

Norfolk Virginia  
25<sup>th</sup> March 1851

My dear Sir,

Your kind letter of the 22<sup>nd</sup> has just reached me and I hasten to reply by the Mail of to day.

Upon inquiry from a relative of Mr E, a Methodist Preacher in this city, I learn that the Hon: Weldon N. Edwards resides in Warren County – near to Warrenton N. C- his post office is at the Ridgeway Depot, Warren County to which your letter should have been addressed. This will account for your not having received an answer ere this.

Your friends here are very anxious to see you and I rejoice at your coming. Much good will result from it. Dr Mallory and others have just returned from Richmond, where they met Senator Douglass. He, D- is working hard for himself with Hunter on the ticket as Vice President

A Mr Chapman of the House of Reps at W[ashington]– wrote to Douglass to come, and he did the showing off part, but my Norfolk friends say to no purpose. Genl & Mrs Baily are in the Hotel with me, on their way to the Eastern shore- Genl B says that Douglass will never do in Virginia & Mrs B- she is a warmer friend of yours than ever- Dr Mallory says that Wise “ will hear of no other name than yours, and that “ if Virginia would not vote for you in Convention, “ that he (Wise) would break up the Democratic “organization in the state-

There is at present a daily steamboat from Baltimore to this place – and daily from hence to Richmond, and from thence Railroad to Ridgeway Depot. This is your route and a very agreeable one you will find it at this season of the year. We have here the most lovely spring weather.

There is not the slightest probability of our sailing for some time to come – as during my absence not a single additional seaman was shipped, as seamen will not enter the navy at \$12 a month, when he can get nearly double that in the merchant service. It is all the more agreeable to me, and feel a sort of “spiritual knocking” that Mr. Secretary Graham will yet do me justice and order me to the Michigan on the Lakes, thus relieving me from the persecution of Dr Harris

Enclosed I send you an article from my pen, from the argus [Argus newspaper?] of this morning, on a steam Line to Rio- I have heard it most favorably commented upon & has attracted some attention- With my kind regards to Miss Harriet who I presume has returned from her visit to Washington, I am with great respect

Your obliged friend & obt servt [obedient servant]  
J. M. Foltz

Hon: James Buchanan



LancasterHistory

[Transcription of article included in letter]

### **Steam Navigation to Rio.**

At the present moment, when steam is revolutionizing the world – when our own State has at length been awakened from her lethargy, and is entering upon a system of internal improvements with a spirit and energy which will command success and develop her inexhaustible sources of minerals and agriculture wealth – we beg to call the attention of the citizens of Norfolk and of all Virginia, to a branch of commerce which is peculiarly our own, and in which we may, with all confidence, defy competition. We allude to the West India and South American trade and mail routes, in which we would have no competition with previously established lines – or if they even did exist, we will clearly demonstrate how easily we could supercede them by our peculiar local advantages.

We desire those gentlemen who have recently manifested so strong a disposition to serve our city and State by the establishment of an European line of steamers – in which we ourselves feel so sanguine of success – to bestow a portion of their attention upon the line which we have indicated, when we doubt not its superior advantages will be obvious to every one, and that it will immediately bring with it a return for the capital invested, which, after all, is the most essential point for consideration and enquiry.

The basis of this trade between Norfolk, the West Indies and Rio Janeiro, will be the carrying of flour to Rio and returning with cargoes of coffee. The only flour which will bear transportation, and which will sell in Rio, is Virginia flour; and the large fleet of N. York vessels employed in that

trade, usually come round to our waters in ballast to procure their cargoes; and their voyage to Rio will occupy an average of 55 or 60 days, as sailing vessels are obliged to cross the Atlantic *twice* to reach that port.

This voyage for steamers is a *coasting voyage*; and in the abundance, cheapness and variety of our coal, in our proximity to the Islands, and in our possession of the only flour which is in demand in Brazil, consist the advantages which we possess *over all other ports*, and by means of which, if properly used, we may *control* the trade, the travel, and the mails of the West Indies and all the Eastern Coast of South America.

The line should consist of steamships, either side wheels or propellers; and leaving Norfolk, should touch at Cuba, St. Domingo, Porto Rico, St. Thomas, Martinique, Guadaloupe, Barbadoes, Pernambuco, Bahia and Rio Janeiro. – They would never be at sea long than four or five days, and would require but little space for coal, water and provisions, leaving nearly all their capacity for cargo and passengers – thus giving them a vast superiority over those steamers which cross the Atlantic, and which are obliged to give nearly all their space for coal alone. The longest passages would be between Norfolk and Cuba, and between Barbadoes and Pernambuco. The other passages would not exceed twenty-four or twenty-eight hours, and the longest would be but four or five days. – The whole voyage would be performed close in to land, with a constant East wind; and should any accident occur to the machinery less than one day's sail would take them to the shore, or a few hour's steam would, at every point of the passage, take them to port, whenever it might be necessary.



The basis of this trade would be the, outward cargoes of flour, and the home cargoes, of coffee, which are always certain, and which, of themselves, would, with the increased capacities of the vessels for freight, in consequence of the small quantity of coal required, be probably sufficient to defray all expenses.

In addition, these vessels would monopolize the mails, all the travel from the Islands to the United States and from Island to Island, the mails and passengers from Rio Janeiro, as well as the mails and passengers from Monte Video and Buenos Ayres; and doubtless the travel from Brazil to Europe which is now a long and tedious voyage, would flow into this channel.

In every respect in which this *Coasting Voyage* of the American Continent is viewed, its numerous advantages will be manifest, and we urgently recommend it to the serious consideration of the citizens of Norfolk and of Virginia.

