

New Orleans, 23 August 1802.

My honored parents - The subject of my present Letter is to recount to you a Scene of horror & devastation, which this devoted City & environs experienced on the night of Wednesday last the 19<sup>th</sup> inst. - at about dusk we were alarmed by the Bell, with the news of an intended Insurrection of the Negroes - their plan was to set fire to the town in its four quarters, to rob the Banks, plunder the inhabitants & murder those who should make opposition to their projects, their plot however was timely discovered, & stifled in embryo, a white man their head, & several Blacks were immediately taken up & put in prison - This evil was thus happily averted, but another awaited us - the Weather was rainy & stormy - but at about 10 o'clock, the most severe Gale from the S. E. came on & increased to a Hurricane, its height was about 2 o'clock, after which it abated & by daylight ceased - In the House where I was, we were up all night & were not without apprehension of its being at least unroofed, we retreated to the ground floor - The Windows were blown in, the railing, tiles, bricks & wherabouts about & the whole house inundated -

The next morning the Streets & particularly the Levee,  
presented a most lively picture of the night's destruction.  
Plates, tiles, trees, & every thing of this description which  
had been flying about in course of the night, were now  
fully exposed to view - 50 Houses were blown down,  
about 2 times the number unroofed, & not ten in the  
whole City & faubourgs but what had received damage -  
the two theatres unroofed - the Market house, a large  
new elegant Brick building supported by pillars of  
the same material was laid in ruins & prostrate with  
the ground - many lives were lost by the fall of this & other  
buildings - The plantations in the neighbourhood &  
particularly those near Plaquemine, were swept away  
& every thing was out with them - had this storm  
taken place during the time of the River's being high  
the whole Country would have been laid under  
water as it is the danger is imminent - Of 60  
Vessels lying at the Levee not one escaped damage,  
not a dozen are worth repairing - The Nancy has  
got her stern knocked in, her hospital carried away

even with her Bows, nothing but her  
& her Bows ground up into Chips, her  
Leaped to receive the division of the Judge  
the Carolina with a Cargo of Flour sunk  
Liberty, with a similar Cargo shared  
10 or 12 other Vessels of various descriptions  
of Newport Cap Sayer is much injured -  
Was the Viper driven from the Navy Yard  
hull, to which she was made fast & carried up the  
with the Hull, altho' moved with 10 Cable  
aboard, the Hull sunk with the Guns, provisions  
&c of the Viper which were on board of her, the  
Viper has nothing left but her hull & that very much  
injured - the U. S. Brig Enterprise after being  
knocked upon her Beam ends was driven high & dry -  
The Ship Starbuck of New York, being about 30 Miles below  
captain, J. G. Went down with her passengers, among which were  
2 Ladies of the Captain & the Crew with the exception of two,  
one of whom was an ashore, & the other saved himself by getting  
upon the Hatch as it floated by him, while the Ship was going down.  
Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Aug. Contrary to my expectation the Judge will not  
yet decide, he now wishes for a re-examination of Wetmore & for further  
evidence from the Dan. The City is as healthy as any part  
of the World - yours &c. B. Stevens

R. S. F.  
1812

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1812 NEW YORK  
55 NASSAU ST  
FRANCIS  
RECEIVED