

George Fearing Hollis Papers

1852 - 1903

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Hollis, William H. (brother)



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U. S. Smb. Louisiana
Newport News, Sept. 22 1861

Dear William:-

A rainy Sunday finds me located in the messroom, this afternoon, instead of rambling about ashore; and I think I ought to take advantage of my situation and send you a few lines in answer to yours of the 31st ult. You must pardon my negligence in not giving Mr. Spener a letter of introduction to you. But I did not receive my advance till nearly ready to sail, and having many things to attend to, I forgot that very necessary act of politeness.

While we were down to the fortress the other day, I saw the Demabock, of Boston. Indeed, we saw her too closely, for one of our green masters came near making sad havoc with one or the other of us. We just cleared his flying jibboom, the end of which caught in our ensign halliards, and hauled

our ensign down: so, you see we were
obliged to dip our colors to a Boston
Craft. This green master, I am happy to
inform you, has been transferred to the
Steamer Roanoke, for the reason, I suppose,
that the worst officers should be attached
to the best ships. I hope he will fall
in with some merchant who will
bring him to his trumps.

Our Capt. says if he is transferred he
shall try to take us all with him,
as he likes us all. One of my superior
officers told me the other night, that
if I would make application for a
masters commission he would doubtless
approve it, as he liked me much.
I know you will all be pleased
to learn that fact, for I can never
for that — to give satisfaction to
my superiors — that I do for a
higher officer, though it would
bring me in an extra \$10. per month.

All I strive for is to do my duty, and I never yet was aboard of a ship, without leaving with a better reputation than when I entered.

I am sorry to write that I write more letters than I receive: though I can't complain. Mother has now a double care on her with her two sons away. I have not yet received a letter from El. I answered Mr. Genord's letter: please inquire whether he received it.

Carrie Quincy has not answered my letter. Tell her that is not according to agreement.

Last night we had an alarm, during my watch, and all hands were at quarters for an hour, as was the case aboard ^{the} ~~the~~ Yorktown, who were endeavoring to elude our vigilance, and she may have succeeded as it was very dark during the latter part

of the night.

I should like to know whether Stanley has collected money due me. Grant owes me \$9.50, viz. \$6. I think, and Lane between \$4. & \$5. Furthermore, what is the prospect in regard to the furniture of the school room? Monday A.M. I have created considerable amusement in the mess, by leaping from my third story berth, during the night, imagining that all hands were called to quarters. Sunday night while I was in a sound sleep, the lookout came my head called out his customary cry of "Port quarters." and before the words had died on the air I was crawling into my trousers. A moment after I was sound asleep in my berth. The foot of this berth lies close to the boiler, and it will be quite an institution in cold weather after a cold water on deck. It is as good as a warming pan.

In my last letter to mother, I told her I would send some specimens. Here they are - comprising fig, castor bean, holly, ivy from the fortress, pine, &c. take care of them.

Rev. Gary

U. S. Steamer Louisiana,
New Bern, April 13th 1862
Sunday, A. M.

Dear Bro. William:—

We have just arrived here after a two days' cruise up the Pamlico and Pungo rivers. We went up the Pamlico to finish our work of destroying the batteries on the banks of that river, and blew up the magazines &c. They were very formidable works, and the rebels might have given us warm work had they remained to die with our possession. They had built many fine houses for barracks, superior in every respect, to those of our troops, and these they had left standing. From Pungo river we brought three refugee families, men, women and children. We took them on board last evening, and as we had no sleeping accommodations for them, they were obliged to sit up in the engine room. We brought all their household furniture away with us, all of the primitive description. The women were all notorious "dippers," and were incessantly rubbing their teeth and gums with a stick dipped in snuff. This seems to be the most general accomplishment that is practiced down this way, and is indulged in by females of all classes of society. You can have no idea of this disgusting practice till you see it. There was one quite pretty girl of the party, and I was surprised when I saw her indulge with the others. The poor whites here are miserable, shiftless fellows, and seem to have no more ambition than the negro slaves; indeed you will

find many slaves who are their superiors in every sense, and have more right to the title of men than they bear. These people look as if they might be ignorant enough to believe anything, and it is no wonder that their leaders succeed so well in gulping them. We took a young refugee aboard, a Scotchman, who was taken prisoner at Hatteras, and spent six months in Fort Warren. He said he was treated there much better than he deserved to be, and never fared better in his life. He was Commodore Warren's orderly.

