Auger Down Books

E-LIST 40

BOSTON BOOK FAIR, NOVEMBER 2026



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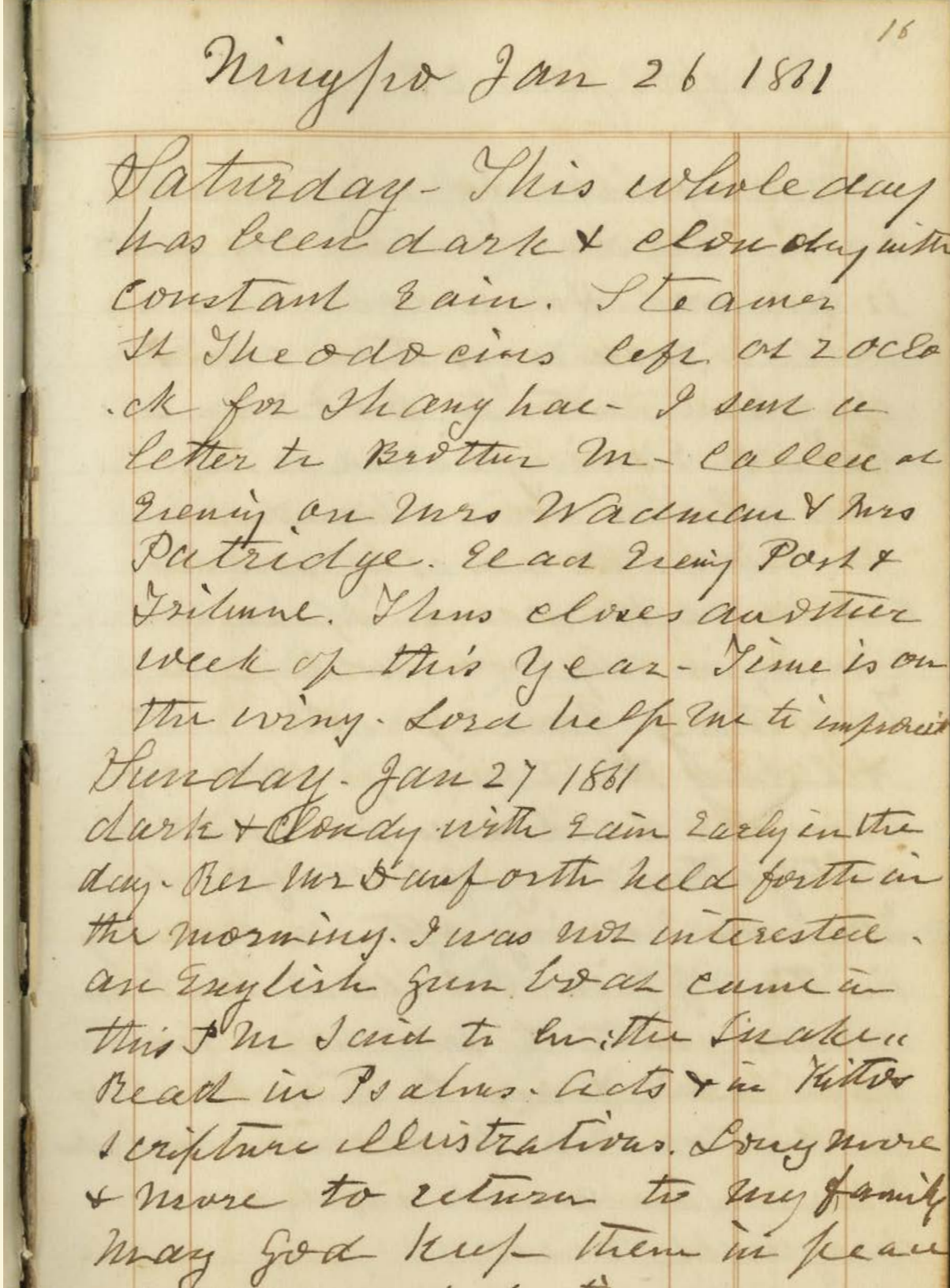
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Ningpo Jan 26 1861

16

Saturday- This whole day has been dark & cloudy with constant rain. Steamer St Theodosius left at 2 o'clock for Shanghae- I sent a letter to Brother M- Called at Dennys on Mrs Wadman & Mrs Patridge. Read Denny Post & Tribune. Thus closes another week of this year- Time is on the wing. Lord help me to improve

Sunday- Jan 27 1861

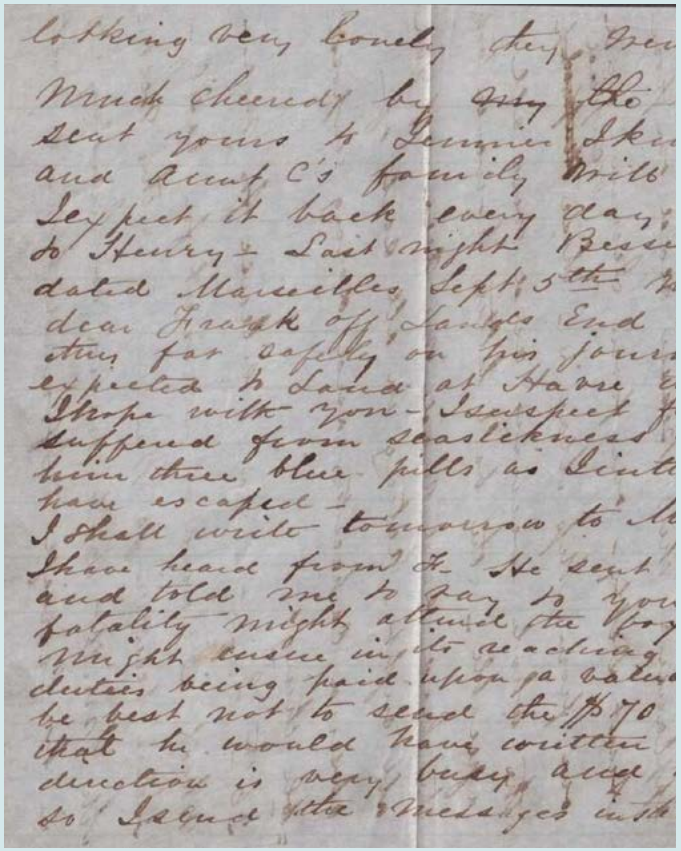
Dark & Cloudy with rain early in the day. Rev Mr Danforth held forth in the morning. I was not interested. An English gentleman came in this P M & I said to him Sir take a Book in Psalms. Acts & in Victor Scripture illustrations. Every more & more to return to my family may God keep them in peace

1

[AFRICAN-AMERICANA - EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY - WOMEN]
HARWOOD, MARGARET BLEECKER LUCE (ATTRIBUTED)

An 1853 Letter Discussing a Free Black Domestic Worker's "Free Papers," the Shipment of a Camera to the Mediterranean, and Seeds from Constantinople.

Shady-side [near Bladensburg, Maryland]: September 19, 1853. Autograph letter, three pages with additional writing in the margins and an address panel, addressed to Commander A. A. Harwood aboard the U.S. frigate 'Cumberland' at Spezia, Sardinia. Washington, D.C., September 26 postmark. Old folds and wrinkling.



A wide-ranging family letter apparently written by Margaret Bleecker Harwood to her husband, naval officer Andrew Allen Harwood, during his Mediterranean deployment, discussing a free Black domestic worker's efforts to obtain her freedom papers, the shipment of photographic equipment overseas, and seeds sent from Constantinople. Andrew Harwood was then commanding the frigate *Cumberland* and would later command the Washington Navy Yard and Potomac Flotilla during the Civil War.

Of particular interest is an account of Rachel Wilson, a domestic worker whom Harwood had recently employed:

"I believe I told you that I had hired a girl – I find it a better plan – both for O & myself – the first one – Rachel Wilson [...] went home to get her 'free papers' and has not returned – so I have hired another who is to come next week."

Maryland issued certificates of freedom to both free-born and formerly enslaved African Americans, recording their legal status and physical descriptions. Wilson's departure to retrieve her papers offers a small but revealing glimpse of the documentary requirements governing the lives and employment of free Black women in antebellum Maryland.

Another noteworthy passage concerns the shipment of a camera to Harwood in the Mediterranean. A Mr. Edwards had forwarded a bill of lading and asked the writer to explain his decision concerning the equipment.

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1

1853 Maryland Letter on Free Papers and Shipments from the Mediterranean.

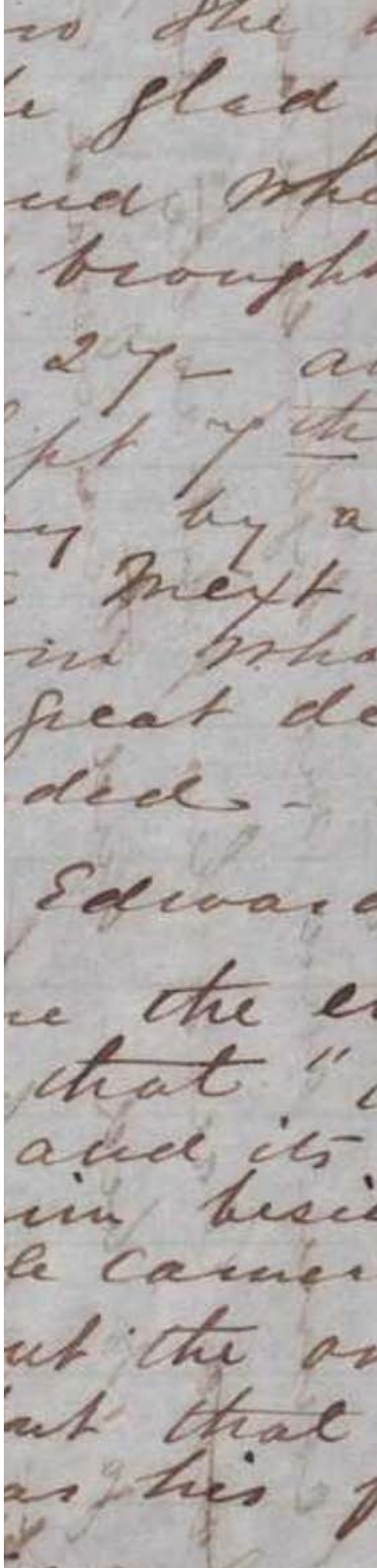
Fearing that “some fatality might attend the box and its contents,” or that customs duties might be imposed upon a valuable camera, Edwards had decided “not to send the $70 but the one you lent me.” The passage documents the private circulation of photographic equipment in 1853, including a camera lent by Harwood, another valued at $70, and the difficulties of shipping such instruments overseas.

The letter also provides an engaging account of the household Harwood left behind. Seeds sent from abroad have produced a flowering “Queen Margaret,” which the writer mistakenly identifies from a label reading “A Paris.” She asks that future seeds from Constantinople arrive with their names and instructions for planting. Meanwhile, the stable door needs repair, the pump may cost several dollars to fix, and she plans to rearrange her rooms to economize. Family letters are read aloud to “unbounded applause,” while an account of a ball inspires an absurd dream about her absent husband. The letter opens with a playful reference to King Charles’s recurring appearance in Mr. Dick’s Memorial in Dickens’s *David Copperfield*.

The attribution is strongly supported by two other surviving letters from Margaret Harwood to her husband, dated April 3, 1853, and February 8, 1854, transcribed by Spared & Shared.[1] These describe the same Bladensburg household, children, Mr. Lowndes, gardening, and even the troublesome pump.

[1] “1853-4: Margaret (Luce) Harwood to Andrew Allen Harwood,” Spared & Shared, accessed October 27, 2026, https://sparedshared11.wordpress.com/2015/12/14/1853-to-andrew-allen-harwood/.

$750



2

[AFRICAN-AMERICANA - ENSLAVEMENT - INHERITANCE - MISSISSIPPI - TEXAS] WADE, J. W.

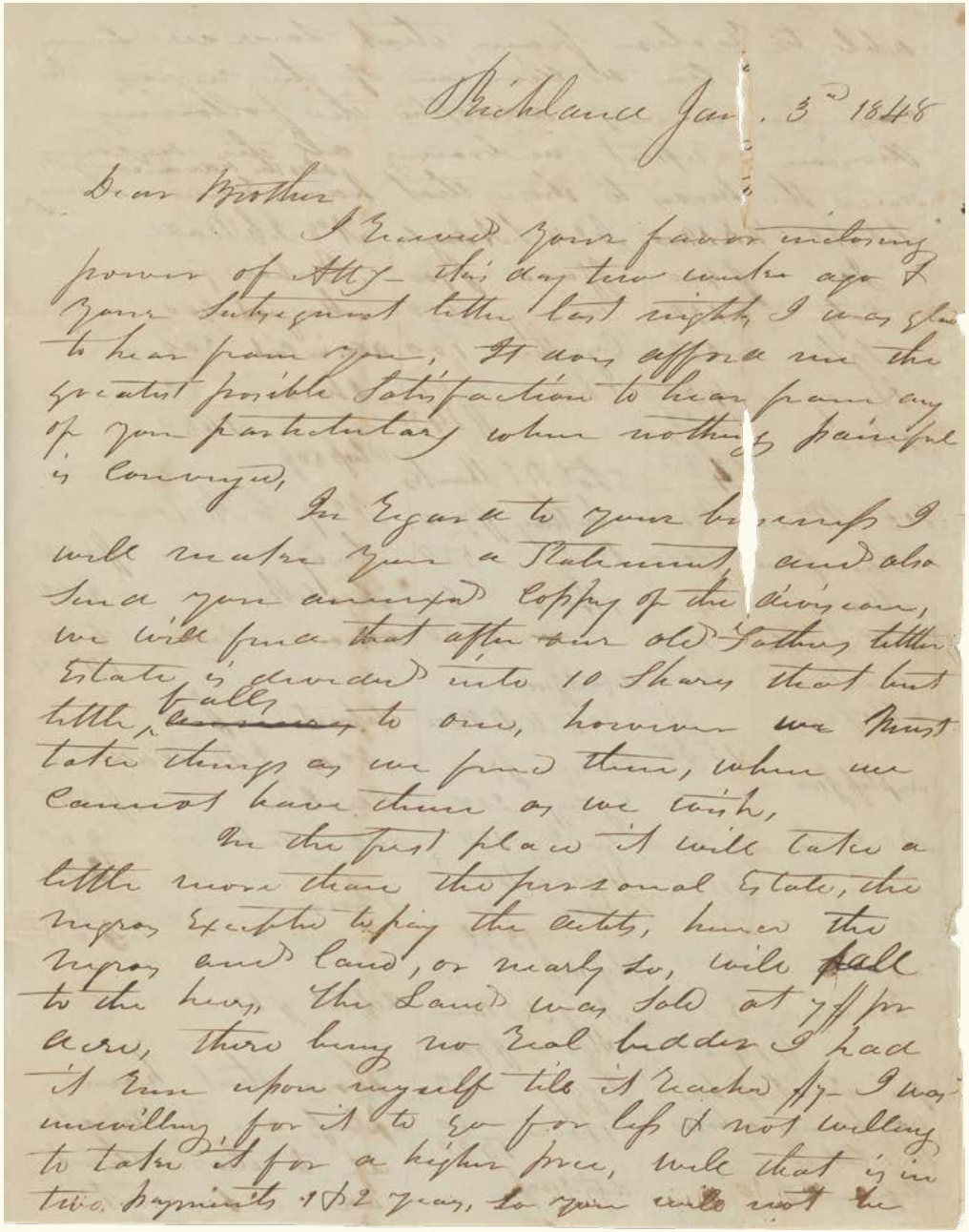
A Letter Recording the Division of Twenty-Eight Enslaved People Among Ten Heirs, with Discussion of Their Sale and Removal from Mississippi to Texas.

Richland, Mississippi: January 3, 1849. Autograph letter signed, three pages, with integral address page directed to Dr. C. A. Wade, Rusk, Cherokee County, Texas. One page occupied by a three-column account of the estate division. Dated 1848 in the letter, with manuscript postal marking dated January 8, 1849. Toning, substantial separations along folds, and several small losses, occasionally affecting text.

A detailed letter from J. W. Wade in Richland, Mississippi, to his brother in Rusk, Texas, reporting the division of their father's estate and arrangements for the sale and removal of enslaved people allotted to the heirs. The letter provides an itemized distribution of twenty-eight enslaved people and explains what happened after the division: relatives were departing for Texas, enslaved people were being sent with them, and the writer anticipated that one woman would command a higher price there than her Mississippi appraisal. Women appear among the named beneficiaries, while enslaved women figure prominently in the subsequent negotiations over transportation and sale.

The recipient is identifiable as Dr. Charles Anderson Wade, a physician who settled in Cherokee County before 1850.[1] The estate was apparently that of Micajah

CONTINUED



2

1849 Letter on the Division of Enslaved People Among Heirs.

Wade, whose recorded death at Richland on July 22, 1848, supports the postal marking's identification of the letter's year as 1849.

Wade begins by acknowledging receipt of his brother's power of attorney and promising a statement of his business and a copy of the division. His complaint about the modest size of the individual inheritances precedes an explanation of which assets would remain after the payment of debts:

"after our old Fathers little Estate is divided into 10 Shears that but little falls to one, however we must take things as we find them, when we cannot have them as we wish.

In the first place it will take a little more than the personal Estate, the negros Excepted to pay the debts, hence the negros and land, or nearly so, will fall to the heirs."

He also reports that the land sold at seven dollars an acre, explaining that, in the absence of genuine competing bidders, he had allowed the bidding to run against himself until it reached that figure. Payment was to be made in two installments, delaying the realization of that portion of the inheritance.

The commissioners' division occupies the second page, recording ten lots and twenty-eight enslaved people, nearly all identified by first name, with individual appraisals ranging from $100 to $700. Among those listed are Joe, Caty, Tyler, Henry, Sampson, Mary, "Little Cynthia," Martha, Anthony, Ruby, Alfred, Peggy, Richard, Margaret, Lucy, and Caroline. The allotments vary considerably in the number of people assigned to each heir; horses valued at $80, previous cash advances, and payments between beneficiaries were incorporated into the calculations. Wade states the principle at the foot of the account: "Those that have overplus are to make it to those that are deficient."

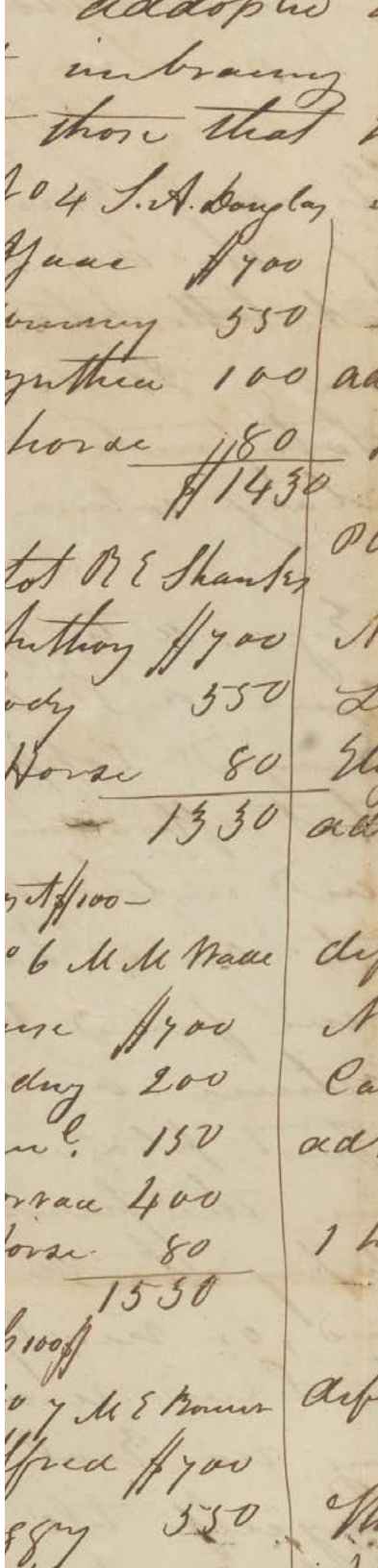
The female beneficiaries include Susan Wade, whose share comprised four enslaved people appraised together at $1,400, and "M E Bonner," apparently Martha Ellen Wade Bonner, Micajah's daughter and the wife of William Nevel Bonner. Martha's allotment consisted of Alfred, valued at $700, Peggy at $550, and a horse at $80, with a further $100 due to equalize the share. These entries document women as recipients of inherited slave property alongside male heirs, although the letter does not establish the legal terms under which the married beneficiaries held or controlled their shares.

The final page connects the accounting to decisions about particular enslaved people. Lucy, entered in C. A. Wade's allotment at $550, had been sent toward Texas because the writer believed she would bring an additional $100 there. His brother's preference was evidently to receive money rather than retain the people assigned to him:

"I learned from your first favor that you wished to realize the money for the negros. I would have kept Lucy and sent you the money but was fully of opinion that you could sell her for $100 more than she was appraised at here."

Lucy's appearance in both the division and the subsequent correspondence allows her proposed disposition to be followed from an estate appraisal

CONTINUED



2

1849 Letter on the Division of Enslaved People Among Heirs.

to transportation for a prospective sale. The passage records the family's calculation that a sale in Texas would yield more than retaining her in Mississippi.

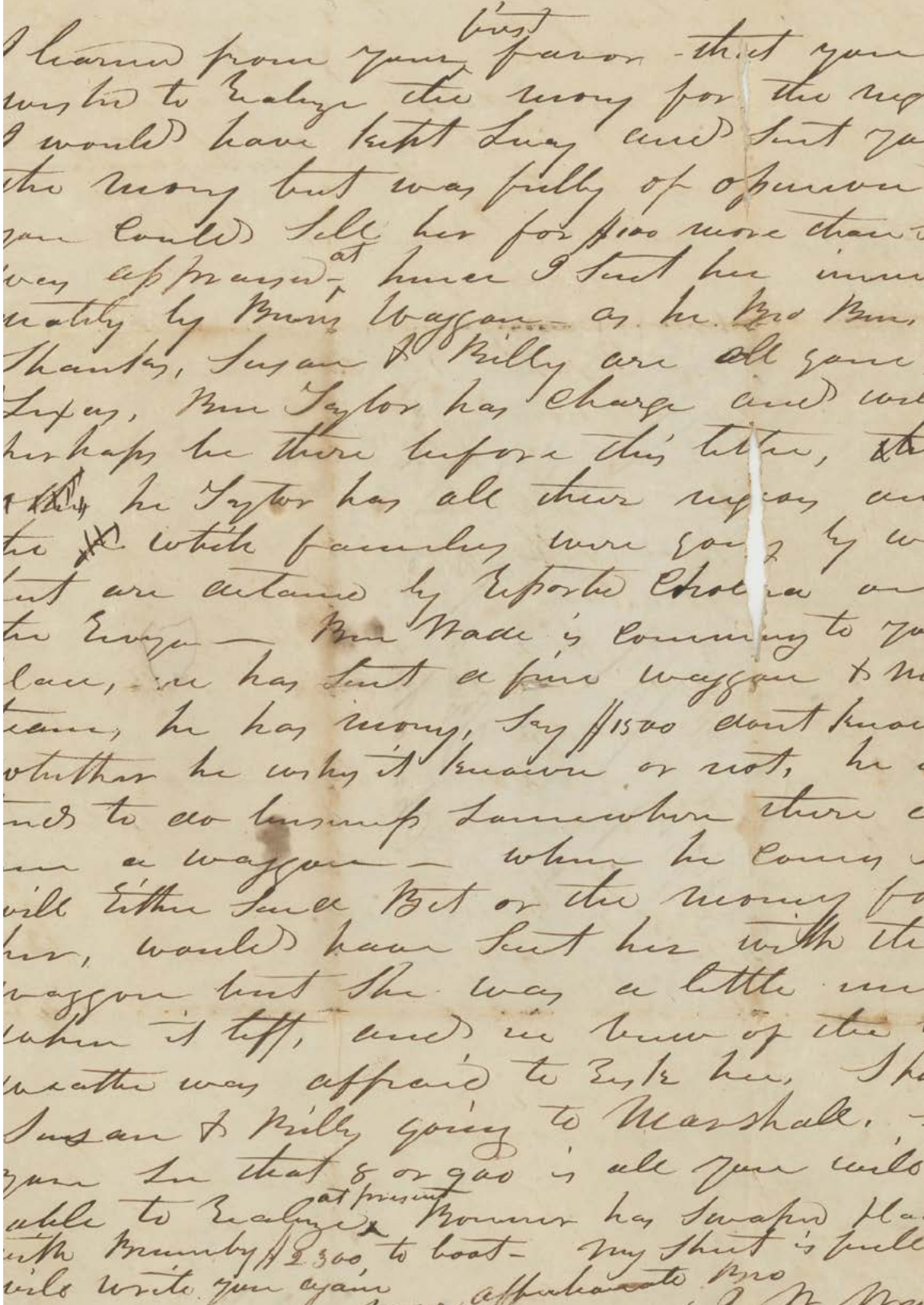
Wade explains that he sent Lucy with Waggoner and describes relatives departing for Texas. Taylor had charge of a group of enslaved people, and plans for travel by water with the white families had been delayed by reports of cholera on the river. Another enslaved woman, identified as Bet, remained behind. Wade expected either to send her later or remit money in her place:

"when he leaves I will either Send Bet or the money for her, would have sent her with the waggon but she was a little unwell when it left, and in view of the bad weather was afraid to Risk her."

Together, the account and correspondence show how the division of a Mississippi estate led to arrangements for the removal and prospective sale of enslaved people in Texas. Lucy's appearance in both the appraisal and the ensuing negotiations allows her circumstances to be followed beyond the estate accounting, connecting her assigned value with the family's plans for her transportation and sale.

[1] "Dr. Charles Anderson Wade Family," *Cherokee County History* (Cherokee County Historical Commission, 2011), 576.

$1,650



3

[AFRICAN-AMERICANA - INDIAN TERRITORY - CREEK NATION - EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY] WINGO PORTRAIT CO.

Studio Portrait of an African American Family in the Creek Nation, Indian Territory, c. 1902—1904.

Checotah and Eufaula, Indian Territory: Wingo Portrait Co., c. 1902 - 1904. Cabinet card photograph measuring 4 x 5 ½ inches on larger mount. Printed imprint at lower margin reading "Wingo's / Extra Finish / Checotah, Eufaula, I.T." Faint contemporary pencil inscription verso. Some fading and spotting, image still quite strong, very good.

A fine studio portrait of an unidentified African American family in the Creek Nation shortly before Oklahoma statehood. The father is seated in a wicker chair with the couple's young child beside him, while the mother stands at left, all three dressed formally for the portrait.

The photographer can be documented quite closely. An advertisement for the Wingo Portrait Co. appeared in the *Checotah Enquirer* in December 1901, listing a staff of trained operators, retouchers and printers and promising that work from the studio was "fully guaranteed" (December 27, p. 6). Polk's 1902-1903 Indian Territory directory lists the Wingo Portrait Co., operated by J. P. and J. F. Wingo, among the photographers in Checotah. The Oklahoma Historical Society also holds a 1904 portrait by "Wingo's Studio, Eufaula & Checotah, Indian Territory" of Choctaw Senate president George Choate

CONTINUED



3

Studio Portrait of an African American Family in the Creek Nation.

and his nephew Bud, establishing the firm's use of the same dual-town imprint at precisely this period.

Checotah and Eufaula were both within the Creek Nation; Checotah had been chartered by the Creek Nation in 1893 and was also the site of the Dawes Commission's first meeting. The photograph was therefore made during the years in which the Commission was breaking up tribal landholdings and enrolling citizens and Freedmen of the Five Tribes. The Creek Nation had a substantial Black population: the federal government recorded 1,774 Black people entitled to Creek citizenship as early as 1867, and Creek Freedmen were enrolled separately during the Dawes process.

The immediate area also became an important center of Black settlement. Rentiesville, one of Oklahoma's historic All-Black towns, was founded in 1903 only five miles north of Checotah, on land owned by William Rentie and Phoebe McIntosh. The sitters here cannot be identified as Creek Freedmen from the photograph alone, but the portrait comes from the larger world of African American family and community life in the Creek Nation during the allotment and statehood period.

$750



4

[AFRO-CUBAN HISTORY - BLACK CATHOLICISM - EDUCATION - OBLATE SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE]
UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER

Early Photograph of Oblate Sisters of Providence with Founders and First Boarding Students of a Cuban School, Including Carmelina Sarracent, c. 1908.

Cuba, likely Cardenas: c. 1908. Large photographic group portrait, approximately 9 inches wide. Contemporary manuscript inscription in Spanish to verso identifying the subjects individually and concluding, “Estas son las fundadoras con las primeras internas” (“These are the founders with the first boarding students”). Loss and wear to margins, with image generally well preserved, very good.



A remarkable early photograph of three Black Catholic nuns with a group of Cuban girls and young women, taken during the formative years of the Oblate Sisters of Providence’s educational work in Cuba. The manuscript inscription on the verso identifies the sitters by name, including Carmelina Sarracent, and identifies the seated nuns as Mother Eduarda, “la Fundadora”; Mother Frances, “la Fundadora y Superiora”; and Sister Rose. It concludes, “Estas son las fundadoras con las primeras internas.”

The Oblate Sisters of Providence, founded in Baltimore in 1829, were the first Catholic religious community established by women of African descent in the United States, with education of Black children central to their mission. Their arrival in Cuba in November 1900 marked the order’s first foreign mission. They established Nuestra Señora de la Caridad in Havana that year and subsequently expanded throughout the island; by 1910 contemporary accounts recorded two Oblate houses in Havana and others at Cárdenas and Santa Clara.

The identification of Carmelina Sarracent is particularly significant. Sarracent was a Black Cuban writer associated with *Minerva*, the important periodical created by and for Black and mixed-race Cuban women. She wrote on questions concerning women and marriage, and a contemporary bibliography records her as a native of Matanzas and the author of a thesis for a doctorate in pedagogy.[1] Her appearance here among the school’s first boarders provides an unusual photographic connection between the educational institutions being created for Afro-Cuban girls and a

CONTINUED

4

Portrait of the Oblate Sisters of Providence with Cuban Students.

woman who would later participate in Cuba's Black intellectual press.

The photograph was very likely taken at Colegio San José in Cárdenas, founded by the Oblates in 1908. San José is particularly likely because it was established specifically as both a boarding and day school, the photograph identifies its young women as the "primeras internas," and Sarracent herself was from Matanzas province. The school and convent were established in two properties donated by a Cuban Oblate sister and became one of the order's principal institutions on the island.

[1] "SARRACENT (CARMELINA)," *Cuba Conteporánea* 43, no. 15 (Enero a Abril, 1927), 62.

$1,250



5

[BRITISH WEST FLORIDA - MISSISSIPPI RIVER - COLONIAL LAND] CHESTER, PETER; LIVINGSTON, PHILIP, JR.

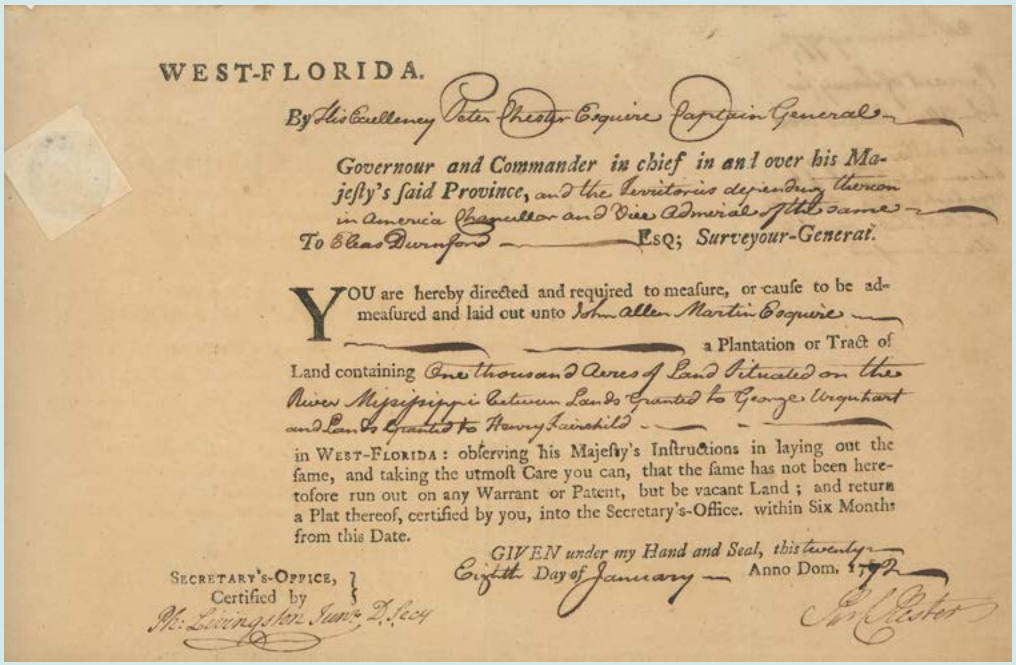
Warrant to Survey One Thousand Acres on the Mississippi River in British West Florida, 1772.

West Florida: January 28, 1772. Partly printed document completed in manuscript, signed by Governor Peter Chester and countersigned by Philip Livingston Jr., deputy secretary. One page, with manuscript docketing and a receiving endorsement signed by Elias Durnford on verso. Applied paper seal. Verso docket dated January 20; receipt dated February 3, 1772. Old folds, light toning, and minor marginal wear and tears.

" A warrant for the survey of a thousand-acre tract on the Mississippi River, issued during the British administration of West Florida. Governor Peter Chester directs Elias Durnford, the province's surveyor general, to lay out the tract for John Allen Martin, a colonial official who had served as a justice of the peace. British West Florida, established in 1763, extended westward to the Mississippi and included territory now divided among Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Martin's proposed tract is described in the manuscript insertion as "One thousand Acres of Land Situated on the River Mississippi between Lands Granted to George Urquhart and Lands Granted to Henry Fairchild"

The printed directions set out the precautions intended to prevent overlapping claims:

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WEST-FLORIDA.

By His Excellency Peter Chester Esquire Captain General Governour and Commander in chief in and over his Majesty's said Province, and the Territories depending thereon in America Chancellor and Vice Admiral of the same

To Elias Durnford Esq; Surveyour-General.

YOU are hereby directed and required to measure, or cause to be admeasured and laid out unto John Allen Martin Esquire a Plantation or Tract of Land containing One thousand Acres of Land Situated on the River Mississippi between Lands Granted to George Urquhart and Lands Granted to Henry Fairchild in WEST-FLORIDA: observing his Majesty's Instructions in laying out the same, and taking the utmost Care you can, that the same has not been heretofore run out on any Warrant or Patent, but be vacant Land; and return a Plat thereof, certified by you, into the Secretary's-Office. within Six Months from this Date.

GIVEN under my Hand and Seal, this twenty Eighth Day of January Anno Dom. 1772

SECRETARY'S-OFFICE, Certified by Wm. Livingston Junr. D. Secy

Pet. Chester

5

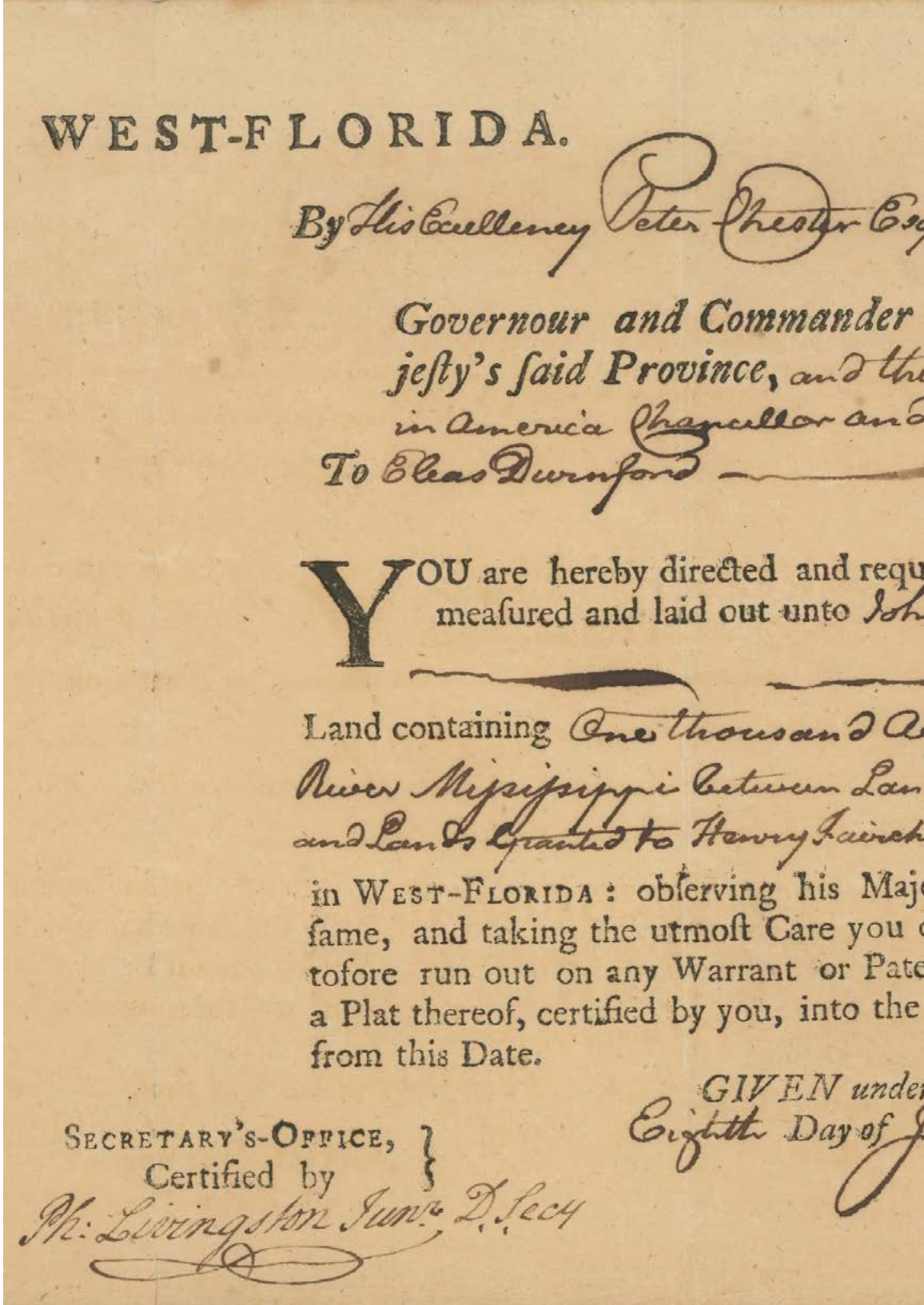
1772 Warrant to Survey British West Florida.

"observing his Majesty's Instructions in laying out the same, and taking the utmost Care you can, that the same has not been heretofore run out on any Warrant or Patent, but be vacant Land; and return a Plat thereof, certified by you, into the Secretary's-Office. within Six Months from this Date."

Martin's application can also be traced in the colonial records: the annotated finding aid to the British Colonial Office papers lists his land petition among the West Florida Council's business for January 28, 1772, matching the date on the warrant's face.[1] Warrants such as these show how British claims to the lower Mississippi were translated into proposed private holdings, located by neighboring grants and subject to a formal survey.

[1] "British Colonial Office CO 5 West Florida Records, Annotated List of Contents," David Library of the American Revolution, 212, accessed October 27, 2026, https://www.amphilsoc.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/attachments/CO5West%20Florida.pdf.

$1,500



WEST-FLORIDA.

By His Excellency Peter Chester Esq

Governour and Commander
jesty's said Province, and th
in America Chancellor and
To Elias Dunford

YOU are hereby directed and requ
measured and laid out unto Joh

Land containing One thousand A
River Mississippi between Lan
and Lands Granted to Henry Fairch
in WEST-FLORIDA: observing his Maj
same, and taking the utmost Care you
tofore run out on any Warrant or Pate
a Plat thereof, certified by you, into the
from this Date.

GIVEN under
Eighth Day of J

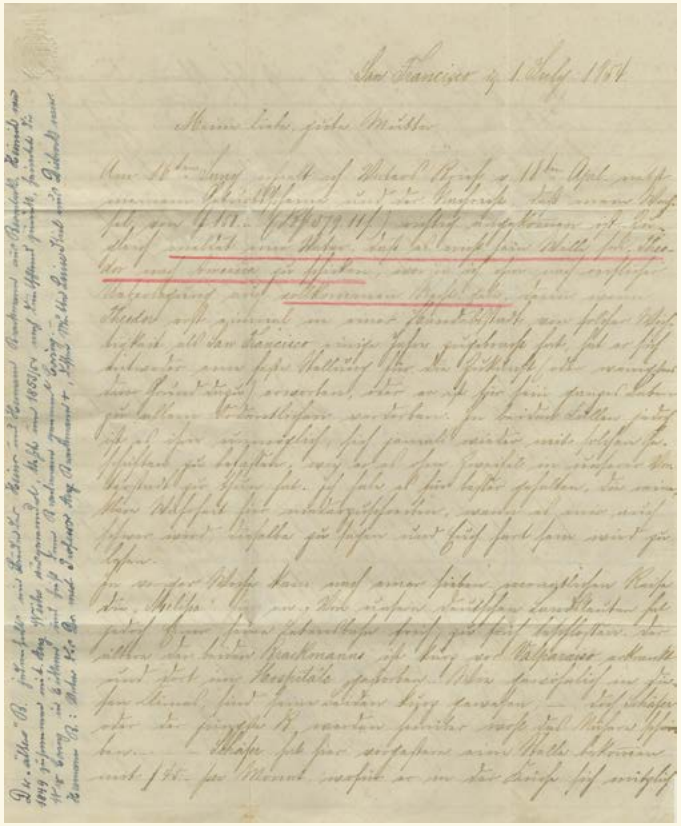
SECRETARY'S-OFFICE,
Certified by
Pt. Livingston Junr. D. Secy

6

[CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH - GERMAN IMMIGRATION - HISTORY OF MEDICINE] [DAVID BURBANK] WEIHE, AUGUST

Letter from Gold Rush San Francisco Describing German Immigration and Comparing a Visit to Dentist David Burbank with Encountering Indigenous Americans: "in an emergency I could at least have shot two of the Indians dead, whereas here I had voluntarily surrendered myself to the doctor".

San Francisco, California: July 1, 1854. Autograph letter in German, three pages, with integral address leaf directed to the writer's mother in Herford, Westphalia, Prussia. Address leaf with San Francisco, New York, Aachen, and Herford postal markings. Original folds, with minor handling wear and small marginal losses, otherwise very good.



A lengthy letter from German immigrant August Weihe to his mother in Herford, Prussia, discussing the prospects for new arrivals in San Francisco, the death of a fellow emigrant during the voyage around Cape Horn, and an uncomfortable visit to a dentist who would subsequently lend his name to the city of Burbank, California.

Weihe begins by acknowledging a letter from his father, who had decided against sending Weihe's brother Theodor to California. Weihe agrees with the decision, explaining that a young man arriving in San Francisco without an established position faces considerable risks:

"Father also informs me that it is not his wish to send Theodor to America, and after mature consideration I agree with him completely. [*In*] a commercial city of such importance as San Francisco [*a young man may*] acquire a secure position for the future [...] or be ruined for his whole life."

He next discusses the arrival of a vessel carrying German emigrants following a voyage of approximately seven months from New York. Among the passengers were two men named Backmann, one of whom had died before reaching California: "The elder of the two Backmanns fell ill shortly before Valparaiso and died there in the hospital."

Weihe continues with news of the surviving passengers and their efforts to establish themselves in California, including employment arrangements and wages. He also mentions acquaintances already living in San Francisco and his hopes of eventually returning to Europe to visit

CONTINUED

6

Gold Rush Letter Comparing Fear of Dentistry with Fear of Indigenous Americans.

his family.

The most unusual portion of the letter concerns Weihe's visit to Dr. Burbank, a San Francisco dentist. Writing with considerable humor about his apprehension, he describes the instruments displayed in Burbank's office and compares his predicament in the dental chair to an earlier encounter with Indigenous people during his travels in the West. The passage reads, in a working translation, with uncertain portions indicated in brackets:

"Now something, dear mother, that will certainly astonish you. For four days I have been spending two hours daily under the hands of Dr. Burbank, an excellent dentist, who will see to it that my teeth do not go entirely to ruin.

[*Weihe describes the condition of his teeth and the work undertaken by the dentist.*] I was myself surprised at my courage. When I first came into the doctor's office and saw his instruments, my hair stood on end, especially when I noticed on the wall a large case full of surgical [*instruments*], hooks, points, straight and curved instruments, behind glass.

I experienced a very similar feeling some years ago when Ferdinand and I, quite alone after separating from our companions, [*encountered an Indigenous encampment*]. There was one difference, however: in an emergency I could at least have shot two of the Indians dead, whereas here I had voluntarily surrendered myself to the doctor, fully conscious of the things that were to come."

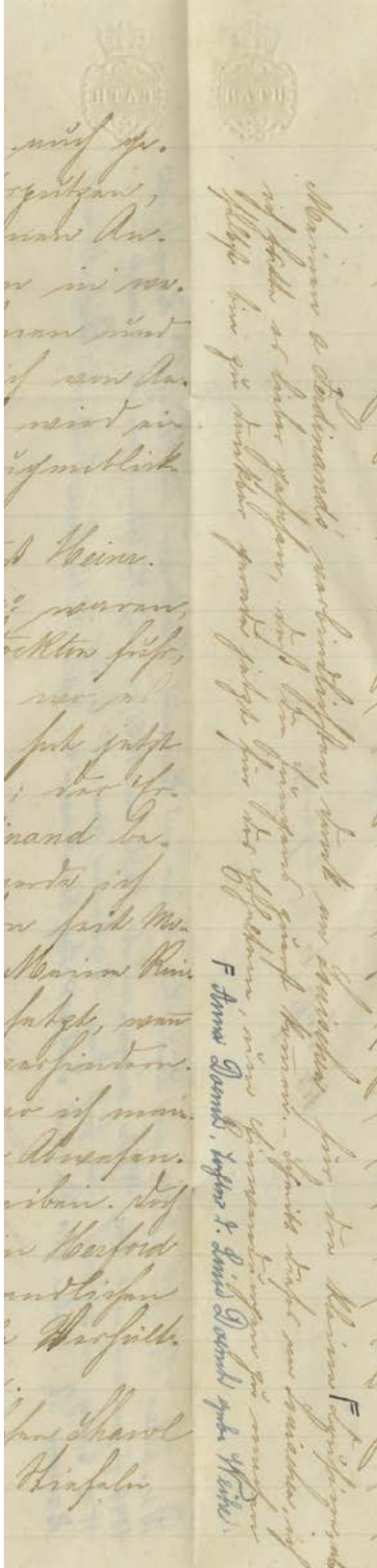
The dentist was almost certainly Dr. David Burbank (1821–1895), who practiced in San Francisco before relocating to Southern California in the 1860s. An 1855 photograph of Montgomery Street by George R. Fardon, preserved at the Bancroft Library, shows the sign of a "Dr. Burbank, Dentist," whom the library tentatively identifies as David Burbank.[1] After moving south, Burbank acquired approximately 9,200 acres in the San Fernando Valley, land subsequently developed into the community bearing his name.[2]

The letter retains its original transatlantic postal markings, documenting its journey from San Francisco to Herford at the thirty-cent rate under the 1852 United States–Prussian postal convention. It traveled by the steamship Golden Gate to Panama and the Illinois to New York, with a July 26 New York transit marking, an August 8 Aachen marking, and an August 9 Herford receiving mark.

An interesting account of German immigrant life in Gold Rush San Francisco, with particular attention to the prospects for new arrivals, the hazards of the journey to California, and the writer's own experiences in the city. The extended anecdote concerning Dr. Burbank provides an additional early record of the dentist's San Francisco practice, including a personal and intense description of a patient's experience.

[1] George R. Fardon, "East side of Montgomery Street," The Bancroft Library pictorial collections, circa 1845-circa 1870, accessed October 9, 2026, https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/154470?ln=en&v=uv.
[2] Andrea Galvin and Ben Taniguchi, *City of Burbank, Citywide Historic Context Report* (Galvin Preservation Associates Inc.: 2009).

$950



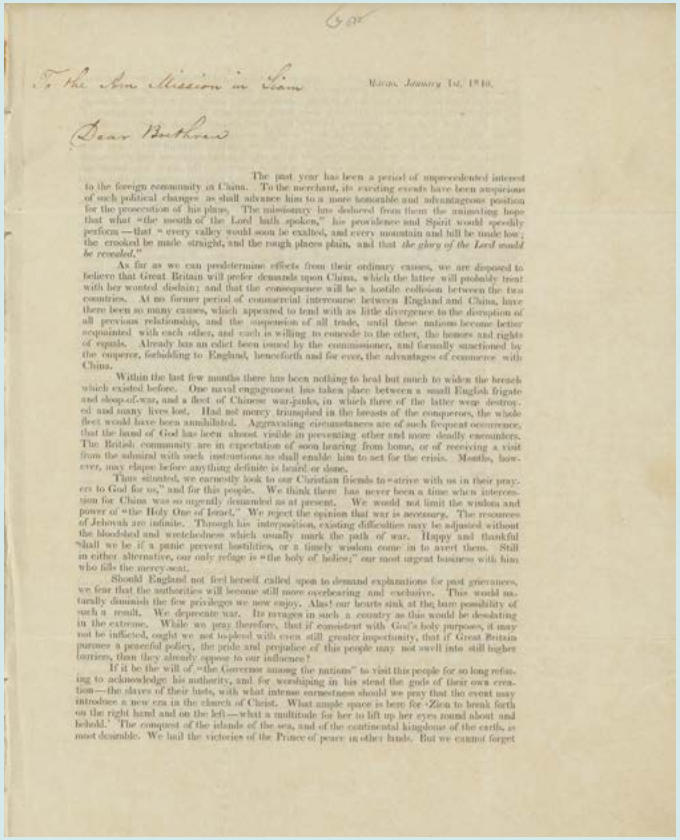
7

[CHINA - FIRST OPIUM WAR - AMERICAN MISSIONS]
ABEEL, DAVID; WILLIAMS, SAMUEL WELLS

Two Missionary Circulars from Macao Condemning the Opium Trade and Reporting the First Opium War, Signed by David Abeel and Samuel Wells Williams, 1840–1841: "What is to prevent the whole coast of China from becoming a scene of ruthless piracy?"

