

Fort McIntosh Texas
March 1st 1853

Dear Brother

Your kind letter of the 22nd of Jan. was recieved on the 24th of Feb. and right glad I was to see it; I assure you, for I had only heard from home once since I had been here, and I began to think that you were not going to write at all. I suppose Father has recieved my letter before this time. Since I wrote to Father, I have been to Fort Dungen, at Eagle Pass, which is on the Rio Grande, one hundred and ten miles above Lerado. I went up in command of the escort for Ned Wallace, a brother of Capt. Wallace, Comdg. this Post. Part of the escort were mounted the rest rode in an ambulance drawn by four horses. The first day we went 36 miles and encamped at a pond of water called Willow Pond. Ned and myself were about half a mile behind the escort when they arrived at the Pond, and when we got up the men had unhitched the horses and got as much water from the pond as we wanted for Culinary purposes, and three of them had rolled up their trousers and were ~~wading~~ wading about in the pond trying to catch some fish with their hands, but up to this time they had been very unsuccessfull, as soon however as they got the

pond well muddied they commenced throwing them out, and I do not think it was more than ten minutes after they caught the first fish, before they had a three bushel bag full, the most of them weighing about 7 pounds each, some, however, would go as high as 10 pounds, You can imagine that I was highly amused at this scene as fishing was always one of my favorite sports, Most of the fish were buffalo, and not very good but there were five or six ~~fine~~ Perch that would weigh from six to eight pounds each, We had fresh fish until we got to Eagle Pass.

The second day we traveled thirty five miles and encamped at a place called Reed Pond, The third day we experienced a severe norther, which commenced, about eleven O'clock.

It was very warm ten minutes before the wind commenced blowing, the wind blew directly in our faces, and being accompanied with hail and rain was extremely disagreeable, It stopped raining and hailing about one O'clock and we encamped 16 miles from Eagle Pass, having traveled 29 miles, Ned Wallace and myself went to bed about dark, because we thought we could protect ourselves better from the cold north wind, by doing so, I had taken a good deal of pains to break the wind by setting grass against a limb of the bush under which we had made our bed and we flattered ourselves that we were going to have a very pleasant sleep, in spite of the norther, but in this we were very much mistaken, for about eight O'clock it commenced raining, and about ten we both woke up and found our blankets wet through, Our only chance for

campfire was to get up and stand by the fire until daylight, which we did. By 11 o'clock, the trees grass and everything was covered about half an inch thick with ice. About 11 it commenced snowing in addition to the rain, and continued until daylight, at which time the ground was covered about two inches thick with ice, the rain and snow having frozen as it fell. We suffered a great deal from the cold on account of the wood which the men brought us being so thickly covered with ice that we could not put it on the fire for fear of putting it out. The only wood we could use was about an armful which was seasoned and easily broken into short lengths, so that it could be set up by the fire, and the ice melted off. If I had put all the wood that I burned during the whole night, on the fire at once it would not have made a fire large enough to keep us warm. You may think it strange that I did not send the men out to get more wood. It would have been useless if I had, for the night was so dark that we could not see an inch and all the wood they could possibly have got would have been brush covered with ice, and we had which would have been useless. It took us at least two hours the next morning to thaw our saddle blankets and saddles so that we could put them on the horses. I do not think that I ever spent so disagreeable a night in my life, and Ned Wallace was the most disgusted man I ever saw. After we got started it did not take us long to go the remaining 16 miles to Eagle Pass. I remained at Eagle Pass four days, and had a very pleasant visit. In returning to this point there was nothing transpiring

worth mentioning until we got to Willow Pond again where the men caught about five bushels more fish which we brought into camp with us

I am learning to speak Spanish or rather Mexican, until within a week past I have had no books to study, and all I learned was what I picked up from hearing the Mexicans talk, but I have now got a copy of Ollendorff's new method of learning to read write and speak the Spanish language, and I am making much better progress. It would amuse you very much to see me taking a lesson in pronunciation. The way I do, is, to get on my horse, and ride into Lerado, and stop at some jacal, and commence talking if the pronunciation is not right - the Mexicans always repeat the word, and in this way I get the proper pronunciation. There are a great many Benaritas in Lerado some of them are quite pretty, and have a very good complexion by candle light, but when seen by daylight the greater part of them have a rather dingy appearance, there are a few, however, who have quite as fair a complexion as the American ladies. The Mexicans are great folks for dancing and the officers all along the Rio Grande frontier attend their dances, I do not mean the San dangos for they are only attended by the lower class of Mexicans. It would amuse you to see the Benaritas dancing they look so solemn that it would require but a slight effort of the imagination to make one think that he

was at a funeral, They consider it quite impolite to talk or laugh or ~~or~~ whilst dancing. They dance the Polka, waltz, and Quadrills, And all of them dance extremely well