The rebel cavalry are now riding about the country, impressing every body, and any one suspected of a leaning towards Unionism, is at once taken to Richmond, and what becomes of them there, no one knows. They generally come at night, and bear men away from their homes in a most summary manner. A perfect reign of terror now prevails here, and this state can not last a great while. There must come a reaction soon, and the rebound will throw many off their feet. I think I will wait awhile to see if there is any mail for us.

P.M. One of our officers has just returned from shore bringing the gratifying intelligence that Island No. 10. and Corinth have been taken by our forces. So it seems that the "Wartaroo" of the Campaign has resulted in our favor! Now what a stampede there will be down the Mississippi and what a scene of confusion will be seen in the cities on the banks of that river! Well, it is cheering to be continually receiving such good news; it shows that some are

wide awake and moving in earnest. Now, what
will Mr. Clellan do? It seems he has taken
Yorktown, but I hope he will not remain
there long, but will gather himself up for
another blow at rebellion. These successive
reverses must be making themselves felt
in rebellion, and can hardly prove very
encouraging to the rebel army. I wonder what
effect it will have on the sale and use
of whisky? The rebel papers are loud
in their lamentations over the undue indul-
gence of that beverage by the soldiers, and
prophecy that if ever they are conquered, it
will be by the "Yankee ally," and not by
the Union army. They might learn something
from the "muddills" if they were so disposed.
We have had quite cool weather for the past
two or three days, but not cold enough to hurt
the fruit blossoms. I had a return of my
cold, and suffered some from rheumatism,
but feel quite smart to-day. One takes cold
much more readily when sailing on fresh
than in salt water.

From what I have seen and learned of this state
I am convinced that many a fortune is to be
made here with a little Yankee energy.

Any man, with common industry and a small
capital could acquire an independent fortune
in fifteen years or so, by embarking in the
grape culture. There is no place in the Union
where ^{the} grape flourishes more abundantly or
where the crop is more sure than in this
state; but the people here neither know enough

nor have enterprise enough to take advantage
of their natural wealth. It would take the
brains of ten North Carolinians to fill the
skull of one Yankee farmer. That is from
actual measurement.

Do you draw my allotment every month?
When will you move into your new store?
Let me know as early as possible so that
I change letter directions. I would much like
to look into your new place of business.
I should think you might create a splendid
trade with such a stand.

Papers and letters now come very regularly, and
the arrivals are as frequent as we could
well have for — one, at least, a week.

It is reported that two regiments that ventured
their heads into Elizabeth City were "bagged"
by Hawkins's Lancers. They rather sprang a
trap on them that time.

This letter is rather disjointed and fragmentary,
but you must pardon all, for I believe the
mail leaves to-morrow morning early, and I
wish to take this ashore this afternoon.

A mail will arrive here this evening, and I hope
to get lots of good letters.

Give my love to Father, Mother, Brothers and
Sisters, and all our friends.

Yours in brotherly love, George

Please ~~me~~
"mail me
"Oppress C.
Kens" book
when it ap-
pears.
Heir's take
a round
about way
to send her
love to you
all. I have
just written
a lengthy
letter to
the Herald
G.

U.S. Steamer Louisiana
Washington D. C. Aug. 8th 1862.

Dear Bro. William:

I am somewhat confused to day
in regard to my letter writing, and can not
recall when I last wrote, or what I acknowl-
edged; so if you are favored with repetition
you may not be surprised.