Macao: January 1, 1840, and July 10, 1841. Two printed circular letters, each three pages, with manuscript headings, salutations, signatures, and address panels directed to Rev. Charles Robinson in Siam or "Bankok." Signed respectively "D. Abeel" and "S. W. Williams," the latter with an additional autograph postscript. The 1841 circular docketed "From Canton Mission / Nov 6. 1841." Old folds, scattered spotting and soiling, small marginal tears, and marginal reinforcement to the 1841 circular; later manuscript date and page annotations on the 1840 circular.

Two connected reports from American missionaries in southern China during the First Opium War, sent to Charles Robinson, a missionary of the American Board at Bangkok. The writers denounce the armed opium trade and describe its effects within Chinese families and their own households, while considering whether the crisis might open the country to Christian missions. The January report is signed by the missionary David Abeel; the July follow-up by Samuel Wells Williams, the mission printer and Chinese scholar. Williams explicitly recalls the circular sent "eighteen months ago," making the documents a continuing account addressed to the same colleague.



To the Am. Mission in Siam

Macao, January 1st, 1840.

Dear Brethren

The past year has been a period of unprecedented interest to the foreign community in China. To the merchant, its exciting events have been auspicious of such political changes as shall advance him to a more honorable and advantageous position for the prosecution of his plans. The missionary has deduced from them the stimulating hope that what "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken," his providence and Spirit would speedily perform — that "every valley would soon be exalted, and every mountain and hill be made low; the crooked be made straight, and the rough places plain, and that *the glory of the Lord would be revealed.*"

As far as we can predetermine effects from their ordinary causes, we are disposed to believe that Great Britain will prefer demands upon China, which the latter will probably treat with her wonted disdain; and that the consequence will be a hostile collision between the two countries. At no former period of commercial intercourse between England and China, have there been so many causes, which appeared to lend with as little divergence to the disruption of all previous relationship, and the suspension of all trade, until these nations become better acquainted with each other, and each is willing to concede to the other, the honors and rights of equals. Already has an edict been issued by the commissioner, and formally sanctioned by the emperor, forbidding to England, henceforth and for ever, the advantages of commerce with China.

Within the last few months there has been nothing to heal but much to widen the breach which existed before. One naval engagement has taken place between a small English frigate and sloop-of-war, and a fleet of Chinese war-junks, in which three of the latter were destroyed and many lives lost. Had not mercy triumphed in the breasts of the conquerors, the whole fleet would have been annihilated. Aggravating circumstances are of such frequent occurrence, that the hand of God has been almost visible in preventing other and more deadly encounters. The British community are in expectation of soon hearing from home, or of receiving a visit from the admiral with such instructions as shall enable him to act for the crisis. Months, however, may elapse before anything definite is heard or done.

Thus situated, we earnestly look to our Christian friends to "strive with us in their prayers to God for us," and for this people. We think there has never been a time when intercession for China was so urgently demanded as at present. We would not limit the wisdom and power of "the Holy One of Israel." We reject the opinion that war is *necessary*. The resources of Jehovah are infinite. Through his intercession, existing difficulties may be adjusted without the bloodshed and wickedness which usually mark the path of war. Happy and thankful shall we be if a panic prevent hostilities, or a timely wisdom come in to avert them. Still in either alternative, our only refuge is "the holy of holies;" our most urgent business with him who fills the mercy-seat.

Should England not feel herself called upon to demand explanations for past grievances, we fear that the authorities will become still more overbearing and exclusive. This would naturally diminish the few privileges we now enjoy. Alas! our hearts sink at the bare possibility of such a result. We deprecate war. Its ravages in such a country as this would be desolating in the extreme. While we pray therefore, that if consistent with God's holy purposes, it may not be inflicted, ought we not to plead with even still greater importunity, that if Great Britain pursues a peaceful policy, the pride and prejudice of this people may not swell into still higher barriers, than they already oppose to our influence?

If it be the will of "the Governor among the nations" to visit this people for so long refusing to acknowledge his authority, and for worshiping in his stead the gods of their own creation — the slaves of their lusts, with what intense earnestness should we pray that the event may introduce a new era in the church of Christ. What ample space is here for "Zion to break forth on the right hand and on the left — what a multitude for her to lift up her eyes round about and behold.' The conquest of the islands of the sea, and of the continental kingdoms of the earth, is most desirable. We hail the victories of the Prince of peace in other lands. But we cannot forget

The January 1840 report was written after the first naval clashes, with the missionaries anticipating a wider conflict. Its most forceful passages describe the persistence of opium smuggling despite Chinese prohibitions:

"Vessels built for the purpose, armed and manned as ships-of-war, are continually forcing this drug upon the empire, and more effectually to gain their ends, are supplying with arms and ammunition the Chinese craft engaged to assist them. If this traffic continues, what is to prevent the whole coast of China from becoming a scene of ruthless piracy?"

The criticism extends into the mission's own households. Employees continue to smoke opium despite

CONTINUED

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Two Missionary Circulars on the First Opium War.

prohibitions and the threat of dismissal, while some of the best available teachers are rendered "stupified and disabled by its influence." The writers describe the strain on families whose scant resources are consumed by the habit, then turn their accusation toward the trade's purportedly respectable foreign participants:

"And yet nominal Christians, men of high worldly respectability, grow, prepare, and smuggle this deadly poison; nay justify, and even commend, themselves for their benevolent services."

Their position on British intervention is more conflicted. "We reject the opinion that war is necessary," they declare, fearing devastation on a vast scale. They also worry that a peaceful British policy might leave Chinese officials more resistant to missionary activity. The same report voices an ambition to establish Christian institutions close to the centers of imperial power:

"Most ardently do we long to establish ourselves in the great centres of influence – to erect the temples of Christ hard by the imperial palace, to attend at the crowded examinations, and be allowed to address all whom we meet".

The second circular recounts the fighting around Canton, attacks on the foreign factories, the city's ransom for six million dollars, and the subsequent withdrawal of British forces to Hong Kong. The missionaries fear that the war might ultimately close China more completely to foreigners. They report that many Chinese understand the conflict as an attempt to compel them to accept opium, and ask whether British military difficulties might themselves be a divine rebuke:

"Is it going beyond our sphere, if we suggest, that the ill success of the expedition thus far may be a frowning providence because of this connection with the traffic?"

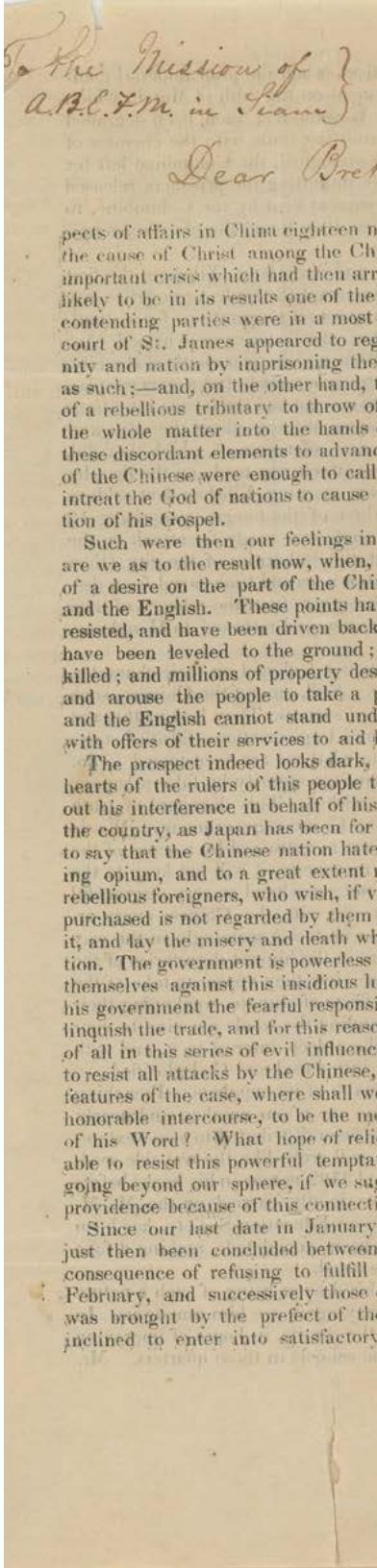
The reports also document the educational and linguistic work continuing through the crisis. The earlier circular describes the Morrison Education Society's school, distinguishing the parents' desire for English instruction from the missionaries' purpose of teaching Christianity. It reports that the son of the Chinese evangelist Liang Afa, educated by Elijah Coleman Bridgman, is working for Commissioner Lin on a Chinese translation of Murray's *Cyclopædia of Geography*. The later circular records Liang Afa's continued religious instruction in his own house near Canton and announces the completion of the *Chinese Chrestomathy*—this was Bridgman's *A Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect*, published at Macao by S. W. Williams in 1841.

A further passage in the January report places Williams's Japanese studies in the aftermath of the unsuccessful 1837 voyage of the *Morrison*, which attempted to return seven Japanese castaways to their homeland. It records the castaways' part in his language learning:

"Mr. Williams devotes a part of his time to the study of the Japanese, under the tuition of those shipwrecked natives, whom Mr. King carried back to their country; but who were not permitted to disembark."

Williams later served as an interpreter on Perry's expedition to Japan and became a professor of Chinese at Yale. Here his handwritten postscript concerns articles being made for the Siam mission and

CONTINUED


To the Mission of
A.B.C.F.M. in Siam

Dear Bre

pects of affairs in China eighteen n
the cause of Christ among the Ch
important crisis which had then arr
likely to be in its results one of the
contending parties were in a most
court of St. James appeared to reg
nity and nation by imprisoning the
as such;—and, on the other hand,
of a rebellious tributary to throw o
the whole matter into the hands
these discordant elements to advan
of the Chinese were enough to call
intreat the God of nations to cause
tion of his Gospel.

Such were then our feelings in
are we as to the result now, when,
of a desire on the part of the Chi
and the English. These points ha
resisted, and have been driven back
have been leveled to the ground;
killed; and millions of property des
and arouse the people to take a
and the English cannot stand und
with offers of their services to aid

The prospect indeed looks dark,
hearts of the rulers of this people t
out his interference in behalf of his
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to say that the Chinese nation hate
ing opium, and to a great extent
rebellious foreigners, who wish, if v
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tion. The government is powerless
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his government the fearful responsi
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to resist all attacks by the Chinese,
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honorable intercourse, to be the m
of his Word? What hope of reli
able to resist this powerful tempta
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providence because of this connecti

Since our last date in January
just then been concluded between
consequence of refusing to fulfill
February, and successively those
was brought by the prefect of th
inclined to enter into satisfactory

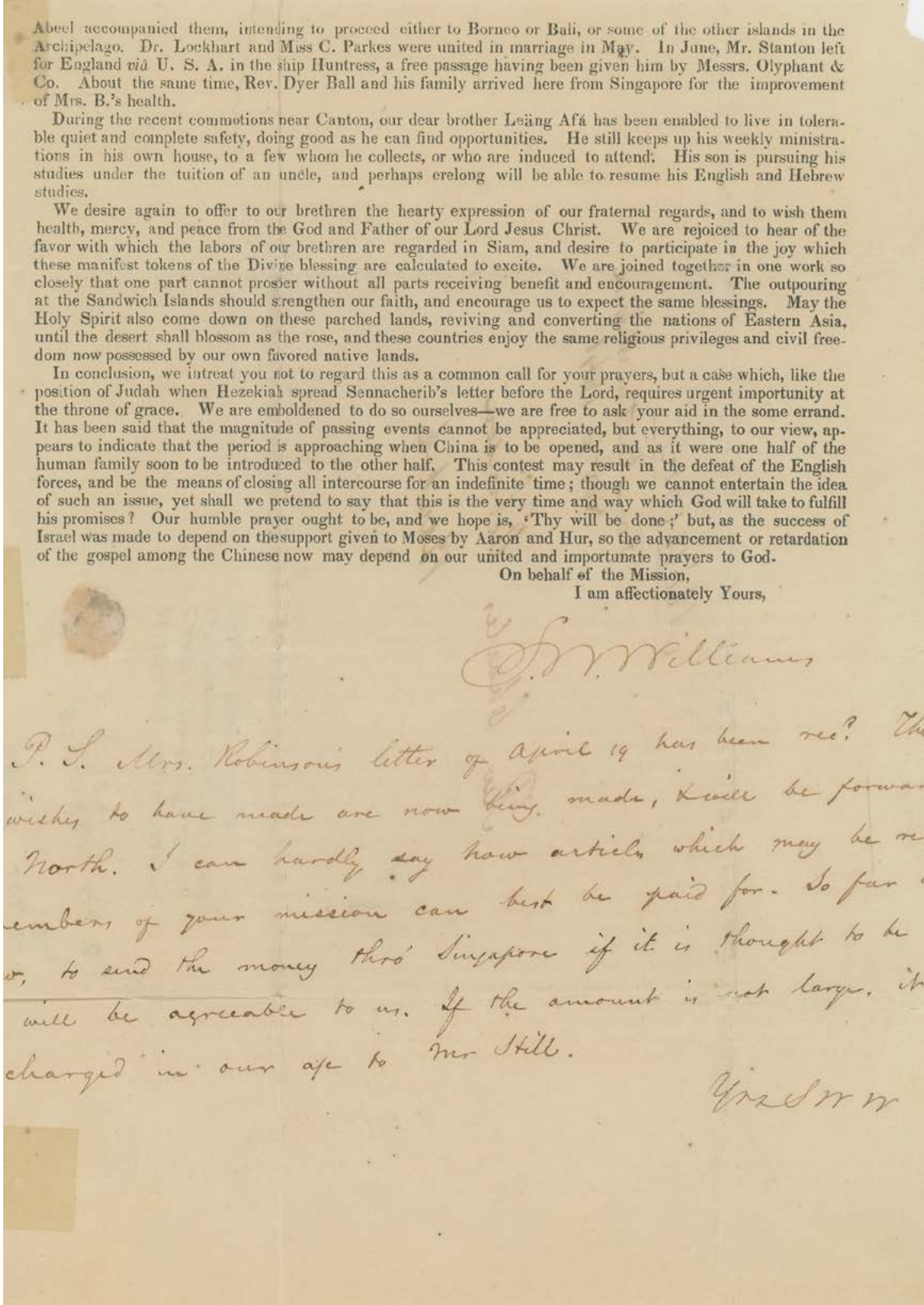
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Two Missionary Circulars on the First Opium War.

arrangements for payment through Singapore, with the page trimmed at margins and some marginal loss to Williams' note.

We find no records institutionally or in commerce of these circulars in their current form. The January 1840 text was reprinted as "State of Missions in China" in the *Calcutta Christian Observer* for August 1840, pp. 492–495. We have not located a separately catalogued institutional copy of either circular in the online records consulted. Relevant papers survive in the American Board archives at Harvard and the Samuel Wells Williams Family Papers at Yale, but the descriptions examined do not identify these two printings individually.

$6,500



Abeel accompanied them, intending to proceed either to Borneo or Bali, or some of the other islands in the Archipelago. Dr. Lockhart and Miss C. Parkes were united in marriage in May. In June, Mr. Stanton left for England *viâ* U. S. A. in the ship Huntress, a free passage having been given him by Messrs. Olyphant & Co. About the same time, Rev. Dyer Ball and his family arrived here from Singapore for the improvement of Mrs. B.'s health.

During the recent commotions near Canton, our dear brother Leäng Afá has been enabled to live in tolerable quiet and complete safety, doing good as he can find opportunities. He still keeps up his weekly ministrations in his own house, to a few whom he collects, or who are induced to attend. His son is pursuing his studies under the tuition of an uncle, and perhaps erelong will be able to resume his English and Hebrew studies.

We desire again to offer to our brethren the hearty expression of our fraternal regards, and to wish them health, mercy, and peace from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are rejoiced to hear of the favor with which the labors of our brethren are regarded in Siam, and desire to participate in the joy which these manifest tokens of the Divine blessing are calculated to excite. We are joined together in one work so closely that one part cannot prosper without all parts receiving benefit and encouragement. The outpouring at the Sandwich Islands should strengthen our faith, and encourage us to expect the same blessings. May the Holy Spirit also come down on these parched lands, reviving and converting the nations of Eastern Asia, until the desert shall blossom as the rose, and these countries enjoy the same religious privileges and civil freedom now possessed by our own favored native lands.

In conclusion, we intreat you not to regard this as a common call for your prayers, but a case which, like the position of Judah when Hezekiah spread Sennacherib's letter before the Lord, requires urgent importunity at the throne of grace. We are emboldened to do so ourselves—we are free to ask your aid in the some errand. It has been said that the magnitude of passing events cannot be appreciated, but everything, to our view, appears to indicate that the period is approaching when China is to be opened, and as it were one half of the human family soon to be introduced to the other half. This contest may result in the defeat of the English forces, and be the means of closing all intercourse for an indefinite time; though we cannot entertain the idea of such an issue, yet shall we pretend to say that this is the very time and way which God will take to fulfill his promises? Our humble prayer ought to be, and we hope is, 'Thy will be done;' but, as the success of Israel was made to depend on the support given to Moses by Aaron and Hur, so the advancement or retardation of the gospel among the Chinese now may depend on our united and importunate prayers to God.

On behalf of the Mission,
I am affectionately Yours,

S. W. Williams

P. S. Mrs. Robinson's letter of April 19 has been rec? The
wishes to have made are now being made, & will be forwa
North. I can hardly say how articles which may be re
embers of your mission can best be paid for. So far
r, to send the money thro' Singapore if it is thought to be
will be agreeable to us. If the amount is not large, it
charged in our a/c to Mr Hill.

Yrs S W W

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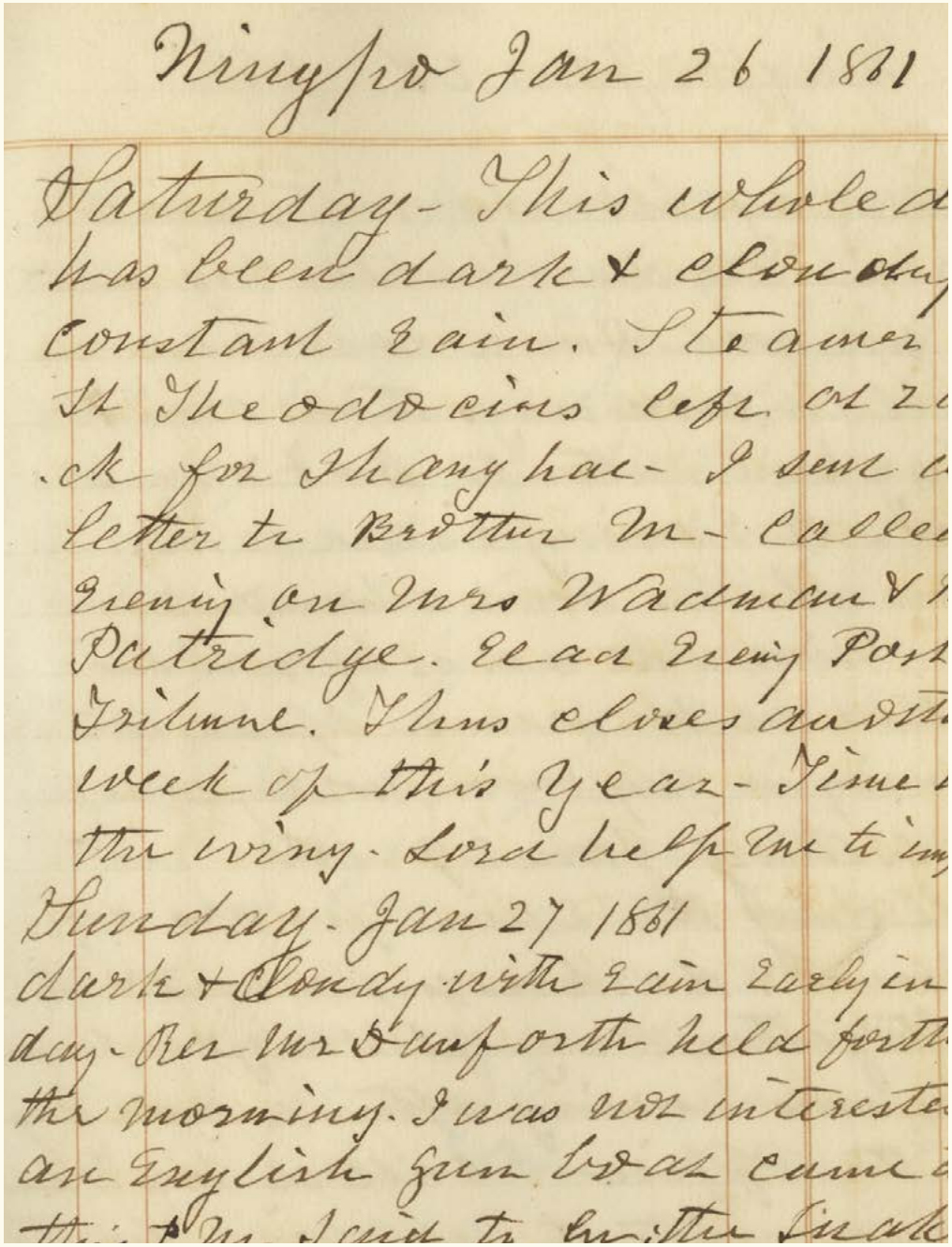
[CHINA - TAIPING REBELLION - AMERICAN CIVIL WAR - MEDICINE] FISH, GEORGE WHITEFIELD

“Nations engaged in civil war & bloodshed”: Manuscript Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Civil War in China and America, 1861–1863.

China, British Hong Kong, at sea, and the United States: January 1, 1861 - June 5, 1862 and November 24, 1862-February 22, 1863. 1-216 and 117-153 pp., with pp. 117-153 inadvertently misnumbered by Fish after the resumption of entries following a several month hiatus. The November 24, 1862 entry begins on the same page as the final June entry, establishing the continuity of the manuscript. Bound in nineteenth century calf with a lock. Appx. 36,500 words in total. Offered with a professional transcription. Contents fine, some wear and chips to boards, overall excellent.

An extensive diary following an American physician from consular and medical work in China into service in the Union army. The diary contains a previously unknown and highly significant account of the looting of Ningbo with descriptions of the burning of the city’s suburbs and its gruesome sacking by both armies, followed by a detailed account of the author’s Civil War experience during the Stones River campaign: guerilla attacks and robberies, capture by Texas Rangers—whom he has to persuade to allow him to continue medical work—the Confederate withdrawal from Murfreesboro, and the campaign’s aftermath of disease and physical and emotional depletion.

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Ningpo Jan 26 1861

Saturday - This whole d
has been dark & clou
constant rain. Steamer
St Theodosius left at 2
ck for Shanghai - I sent
letter to Brother M - calle
Denig on Mrs Wadman &
Partridge. Read Denig Pos
Tribune. Thus closes anoth
week of this year - Time
this wing. Lord help me ti im

Sunday - Jan 27 1861
dark & cloudy with rain early in
day - Rev Mr Dumforth held forth
the morning. I was not interested
an English gun boat came
this Pm I went to the Episcopal

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Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

Based on location, employment, arrival date, and family connections, we have identified the writer as George Whitefield Fish (1816–1885). An 1837 graduate of Castleton Medical College, Fish served as the US Consul in Ningbo from 1860 to 1862, during the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), a civil war between the Qing dynasty and the Christian theocratic Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The war encroached upon and eventually overtook the city—Fish himself entered the occupied city seeking protection for missionary households—as Fish continued to practice medicine and attend church. After his return to the US he entered the 4th Michigan Cavalry Regiment as a surgeon in July of 1862; captured while accompanying a train to Nashville, he appealed to Confederate commanders for recognition of his position as a physician and worked through the night among wounded Union soldiers. Alongside these encounters, the manuscript follows his practice in and departure from China, passage to California in company of 500 Chinese passengers, reunion with his family, and direct experience of the American Civil War.

Receiving reports on the American civil war as the Chinese one approached his city, Fish commented: "This poor world does seem to be in a sad state. Nations engaged in civil war & bloodshed" (November 13, 1861). In fact, abolitionists at the time both made comparisons between American enslavement and the Chinese social hierarchy, and—early on, at least—pointed to the Taiping Rebellion as a cause for celebration and possible inspiration for the rejection of enslavement in the US.[1]

In China: January 1861 to June 1862.

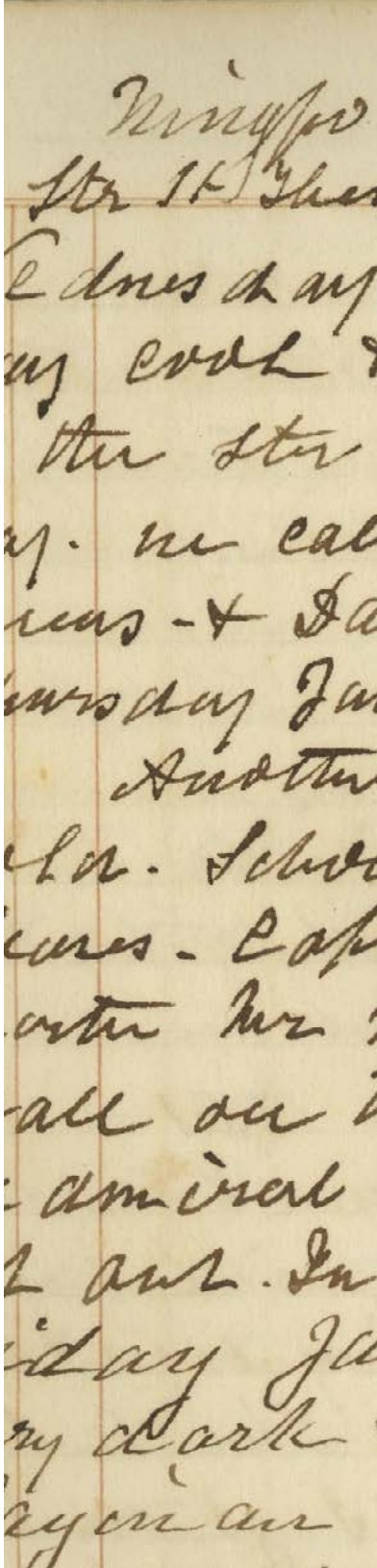
Fish had been separated from his family for nearly two years when the diary opens in January of 1861. His wife and children remained in the United States, with the family home at Flint and his son George attending school at Ann Arbor.

The first entries take him from Ningbo to Shanghai aboard the Russian steamer *St. Theodosius*. He prepares official returns and letters home, then endures a prolonged return passage through cold weather and rough seas. Back at Ningbo, the office brings him into contact with Chinese officials, merchants, shipmasters, and sailors, while his medical practice takes him from foreign households to vessels in the harbor. He vaccinates children, treats sick crewmen, extracts a tooth for a visiting clergyman, and attends the families among whom he lives. Captain Schenck of the *Saginaw* visits repeatedly; together they call upon the Chinese civil and naval authorities.

American politics reaches this community through newspapers and letters arriving several weeks after the events described. Fish learns of Lincoln's election on January 20 and notes differing reactions among Presbyterian and Baptist acquaintances: the Presbyterians (whom Fish frequently excoriates for their Calvinism) are "a little disappointed," while "the Baptists seem pleased" (Jan. 21, 1861). As news of secession accumulates, the diary records an American abroad trying to anticipate whether his government will survive. On March 3, he writes:

"Alas, what is my country coming to. May God avert from us the threatened danger & its fearful consequences. Mad men are determined to pull down the fair fabric of our government & inaugurate anarchy & civil war. Timid & time serving men tremble & whine. No one has

CONTINUED



Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

confidence in those in power. Weakness characterizes the administration. Every good & true man ought to pray for God's help in this time of our sore need. May the God of our fathers be merciful to their children." (March 3, 1861)

His hopes for Lincoln are initially that "agitation may cease & peace & quietness be restored to our dear native land" (Mar. 4), but later reports bring news of the capture of Fort Sumter and Northern mobilization. Reading what is likely Alexander Stephens's cornerstone speech several months after its delivery in Savannah, he scoffs:

"Read Stevens' speech on the Slavery trouble. He says it's the thing, the only true basis of society, & says the Southern Confederacy is based on the inferiority of the Negro race. Ergo it is to be permanent. Bah! nonsense. Hypocrisy." (June 19, 1861)

The consulate presents more immediate difficulties. Fish examines survivors of piracy, takes depositions, settles disputes, and deals with violence involving foreigners. In February, a man named Meredith arrives after escaping his captors: "Piracies almost under our own eyes, & it seems impossible to prevent them" (Feb. 14). In March, Fish exchanges communications with the British consul concerning Chinese men killed by foreigners, remarking on the "rascality" that was "being practiced by foreign blackguards in this vicinity to the annoyance of good people" (Mar. 6).

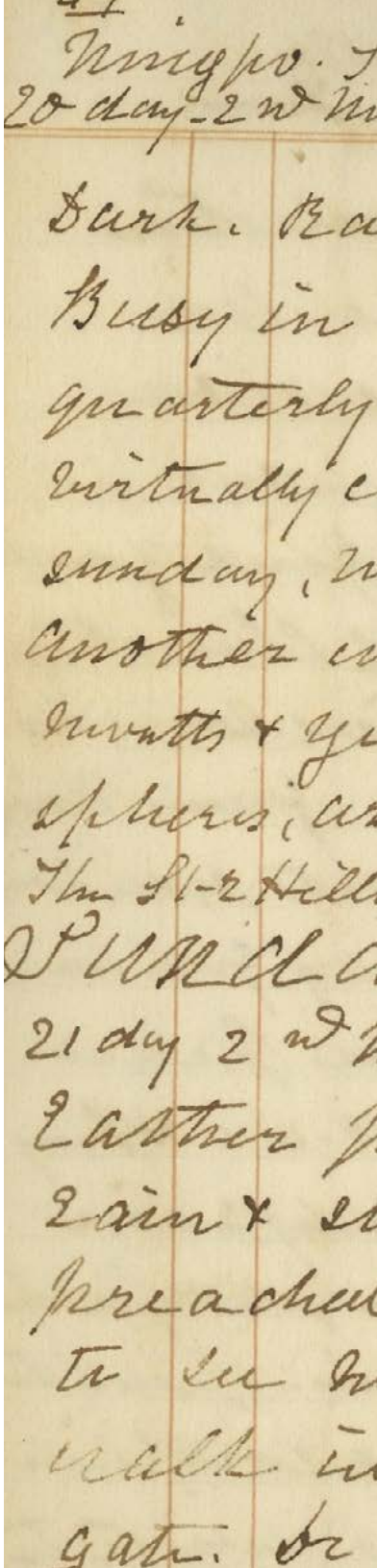
A prolonged dispute over the consulate begins in April, when William Breck arrives and "claims jurisdiction" (Apr. 16), the next day "demand[ing] possession of the consulate" (Apr. 17). Fish refuses to surrender the office and refers the matter to Commodore Stribling, who initially decides in his favor. Further correspondence follows, including complaints about salary and the proper authority for transferring the post. Fish alternates between wishing to escape its responsibilities and insisting that he cannot relinquish them improperly. After a few months' struggle he relents, recording on August 9, "Give up consulate to Breck." He remains in Ningbo as a physician.
Separation from his family, though, imposes uncertainties that no official correspondence can resolve:

"After service I return to my room and indulge in my feeling of loneliness. Think of my wife & children and wonder how they are. Whether all are well & happy, or whether sickness & perhaps death may have visited the circle. Alas my heart misgives me & I fear evil may have befallen them. Into thy gracious hands oh Lord! I will try & commend them all." (June 9, 1861)

Outside the office, the entries record a city and surrounding countryside not yet overtaken by the approaching armies. Fish attends theatrical performances, follows silk production, walks the city walls, and travels through cultivated fields and canals, appreciating their advanced engineering. Returning from an excursion on March 13, he writes:

"We slept last night in our boat. Were transported some distance during the night. Slight rain in the night. Clouds & a little rain today. In the morning we are among hills & beautiful scenery. An old Pagoda in a fine state of preservation, and on the point of a hill close by us. The river where we are this morning is shallow & narrow, clear

CONTINUED



Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

water. After consultation, we conclude to abandon our original purpose of going into the hills. It looks stormy, so we turn homewards. Are again drawn from the river into the Canal & proceed homeward, through highly cultivated fields. This canal is a marvel. Massive piles of mason work for miles, wonderful stone bridges with high arches. The people seem kind. We call on many of them & talk to them. Arrive at Ningpo early." (March 13, 1861)

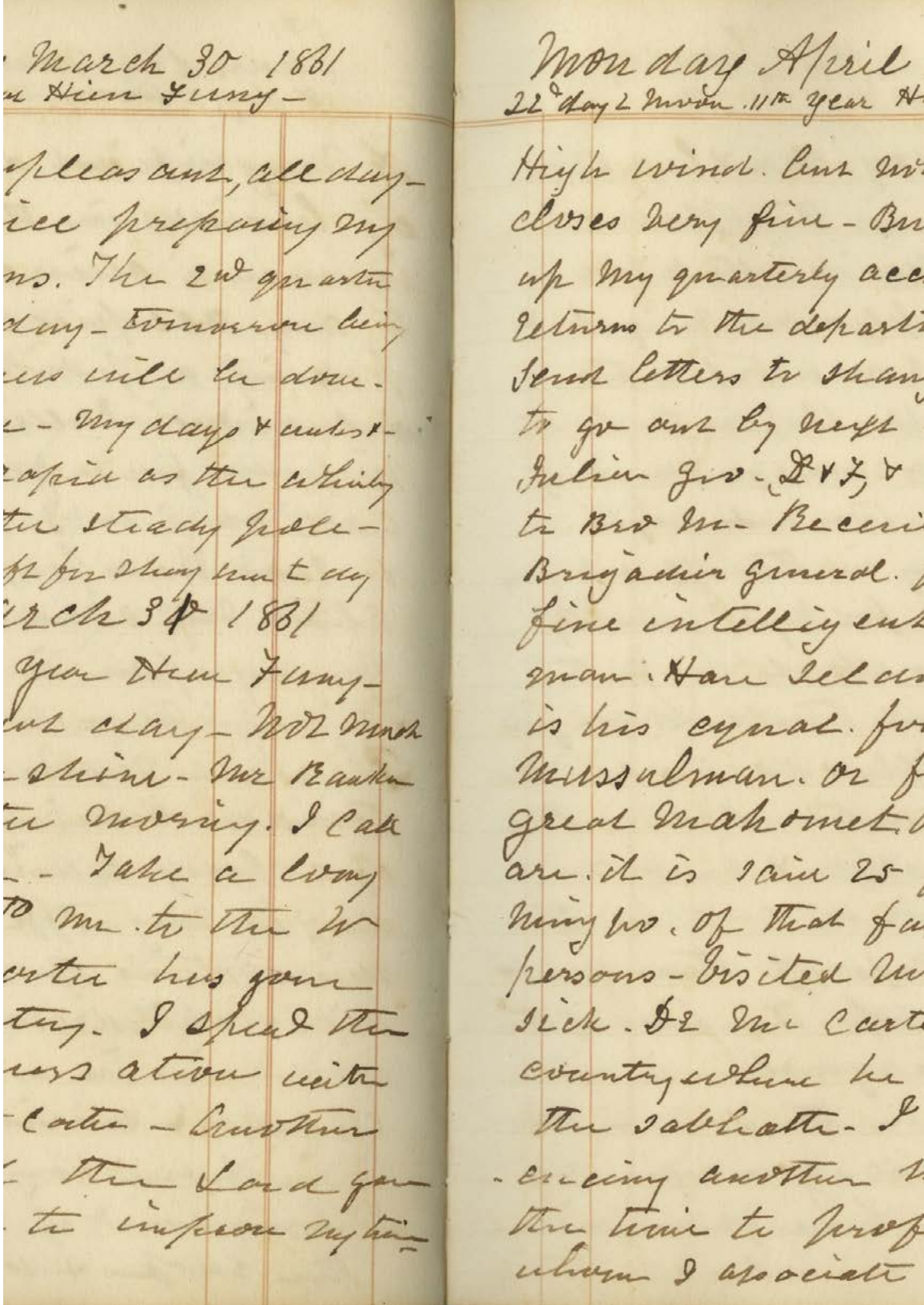
Religious practice structures his weeks, but during September, sickness increasingly determines the household visits. Children die, missionaries and sailors fall ill, and Fish finds few families untouched by disease. In September he writes:

"I am busy as usual. Visit nearly everybody in town – all being more or less sick. There is a larger proportion of the people sick than I have ever seen in any place before, I think – fevers, diarrheas & dysenteries are prevalent. The Chinese are said to be suffering nearly as much as foreigners." (September 16, 1861)

Fish himself becomes seriously ill, leaving a brief interruption in the entries. By November he is arranging for a Dr. Abbe to take over his practice so that he can return home. These preparations precede the immediate danger from the Taipings, but their approach turns his final weeks into a time of evacuation, destruction, and occupation. His November 26 entry records the emptying streets:

"A panic among the Chinese. Thousands of people leaving

CONTINUED


March 30 1861
Monday April

Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

the city. There will be terrible suffering among the poor. I've been in the city today. Shops closed, streets seem almost deserted. Rebels believed to be near here & approaching. May come at any hour. Alas, for the poor people. May God soften the hearts of the Rebels." (November 26, 1861)

The next day, he witnesses "thousands of people fleeing in mute terror from danger imagined to be impending over them by the rebels" (Nov. 27). He continues settling accounts and visiting patients; but on December 2 the danger becomes visible against the night sky:

"The night is illuminated by the conflagration of the Eastern suburb of the city, set on fire by the Tan-Tai to prepare for defending the city wall. These poor Chinese seem to be in an evil case. By their own officers & by the insurgents they are alike destroyed." (December 2, 1861)

Fish and Abbe enter the nearly deserted city the following day. Its gates are closed except one, transport is difficult to obtain, and the remaining inhabitants are frightened. Fires, "indiscriminate" looting, and a "fabulous amount of property" destruction continue, though the rebels have yet to enter the city—in fact, the December 4 entry states that "Reports from places where the rebels are seem favorable. Tis said they respect life & property." On December 8, he notes that the suburban fires were "by order of the imperial forces":

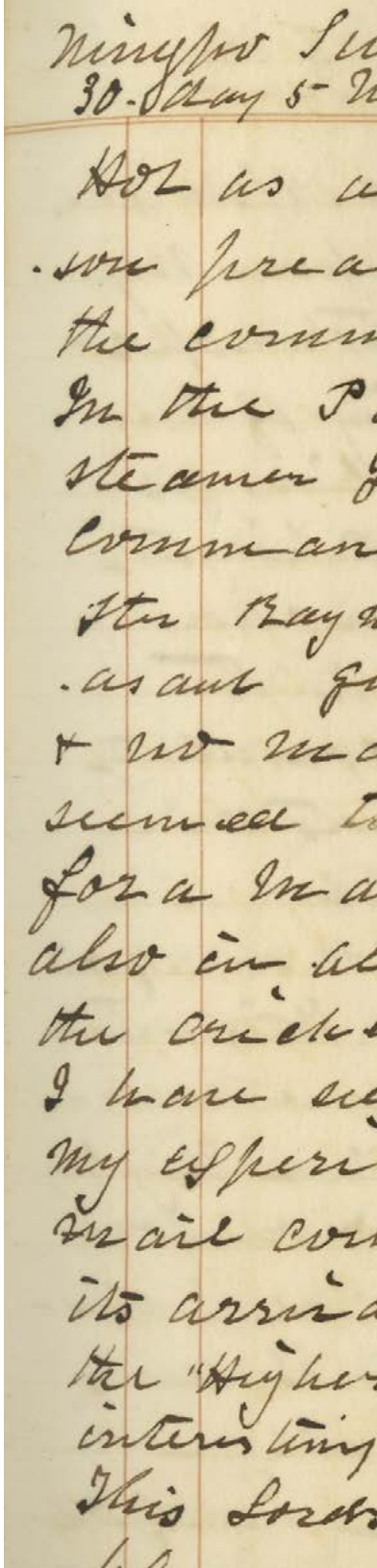
"Rev. Mr. Lord preached this morning. A good attendance. There is the booming of cannon & the smoke from burning houses all day. The din of war. The rebels have invested the city on 2 sides, the S. & W. The extensive suburbs are on fire by order of the imperial forces. A pretty constant cannonade is going on from the city walls. 3 steamers from Shanghai arrived today, bring the news that a British & French force is to arrive here tonight & there is a good deal of fear that there will be interference on the part of those powers, which will complicate the matter a good deal, as a promise of non interference has been given the insurgents." (December 8, 1861)

The entry identifies the practical difficulty confronting the foreign representatives: their declared neutrality now faced the possibility of armed intervention. Their November 28 conference and communications with Taiping commanders survive in the published American diplomatic correspondence.[2] Fish's diary supplies a private record of the uncertainty surrounding those arrangements as the defenses collapse.

On December 9, he records the entry of the rebels into Ningbo:

"Fine day & an eventful one. Early this morning the rebels entered the city & took possession. There was sharp fighting at the S. & W. gates. Troops swam the moat with their scaling ladders, scaled the walls, driving the Imperialists before them. They then planted their banners on the wall. All this seems to have been done very quietly. During the after part of the day, the city was given up to plunder. Houses, shops, stores, every conceivable place being broken into & plundered. Not much of any killing. Droves of poor people from the country are being driven into the city, bearing enormous burdens, probably their own household goods, being born into the camp of the soldiers. The heart sickens at the sights witnessed. May God have mercy on these poor

CONTINUED



Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

people." (December 9, 1861)

The following day Fish participates in efforts to protect several households familiar from his medical rounds:

"This is a day of anxiety among the people of Ningpo, both native & foreign. Bands of soldiers prowling about seem to threaten depredations all the time. In company with Messrs. Rankin & Lord, I call on the rebel generals. Have a pleasant enough interview. They grant us guards for Mr. Jenkins' & Mr. Knowlton's & Mr. Lord's houses – promise protection &c. It seems doubtful if they have the power to control their own men. The Str. Chusan is in from Shanghai. Mail in Shanghai but not yet in Ningpo. We look to God for protection. Thus far he has granted signal protection to us all. May he still be gracious unto us." (December 10, 1861)

The distinction between promises made by commanders and the behavior of their soldiers remains central to the next entries. The next day, he writes:

"Another fine day, spent in wandering through the desolated city. It is sorrowful in the extreme to witness the awful destruction of property presented in every quarter. We have seen 11 dead bodies today, 2 without heads & others with ghastly wounds. Bands of young soldiers are moving about, prying into every place, taking whatever they choose & destroying the rest. Very few Chinese are left except the rebels. Now & then a poor old man or woman looks out in terror. Alas for Ningpo." (December 11, 1861)

Fish later notes proclamations forbidding further plunder. His successive observations cover the population's flight, destruction by the defending authorities, the assault on the city, assurances from the victors, and attempts to restrain looting. They also provide a point of comparison with Breck's December 10 dispatch, which reported that "no outrages" attributed to the rebels had yet become known to him[2]—though given Fish's previous reports, and using the term "rebels" fairly exclusively, it is not clear on which side the looting and murdering "soldiers" in his December 11 entry fell.

Fish leaves Ningbo on December 16, observing the rebels constructing stockades before making his farewells. Storms delay his arrival in Shanghai until Christmas. On December 28 he records a "lengthy interview with Mr. Burlingame" in which Fish tells him "what I know about Ningpo & the rebels." The minister subsequently visited the city and, in his January 23 dispatch to Seward, described devastation, unburied bodies, and arrangements to protect the foreign settlement.[3] Fish's journal establishes that he briefed Burlingame before that visit, without showing which observations informed the later report.

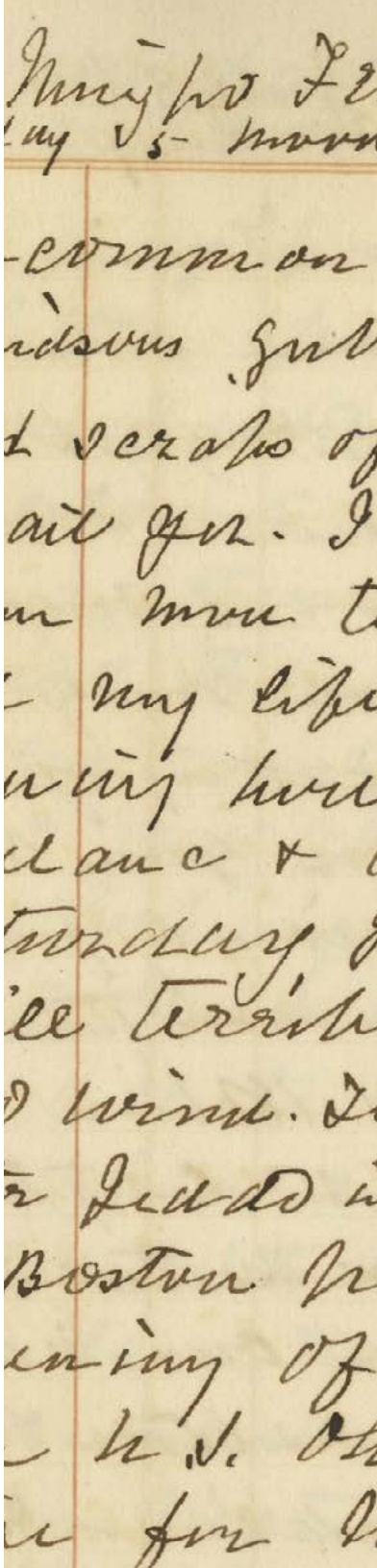
Shanghai provides no immediate escape from either war; there, Fish takes tea with a group of Americans:

"People from Tennessee, Methodists. secessionists. Strange that Slavery has so demoralized the people of the South, as to make right appear wrong, and a lie, the truth. Evil, good." (January 7, 1862)

Within days he is watching another movement of Chinese refugees:

"There is a panic about the rebels. They are said to be

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Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

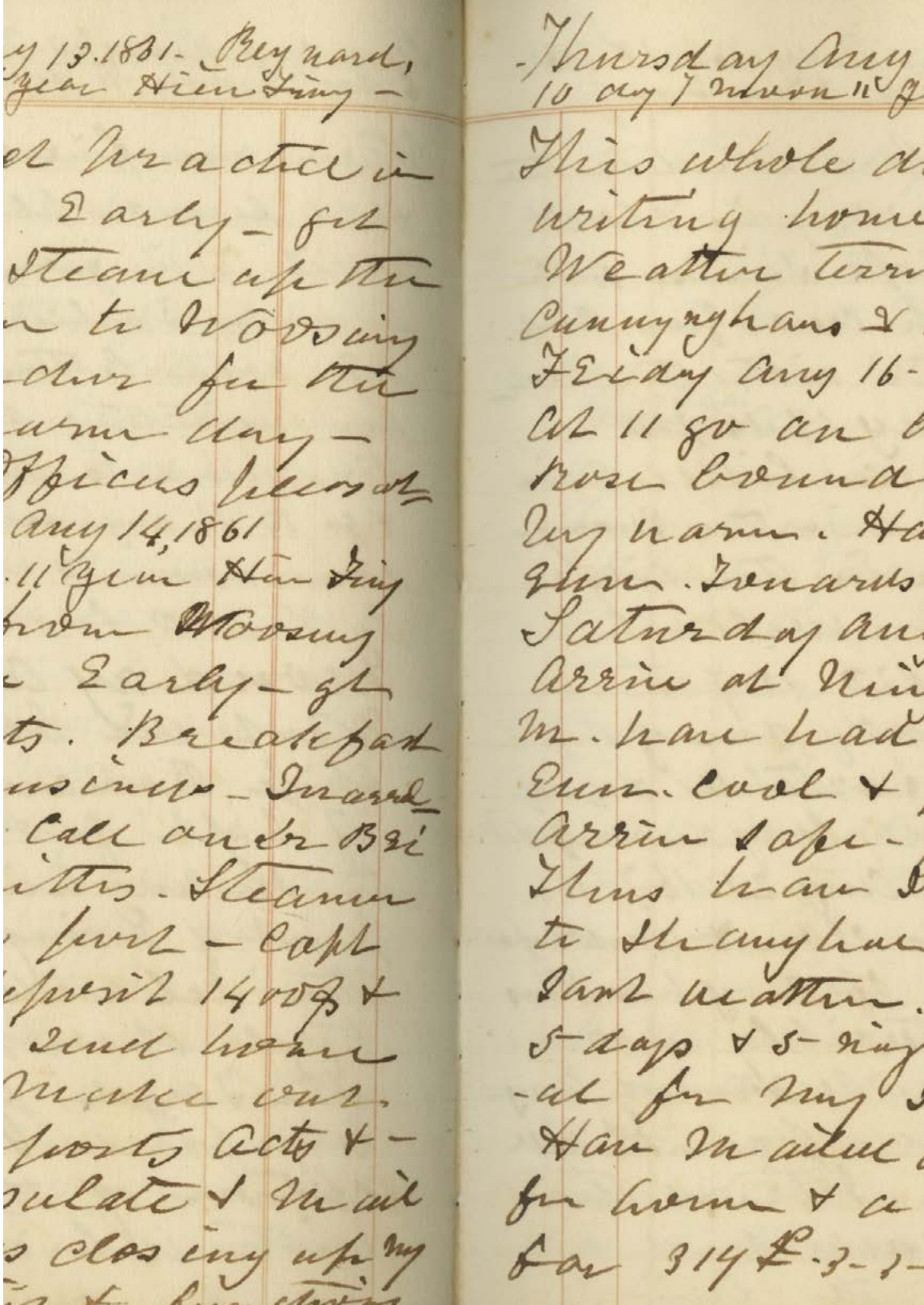
near, & are robbing, burning & murdering. Hundreds of poor people are flying into the settlement for safety. Scenes of suffering present themselves almost constantly. Women & children in want. Alas! when will this cease." (January 12, 1862)

Fish feels himself "fated to be in the midst" of rebel attacks: "Left Ningpo in rebel hands & they seem to be just attacking Shanghai." (Jan. 16, 1862) News of the Trent affair creates another anxiety: possible war between the United States and Britain. "Everything looks threatening," Fish writes (Feb. 3), as he prepares to depart for the US. Continuing through Hong Kong and Canton, he is "more than ever impressed with the wonderful industry, ingenuity, & frugality of the Chinese" (Feb. 19), though he feels "pity [...] from my heart" at seeing the "girls whose business is to paint, & amuse men" (Feb. 21). American politics continues to dominate his conversations:

"Had a warm discussion on American affairs. My heart sickens to see the dreadful ignorance of the English as to our affairs, & the malignant tone of the press & people. I believe a war with England is inevitable, & not very distant. May God help us in this our time of need." (February 26, 1862)

It also appears in the sermon delivered by the Bishop of Victoria, who "apprehended war with the United States" and "closed with a self complacent pat on the back of the British Lion"; Fish remarks on his distaste for the Bishop's "Praying for 'health & wealth' on royalty," commenting that "no people excel the English in self

CONTINUED



Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

glorification" (Mar. 2).

