

Franklin (La) March 13th 1845

My Dear Wife - We arrived here on the 8th of Feb. 32 days from Baltimore, having left Baltimore on the 8th of Jany. With the exception of loosing a cable and anchor and having to put into Norfolk to procure another, we had quite a pleasant voige, with but little more than the common routine of a sea life - I would have written to you upon our arrival here, but the Capt and I thought that it would be as well for him to write then apprizing you of our arrival here, and for me to write when we should be ready to embark for home. I received your letter, and paper also on the day that we arrived here - I soon devoured their contents and felt at ease - you can hardly immagin how glad I was to hear from home - The eger immamation can make a few short sentences, from home and friends, speak volumes. The fear that your health might be more feeble than when I left troubled me much.

You say that you have bought some wood for me to saw up when I get home - It seems then that you are determined to keep me at home with you a while, long enough at least to saw you up some wood - that is capital, I know of nothing that could suit me so well & shall want some rest when I get home, and sawing wood you know is fine sport, especially where you have to saw it short, well go ahead buy all that you can.

Olive I suppose is with you never tell her what I want to see her very much and want her to stop with you until I return, if she does not I know not when I shall see her. Can she not get a school there.

How is my dear little boy, I suppose that he talks a good deal about his pa-pa, and wants his pa-pa to come home and play with da-dy - poor child, you know not how much your pa-pa wants to see you, he would go a long distance this very night to see his dear child, - well be a good boy - your pa-pa hopes to see you again soon, and will bring you something pretty when he comes home.

You need give yourself no trouble about Johnson, I intend to pay him as soon as I can, but the debt which I owe my family is due before his. My clothes stick by me yet in pretty good shape with what mending I do to them.

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Contributed to Maine Memory Network by the Maine Historical Society
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Date: March 13, 1845

Description: Letter from John Davison to his wife, Eliza, concerning family life, slavery and shipping near Louisiana.

It is very healthy here - The climate is delightful, it seems like perpetual Summer -
The forest is dressed in living green, the orange tree is laden with its yellow fruit,
and the peach is in full bloom. The manufacture of sugar is carried on here
quite extensively, and is rapidly increasing. The thing only prevents Louisiana
from being the most desirable part of the whole country, and that is slavery - Slavery in its
dark broad march casts a shadow before it, and curses and withers every thing that
it touches. We may compassionate the poor slave as we see him hurried away to his daily
task, without distinction of sex by his cruel task master; this however we may witness
in silence upon the supposition that such is the fate of poverty in other nations;
But what can we say when we see mothers, at the first glimmerings of day,
with the tender infant on one arm, and the slave's hoe on the other,
marching off to the field there to labour till dark under the
lash of that infernal cannibal, the slave driver, who, shameless
wretch, will cause men to extend those females on the ground upon their faces,
unblushingly turn up their clothes and there publicly beat them in the
presence of their own husbands and children until the blood gushes from
the wounds inflicted; nearly for some trifling or fancied offence -
but this is slavery in its milder forms. Society here is just what it
must necessarily be in a slave holding community - The Lord, and
the Slave, or what amounts to the same in the abstract, I can see
no condition between the two extremes. Let them be black or white.
I don't however feel prepared to say that the immediate abolition
of slavery would not make the condition of the slave, upon the
whole, worse than it now is.

It is quite a tedious business, cruising around here with a vessel, in consequence
of the narrowness and crookedness of their rivers, or byo's as they call them here,
they are quite shallow to. Franklin is some 40 or 50 miles up the river
we have however been as high up as New-Town which is about 80 miles
up - We cannot take a full cargo from here by reason of the shallowness of
the water, but shall have to go to barrel stake some 20 miles from the mouth

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the water, but we shall have to go to barrel stake some 20 miles from the mouth

of the river where a part of our cargo will be brought to us by a lighter.
We are now all ready and shall get along towards home as fast as
possible, we shall not probably get to barrel stake in time to leave
before the 20th of this month, and shall not arrive at Philadelphia
before the 20th, or 30th, perhaps, of April. From Philadelphia we shall sail for
home. When we came out we were expected to take a cargo for Baltimore
but have made other arrangements since - I want you to write to me at
Philadelphia, write in time for it to get there by the 15th of April if
you can, or 20th, write every particular - Tell Eliza how we are getting
along and that the Captⁿ wants her to write to him at
Philadelphia as soon as she receives ~~news~~ this - Direct to
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In haste

Affectionately your husband

John Davison

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