We have received two mails since I last heard
from home. Our mails are so erratic that
sometimes we are gladdened and at others
our market is barren for some time.
Our news from the North is not very
cheering, and many that I know of are "blue
blue," but of the wrong shade. I often hear
the remark that "all is up" and the war about
"played out for us." I don't believe it: now
is the time to think of victory when they
have brought every thing possible into the
field. We now know just what to count
upon, what preparations to make, the number
of men, but not the number of days re-
quired. I think one thing is very evident,
that is that James's river is "played out"
as a field of operations. I don't see how
any thing can be gained there now.

Of nothing happens to prevent it, I have
no doubt that we shall awake one of these
days. The Yankees seem to have lost their
national characteristic of always being
wide-awake and never to be caught napping.
Let how often have they been caught asleep
during this war, and only awakened when
they received a poke in the ribs from some
other man. This ship that we saw is being
built in Wilmington, and we may soon have
an opportunity to see her. (Erase before showing)
When she has done her work we shall have
a flot of iron monitors down her to look
after the wreck. If she appears I want
to see the old ship go down with her flag
flying. We can't be expected to strike an iron
saw, but we can fight till she sinks.
Now that Congress has adjourned I trust more
promptness and energy will be displayed
by the Executive and heads of the departments.
Some of us would like to get home before
1870; but we won't unless things go on a
little better than they have.
Hot weather has come again with renewed
power, and seems to take hold of us a little
more strongly than before, and it is rather
hard work to worry through the dog.
Last night there was not a breath of air

steering, and some found it difficult to sleep.

I spent the evening ashore with a small party of ladies and gentlemen and we had an agreeable time. We had some nice ice-cream and Buck wine, and were favored with some excellent music and singing. As I had the mid watch I did not return till morning.

I saw Bro. Miller day before yesterday and had a pleasant chat of home matters for two hours. I would not have objected to bear him company on his visit home. It was something to see some one who had seen you all.

I believe I told you the bundle came safely to hand before Mr. Miller arrived here. He sent it up from Newbern in the mail.

There is nothing stirring in this department, and no signs of anything to come.

I suppose you will soon make a demonstration of his Union sentiments. I didn't take your allusion till after reading Mr. Miller's letter. I should much like to be at home to witness the first launch in the ~~city~~ family, but they must take the will for the deed. Mr. Miller did something in this line at Newbern the other day - united the State wain's mate of the "Hetzell" to a blooming N. Carolinian with Union sentiments.

Aug. 8th Our Year ago day before yesterday since we sailed from Phila. In another year our engine will be up, if not before.

Yesterday I received a nice long letter from Luissin and Henry Hudson, with the photographs of my pets, and a bundle of papers in which I found little Gump Gilley's who I was like discovering a jewel. In the afternoon I went ashore and showed my acquisition to my lady friends here. They were delighted with the pictures, and gave my three pets a host of compliments. I carried my stock of photographs to my young sick friend to whom I often send some delicacies. He studied them over with great pleasure, and begged me to bring them again when I called that he might examine them more particularly. His little sister, a pretty little dimpled-cheked girl, has named one of her young kids "Ellie Hallie". I have found some warm-hearted friends here as I always find, wherever I go. They try to make my time pass as pleasantly as possible, and exert themselves for my pleasure. They seem to think more highly of the Navy Officers than of the Army. I see by Ed's letter to John Halim he wishes Mother to send him my letters. I think it a good idea. I reckon he will be able to read them with a little practice, if not I will do my best to render them legible. Tell Mother the 17th Reg't is at Newbern, and I don't know when I shall see that place. They want to keep us here though we are out of coal.

Our Paymaster has not yet returned nor have we yet received a word from him. Expect him any day. I would like very much to read Bro. Leonard's sermon on the new coal, but I suppose I can't have the privilege. Give him my love, and may God bless him for his good work! Give my love to Father, Mother and all the boys and girls. Love to Mrs & Mrs Gilley with many thanks for their kindness in sending me Frank's picture. If they knew how highly I prized it, they would think it well bestowed.

Very truly
Your Son, George.