

CIVIL WAR TREASURES:Planter's Progeny

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Feature Essay

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Frierson, Jacob Alison *CIVIL WAR TREASURES:Planter's Progeny*.

New Acquisitions in the

Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections,

LSU Libraries' Special Collections

Dixie Rebel Details Routine

Collection: Jacob Alison Frierson Correspondence and Minutes, Mss. 4209, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, La. Size: 32 items.

Excerpt from letter dated April 18, 1865 (pictured above), written from a "Camp near Cotile" close to Alexandria, Louisiana, more than a week after Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox. Frierson refers to hearing "bad news" but is apparently unaware that the surrender has taken place:

"Two men were shot out of the 31st on last Friday for desertion one of them was reprieved but his superior did not come until Friday night, and that was too late to do the poor fellow any good. It is strange how men will disgrace themselves and lay themselves liable to [?] awful end. Four or Five have deserted from our Regt. in the last month - It is to be hoped there are not many more black sheep in our flock.

Our Division is cutting cord wood, mostly dry pine, it is said for the 'Gun Boats', but I think from the quantity it must be for the 'Steam Boats' - Some think the 'Gun Boats' have come down to put us across the river, but I do not think they will attempt anything of the kind - I think from the present appearances that will remain here for sometime - Most every one seems anxious to go to

"Missou-ri" - I am willing to go if we can accomplish anything perhaps we may be able to draw off some of the troops opposing Gens. Lee and Johnson. We have been hearing bad news for sometime and if true is getting worse - I need not mention the reports for I dare say you have heard them, and I dare say you are like myself, that is, dislike to hear them repeated. You must not allow such reports cause you to be the least despondent. Remember such reports are always exaggerated; and that even if they were so [?] that would lack a great deal of being whipped - as long as our army remains firm in their determination to have our freedom, we have nothing to fear. Our cause I believe is just and the Ruler of all things will see us righted. I am willing to shoulder my gun as long as there is an armed yankee on our land..."

Jacob Alison Frierson was the son of planter Robert B. Frierson of Midway Plantation near Kingston, DeSoto Parish, Louisiana. He served as a private in Company G of the 27th Louisiana Infantry Regiment, known as the Dixie Rebels. His name is sometimes listed in service records as "Faison" and "Friarson."

Frierson was a scout and was at times stationed at parole camps where he guarded prisoners. His regiment was organized in April 1862 at Camp Moore, Louisiana, and participated in the defense of Vicksburg before and during the Siege, and in the Red River Campaign. Reorganized in 1864, the 27th Louisiana surrendered under Gen. Kirby Smith at New Orleans on May 26, 1865.

The manuscript collection contains Civil War correspondence of Jacob Alison Frierson and family members. From camps near Alexandria, Louisiana, Frierson writes about marching, drilling, and rations, and the "sins and vices of camp life" from which, he hopes, his parents' prayers will deliver him. He witnesses the execution of deserters that he describes in some detail. Frierson refers to newspapers articles on the war, and writes about prisoners, officers, and fellow soldiers. He mentions Confederate generals Richard Taylor, Allen Thomas, and Kirby Smith; Fort DeRussy; and federal ships delivering Confederate prisoners. He makes note of the activities of the Crescent Regiment, 24th Louisiana Infantry.

Frierson and his mother, E.S. Frierson, share information on sermons they have attended and the latest war rumors that are circulating. She writes that she fears that new shipments of medication have been poisoned. Frierson occasionally mentions the family's slaves by name, and often closes his letters

with "tell all the negroes howdye for me." Other topics are the devaluation of Confederate currency, news about neighbors and family members, and life at home in Kingston, Louisiana. The collection also includes minutes of the Room Examining Board in Pineville, Louisiana, on October 15, 1864, listing recommendations for military promotions.

If you are interested in using the Jacob Alison Frierson Correspondence and Minutes or other collections in the Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, visit LSU Libraries Special Collections online at www.lib.lsu.edu/special for visitor information.

Leah Jewett is the Exhibitions Coordinator and Civil War Manuscript Archivist at Hill Memorial Library, LSU Libraries' Special Collections.