrench our capital should be brought into action cultivation as soon as possible – with the moderate increase of force which I suggest all our upper land on this side will be occupied – with nothing but the fencing as extra or job work – you will have no indebtedness to pay up upon Singer home – which is daily no great job if your portable saw can be got in order –

We are again wanting rain considerably and it may soon – Barnum is laying by his cane & corn also – We have double his area of cane & a good deal more corn – Would you believe it? We are actually buying corn for grinding & not one a week supply of old corn at with bride for bread – We shall then begin to cut & feed the new corn – The corn looks remarkably well –

We could possibly do with up than a dozen more mules for next year – Barnum has not been able to spare a mule – from as many plows as we do our cultivating & pulling machines have saved us this season. We hope to have scraping machines for the next crop – so as to do without the mule almost entirely in cane as we now do in corn – Team is now what we want – & the implements will soon come – We have already the plan of a cane cutter & gather under one –

We want a ditching machine for cleaning out and excavating old ditches in the field – more economical than the spade & shovel by hand – I hope soon to see hand cotton

Cane Forest 28th July 1862

Dear Hart

I have been talking of going to Va to get hands but am not there now that I shall get off every day only upon a necessity for my presence here.

We are just at the end of the field work only left back by the rainy week. I hope they are now employing enough at last for us all to finish. We ought to be getting wood now. We have divided the wood to get that we got last season & then we had the time to spare, not to day.

I shall try to get the hands at both places to get extra wood at an extravagant price over last season. If I find when they begin that they are in earnest in getting the wood I may have the middle of next month, the time Dr Richardson gave Bray to start with his wife North. That is time enough, but I would let him go later than to have any chance lost, even tho I advise you to get all the hands you can & bring down by the 1st to the middle of Oct. We ought to have on

postpone Seed Cane before grinding & then
we begin, by keeping every thing hot till we
are through – beginning to cut Cane about the
1st Nov. for the Mill.

I have engaged a Sugar Master
yesterday – I hope I do think I can would get
Mr. Gaspin to Make the Mass.
Will be here today – I want two as we
have the Slaves for early as well as the do.
I it would be better to Make use of
all the Material we have – Mr. Kinsley
will probably send Another out Soon –

You have Some very fine Cane
but Most of your Rattoon is Not good – Some
of your plant like Some of ours is there –

I hope you will have Cane yet
a Supply – Barron says you will, I am not
entirely Satisfied with the Management of
the Cane – You Cant get a Crop to every
thing Right, it is hard to get one entirely Sound.
& now days a Man is a fool to expect
perfect honesty from any body – Knight is
dead & inactive don't keep stimulus in hand
to excite the Negroes – If they Can escape
they go they Care not for any where else.
It takes some time to find people out –
still both are better than Some others I have:
but Not as good as they ought to be.

I feel anxious about your
Responsibility for our Wards – indeed for the
Matter of that our Responsibilities are up to
the full Measure of our expectations as to the
Crop – we Cant afford to fail. every thing must
succeed to Success – I count no personal Sacrifice
to save any thing. I have felt the day of adversity
too Sturdy to let any thing or any body intervene
to Cause a failure. I shall give up to Nothing but
the act of the Almighty – So if you shut Sue me
in Kentucky I shall hope to see you & your
here – It looks to me as if all were adrift –
adrift – because no man Save the Almighty
Can give experience of the future – half our
fields now a Wash & the Cultivation entirely
dependant on the Caprice of an African,
with no law ~~[illegible]~~ Menace or Power
to Compel the necessary labor – the pyramid
is inverted and its downfall is as Sure
as gravity, delineated in unerring history
Pictures no man has but which Stares
every Man in the face who has the Nerve
to look things in the face – So what
I count Most – Now is to Make Sure what
we have in our grasp & then we may
ponder on the future –

Much love to Mary & Kepler for the kind
Care Your Affe. Father S. Gibson

Colo. Hart Gibson

Lexington

Ky.

