



Archive of a Louisiana Planter Family with strong Catholic ties, Includes Descriptions of their Struggles During the Civil War, Mentions Men and Women whom they Enslaved

(Louisiana) (Morancy Family Archive) Archive related to the family of Honoré Perigny Morancy (1795–1881), an exile from the Haitian Revolution whose prosperous Louisiana plantation lay within sight of Federal forces at the devastating 1863 Battle of Milliken's Bend. Includes Descriptions of the Family's Civil War Struggles and of the Men and Women they Enslaved, materials dated circa 1820-1880

Collection of approximately 40 letters and documents, 15 photographs, as well as several related ephemeral items, pertaining to the Morancy family of Louisiana. The bulk of the items date from the 1850s-1860s.

The collection includes letters, documents, ephemera and family photographs of the Morancy family. One of the highlights of the collection is a striking photograph of a well-dressed African American woman seated alongside a young white child, circa 1855-1860. This portrait likely depicts the Morancy family's "Mammy Jane" or Matilda Butler, an enslaved black woman who bore at least one child to Honoré Morancy.

Honoré P. Morancy was a French Catholic planter of Milliken's Bend, East Carroll Parish, Louisiana. Generations of Morancy family members claimed ancestry from the Montmorency family, a line of French nobility, who were said to have been forced to flee their home country during the French Revolution, ultimately settling in present-day Haiti. Other sources suggest Honoré Morancy's ancestors can be traced to Marie-Galante, Guadeloupe, as early as the 1740s. Regardless of the family's origins, Honoré Morancy's fate was most certainly tied to events in the island nation of Saint-Domingue, where his father and uncle were killed when Haitian freedmen and enslaved laborers began the insurrection that would lead to Haitian independence. The Morancy family tried to leave the island before the Santo Domingo revolution of 1791. Young Honoré and two siblings, Emile and Victoria, were rescued from the island, purportedly by a slave or nurse, and then smuggled on board a ship out of the country to the United States. Upon reaching the U.S., Morancy and his brother Emilius Morancy came initially under the guardianship of Charles Carroll (1737-1832) of Maryland, the only Catholic Signer of the Declaration of Independence. Honoré was well-educated and served as a professor of French, Greek, and Latin in Natchez, Mississippi, prior to marrying Eliza Lowry in 1818. The couple eventually settled in Milliken's Bend, and Morancy soon amassed considerable wealth in the form of land and enslaved men, women, and children. On the eve of the Civil War, the 1860 U.S. Federal Census slave schedules show that Honoré P. Morancy enslaved 164 individuals.

Located approximately 15 miles above Vicksburg on the Mississippi River, Milliken's Bend was a small community in Madison Parish, Louisiana. The town's proximity to major centers of commerce such as New Orleans, Natchez, and Vicksburg aided its growth, and placed it within easy reach of important markets for the corn and cotton crops grown by the slaves of Milliken's Bend plantation owners. (The Mississippi River eroded the land upon which the town stood and it is now extinct). Among the prosperous plantation owners in Milliken's Bend at the onset of the Civil War were Honoré Morancy and his brother-in-law Philip Maher (1812-1872), married to sisters Eliza Jane Lowry Morancy (1803-1884) and Caroline Lowry Maher (1811-1872).

The approximately 40 letters/documents in the collection span decades and generations of Morancy family members but are particularly strong with regard to the effects of the Civil War on the Morancy family and their fortunes. The June 1863 Battle of Milliken's Bend, famed in part because of the battlefield heroism of the African Brigade, was a small but savage engagement fought on the west bank of the Mississippi River within close proximity to the Morancy plantation. By early 1863, Milliken's Bend had become one of several staging areas for the Union Army as Grant prepared for the Vicksburg Campaign. As Honoré and Eliza Morancy's seven (7) war-date letters indicate, the conflict was devastating to their home and economic security. The war also impacted their enslaved laborers, as many apparently fled to the freedom of Union lines, though a few seemingly stayed with the Morancy family throughout the war. One woman, "Mammy Jane," is referenced frequently in family correspondence and appears to have been viewed as a beloved member of the family both during and

after the war, letters from the 1870s reveal that Jane remained with the family caring for Morancy grandchildren.

In a powerful letter, undated but likely the spring of 1862, Eliza writes to her daughter Caroline, painting a vivid portrait of tumultuous times at the plantation, as the family faces military threats, natural disasters, political unrest, and family illness. The letter reads, in small part:

“Peyton [enslaved man] thinks a carriage cannot go out even now. The water is rising yet. We hear to-day that it has fallen 3 inches at the Lake and is at a stand here.... The levee at Young’s Point gave way several days ago and the water is rising in the field now, near the church. Dr. Buckner’s levee was partly cut a night or two ago - this would be indeed be a misfortune to all of us if it should take place again... You may have seen the Governor’s proclamation to burn the cotton. Your Pa says he has no legal right to do this as the Legislature did not pass the act — but public opinion will sustain him. I hear that Mr. Jones of Compromise will guard his with arms and will shoot down any man who attempts to do it.... Perhaps now the French and English will soon come to buy and we can sell it to them. Your Pa says that his crop at the present prices will bring \$70,000, and this is too much a sacrifice unless it is absolutely necessary....” Eliza then continues discussing the surrender of Forts Jackson and Philip and the fear of guerrilla warfare and pillaging. She goes on to describe the news from New Orleans: *“I am told that eight persons were killed and several wounded in New Orleans for showing sympathy with the Union army by hurrying for Lincoln. I suppose some poor ignorant people who might have done it without much reflection, for no one who reflected a moment would have been so foolish. Mrs. Jones told Cory that the city was like a Bedlam — people running about, women and children crying, and the destruction of property immense. Molasses, sugar, bacon destroyed — and this too when the city is nearly destitute of provisions. The people of Vicksburg are not much better. All that can go have gone out into the country....”*

Eliza continues with references to a number of individuals who appear to be enslaved, including Peyton, Henry, Jane, and Rosa, and mentions the forcible impression of “Negro men” into Confederate service to build fortifications.

