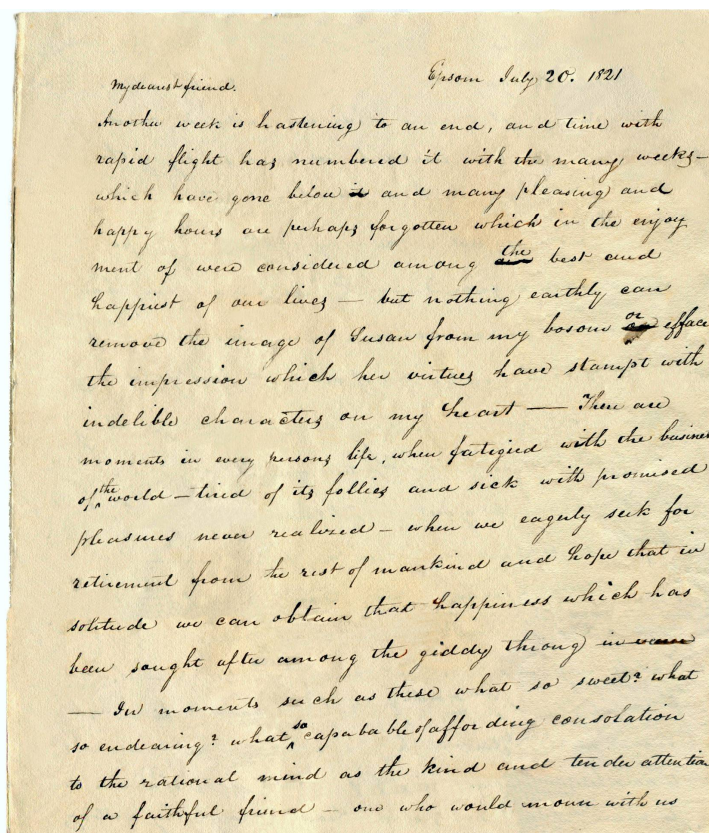


JAMES BABB'S LOVE LETTERS

Two letters written by James Babb of Epsom in 1821 to his eventual wife Susan Mead of Northwood, were donated to the Epsom Historical Association. The letters were in bad shape, they were pieced together and re-imaged before being sent to the Association. His diary entry for Friday July 20: At home. Little company. Wrote to # and sent by Mr. Tasker. (# is how she is referenced throughout his diaries) and Thursday 18 October - Went to Mr. Mead's in evening, had a pleasant time with the friend my heart holds ever dear. Tarried while ½ p 1 and then for Epsom. Home 3. Snowed first for the season.



My dearest friend. Epsom July 20. 1821
Another week is hastening to an end, and time with rapid flight has numbered it with the many weeks - which have gone before ~~is~~ and many pleasing and happy hours are perhaps forgotten which in the enjoyment of were considered among ~~the~~ the best and happiest of our lives - but nothing earthly can remove the image of Susan from my bosom ~~or~~ efface the impression which her virtues have stamped with indelible character on my heart - There are moments in every persons life, when fatigued with the business of ^{the} world - tired of its follies and sick with promised pleasures never realized - when we eagerly seek for retirement from the rest of mankind and hope that in solitude we can obtain that happiness which has been sought after among the giddy throng in ~~vain~~ - In moments such as these what so sweet? what so endearing? what ^{is} capable of affording consolation to the rational mind as the kind and tender attention of a faithful friend - one who would move with us

Epsom July 20, 1821

My dearest friend,

Another week is hastening to an end, and time with rapid flight has numbered it with the many weeks which have gone before and many pleasing and happy hours are perhaps forgotten which is the enjoyment of were considered among the best and happiest of our lives. But nothing earthly can remove the image of Susan from my bosom or efface the impression which her virtues have stamped with indelible character on my heart. There are moments in every persons life, when fatigued with the business of the world - tired of its follies and sick with promised pleasures never realized - when we eagerly seek for retirement from the rest of mankind and hope that in solitude we can obtain that happiness which as been sought after among the giddy throng.

