

Gassy Jack Deighton's letter home - June 28, 1870

[caption id="attachment_2988" align="alignnone" width="860"]



John "Gassy Jack" Deighton[/caption]

This letter, written by "Gassy Jack" Deighton in June of 1870 to his brother Tom in England, was acquired by Vancouver businessman H. R. MacMillan and given to the City of Vancouver on December 23, 1948. A typewritten transcript and photocopy is found in the City of Vancouver Archives [COVA AM648] ; the original is kept in a safe.

This transcript was made in July of 2018 by Transcribimus volunteer **Tegbir Kaur** [facebook](#) | [instagram](#)

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Page 1.

Granville,
Burrard Inlet-B.C.
June 28. 1870

Dear Brother

You may imagine my surprise when I got your letter not having one so long. You see by the head of this letter where I live has got a name it has been laid out has a town site since I wrote home last. I was the first settler here three years ago I have purchased the largest and it proves by luck to be the best but I can assure you it was a loomsome place when I came dhere first surrounded by Indians I dare not look out doors after dark there was a friend of mine about a mile distant found with his head cut in two the Indian was caught and hung this place is a lumber country we have two saw mills here but only one is running at present owing to the Lumber Market being low but both Mills will run shortly. I have done well since I came here, Tom, and I have seen hard times too. I find a man has few friends when he is sick and no means. I was three years and a half sick and most of the time on crutches and four months in my bed. I run in debt two thousand dollars and business in New Westminster fell off so I Could not make a living I started with all my traps and six dollars and me sick came to this place I was here one year and a half before anyone found out I was making money finally it was found out and then a rush. Hotels Saloons Stores etc. Everybody was going to make a pile and run me out but they did not succeed for I have done the most of the business all the time I have got a good house and garden plenty of chickens and have an Indian boy to cook. I paid all my debts do not owe a cent and have a little cash besides. Johnson wrote me and said he was surprised that Bill Maltby should owe me money. Why Tom, he is a useless thing he came to Cala broke and remained so all the time and I supposed he was man enough to pay me when he went home if he had me a prsent of something even the value of a dollar. But no he has never wrote me since he left here. Tom, I was sorry when I read he was married to Jane because I consider him no account. There are the countries to try a man where he gets nothing but what he works for no windfalls no marriage dourys. Johnson told me how well he was off so I wrote him and let him know where he could get rid of some of it. Tom I shall never ask Bill Maltby for anything but he is mean. I am now more satisfied at him getting married so soon it is a wonder he did not play Mormon on it and get two wifes in case of an accident.

Tom there is an old Chum of yours here his name is Dick Challenger I think. He sends his best respects to you and Emma so soon has you get your Salmon let me know how much there is two half Bbls for you Ann & Johnson. I sent them to him for I thought they would go safer I paid the frieggt to Hull if you like them I will send you some more in the fall write and let me know where to send them too for the Hudson Bay Co will forward them to any part of England. X Tom write and let me know how you are fixed and if you are short I will send you some money I will also give you an order for my Camphor Trunk and all my effects you can have everything but do not part with the spoons or Trunk and get them at once for delays are dangerous. Tom I

Page 2.

might come home for a few days but the chances are I shall not for I cannot leave here without selling out. Tom if anything happens me you shall have all I have got Ann is all right and Mother I believe when you write again give me all particulars.

Tom I wish you was out of the country and here you could make an easy living with little work if things

Page 2 of 4

start up here again I might send for you and Emma. X When Dick died Johnson wrote me and I thought by the letter that Dick was broke he talked about Doctors Bills and the care he was taking with him that he was keeping him out of the poorhouse but however I am going to write him for all particulars. By the time you get this you will have got the Salmon. It is Salmon bellies you will have to soak them before cooking you will find them nice Tom I have given you a long twister with my kind love to you and Emma.

I remain your
Affectionate Brother
John Deighton.

You need not present the order without Johnson objects to deliver the Trunk or something happens Mother. I will write Ann in a month.

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H.R. MacMillan, City of Vancouver Archives CVA 134-085[/caption]