

Baton Rouge, La. Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> 1862  
Headqrs. 159<sup>th</sup> Reg't. NYS Vols.

Dear Father

In my last I told you that we had come to anchor off New Orleans. The city is almost entirely deserted along the levee & presents a most deplorable sight. As we were not allowed to go on shore I had no chance to see anything of the interior of the city. On the 16<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. we weighed anchor & started for Baton Rouge together with 5 transports & 6 Gun Boats. On the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> we arrived opposite the city when we came to anchor while the Iron Clad "Essex" went about ½ mile ahead of us to shell a rebel battery planted on the shores or rather on a bluff a little beyond the river. They did not have to fire more than a dozen shot before the rebels left. We were landed in the afternoon and were marched about a mile from where we landed to form our camp. We are directly opposite the City Barracks used by the regulars before the war broke out. Every preparation was made for an attack. We were ordered to send 4 of our companies on picket to lay on our arms all night & to turn out at 4 ½ a.m. so as to be ready in case they should make a demonstration. On the 18<sup>th</sup> our tents were pitched & our position assigned us in case of an attack. There are earth works all around our front thrown up by the rebels at the time they held the city & our rear is protected by the river & the gun boats which still lay at anchor. The city is entirely deserted with very few exceptions. A number of the houses have either been knocked down by shell or torn down to afford a clear space for a fight. It is without exception one of the most desolate places you could imagine. Provisions are enormously dear & scarce. Flour is \$150 pr bbl. & none to be had even at that figure, matches 50¢ pr box, boots \$30 to \$40 pr pair, shoes \$20 & nearly every thing else in the same way. The darkies are coming in by the dozen. Poor half starved & miserably clothed, they desert their masters & come to us for protection. There is a rebel Fort above us with (the report is) 15,000 men waiting for us to make a demonstration when they will surrender as they are nearly starved to death.

Harry [Tiemann] was quite sick the other day but is now quite recovered. I have not been sick as yet & hope to enjoy good health for some time to come. We have had splendid weather ever since we left New York. It has only rained twice & then only for a few minutes.

Hoping you are all well & with love to all I remain

Your affectionate Son  
Frank

Direct

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Baton Rouge  
La.