In moments such as these what is so sweet? what so endearing? what so capable of affording consolation to the rational mind as the kind and tender attention of a faithful friend - one who would mourn with us when afflicted - who would willingly share our sorrow - who would sweetly sympathize in all our distress - who would bestow their best counsel when we needed it and whose greatest happiness would be to have us enjoy the same blessings - is not such a treasure worth possessing - and should we not make every exertion in our power to secure such a friend ----- Dearest Susan - long have I considered you as such a friend and long have the best affections and dearest wishes of my heart been your only - and could you know ever motive, read every thought by which this heart is actuated you would know that it is devoted to you alone and that its last throb will breathe a prayer for your happiness. Whatever disappointment I may be destined to endure - whatever path may be chalked out for me to walk in - should your parents continue unrelenting - this heart will remain unaltered - faithful to the profession it has made - and if this hand cannot be united with Susans, at the __, it shall never, oh, never be presented to another --- it is not in the power of any one of Adam's descendants to change the sentiments of my heart although they destroy all my hopes of happiness and prevent the accomplishment of my dearest wishes --- and should those who forbid me to hope - think you incapable of choosing for yourself - imagining that they are older and wiser and capable of making a better selection than yourself undertake to find a companion for you who will __ themselves - and you conceive it to be your duty to comply with their wishes --- it would not alter my opinion of my friend - I should still wish her every blessing and hope that she might be every happy --- That friendship and esteem which I have professed for you, Dear Susan, I trust founded as virtuous principles and I am con__ that nothing can happen, which will make any alteration that fixed regards, respectful esteem, - and true love which I entertain for you --- it is the ruling passion of my mind, the constant subject of my thoughts -- and sometimes I ever dare to hope that the time will arrive when I may call thee mine forever - by every name th_ is dear to the heart of man ----- O my friend how much I should be gratified to behold you tomorrow eve - but must deny myself that pleasure until another week shall have passed - - I shall almost count the minutes as they slowly travel away - How strange and yet how true that the oftener I see you the oftener I wish to and always have something unsaid that I wish to say -- the truth is when I am near you I forget all the world beside. - Yours forever - James.

October 22, 1821

Dear Susan,

I have sometimes thought if I could prevail on you to write me an answer to some of my letters it would afford me such pleasure - but I am convinced that if it would not be agreeable to you I could not desire your compliance with my requests.

Although a single line with your loved name inscribed beneath it would at any time produce in the bosom of your friend emotions of a most delightful nature -- yet I do not wish you to do anything to oblige me to which you can have the least objection.

What can be the difference whether you write or not -- it doth not need a written expression of your sentiments to remind me of you -- No, dearest friend, your loved form is too deeply engraven on my heart to need such an assurance - Permit me to offer to your

acceptance the thanks of a grateful heart for the happy privilege of passing a few moments by your side Thursday evening -- O that this interview could have lasted forever. I arrived home at 3 o'clock in safety - hope you did not receive any addition to your cold - and your sleep was sweet and your dreams pleasant. While writing this evening to my lovely friend my fancy wanders to the happy fireside where I last had the pleasure of seeing you and if any wishes could be realized I should be near you at this moment -- do you not believe, dear Susan, that friends though distant, may at the same moment of time have their minds occupied by the same thoughts -- I believe it to be the case -- Often while I have been gazing at the bright luminary whose brilliant and splendid lustre we have together admired and so frequently mentioned to each other, while taking a walk on a pleasant evening -- have my thought been turned to you and the power of sympathy has gently whispered to my throbbing heart that at the same time your gentle bosom may be actuated by similar emotions ---- and that your friend though distant sometimes engages your attention and that you sometimes deign to breath a prayer for his happiness ---- I happen once in a great while to be in a party of Epsom young ladies - to hear them talk nonsense - to tell the faults and the follies of their neighbors - and to say and do what they, I suppose, imagine to be very becoming and attractive -- but such parties have no effect on me but to render you my beloved friend still dearer if possible, to my heart.

I read in the Newspaper today that a premium was awarded to a young Lady of Northwood for the best heart throb at the meeting of the Agricultural Society -- I presume the decision was correct - had I been one of the Committee I should - certainly have preferred it to all the other specimens of domestic manufacturing - the name attached to it would to me have been sufficient proof that there could have been none better. -- Dear Susan, while I assure you that in future letters endeavor to comply with your wishes, when I call at your house tarry later than the hour you named with you not dear girl, when convenient let me have opportunity to see you for one fleeting transitory moment -- I ask no more -- not even this if you conceive it improper -- I will obey your wishes in every respect. I will endeavor to deserve your esteem ----

You said something about three years - I hoe you will not mention it again --- You know I love you - Heaven knows how truly ---- The spell which your virtues and your charms hath woven around my heart cannot be broken -- neither do I wish it should be -- Your friendship and esteem allow me to say your love is all I wish for in this life with the ability to render your happy -- A greater blessing I cannot have, will you not dear Susan, allow me to hope I may in time obtain this. Adieu & believe me, ever yours. James.