Fish sails from Hong Kong aboard the *Washington* on March 5. With him are five other passengers whom he names and approximately 500 Chinese passengers. One of the named travelers, Brannan, is attempting to reach his family before dying. As Fish predicts, he does not survive the first week, and his body is placed "in a puncheon of spirits to carry it home to his family" (Mar. 9). A sailor is subsequently washed overboard. Fish records the unsuccessful effort to save him:

"Everything was thrown aback at once - a life buoy thrown over which the poor fellow did not get. We saw him swim gallantly for a time & we tried to encourage him. He sank before a boat could be got off. Doubtful if a boat would have lived in such a sea." (March 12, 1862)

Fish also records seasickness, the examination of the Chinese passengers' tickets, and cases of smallpox, "ship fever" (typhus), and tonsilitis; they "Lose one Chinese passenger" to ship fever, who is "Buried at sea" (Apr. 17 & 18). Although these observations do not provide individual accounts of the emigrants, they add a physician's record of health and mortality aboard a vessel carrying a large body of Chinese passengers to California.

The *Washington* enters San Francisco on April 21. Fish visits the city—"There is a vast amount of business done here & a great deal of wealth" (Apr. 23), though it is "disagreeably" dirty (Apr. 25)—and travels to San Jose and Santa Clara. The Civil War reappears in the diary after apparently leaving his mind for the duration of his passage from China: "Hear news of the capture of Savannah, Georgia & of N.O. by our troops" (Apr. 29). He continues his journey aboard the *Golden Gate*, on which his roommate is "returning from Guaymas, Mexico, full of speculations in mines" (May 3). They cross the Isthmus of Panama and Fish takes the *North Star* to New York. He leaves New York on May 24 "just as news of Banks' retreat reaches" it, arriving in Flint on May 29 and finding his family well. After brief entries at home, the record breaks off in early June.

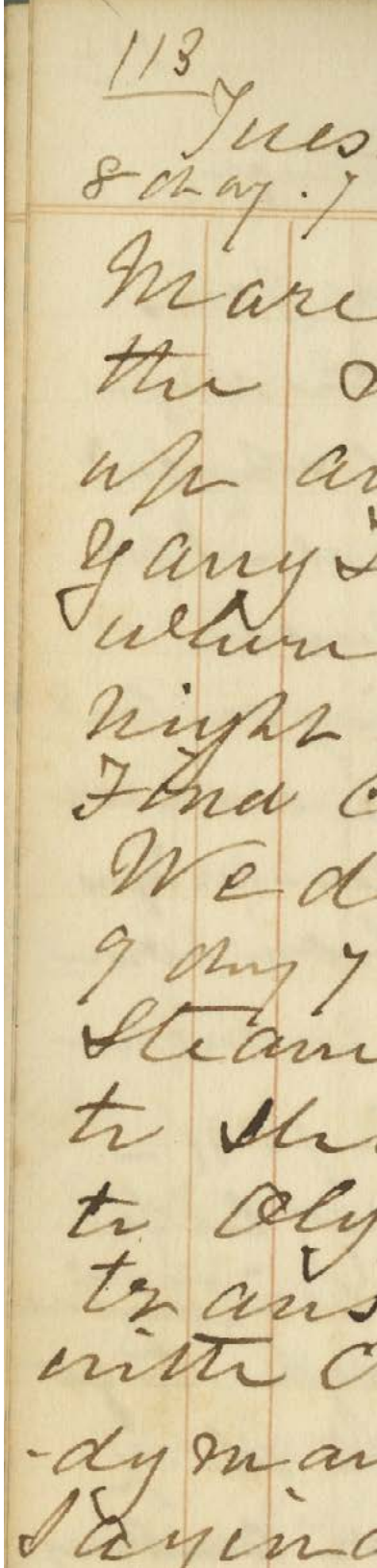
Civil War Service: November 1862 to February 1863.
The diary resumes suddenly in November:

"Since my last was written in this, nearly 6 months have passed & I have been 4 months in the U.S. Service as Surgeon of the 4th Regt. of Mich. Cavalry. I made a hasty visit to my 2 Bros. at Jeff. Barracks in July & received my Commission from Gen. Blair as surgeon in July, 26th day." (November 24, 1862)

The American war which he had thus far only followed through delayed correspondence had become his daily work. Writing from his medical post in Mitchellville, Tennessee, Fish's immediate concerns are the charge of "nearly 100 sick men of our Regt." (Nov. 24). Transportation is unreliable and rumors of guerilla attacks unsettle the men:

"Get 65 men, convalescents, off as I suppose & they return on my hands at night for lack of transportation. There are constant rumors & reports of rebel raids, but we don't know what to believe & what to disbelieve. Rebellion is an awful curse to this nation & people, & they deserve it all & more. Only the leaders are not as well the sufferers." (November 28, 1862)

CONTINUED



Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

He reports that "7 houses were robbed" and that "Great consternation prevails among the people," remarking, "Truly these neutral people are escaping the harvest of the seeds of which they strew" (Nov. 30). Much of his disdain is reserved for "neutrals"; he reports "a warm discussion with a Tennessee neutral who sighs for compromise" and that "There are many such all through this country" (Dec. 1). His politics do not soften with proximity to the conflict: "Secession is undoubtedly the monster crime of the world. Its effects will travel down through many years. Posterity will feel its curse" (Dec. 4).

Rejoining the rest of the regiment at Camp Rosecrans near Nashville, he finds "matters in my department in a wretched state of disorder. A large no. of sick men, no order, no regularity in anything" (Dec. 8). He sends men to the city hospital, writes discharge and disability certificates, and receives news of "heavy loss on our side" at Rappahannock (Dec. 17). Fighting on Sunday the 21st in which nine Confederates are killed leads him to comment, "Thus the Lord's day turned into a day of turmoil & bloodshed" (Dec. 21). The regiment advances the morning after Christmas, and Fish experiences his first enemy fire:

"Left Camp Rosecrans this morn in a heavy rain which continued all the forenoon. We have had a brush with the enemy – fought our way for the last 4 miles Have had several men wounded. This is the first of my being under fire. Shells whistled about us. Stay at night with a widow lady with my wounded men." (December 26, 1862)

The next day:

"March from Lavergne in the rain, driving the enemy steadily before us, fighting every step. Have a few men wounded, none killed. Find several horses lying dead & take a number of prisoners. Make 6 or 7 miles, fighting every inch of the ground. Encamp in the evening." (December 27, 1862)

The succeeding entries follow skirmishing, reconnaissance, and uncertainty. On December 31, during the heavy fighting near Murfreesboro, Fish writes:

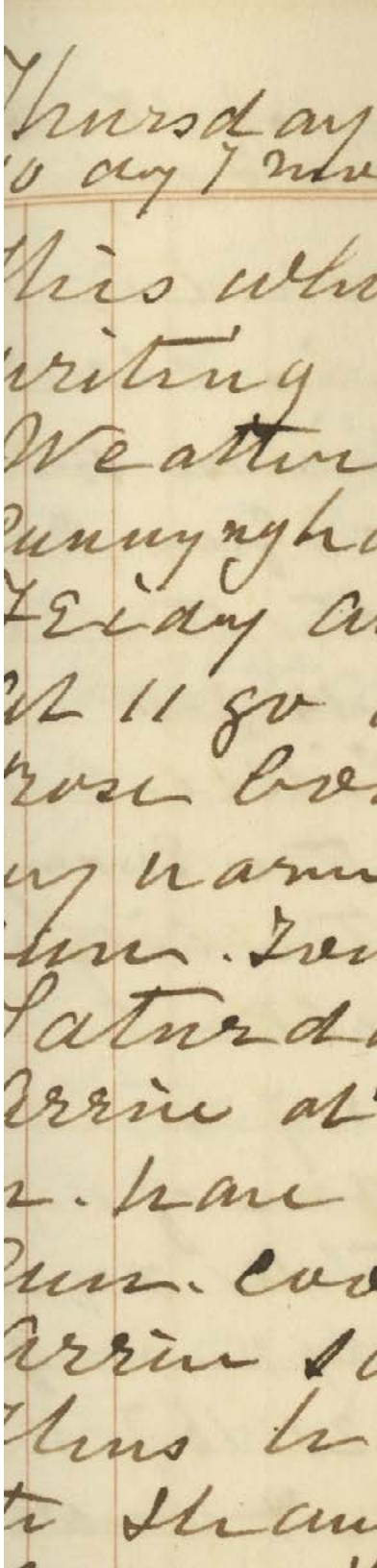
"I fear our army is worsted. At all events, the right wing is cut up. Cavalry hurriedly sent to support the right wing. We spend the latter part of the day in supporting cannon. Come back on M. pike in the night, full of anxiety. Stragglers give a terrible account of our losses. God help us. I fear this army is nearly gone up. Clear & pleasant." (December 31, 1862)

New Year's Day opens with "A Happy New Year to all the dear friends. A sad one here to many of our poor fellows." Fish hopes the army can recover, but he himself had been captured:

"Ordered to take the train back to Nashville. Start. Attacked at Severn. Captured, one ambulance taken, one destroyed & the other escapes. Vernon & Charlie also captured. Taken back to near Murfreesboro. Encamp for night with Texas Rangers. Tis Genl. Wharton's Cavalry who are our captors. A long, tedious & most unwelcome march." (January 1, 1863)

The next morning a "Texan friend" assists him in approaching Confederate officers about being allowed to continue medical work:

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Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

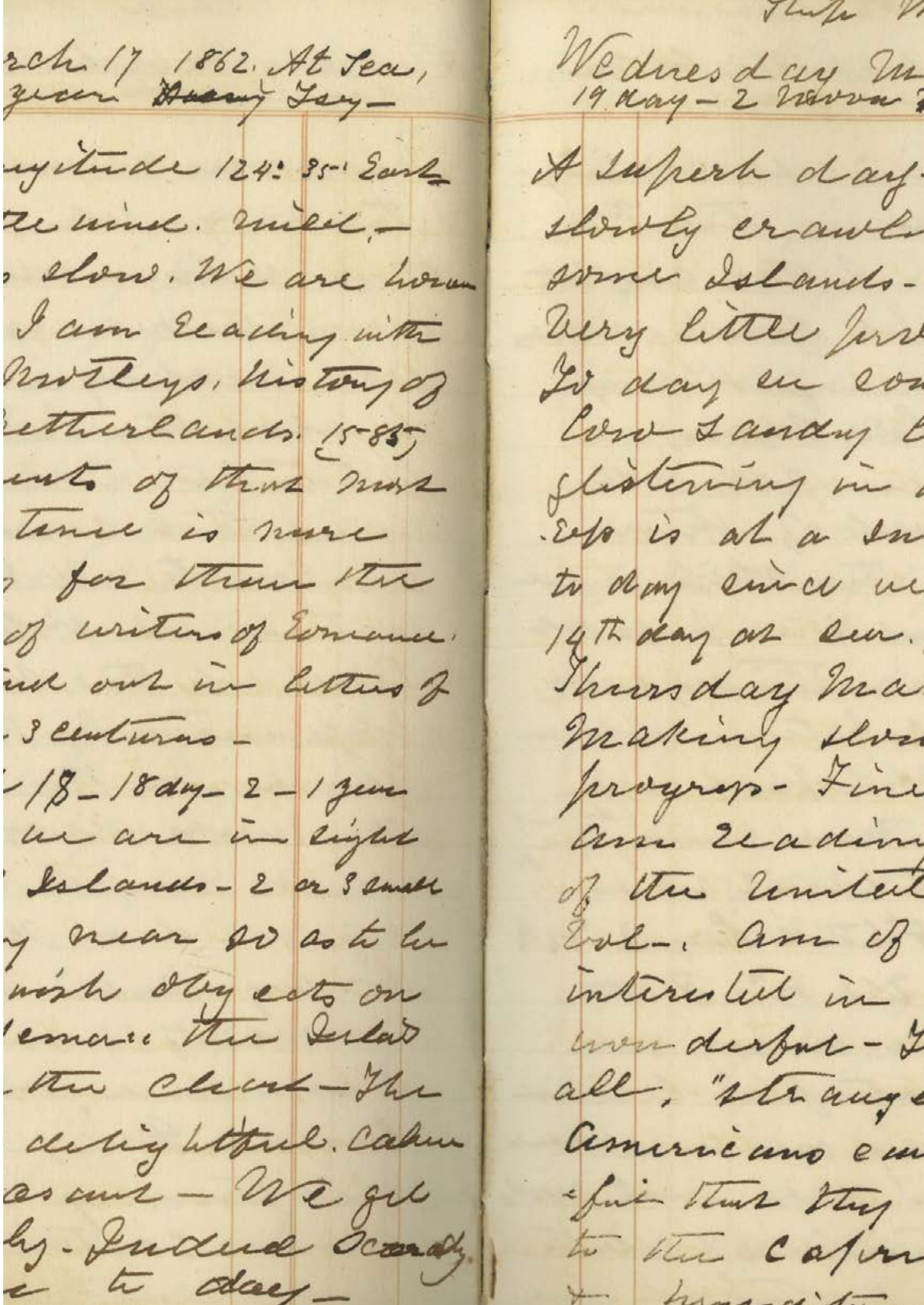
"From him I go to Genl. Hardee, find him on the battlefield on horseback with his dead countrymen all around him. Demand my rights as a Surgeon. Am sent to Genl. Bragg. See Gov. Harris & Rt. Rev. Maj. Genl. Polk – a pretty set of hoary headed black hearted, insurgent traitors. Finally go into Murfreesboro & get to work among our wounded soldiers. Find enough to do. Work till 3 in morning dressing wounds. Vernon helps me. Many of these wounds are of a fearful nature. Maj. Smith of the 11 Mich. wounded in face, & others more seriously still." (January 2, 1862)

The encounter provides a counterpart to the meeting with Taiping commanders. At Ningpo Fish had sought guards for threatened households; here, himself a captive, he demands recognition of his professional position and obtains access to wounded soldiers. Where his opinions on the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom may have been ambivalent, his condemnation of the Confederate leaders is unqualified, but the practical result in each case was medical work under their authority.

He remains at work in Confederate-held Murfreesboro, writing on January 3:

"Heavy rain all day. Still busy dressing wounds. I can see that there has been heavy fighting, & the enemy has met with heavy loss. His wagons are busy bringing in wounded. Anxiety is depicted on every rebel face. They are preparing for some movement, probably to retire from here." (January 3, 1863)

CONTINUED



Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

The Confederates withdraw that night, leaving behind the wounded and their medical care:
"Today the place is solitary, only the wounded men & surgeons remain. All day we look anxiously for an army to come, but the sun goes down without bringing them. Old Rosecrans don't move on Sunday. Tis rather an anxious day - watching & waiting for the advance of our army." (January 4, 1863)

The following morning brings the scene he has awaited:

"Our Army comes in early. 1st Cavalry, then Artillery, then long columns of Infantry. Right soon the hateful rebel flag comes down & the old flag, the Stars & Stripes, waves over the public square. Yankee Doodle & Hail Columbia resound through the streets. The 'Northern invaders' are here at last." (January 5, 1863)

The arrival of the medical administration produces a less favorable response:

"Pleasant all day. Still attending to the poor wounded fellows - wounds mostly doing well. Dr. Swift, Medical Director, arrives. I can see a perfect swarm of parasites of the profession attaching to him. Mean sneaks, seeking places for themselves, where they can be comfortable & free from hard work. Poor human nature – selfish always." (January 6, 1863)

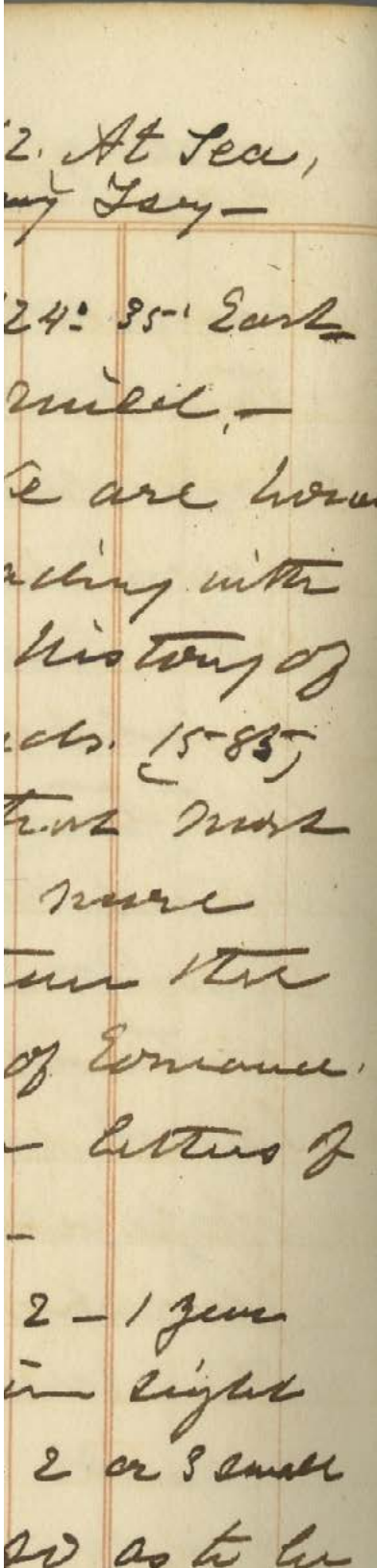
Fish remains with the Murfreesboro wounded until January 7. Returning to his regiment, he discovers that captivity has cost him nearly all his possessions, the Confederates having stolen his horse, trunk, and "nearly all my medicines, uniform, shirt, stockings, everything but the clothes I have on" (Jan. 7). He feels himself "quite reduced" and is "sick of this kind of life," writing that "Military does develop the very worst traits of poor human nature. He who gets through without demoralization, does well" (Jan. 8).

The remaining entries show the medical aftermath of the campaign. Fish visits wounded Confederate prisoners, records measles in camp, and describes tents flooded by rain and sleet. On January 15 he reports horses and men dying from cold and exposure. Men are tired, cold, and extremely demoralized; Fish comments that "Just 2 weeks ago tonight, the rebels retreated from Murfreesboro, leaving me a prisoner" (Jan. 17) His next entry places physical suffering beside the loss of ordinary religious and domestic life:

"No church. Oh these Sundays, how barren of good they seem. I am very anxious to get home letters. Write to Bros. F & M today. Our Regt. is still out. When will this dreadful war come to a close. Our men are suffering seriously. We have measles, mumps, Pneumonia & Fevers, diarrheas & dysentery in camp." (January 18, 1863)

Fish records being appointed "Medical Director of the Cavalry Corps on Genl. Stanly's staff" (Jan. 23) but a few days later reports that it apparently did not go through: "Have been Medical Director of Cavalry almost & am now back to my Regt., never having left it" (Jan. 26). A subsequent order makes him brigade surgeon under Colonel Minty (Jan. 29). He visits five Confederate prisoners, four sick or wounded, and accompanies further cavalry movements. Illness increasingly makes him question his ability to remain in camp. The diary closes on February 22 after another alarm on the Manchester Pike, with concern over declining regimental

CONTINUED



8

Diary of a Michigan Physician Witnessing Two Civil Wars.

strength and longing for home. Fish writes that "my very soul longs for home, church, & other privileges such as are enjoyed in Christian land" (Feb. 22 1863)—just as he had written, a year prior aboard the Washington, "I want ever so much to get home [...] to feel that I am once more in a Christian land" (Mar. 16, 1862).

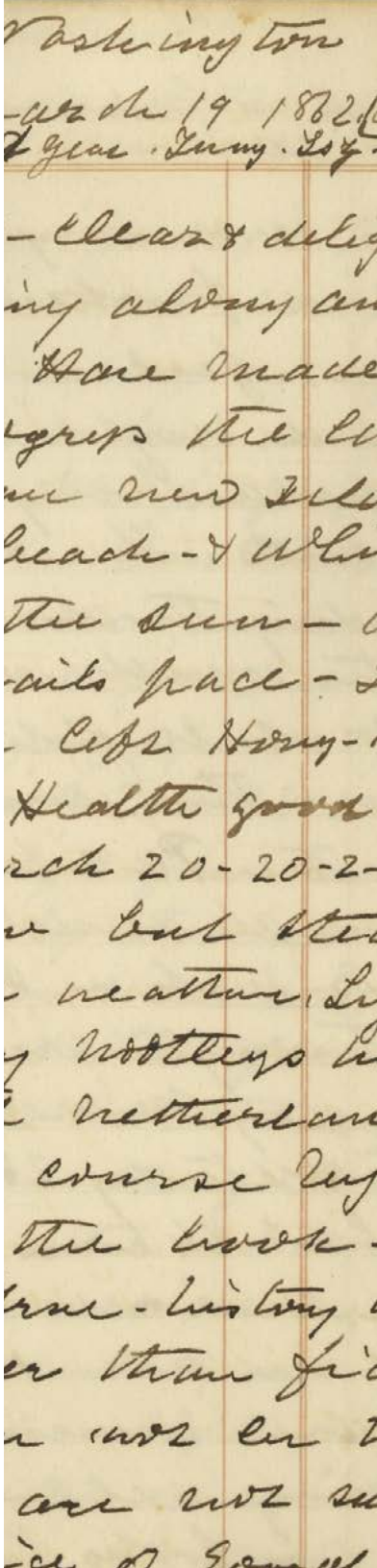
The manuscript's continuity is more than geographical. The Chinese relationships continue into these Tennessee entries: a January letter from Julia encloses correspondence from Shanghai, and another mail brings a letter from Dr. McCarter. The same physician's work, religious convictions, family correspondence, and political loyalties persist as his position changes from foreign resident and former consul to Union surgeon and prisoner. His encounters with rebellion in the two countries are not interchangeable, but the diary repeatedly returns to the consequences for households, patients, and people left vulnerable by the movements of armies.

The diary appears to continue the Clements Library's *China diary, 1859–1860*, whose author is described as an American physician sailing for China aboard the N. B. Palmer on February 28, 1859, and joining a brother, also a physician, in Shanghai.[4] The present manuscript marks precisely the second anniversary of that departure on February 28, 1861, naming the same ship. The brother supplies a further connection: George's brother, Dr. Melancthon Fish, had preceded him to China, and the present volume repeatedly records correspondence with Melancthon, his visit to Ningbo, and his departure for home in July 1861. A visual comparison with the Clements *China diary* suggests that they were written by the same person. Profession, family relationship, destination, vessel, and exact departure date together with handwriting make a strong case for common authorship and continuity.

The diary provides detailed firsthand accounts of two civil wars, separated by a year and a journey across the Pacific. Fish's descriptions of the capture and destruction of Ningbo and his subsequent experiences as a Union surgeon during the Stones River campaign are particularly substantial. In both conflicts, his work as a physician brought him into direct contact with military commanders, civilians, and wounded soldiers, providing a close account of the fighting and its aftermath.

[1] Tao Zhang, "China in American Abolitionism, 1830–1865," The Historical Journal 69 (2026), 832–835.
[2] Letter from William Breck to Anson Burlingame, December 10, 1861, Foreign Relations of the United States, Document 669, accessed October 27, 2026, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1862/d669.
[3] Letter from Anson Burlingame to William H. Seward, January 23, 1862, Foreign Relations of the United States, Document 671, accessed October 27, 2026, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1862/d671.
[4] China Diary, William L. Clements Library, The University of Michigan, accessed October 27, 2026, https://findingaids.lib.umich.edu/catalog/umich-wcl-M-2238chi.

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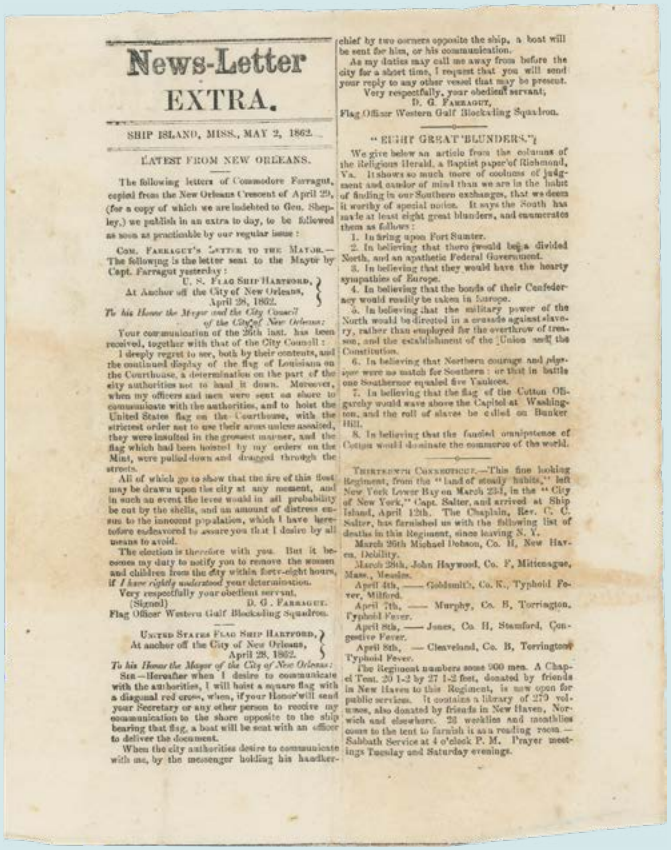


9

[CIVIL WAR - MISSISSIPPI - UNION CAMP PRINTING]
EASTMAN, A. W. (PRINTER)

News-Letter. Extra. Latest from New Orleans. [Extra Announcing Farragut's Demands upon New Orleans, May 1862.]

Ship Island, Mississippi: May 2, 1862. Printed newspaper extra, single sheet in two columns. Old horizontal and vertical folds, light toning and scattered soiling, with minor wear at the edges; text clearly legible. Near fine overall with minimal foxing.



News-Letter
EXTRA.

SHIP ISLAND, MISS., MAY 2, 1862.

LATEST FROM NEW ORLEANS.

The following letters of Commodore Farragut, copied from the New Orleans Crescent of April 29, (for a copy of which we are indebted to Gen. Shepley,) we publish in an extra to day, to be followed as soon as practicable by our regular issue:

COM. FARRAGUT'S LETTER TO THE MAYOR.—The following is the letter sent to the Mayor by Capt. Farragut yesterday:

U. S. Flag Ship Hartford,
At Anchor off the City of New Orleans,
April 28, 1862.

To his Honor the Mayor and the City Council of the City of New Orleans:

Your communication of the 26th inst. has been received, together with that of the City Council: I deeply regret to see, both by their contents, and the continued display of the flag of Louisiana on the Courthouse, a determination on the part of the city authorities not to haul it down. Moreover, when my officers and men were sent on shore to communicate with the authorities, and to hoist the United States flag on the Courthouse, with the strictest order not to use their arms unless assailed, they were insulted in the grossest manner, and the flag which had been hoisted by my orders on the Mint, were pulled down and dragged through the streets.

All of which go to show that the fire of this fleet may be drawn upon the city at any moment, and in such an event the levee would in all probability be cut by the shells, and an amount of distress ensue to the innocent population, which I have heretofore endeavored to assure you that I desire by all means to avoid.

The election is therefore with you. But it becomes my duty to notify you to remove the women and children from the city within forty-eight hours, if *I have rightly understood* your determination.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,
(Signed) D. G. FARRAGUT.
Flag Officer Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

United States Flag Ship Hartford,
At anchor off the City of New Orleans,
April 28, 1862.

To his Honor the Mayor of the City of New Orleans:

SIR—Hereafter when I desire to communicate with the authorities, I will hoist a square flag with a diagonal red cross, when, if your Honor will send your Secretary or any other person to receive my communication to the shore opposite to the ship bearing that flag, a boat will be sent with an officer to deliver the document.

When the city authorities desire to communicate with me, by the messenger holding his boat-chief by two corners opposite the ship, a boat will be sent for him, or his communication.

As my duties may call me away from before the city for a short time, I request that you will send your reply to any other vessel that may be present.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
D. G. FARRAGUT,
Flag Officer Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

"EIGHT GREAT BLUNDERS."

We give below an article from the columns of the Religious Herald, a Baptist paper of Richmond, Va. It shows so much more of coolness of judgment and candor of mind than we are in the habit of finding in our Southern exchanges, that we deem it worthy of special notice. It says the South has made at least eight great blunders, and enumerates them as follows:

1. In firing upon Fort Sumter.
2. In believing that there would be a divided North, and an apathetic Federal Government.
3. In believing that they would have the hearty sympathies of Europe.
4. In believing that the bonds of their Confederacy would readily be taken in Europe.
5. In believing that the military power of the North would be directed in a crusade against slavery, rather than employed for the overthrow of treason, and the establishment of the Union and the Constitution.
6. In believing that Northern courage and physique were no match for Southern: or that in battle one Southerner equaled five Yankees.
7. In believing that the flag of the Cotton Oligarchy would wave above the Capitol at Washington, and the roll of slaves be called on Bunker Hill.
8. In believing that the fanciful omnipotence of Cotton would dominate the commerce of the world.

THIRTEENTH CONNECTICUT.—This fine looking Regiment, from the "land of steady habits," left New York Lower Bay on March 23d, in the "City of New York," Capt. Salter, and arrived at Ship Island, April 12th. The Chaplain, Rev. C. C. Salter, has furnished us with the following list of deaths in this Regiment, since leaving N. Y.

March 26th Michael Dobson, Co. H, New Haven. Debility.
March 28th, John Haywood, Co. F, Mittenague, Mass., Measles.
April 4th, —— Goldsmit's, Co. K., Tyhoid Fever, Milford.
April 7th, —— Murphy, Co. B, Torrington. Tyhoid Fever.
April 8th, —— Jones, Co. H, Stamford, Congestive Fever.
April 8th, — Cleaveland, Co. B, Torrington Typhoid Fever.

The Regiment numbers some 900 men. A Chapel Tent, 20 1-2 by 27 1-2 feet, donated by friends in New Haven to this Regiment, is now open for public services. It contains a library of 279 volumes, also donated by friends in New Haven, Norwich and elsewhere. 29 weeklies and monthlies come to the tent to furnish it as a reading room.—Sabbath Service at 4 o'clock P. M. Prayer meetings Tuesday and Saturday evenings.

An early Union camp newspaper extra reporting the confrontation over Federal authority in New Orleans, printed on the Mississippi coast while the city's occupation was being established. Under "Latest from New Orleans," it reprints naval commander David G. Farragut's April 28 letters from the *New Orleans Crescent* of April 29, acknowledging General Shepley for the copy. The printer explains that a regular issue will follow "as soon as practicable." This extra appeared eight days before the May 10, 1862 issue designated Volume I, Number I of the *Soldier's News-Letter*.

The paper was the work of A. W. Eastman, a private in Company K of the 8th New Hampshire Infantry. The regiment had carried a printing press in its baggage, and General Benjamin F. Butler ordered it set up for use. Eastman took charge of the press and printed military orders.[1] His newspaper subsequently followed the regiment into Louisiana, appearing at Gretna and Brashear City; the press served both the administration of the army and the soldiers' appetite for news.

Farragut's principal letter records the gap between naval possession of the city and the submission of its civil authorities. Writing from the flagship *Hartford*, he protests the continued display of Louisiana's flag on the courthouse and the removal of the United States flag from the Mint. He warns that further defiance may draw the fleet's fire upon the city, damage the levee, and bring suffering upon the civilian population. Responsibility for what follows, he tells the mayor and council, rests with them:

"The election is therefore with you. But it becomes my

CONTINUED

9

News-Letter. Extra. Latest from New Orleans.

duty to notify you to remove the women and children from the city within forty-eight hours, if I have rightly understood your determination."

A second letter, also dated April 28, supplies practical instructions for communication with the fleet. A square flag bearing a diagonal red cross will announce a message from Farragut; a city messenger holding a handkerchief by two corners will summon a boat. Printed beside the ultimatum, these details show how communication between the naval command and municipal government was to proceed.

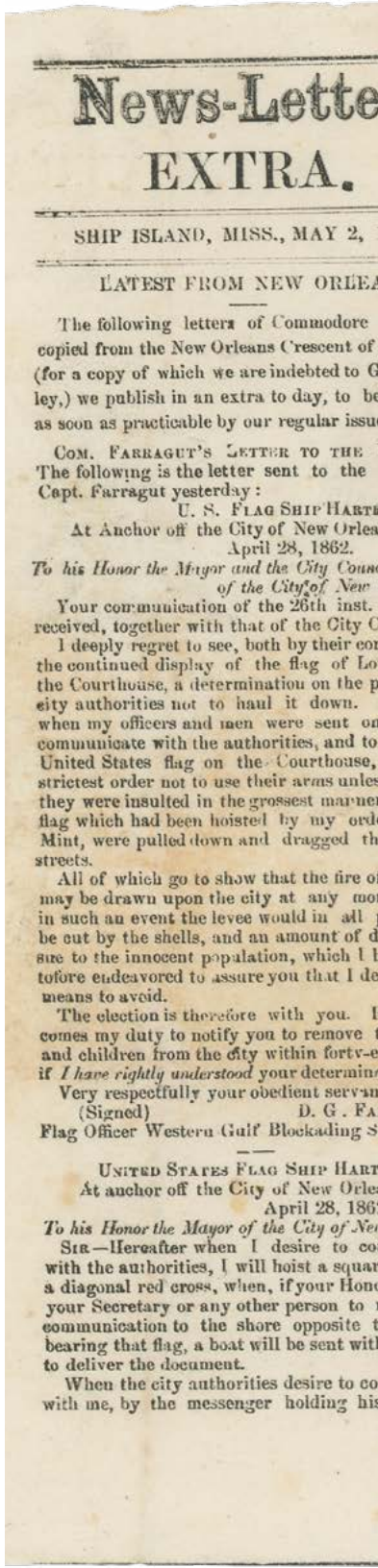
The remaining columns provide Confederate political criticism and news of camp life. "Eight Great Blunders," taken from Richmond's Baptist *Religious Herald*, lists mistaken Southern expectations, including a divided North, European sympathy, ready acceptance of Confederate bonds, and the supposed ability of cotton to command world commerce. Its appearance here gave Union readers a Southern account of the Confederacy's miscalculations. A report on the 13th Connecticut, supplied in part by its chaplain, the Rev. C. C. Salter, records deaths from disease since leaving New York and describes a chapel tent and reading room, a library of 270 volumes, and the receipt of twenty-six weekly and monthly periodicals.

A contemporary letter, transcribed by Spared & Shared, suggests how such an extra circulated among the troops. On May 3, Captain Elphonzo Gilman Colby of the 8th New Hampshire sent his wife a small paper, calling it "the first production of The Island" and giving its price as three cents; he expected a larger paper to follow.[2] The timing and description suggest this May 2 extra, although Colby does not identify his enclosure by title or date.

The May 2 extra is recorded in The Gilder Lehrman Institute's American History, 1493–1945 index as a broadside.[3] An early example of Union camp printing, joining the immediate terms of the occupation of New Orleans to the political reading and daily circumstances of the troops on Ship Island.

[1] John Stanyan, *A History of the Eighth Regiment of New Hampshire Volunteers* (Ira C. Evans, 1892), 109.
[2] "1862: Elphonzo Gilman Colby to Sarah (Turner) Colby," Spared & Shared, accessed October 30, 2026, https://sparedshared14.wordpress.com/2017/03/10/1862-elphonzo-gilman-colby-to-sarah-turner-colby/.
[3] "News-Letter Extra," *American History, 1493–1945*, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, accessed October 30, 2026, https://www.americanhistory.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/News-Letter-Extra/GLC06107.19.

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News-Lette

EXTRA.

SHIP ISLAND, MISS., MAY 2,

LATEST FROM NEW ORLEA

The following letters of Commodore
copied from the New Orleans Crescent of
(for a copy of which we are indebted to G
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COM. FARRAGUT'S LETTER TO THE
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U. S. FLAG SHIP HARTF
At Anchor off the City of New Orlea
April 28, 1862.

To his Honor the Mayor and the City Coun
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Very respectfully your obedient servan
(Signed) D. G. FA
Flag Officer Western Gulf Blockading S

UNITED STATES FLAG SHIP HART
At anchor off the City of New Orle
April 28, 186

To his Honor the Mayor of the City of Ne

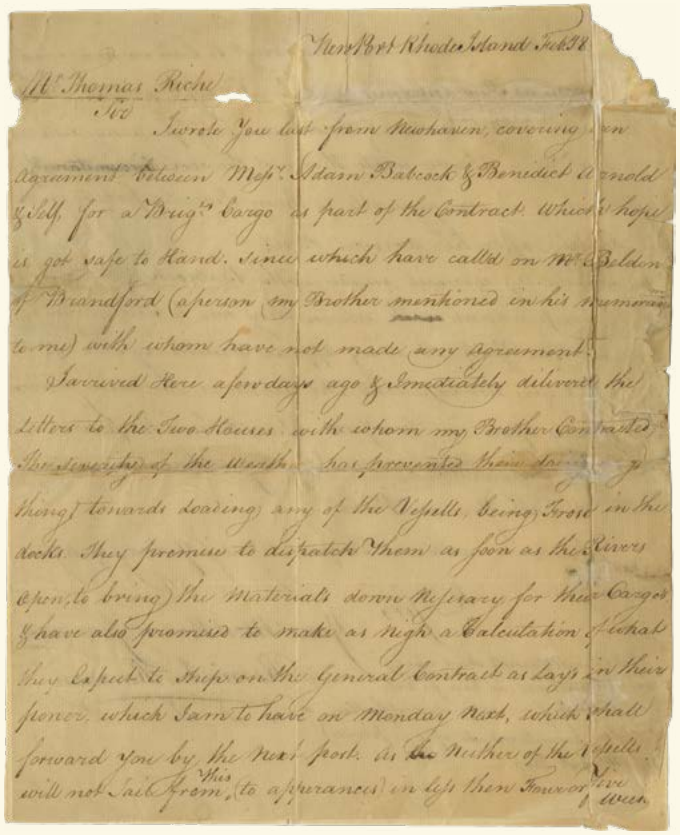
SIR—Hereafter when I desire to co
with the authorities, I will hoist a squar
a diagonal red cross, when, if your Hono
your Secretary or any other person to
communication to the shore opposite
bearing that flag, a boat will be sent wit
to deliver the document.
When the city authorities desire to co
with me, by the messenger holding his

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[COLONIAL AMERICA - MARITIME TRADE - BENEDICT ARNOLD] REMSEN, REM I.

Letter Documenting Benedict Arnold's Early Career as a Merchant and Shipowner, 1765.

Newport, Rhode Island: February 8, [1765]. Manuscript letter signed, addressed to Thomas Riche in Philadelphia. Folded with address panel and contemporary docket confirming the year. 2pp measuring 7 ¼ x 9 inches. Delicate with tears at folds, old repairs with archival tape; very good.



An early account of Benedict Arnold's work as a merchant and shipowner, written ten years before the American Revolution. Arnold was then twenty-four and trading from New Haven in partnership with Adam Babcock. Here, a merchant who had negotiated a cargo agreement with the two men reports on efforts to assemble shipments from New England, where winter weather had delayed loading, and having their brig call at Newport to take him aboard.

The writer was Rem I. Remsen, who was helping coordinate the New England shipments and reporting on their progress to Thomas Riche, a Philadelphia merchant. Remsen and his brother John were working with Riche on a supply venture to Cayenne, French Guiana; this letter probably concerns that undertaking. [1] Remsen had reached an agreement with Arnold and Babcock in New Haven before traveling to Newport to check on the preparations of two other firms.

Remsen had already forwarded Riche the agreement for "a Brig Cargo as part of the Contract." On arriving in Newport, he delivered letters to two commercial houses with which his brother had contracted. Neither could load its vessels until the weather improved and supplies arrived from the interior:

"They promise to dispatch as soon as the rivers open, to bring the materials down necessary for their cargos & also have promised to make as nigh a calculation of what they expect to ship on the general contract as lays in their power".

With the Newport vessels unlikely to sail for another four or five weeks, Remsen proposed that Arnold and Babcock's brig call there from New Haven, allowing him

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10

Letter Documenting Benedict Arnold's Early Career.

to join her. The partners had encouraged his visit to Newport:

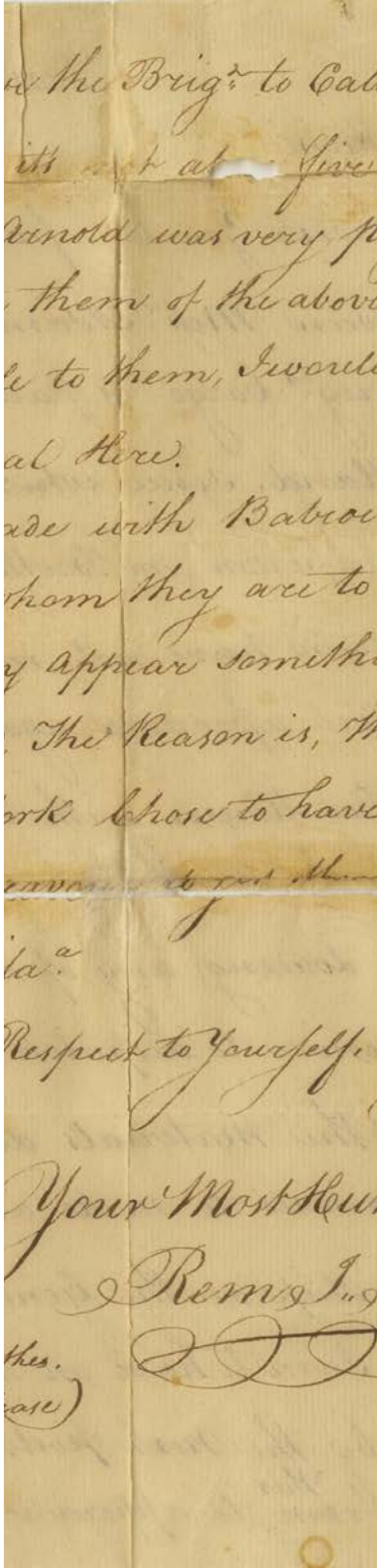
"I thought it best to have the Brig to call in here from New Haven [...] & Mr's Babcock & Arnold was very pressing with me to go in here. I have wrote them of the above circumstances & also if it was agreeable to them, I would proceed in her immediately after her arrival here."

Remsen also describes the financial arrangement, for which "our correspondent with whom they are to settle will be in New York." He explains that Arnold and Babcock preferred to settle there because they were frequently in New York, although Riche was based in Philadelphia. The postscript leaves the proposed passage contingent on the partners' agreement to send their vessel for him. Princeton's Remsen Family Collection preserves related correspondence, including eleven letters to Riche dated 1765–1767. James H. Soltow's study of Riche's Cayenne venture describes Riche directing John Remsen's brother to Newport to find out what the contractors were shipping, closely matching the circumstances of this letter.[2] The specific cargo and destination of Arnold and Babcock's brig are not stated.

Later correspondence records financial disagreements within this commercial circle. The Maryland Center for History and Culture holds a letter from Arnold to John Remson dated April 21, 1768, threatening to have him arrested for an unpaid debt.[3] Charles Coleman Sellers, in *Benedict Arnold: The Proud Warrior* (1930), quotes a 1768 letter to "Mr. Remson" in which Arnold disputes a claim by Mr. Riche under a contract and declares himself a "loser of Fifty per cent on both voyages."[4] Sellers's extract may come from the Maryland manuscript; whether the dispute concerned the agreement described here is uncertain. Arnold was then in the early stages of an ambitious mercantile career, having formed his partnership with Babcock the previous year and begun extending his commercial activities beyond New Haven. The letter offers a contemporary account of these early ventures, before the military career for which he would become known.

[1] Remsen Family Collection; Manuscripts Division, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library, accessed October 27, 2026, http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/765371377.
[2] James H. Soltow, "Thomas Riche's 'Adventure' in French Guiana, 1764–1766," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 83, no. 4 (Oct. 1959): 409–419.
[3] Benedict Arnold letter to John Remson, 1768 April 21, Box: 6, Colonial period in Maryland collection, MS 2018, H. Furlong Baldwin Library, accessed October 27, 2026, https://mdhistory.libraryhost.com/repositories/2/archival_objects/313060.
[4] Charles Coleman Sellers, *Benedict Arnold: The Proud Warrior* (Minton, Balch & Company, 1930), 11–12.

$1,500

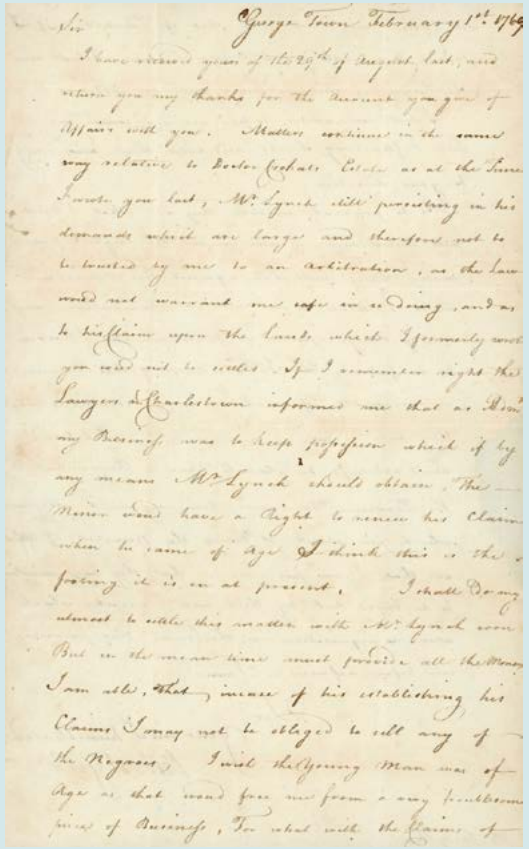


11

[COLONIAL AMERICA - SOUTH CAROLINA - ENSLAVEMENT] GIBB, ROBERT

1769 Letter from South Carolina on the Possibility of Revolution, Colonial Taxation, Enslavement, and British Military Protection: "The Inhabitants of this Province are incapable of making any resistance were they ever so much inclined, and I believe wou'd allways be glad to have a Regiment in the Province to secure them against the slaves which are about 10 Times the Number of Whites".

George Town [Georgetown, South Carolina]: February 1, 1769. Autograph letter signed, to James Smyth, Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh. Two pages, 7 x 11 ½ inches, with address panel. Near Fine.



A substantial pre-Revolutionary letter from the Georgetown physician and planter Robert Gibb, discussing the administration of a contested estate and the political position of South Carolina's white inhabitants. Writing to the Edinburgh lawyer James Smyth concerning settling an estate, Gibb explains colonial objections to taxation without consent while arguing that the province's white population would welcome British troops for protection against enslaved people.

Gibb had studied medicine at Edinburgh University before settling in Georgetown in 1754. The son of Francis Gibb, an Edinburgh solicitor, he subsequently acquired plantations and enslaved laborers in South Carolina. His later loyalty to the Crown is documented: he died in 1777 while facing banishment for refusing an oath of abjuration, and his estate was confiscated in 1782.[1] After discussing the estate business and promising to procure tree seeds and flowering shrubs, Gibb turns to reports of American affairs in the British press. He disclaims political expertise, but emphatically rejects what he regards as false representations of the colonists:

"As to political matters they are what I don't well understand, I can see in the English papers many things published against the Americans which I believe to be without Foundation and many things asserted as Facts which I know to be false, The Inhabitants of this Province

CONTINUED

11

1769 South Carolina Letter on Enslavement and Revolution.

are incapable of making any resistance were they ever so much inclined, and I believe wou'd allways be glad to have a Regiment in the Province to secure them against the slaves which are about 10 Times the Number of Whites all that I can perceive is that they are unwilling to be taxed but by their own consent which upon no requisition on the Crown this province ever before refused."

The ten-to-one ratio is Gibb's own estimate, recording his perception of white endangerment and the military support he believed the colonists would welcome.

The earlier discussion concerns a legal dispute, in particular claims against a Dr. Crokat's estate by Lynch and Edwards, with the interests of a minor heir still unresolved. Gibb is reluctant to submit Lynch's demands to arbitration because of his own potential liability, and wishes that the heir had already come of age. He explains the immediate financial consequences:

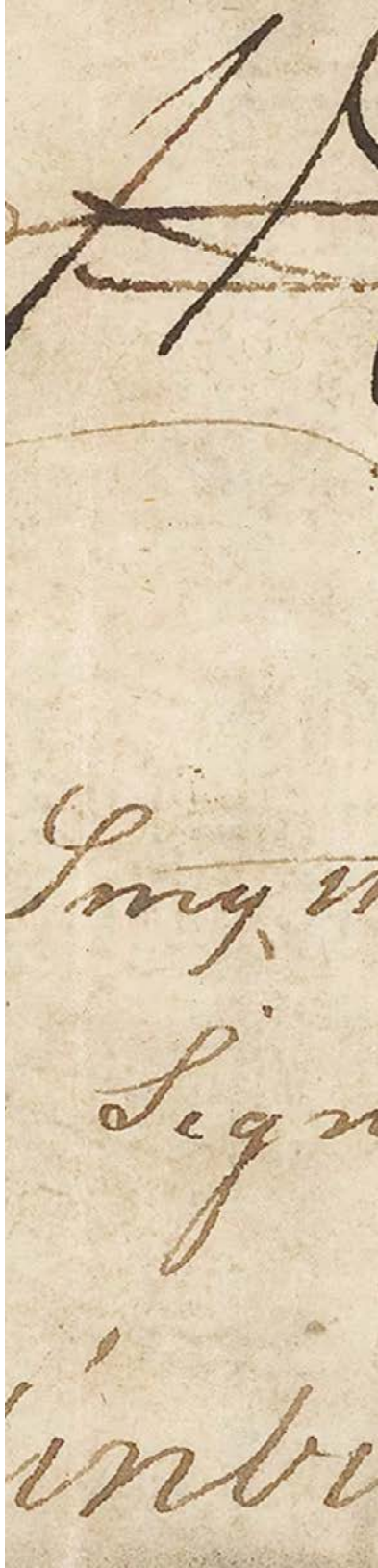
"I shall Do my utmost to settle this matter with Mr Lynch soon But in the mean time must provide all the Money I am able, that, incase of his establishing his Claims, I may not be obliged to sell any of the Negroes. I wish the Young Man was of Age as that wou'd free me from a very troublesome piece of Business, For what with the Claims of Mr Lynch and what with that of Edwards, If I do not act with great Circumspection, I shall run the Risque of embarras[s]ing my own Affairs."

