

Matagorda July 20th 1836

My Father

This is the first letter I have that is advisable to send you since the receipt of yours of the 18th Dec 1835-brought by my wife-I prepared an answer immediately on my wife's arrival here and intended to have sent it as far as New Orleans by the vessel she came here in-but before the vessel left the Bay the intelligence was brought here of the retaking of the Town of San Antonio-the defeat of the army under Col. Fannin and of the rapid march of the Mexican Army-(too strong to be met) upon us-all this news coming upon us is suddenly and entirely unexpected a complete consternation ensued and every citizen able to do so left the town and got on board the vessels in the Bay to be off-the complexion of affairs being so much altered from the time I wrote till I could have sent the letter I did not send it- but myself wife & child went on board the same vessel on which they came out-and remained in the Bay until the vessel left for New Orleans-which was on the third of April-we remained at New Orleans about 2 weeks-in part waiting for a vessel to go to Matamoros a large town on the Rio Grand in the State of Tamaulipas and one that was at peace with the General Government of Mexico- but a vessel arriving at New Orleans while we were waiting-brought intelligence that the American citizens were likely to be expelled from the town I concluded to go up the Red River in the hope of finding a place suitable to my views and circumstances- accordingly we took passage to Natchitoches-but when at Alexandria-about 150 miles below-we met the intelligence of the capture of Santa Anna and the defeat and retreat of the Mexican Army from Texas-however we continued our journey to Natchitoches-where we remained about a week without having any positive confirmation of

the news of the defeat of Santa Anna-and being extremely anxious to know the truth of the matter and the State of affairs in the country-I purchased a horse and set out by land for the Sabine-intending to return in about 10 or 12 days-but when I arrived on the Sabine I could hear but little news as to the State of the country-and as Banta had Stayed at Passo Caballo-(the Entrance to the Matagorda Bay) when we left and I had not heard from him since I left then I was anxious to know what had become of him-I concluded to prosecute my journey back to this place in the hope of hearing from him-which I did and found he also had gone to New Orleans but not untill after the defeat of Santa Anna-owing to Some hindrances I did not get to this place untill the fourteenth day after I started-I stayed here only one day and started back but I soon got So Sore full of Boyles-as to be unable to ride I however got as far as Linchburg on the Sanjacinto from whence I got a passage to Galveston Island by the Steam Boat after a few days and from there to New Orleans by Schooner-and again to Natchitoches by Steam-having been from there five full weeks-But I must leave it to you to judge what were my feelings on entering the House and the room in which I five weeks before took as I thought a leave for 10 or 12 days of all that was dear to me there-the warm kiss and the fresh tear of my constant wife and my dear and only child-but alas when with a light Step and a joyous heart I sought them I left-I met but my wife and with Such a Shriek that told too well the Sad truth that our child was no more-the unhappy little Sufferer was taken Seriously Sick the Seventh day after I left Natchitoches and died the fifth day after she was taken (the 17th May) The Physician who attended her (Doct. Heard) describes her disease to have been the cholera infantum and the measles in Putrid form But there is no dependence to be placed in the Statements of most of the Physicians of this country as they are generally mere Pretenders-or men of great dissipation-the one employed

-Heard is of the latter class and was the Best one my wife could get and the best one in the Town of Natchitoches-My wife thinks our little one was very badly treated and fully believes that with good treatment she would have recovered

For my own satisfaction I had the little corpse taken up that I might See it-and Strange as it may seem the man who had dug the grave and covered it again-was compelled to dig up three before he could find the right one and only three weeks after she was Buried-So great is the mortality of the place and the accumulation of new graves I could get no tomb Stones in the place but had a Head and foot Board cut from plank & Painted white and lettered with the following Plain inscription

In memory of Mary Elizabeth
Daughter of Andrew & Mary Margaret
Mitchell-who died at
Natchitoches, May 17th
1836 aged one year
Six months and
21 days - and placed at the ends of the grave

This simple tribute was all I could leave to her memory at her grave-I could not get a fence put about the grave while I remained there-But I agreed with a carpenter there to have a neat fence Put around the little grave which I think he will do

My wife has borne this misfortune as all others that have befallen us since our union with a fortitude and resignation Which I am incapable of exercising.

Banta did not come on with us this time from New Orleans-he came with us to New Orleans from Natchitoches-but preferred to stay there for the present Andrew M Billings is also there-I expect both of them to come on here So soon as they hear from me by the return of the vessel now in the Bay-We arrived here about 8 days ago and find the air and climate delightful-After writing to you last winter in a few days I left the School I had to take charge of a Store and Sett of Books for a gent by the name of Wallace (Col J W E Wallace) at the rate \$1200 per year but I had only been employed in this way about 2 months

where the approach of the Mexicans made it necessary to leave here in haste
I however Saved what goods I could together with the Books and papers
of value belonging to Col Wallace-he was at the time at another
Store of his and I have not Seen him Since-he is now in the army
The Texian Army are now at the Town of Victoria on the Guadalupe River
and the main body of the Mexican Army are about Seven miles this Side
of Matamoras (East) in the state of Tamaulipas-Said to be only waiting
for reinforcements to advance again upon Texas-but there is no longer any
fear on the part of the Texians as their army is now strong and will
able to contend with that of the Mexicans- The cabinets are now at
Velasco [] on the Brassos-but are expected here next week.

I was grieved to hear of the death of Aunt Nancy and of the injury of Aunt Jennet but
I trust the first is happy and the last (who should be considered our family saint) is well
I wish particularly to be remembered to my cousin Wm R. Mitchell for the
particular Service rendered to me by him-I intend to write to him
Some also to Thomas B. Mitchell and to Mr. Glen-if by chance you
may See Mr. Hand of Minden whose Son came out here last fall you may
Say to him his Son is Dead he was killed after being taken
prisoner at Goliad-he received 2 wounds in the Battle but would
have recovered from them- I hope you will write me Soon after
the receipt of this and Direct to Matagorda Texas-care of Thomas
Toby & Brothers New Orleans who are Texas agents-& Let us both be affectionately
remembered to all our Brothers & Sisters-Again I Subscribe

Your unfortunate Son
A Mitchell

(Address)

(Postmark)

New Orleans La. Aug. 5

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Mr. Hugh Mitchell
Speakers Baisin P.O.
Montgomery Co.
New York
USA

July 20
1836

[This is a LITERAL transcription, complete with original spelling, punctuation, and line breaks. Document accession number 74-55.1]