Col - W. M. Blackford
Tyrrell
Comp'y L. H. Gibson

Oak Forest 5th Feb. 1870

Dear Hart

I do not know whether the cry of yellow fever in New Orleans will delay your coming or not if it does I have a word or two to say about business –

I want you to attend to the signatures of the papers sent you last summer or spring – I am in trouble about Ridgeland Mills for the want of the proper authority to issue Orders for rents & to rent for next year. It is terrible to let important business slide on in this way. Since then is the sale of the 1/3 of this place to Sneed & McKinley for my benefit only wanting your & Mary's signatures – there is no end in conceiving difficulty – every thing has been done by Goode with my agency from the beginning to the end & I have never found any mistake yet. It is subject to be terribly complicated by any accident. All our debts interested in the whole business being cleared finally & forever.

Another thing – Randall has some sampling cane which he has authorized to be sold – Green Wood must have it. You want all you can get. We shall expand you the money advanced to us for Mules, then would pay for all Randall will have to spare.

I am pushing Benson to get some land prepared for planting Cane at Green Wood by the 15th or 20th but he is a poor apology to get work done. His hands got only 1¼ Cords Wood for day whilst ours got the regular quantity of 1½. The hands say you made that bargain with them. I told them I believed they lied. On our place the wood is on high land & not called over & they can get almost as much again as in the swamps as on Gibson above on the bayou. We have 800 Cords Wood now hauled on the Yard & 100 Cords house wood which they are now hauling & packing away. Benson says he has 400 Cords & about half hauled & he has 4 Mule Wagons going. he tasks every thing to such an extent that they what do any thing without it. They haul 5 loads a day. I would be about right. We hauled 9 & 10 without tasking. though ours is heavy but not to make that difference. Old Lewis beats him at Magnolia and Knight is all man though rather slow. And yet I dont know where any one could be got to do any better than Benson. I got old Davis to give Randall Cane an extra plowing which has brought it out after having waved on them, as the negroes called it, but I could not get it done at G. wood. Benson said it was too wet whilst he plowed over all our crop above the lane & during two weeks I could not get him to run a furrow, always

since we came. If it was too wet for several days, rather than plow towards the end of a week he would put it off till the next week when it would be raining again. Negroes no doubt tasked so they were ill. You cant do much with such men. They are age Servants. I have had a time of it to keep him from cheating in every way. Pork, Wages, H.F. but enough of all this.

I write Chiefly as to two points, to wit as to the Signing of the papers & the Seed Cane from Magnolia.

I am going to Richmond Christmas or New Year after hands for us all. I have them looking out and authorised to engage. Shall keep up a correspondence with them. have dont so engaged. I got 8 boys here, & two run off & started back home!! foolish chaps. leaving 6 or ten or 15 more will do us.

Our Cane is injured by the constant dry weather. The worm in the joints of the Cane is very bad.

Much & warmest love to Mary & the children.

Yr. ever affectionate Father

J. S. Gibson


NEW ORLEANS
SEP
3
3
To
Colo. Hart Gibson,
Lexington,
Kentucky.

P.S.
I will write a report about business as soon as I can do so from observation. J.G.

New Orleans Feb 5th 1870

My Dear Mart,

I arrived here yesterday with 8 boys & young Gum out of 30 engaged!! I lost the passage of only 3 but spent a good deal outside – It is a most hazardous business – Mr. Haly told me one of his friends engaged 7 & reached here with only 8 out of the whole.

I have made arrangements to return to Richmond about the end of the year. When I hope to get a supply for all – No news since & they are of the better class – The good ones are at work & can't leave till the end of the year –

Cypress Wax is of no service in the world –

I hope to hear from you or to see you soon – Write about all – Sarah Linda, &c &c.

Warmest love to Mary & her "Weaklings" Ever affty. Yrs. Father

P.S.
I will write & report about business as soon as I can do so from observation.
J.G.

New Orleans 26 Sept 1870

My Dear Mart,

I arrived here yesterday with 8 boys & young Allen out of 30 engaged!! I lost the passage of only 3 but spent a good deal outside. It is a most hazardous business. Mr. Gray told me one of his friends engaged 78 & reached here with only 8 out of the whole.