The passage documents the vulnerability of enslaved people to estate litigation and creditor claims, while also recording Gibb's anxiety about his personal exposure as administrator.

The recipient was almost certainly James Smyth of Balharry (d. 1781), admitted as a Writer to the Signet in 1742. The National Library of Scotland preserves a 1765 letter sent to him from Jamaica by John Wedderburn, concerning Wedderburn's Scottish business interests.[2] Smyth also appears as the Edinburgh reward contact in an advertisement published in June 1768 for the capture of London, an enslaved seventeen-year-old who had escaped from Captain Oliphant Kinloch.[3] In 1773, Smyth was among the Perthshire justices who initially supported Wedderburn's claim to the service of Joseph Knight, before Knight secured his freedom through the subsequent proceedings culminating in the Court of Session's decision of 1778. These associations place Gibb's correspondent within a Scottish legal network involved in both colonial business and the enforcement of slavery.

[1] William Mylne and Ted Ruddock (Ed.), *Travels in the colonies in 1773–1775: described in the letters of William Mylne* (University of Georgia, 2021), 97.
[2] "Letter of John Wedderburn to James Smith," Acc.14352, Archives and Manuscripts, accessed October 27, 2026, https://manuscripts.nls.uk/repositories/2/resources/22313.
[3] "Runaway Slaves in Britain," accessed October 27, 2026, https://runaways.gla.ac.uk/incs/load_data.php?_=1643328000000.

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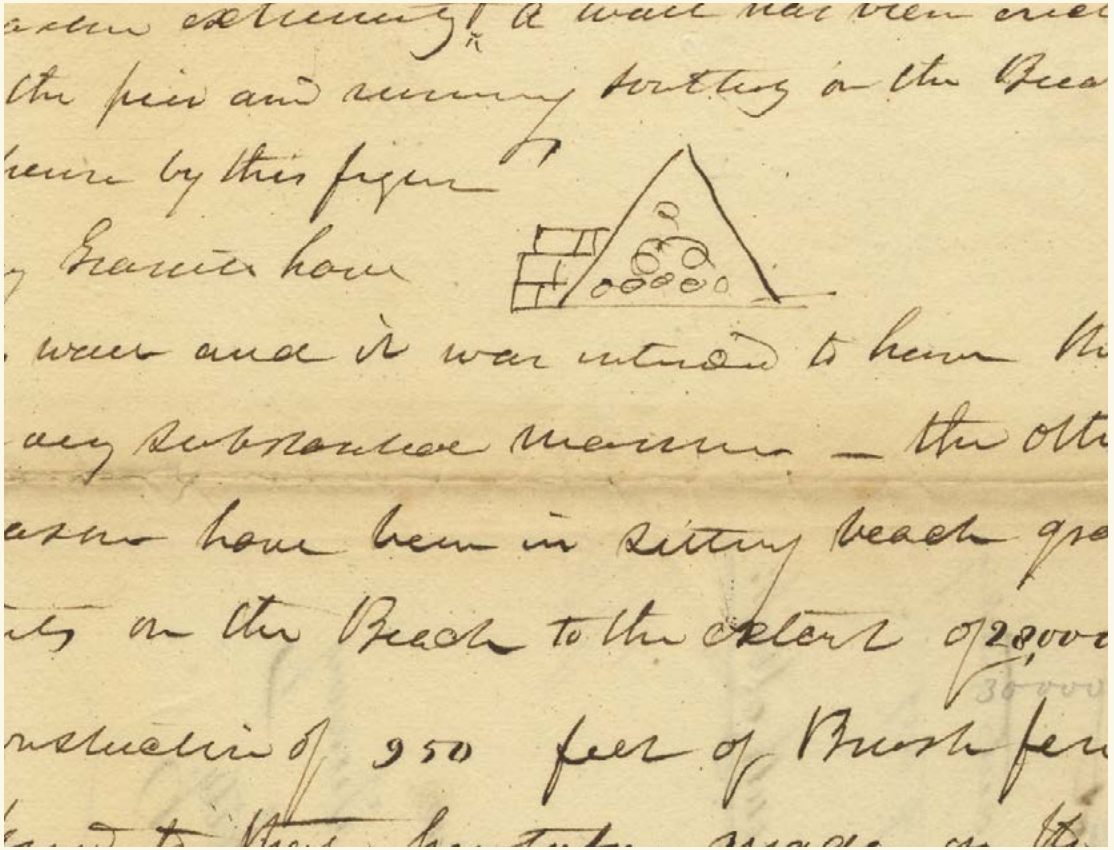


12

[CONSERVATION - ECOLOGICAL ENGINEERING - US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS - MASSACHUSETTS]
SAMPSON, ZABDIEL; BRADFORD, JOSEPH; SAMPSON, SCHUYLER; ET AL.

Collection of Documents Relating to the Preservation of Plymouth Beach, 1825–1852.

Plymouth, Massachusetts: 1825 - 1852. Twenty-five documents totaling 44 pages. A full inventory is available on request. Generally excellent to Near Fine condition.



A very early Army Corps of Engineers collection, concerning the conservation of the eroding Plymouth Beach, Massachusetts. Plymouth Beach, on Massachusetts's South Shore, is a barrier beach that protects the shoreline from the effects of severe storms and high tides. The importance of the beach has been long recognized, including by the area's legal bodies; a 1702 law passed in Plymouth provided for a five-shilling fine to anyone destroying trees or lighting fires given "the grat damage likly to accrew the harbour."[1] Nonetheless, as Barnstable physician and historian James Thacher put it, by 1805 "the beach was in such ruinous condition that the tide swept over it and boats actually crossed at the breaches," and though a "promiscuous wall of stone" was constructed, it was "soon entirely demolished by the surges of the sea, as if composed of pumpkin shells."[2]

In 1824, Plymouth petitioned Congress for help repairing the beach, having already spent more than $40,000 on its own attempts.[3] Congress granted the town $43,566 for the project, which was to be overseen by the Army Corps of Engineers. Offered here is a collection of documents, particularly reports, pertaining to the project. Dating from about 1825 to 1852—the Army Corps of Engineers in its current form was established only a few decades prior, in 1802—the documents consist mainly of annual progress reports to the Corps, agreements with local contractors, and statements of accounts. They provide detailed descriptions, along with a few diagrams, of the methods used in protecting the beach, the budget involved, and the status of the repairs.

The project used a mix of what has more recently come to be called "soft" and "hard" engineering: soft engineering involves protecting shorelines using natural materials in a way consistent with the shoreline's natural features, whereas "hard" engineering

CONTINUED

Collection of Documents Relating to the Early Preservation of Plymouth Beach.

involves using sturdy materials like concrete, metal, or stone to construct seawalls, breakwaters, and so on. Here, they mix the use of more durable constructs like stone and timber breakwaters with fascines of "swamp whortleberry, black & white pepper, laurel & birch bushes" and packed in seaweed. An 1830 report describes the strategy:

"In filling this work the following order has been observed. Upon the flooring stone was first placed one foot high the whole width; sand was then thrown in to make the work level, the whole then filled with sea weed on which was placed as much as could be conveniently done, after being settled a second layer of sea weed, sand and stone placed thereon, again fascines and stone which now entirely fills the work. On the harbour side of this work a heavy strata of fascines has been placed and secured with stone, on the inner or beach side of this work sea weed in large quantities has been placed and sand thrown thereon [...]." (Oct 1, 1830)

The idea was "principally to collect the drifting sand" (October 24, 1825) to provide land on which to plant beachgrass, which would naturally prevent erosion—which the town's 1702 law had recognized. An 1831 report states:

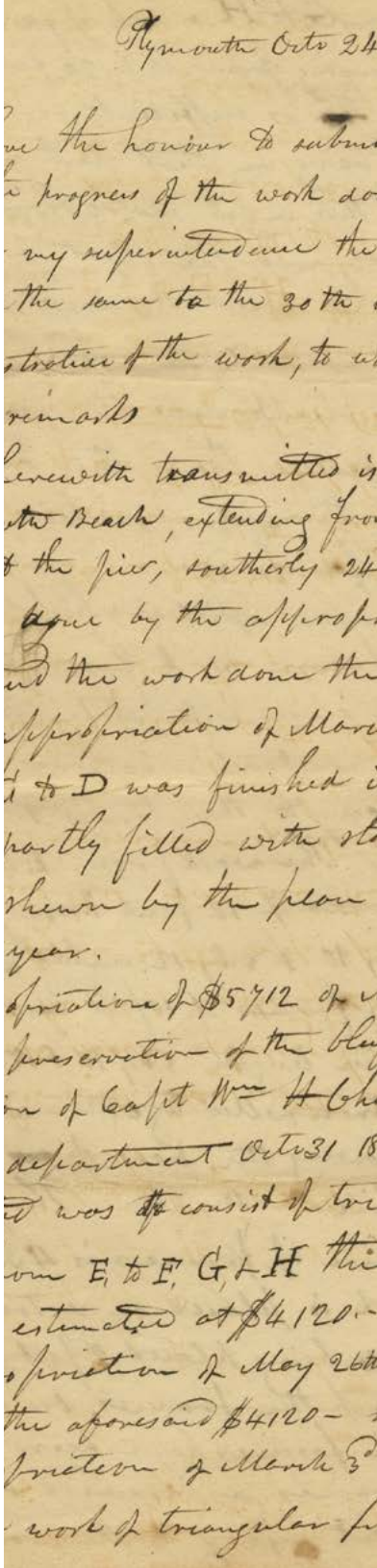
"At this point from 10 to 1200 feet sea weed has been placed from time to time, and is now raised sufficiently high to set grass, which will be done the coming spring. — From K to L [referring to a diagram that is not included] 1000 feet a double strata of fascines have been laid 15 feet toward the sea from the fascines laid at this point last season, and which has been done to give greater width to the Beach, and the places between the work of last year, and that of this year, has been filled with sea weed to prevent sand drifting into the harbour, and also aid the growth of grass, which will be planted thereon next spring. — Last March grass was set over the whole distance from K to L, which was raised by sea weed and fascines last year and the grass is in fine condition and bearing a good crop of seed." (October 1, 1831)

Though the term "ecological engineering" would not be coined until nearly a century and a half later, this is a clear early example of the approach.

The collection also preserves the interaction between the local and federal economies. While the project was funded by a federal grant and conducted under the auspices of the US Army, the work was carried out at least in part by local civilian contractors. The collection includes an 1826 list of proposals for construction and delivery of fascines and stones, giving names and prices per ton. Different individuals promised different tonnage, from fifty tons (at between $2.75 to $4 per ton) to 500 (at between 75¢ to $2.80 per). It also contains several years of budgets, and contracts with four of the contractors: Winslow Wright, John Ransom, Sylvanus Ripley, and Thomas C. Standish. Interestingly, though these four made offers on the cheaper end, the government seems to have turned down the cheapest proposal of 500 tons for 75¢ per; at least, a contract with the man offering this deal is not present in this collection.

Reports are sent from local superintendents Zabdiel Sampson, Joseph Bradford, and Schuyler Sampson (seemingly no relation) directly to the Army Corps of Engineers' chief engineer; during this time, these were Alexander Macomb, Charles Gratiot, and Joseph Gilbert

CONTINUED



Collection of Documents Relating to the Early Preservation of Plymouth Beach.

Totten. Other major figures in army engineering are involved as well, such as Zealous Bates Tower, who writes to Schuyler Sampson:

"Any information that you may possess in connection with the past expenditures for the strengthening of Plymouth Beach will be useful to me. Your practical experience as Agent for the works of improvement upon this Beach together with your close observation of the effect produced by the various plans adopted to widen & raise it will give much value to any account you may choose to furnish me. As I informed you to day I would like to ascertain how the different appropriations have been expended & what has been the general effect of the structures erected by those expenditures." (October 11, 1852)

The collection also occasionally records unusual weather events in the bay. Sampson writes to Army topographical engineer John James Abert about a major storm affecting the beach:

"Sir: I would beg leave to report to the Department that this region has recently been visited by a most severe Easterly storm of wind and rain which continued ten days, and the effect of which on Plymouth Beach has been very injurious – the tide rose to an unusual height, and the sea forced through the Beach in two places of about one hundred and twenty yards each.

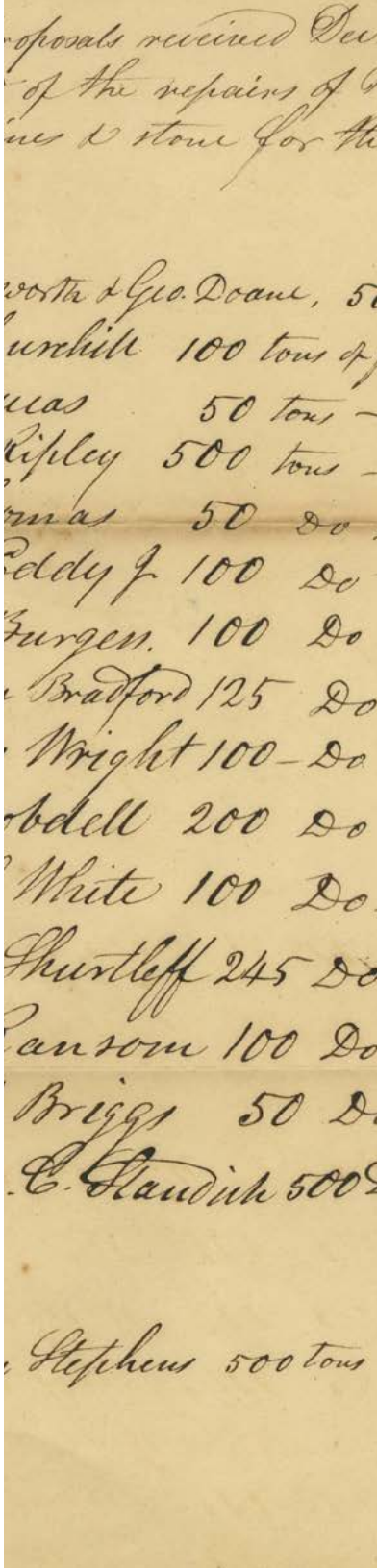
The Storm of December 1839 injured the Beach at the point, above referred to, and made considerable inroad which was reported at that time to the Department, – and I would now advise that a further sum of 400 dollars be added to the Estimate I forwarded to the Department dated August 12, 1840, of 1000, – making the sum necessary for the service of 1841 $1500 –" (November 16, 1840)

He mentions in a later letter to William H. Swift that the destruction was "so great [...] that I deemed it prudent to make an entire sketch of the beach which was done – after repeated visits to the Beach for survey" (July 16, 1841). He reports that "no appropriation was made for the works, and of course no repairs have been made," and asks that Swift forward the report to the Chief Engineer.

Overall the collection provides an in-depth look at an early, major, and long-running public works project, which used ecological knowledge and engineering strategies long known about but only more recently returned to. Of interest to researchers of Massachusetts history and the Army Corps of Engineers, and also those studying the history of ecological engineering and conservation.

[1] As quoted in Howard P. Barnes, "Eel River & Plymouth Beach," *Pilgrim Society Note* 1, no. 8 (1958).
[2] James Thacher, *History of the Town of Plymouth*, Third ed. (Parnassus Imprints, 1972), 328.
[3] Thacher, *History*, 329.

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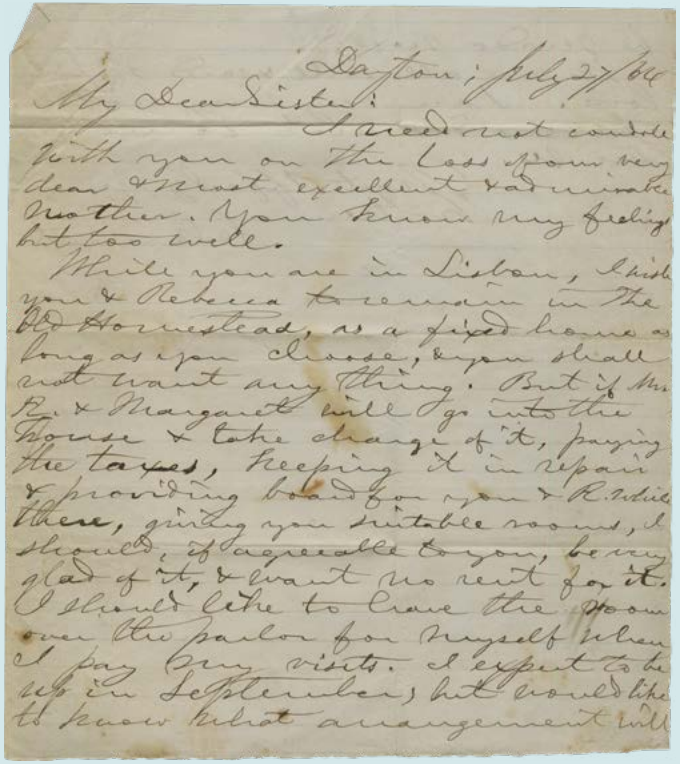


13

[COPPERHEADS - ANTEBELLUM POLITICS - CALVINISM - VALLANDIGHAM FAMILY] [CLEMENT VALLANDIGHAM] VALLANDIGHAM, CLEMENT; LAIRD, CATHERINE; LAIRD, ROBERT; VALLANDIGHAM, JAMES LAIRD

Collection of Letters of the Vallandigham–Laird Family, 1828–1868, Including Wartime and Post-War Letters from Copperhead Clement Vallandigham.

Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Ohio: 1828 - 1868. Seven letters and one document, totalling approximately 18pp. Two from Clement Vallandigham, one from his brother James Laird Vallandigham, and four from his aunt and uncle Catherine and Robert Laird. With an 1855 - 1856 statement of account of Clement Vallandigham with G. W. Wilson. A few letters with some damage intersecting with text and one with later pencil manuscript; otherwise generally excellent to Near Fine.


Dayton, July 27/64

My dear Sister:

I need not condole with you on the loss from very dear & most excellent & admirable Mother. You know my feelings but too well.

While you are in Lisbon, I wish you & Rebecca to remain in the Old Homestead, as a fixed home as long as you choose, & you shall not want anything. But if Mr. R. & Margaret will go into the House & take charge of it, paying the taxes, keeping it in repair & providing board for you & R. while there, giving you suitable rooms, I should, if agreeable to you, be very glad of it, & want no rent for it. I should like to have the room over the parlor for myself when I pay my visits. I expect to be up in September, but would like to know what arrangement will

A small collection of letters of the Vallandigham-Laird family, mainly addressed to Rev. Clement Vallandigham and Rebecca Laird. The letters come from Rebecca Laird's sister-in-law and brother Catherine and Robert Laird and from two of her children, the Rev. James Laird Vallandigham and his younger brother, the infamous Copperhead politician Clement Laird Vallandigham, who writes here to his sisters.

The two letters from the younger Clement were sent in 1864 and in 1868. The 1864 letter is dated July 27, catching Vallandigham about six weeks after his return to the US: in 1863 he had been deported to the Confederate States for violating Burnside's General Order 38, had escaped to Canada—where he planned to create a Northwestern Confederacy by overthrowing the governments of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois—and then returned to the US on June 15, 1864, in an elaborate disguise. He writes to his sister Elizabeth concerning plans for the family estate after the death of their mother a few weeks earlier:

"While you are in Lisbon [Ohio], I wish you & Rebecca to remain in the Old Homestead, as a fixed home as long as you choose, & you shall not want anything. But if Mr. R[obertson] & Margaret will go into the House & take charge of it, paying the taxes, keeping it in repair & providing board for you & R. while there, giving suitable rooms, I should, if agreeable to you, be very glad of it, & want to rent for it. I should like to have the room over the parlor for myself when I pay my visits. I expect to be up in

CONTINUED

Collection of Letters of the Vallandigham–Laird Family, 1828–1868.

September, but would like to know what arrangement will be made now." (July 27, 1864)

In his biography of Clement Vallandigham, his brother John wrote that he had had every intention of spending some quiet time at what the family called the "Old Homestead" in Lisbon, but was instead being continuously invited to various political meetings, both Democratic meetings and bipartisan peace meetings.[1]

The second letter was sent early in 1868; Vallandigham was still attempting a career as an elected official (as his brother put it, "he was not a fortunate politician"[2]), and that year he would lose the senate nomination. He writes to his sisters Elizabeth and Rebecca:

"Enclosed I send you a draft for 25$ – a small sum, but I will send more in the spring, as soon as I get into business & begin to make a little again. I lost so much time this fall & winter (& of course much money at the same time) & also some 200$ by a bank failure, that I must stir myself, as well as be careful. But all will come right yet, I am sure. [...] Charlie is very well; going to school & doing extremely well. Louisa is still very desponding; & I hope sincerely that as soon as spring begins to open you will come down & pay us a long visit." (February 7, 1868)

Clement Vallandigham's letters record the personal affairs behind his tumultuous career. Earlier letters document the strict Calvinist atmosphere in which Vallandigham grew up and its crossover with the family's shared anti-abolitionist beliefs. James Vallandigham recorded that their childhood home was one "of piety," and reproduced a letter from a Presbyterian minister in Dayton whom Clement informed of his feeling that "his fixed purpose [was] to follow the path of duty in his political career without the smallest sacrifice of principle."[3]

In 1834 Catherine Laird writes to her sister Rebecca Vallandigham:

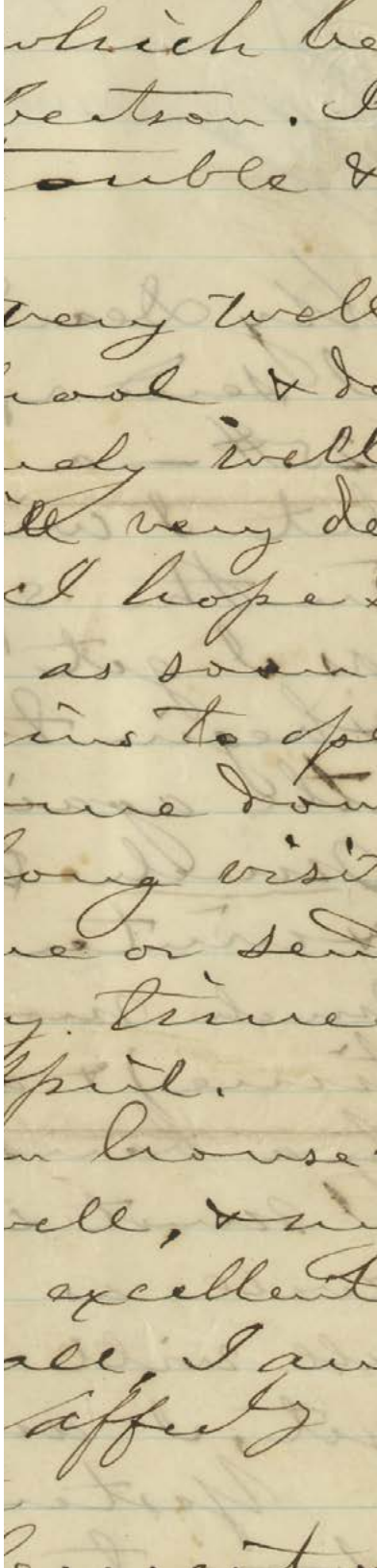
"We have received from time to time the papers containing James addresses, and this morning his reply to the 'Abolitionist'. I think James advocates whatever cause he espouses ably, and trust the day is not far distant when he will stand forth the fearless and faithful preacher of righteousness." (September 11, 1834)

In a later letter, James likewise places political convictions alongside religious ones:

"I am holding a protracted meeting; it [was] well attended & very solemn & interesting; there are upwards of 20 inquirers, & the interest increasing. [...] I am sorry that George & Clement were defeated but no doubt it was all right, though we cannot see it. The Know Nothings will sweep this state. If I had a vote this fall, I would vote with them. I am sick of this abominable foreign influence, & hope that it will be at once & forever put down." (November 3, 1854)

Other early letters from Catherine Laird concern illness and death in the family, which struck in devastating ways a number of times: with a stillborn child in 1828 (May 6), the 1837 death of Robert Laird in Georgia of tuberculosis (April 10), and later that year an outbreak of scarlet fever in four family members which killed her young daughter Catherine (December 6). Throughout, Catherine

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13

Collection of Letters of the Vallandigham–Laird Family, 1828–1868.

emphasizes the family's religious commitment. On the younger Catherine's death she writes:

"My dear little Catherine evinced an understanding far above her years, her remarks and questions indicated mind, her memory was uncommonly retentive, she was very fond of committing hymns, & could, in her babyish language recite several. [...] In her last distressing illness she was like a lamb, so patient and submissive, willing to do, or take any thing prescribed her." (December 6, 1837)

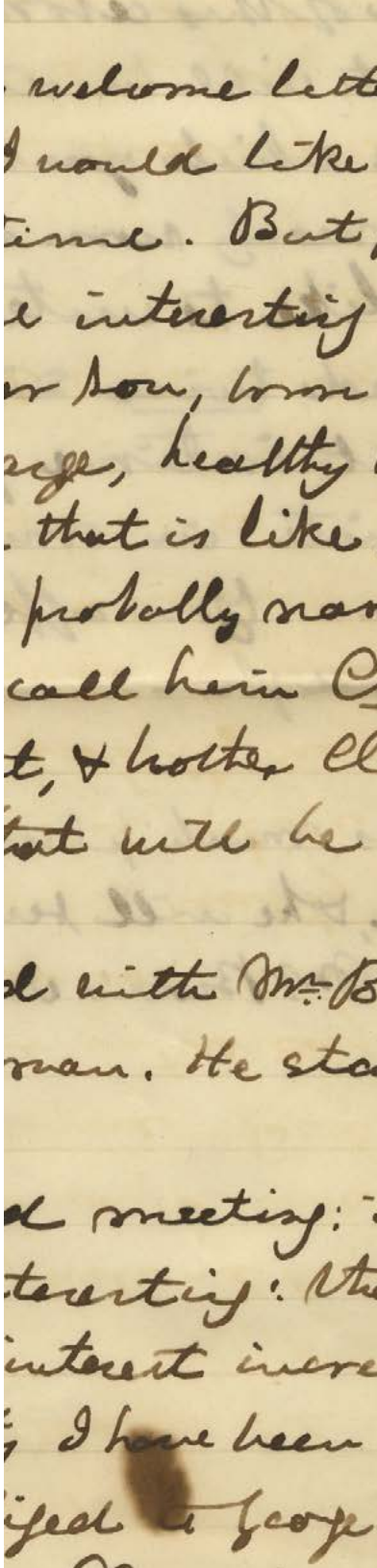
Her husband Robert, she reports, stated on his deathbed "(peccavi) I have sinned – have always been terribly moral & extremely correct – yet I feel that in my deep I am full of sin. My only hope is in the Saviour" (April 10, 1837).

Prior to his death, Robert Laird was a Presbyterian minister. Catherine reports that he "set out on his agency for the Western Seminary"—now the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary—in May of 1828; in the same letter, Robert writes that "I have been threatened with an invitation from a vacant church in Washington City." In the 1830s he was stated supply at the Manokin Presbyterian Church in Princess Anne, Maryland, where he was also the president of Washington Academy, resigning in 1834 due to poor conditions, conflict with the Board, and a compensation that was "less than any of his predecessors" (September 11).

Overall the collection provides a look at both the personal affairs of Clement Vallandigham and the ideological atmosphere that produced the stridently committed Democrat.

[1] Rev. James L. Vallandigham, *A Life of Clement L. Vallandigham* (Turnbull Brothers, 1872), 364–365.
[2] Vallandigham, *A Life*, 423.
[3] Vallandigham, *A Life*, 492–501.

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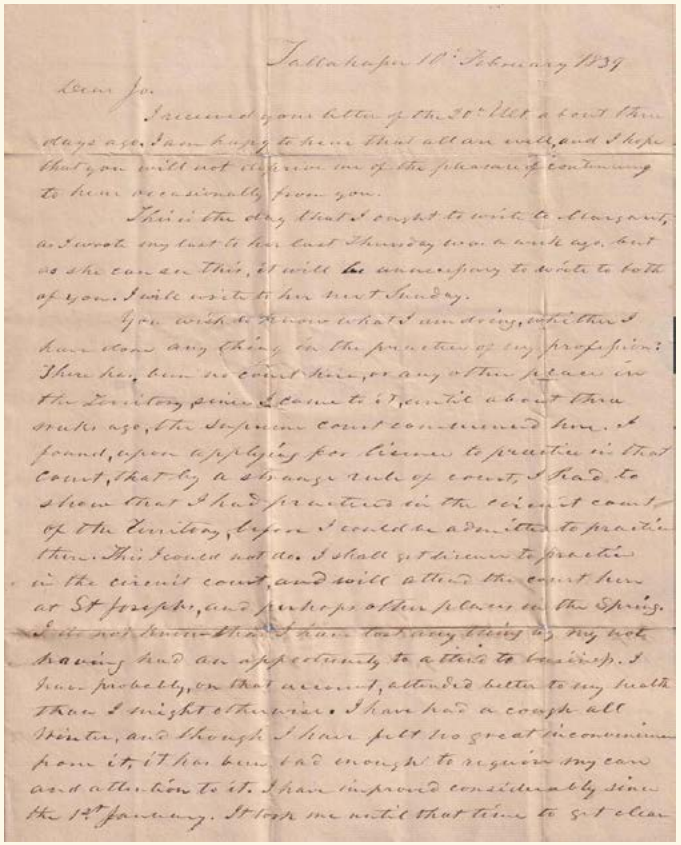
[FLORIDA - TERRITORIAL HISTORY - LAW - MEDICINE] CARMACK, SAMUEL W.

1839 Letter from a Future Florida Territorial Judge on Establishing a Legal Practice and Seeking Health in Tallahassee: "once I am known here, and have health to attend to business, I can make a fortune."

Tallahassee, Florida Territory: February 10, 1839. Autograph letter signed "S. W. Carmack," three pages, with integral address panel to Joseph H. Greer at Fayetteville, Tennessee. Tallahassee postal marking dated February 11, 1839. Old folds, with separations and tape repairs; scattered spotting and staining, and small losses at folds and edges affecting portions of a few words. Text generally clear and legible.

A detailed account of establishing a legal practice in territorial Florida while seeking relief from chronic illness, written from Tallahassee by Samuel W. Carmack, a Tennessee attorney who later became a territorial judge. Carmack had moved to Florida for his health in 1838.[1] Writing to Joseph H. Greer in Fayetteville, apparently his brother-in-law, he describes an obstacle to his admission before the territory's highest court, his confident assessment of the local lawyers, and his hopes of recovery in a warmer climate.

His difficulty entering practice arose from an admission requirement he had not expected. The court he calls the "Supreme Court" was the territorial Court of Appeals, whose current session he had been attending:



Tallahassee 10th February 1839

Dear Joe

I received your letter of the 31st Ult a few days ago. I am happy to hear that all are well, and I hope that you will not dispair me of the pleasure of continuing to hear occasionally from you.

This is the day that I ought to write to Margaret, as I wrote my last to her last Thursday was a week ago, but as she can see this, it will be unnecessary to write to both of you. I will write to her next Sunday.

You wish to know what I am doing, whether I have done any thing in the practice of my profession? There has been no court here, or any other place in the Territory, since I came to it, until about three weeks ago, the Supreme Court commenced here. I found, upon applying for license to practice in that Court, that by a strange rule of court, I had to show that I had practiced in the circuit courts of the Territory, before I could be admitted to practice there. This I could not do. I shall get license to practice in the circuit court, and will attend the court here at St Josephs, and perhaps other places in the spring. I do not know that I have lost any thing by my not having had an opportunity to attend to business. I have probably, on that account, attended better to my health than I might otherwise. I have had a cough all Winter, and though I have felt no great inconvenience from it, it has been bad enough to require my care and attention to it. I have improved considerably since the 1st January. It took me until that time to get clear

"I found, upon applying for license to practice in that Court, that by a strange rule of court, I had to show that I had practiced in the circuit courts of the Territory, before I could be admitted to practice there. This I could not do. I shall get license to practice in the circuit court, and will attend the court here at St Josephs, and perhaps other places in the spring."

He had used his time in the courtroom to judge the competition and was already anticipating a profitable practice:

"I have attended at the court house nearly every day since the Supreme Court commenced, and I feel very confident that once I am known here, and have health to attend to business, that I can make a fortune in a few years. I have

CONTINUED

14

1839 Letter from a Future Judge on Health and Wealth in Tallahassee.

listened to the greatest men of this Territory on some very important trials, and I think, that I do not overrate myself when I say, that I am inferior to no one of them. I shall have an opportunity of doing some business in March and April, and then I may be able to form a more correct opinion of the strength of the competition here than I now can."

His plans depended on regaining his health. He had arrived with a cold caught during the journey and continued to suffer from a cough. Another's apparent recovery encouraged his belief that remaining in Florida would allow him to return to work:

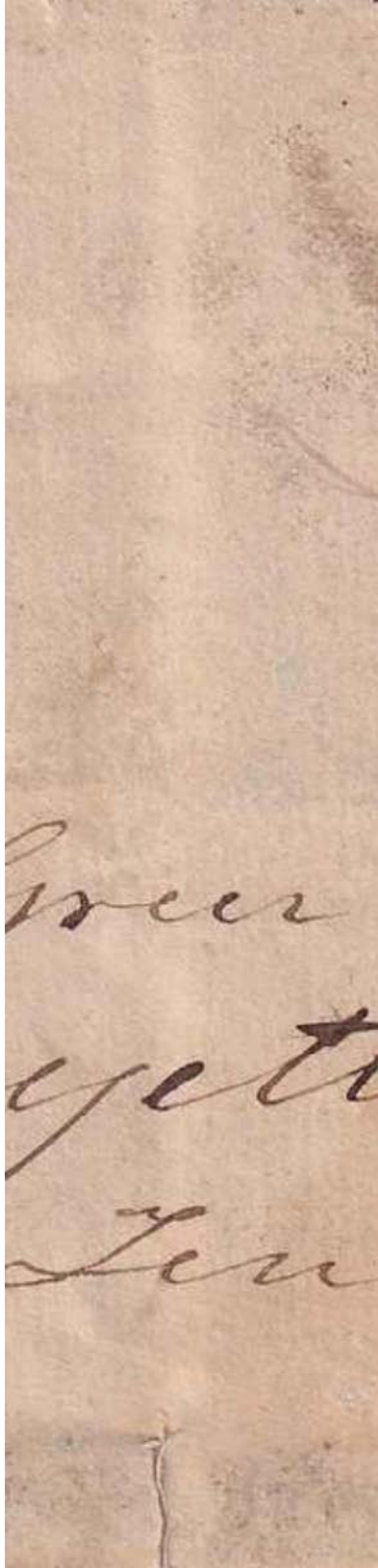
"There is a young quaker here, who came here last winter with one lobe of his lungs nearly destroyed by disease. He continued during the winter on a stand – doubtful whether he would last through the winter, about the 1st April he got well of the cough, and is now, this winter able to attend to business – never having any cough except for a few days after taking cold. I feel confident almost, that I shall be restored to health again, but it must be in Florida. I am well satisfied that this winter would have killed me, if I had remained in Tennessee."

Florida's healthful appeal was already the subject of contemporary travel literature; for instance, *A Winter in the West Indies and Florida*, published in 1839, described Key West and St. Augustine as places of resort for sick people from the north.[2]

The remaining portion of the letter concerns property and debts left behind in Tennessee. Carmack disputes a $79 clothing bill, discusses the reported $1,200 proceeds from the sale of his effects, and gives instructions about shingling his house and accepting labor in payment of a debt. He also recalls an agreement for clearing and draining newly opened ground, keeping a ditch open, and delivering 100 barrels of corn, with an additional amount assessed from the crop on a smaller field. By 1842 Carmack was serving as judge of the Apalachicola District of Florida Territory.[3] He subsequently declined an appointment to the Southern Judicial District of the state and died in 1849.

[1] Charles Lanman, *Biographical Annals of the Civil Government of the United States, During Its First Century* (James Anglim, 1876), 69.
[2] "An Invalid," *A Winter in the West Indies and Florida* (Wiley and Putnam, 1839).
[3] "Compensation to the Governor, Judges, and Secretary of Florida Territory," in *An Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of the United States, for the Year 1842* (J. and G. S. Gideon, 1843), 24.

$750



15

[HAITI - SAINT-DOMINGUE - ENSLAVEMENT - SUGAR PLANTATIONS] “DOUET”

Letter on Plantation Speculation and Investment in Enslaved Labor in Saint-Domingue, 1786.

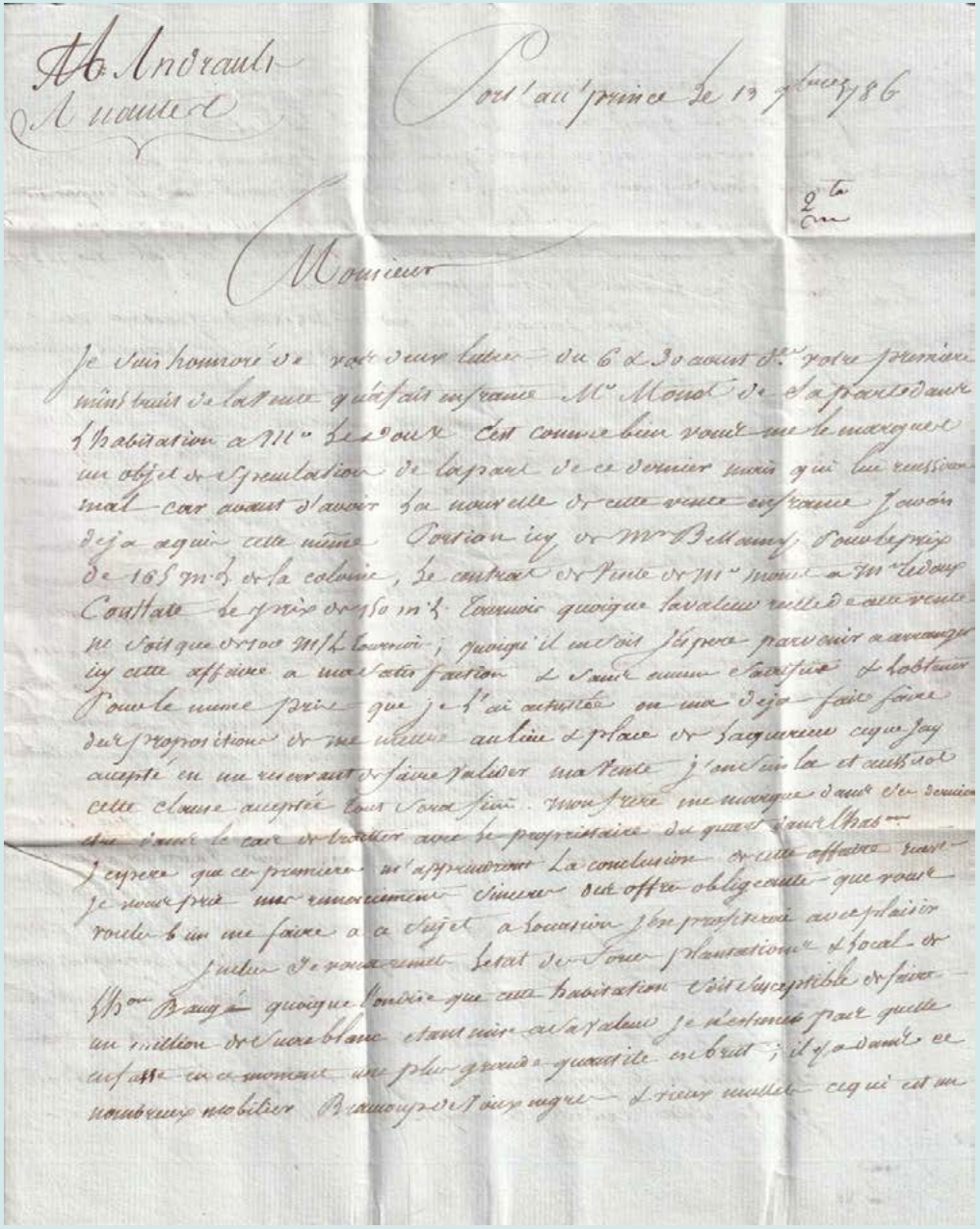
Port-au-Prince, Saint-Domingue: November 13, 1786. Autograph letter signed “Douet,” in French, three pages, with integral address panel directed to Mr. Andrault through the merchant Vallot at Nantes. Old folds, remnants of red sealing wax, seal-related paper loss and old repairs, with some loss to text on the final page.

A letter assessing plantation investment and the cost of enslaved labor, written by a commercial agent at Port-au-Prince to a plantation owner in France. The writer, Douet, considers a sugar estate’s productive prospects, discusses a disputed purchase of his own, and reports on business undertaken for his correspondent, Mr. Andrault.

Andrault was probably Jean-Baptiste Andrault, a former Saint-Domingue notary and coffee planter who had returned to France earlier in 1786. His marriage into the Vallot family of Nantes and employment of his nephew Bernard as plantation manager accord with the names in the letter. Related Andrault correspondence survives in the Gabriel Debien papers at the Archives départementales de la Gironde.

Douet’s assessment of a sugar estate weighs its reported

CONTINUED



15

Letter on Plantation Speculation and Enslaved Labor in Saint-Domingue.

productive potential against the condition of its enslaved workforce and livestock:

«Quoique l'on die que cette habitation soit susceptible de faire un million de sucre blanc [...] il y a dans ce nombreux mobilier beaucoup de vieux negres & vieilles mules ce qui est un point de consideration, j'estime que pour porter cette h[abitati]on a faire un plus grand revenu que celuy actuel il y faudroit faire de grand deboursé tant en negres qu'en bestiaux.»

["Although this plantation is said to be capable of producing a million [pounds] of white sugar [...] its extensive stock includes many elderly enslaved people and old mules, a significant consideration. I estimate that making this plantation yield a greater income than at present would require large outlays both on enslaved people and on livestock."]

He offers to join Andrault in an arrangement for the property if the latter remains interested, adding that the particulars he forwards are all he has been able to obtain. Elsewhere, Douet disputes the sale of a plantation share in France. The seller, Monot, had conveyed it to Ledoux, but Douet claims a prior purchase from Bellamy in the colony:

«C'est comme bien vous me le marquez un objet de speculation de la part de ce dernier mais qui lui reussira mal, car avant d'avoir la nouvelle de cette vente en France j'avois deja aquis cette même portion icy de Mr Bellamy sous le prix de 165 m[ille] [livres] de la colonie.»

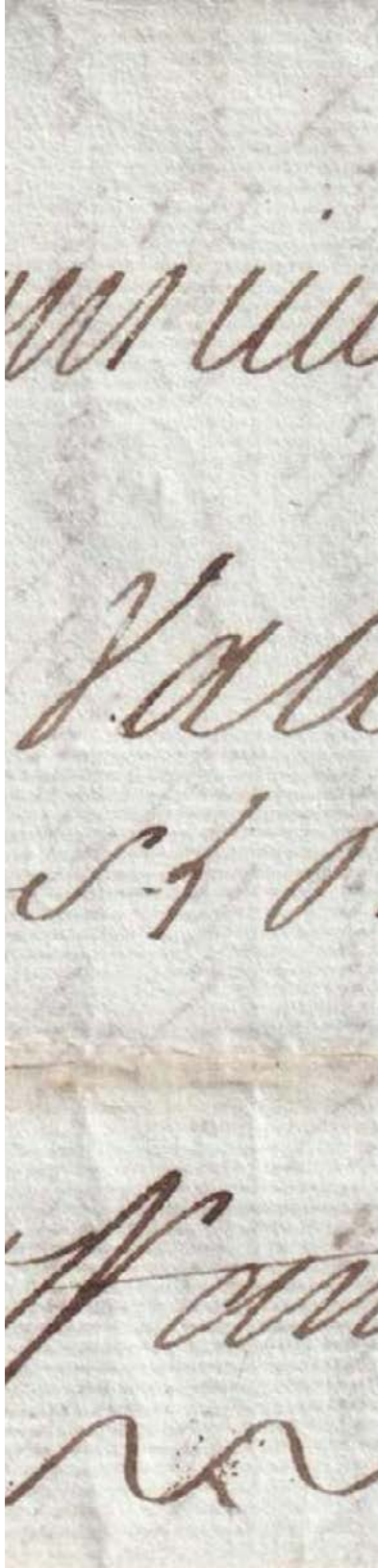
["As you rightly point out, this is a speculation on the latter's part, but one that will turn out badly for him, since before learning of this sale in France I had already acquired that same share here from Mr. Bellamy for 165,000 livres in colonial currency."]

Monot's deed stated a price of 150,000 livres tournois, although Douet put the transaction's actual value at 100,000. He had accepted a proposal to take the purchaser's place, while reserving the right to have his earlier purchase validated; settlement remained conditional upon that provision.

Bernard had drawn Andrault's attention to a commission charged by Douet. Defending his charges on shipments aboard Le Juste, Douet refers to invoices held by Vallot and his eight years of business in the colony. He nevertheless credits the disputed amount to the plantation account and rejects his correspondent's implied accusation: «l'aplication que vous m'avez faitte du proverbe que les absens ont toujours tort n'est pas juste» ["your use of the proverb 'the absent are always in the wrong' is not fair"].

The letter closes with proceedings against a negligent builder, including plans for expert assessment of the unfinished work and its rental value. Written five years before the uprising of 1791, the letter dates from the period when Saint-Domingue was the wealthiest colony in the French empire. Douet's discussion of increasing sugar production through further purchases of enslaved people records the calculations sustaining that plantation economy shortly before the Haitian Revolution.

$950

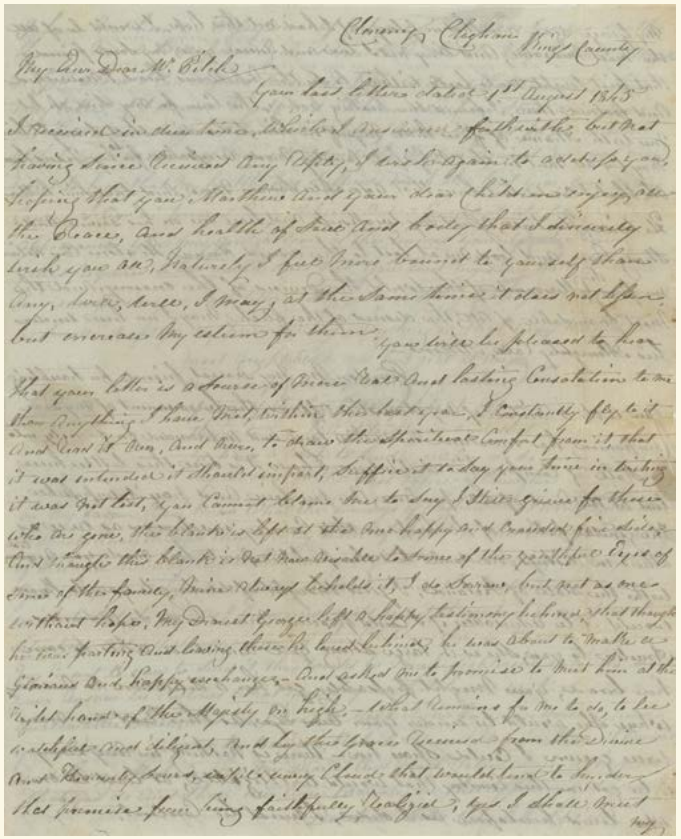


16

[IRELAND - IMMIGRATION - GREAT FAMINE - WOMEN]
LAUDER, ELIZABETH

An 1846 Irish Famine Letter Describing Crop Failure, Economic Destitution, and a Widow's Efforts to Send Her Daughter to America: "no doubt but the publick prints has made you acquainted with the state of Ireland."

Clonony, Cloghan, King's County [now County Offaly], Ireland: January 26, 1846. Autograph letter signed "Elizabeth Lauder," addressed to the Reverend Frederick Pilch at Newark, New Jersey. Three densely written pages with additional correspondence on the integral address leaf, bearing postal markings and remnants of a wax seal. Old folds, scattered staining and soiling, several tears and small losses, and general wear; overall good condition, with the text largely legible.



An early and detailed letter from the Great Irish Famine, written by a recently widowed Irish mother to a minister in Newark, New Jersey, describing the failure of the crops, the collapse of her family's financial circumstances, and her hopes of sending one of her daughters to America. Writing in January 1846, Elizabeth Lauder describes the combination of agricultural failure, high rents, and legal difficulties that threatened to leave her large family destitute. She also makes a discreet appeal for financial assistance from her American correspondent, asking that any help be concealed from her children.

Lauder wrote from Clonony, near Cloghan in King's County, to the Reverend Frederick Pilch, a minister with whom she maintained a close religious and personal friendship. Pilch was then associated with Bethel Church in Newark, listed in the city's 1844–1845 directory at the foot of Market Street.[1] Much of the opening portion of the letter concerns Lauder's Christian faith and her grief over the recent death of her husband, George. She describes the loss of her companion and the absence she feels at what had once been the family's "happy and crowded fire side." She repeatedly returns to an earlier letter from Pilch, which she kept and reread for spiritual consolation.

The death of her husband had also left the family in increasingly precarious circumstances, exacerbated by the agricultural crisis unfolding throughout Ireland.

CONTINUED

1846 Irish Famine Letter from a Widowed Mother.

Lauder writes:

"Pardon me my dearest friend for troubling you with a recital of my domestic affairs, the bereavement of my dear Companion has involved me with a large and unprovided for family into a state of comparative destitution, I have it is true this little place, but at the Rent of £2 per Acre, can we live and pay it, impossible, the general failure of the Crops in this Country involves us as well as others in distress, no doubt but the publick prints has made you acquainted with the state of Ireland."

The passage is notable for its early date. Potato blight was first reported in Ireland in September 1845, and its effects on the country's food supply became increasingly apparent during the following winter.[2] The conditions Lauder describes are corroborated by testimony presented to the House of Commons on February 17, 1846, which included reports of widespread crop destruction in King's County and increasing distress in Tullamore, not far from her home.[3] Her letter offers a firsthand account of these conditions before the devastating crop failure of autumn 1846.

