

A.A. Genls Office
1st Brig, 1st Div, 19 A.C.
Near New Iberia
Nov. 29th 1863

Dear sir

The mail does not leave as soon as was anticipated, so I add a few lines to my last evenings scribble.

My new modeled "Franklin Heater" that I described so graphically (?) last evening is finished and I am basking (like Tabby) in its glowing cheerful light, looking occasionally at the embers long enough to see air castles spring up and to find their chimeras inviting thought.

I have been for a long time earnestly casting in my mind the course that I should pursue in reference to my future and have come to the conclusion that one of two paths are only left to my choice ie in which I could be thoroughly successful.

The 1st is that of a Bookseller, but the great difficulty in my following this is want of means to start. Once under headway I feel confident that I could attain a very respectable position in society in a pecuniary point of view and it would be carrying out my long cherished views in reference to my settling in life.

The other path, is the one I am now in. I find that the Adj Genls Dept. is suited in almost every respect to my taste and habits. I cannot say that I like the roving unsettled life incident to it, but situated as I am I cannot feel that I would be doing right if I should discard the profession merely on the score of its comfort being inferior etc. I could not succeed as well in any other military dept as this. In infantry, artillery or cavalry service I would not attain to any particular proficiency, from the fact that I would not have my heart and hand in the work. One trouble in following this (the A.A. Dept) is that unless I should have an appointment as Asst Adj Genl in the regular army, it would not be worth the hard study as well as the time it takes, as my present commission is merely temporary, liable at any moment to be revoked by the President. Do you or your brother Theodore think it of any use for me to even think of getting an appointment as Asst Adj Genl in the regular army. I am ambitious enough to think that by some means or another I could be transferred to it. If you or him deem this [] I will in my spare moments prepare myself for this other business, as in choosing these two from many others (one or two of which I like exceedingly but have no talent for them) I must do so with the firm intention of rising to the height of the particular one necessity may compel me to take.

If I could conscientiously leave the army just now I could make my fortune by speculating, but the question naturally arises which will be the most conducive to my future honor and happiness. Consequently I conclude I better remain in the service where we all are needed, than to leave it, grow rich, and re-enter it when our country does not need the service of every one of its young men. I am anxious to have a competence, but not if to secure it I must leave the service at this most critical moment.

I am anxious to decide this important (to me) matter as a great deal of my future happiness will depend on the business or profession I may follow.

If I can get an appt in the army, that is the place for me, if not the book business is, after the war is over, and I have no doubt that the Messrs Wood would assist me all in their power in my preparations etc for that particular business. If I follow that of the army I can by determined energy and perseverance rise to a very fair position.

I have thus imposed on your good [] thus far, knowing that you would understand me and advise me as a friend. I have recd so many tokens of interest and friendship from your family that I am almost ashamed to encroach this much. Hoping that time will permit you answer my rather long letter, and that this will find you all in the enjoyment of good health and spirits.

I remain
As Ever
Sincerely
Yours
Oliver Matthews
A.A. G.

J A Roosevelt esq
94 Maiden Lane

P.S. I had forgotten to mention Thanksgiving. We had a very good time generally. Genl Franklin issued an order that 1st the Chaplains of all Regt should have dinner service. 2nd that all extra issue of whiskey is hereby ordered for the command, which we thought was quite a [].

This letter being so long I concluded to mail it separately.