I have made arrangements to return to Richmond about the end of the year. When I hope to get a supply for all. We have signed & they are of the better class. The good ones are at work & can't leave till the end of the year.

Cotton was of no service in the world.

I hope to hear from you or to see you soon. Write about all. Sarah, Lula, &c. &c.

Warmest love to Mary & her "Weaklings" Ever affty. Yr. Father

Colo. Hart Gibson

Lexington

Ky.

Oak Forest 22nd Oct. 1890

Dear Hart—

I have your letter of the 15th inst. yesterday — why did you not send us a copy of your paper?

I am very glad you are coming — I do not think there is any danger to keep through the city, you might stop with Elodie in Carrollton all night & pass over to Indiana to take the cars — We should continue to plant cane at all the places till Monday the 31st and then begin to cut and haul cane for the mill from this place & S. Wood — I want to make one cane to see how every thing works & then leave you & the overseer & him if he will stay & let me go to Virginia having a little matter to settle in the neighborhood of Charlottsville of a rather an interesting character; I dont think you can pick up large a place in this country as you once did in a lady who should be nameless; by the bye I understood that lady was living in Charlottsville but I did not see her. I know you will be very unhappy about it as you seemed to take such a fancy to her; I hope you dont take a similar fancy to another who happened to be born & raised in that vicinity — It is lucky for me that you did not get a chance at this certain lady, or it might have been fatal to me.

What can we do? every good manager becomes proprietor & so good men become scarcer and scarcer and working all the time to get the favor of the negroes & in the end carry them off — that is why I am so much in favor of getting fresh hands but mind boy Wady — Come as soon as you can

With warmest love to Mary & the children

Your ever affectionate Father

F. Eliza

Could you get a bargain in Mules in Ky. on 12 Mos? We shall want a team having had our usual luck and G. wood has none. I think we have lost 4 or 5 – Green Wood & Magnolia None, we are very deficient in that implement the Eight Acres of the Cane field & they are very dear here & dull Sale & cheap as Ky – as I observe by your Monthly Report of public Sales.

I doubt if Magnolia has any Cane to spare – but it must be kept on G. wood or Lime Creek if there is – It used to be a standing theme with Randall that I never good for growing Cane but always lost its Shape it would not be a fairer with him both in raising & saving For the last two Seasons we have not had half enough of Rain to make the Cane grow as it should – and now the boring Worm is so numerous in the Stalk that we have to plant 1/3d More Cane than usual to get a Stand. So we must make allowance for this – there is always something to disappoint Calculation –

The little time I was about Lake it do us any good here I cant praise either of our Overseers Much One Knight is too Slow & inexperienced & the other is too irregular & inattentive & lets the Negroes have their own Way too Much & tasks at every thing & County his wood Only once a Week – Contrary to the Most Positive orders first cut the trees as they came & count & Mark the Wood every Morning – It is curious to take a look at how things are done You cant find a green tree cut at G. Wood nor a piece of Any but the worst to cut & split & now over 3½ feet long but Mostly 3 ft. that Cole & there only two of the Regular hands cutting for their tasks 1½ Cords Old Dark upon 1½ Cords pr day – because the place on the bayou above have all their wood in the Swamp in some instance perhaps only 14 Cords Cane Sequard but that at G. Wood where Nothing but easy cutting & splitting wood way getting it was a burning Shame to see such loss of precious time & then measuring once a Week only the grandest Swindle You can imagine – Working 16 wood Choppers & propping to have got 400 Chords when in reality I fear there are Not 200 – Here the trees were cut as they came, Oak, Gum, and all the inferior wood – and only 19 wood choppers & nearly all getting 1½ Cords getting in all 800 Cords & 100 for the large Nearly all hard green Oak 3 ft. long.

Now Thompson hide all this & dream You if he Can When he Knows it will be found out – What Varcoe? Nerd Knight is Slow to death he will execute what is directed & he is all attention & is not afraid of a Negro as the Crooks all are – Now this is What I See & Know & yet remain & this is all you Can get as a general thing but