Lauder next raises the possibility of sending her daughter Amelia to America, hoping that Pilch might help find her employment under his supervision:

"I just thought of writing to you to know would it be advisable if I could procure means to do so, to send Amelia to you, she is a large strong girl and well able to earn her bread, you might possibly get her a situation to do something, where she would be under your own Eye, as the rest are now well grown I could spare her."

Lauder's difficulties extended beyond the immediate shortage of food and income. She describes a legal challenge to her claims following her husband's death, against which she lacked the money necessary to defend herself:

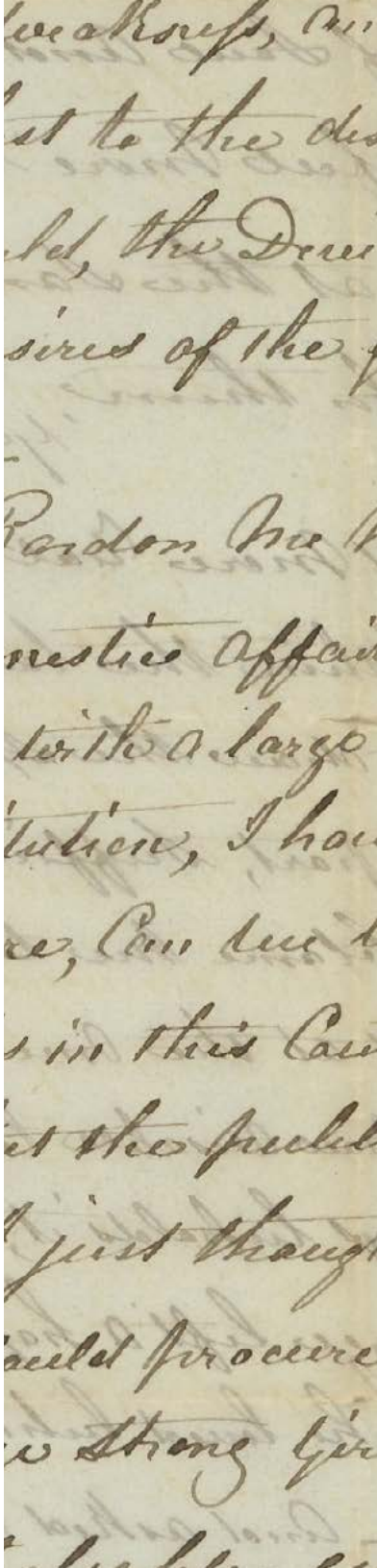
"There is now a Bill filed against me to annihilate my claims altogether. In God alone I can depend about it, I cannot say what course the law may take, if I succeed myself and Children will have some dependence, the Lord is all sufficient for these matters, if he sees it good for us he won't withhold, the want of means to defend the suit is against me."

Although the nature of the litigation is unclear, the passage reveals another source of vulnerability for a widow struggling to maintain her household. She goes on to describe her deteriorating health, writing that she is "at present very delicate and a complete old woman in appearance."

The most personal section of the letter concerns an offer of financial assistance from Pilch and his wife, Martha. Lauder acknowledges that she urgently needs the money, but is reluctant to accept help at the expense of her friends' comfort. She provides instructions for transmitting a draft through the post office or National Bank of Ireland at Banagher, while requesting that Pilch avoid particular local intermediaries. She also insists that the transaction be concealed from her children:

"I may with God's help be independent yet, and able to return the compliment, I do not wish to state to you, as I know you would feel it, the extent of my present

CONTINUED



16

1846 Irish Famine Letter from a Widowed Mother.

situation, notwithstanding if any of the Children were to know that I gave my consent to you to send it, they would be much displeased with me, so in your answer be cautious what you say on that head."

Lauder closes with expressions of gratitude to Pilch and his wife, sending affectionate greetings from her children and reiterating how much their friendship has meant during her difficulties. The letter records the early effects of the Famine on a family whose circumstances were already compromised by bereavement and legal uncertainty, and shows how personal connections across the Atlantic could offer both financial relief and a possible route to emigration.

[1] B. T. Pierson, *Directory of the City of Newark, for 1844–45* (Aaron Guest, 1844), 50.

[2] Cormac Ó'Gráda, "The Great Hunger 1845–1850," in *The Great Irish Famine* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 32–56.

[3] "Famine and Disease in Ireland," Hansard, House of Commons Debates, February 17, 1846, vol. 83, cols. 1059–1060, accessed October 30, 3036, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1846/feb/17/famine-and-disease-in-ireland.

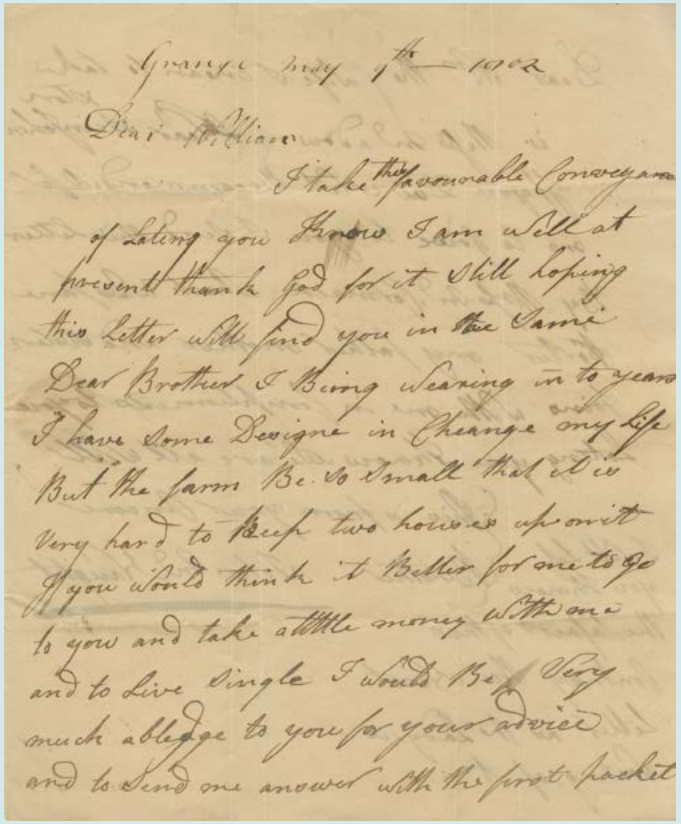
$950

17

[IRELAND - IMMIGRATION - PENNSYLVANIA - ATLANTIC TRADE] MCKNIGHT, WILLIAM; PATTON, JOHN; PATTON, FRANCES; ET AL.

"Coming from that World of Liberty, equality and independence": Archive of Family and Mercantile Correspondence between County Donegal and Pennsylvania, Documenting Irish Emigration, the Rebellion of 1798, and Transatlantic Trade, 1796–1841.

County Donegal, Ireland; Pennsylvania; South Carolina; and others: 1796 - 1841. 35 letters, one empty cover, and two manuscript receipts. Accompanied by a modern transcription. Generally very good to excellent.


Grange May 1th 1802

Dear William

I take this favourable Conveyance of Letting you Know I am well at present thank God for it Still Loping this Letter will find you in the Same Dear Brother I Being wearing in to years I have Some Designe in Cheange my Life But the farm Be So Small that it is very hard to Keep two houses upon it if you Sould think it Better for me to go to you and take a little money With me and to Live single I Would Be very much ablegge to you for your advice and to Send me answer with the first packet

William McKnight, also addressed as McNight, emigrated from County Donegal in the late eighteenth century and was established in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, by 1796. There, he worked as a storekeeper or for various stores, the first being the store of "Thomas Portter" at the "Chestnut Level meeting house" (June 25, 1796). His relatives in Ireland, several using the surname McNaught, remained at Grange in Burt and in neighboring communities. Offered here is a collection of letters written to McKnight from family, dating between 1796 and 1841.

The principal correspondent, McKnight's brother-in-law John Patton, was a brewer and farmer in Ramelton, married to William's sister Frances (or Francis). Their letters maintained a commercial relationship alongside an extended discussion of family affairs: whether to emigrate, how to provide for unmarried daughters, what obligations successful emigrants owed their relatives, and whether William should return to take over the family farm.

These letters were published privately by Gary T. Hawbaker as Dear William: Letters from Home (Hershey, Pennsylvania, 2008), together with a history of the McNaught family of Grange, Burt Paris (OCLC 294967621, locating ten copies), and entered the secondary market following Hawbaker's death in 2023. No copies of the book were available at the time of writing.

Patton's early letters connect emigration directly with conditions in Ireland in 1797–98, relating to the Irish Rebellion. In June 1797 he reported "New Depredations being Committed on Neighbours but on friends by

CONTINUED

Correspondence Archive of a Donegal Family.

the Armey," and asked whether he could continue his business in America (June 23, 1797). The following month he explained that his departure depended upon selling his leases and brewing apparatus, and persuading relatives to accompany him. "A great Deal of our Neighbours is going this season to your country," he wrote; his own brothers were already established in America, such as his "younger brother William" who "went over Las[t] July and is fixed in a Distant Neighbourhood from you" (July 4, 1797).

In a letter from June of 1798, Patton described reports of fighting around Antrim alongside his difficulties leaving Ireland:

"matters heer seem to turn out Very badly in the south they are got up against the Kings armey and terable to Relate great havock has tooke place, in the north as Neer us a Antrim town and Neighbourhood the insurgents are getting up there heads and always meets with Repuls and Loss – would to god I had gon to america Last year. But at this time I would not get one guinea for my Property which I should think will Detain me untill some Great event takes place". (June 15, 1798)

The same letter records a missed shipment when a vessel departed early, "takeing advantage of an imbargo Which Was Likely to take place." McKnight's uncles George and Robert McAdoo describe a country "exceeding scarce of provisions this year," with prices high due to being "full of the Army," and report that the "Government put a stop to the malting [...] on the account of the scarceness of grain" (July 28, 1800). In 1803 Patton reported preparations against a possible French invasion and the doubling of the local yeomanry corps:

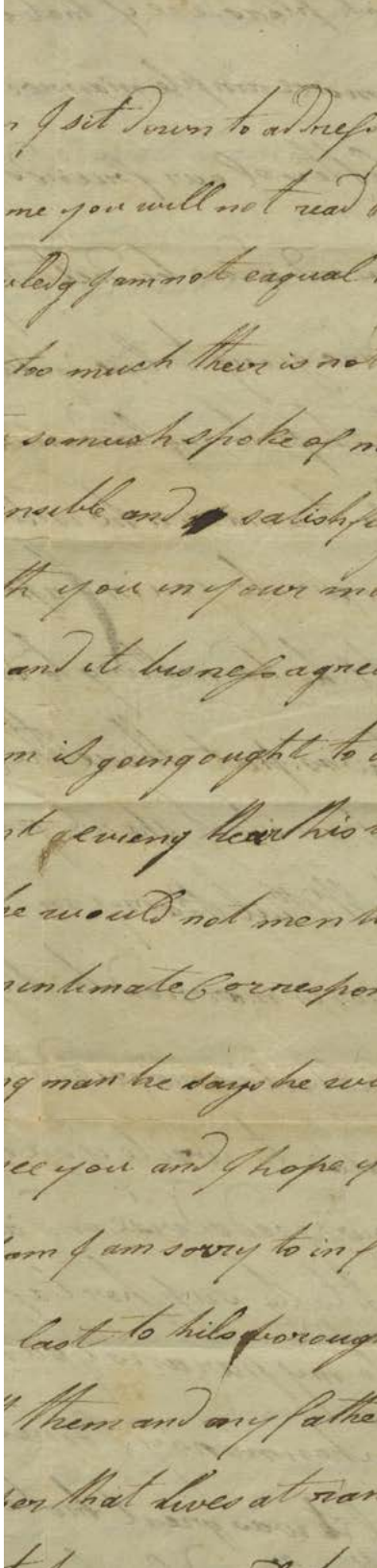
"in my opinion, Boneypart [sic] will strain ever nerve to get in amongst us. Great is the preparations making in both sides. Our core of yeomanry which was only 50 is augmented to 100 and Letterkenny more in proportion." (September 26, 1803)

Letterkenny appears both as a growing town and as a place exposed to sectarian confrontation. In 1802 Patton called it "the first town in the County Donegal," adding that "it's one half amended in building since you seen it" (June 24, 1802). An undated later letter attributes declining trade to conflict between Orange and Catholic parties, and describes preparations for an anticipated confrontation:

"The orange party I understand that was to be in L.K. last was to compose upwards of twenty thousand, the other was to have opposed them, which in my opinion would have been done had not a previous armament of ordinance, Cavalry & foot been sent to Letterkenny, Ramelton and Killmarenan, which has proved for our peace and quiet providentially useful. [...] We have at present the horse and men to feed, but well paid for it. Nothing else worth mentioning." (N.d.)

The commercial correspondence follows repeated consignments of wheel irons sent from Ireland for sale in America, with proceeds returned principally in flaxseed. Patton discusses prices, shipping opportunities, intermediaries, storage, and the relative desirability of New York seed. One shipment costing £4 10s in Ramelton produced a return of sixteen guineas and change, encouraging a larger investment (July 17, 1798).

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Correspondence Archive of a Donegal Family.

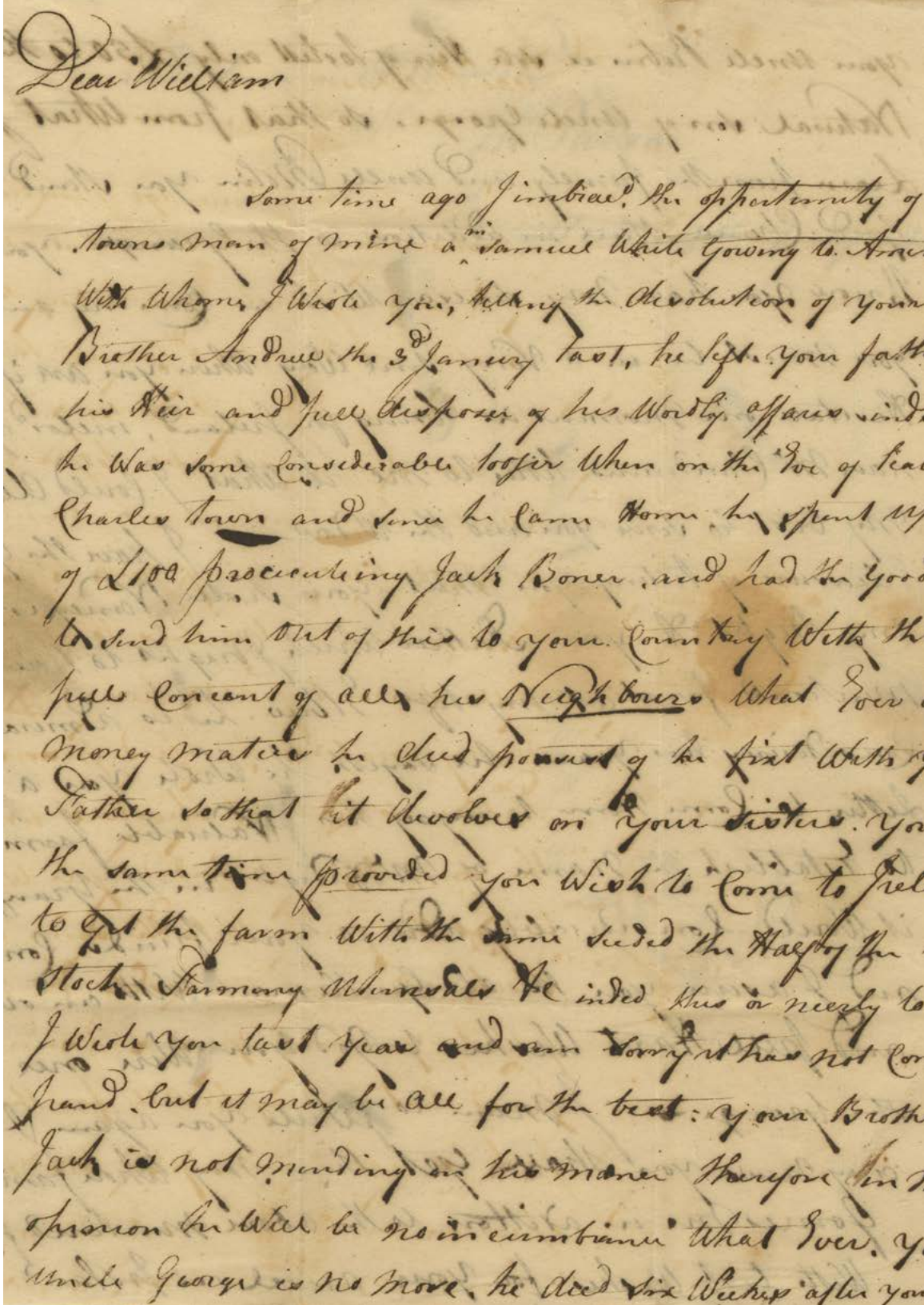
Subsequent letters record less satisfactory transactions, including seed held over for another season and merchandise appropriated by Patton's brother. William's surviving reply, dated Lancaster, January 6, 1802, acknowledges the latter loss and discusses disposing of irons through Philadelphia. Two accompanying manuscript accounts record quantities, duties, storage, and carriage expenses through Wilmington, Norfolk, and Philadelphia.

Other ventures included sending British halfpence to America for whatever they would bring, investigating staves and meal, and purchasing hops in Liverpool. Patton's request for Nankeen cloth recurs over several years without successful delivery. Frances sent shirts of her own manufacture, carefully distinguishing one of superior quality "for fear of any mistake in the receiving of them" (June 10, NY).

The letters continue to describe Patton's business into the next generation. By 1824 his son had taken over the brewing and malting while he worked a forty-acre farm. Increased competition and duties had reduced their profits:

"Times in this Country is getting very bad. Our trade at brewing is much failed on account of opposition. When I began brewing there was not a Brewer in Derry, now 2. In Straban none, now 2, in Lefford none, now one, all striving who does most and the one hurting the other as the damnable duties destroys and takes all we make." (June 10, 1824)

CONTINUED


Dear William

some time ago I imbraced the opportunity of
Towne man of mine a Samuel While Gowing to Ame
With whom I Wrote you, telling the decease of your
Brother Andrew the 3d January last, he left your fath
his Heir and full disposer of his Worldly affairs and
he Was some considerable losser When on the Voe of Sea
Charles Town and since he came Home he spent up
of £100 prosecuting Jack Bower and had the good
to send him out of this to your Country With the
full Consent of all his Neighbours What Ever
Money matters he died possessed of he first With
Father so that it devolves on your sisters. You
the same time provided you Wish to Come to Ire
to Let the farm With the same stocked the Half of the
Stock Farmery Whereby he indeed thus or nearly to
I Wrote you last Year and am Sorry it has not Co
hand but it may be all for the best: your Broth
Jack is not minding his Money therefore in
opinion he Will be no incumbrance What Ever. Y
Uncle George is no more, he died Six Weeks after you

Correspondence Archive of a Donegal Family.

Letters also served as introductions. In 1824 Patton recalled writing on behalf of an emigrating relative, explaining that he "painted the whole matter as much in his favour as the subject could admit," and read the letter aloud to the man and his father (June 10, 1824).

William's brother Andrew supplies a separate account of migration and return. He was living in Charleston, South Carolina, by 1800. Writing from there in July, he discouraged William from joining him:

"William, I can not advise you to come to Charleston as it [is] so mortal to newcomers. There was last summer upwards of six hundred died and mostly strangers. This place is getting so settled that it is hard at present to make money as in Lancaster." (July 20, 1800)

Andrew returned to Ireland in 1802, bringing 2,200 pounds of cotton and a quantity of rice to Liverpool. His financial assistance transformed the family's circumstances. After his death, their sister Ann recalled the reception he had received:

"Your dear Brother Andrew his coming home in the year of 1802 which raised us on a par with the first in the Country and if it was to be expected that there was a heaven on Earth, Andrew and us lived in it the week of his arrival. He paid a hundred and 6 pounds for his father and he said to the family he would spend Christmas night happy which we did and many days until it pleased God to remove him to himself the 3 of January last" (May 22, 1805)

Andrew's death in January 1805 prompted efforts to recover his house, furniture, and other property in Charleston, South Carolina. A further letter seeks information about a £750 consignment he had sent from Liverpool to Charleston, for which Patton could not locate the shipping documents (August 16, 1806).

The archive also mentions a separate family connection, this one in Charlestown, Virginia, now Charles Town, West Virginia: in 1798 Patton reported that "David is in Charlestown in Virginia America" and that another relative was keeping store with him there (June 15, 1798).

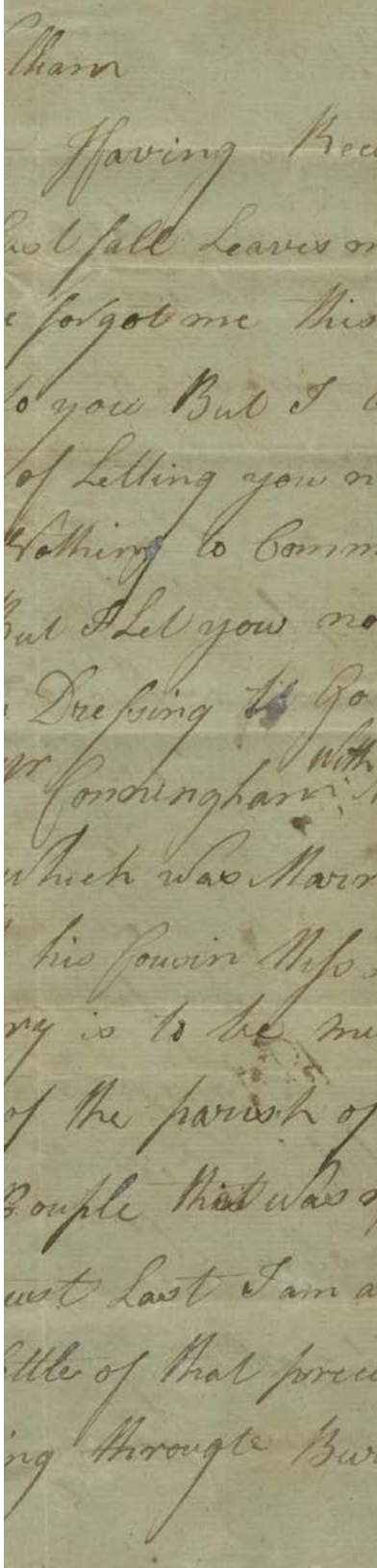
The women's letters provide some of the strongest social-history material in the archive. John Patton's account of Sally's childbirth outside marriage in 1800 reports a demand by the child's father for land or £50 as a condition of marriage, and the family's disapproval (August 2, 1800). Two years later, her sister Ann explained that the scandal had affected her own prospects and her willingness to remain in Ireland:

"I would like to go to America but intending not to give you or Andrew McNight any trouble. But I would like your advice before I go. I have my health very well, I thank God. I can sew very well and you may think I have got great trouble since you left the Grange that I would not like to live in this Country – if Sally had escaped the bad luck I would be in my own house, but my trouble was so great that I could have not the face to look up, for I was not in Ramelton or L'kenny since it happened". (May 12, 1802)

Ann expected to receive £50 from her father if she left Ireland. A few days before she wrote, her brother John had asked William for advice about a similar decision:

"I have some design in change my life, but the farm be

CONTINUED



17

Correspondence Archive of a Donegal Family.

so small that it is very hard to keep two houses up on it. If you would think it better for me to go to you and take a little money with me and to live single I would be very much obliged to you for your advice and to send me answer with the first packet." (May 9, 1802)

Both writers asked William to help them choose between specific prospects at home and an uncertain living abroad, but William's own circumstances were not always clear to his relatives. In 1802 Patton heard that he had left an employer, named in that letter as "Mr. Modawell," for a larger store (June 24, 1802). Subsequent letters asked about reports of financial losses. In 1804 Patton complained that William had "never in the least intimated to me your misfortune," nor "your present situation" at all, leaving the family without his side of the story (August 25, 1804).

By 1805, they were urging him to return to Ireland. Andrew's death had deprived his parents and sisters of financial support, while their brother John's drinking and conduct had made him an unwelcome successor at Grange; Ann writes that "he has defrauded the family, for give him one guinea in his pocket, he would not be sober while it would last" (May 22, 1805). Patton explained that William could take over the farm, with its crops already planted, half the livestock, and the farming implements. Writing with William's father beside him, he described the old man's wish that William return "to establish the name of McNaught in the Grange" (May 29, 1805).

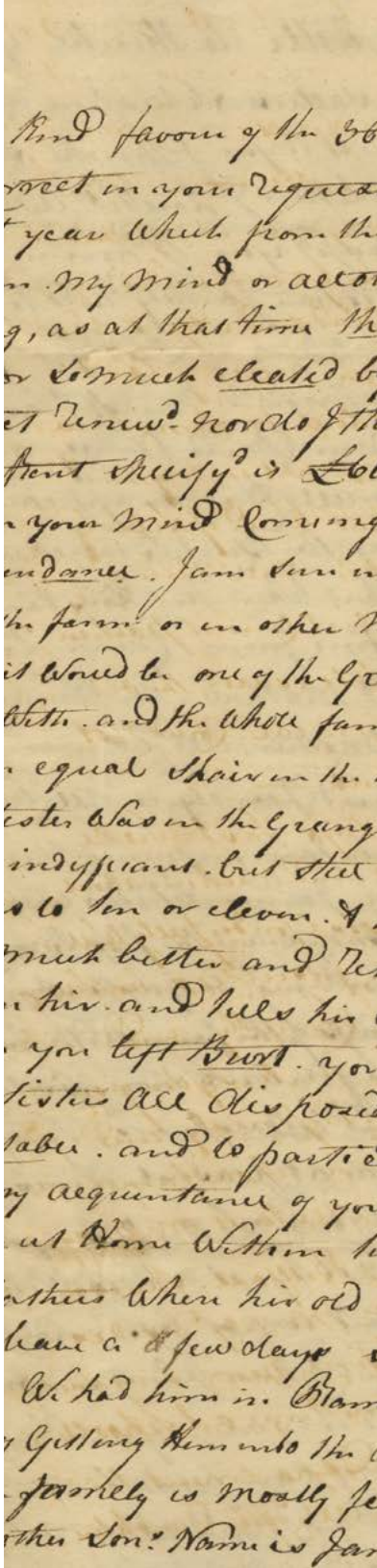
These appeals continued for years. In July 1810 Patton urged William to arrive before his parents died and to renew the farm's expiring lease. But the financial terms could work against the family's wishes; discussing a proposed annual rent of £60 in an undated letter, Patton acknowledged that returning might burden someone accustomed to American life: "it would only be a tax on your mind coming from that World of Liberty, equality and independence" (N.d.). By May 1812 William's father had died, and Patton was still asking him to come, despite it "being under the influence of [the] Landlord" (May 21, 1812).

In 1826 Frances complained that William had stopped answering the family's letters; a nephew wanted to go to America, but his widowed mother refused to write to William for help because "you were so ungrateful as not to write to her, she would not write to you" (July 20, 1826). Frances nevertheless urged him to visit:

"There is nothing would give us more pleasure I assure you than to see you in this Country. Therefore I hope you will take it to consideration, and write me your sentiments on the subject. There is only three of us now to come to see" (July 20, 1826).

Overall, an extensive correspondence of an Irish family divided between County Donegal and the United States, with particularly good material on emigration, family life, and transatlantic commerce in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The letters combine contemporary reports of conditions in Ireland with the practical details of maintaining a business and supporting relatives across the Atlantic. Contributions from several family members, including William's sisters, give the group breadth, documenting the circumstances of those who remained in Ireland as well as the opportunities and obligations of those who left.

$4,500



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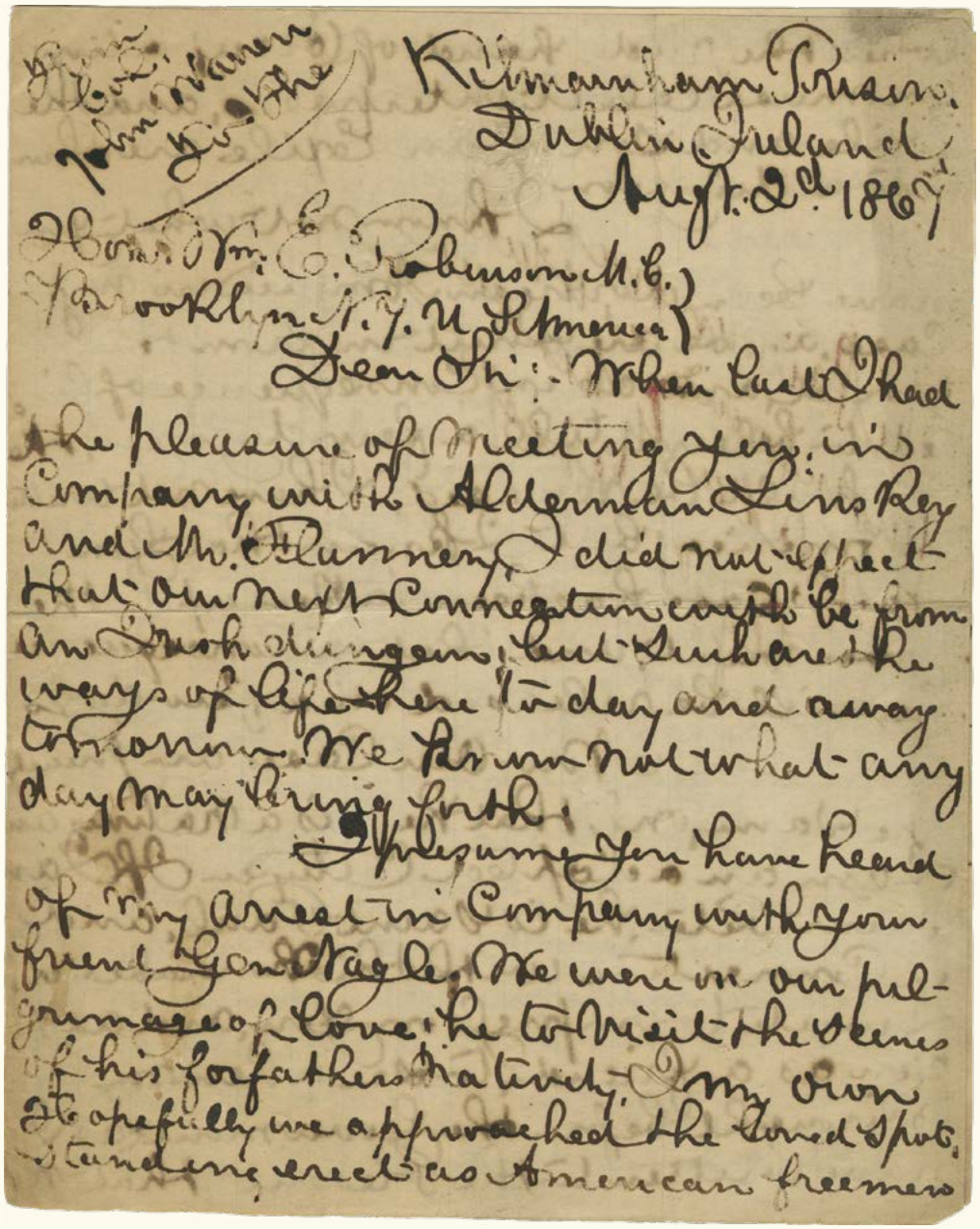
[IRISH-AMERICAN NATIONALISM - FENIANISM - EXPATRIATION ACT] WARREN, JOHN

Autograph Letter from Kilmainham Prison to Congressman William E. Robinson, by the Fenian Organizer and Co-Editor of 'The Fenian Spirit,' Demanding Equal Protection for Naturalized American Citizens.

Kilmainham Prison, Dublin: August 2, 1867. Autograph letter signed "J. Warren," four pages on a single folded sheet. Docketed at head, with additional red-ink annotations in another hand. Old folds, toning, scattered staining, and variable ink fading.

An historically significant prison letter from John Warren, the Massachusetts Fenian organizer, former Union officer, and co-editor of *The Fenian Spirit*, to Congressman William E. Robinson of Brooklyn, demanding that naturalized Americans receive the same protection abroad as native-born citizens. Arrested in Ireland following the failed *Erin's Hope* expedition, Warren challenged Britain's refusal to recognize that his American naturalization had ended his allegiance to the Crown—a distinction separating his case from that of his American-born fellow prisoner, William Nagle. His 1867 trial would bring this conflict directly before the courts. Here, before those proceedings, Warren directs his appeal to an Irish-born congressman who would help secure the Expatriation Act of 1868, affirming the right to change national allegiance and equal American protection abroad for naturalized citizens.

CONTINUED



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Letter from Kilmainham Prison Demanding Equal Protections.

Warren (1834–1895), a native of Clonakilty, County Cork, emigrated to Boston in 1853 and served as a captain in the 63rd New York Infantry of the Irish Brigade. By 1863 he headed the Fenians in Massachusetts; in 1864 John O'Mahony appointed him organizer for New England. In August 1864 Warren and Peter O'Neill Larkin launched *The Fenian Spirit*. As Lucy E. Salyer documents, the paper printed emigrant notices, Irish history, and patriotic poetry with practical lessons in military tactics and fortification.[1] Its masthead displayed a phoenix, harp, and cannon, and its international sympathies extended to Polish insurgents and the Māori of New Zealand. The editors denounced inactive patriots and rebuked Irish Americans absorbed in pleasure and amusement. Warren's prescription, quoted by Salyer, was uncompromising: "Let your logic be made of lead, let your orators be cannon [...] make bonfires of your petitions."[2]

His organizing also extended to the immediate needs of immigrants. In March 1864, according to the Boston Pilot account discussed by Charlestown historian Ed Callahan, Warren helped secure lodging for newly arrived Dubliners caught up in an alleged recruiting fraud. Promised employment and free passage, the men had instead been pressured to enlist by agents seeking military bounties. When they were turned out of a Charlestown warehouse, Warren arranged accommodation among neighboring Irish families.[3]

In April 1867 Warren sailed from New York with approximately forty Fenians aboard the *Jacmel*, renamed *Erin's Hope* during the Atlantic crossing, in an attempt to reinforce the Irish rising. The vessel carried thousands of firearms. The expedition failed to land its arms, and Warren was arrested after going ashore near Dungarvin.[4] Writing from Kilmainham two months later, he describes his arrest alongside Nagle:

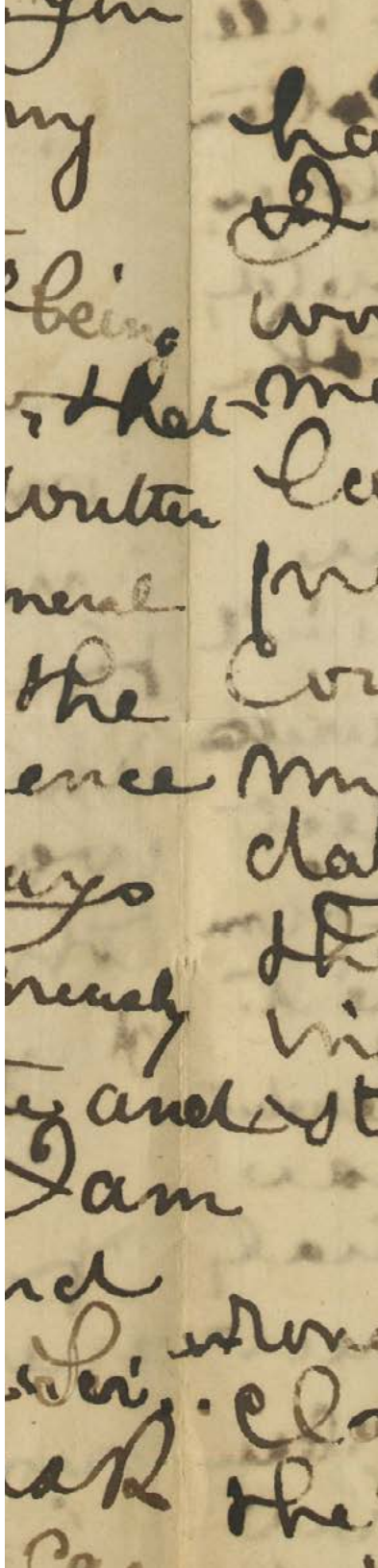
"I presume you have heard of my arrest in company with your friend Gen. Nagle. We were on our pilgrimage of love: he to visit the scenes of his forefathers' nativity, & my own. Hopefully we approached the loved spot, standing erect as American freemen, when the rude hand of (occupation we must call it) interposed, and the Exile and Son of an Exile are thrown into a dungeon."

Robinson, an Irish-born journalist and lawyer who had entered Congress that March, was a sympathetic recipient: he had already seconded a congressional resolution supporting the Fenian rebellion. Warren had heard that the government was pursuing Nagle's release and asks Robinson to ensure that his naturalization would not leave him at a disadvantage:

"Now our cases are nearly the same, only that he is a native and I am an adopted citizen. If I am Saint Peter, he is Saint Paul, and in connection with this, honorable Sir, I write to impress on you, and ask you as a friend, to see when my case is brought before the Government, as I have written to the President, that no invidious distinction is made between the adopted and native citizen, and that England's doctrine 'once a citizen and for ever a citizen' does not prevail."

The consequences of this distinction would become explicit at Warren's trial, when his request for a jury composed partly of foreigners was rejected on the ground that his American naturalization had not extinguished his British allegiance.[4] In the present

CONTINUED



Letter from Kilmainham Prison Demanding Equal Protections.

letter, he insists that his imprisonment undermined the United States' authority to confer citizenship:

"My case Hon Sir is a peculiarly hard one. I am no wild enthusiast. I am a practical man and mean work, and it does not pay to keep me idle. I have violated no English law. My ambition is the obeying and protecting the laws of my adopted country. I have been in America since my boyhood, and was arrested a few days after my landing here. It is plain they hold me for opinions expressed in America, and ignore the United States rights to confer citizenship.

There is something seriously wrong here. England should renounce her claim upon naturalized citizens of the United States, or be compelled to, or the United States should acknowledge that right and let us see where we stand and be prepared for it."

The sarcasm becomes sharper as he contrasts leisurely diplomatic exchanges over the Alabama and cotton claims with the condition of imprisoned soldiers:

"It may be an agreeable pastime with the officials of the State department, to coquet with the officials of the Foreign Secretary's office at this side [...] but it wont do for old soldiers who escaped the bullet in the field, but who are fast giving way to the starvation bullet in the prison."

He concludes with specific instructions for securing support in Washington:

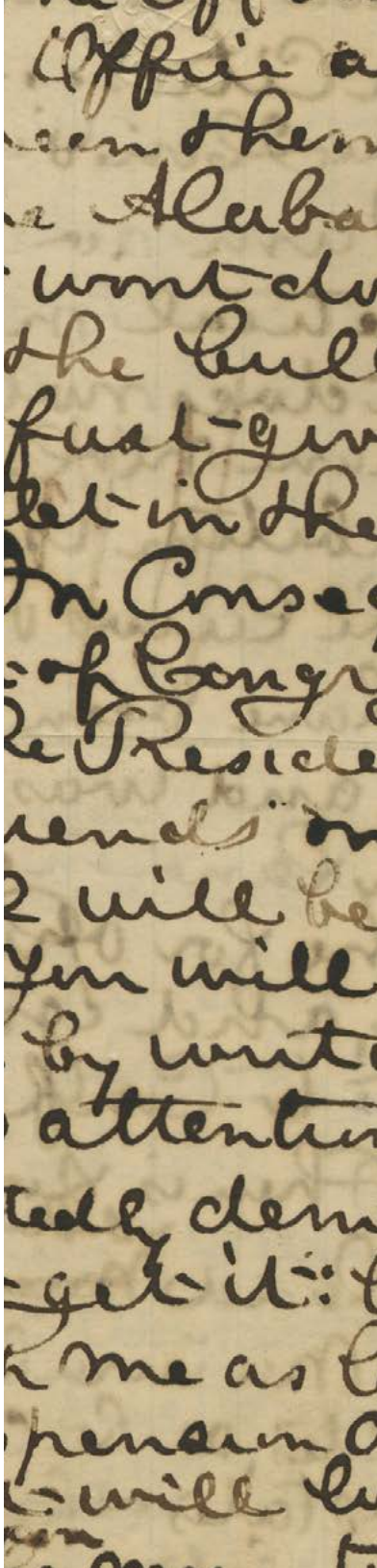
"In consequence of the adjournment of Congress my case will be urged on the President. I have written to several friends on the subject. A memorial will be presented from Boston, and you will confer a great favor on me by writing to the President and calling his attention to my case. I have repeatedly demanded a trial, and will not get it; but they expect they can keep me as long as they please under the 'Suspension Act' and that my Government will look coolly on at me dying in a dungeon in the mean time."

On August 3, the following day, Warren dated an appeal directly to President Andrew Johnson, subsequently published in the American diplomatic correspondence.[5] His trial later that year resulted in a sentence of fifteen years' penal servitude. Robinson became an important advocate of the expatriation legislation passed on July 27, 1868, which asserted the right to change national allegiance and expressly guaranteed naturalized Americans abroad the protection accorded to native-born citizens in comparable circumstances[6]—the distinction Warren had asked him to confront in this letter.

Warren was released in March 1869. Crowds and bands welcomed him back to Clonakilty along a road illuminated by burning barrels of tar. His wife Joanna and daughter Eliza had died during his imprisonment.[7]

[1] Lucy E. Salyer, "The Fenian Spirit of John Warren," *Conakilty Historical & Archaeological Journal* 2 (2017): 1–27.
[2] Salyer, "Fenian Spirit," 9.
[3] Ed Callahan, "John Warren – The Fenian Brotherhood & 'Paddy's Lamentation," *Charlestown Patriot-Bridge*, March 10, 2011.
[4] Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs, Accompanying the Annual Message of the President to the Third

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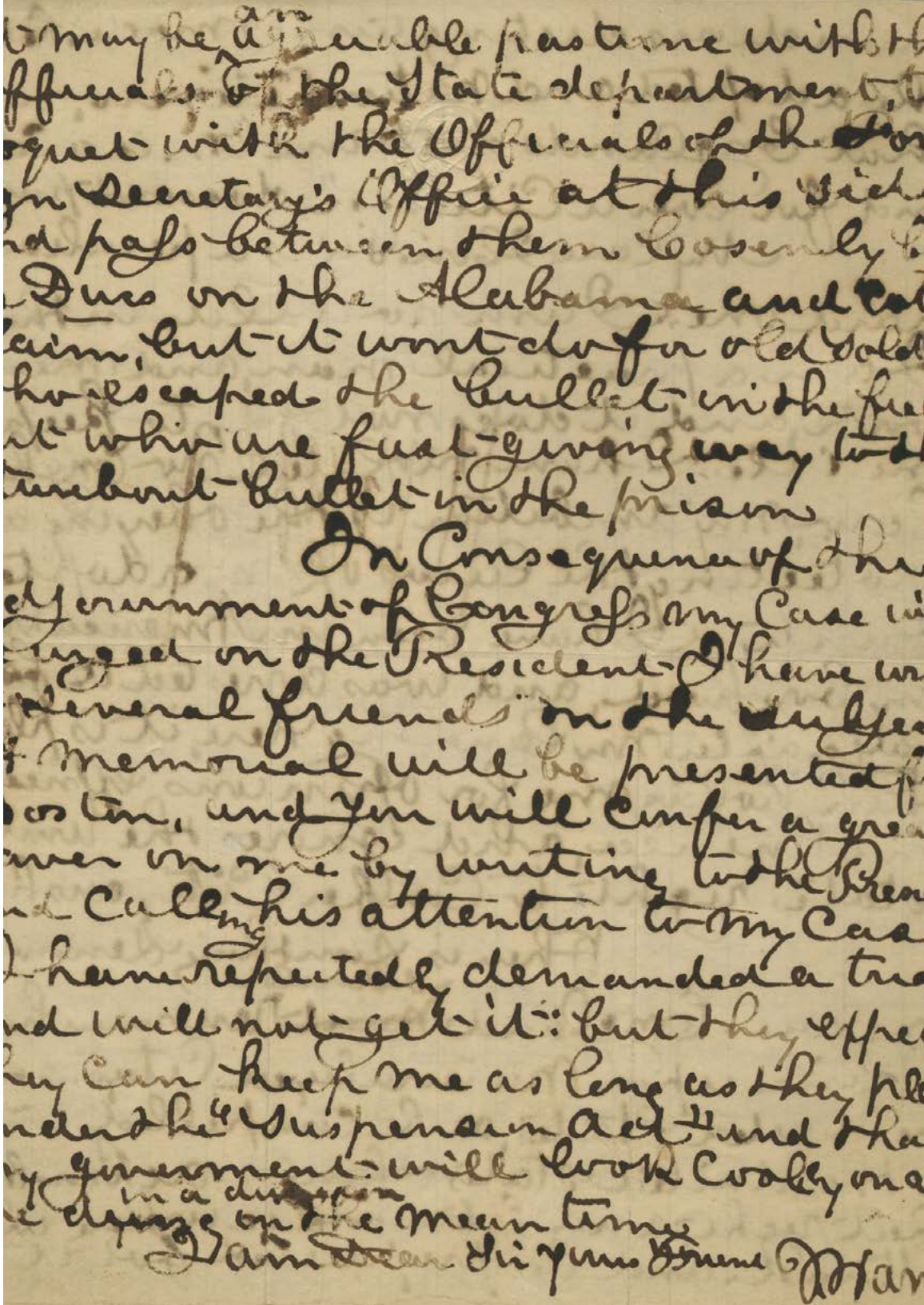


18

Letter from Kilmainham Prison Demanding Equal Protections.

Session of the Fortieth Congress, Part I, Document 11, accessed October 12, 2026, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1868p1/d11.
[5] "Letter to the President," Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs.
[6] Bridget Hourican, "Robinson, William Erigena," Dictionary of Irish Biography, accessed October 12, 2026, https://www.dib.ie/biography/robinson-william-erigena-a7739.
[7] Salyer, "Fenian Spirit," 16.

$3,750



19

[KENTUCKY - CONFEDERATE GUERRILLAS - U.S. COLORED TROOPS - MILITARY JUSTICE] OFFICERS OF THE LOUISVILLE MILITARY PRISON

Petition to Major General John M. Palmer Requesting Commutation of the Death Sentence of Samuel O. "One-Armed" Berry, Notorious Kentucky Confederate Guerrilla.

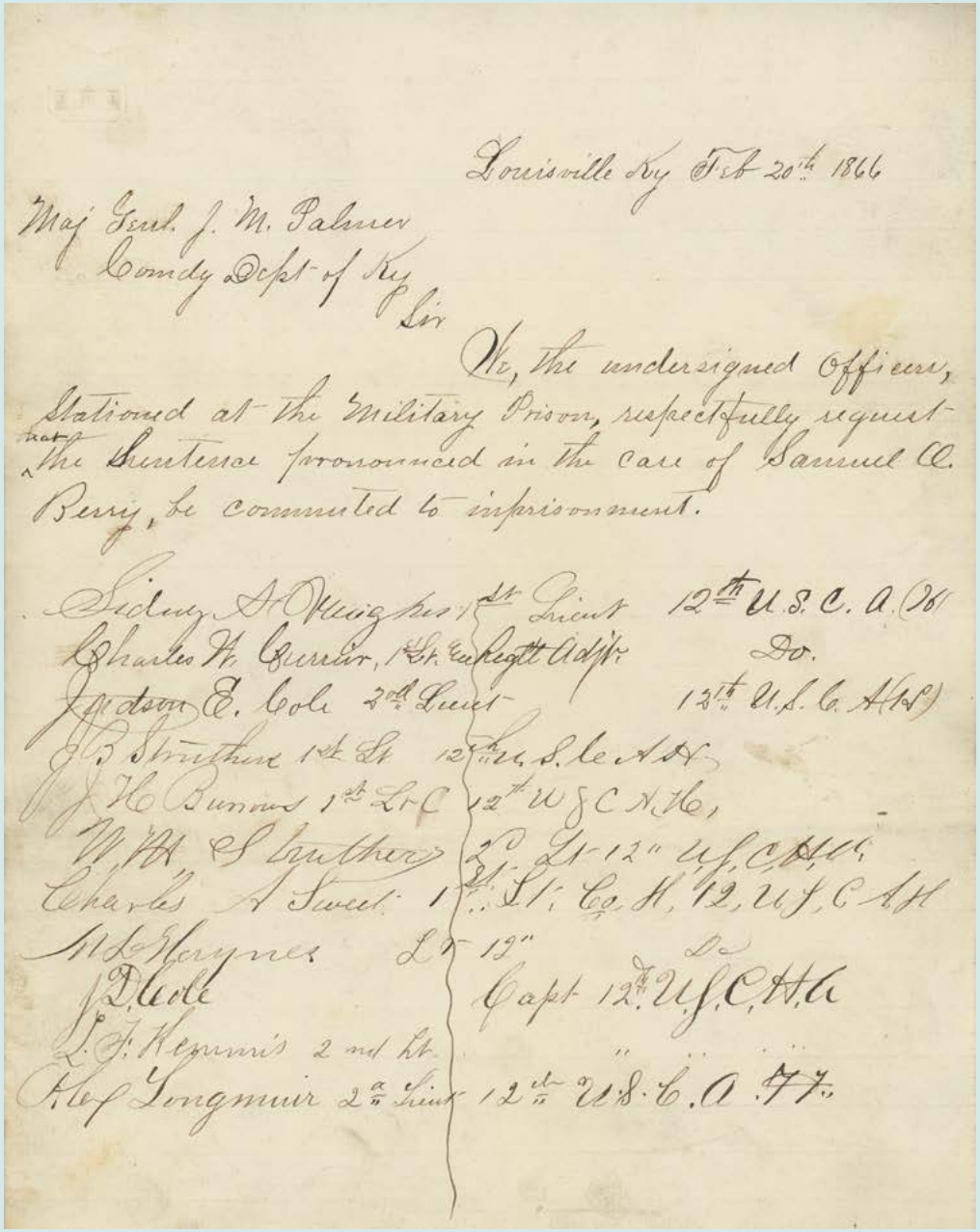
Louisville, Kentucky: February 20, 1866. Manuscript document, one leaf, signed by eleven officers stationed at the Louisville Military Prison, principally officers of the 12th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery.