I received a visit a few days ago from J. N. Banapark a classmate of mine, he belongs to the Rifle Reg. and is stationed at Fort Luel on the Moors about 60 miles from this place, He was perfectly delighted with Lerado, and wishes that he was stationed here. We all went to a dance whilst he was here, and it was very amusing to hear him try to talk Spanish, He only knew a few words and every one he danced with was entertained as follows, ~~Go entienda~~ Habla usted Ingles? (do you speak English) No Señor, (no sir) Entienda usted Ingles? (do you understand English) No Señor Go no habla ni entienda Española? (I do not speak or understand Spanish) and here his conversations always ended with, an exception when by a great exertion he managed to say, Está el doctor viejo, eso el doctor nuevo, (This the ~~old~~ doctor, that the new doctor pointing at the same time to the two doctors

I have to pay about twenty dollars a month for board, and do not get any thing to eat at that, We have to pay from 6 to 10 dollars per barrel for potatoes which is the only vegetable we can get, excepting a few pumpkins, about the size of my head for which we pay sixpence apiece, butter costs us from 40 to 50

cents a pound, Chickens $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents apiece, and beef 8 cts a pound, I think that we can get butter from the States, and not cost us more than 18 or twenty cents a pound, as we would only have to pay transportation to Corpus Christy. I wish you would tell Father to have two kegs of nice butter put up and sent to me. The kegs which contain the butter will have to be put in larger kegs, and filled with brine. Have them directed to me, in care of the Quarter Master at Corpus Christy. They will have to be shipped to some house in New Orleans for reshipment.

I intend to send you some money as soon as I can get a check. I will write and let you know when I send it; what I want done with it.

I am really delighted to hear that Father has bought the old Buckingham place, for I always thought that it was the prettiest situation for a residence in Lackeny County, and I have often wished that we owned it. I suppose that you will all be settled down in it long before I get home.

It is very kind in you to wish to put off your wedding until I come home, but I fear you will get quite tired of waiting long before you see me in Newark, for in all probability it will be four or five years before I can return home, and by that time you will be almost an old Bachelor. So I shall not expect you to wait until I come home. I am delighted to hear that you are going to marry Cousin Ann for I think she has the sweetest disposition of any girl I ever saw, not excepting my own favorite, who

I intend to marry when I get to be a Captain
is she does not get married before that time,

I would finish this sheet if I were not
already nearly fazed out, for it is now quite late
and I have been writing since about twelve O'clock
making out the proceedings of a Court Martial,
and I assure you that it is a great bore
I may, however, have time to put in a P.S. before
the mail goes out day after tomorrow morning
I do not think that you will have much to complain
of for I have already written you quite a long letter

I received a letter from Mary &
one from Eliza at the same time I received yours
I will answer them both as soon as I can find
time, I cannot possibly write them in time for
this mail, so I will they will have to wait a week
at least, and perhaps longer

Give my love to Father, Mother, Mary
Eliza, Mr Robins & family, and all enquiring friends.

Your affectionate Brother
Chas W. Woods
Box 22 N 1st City

P.S I have been very busy all this morning in
settling the accounts of the Post Treasurer, who is
sick, and in recording the proceedings of the
Council of Administration. I still like my
post as well, if not better than when I wrote you
before, I think Capt. Wallace is the best man I

6
ever knew, he takes a great deal of pains to instruct me, in on every subject relative to my duties upon which I am not posted, he also has a very good opinion of, but not without cause, for I always do my duty promptly, and no matter how disagreeable the duty may be, I go at it cheerfully. And when I see any thing going wrong about the post I never fail to report it. He also offers me a great many privileges, which I do not ask for, and which he grants to the other officers of the post with reluctance when they ask. It very often happens that an Officer wishes to be relieved from his duties as Officer of the Day in order to go to a dance in town; the Capt always offers to take my sword if he thinks I want to go. But I always decline, no matter how much I may wish to go.

Yours Truly

C. R. M.