

FROM BENJAMIN SCRIPPS TO WILLIAM SCRIPPS, NEAR MORGANTOWN, VA.

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 25, 1805.

Dear Parents:

I arrived in this city on the 14th of Nov. last, before that dreadful contagion called the yellow fever had ceased to destroy its inhabitants. Several persons of my acquaintance fell victims to the dire disease, but by the blessing of God I enjoy my health, having but had one week's sickness during the whole season, & that at Natchez. I attribute my health in a great measure to a regular mode of life and a particularity of diet highly necessary in this hot climate, the neglect of which proves fatal to the generality of travelers.

I received from you, dated the 28th of June, a letter, & two more before that, which I got immediately on my return from my western excursion, but your last gave me the greatest satisfaction, as by that you appeared disposed to wait for my return, instead of taking that rash step which your two former letters induced me to believe, and which caused me great uneasiness, as such an undertaking would, in my opinion, be very prejudicial at present, and perhaps fatal to your lives. As I mean to leave Orleans before the setting in of the sickly season (which is the beginning of August for the Y fever), when by that time I hope I shall know what will be most to our advantage in respect to settlement. For in the unsettled state everything remains at present, I despair of getting land under the U. S. government, together with an utter dislike to the present constitution under Jefferson, which I think has considerably curtailed the privileges of the middle and lower class of citizens, besides many other disadvantages attending the climate and low situation of the territory of New Orleans, all which induces me to wait for the opportunity of making interest for settlement in the Spanish provinces* with Spanish officers, who, together with the Marquis De Casa Calvo and a part of the garrison, still remains here. I would wish you to write every post, if possible, as it is the greatest gratification I can at present receive. I hope that you will not bind John, but let him gain as much insight as possible in that line, as I hope to have it in my power yet for to settle to our satisfaction in some country more agreeable than where you are at present. Until such time I would wish you to remain on your little farm.

It gave me the greatest pleasure to read the flattering accounts

* He probably had in mind settlement in what is now Texas.