An unusual Reconstruction-era military document concerning Samuel Oscar "One-Armed" Berry, the notorious Kentucky Confederate guerrilla associated with Marcellus Jerome Clarke, better known as "Sue Mundy." Written after Berry had been convicted by military commission and sentenced to death, the document petitions Major General John M. Palmer, appointed commander of the Department of Kentucky in 1865, for commutation of his sentence:

"Louisville Ky Feb 20th 1866
Major Genl. J. M. Palmer
Comdg Dept of Ky
Sir

We, the undersigned Officers, stationed at the Military Prison, respectfully request the sentence pronounced in the case of Samuel O. Berry, be

CONTINUED



Louisville Ky Feb 20th 1866

Maj Genl. J. M. Palmer
Comdg Dept of Ky
Sir

We, the undersigned Officers, Stationed at the Military Prison, respectfully request the Sentence pronounced in the case of Samuel O. Berry, be commuted to imprisonment.

Sidney A. Wing 1st Lieut 12th U.S.C.A. (H)
Charles H. Currier, 1st Lieut & Actg Adjt Do.
Judson E. Cole 2nd Lieut 12th U.S.C.A. (H)
J. Struthers 1st Lt 12th U.S.C.A.
J. H. Burnes 1st Lt C 12th U.S.C.A.
W. H. S. Luther 2d Lt 12th U.S.C.A.
Charles A. Sweet 1st Lt Co. H, 12, U.S.C.A.H
M. L. Haynes Lt 12th Do
P. Cole Capt 12th U.S.C.A.H.A.
L. F. Kenny's 2 nd Lt " "
Chas Longmuir 2d Lieut 12th U.S.C.A.

19

USCT Petition to Commute the Death Sentence of "One-Armed" Berry.

commuted to imprisonment."

The petition is followed by the signatures of eleven officers, most identifying themselves with the 12th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery, then stationed in Kentucky.

Berry's path to guerrilla warfare was curious. Orphaned as a child, he was brought to the Shaker community at Pleasant Hill in 1845 at age nine and remained there intermittently for roughly a decade, repeatedly running away before finally leaving the community. During the war, Berry and his guerrilla band would return to the vicinity of Pleasant Hill and rob a Shaker stagecoach.[1] The Kentucky Historical Society's Civil War Governors of Kentucky biography of Berry identifies him as operating with Clarke, Henry C. Magruder, Isaiah Coalter, and others in central Kentucky during 1864 and 1865; he was captured by troops of the 2nd U.S. Infantry in Nelson County in December 1865.[2]

Berry's postwar activities had included violence against Black soldiers. In May 1865 he attacked a detachment of African American troops in Bardstown, after which he disappeared; he and his men are possibly also responsible for the killing of four recently discharged African American soldiers that October.[3]

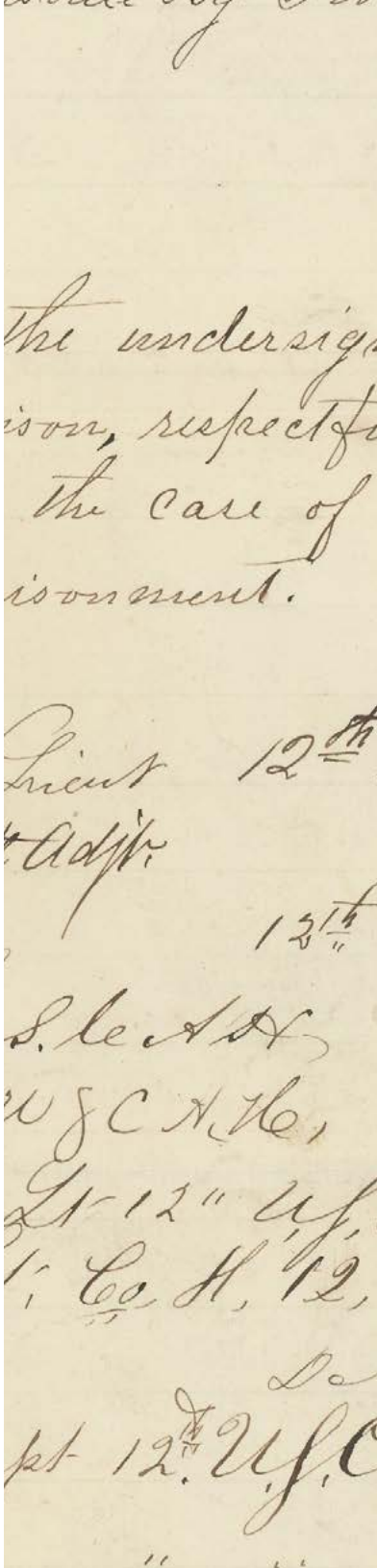
Berry and his men apparently planned to rob and kill their way to Mexico.[3] However, Berry was apprehended in December near Bloomfield, and his military commission convened at Louisville on January 13, 1866. He was charged with more than fourteen murders, six robberies, and two rapes of Black women; he was acquitted of the rape charges but convicted of eleven of the murders and one of the robberies and was sentenced to death. The sentence was subsequently commuted to hard labor, to be served in Albany, New York, where Berry died in 1873.

The identities of the petitioners add particular interest. The 12th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery was organized at Camp Nelson in July 1864 and was the largest of the USCT regiments formed there, with 1,418 enlisted men. Its African American soldiers performed garrison duty and guarded the Louisville & Nashville Railroad and other strategic points in Kentucky, mustering out in April of 1866, two months after the present petition.

The document thus directly connects the prosecution of one of Kentucky's best-known Confederate guerrillas, charged with a laundry list of violent acts against Black civilians, with officers of a Black Union regiment whose soldiers had themselves likely confronted guerrilla violence in the state.

[1] Julia Raimondi, "Sam Berry, the One-Armed Outlaw," Village@Work, Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, accessed September 4, 2026, https://blog.shakervillageky.org/sam-berry-the-one-armed-outlaw/.
[2] "Samuel Oscar Berry," *Civil War Governors of Kentucky Digital Documentary Edition*, accessed September 4, 2026, https://discovery.civilwargovernors.org/document/S32203185.
[3] James M. Prichard, "Darkness Before Dawn: The War's Closing Days," *Kentucky Humanities* (Fall 2013):32–35.

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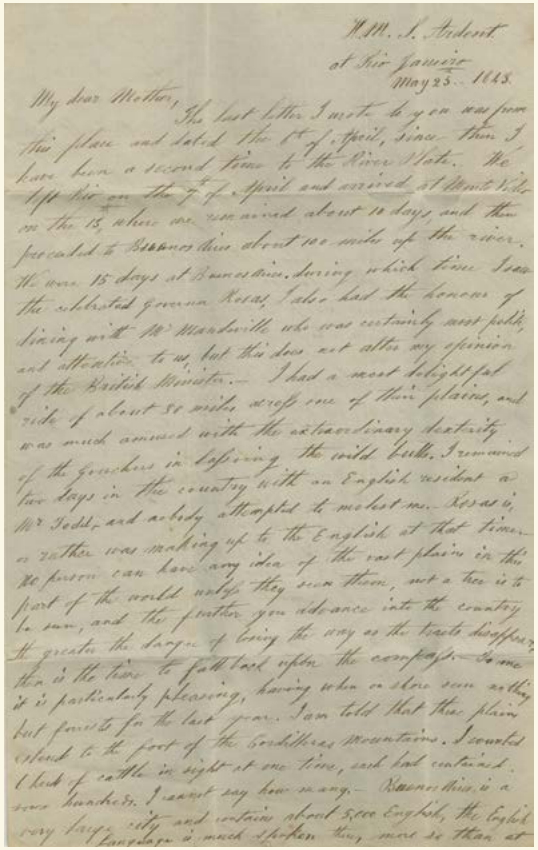


20

[LATIN AMERICA - ARGENTINA - URUGUAY - BRITISH NAVAL HISTORY] BAKER, HENRY

"We should turn Rosas out to a certainty": An 1843 Letter on Juan Manuel de Rosas, the Siege of Montevideo, and British Intervention in the River Plate.

Rio de Janeiro, aboard H.M.S. 'Ardent': May 25, 1843. Autograph letter signed, addressed to Mrs. Baker at Maldon Hall, Maldon, Essex. Single leaf with text on three pages, fine condition.



A substantial letter from a British naval surgeon to his mother, written following visits to Montevideo and Buenos Aires during the opening months of the siege of Montevideo. Baker describes an excursion into the pampas and the British community in Buenos Aires, reports the killing of prisoners by the opposing forces, and anticipates a war in which the British squadron might remove Juan Manuel de Rosas from power.

The siege had begun in February 1843, when Manuel Oribe's forces, supported by Rosas, advanced on Montevideo. British naval assistance helped keep the city supplied, drawing the squadron into a conflict that involved both Uruguay's rival political factions and the government of Buenos Aires. Baker's letter records a naval observer's expectations of intervention two years before the Anglo-French blockade of Buenos Aires.

Baker had spent fifteen days at Buenos Aires, where he saw Rosas and dined with the British minister, John Henry Mandeville. Although Mandeville was "most polite, and attentive to us," the hospitality did not alter Baker's unfavorable opinion of the minister. An excursion into the countryside brought him into contact with an English resident, Mr. Todd, with whom he stayed for two days. He admired the "extraordinary dexterity of the Gouchers [gauchos] in lassoing the wild bulls" and found the open country a welcome change from the forests he had encountered during the preceding year:

"No person can have any idea of the vast plains in this part of the world unless they see them, not a tree is to be seen, and the further you advance into the country the greater the danger of losing the way as the tracts disappear, then is the time to fall back upon the compass. To me it is particularly pleasing, having when on shore seen nothing but forrests for the last year. I am

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1843 British Surgeon's Letter from the Uruguayan Civil War.

told that these plains extend to the foot of the Cordilleras Mountains. I counted 6 herds of cattle in sight at one time, each herd contained some hundreds."

He estimated the English population of Buenos Aires at 5,000 and observed that English was more widely spoken there than at either Montevideo or Rio. His own movements had been unimpeded, a circumstance he associated with Rosas's efforts to cultivate the English. Elsewhere, however, the war continued with considerable violence. Sending his father further newspapers from Montevideo, he reported:

"It is no exaggeration about Oriba's people cutting the throats of their prisoners. There is a Col. Franks or Francis, who is not satisfied at seeing it done, but lends a hand himself. Rivera's people occasionally retaliate, but not so bad."

Baker also noted that Rosas and Oribe described the inhabitants of Montevideo, and the British assisting them, as "savage Unitarians." The expression referred to political opponents of Rosas's Federalist regime, although Baker admitted that he had not learned its meaning. He was particularly struck by its application to Commodore Purvis, whom he regarded as a kindly and benevolent man.

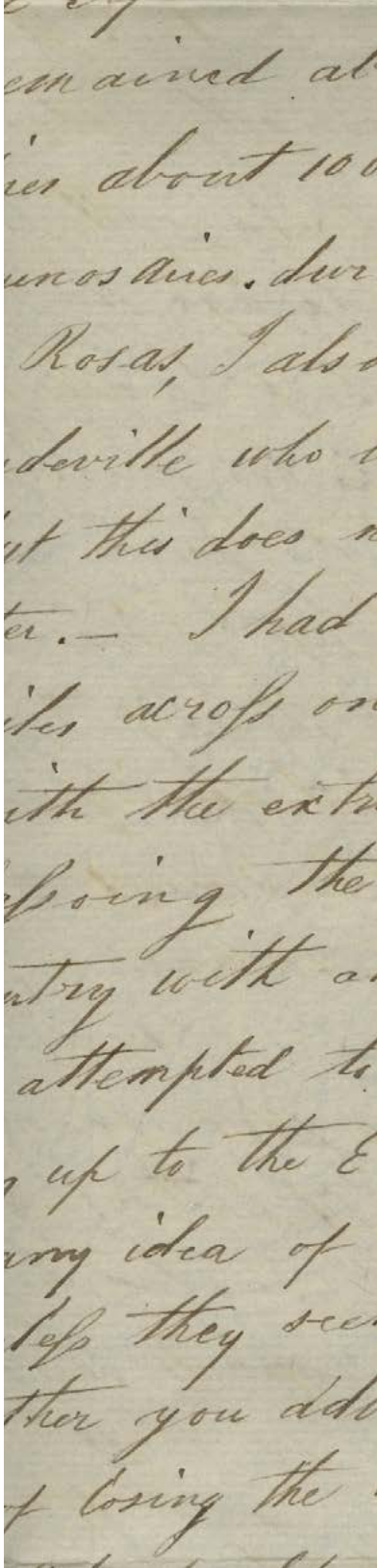
His confidence in British naval power was unequivocal: "It is thought that Rosas will declare war against England on account of the interference of the Commodore, should he do so it will be a capital thing for Buenos Aires, as it can never prosper under so bad a government, and we should turn Rosas out to a certainty, without any extra force from England."

The prospect of intervention was accompanied by observations of disrupted civilian life. Baker described houses and grounds falling into ruin after their proprietors had fled in fear of being killed. At Montevideo he met an emigrant from the Basque provinces who owned 2,000 cattle near Buenos Aires and employed numerous gauchos, but had received no news of either for more than nine months.

The letter closes with the practical frustrations of the deployment. Ardent had reached Rio hours after the home mails departed for Montevideo, and Baker warned his mother against sending further parcels after one containing a diary had been lost. The ship was coaling for its return, while its boilers were showing the effects of repeated steaming: the engineer said they "weep a little," a condition sailors more plainly called a leak. Baker also mentioned the annual journal due to Sir William Burnett.

Baker was the son of Benjamin Baker, a surgeon of Maldon, Essex. His entry in Venn's *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College* records his admission in 1828, qualification as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1833, and subsequent service as a Royal Navy surgeon. Published in part in "Letters from the 'Ardent,'" The Mainsheet, no. 49 (1988), pp. 18–20, together with extracts from two other Baker letters. The article identifies the letters as belonging to the collection of Derek Bolton.

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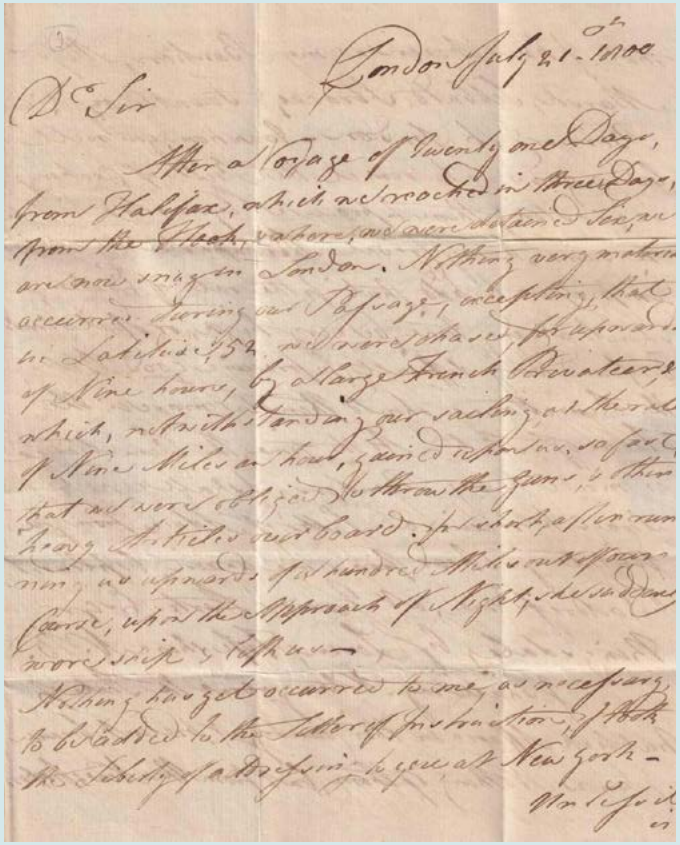


21

[MARITIME HISTORY - PRIVATEERING - FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY WARS - WILLIAM COBBETT] ROBERTSON, JOHN STARK

Letter Describing a Nine-Hour Pursuit by a French Privateer during an Atlantic Passage Shared with William Cobbett, 1800.

London: July 21, 1800. Autograph letter signed "J. Stark Robertson," three pages, with integral address panel addressed to James Morris, Esq., "High Sheriff," New York. Red London paid datestamp of July 22 and manuscript postal notations. Old folds, with some separations reinforced; seal losses affecting a few words near the close of the letter; light toning.



A firsthand account of a nine-hour pursuit by a French privateer during an Atlantic crossing in the summer of 1800, written by the Scottish physician John Stark Robertson to James Morris, high sheriff of New York. Robertson and his wife, Susanna, had recently arrived in London after sailing from New York by way of Halifax. Their vessel can be identified as the *Lady Arabella*, the packet that also carried the political writer William Cobbett and his family back to Britain. The identification is supported by Susanna Robertson's letter to her aunt, written from London on the same date. She describes the same pursuit and the disposal of the guns, and names the journalist "Peter Porcupine," William Cobbett, among their fellow passengers.[1]

Robertson opens with an account of their passage:

"After a Voyage of Twenty one Days, from Halifax, which we reached in three Days, from the Hook, where we were detain'd six, we are now snug in London. Nothing very material occurred during our Passage, excepting, that in Latitude 52, we were chased for upwards of Nine hours, by a large French Privateer, which, notwithstanding our sailing at the rate of Nine Miles an hour, gained upon us, so fast, that we were obliged to throw the Guns, & other heavy Articles over board. In short, after running us upwards of a hundred Miles out of our Course, upon the Approach of Night, she suddenly wore ship & left us.—"

Cobbett's own letter from Falmouth on July 8 identifies the *Lady Arabella*. A report in The Times of July 8, reproduced in Edward Smith's biography of Cobbett, records the packet's arrival at Falmouth on July 4 and the

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1800 Letter Describing an Atlantic Chase by a French Privateer.

jettisoning of guns and other material during a chase.[2] Cobbett is not named in the present letter; his presence aboard the vessel is established by these parallel accounts.

Robertson had left financial instructions with Morris before sailing. Related letters from Robertson to Morris concerning New York landholdings survive in the Rutherfurd Family Papers at the New York Historical.[3] Here he designates Marsh, Sibbald, Stracey & Fauntleroy, at 6 Berners Street, as his London bankers, asking Morris to remit bills of exchange for collection and credit to his account. He provides an alternative if exchange becomes expensive or reliable bills difficult to obtain:

"Perhaps it may not be improper to add, that if the rate of Exchange should at any time, be very high, or if it should be found very difficult to procure good Bills, the Remittance should then be made in the form of Stock. – At the time, the Remittance is made to my Bankers, I shall expect always to receive a Letter of Advice from you."

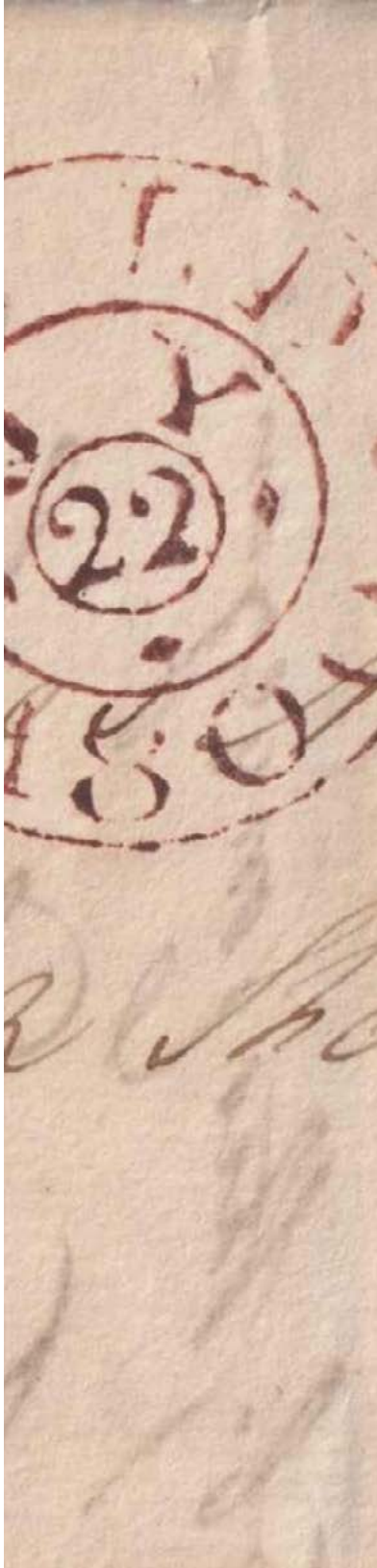
Robertson declines to comment on public affairs, explaining that his knowledge extends no further than newspapers available to his correspondent; this may be related to the Anglo-French war, as he comments on his experience of scarcity in London:

"I am sorry to say, however, because I already feel it, that Scarcity prevails here more than I believed, or even imagined when in America. – A good Crop, of which, there is at present, a great prospect, will partially remedy this Evil, as a general Peace, of which, it is said, there is some prospect, will, I hope, completely remove it. – in the mean time, it is distressing."

Robertson's account documents the hazards of wartime Atlantic travel alongside the practical business of transferring funds from America and the scarcity he encountered in Britain. It also supplies a fellow passenger's perspective on the Lady Arabella's escape during the voyage that brought William Cobbett back to Britain.

[1] Livingston Rutherford, *Family Records and Events* (De Vinne Press, 1894), 339–340.
[2] Edward Smith, *William Cobbett: A Biography*, Vol. I, digitized by Project Gutenberg, accessed October 27, 2026, https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/49844/pg49844-images.html.
[3] Guide to the Rutherfurd Family Papers 1721–1879, The New York Historical, accessed October 27, 2026, https://findingaids.library.nyu.edu/nyhs/ms532_rutherfurd_family/all/.

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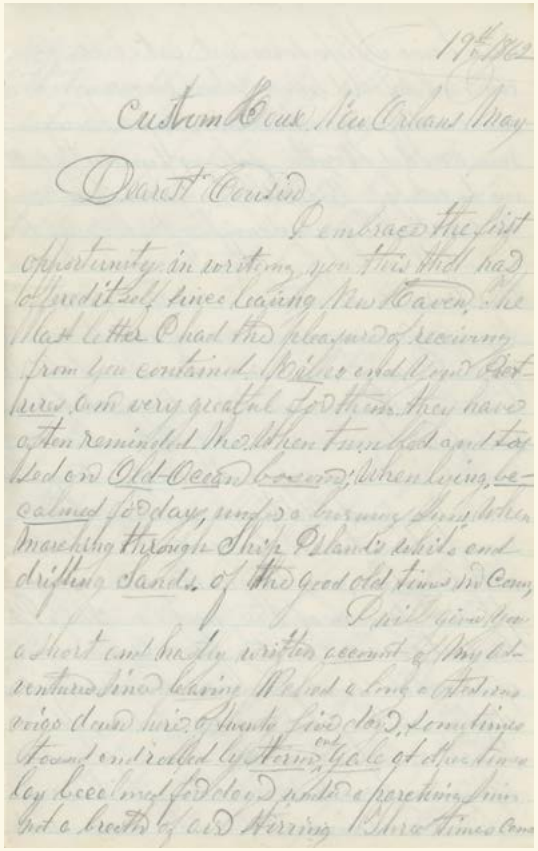


22

[NEW ORLEANS - CIVIL WAR - BUTLER'S "WOMAN ORDER"] PERKINS, NEWTON WILLIAM

Union Soldier's Vivid Letter from Occupied New Orleans, Written Four Days After Butler's "Woman Order," Describing Its Immediate Effect on the Women of the City, the Passage of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, Civilian Hunger, and the Destruction of Cotton.

New Orleans: May 19, 1862. Autograph letter signed "Newton," four closely written pages on a folded sheet, addressed from the Custom House in New Orleans to his cousin Emma A. Leach of Litchfield, Connecticut. With original stamped envelope. Folded with light handling wear and soiling; very good.



A highly detailed Union soldier's letter from the opening weeks of the occupation of New Orleans, written from the Custom House just four days after Benjamin Butler issued his notorious General Order No. 28, the "Woman Order." Corporal Newton William Perkins of Company A, 13th Connecticut Infantry, describes the regiment's difficult voyage south, its encampment at Ship Island, passage through the recently captured defenses at Forts Jackson and St. Philip, and triumphant entrance into New Orleans, before turning to conditions under occupation: hostility from the city's women, widespread hunger among the poor and crowds seeking Federal food relief, the withdrawal of Confederate forces into the interior and their destruction of cotton along the way.

Perkins begins with the twenty-five-day voyage from New Haven, during which the crowded troop transport endured storms, sickness, poor provisions, and six deaths at sea. After several weeks drilling on the white sands of Ship Island, the regiment embarked for the Mississippi and proceeded upriver through the defenses below New Orleans. Perkins describes Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip in the immediate aftermath of Farragut's campaign and gives particular attention to the Confederate obstruction stretched across the river, describing "A chain made of several large and small chains twisted and hammered together forming a single chain as large as a man's body."

He relates that a deserter from the fort had revealed where the chain was shackled together, without which, Perkins believed, the Federal fleet "should not have

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Union Soldier Letter on Butler's "Woman Order."

obtained such an easy victory." Passing the forts, the soldiers continued through the plantation country, where Perkins observed sugar plantations, steam-powered sugar mills, and orange groves along the river.

The regiment entered New Orleans with its band playing "Yankee Doodle," finding the landing "thronged with people of every nation, kindred and tongue." After initially quartering in a cotton shed formerly occupied by Confederate soldiers, Perkins and his comrades marched in full uniform to the immense unfinished granite Custom House, where his company occupied the sixth story and performed guard duty overlooking the city and river.

His description of relations between Federal troops and the women of New Orleans is particularly significant. Perkins writes:

"When our troops first entered the city insult was offered them on every side and by the ladies. Gen. Butler has issued orders which have checked this, and they now stand in great fear of us. The young ladies cast their eyes at us when we pass them, but offer no insult."

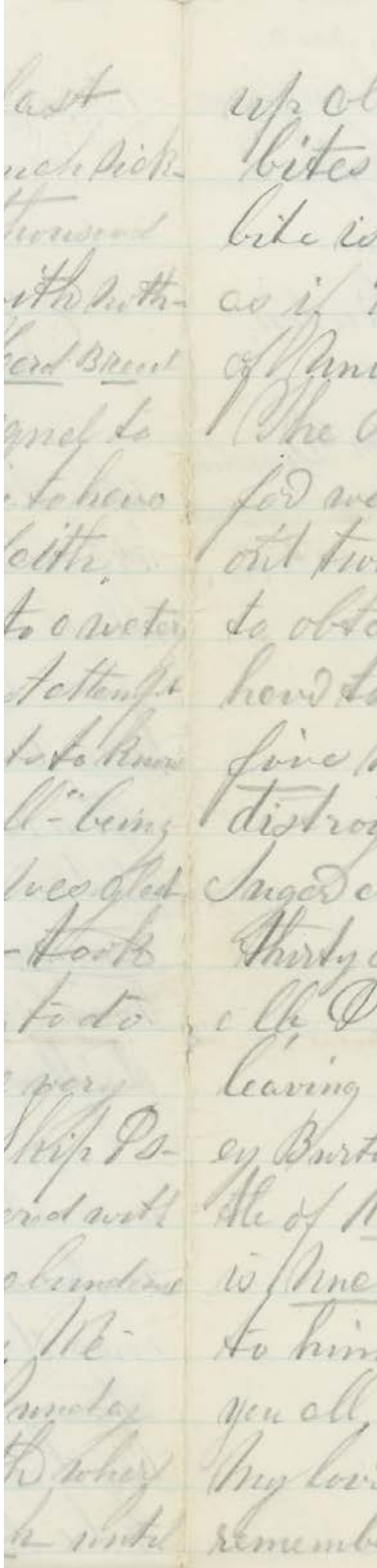
Perkins was writing on May 19, only four days after Butler issued General Order No. 28 in response to what he termed the "repeated insults from the women" of New Orleans toward Federal officers and soldiers. The notorious order declared that a woman who insulted or showed contempt for a Union soldier could thereafter be treated as "a woman of the town plying her avocation." Perkins's letter provides the immediate perspective of an enlisted soldier on the order's practical effect: the insults he had witnessed upon the army's arrival had, he believed, been "checked."

Conditions among the city's poorer inhabitants were equally striking. Perkins reports that the "poor classes have suffered greatly for want of food," and describes Federal troops distributing provisions twice weekly to enormous crowds: "Thousands rush to obtain food and [...] bayonets have to be used to keep them back." On the same day Perkins wrote, Butler issued General Order No. 30, declaring that "great distress, privation, suffering, hunger, and even starvation" had been brought upon the population of New Orleans, in part through the collapse of Confederate currency and the actions of local banks.

Perkins also reports that "Five million dollars worth of Cotton [was] destroyed by the Rebels when they left," records contemporary prices for flour and coffee, notes that sugar and molasses were cheap, and observes that Union men were enlisting in New Orleans as the Confederate Army retreated. He closes by asking after family and friends in Connecticut and joking that he might "buy a plantation and settle down here when the war is over."

A rich letter from the first weeks of Federal New Orleans, providing an eyewitness account of the aftermath of Farragut's campaign and life under Butler's controversial occupation. Most notably, Perkins records the apparent effect of the "Woman Order" only four days after its issuance while simultaneously describing the severe civilian hunger that Butler addressed in another general order that very day. Much of Perkins's wartime correspondence is preserved with the Montgomery Family Papers at the Library of Congress.

$1,750



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[OREGON - CALIFORNIA - EDUCATION] SHARP, WILLIAM H.; SHARP, MARY; EWING, NELLIE E.; CHAPMAN, C.W.; ET AL.

“Prof. called me a jackass”: Diary and Letters of William H. Sharp, A Student at California Military Academy.

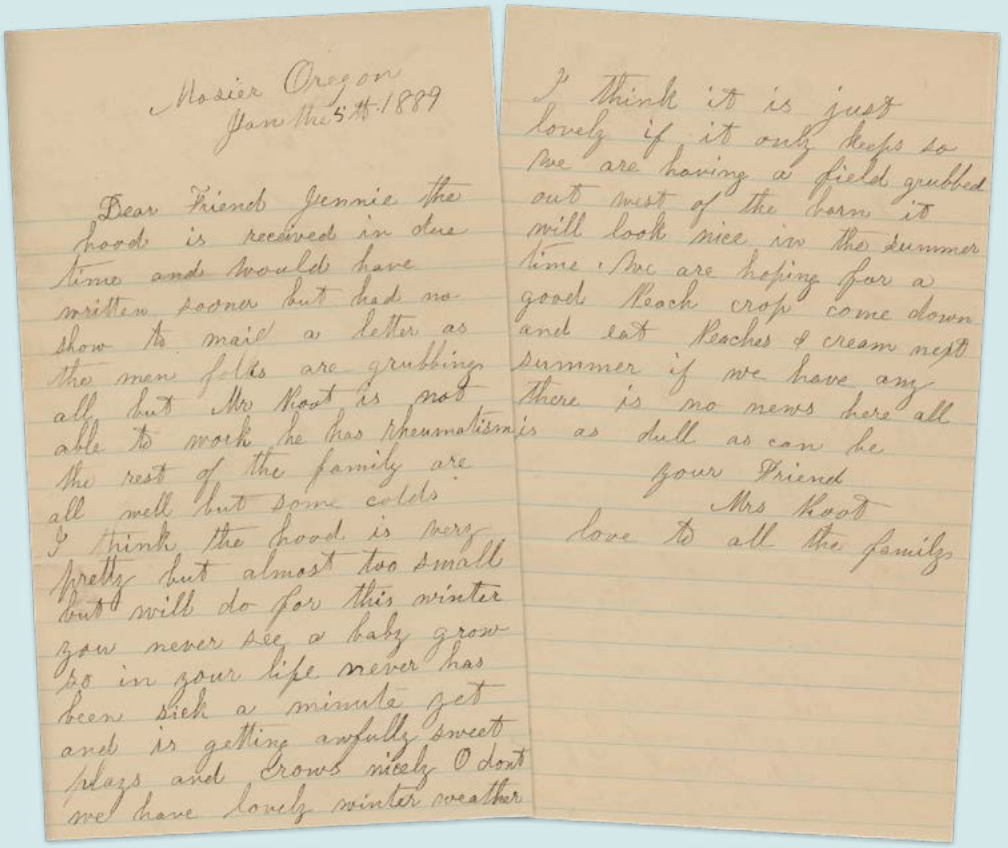
California, Oregon, Iowa, and New York: 1817 - 1889. 67 items: 62 letters, mainly dating from 1887 (eleven letters), 1888 (nineteen letters), and 1889 (fourteen letters); three playbills from the CMA Dramatic Club; and two diaries dating from Jan 1 - Sept 4 1882 and Sept 5 - Dec 27 1882, totaling about 14,000 words. Overall excellent.

William H. Sharp (1863–deceased) was born in Washington and lived in The Dalles, Oregon. He attended the California Military Academy in Oakland from 1880 to 1883 and then returned to The Dalles. There, he worked as a commission merchant and ran for county clerk.

Offered here is a collection of letters mainly to, with some from, William Sharp, with two of his diaries covering the year 1882. The letters are from friends and family—Sharp had many cousins with whom he corresponded regularly—and cover his time at the California Military Academy (CMA) and back in The Dalles.

The CMA was founded in 1865 by Rev. David McClure, and combined college preparatory education with military drills, including firearm training, with the aim to “give the youth of the remote West an opportunity to acquire an education such as could not otherwise be obtained.”[1] His attendance put a financial strain on the family; his mother, Mary Sharp, reminds him that “we have to scrach

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Mosier Oregon
Jan the 5th 1889

Dear Friend Jennie the hood is received in due time and would have written sooner but had no show to mail a letter as the men folks are grubbing all but Mr Root is not able to work he has rheumatism the rest of the family are all well but some colds I think the hood is very pretty but almost too small but will do for this winter you never see a baby grow so in your life never has been sick a minute yet and is getting awfully sweet plays and Grows nicely O don't we have lovely winter weather I think it is just lovely if it only keeps so we are having a field grubbed out west of the barn it will look nice in the summer time. We are hoping for a good Peach crop come down and eat Peaches & cream next summer if we have any there is no news here all is as dull as can be

Your Friend
Mrs Root

love to all the family

Letters and Diary of a California Military Academy Student, 1880s.

hard to keep you at school" as she scolds him for his poor performance (April 8, 1882). Mary Sharp also worried about conditions at the Academy:

"Willie I hope you will be kind to all new comers & comfort them all you can I read of two boys being killed by ill treatment at boarding schools, one they took out of a warm bed & pumped cold water on him in a cold night untill he died the other they tied a [?] & triped him so he fell [?] hurt his head & killed him I hope the boys do not play such tricks at your school". (November 12, 1880)

The CMA promised not to admit any boys who were "morally bad, as the institution is not designed to reform vicious boys".[1] However, a letter from C.W. Chapman, Sharp's friend and former roommate, suggests that the school's rigorous drilling was not necessarily successful. Chapman writes from Nevada City, a mining town in central California:

"I'm working hard as usual; but I expect you don't care anything about that. I'm having lots of fun too, if that interests you. You don't know one half as many girls as I go to see every evening. And they are the kind of girls that you can have fun with too. [...] I am making up for lost time. [...] I haven't had my fingers in anybody else's pie yet, and maybe I haven't had them in anybody's anything else either. But that's some more trash. [...] How do you fellows treat the little dears now? I hope you don't deal with them as harshly as you did when I was down there." (January 10, 1883)

The two diaries agree with Chapman that the environment was a good deal more lax than the school's literature let on. Besides near-nightly pranks and pillow fights that often caused the beds to break, Sharp frequently describes giving other students a "thrashing" and even has a girl visitor, Laura, who stays the night in his room regularly:

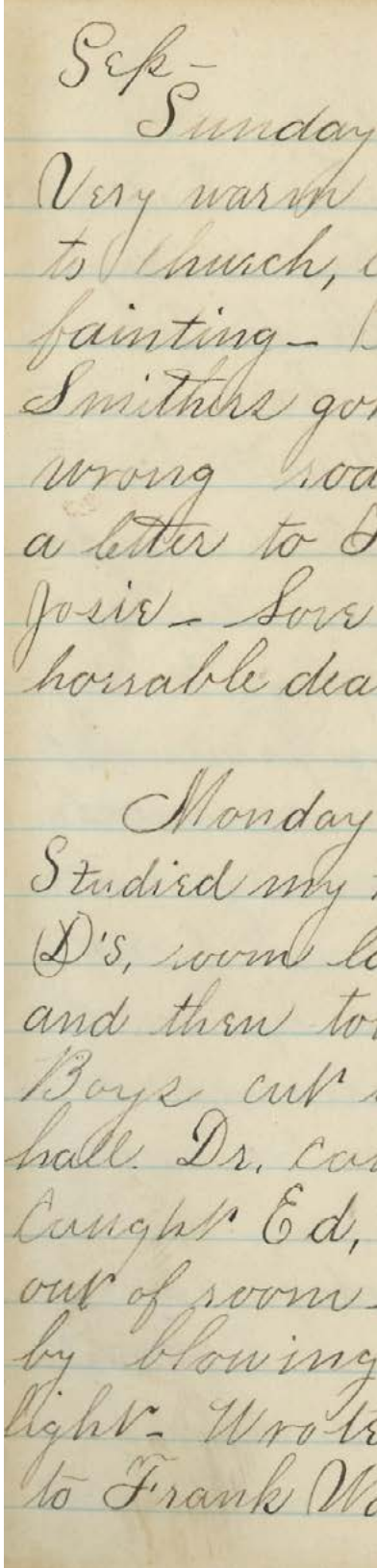
"Slept with Laura again. Fine time. Hardin got caught" (February 22); "Rained all night. Laura staid in our room" (March 14); "In D's room last night. [...] Teased Laura and gave her a good spanking" (August 2); "Laura came in and slept all night with me" (August 27).

In an April entry, he mentions having "Pulled Laura out of her room last night," suggesting that she lived on campus—perhaps a family member of one of the professors or staff—or that she was a resident of a nearby neighborhood.

Of course, the boys are disciplined, with Sharp often mentioning fellow students being "arrested" (likely put in detention) or expelled, including a row between "the republican boys" and "the democrat boys" leading to "60 under arrest" and a lecture (October 20). However, the faculty sometimes put disciplinary matters into the students' hands:

"The fellows that lied at prayers wouldn't own up, and no one could get till they did. We got permission to make them. We tried to persuade them at first, but couldn't see through it. Dakan had a dagger. We were going to take it away and make him confess. Most of the fellows were afraid. I nearly had a fight with him before dinner. After dinner we threatened to thrash him if he refused to own up. He said he would go and own up if the others would [...] after dark Dakan and Dodge ran away. Some of us ran after them and caught Dakan in a grocery store. Only

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Letters and Diary of a California Military Academy Student, 1880s.

three went up to him. The others were afraid. We brought him back and made him confess. Dodge came back afterwards" (January 20)

In the middle of that year, the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed; a fixation on Chinese immigrants runs throughout Sharp's diary. It seems that the CMA employed Chinese workers in the cafeteria, as Sharp mentions "Chinaman's hair in pudding" (April 25), that "The chinaman is getting to[o] fresh at the table wants knocking down" (August 2), and that "Chinaman are getting funny, won't give us enough to eat" (October 7). Sharp even "Dreamed I was a chinaman. There being too many in the country, they tried to drown me" (January 29).

Of the coursework, Sharp generally reports that lessons are good, poor, or difficult, focusing more on the—on his telling—sometimes odd behavior of the professors: "Prof. Bowers called himself a chinaman" (January 6); "Prof. called me a jackass" (March 14); "Prof. taken for a yankee by a yankee" (July 21).

Later letters are mainly between Sharp and his wife-to-be, Jennie Booth. He mentions attending a temperance meeting, updates her on business, which is "not overly brisk" but "good enough" (October 6, 1888), and describes hiring a "mongolian" cook who is "a very fair specimen of the celestial race" (October 5, 1887). Booth describes Oregon City on a visit there as "very picturesque" but primitive: "it has only one street that is passable the rest are so rocky that you can't get over them with a conveyance." (August 17, 1888).

Around this time, Sharp runs for county clerk as a Republican; a W.T. McPhire writes from Mosier:

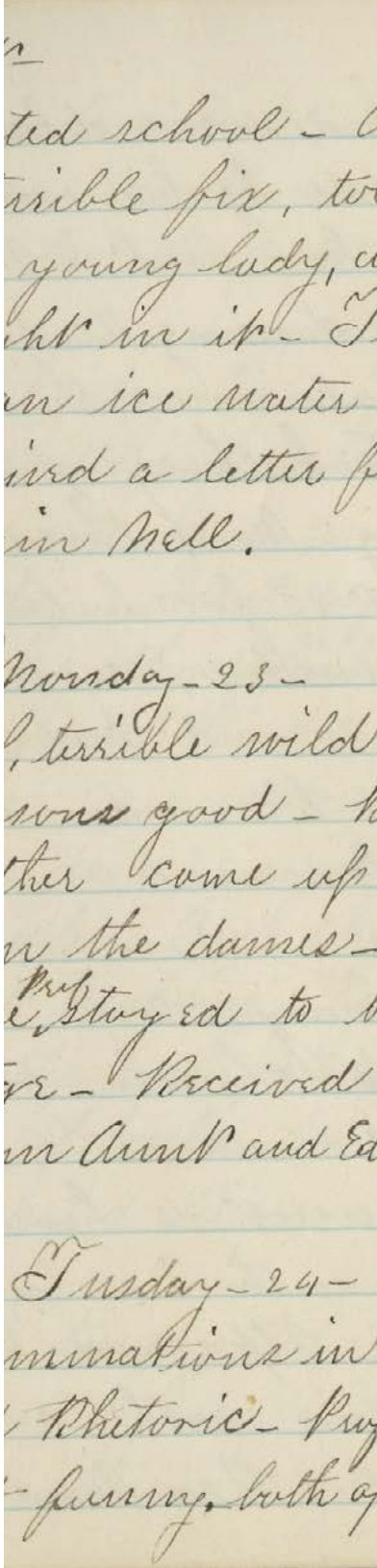
"I am glad to know you are in the field for the clerkship, which as you state is a very desirable office. Now I can and will say this much, (although opposing you in politics) that if you receive the nomination for this office against any one in my party that is not an honest sober and industrious man, I will willingly do all in my power to help elect you to the office." (March 12, 1888)

Despite this bipartisan support, Sharp lost to a man named Thompson. Sharp and Booth married and lived together in The Dalles, and Sharp remained in his career as a farmer and merchant.

Of interest to scholars of Oregon history and of 19th-century military education.

[1] "California Military Academy," *Mariposa Gazette*, June 30, 1887, 4.

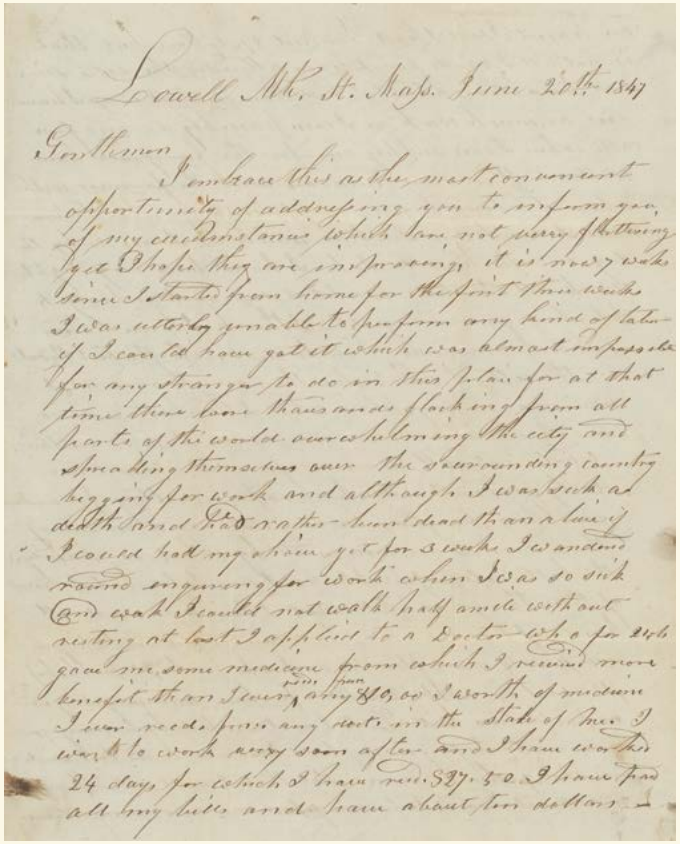
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[POOR RELIEF - FAMILY SEPARATION - LOWELL - LABOR HISTORY] STAPLES, DANIEL

An 1847 Letter from a Destitute Maine Father Attempting to Reestablish Himself in Lowell, Asking Town Officials to Care for His Children but "Dont Bind Them Out in Temple."

Lowell, Massachusetts: June 20, 1847. Autograph letter signed "D. Staple[s]," four densely written pages, with extensive additional writing in the margins. Docketed "July 1st Ans'd P.M." Old folds, scattered staining and marginal wear, overall very good.



Lowell Mch. St. Mass. June 20th 1847

Gentlemen

I embrace this as the most convenient opportunity of addressing you to inform you of my circumstances which has not been flattering yet I hope they are improving it is now 7 weeks since I started from home for the first three weeks I was utterly unable to perform any kind of labor if I could have got it which was almost impossible for any stranger to do in this place for at that time there were thousands flocking from all parts of the world overwhelming the city and spreading themselves over the surrounding country begging for work and although I was sick and did not care whether I lived or died rather than a slave if I could get my chain off for 3 weeks I was and round enquiring for work when I was so sick I can walk I could not walk half a mile without resting at last I applied to a Doctor who for 24/6 gave me some medicine from which I received more benefit than I ever [illegible] any $40.00 worth of medicine I ever received from any doctor in the State of Me. I went to work very soon after and I have worked 24 days for which I have rec. $27.50 I have paid all my bills and have about ten dollars

wife Mary in 1845 and Daniel's own death in 1853.[1] This matches the three names appearing in the letter, with the adult Mary apparently accompanying her father to Lowell while Robert and Susan remained in Maine.

The letter appears to have been written to Temple's selectmen or overseers of the poor. Under Maine's Revised Statutes then in force, towns were responsible for the care of their poor; where separate overseers were not chosen, the selectmen acted in that capacity. Among the powers specifically granted to overseers was the authority to bind out the minor children of paupers as apprentices. The law also authorized them to investigate the treatment of such children and, in certain circumstances, bind them out again. Staples's language thus refers to a specific and immediate legal possibility.

CONTINUED

1847 Letter from a Destitute Father in Lowell.

His circumstances before leaving Temple had evidently been severe. Staples reminds the officials of their assistance during a period in which he had been incapable of caring for himself and in which other townspeople were apparently calling for harsher treatment of him. Particularly striking is his insistence that, despite his condition, he understood the difficult position in which the officials had found themselves:

"I tender you my sincere thanks for your very kind treatment to me last winter and spring when I was in a state that I could not help myself and all nature seemd to frown upon me and every citizen in town were barking at you like so many hell hounds to take a defferent course with me I was not so mentally deranged but what I knew the difficult situation you were in and again I tender you my profound regards for your kind treatment."

Seven weeks before writing, Staples had left Temple for Massachusetts in an effort to support himself. His arrival coincided with the enormous movement of Irish famine immigrants into the industrial cities of New England. Lowell's Irish population was expanding rapidly during precisely these years, with poor immigrants drawn by the availability of factory and unskilled work. Staples describes the effect from the perspective of an impoverished Yankee laborer competing in the same market:

"for the first three weeks I was utterly unable to perform any kind of labor if I could have got it which was almost impossible for any stranger to do in this place for at that time there were thousands flocking from all parts of the world overwhelming the city and spreading themselves over the sourounding country begging for work."

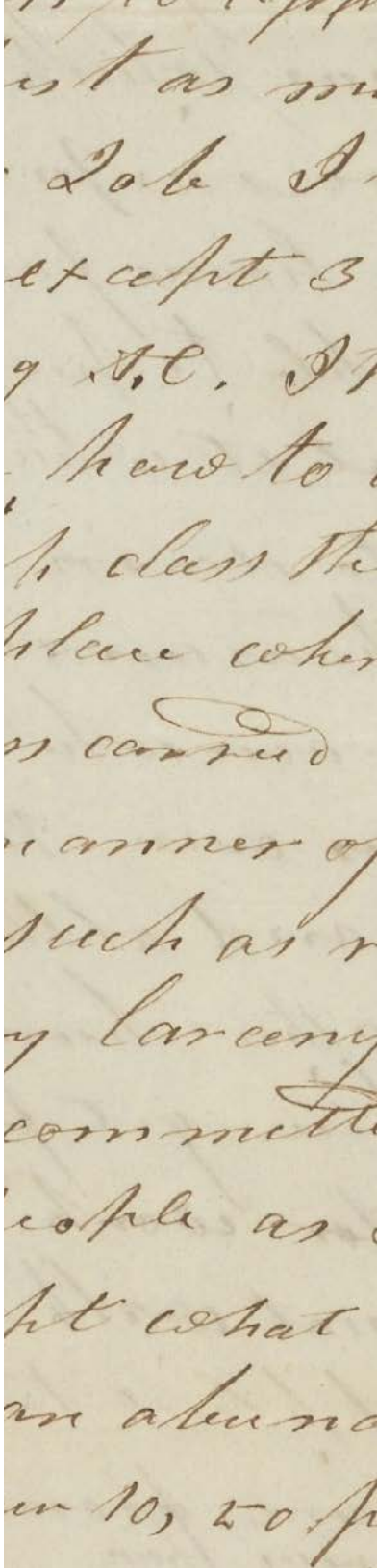
Staples himself was extremely ill: "I was sick at death," he writes, "and had rather been dead than alive if I could had my choise," yet for three weeks he continued wandering in search of employment despite being unable to walk half a mile without stopping. A doctor eventually gave him twenty-five cents' worth of medicine which, Staples claimed, benefited him more than ten dollars' worth of treatment he had received in Maine.

His situation had changed considerably by the date of the letter. He had worked twenty-four days and earned $27.50, while making approximately another ten dollars by "attend[ing] the sales." After paying his bills he had ten dollars remaining. He had also developed several sources of employment:

"I have now as much work as I can possibly do and five calls where I can supply one for the foreigners have scattered off in some measure and the farmers with whom I labour begin to appreciate yankee labour and I can have Just as much as I can do by the day month hour or Job."

