

Letter from
Dr. Nicholas D. Labadie
at Galveston, Texas
to
Mr. Barstow
[Ebenezer T. Barstow]

Date: May 29, 1862

A copy of the original letter is in the possession of
The Wallisville Heritage Park
Post Office Box 16
Wallisville, Texas 77597

Transcribed for the Wallisville Heritage Park

By Kevin Ladd on May 5, 2003

Galveston 29 May 1862

My Dear Mr. Barstow:

To day I learn the S. B. Ruthven¹ leaves at 10 for Liberty on her last rip & I understand she is to be sunk to Blockade the River!

I wrote you & to Lottie by Capt. Johnson who promised to come down, if he does he will find sale for all he brings, the Provost Marshal invites cuntry [?] produce to come down and will give permits to those boats. Wee need something to eat. Our market does not give half mea--- for applicants. Up to this writing all is quiet outside. The Santee² & her consort riding at anchor in their glory. The town is well thinned out. I find in Provost Marshall's book some 800 names enrolled exempt from bearing arms, foreigners & men crippled & those over 50 years, from 35 to 50 years are made to do militia service, the exempt are entered into the fire Brigade or department. So far as I can judge 2000 souls are yet in the Place & they must have something to eat.

Dr. Hurlbut [Huelbut?] & myself are the only Physicians left. Shearer goes when the army moves, Lancton is packing & Leclerc called to see me this morning. I advised him to stay to the last & when he goes I will see to the affair of the wharves. The war tax is not paid on the wharf fee ----- & I would suggest to lend the company the money at 10 %. See Nichols about it when you go to Houston.

As to my wife³ I have paid her from \$35 to \$50.00 per month which have supported her very well \$15 of which pays her house rent. She will need not less than \$50 per month but let it stand for the present. She has enough for next month as Bremond paid her the balance of his note, some \$70.00 was due. Since Monday tickets are being refused & the demand is now R.R. tickets, that there are those here yet to depreciate Confederate money. I full well aware, straws (?) shows which way the wind blows. Sales are light, yet a call for medicines is kept up, enough is left to keep me busy. I see quietness more & have more time to survey with my eyes the real state of the place. One Company at the Point 4 guns abreast South of our Shop. The Factor's Press is occupied by the French flag and French families. Very little of anything eatable to buy, yet the Houston Telegraph

tells its readers there are 5000 head cattle & stores full crumbed of Sugar, molasses & flour ready for the Federal gold. Such a pack of lies I do not like, it is bad enough to be unfortunate, but too bad to be slandered & to give to those families forced to go away because their husband, father & brothers are in the army the appellation of the Poor of Galveston. Thank God the poor of Galveston have called on the rich of Houston or of the county for help as long as they were left to provide for their families. Nor can I believe Federal Gold will be able to turn any of us. Some doubtless are traitors. I'll know them in time. All those who stay must get a permit & swear to the support of our flag. I got that paper & willingly stepped forward to take that oath & said to all the old oak may be broken or uprooted but never will be bent to the threatening danger. Thus I stand & no power will shake my moral courage. I shall write again as I am prepared to sink or swim with Galveston. So yet we see nothing to outside unusual. We believe there will be no bombardment, at least it is my belief. Solid shot my silence our batteries abreast & do some harm to houses if indeed they attack those guns whilst there is but one gun at the east end. My sincere Love to You all is as usual.

Yours, N. D. Labadie

¹ "S. B. Ruthven" refers to a steamboat that plied the Trinity River during the 1850s. The boat was named for A. S. Ruthven of Houston, a well-known merchant.

² "The Santee" refers to the U.S.S. Santee, one of the Union ships assigned to Galveston Bay by the Navy's West Gulf Blockading Squadron.

³ This refers to Dr. Labadie's third wife, Juliana or Julia Seymore, who he married in 18--. It appears that they were living in separate residences at the time of this letter, which might suggest they were separated. It could also suggest that Dr. Labadie, like many prominent Galveston men during the war, had moved his family to some safer location.