The remark offers a direct working-class view of competition between New England laborers and newly arrived immigrants during the famine migration. Staples was not himself comfortably established: he had arrived sick, nearly penniless and dependent upon casual work, yet immediately interpreted the crowded labor market through a distinction between "foreigners" and "yankee labour." Lowell sources confirm both the rapid growth of the Irish population during the 1840s and the resulting transformation of the city's labor force.

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1847 Letter from a Destitute Father in Lowell.

Staples also gives a granular account of working-class subsistence. His labor consisted principally of "hoing & planting gardening &c." He paid $2.50 per month for a room, bought little meat, and calculated that bread was cheaper than fuel for baking. Provisions were plentiful but expensive: flour at $10.50 per barrel, fresh pork at ten cents, veal at eight cents, and apples at two dollars per barrel. He believed that, despite these prices, a family might live more cheaply around Lowell than in Maine.

His daughter Mary was contributing to the household economy as well. Though "not verry good" in health, she was apparently walking to the mill regularly and earning "about 12 or 13 dollars pr month." Her presence is particularly significant in establishing the writer's identity: Temple records give Daniel Staples a daughter Mary, then twenty-seven years old, while the younger children Robert and Susanna correspond with those he asks about later in the letter.

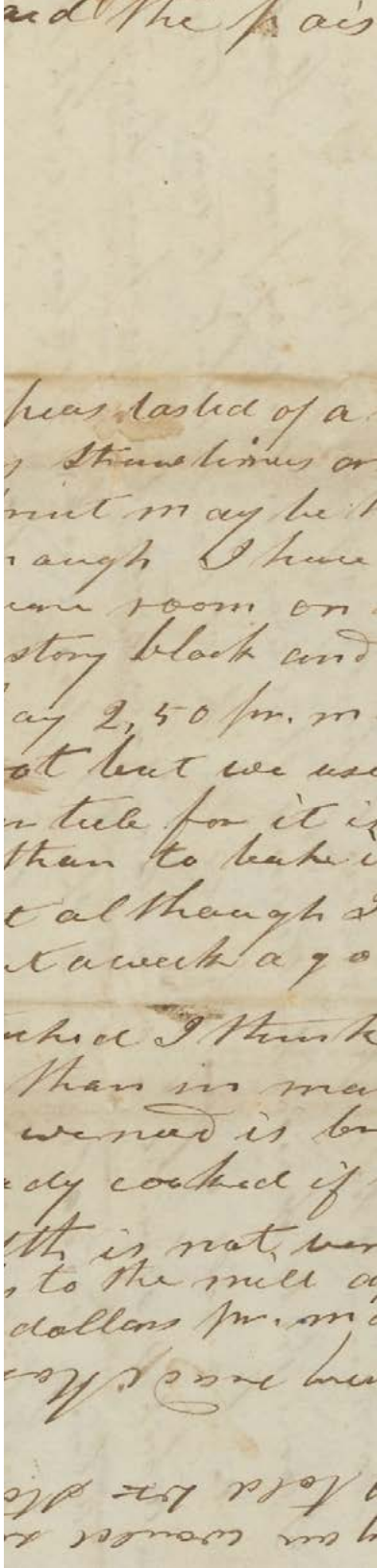
The welfare of those younger children remained very much in his mind. Staples asks the officials for news of Robert and Susan and requests assistance with Henry's medical treatment. Most importantly, he entrusts his children to the recipients while attempting to establish a new home:

"my childern Gentlemen if you see them or any one of them in trouble take care of them but dont bind them out in Temple for this is a far better place for them or any body else to live than Temple is and I shall come up and see to them Just as son as I can get a location which I think is suitable for them."

He quickly qualifies his enthusiasm—"I dont mean that I think the city of lowell is a good place for childern"—and explains that he intends to leave the city as soon as he can find somewhere nearby where he can earn as much. Staples's migration to Lowell and his careful accounting of wages, rent, food, employment, and his daughter's mill income show his attempt to regain the economic independence necessary to bring the family back together. Overall a scarce letter from a person receiving poor relief.

[1] "Early Families of Temple," Franklin County MEGenWeb, accessed October 30, 2026, https://www.usgenwebsites.org/MEFranklin/familiesearlytemple.html.

$600



25

[REPUBLIC OF TEXAS - WOMEN'S PROPERTY RIGHTS - ENSLAVEMENT] PILKINGTON, SAMUEL

1842 Letter from the Republic of Texas Concerning Property Rights Within Marriage and Using "Valuable Negroes" to Pay off Debt.

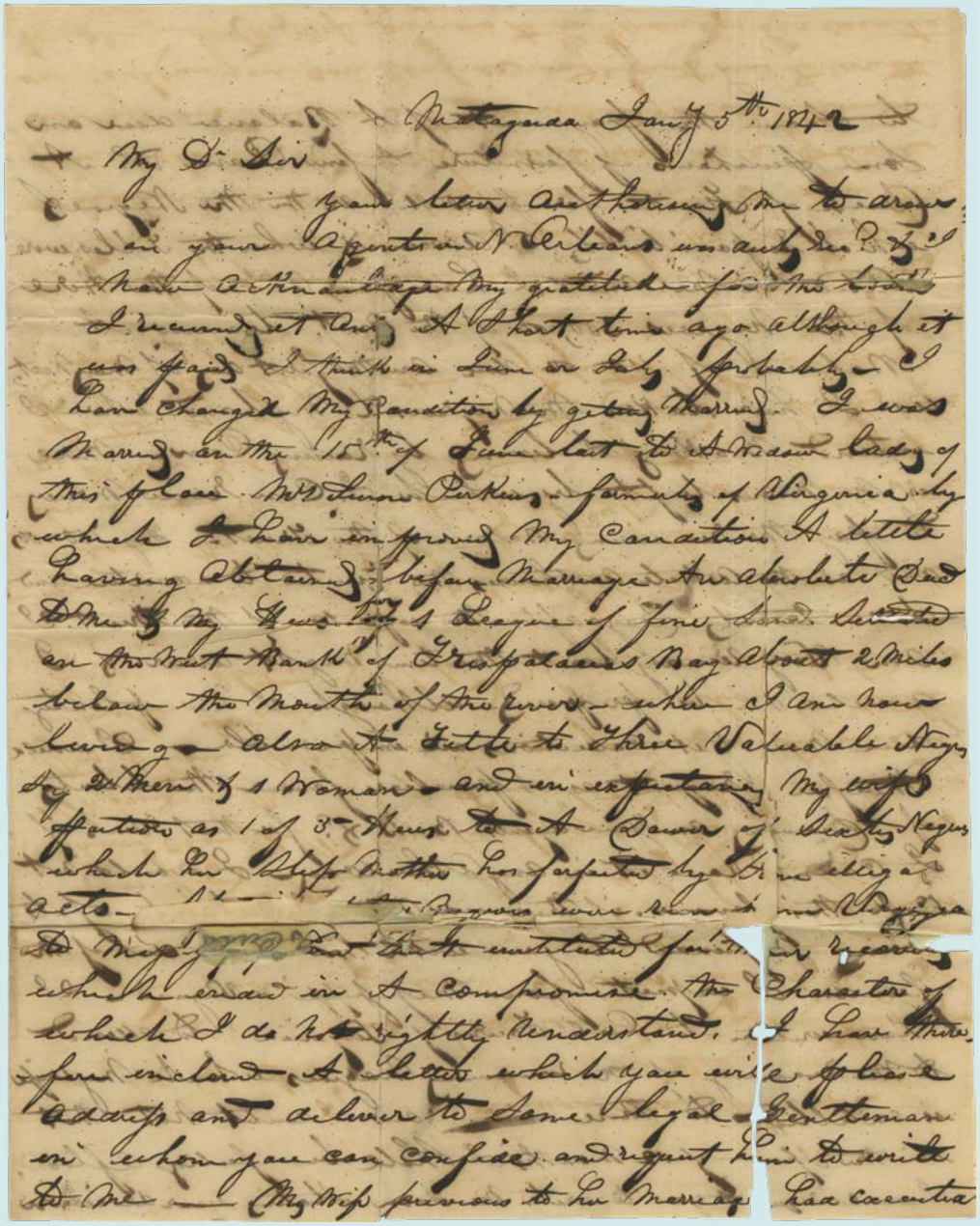
Matagorda, Republic of Texas: January 5, 1842. Autograph letter signed "Sam'l Pilkington," to an unidentified correspondent. Old folds with separations and small losses, scattered staining, and discolored tape repairs affecting the legibility of portions of the text.

A detailed letter concerning marriage, women's property, and slaveholding in the Republic of Texas, in which Samuel Pilkington describes the land and enslaved people acquired in connection with his recent marriage, the debts already secured against them, and his wife's disputed interest in a much larger group of enslaved people in Virginia and Mississippi. Pilkington was an early Matagorda County physician; the county's marriage records confirm his marriage to Susan Perkins on June 15, 1841.[1]

Writing to thank his correspondent for an earlier loan and request the possibility of another, Pilkington introduces his marriage as an improvement in his circumstances:

"I have changed my condition by getting married. I was married on the 15th of June last to a widow lady of this

CONTINUED



1842 Texas Letter on Property Rights and Enslaved Texans.

place, Mrs. Susan Perkins, formerly of Virginia, by which I have improved my condition a little, having obtained before marriage an absolute Deed to me & my Heirs for a League of fine land situated on the West bank of Trespalacios Bay about 2 miles below the mouth of the river, where I am now living—also a Title to three valuable Negroes, say 2 men & 1 woman, and in expectancy my wife's portion as 1 of 5 heirs to a Dower of sixty Negroes which her step Brother has forfeited by some illegal acts. A portion of the Negroes were [run?] from Virginia to Mississippi and suit instituted for their recovery, which ended in a compromise, the character of which I do not rightly understand."

His emphasis on obtaining an absolute deed before marriage gives the letter interest in the context of the republic's recent marital-property legislation. On January 20, 1840, Texas adopted a statute that, while establishing English common law as its general rule of decision, expressly provided that a woman's land and enslaved people would not become her husband's property simply through marriage. These possessions, together with land and enslaved people subsequently acquired by gift or inheritance and the children born to enslaved women, remained her separate property, although the husband retained "sole management." The arrangement preserved features of the earlier Spanish-Mexican property tradition alongside the adoption of English common law.

Further legislation in February 1841 prescribed safeguards for conveying a married woman's separate property, including land and enslaved people: she was to be examined privately, apart from her husband, and acknowledge before a judge that she had freely executed the conveyance. Although he does not mention the statutes or explain why the transfers were arranged in this fashion, Pilkington's letter records property transactions made during the first years of this statutory framework.

The land described has a further connection to Susan Royall's name. The Texas General Land Office identifies the Susan Perkins Survey, Abstract 371, on the western bank of Tres Palacios Bay, consistent with the location of the league Pilkington describes as his new home.[2]

Pilkington next explains why his improved circumstances had not resolved his immediate need for money. Before their marriage, Perkins had secured a debt for household purchases against the enslaved people whose title subsequently passed to him. He reports that $300 from their hire had been applied toward the $450 obligation, leaving $150 due on May 1:

"My wife previous to her marriage had executed, to secure the payment of a balance due on some purchase of furniture, a fine Piano &c., a Deed of Trust for $450.00 on the Negroes, which responsibility I assumed when the titles were vested in me [...]

As I have taken the Negroes to my land, where I intend making a living by raising corn, there is no means left by which I can raise money to pay the remaining balance of the Trust, say 150.00, and as the article authorizes the Trustee to advertise and sell twenty days after the expiration of the Trust, I am very uneasy that the time might arrive & I would not be prepared. Although I have plenty due me, yet collections are impossible. I would therefore request as a peculiar favor the liberty of drawing on your agents B. B. & Co. for that amt. if I cannot raise it in any other way."

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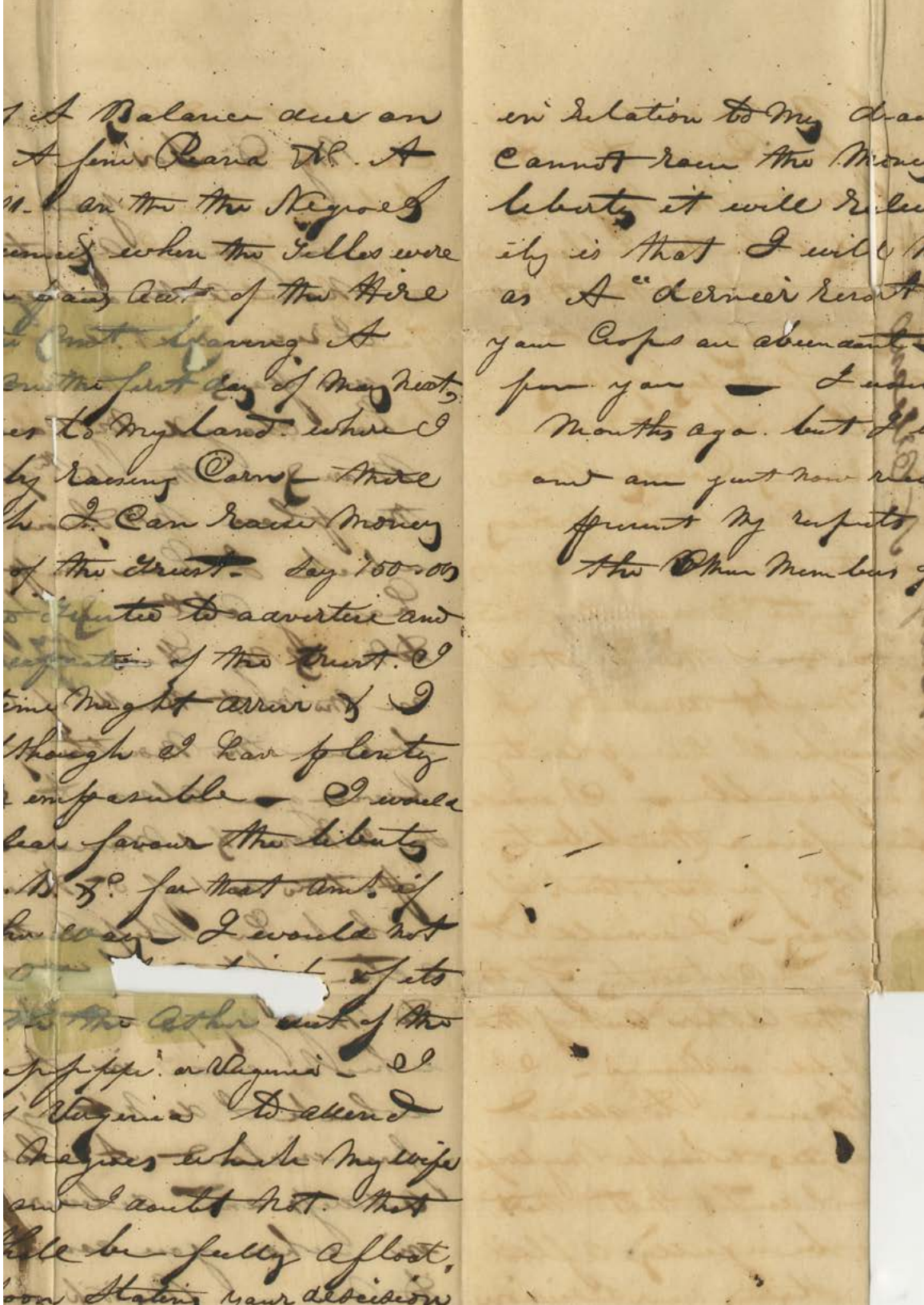
1842 Texas Letter on Property Rights and Enslaved Texans.

The decision to employ their labor himself had interrupted the hiring income on which repayment depended, leaving them subject to a trustee's sale if he could not obtain the balance.

Pilkington asks for permission to draw on his correspondent's New Orleans agents only as a "dernier resort," assuring him that permission alone would relieve his anxiety. Meanwhile, he seeks legal assistance with Perkins's claims in the United States, asking that an enclosed letter be delivered to a trustworthy lawyer and reporting that he has written to "Col. Towns of Virginia to attend to the recovering of the remaining Negroes which my wife is entitled to there." Despite his present difficulties, he expects that "in the space of 12 months I shall be fully afloat."

[1] Carol Sue Gibbs, "Dr. Samuel Pilkington," USGenWeb, accessed October 12, 2026, https://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/doctor_pilkington.htm.
[2] "Tres Palacios Bay–North Section, Matagorda - Blaskey," accessed October 12, 2026, https://www.glo.texas.gov/open-government/public-notices/tres-palacios-bay-north-section-matagorda-blaskey.

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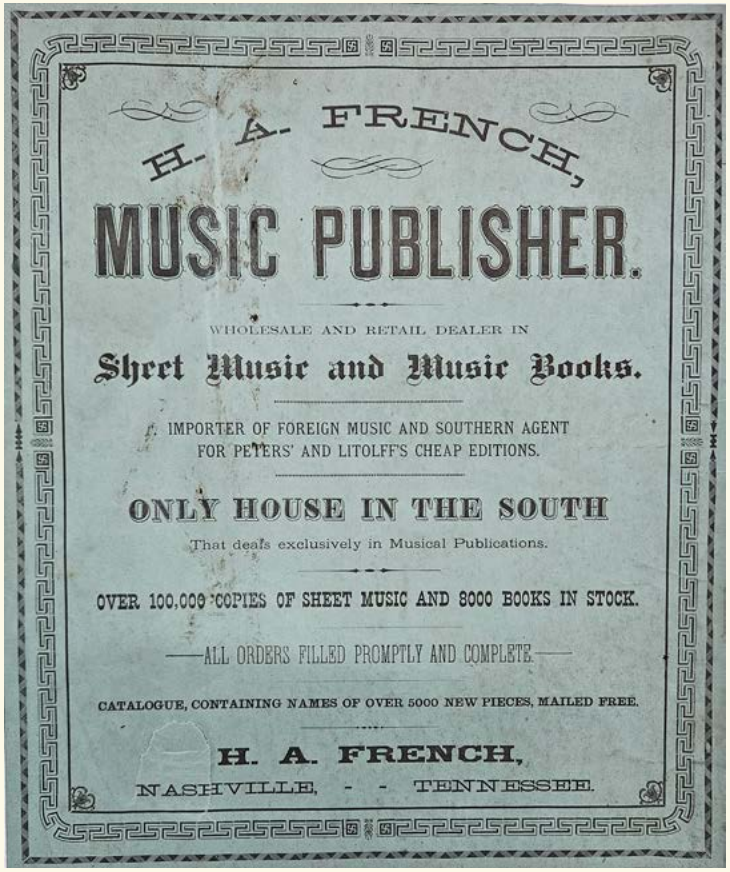


26

[TENNESSEE - MUSIC PUBLISHING - ADVERTISING]
FRENCH, H. A.

H. A. French, Music Publisher. [Advertising Broadside for a Nashville Sheet Music Publisher.]

Nashville, Tennessee: [c. 1880s]. Broadside, 10 ½ x 9 inches, printed in black on blue paper with an ornamental border. Blank verso. Near Fine.



An attractive advertising broadside for the Nashville music publisher Henry A. French, promoting his business as the "Only House in the South That deals exclusively in Musical Publications." French operated a wholesale and retail establishment specializing in sheet music and music books, with an extensive inventory of American and European publications. The broadside advertises a stock of more than 100,000 copies of sheet music and 8,000 books, and offers a free catalogue containing the titles of more than 5,000 new pieces.

The advertisement reflects the growing importance of Nashville as a center for the distribution and publication of music in the decades following the Civil War. French describes his business as an importer of foreign music and Southern agent for the inexpensive editions of the European publishers Peters and Litolff, indicating the availability of a substantial international repertoire to customers throughout the region. The firm's emphasis on printed music, rather than the sale of instruments, was evidently a point of distinction in the competitive Southern music trade.

French's publishing activities are documented by surviving sheet music of the period, including an 1880 edition of J. P. Skelly's "Why Did They Dig Ma's Grave So Deep?" The Nashville Public Library also holds a collection of H. A. French music catalogues dating from approximately 1885 to 1889. French was the brother of Jesse French, whose Nashville piano and organ business developed into a major regional enterprise. In the following decades, Henry French published compositions by the Tennessee ragtime musician Charles Hunter, including "Possums and Taters," "A Tennessee Tantalizer," and "Queen of Love," while Jesse French helped distribute ragtime music through his network of stores.

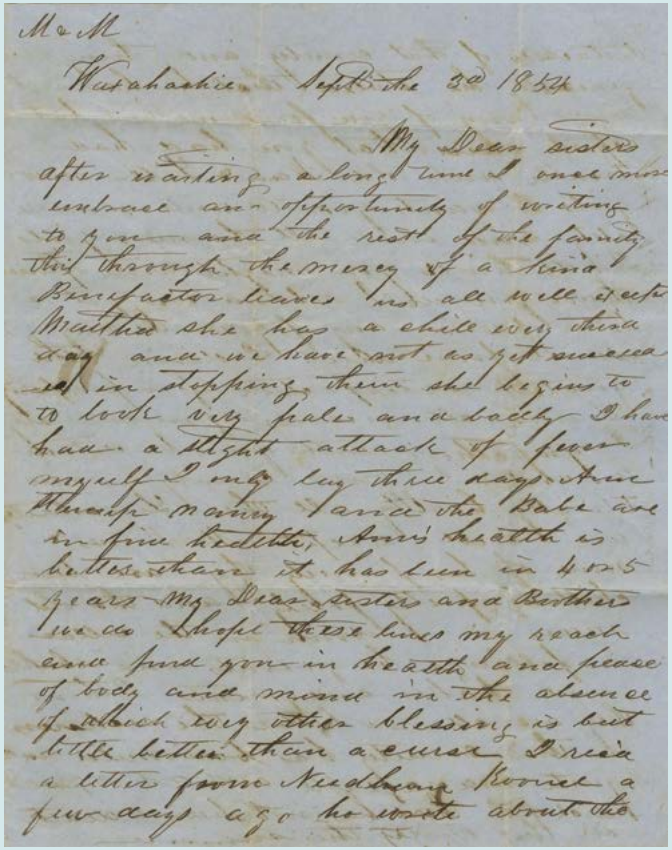
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27

[TEXAS - EURO-AMERICAN MIGRATION - SECTIONAL CRISIS - CIVIL WAR - CONFEDERACY - TEXAS-INDIAN WARS - WOMEN] PARKS, MILTON; PARKS, FELIX G.; PARKS, WILLIAM W.; PARKS, MARTHA; PARKS, MARY; ET AL.

"Texas or some other wild world": Archive of the Parks Family Emigrating from Tennessee, Establishing Themselves in Antebellum Texas, and Living Through the Civil War.

Tennessee and Texas: 1815 - 1885. Approximately 241 items: 194 documents, 1815 - 1885, and 47 letters, 1835 - 1864. Conditions vary; a few items with more extensive damage intersecting with text, but generally very good to excellent.


M. M.

Waxahachie Sept the 3d 1854

My Dear sisters after waiting a long time I once more embrace an opportunity of writing to you and the rest of the family this through the mercy of a kind Benefactor leaves us all well except Martha she has a chill every third day and we have not as yet succeeded in stopping them she begins to look very pale and lazy I have had a slight attack of fever myself I lay three days. Aunt Thursday morning and the Babe are in fine health, Ann's health is better than it has been in 4 or 5 years My Dear sisters and Brother we do hope these lines may reach and find you in health and peace of body and mind in the absence of which any other blessing is but little better than a curse I recd a letter from Needham Ronnie a few days ago he wrote about the

An archive documenting the movement of the Parks family from Lincoln County, Tennessee, to Texas in the years before the Civil War. Consisting mainly of letters written between 1835 and 1864, together with a group of family documents—mainly receipts—the collection follows the Parkses across a revealing period in the family's history: from the first decisions to leave Tennessee and the practical business of establishing households in Texas, through the increasingly volatile years of frontier conflict, secession, and war.

The documents in the archive indicate that the family were well-established in Tennessee likely since at least 1815, the date of a survey of land on Mulberry Creek in Lincoln County, near Fayetteville. Today, the Parks Cemetery and McDaniel-Parks Cemetery sit just east of Fayetteville, near Mulberry Creek. Nonetheless, of the ten children of Thomas Parks (1796–1847) and Sarah Woodruff (1785–1857), at least eight—William, Milton, Felix, Emily, Martha, Mary, Aaron, and Sallie—would end up in Texas eventually.

The family were part of the wave of emigrants from the American South to the new state of Texas in the midcentury, and mostly ended up in the area of Waxahachie, established in 1850. Emigrants from the South brought their ways of life with them—in agriculture, in religion, and especially in the practice of enslavement. [1] Ellis County was a strongly slaveholding area, with the enslaved population by 1860 totaling more than a quarter of the white population. Though the letters from before the 1860s make only a few mentions of enslavement—

CONTINUED

Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

the writers mostly discussing the construction of their new lives, farming, teaching school, attending religious meetings—the tone abruptly shifts around the turn of the decade. Political "excitement," pride in the South and defense of her "rights," secession, and the raising of militias arise in the letters; oddly, it is only at this point that conflicts with Indigenous people arises as well—perhaps the threat of civil war made the possibility of violence feel more real to those in relatively eastern Ellis County.

The letters both record a family's migration and settlement and give a rather coherent narrative of their place within the broader history of Texas, its settlement, and its role in the Civil War.

Life in Tennessee

A majority of the documents in the collection belong to Benjamin Warren, husband of Emily Parks. Many are receipts for orders from Warren for goods like bacon and blacksmithing work, taxes paid to Lincoln County, voter registrations, balances paid or owed, and train receipts from the Winchester & Alabama and Nashville & Chattanooga railroads. The family was involved in farming, and other records in the collection from the 1820s and 1830s document them renting out the use of their farm, generally to be paid in barrels of corn, along with a few receipts for the purchase of farming machinery.

Alongside these are several receipts that likely document the Warrens' use of enslaved labor, each recording the "hire of a negro girl Harriet for the present year" with "three suits of clothing two summer suits & one winter suit Blanket and the necessary quantity of shoes & stockings," dating January 26, 1860, January 2, 1861, and December 30, 1861. In 1860, about a quarter of Tennessean families held enslaved people.

The documents also include a receipt for $105 paid by Warren to the Department of the Cumberland in 1864:

"Mulberry Tenn Jan 31st 1864 / Received from Benjamin Warren one hundred and five dollars in full for assessment levied in pursuance of General Orders No. 6 Head Quarters Department of the Cumberland Jan 6th 1864 – J. H. Ketcham / Col 150th NY Vols".

In January of 1864, Confederate guerillas murdered two Union soldiers in the Cumberland; in response, the Union levied a tax on all citizens considered "disloyal" who were living within ten miles of the location of the murders, which John H. Ketcham was sent to collect.[2] The money was sent to the soldiers' surviving family.

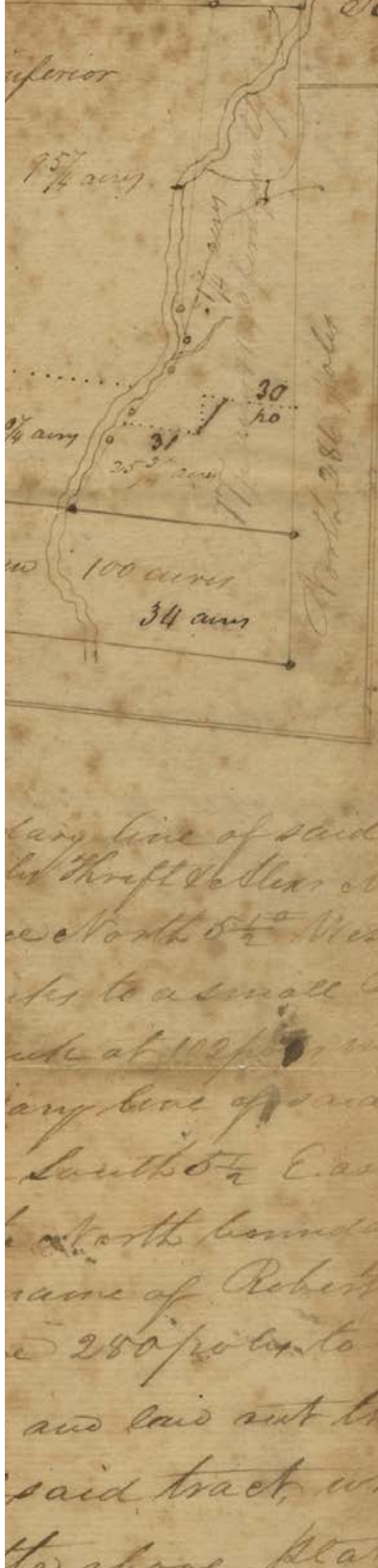
Most of the correspondence in the collection was sent to Benjamin and Emily Warren, some of the only Parks family members to stay behind in Tennessee for most of their lives—though both died and were buried in Clara, Texas, near the Oklahoma border.

Migration and Settlement in Texas

The first Parks to leave for Texas was Milton. He had served in the Mexican-American War, and first writes to his father during that period from New Orleans:

"we expect to leave here on tuesday next for mexico and will land at Matamoras if no other news comes to turn us back our vessel came up to day to recure us when all ready I saw some men to day who was just from jeneral

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Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

tailors armey they asay times is tolerable warm out thare but the mexicans was leaving very fast and supposed to be a colecting at another point some 200 miles from him so soon as the troop from the united states was suficient to march jeneral Tailor was going to gave them an other battle and perhaps is gone by this time he thinks that this will be the last battle that will be faught until peace is made and if it should be we will not have to serve the tourm of twelve months we all went down to the place whare jeneral Jackson faught his great battle thoe we could see nothing but his entrenchment". (June 14, 1846)

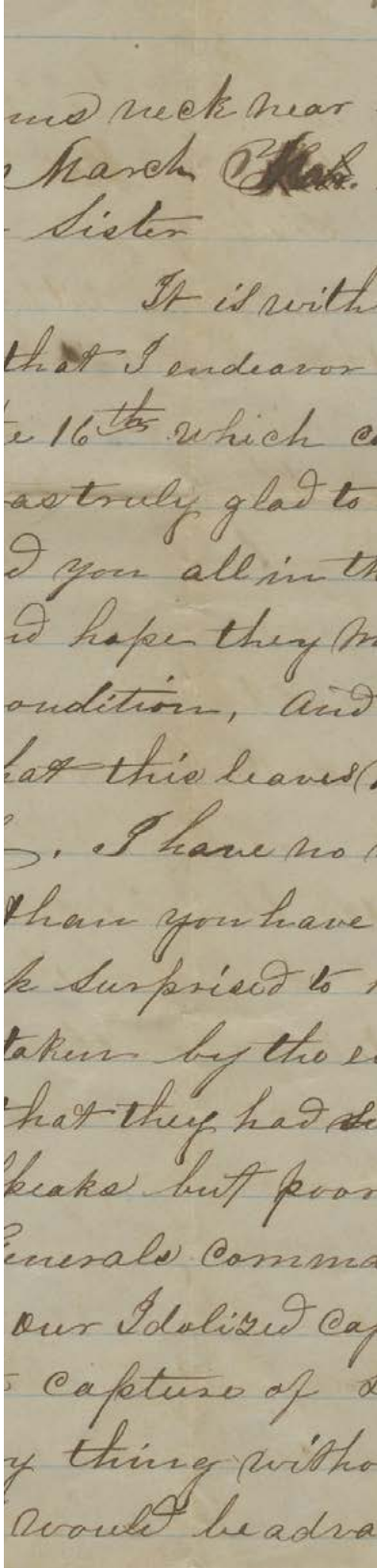
After the war, we find Milton on a journey south, apparently without any particular destination in mind. Writing from Holland Springs, Mississippi, Milton tells his brother Felix G. ("F.G." or sometimes "Fee") that he "came on through Athenes Florence Tuscombia and down to Jacinto", where "politics is rageing high [...] they have to pine poles half a mile long raised and the cock & coon on top of them" (October 9, 1848). During his travels, Milton decides that Texas would be a good destination for a young man in search of a decent living situation:

"I tried to sell my saddle horse all the way down and I met with no man that had any money until I reached this town and hear it is like Majr Garners liquer dam little if any though I sold him to day and will take the stage in the morning for memphis. [...] I had to sell him at a reduced price or return home I thought as I was this far on my road that I would go a head and [?] me out a situation in Texas or some other wild world as I saw that the chance was rather gloomey thare to make money it was true that I hated to leave all of those pretty girles so fare behind me though one trade is enough at a time [...] you must tell all of them that I have concluded to go on to Texas and will be gone two or three months provided I have luck in finding me a situation to suit me". (ibid.)

F.G. decides to make the expedition as well; in 1849 he writes from Savannah, Tennessee, to his mother, reporting that his infant daughter Sarah Ann had died (October 12), and in 1850 we find him writing from Jacksonville, Texas, to his brother Jesse Woodruff ("J.W."). F.G. established himself quickly:

"I made a considerable rise I have bought land about 12 miles south of where I was when Newman [missing] here in one mile of the above named town I [missing] got one among the best farms now in this [missing] or at least said to be by all that know [missing] farm but I have to pay well for it $3.75cts per acre [missing] is high in speaking of Texas prices but considered low for the land I have 314 acres of land 60 acres of as good bottom land as can be found on [elk?] River and as well timbered all kind of timber you wont expect poplar & chestnut and a pinery of about 40 acres & the balance upland are of great quality said to be by old settle[r]s it is dark Red land the soil is from 18 inches to 2 feet deep & I have 40 acres in splendid cultivation & under a good fence and as good a spring as that of mothers and a very genteel hughed log house finished off in good order a good garden & about fifty young peachtrees and all sweet little pecuniary arrangements and upon the whole if I can but only pay for it I am as well settled as I could wish to be I get one and two years to [pay] for it $650 [...] still hope that you will come out next fall and join me or take half the place I could sell the place now for $200 profit but I want to keep the place and especially untill I here whether you or Allen or any of you are coming out next fall or not if you intend coming I want you to write to me on that subject.

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Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

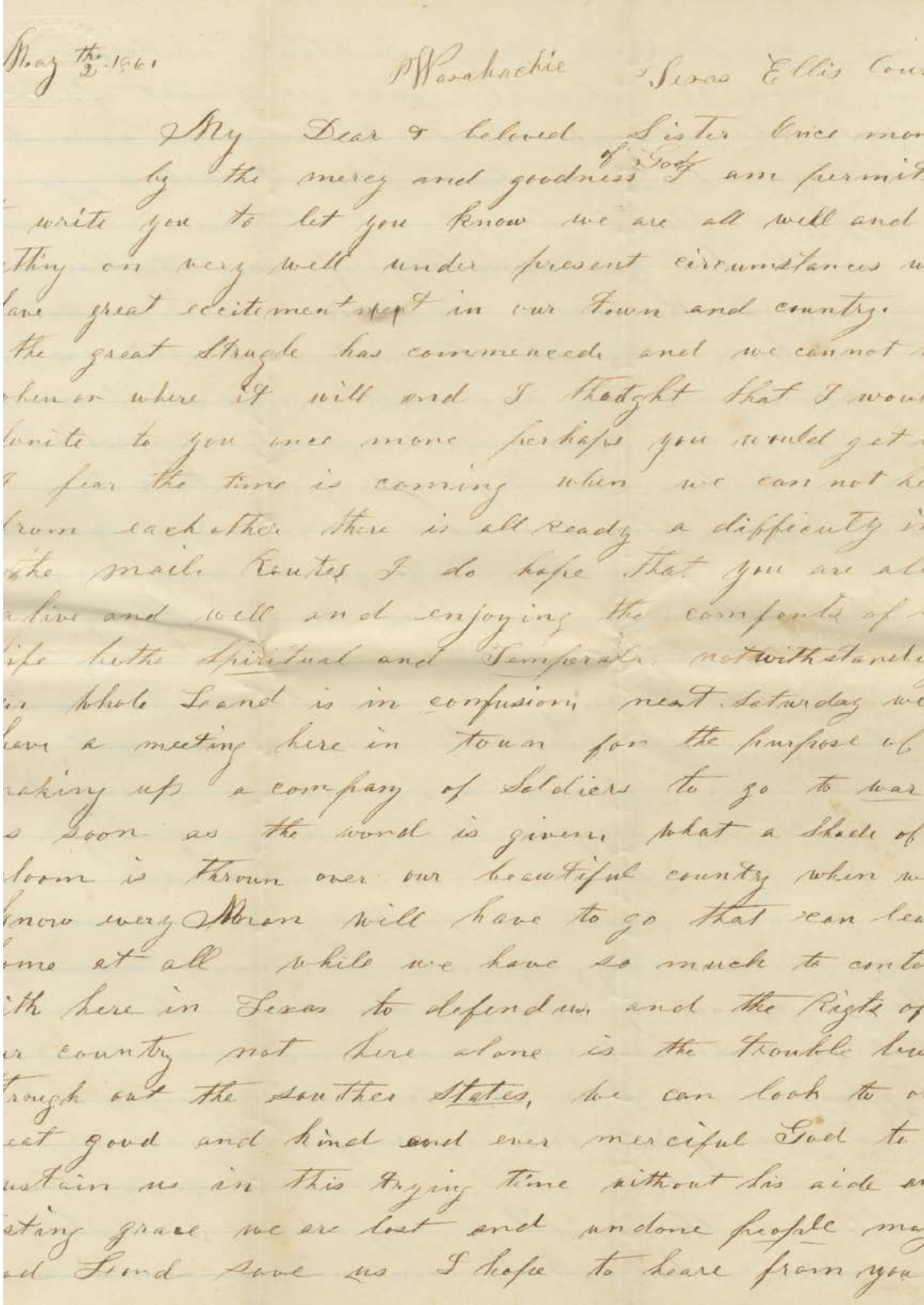
I have bought my corn and meat a cow and calf plows &c 27 head of stock hogs & am in debt $48 besides my land I sold my mule & my wagon is conditionaly sold. I am makeing a big crop this year if the seasons suit us Cousin Aaron Parks is living with me and is at work like a clever fellow and is well satisfied with country I have a negro Boy hired at $7.50cts per month we are aiming to plant 20 acres in cotton 15 in corn 3 in wheat the remainder in popcorn peas & potatoes". (February 13, 1850)

A few years later F.G. wrote to his family giving them advice on how to make the journey south, preferably in early September with a "we[ll] proportioned four horse wagon [...] and a large spring carriage for two horses," bringing "nothing but your clothing & be[d]ding cooking and some provisions," since "there is nothing you will be compelled to have but you can buy cheaper her than you can hallit" (April 4, 1852). William Parks ("W.W.") writes from Arkansas to his brother Jesse that he plans to "start to Texas in 8 or ten days"—he had tried to get a school up in Calhoun but it "was not worth much," since the people there were all so "poor and in debt" that they "have to work there children" rather than send them to school (October 9, 1852).

Building Community

From the mid-1850s to the early 1860s, the Parks family put down roots in Texas. During this time, the population of Texas nearly tripled, from 212,592 in 1850 to 604,215 in 1860.[3] W.W. writes several times from Waxahachie, describing buying land, the status of crops, meeting with "one little flock of old Baptist[s]" (September 30, 1854),

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Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

and fellow emigrants from Tennessee:

"there has been a great many emigrants passed through this region & a few stopped with us this fall. L.E. Zucker from Fayetteville has located in Waxahachie – Our Town is improving very fast this winter. We are about trying to establish a good school (a school of the first order) at one village – we have had pretty good schools ever since I came to town and our children have gone most of the time [...] Brother [F.G.] is now living in Larissa and working at the saddling business I suppose he's doing very well & he and family were all well a few days ago I learned that he has professed Religion I did not learn whether it was at home or under some excited meeting but hope that he has had a change wrought by grace". (November 25, 1854)

F.G. had taken ill and moved to Larissa to find work that could still be done despite his chronic fever and chills. He nonetheless advises his brother Allen to come to Texas for his health:

"I understood through Morgan Cowley that you was in rather bad health I think you ought to come to Texas if for nothing else on account of your health I think you would have good health in this country as far as your case is concerned or any person that is predisposed to a disease of the lungs, I looked very strong for some of you Boys out this winter untill Cowley come then I became discouraged and out of hopes [...] this is a great country to make money in and live easy if it was not I would have perished to death". (January 1, 1857)

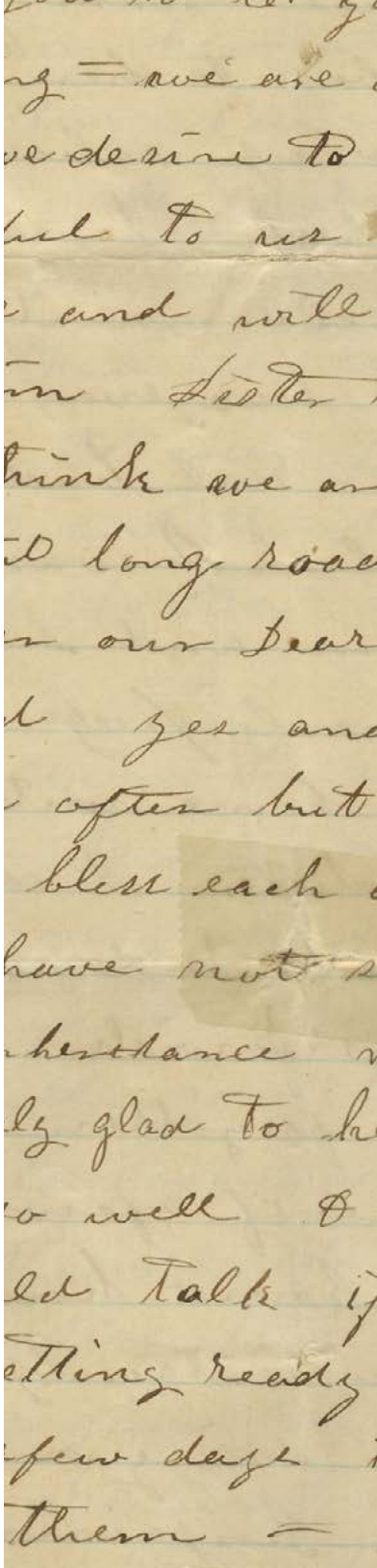
Milton takes ill as well, though he finds it difficult to cope with the high cost of living:

"I have been out a good deal this spring I have exposed myself a good deal more than I like to but I have to be making money some way or other a man cant live here without money my expences has been very high my board and washing is $12 dollars pr month Fanny and Pinks $5 dollars pr month [...] I dont know what I shall do this summer I have had several good offers but I will have to be governed by my health". (April 20, 1860)

In 1859, we begin to hear from the women of the Parks family's Texan contingent. Martha ("Mat") and Mary ("Mollie") Parks, who often write together, have gone into schoolteaching—as Martha puts it, "dont juge the country by the school teachers" (April 4, 1859). The two live with their third and youngest sister Sarah ("Sallie"), who marries fellow Tennessean emigrant James E. Smith in 1859, with a honeymoon trip to Dallas before Smith took a business trip to Houston ([1859], N.d.). Martha reports making $20 a month after expenses, and describes her living situation in Ellis County, surrounded by fellow emigrants:

"I must tell you what kind of a place I am at well it is about 6 miles from town in a very good neighborhood at Mr. Newtons close by the school house they are very kind to me and treat me with a great deal of respects they are on a large prarie farm but there is no other sort about here I tell you they are worth looking at when they are put about site there is 3 or 4 farming this place [...] they are all Misurians a nest of them – around here there is one Tennessian close by just as kind to me as need be they live on the way to the schoolhouse and I call sometimes and take supper [...] dont think the people here dont live well for all that they can live sis I wish you just knew how

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Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

many clever folks we have met with we have met with a great many Tennesseans you have know idea how near we all feell I recon we will remain as we are untill fall and then we think of keeping house with Milton he is doing well he working on a farm at 1 $ 50 cts per day good hands can [earn] good wages". (April 4, 1859)

Mollie writes from a school called Rural Glen Academy, often describing camp meetings with "a great many profess[ing] and a number of penitents in the altar both old and young" (August 5, 1859). A meeting near Waxahachie had "a great many conversion[s] and quite a number joined the church" (August 22, 1859). Interestingly, Mollie later describes prayer meetings not just for women but led by women:

"we have Female Prayr meeting some of our good sister[s] lead in prays I believe it will do good Sally enjoy[s] it so much I have seen her get shouting happy and Sister Henrie Marchbank can pray and talk equal to any Preacher when she gets hapy she is a Particular Friend of ours". (March 17, 1861)

The family also make occasional mention of what is likely the use of enslaved labor; the sisters mention having a "good black woman and we are makeing out finely" (August 7, 1860), and F.G. describes "a negro Boy hired at $7.50cts per month" as a farmhand (February 13, 1850). Though the major enslavers at the time were the planter class, a quarter of Texan families owned one or more slaves.[3]

The Texan Frontier and the Leadup to War

In the 1840s and 50s, most emigrants to Texas were not moving to its western frontier but to its more protected east and south—conflicts with Indigenous tribes who were driven off their land, especially the Comanche, were ongoing throughout the century and put many off the prospect of moving into a zone of conflict.[3] The Parks's appreciation of their domestic life in Texas is not without the knowledge of their proximity to the frontier, though it does take until the heights of the sectional crisis for this to seem to sink in. Mollie Parks writes:

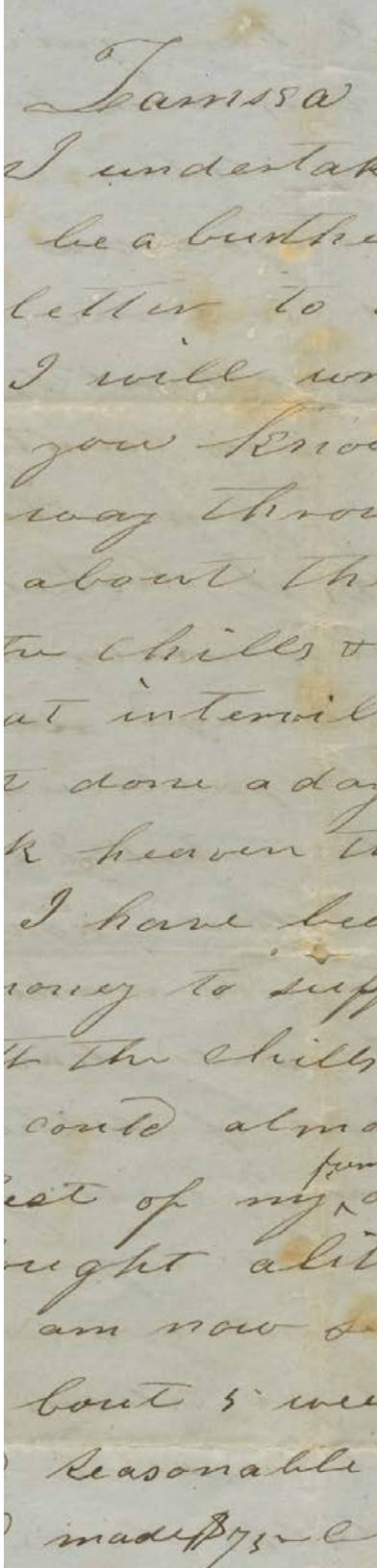
"Brother Milton is down to see us, at this time he is merchandising at Wetherford Parker Co ––– and doing very well considering the hard times [...] it is a delightful place out at Weatherford, so healthy, the only objection I have to the place it is to near on the Frontier, Indians come in and steal horses every light moon". (January 14, NY)

In 1860, comparing excitement over "the disolution of the union" on the one hand and "the Indians on the other," Milton writes:

"we have some horible accounts from the frontest counties not more than one hundred miles west of us the Indians are killing scalping and buchering up the frontiers settlers at a horid rate the[y] have sent here for help the[y] want men and provisions and armes one company started last week carried 2 waggon loads of provisions and other company starts to morrow and takes 4 waggon loaded with provisions you never saw such hot times as we have had here ever since the Election nobody noes what a few more months may bring around but I hope for better times". (December 10, 1860)

The family sees a throughline between the Texas-Indian Wars and the coming Civil War. Describing a celebration

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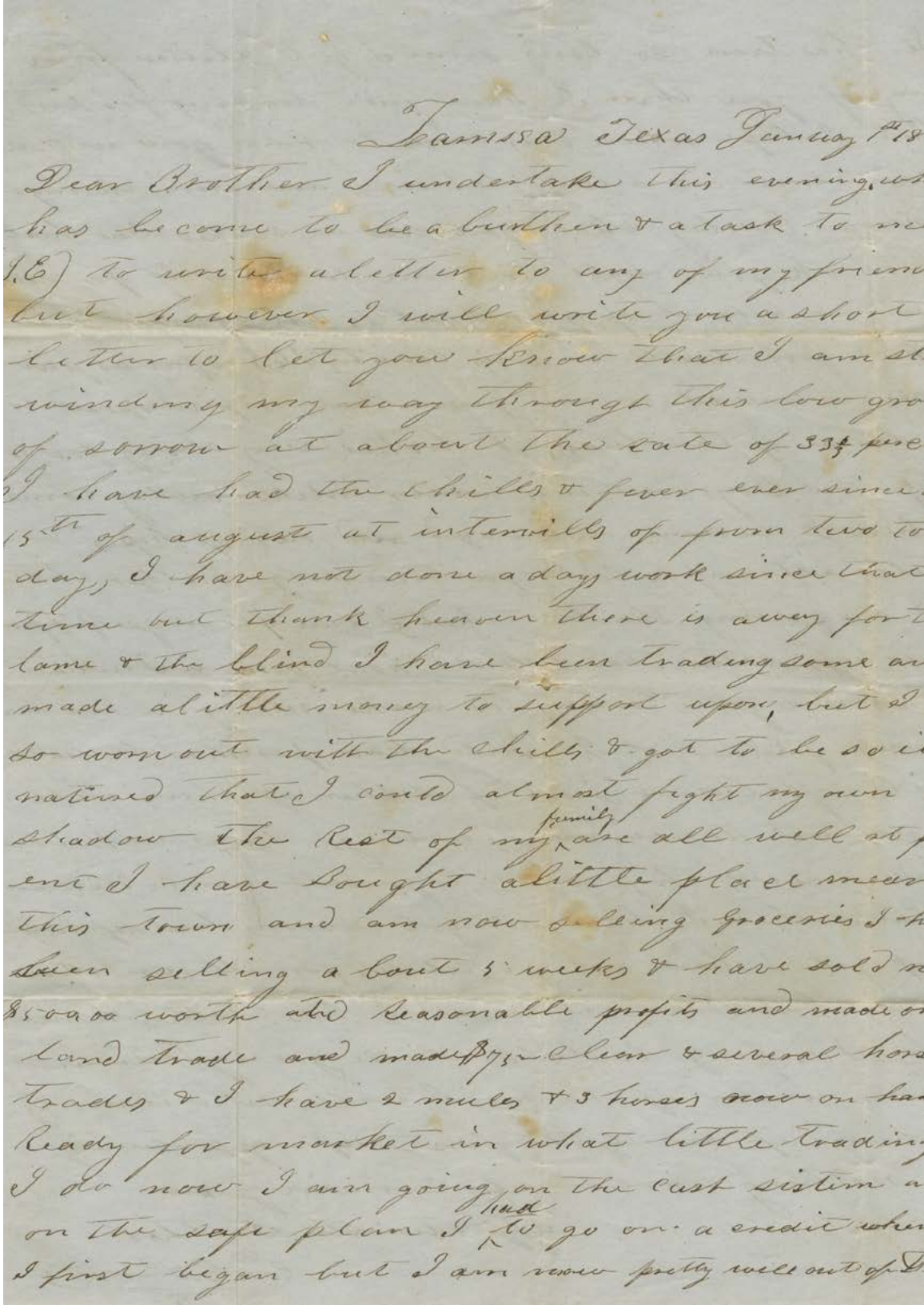


Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

after Texas seceded, Mollie writes that the state's soldiers were "Ready as they have tried their spunk out here after the Indians":

"I think we have a good country to live in, althoug[h] we have had great excitement for so long a time I hope we will have peace by and by. Such has been the case all over the Union, we have gone out of the union with several others we was sorry when we heard that Tennessee had not gone out, but I believ[e] it is the general opinion now that she will go out and I believ[e] she would Fight to if necesary for she has some brave Soldiers, as ever trod the soil, I feel partial to our native state, the home our childhood but Texas has some as brave and true southerners as ever you saw any where and will be Ready as they have tried their spunk out here after the Indians, there is a Military company here in town now as a standing company ready if they should be called several of my acquaint have joined, they gave a Ball last week had fine supper, on Tuesday evening they had a play presented to them by the Ladies of Waxahachie Miss Mag Marchbanks delivered an [ad]dress before a large audiance. We Marched our school out with the Military-company, we had quite a large company, we marched a bout qr of mile down to the Methodist church the Soldiers marched in with their guns and stoved all Round the stand we marched in after them we had two Flags and a banner to Represent each state that has withdrawn from the Union then we were marched out around the Soldiers to see them Muster and Fire their guns, they Fired of[f] their guns all Round us, and we had several speeches that evening; the time was very interesting,

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Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

but they had a dance and danced all night this we did not partake". (March 17, 1861)

Mollie updates the Tennessean family several times throughout the spring of 1861 about the "great eccitement in our town and country" now that "the great strugle has commenced" (May 2). In Early May there was "a meeting here in town for the purpose of making up a company of Soldiers to go to war as soon as the word is given"; Mollie reported trouble with mail routes and stated that she did not feel safe to head back to Tennessee (*ibid.*). Hearing of Tennessee's secession, she writes:

"we heard there was two large companys gone out from old Lincoln [*county*] weare anxious to know if any of our folks has gone we were proud to know that Tennessee has seceded and came where she ought to have come at first I know she will send out some brave soldiers to fight for the south may Heavens Richest blessings ever rest upon them if such is the case that they do have to go to fight I bid them God speed in defence of our Southern Rights I pray that they may be guarded and protected in this great struggle [...] tell your Pa & Ma to raise their boys to be soldiers we still hope Texas will not be called on but there is companys Ready now as soon as called they will go if needed some of our Texas Rangers could soon whip those yankees in the north. The compa[n]y that I wrote to you some time ago has just returned from Frontiers very much fatigued and worn out that had been ecsposed [?] to the hot sun some of them were tanned almost brown I believe all returned safe but had a great deal of sickness, while gone, some time would have to go several days without any hardly to eat to lay down on the ground to rest at night [...] for all their travels they did not get to see any Indians they kept them back up of the Frontiers." (N.d.)

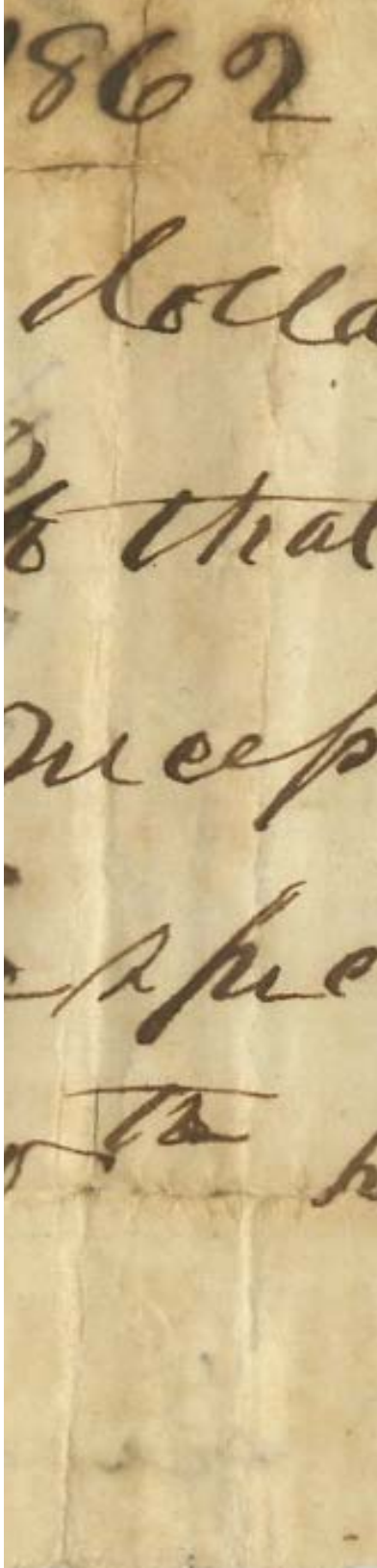
The Civil War

Ellis County contributed several companies to the Twelfth and Nineteenth Texas Cavalries;[1] oldest brother William Woodruff Parks served as Captain in Company A of the Nineteenth. In July, Mollie writes that Waxahachie had raised two companies, one to act as a home guard and the other to be ready for deployment when called (July 1, 1861). We then begin to hear from enlisted family. First, Aaron Parks, the youngest son, writes from Camp Trousdale in Tennessee. He devotes much of his letter to a detailed description of the ritual humiliation of a man who had attempted to desert:

"we have some very exciting times here some times I witnessed the worst site yesterday that I ever saw in my life it was a man that tried to desert but they followed him and caught him up in Kentucky they b[r]ought him back and [?] him out of service we marched him out in to the field with one side of his head shaved as clean as if it never had a hare on it and too great long horns on his head that looked like cow horns They placed two sine boards on him one on his breast and the other on his back puled off his shoes & socks ro[l]led up bri[t]ches and sleav[e]s and made him take his shoes in hand and his [k]napsack on his back and ma[r]ched him through the field before the eyes of 5 to 6 thousand people with the fief & 8 or 10 drums following close behind him that is what the deserter gets here I hope I never will see another one". (July 13, 1861)

The Parks siblings' nephew, James M. Warren—the son of Emily Parks and Benjamin Warren, to whom many of

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Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

the letters are addressed and who did not arrive in Texas until well after the war—enlists with the 5th Kentucky Regiment (Confederate) in March of 1862. In April, a fellow soldier named Hager writes to Benjamin Warren that James had been killed in action:

"I take this opportunity of writing you the painfull news of the death of your son James. he was a good boy from the day he started, always ready for duty and I took every care to help him always when he was tired I would carry his load for him and rest him and on Sunday I took him right at my side into the fight and he fought cool and brave and made funny remarks all the time of the fight and on monday he went with WH Rees and about 11 oclock in a charge on the enemy he was shot and I guess through the heart as he fell dead and never [?] Mr Rees turned him over but Jim was gone and our army was falling back and and [sic] we had to bear him with the rest of our dead." (April 10, 1862)

However, Hager was somehow mistaken; James Warren writes to his parents the following month from the US Army hospital in Keokuk, Iowa. He had been shot through the trousers, not the heart: "I rec[k]on you would like to know wher[e] I was shot the ball went in at on[e] britches poc[k]et and out at the other but it is now about well" (May 20, 1862), later writing that the bullet had gone through his bowels. He reports that "although I hav[e] had a purty bad wound", he is "getting along very well and I am treated Just as well as I want to be". Warren describes meeting soldiers from all over the country and changing his opinion on war:

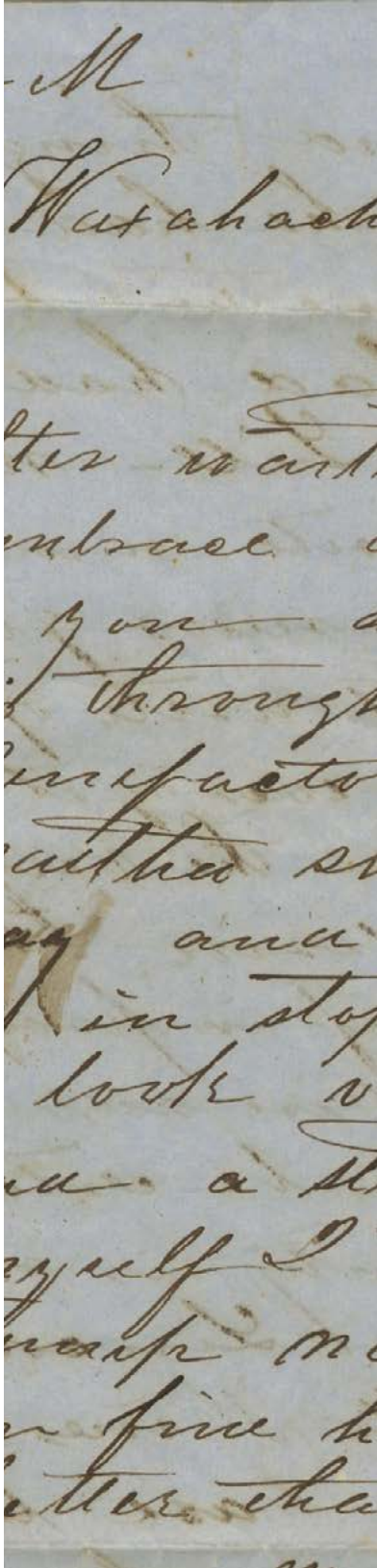
"I hav[e] a very n[i]ce room to stay in ther[e] is not [?] four other stays in this room we ar[e] all four from different states one of them Alabam[a] the oth[er] from Kentuc[k]y the oth[er] from Ohio we are very well acquainted now ther[e] are some as friendly popople [people] here as I eversaw [...] there isent very mutch fun in shootting at one another now sure for I tried it once I dont think that I will try it any more soon if I get hom[e] again I think I will stay there a while you hav[e] know idy [no idea] how any body feels when the bullets are whis[t]ling about your head and you couldent hardly hear your ears". (May 24, 1862)

Nonetheless, he seems to have reenlisted, writing from Como, Mississippi in 1864 that he had "the best company in the Serfice" and had done "some very har[d] fi[gh]ting" in Tennessee (January 25).

Meanwhile, the women of the family live in fear of the Union forces, which they refer to as the "Abolitionists." Milton stays with Sallie, Mollie, and the children at night while James Smith is in Houston for business, as the women feel "a little afraid to be alone allthough our Neighbors are as close as your cotton house" (September 15, 1861). In the same letter, Mollie describes the effects of the Union blockade and the nighttime escape of two enslaved Black men:

"we have had good season for everything plenty of every thing old Link cannot starve us by Blockadeing we have all sorts ways to get along. very true he has stoped Texas from useing so much coffee we can use tea great nany are using Rye & Barley for coffee. we can live a long time yet it is selling at 50 cts per pound. Sally says tell you she has got a little yet for Break fast along occasionaly. but if the blockade is not soon taken out we will have to do without. [...] I fear some times we have some Abolitionist

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Archive of a Family Emigrating from Tennessee to Antebellum Texas.

not far from us there was four Negros saddle a good horse a piece and started for some where and cant be found no where. the white people where out at the soldier camp not thinking any danger and did not come home that night. by the time they got home they were gone so far they could hear any thing from they are still in pursuit of them they belong to four different Men here in our Neighbourhood. we donot know what they will do next. I think every Negro Man ought to be made got[o] the war & help to fight". (*ibid.*)

Conclusion

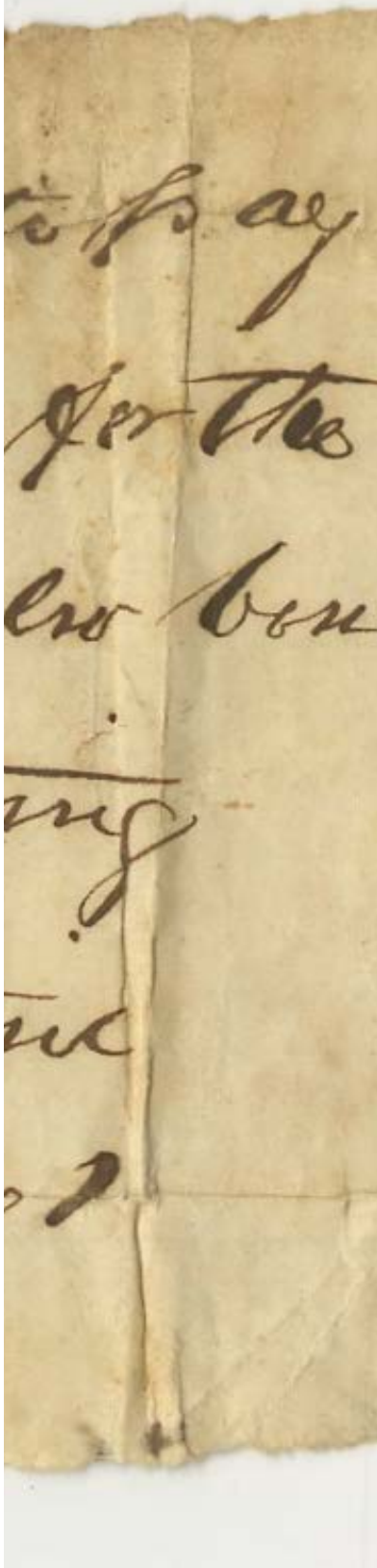
The correspondence preserves the process of migration and settlement in the new state, from the decision to strike out for the west to the everyday work of creating a home. Moreover, that new state happened to be Texas: the Parks were part of the wave of Southerners emigrating there during early statehood that made Texan culture so aligned with the South. Families like the Parks helped shape the culture that made Texas a Democrat-aligned slave state, and thereby paved the way for the conflict that would doubtless affect their family for years to come.

[1] Robert J. Haaser, "Ellis County," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 2, 2026, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/ellis-county.

[2] "Statement of the military service of Bvt. Maj. Gen. JOHN H. KETCHAM, formerly colonel One hundred and fiftieth New York Infantry Volunteers, and brigadier-general of volunteers," in *John Henry Ketcham (Late a Representative from New York) Memorial Addresses* (Government Printing Office, 1907), 12.

[3] Randolph B. "Mike" Campbell, "Antebellum Texas," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 2, 2026, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/antebellum-texas.

$12,500



28

[VERMONT - EPISCOPAL CHURCH - CHURCH AND STATE]
PETERS, SAMUEL

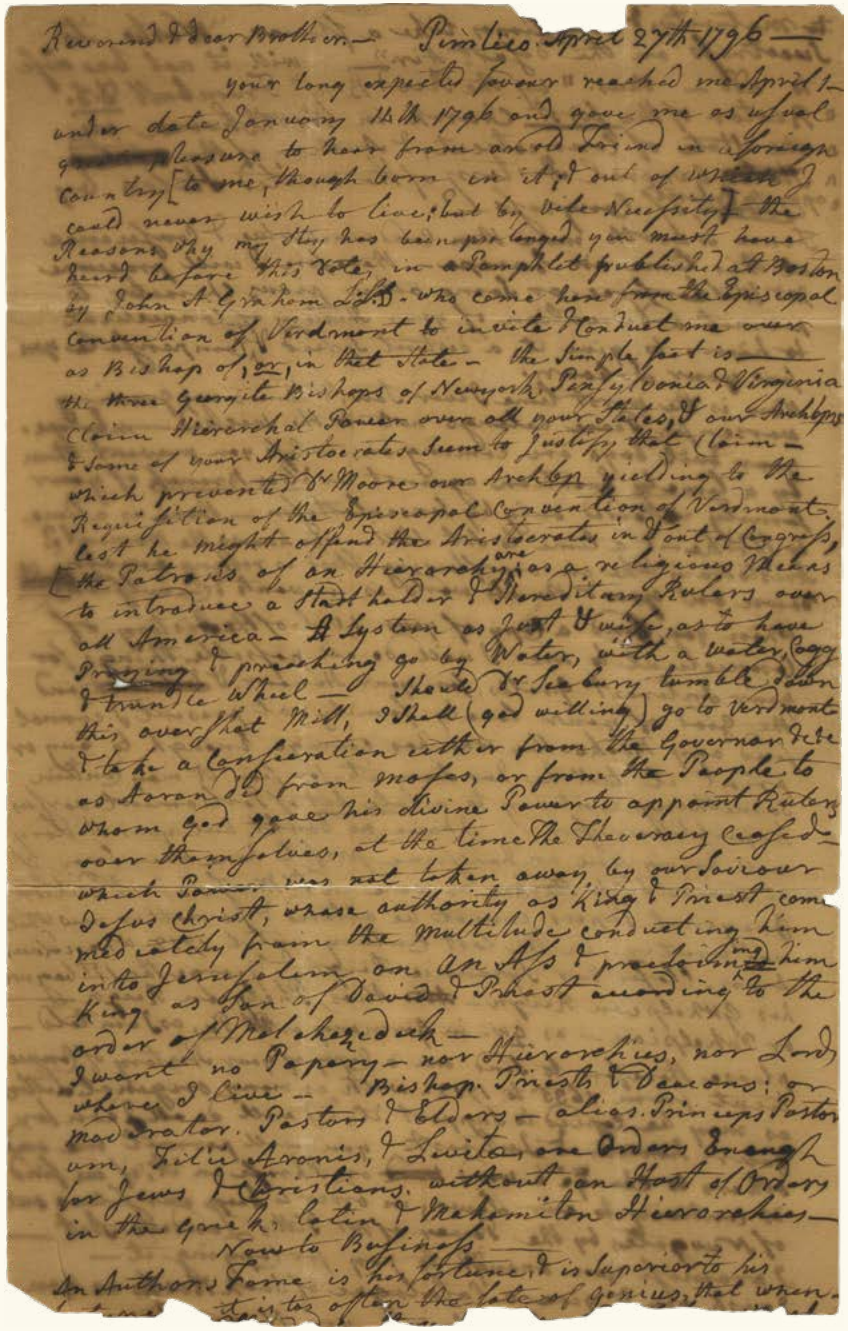
"I Shall Go to Vermont & Take a Consecration [...] from the People": 1796 Letter from Vermont's Bishop-Elect on the Failed Attempt to Establish a Vermont Episcopate.

Pimlico [London]: April 27, 1796. Autograph letter, [4] pp., to the Rev. Benjamin Trumbull of North Haven, Connecticut. Losses along the lower margins affecting portions of several lines.

An extensive letter from the Connecticut-born Loyalist clergyman Samuel Peters, written in the aftermath of one of the stranger episodes in early Vermont religious history: the state's unsuccessful attempt to establish an Episcopal bishop independently of the developing national church. Peters had been elected Bishop of Vermont by the state's Episcopal convention in 1794, and Vermont lawyer John A. Graham was sent to England to secure his consecration from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Governor Thomas Chittenden authenticated the convention's credentials under the state seal; when Graham returned and reported his failure to the convention at Windsor in October 1795, Chittenden and members of the Council of State were present.

Peters had received Graham's published account of the negotiations and he here gives Benjamin Trumbull his

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Letter from Vermont's Bishop-Elect on Establishing a Vermont Episcopate.

own furious interpretation of their failure. Canterbury had declined to consecrate him, arguing that the 1786 Act of Parliament authorizing English consecrations for America had already served its intended purpose and that Peters, after twenty years in England, lacked the testimonials expected from Vermont. Graham had countered that the Vermont church did not consider itself bound by the relevant American canon and warned Canterbury that Vermont might simply have its bishop consecrated by its own governor. Peters takes that argument considerably further:

"The simple fact is, the three Georgite Bishops of New York, Pennsylvania & Virginia claim hierarchical powers over all your States, & our Archbishops & some of your Aristocrats seem to justify that claim, which prevented Dr. Moore, our Archbishop yielding to the requisition of the Episcopal Convention of Vermont [...] Should Dr. Seabury tumble down this overshot mill, I shall (God willing) go to Vermont & take a Consecration either from the Governor &c &c. as Aaron did from Moses, or from the people to whom God gave his divine power to appoint rulers over themselves, at the time the Theocracy ceased... I want no Popery, nor hierarchies, nor Lords where I live."

Peters here advances an even broader claim than Graham, grounding ecclesiastical authority ultimately in "the people" and rejecting the authority asserted by the established American bishops over Vermont. Canterbury's own account acknowledged that Governor Chittenden had joined the Vermont convention in recommending Peters for consecration.

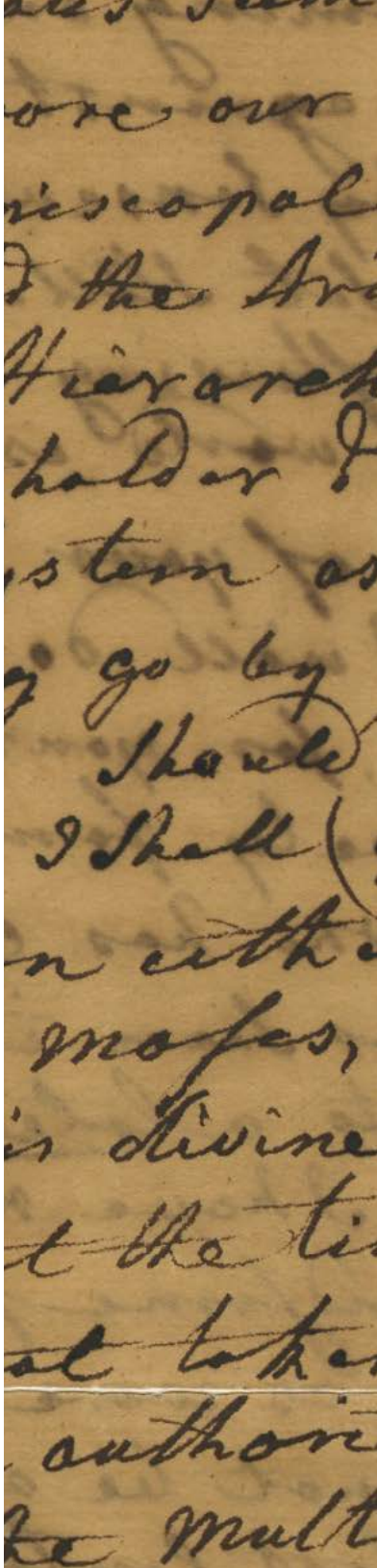
The letter then turns to Trumbull's historical work, providing a piece of pre-publication correspondence concerning the first volume of his *Complete History of Connecticut*. Peters offers to promote the work in England, proposes securing William Wilberforce or another prominent figure as dedicatee, and asks Trumbull to send the manuscript together with copies of supporting documents. He also warns that politically troublesome language might have to be softened to avoid prosecution:

"An Author's fame is his fortune, & is superior to his fortune. [...] Please therefore to send me a copy of your History of Connecticut from 1635 to 1712, with as many original letters as may be copied to support it, & I will do all I can for your honour & interest. You will permit me and others to change a word or phrase in it, if we find it contrary to our Laws, in order to keep ourselves out of Newgate".

Trumbull's first volume appeared at Hartford the following year, in 1797, under the title *A Complete History of Connecticut, Civil and Ecclesiastical, from the Emigration of Its First Planters from England, in MDCXXX, to MDCCXIII*. A surviving 1796 subscription prospectus confirms that the work was being actively prepared and promoted at exactly the time Peters wrote.[1]

In the remaining pages Peters ranges widely through contemporary politics, attacking aristocracy and Britain's wars and national debt, commenting on Jay's Treaty, and asking whether the United States should exploit Britain's European difficulties by inviting Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, St. John's Island, New Brunswick, and Upper and Lower Canada "to become Sovereign States in union with Congress." He closes with news of

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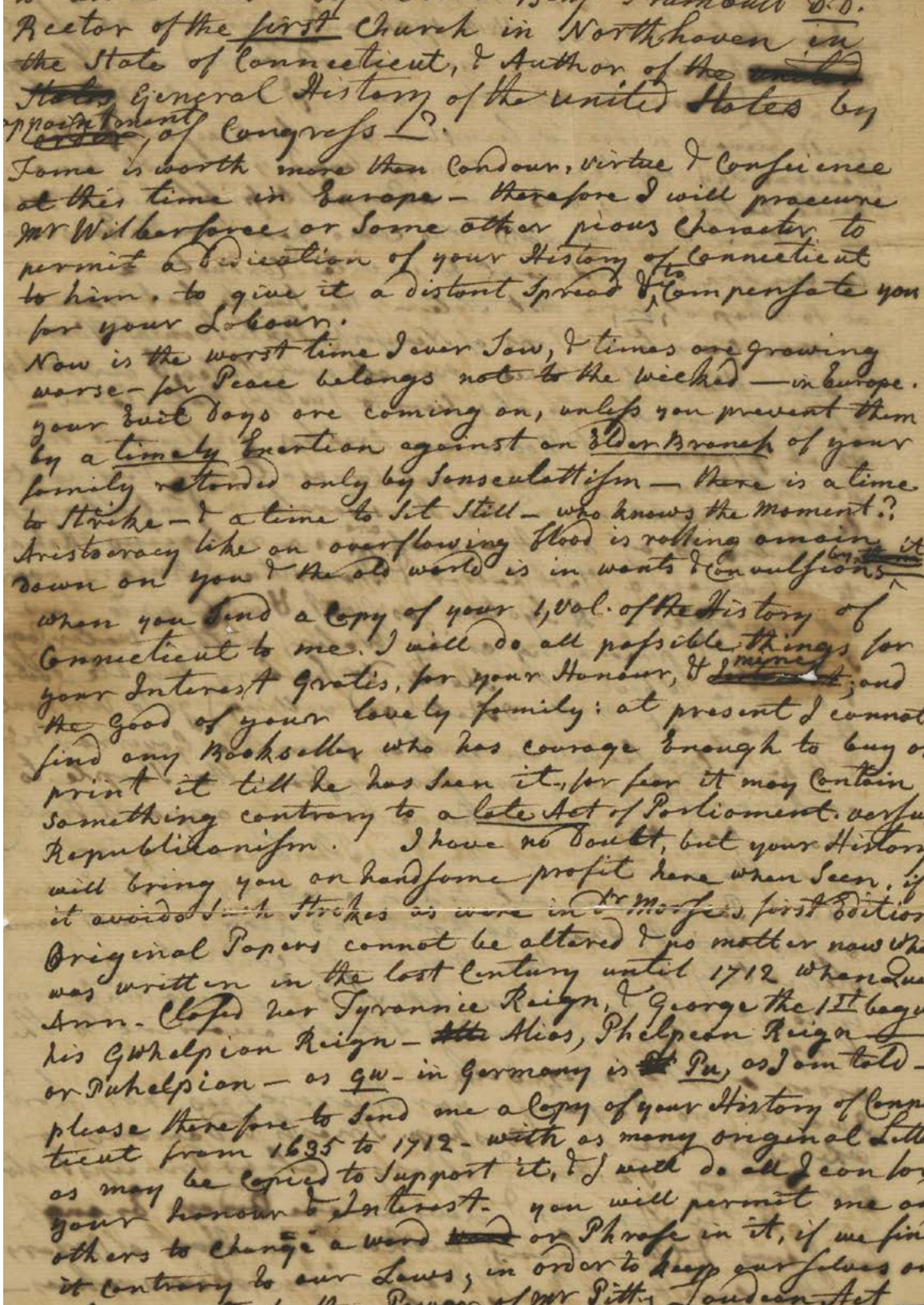
Letter from Vermont's Bishop-Elect on Establishing a Vermont Episcopate.

family and mutual acquaintances and tells Trumbull that, if he eventually reaches Vermont, "Harmony among all Sects, who preach Christ crucified shall be my text till God bears me up to Heaven."

Overall the letter is an important surviving statement from Vermont's frustrated bishop-elect, written while the failed consecration remained a recent controversy and setting out an explicitly Vermont-centered alternative to the authority of both Canterbury and the emerging American Episcopal hierarchy. The letter's proposal that a bishop might derive his authority from Vermont's governor or from "the people" closely echoes the arguments made by the state's own agent in London.

[1] "Preface," in Benjamin Trumbull, D.D., *A Complete History of Connecticut, Civil and Ecclesiastical, from the Emigration of Its First Planters from England, in MDCXXX, to MDCCXIII*, Vol. 1 (Hudson & Goodwin, 1797).

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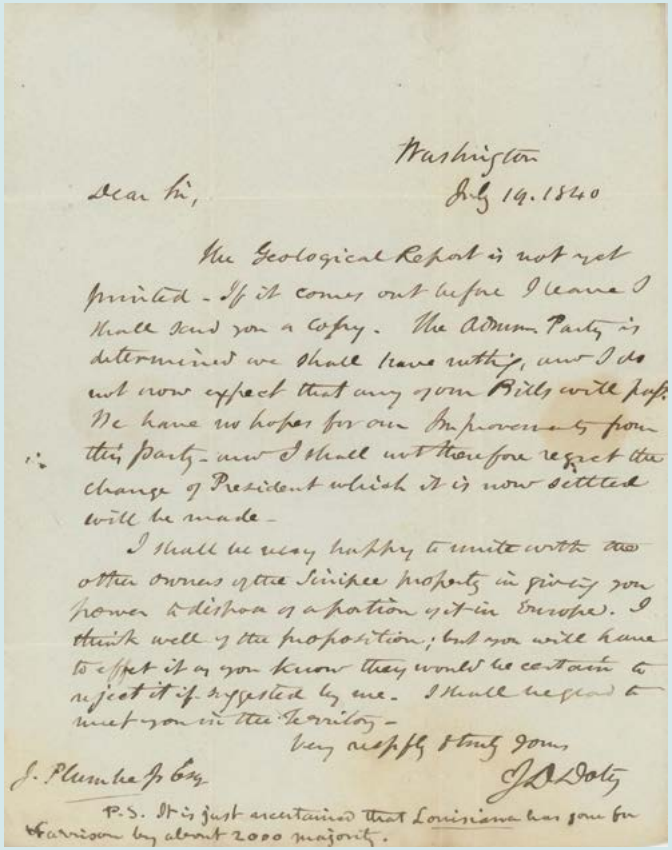


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[WESTERN AMERICANA - WISCONSIN TERRITORY - LAND SPECULATION] DOTY, JAMES DUANE

1840 Letter to John Plumbe Jr. on Selling Sinipee Property in Europe.

Washington, D.C.: July 19, 1840. Autograph letter signed "J D Doty," addressed to John Plumbe Jr. at Plymouth, North Carolina. One page, with integral address panel bearing a Washington City postmark and Doty's free frank as "Delegate"; contemporary docket. Original mailing folds, light toning and scattered soiling, minor wear at edges and folds; red wax seal remnant.



Washington
July 19. 1840

Dear Sir,

The Geological Report is not yet printed - If it comes out before I leave I shall send you a copy. The Admin Party is determined we shall have nothing, and I do not now expect that any of our Bills will pass. We have no hopes for our Improvements from this party - and I shall not therefore regret the change of President which it is now settled will be made -

I shall be very happy to unite with the other owners of the Sinipee property in giving you power to dispose of a portion of it in Europe. I think well of the proposition; but you will have to effect it as you know they would be certain to reject it if suggested by me. I shall be glad to meet you in the Territory -

Very respectfully & truly Yours
J. D. Doty

J. Plumbe Jr Esq

P.S. It is just ascertained that Louisiana has gone for Harrison by about 2000 majority.

A letter concerning a proposed European sale of property at Sinipee, a speculative Mississippi River port in Wisconsin, and strained relations among its owners. James Duane Doty, Wisconsin Territory's congressional delegate and its future governor, writes to civil engineer and land promoter John Plumbe Jr., who had become Sinipee's surveyor and agent in 1838.

At Sinipee, Plumbe had promoted a railway from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi as an initial section of a route to the Pacific. The town's prospects deteriorated after flooding and a malaria epidemic in 1839, and by early 1840 nearly all its inhabitants had left.[1] The proposed sale may have been an effort to recover part of the proprietors' investment after the town's decline.

Doty approves the proposal but insists that Plumbe must secure the cooperation of the other owners:

"I shall be very happy to unite with the other owners of the Sinipee property in giving you power to dispose of a portion of it in Europe. I think well of the proposition; but you will have to effect it as you know they would be certain to reject it if suggested by me."

The letter also concerns Wisconsin legislation and public improvements. Doty offers to forward a geological report if it appears before he leaves Washington, then attacks the Van Buren administration:

"The Admn. Party is determined we shall have nothing, and I do not now expect that any of our Bills will pass. We have no hopes for our Improvements from this party — and I shall not therefore regret the change of President which it is now settled will be made —"

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1840 Letter on Selling Sinipee Property in Europe.

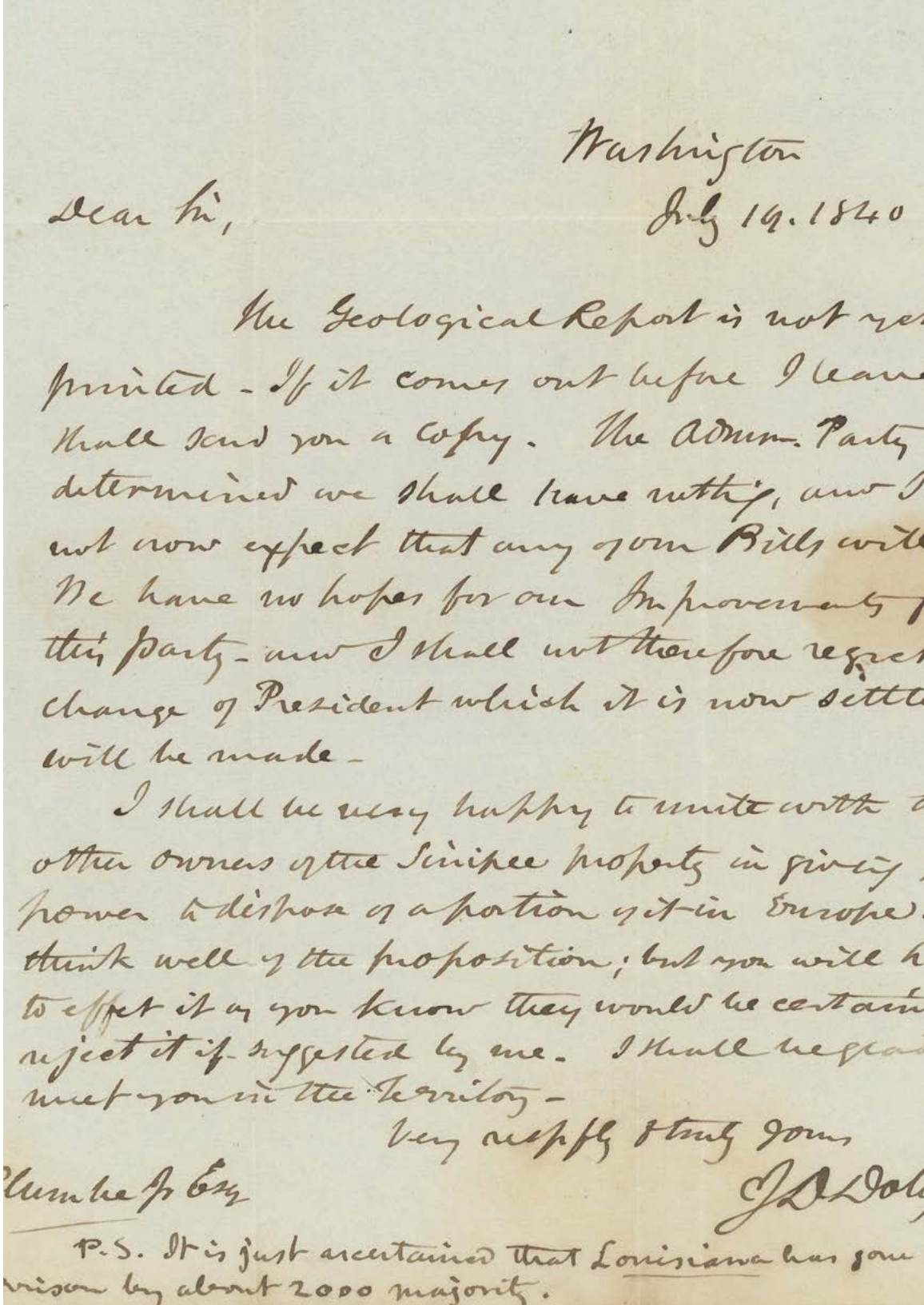
Although elected as a Democrat, Doty welcomes the prospect of the administration's defeat. His postscript adds news circulating during the summer campaign: "It is just ascertained that Louisiana has gone for Harrison by about 2000 majority."

Plumbe had published Sketches of Iowa and Wisconsin (1839), an early promotional account of the region. After going east to continue his railway campaign, he took up daguerreotypy in 1840 and went on to establish a national chain of photographic galleries.

The letter records the connection between territorial politics and private investment in western development, with a proposal to seek European purchasers for a troubled Mississippi River property. Doty's warning about the other owners adds evidence of friction within the venture.

[1] "Plumbe, John, Jr.," *The Biographical Dictionary of Iowa*, accessed October 30, 2026, https://uipress.lib.uiowa.edu/bdi/DetailsPage.aspx?id=307.

$1,250



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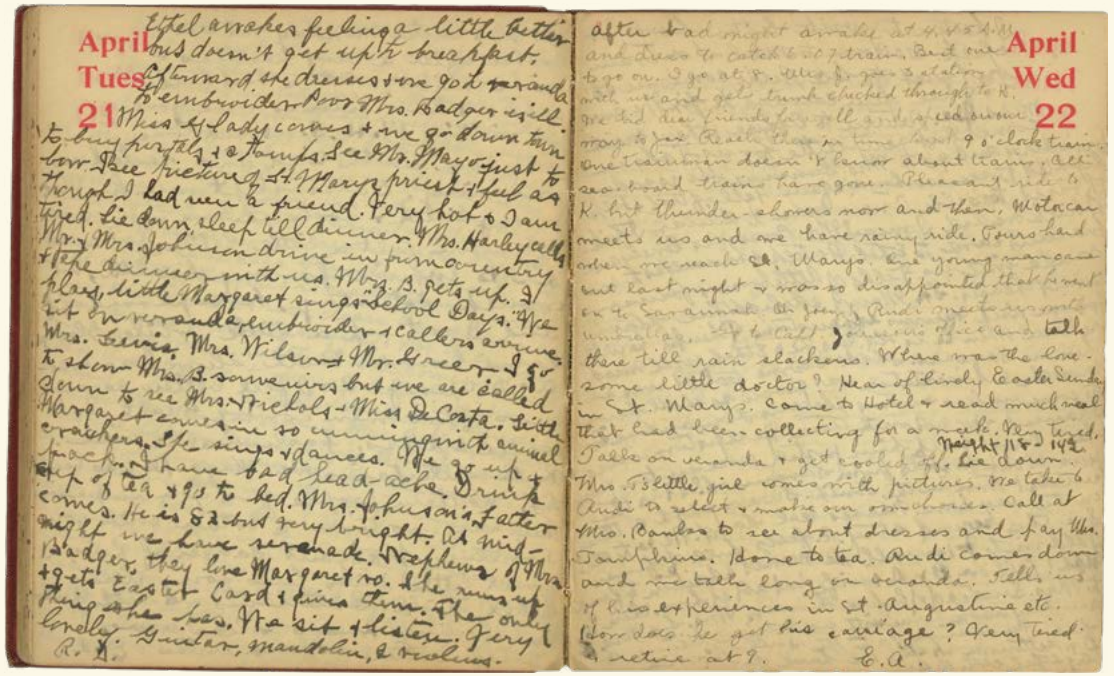
[WOMEN - GEORGIA - PHOTOGRAPHERS - RACE - MASSACHUSETTS] ALLISON, RUTH; ALLISON, ETHEL

1908 Diary of Ruth and Ethel Allison, Fitchburger Sister Photographers, on a Luxurious Trip to the Jim Crow South and Shooting the 1908 Atlanta Terminal Fire on Their Way Home: "Come at once to a big fire, and bring the Kodak."

Georgia, Massachusetts, and others: 1908. Journal in red fabric measuring approximately 5 x 5 ½ inches. 362 pp filled out, totaling roughly 35,000 words. Cover worn with fading, especially to spine, very good. Contents Near Fine. Overall excellent.

A 1908 daily diary shared by Ethel Allison (1880–1913) and her younger sister Ruth (1883–1971), with each switching off days writing from January to May when Ethel takes over. Hailing from Fitchburg, Massachusetts, the sisters were socialites, amateur photographers, and well-traveled on the East Coast. The diary covers most of the sisters' monthslong visit to Jim Crow Georgia, their return to Massachusetts, and the start of a second trip to the South.

Besides documenting their lifestyle of social calls, singalongs, boating, sleeping in, and shopping—financed by their father, Henry Allison, president and director of Fitchburg's Safety Fund National Bank and trustee of the Fitchburg Savings Bank[1]—the diary provides a look at the lives and activities of two fairly independent young women who were avid photographers and travelers, and whose privileged Northern lifestyle slotted in exceptionally well to the affluent and racist white South.



Written mainly from St. Mary's, a city on the Georgia coast bordering Florida, the diary is highlighted by the sisters' somewhat unusual hobby of photography. They often mention "printing" and getting "blue print paper," indicating that they were doing their own cyanotype printing, both at home and in their hotel at St. Mary's. They photograph "live-oaks" and the "arrival of [a] Coach" (Mar. 7); the train station and delivery wagon; drumfish at the wharf; and a porpoise, wrestled down by "Mr. Lee [...] while we take two pictures of him" (Mar. 15). However, their most extensive photographic discussion concerns shooting the 1908 Terminal District Fire in Atlanta, which they witnessed on their return trip from St. Mary's back to Fitchburg. Ethel writes:

"Well, well, what will a day not bring forth? We start in

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1908 Diary of Fitchburger Sister Photographers.

by being awakened by a cab-man at 5 A.M. who tells us that W.G.C. has sent us a cab and wants us to come at once to a big fire, and to bring the kodak. We make great haste and reach the terminal station in time to take first pictures of big fire. Glorious but awful sight. Mr. C. sees that we mount the terminal and take two views from there. Mr. Benjamin of N.Y. desires photo of fire and leaves us his address. We start home and W.G.C. sees us as far as the corner. Newspaper man meets us and we go to the Photographers & leave plates to be developed. Ruth has photo taken. Home to a late breakfast much excited." (May 8)

The fire, which was Atlanta's most destructive to that date, started in a cracker factory on Nelson Street and Madison Avenue (Spring Street), and high winds quickly spread it along. Ultimately forty-two businesses were totally destroyed and twenty-five heavily damaged, with total losses estimated at $1.25 million.[2] The sisters follow up at the studio on the 9th:

"We go to photographers & I engage for pictures. [...] See ruins of fire. Try to see Mr. Branch of the Atlanta Journal but he is not in. Get 1 doz. papers." (May 9)

They finally bring them to the Atlanta Journal on the 11th, "& are paid $4.25 for fire pictures." It is unclear whether the newspaper actually made use of their photos, as the photos it ran around the time were credited to other photographers or were uncredited, and coverage of the events had already declined sharply by the 11th when the sisters dropped their photos off.

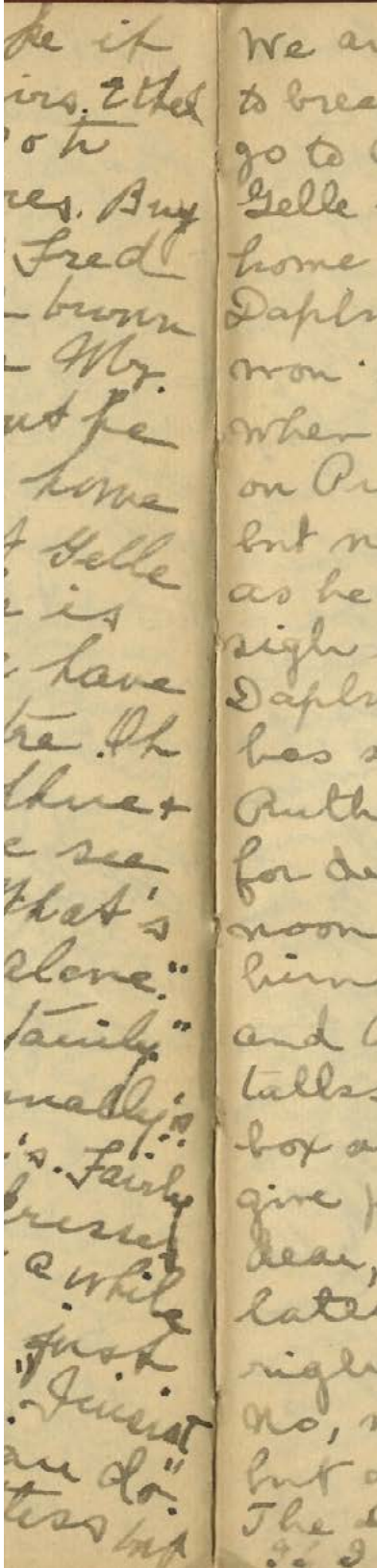
The sisters also photograph the African American residents of St. Mary's; for instance, they shoot an "old [n—r]-house" (Mar. 31), "Go to see [N—r] excursion" (Mar. 29), and make a whole outing of observing and photographing local African Americans:

"After dinner Mr. Cross helped take picture of Capt. Johnson & his wife, then Dr. Patten joined us and we took photo of [n—r] family. How did I disturb the heart of a Southern man! [...] [N—r] wedding at Zion Baptist a treat. Rudi full of fun — Coco Cola." (Mar. 25)

The photographic work crosses over with their explicit racial attitudes; a secondary highlight of the diary is the Yankee sisters' fascination with the Northern-Southern cultural divide, placed alongside entries that reveal that in retrospect the gap is not so large as the sisters might think. For instance, Ethel mentions a talk with "Mr. R." in which "we get into [an] argument on [the] slavery question. Uncle Toms Cabin Marching thro' Georgia etc." (Feb. 12), and Ruth writes of a "long talk with all the boys" about "Which is worse? Do Northern girls differ from Southern ones?" (Feb. 13). They often "praise the Southern men" (Mar. 28), both to those men and back home in Massachusetts, but are skeptical of claims made by those like "Mrs. Evans," who states that "it is the thing for a Northern girl to marry a Southern man," asking, "Is it?" (Apr. 24). Though Ethel finds it enough of a scene to comment on Mr. R. "go[ing] by 'bossing [n—r]s'" (Jan. 27), the girls make plenty of casual racial comments of their own: "Joe was busy with [n—r]s in the store so we went to walk" (Feb. 22); "Mrs. Simmons calls. [...] Tells tales of our & her [n—r]-boy" (Apr. 2); "right in the midst of our packing our white gowns store [n—r] appears. We felt like Sally oh! dear! Oh dear!" (Apr. 14).

Ruth also reports on a trial related to racial unrest in

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1908 Diary of Fitchburger Sister Photographers.

neighboring Kingsland, Georgia, in which some of her acquaintances seemingly participated: "[N—r] riot in Kingsland tried. Defendant + witnesses at hotel. [...] Mrs. Davis told us all about the riot + her little girl [?] saying 'Shoot 'em Papa'" (Apr. 13). However, we do not find an event matching this description documented at the time of writing.

Lastly, the diary provides colorful tidbits of local history. The sisters visit Dungeness and Plum Orchard, then occupied by the Carnegies:

"We are invited to Dungeness and we decide to risk the weather and go. We take the 10 o'clock boat & calmly stay in cabins. [...] We meet Mrs. Yates & delightful lunch is served. We see photos etc. After lunch with a three-seater & pair belonging to Mrs. Carnegie we take a two-hour ride out to Plum Orchard, 22,000 acres on the island 21 miles long. See Thom's sister's home, also other children's houses. Beautiful drive through the woods amid the palms. Go round by Dungeness home. Beautiful place." (Feb. 14)

It is not clear whether this was a social call or more of a touristic visit, though "Thom" could be Thomas M. Carnegie Jr.; if so, the first-name basis indicates much about the Allisons' social standing.

The sisters also see—and photograph—a Knights of Pythias event, estimating 270 Knights at the courthouse for it (Feb. 16); mention the move of the Camden County Tribune office to St. Mary's with a "visit [to the] new printing-office" (Mar. 7); and catch an ostrich race at a local zoo:

"Do a little shopping. Then have dinner & decide to go to Ostrich farm. Fine car ride. The farm is very interesting. First walk around and see monkey & other animals. Sit in swing. We see the race. Ostriches harnessed & driven round the track, then two little [n—r] boys ride bare-back. Funny the way they catch them and immediately put hood[s] over their heads. It quiets them at once. We buy souvenirs then take car home." (May 1)

In mid-May they return to an easy social life in Central Massachusetts, with visits to Holyoke, Boston, and New Hampshire. In the fall they help Henry Allison "close up the Lodge" (Oct. 6), likely the Masonic Lodge in Fitchburg, for which he was at one point the secretary;[3] and in December they head back to Georgia and rejoin their old crowd, whom they "Never expected to see [...] again" (Dec. 15).

Overall the diary provides a look at rich, white, Jim Crow-era Georgia from the perspective of two wealthy young Yankee women sympathetic to that milieu, as well as a written record of their activities as photographers of their life and times.

[1] *Fitchburg—A Quality City* (Fitchburg Sentinel, 1912), 32–36.
[2] "Terminal District Fire. 1908," Atlanta History Center, accessed October 20, 2026, http://album.atlantahistorycenter.com/cdm/ref/collection/athpc/id/2777.
[3] J. Fletcher Brennan, *General Register of Freemasonry* (American Masonic Publishing Association, 1871), 111.

$2,500