Just prior to the Battle of Milliken’s Bend, Eliza was sent by Honoré to her home state of Kentucky to stay with friends and family. She writes to Caroline in May 1863:

“Your pa insists on my going to Kentucky...Your pa promises to go up in a week or two....Mr. Fontane promises to stay with him and Jane too. I have consented...I prefer to wait for him but he will not let me do so – O’ darling how I wish you were with me & think you could come....Your Pa stays to dispose of his cotton as it is our only resource and he can sell it to a citizen or Englishman. I am distressed to think of the horrid state of affairs. I hear that as soon as practicable 70,000 Federals are going to Monroe & I suffer greatly in anticipation.”

Writing in December 1863, six months after the Battle of Milliken’s Bend, Honoré tells his children:

“...I have returned again to my house with our furniture from Stockland, as I could no longer remain there on account of robbers who were some time ago infesting the country. I am at present very quiet here and am treated with marked kindness and civility by the [Union] officers here as well as by Genl [John P.] Hawkins who commands the district. He is cousin of A. D. Hawkins [H. Morancy’s son-in-law].... Under the reign of plunder and lawlessness which prevailed in this parish previous to the advent of the present set of officers, we have lost everything except a few cows and a very few mules. Louis, if you had any cotton left for the gin, it has all been stolen....I have only got twelve thousand dollars for all the cotton I had & the most of it was burned by the Confederates last July....If there was any means

among you to purchase cotton and the Confederate agents would not seize it, it would be a good thing....” He concludes with a note from “Jane,” who “wishes to be remembered by all of you and wishes particularly to send her love and respects to Caroline and wants very much to see the baby.”

Jane is referenced again, and with great affection, in Eliza’s letter of 18 June [1864], to her daughter Caroline. She also mentions two other enslaved persons, “Chatham” and “Rosa”.

“...Write often, my darling, and give me particulars. First of yourself and father and dear little one, of dear Vie and family, of Jane and Rosa. I can never forget them and their kindness to you and my dear husband. Let me know what servants are on the place of those belonging to us, if Chatham has been heard of, what things were stolen at Stockland...Give my best love and a kiss to your dear father, to Victoria and her family. Give my love to Jane and also to Rosa who has been so faithful to you.”

Beyond the events of the Civil War, the family’s association with the Roman Catholic Church is another striking characteristic of the archive. Catholics constituted a significant minority in the Confederate population, but most of the South was Protestant, particularly Baptist and Methodist. The Morancy family letters paint a portrait of a family deeply rooted in Catholic lay life and spirituality. Southern Louisiana was predominantly Catholic due to its French and Spanish heritage, and Catholic families like the Morancys held significant wealth and influence in the region. The family’s letters, and their ties to New Orleans, Catholic boarding schools, and male and female religious figures, provide a rare glimpse into 19th-century Southern Louisiana Catholicism.

While there is just one letter from Honoré Morancy in the collection, the archive features more prominently the correspondence of his wife Eliza. Six letters in the archive were written by Eliza, five of which are addressed to her daughter Caroline. Seven additional letters are addressed to Eliza, sent by various friends and family members. Honoré and Eliza’s daughter, Caroline Morancy Hawkins (1833-1922), authored at least two letters in the archive. Additional correspondents in the collection include, in part: Caroline Lowry Maher (1811-1872), the sister of Eliza Lowry Morancy, as well as second-generation Morancy descendants such as Edward Preston Hawkins (1856-1881) and Francis J. Hawkins (1875-1939), sons of Caroline Morancy Hawkins. The preponderance of letters associated with Caroline and descendants of the Hawkins line suggests that the archive likely descended through Caroline Morancy Hawkins and her children.

Most notable among the 15 images in the collection is undoubtedly that of the unidentified African American woman and white child, ca 1855-1860. The image is printed on paper likely a partially tinted salt print. The image features its two subjects at the forefront and a rural scene of trees with an apparent structure in background, creating a three-dimensional effect. The African American woman is seated with her face in profile, wearing an elegant, patterned dress, artfully arranged hairstyle, and jewelry shown with a hint of gold tinting. Her hand supports the back of a young white child seated in a highchair and wearing a white dress tinted with delicate pink and green blooms. (The image is housed in a half plate sized leatherette case (heavily worn with a detached cover).

The identity of the woman and child cannot be definitively determined. It was not uncommon for Southern slaveholding and Reconstruction-era families to photograph an enslaved caretaker or “mammy” with a young charge. Given “Mammy Jane’s” seemingly important role within the Morancy family, it is certainly possible that the woman shown in this image is “Jane” seated alongside a child who would likely be a grandchild of Honoré and Eliza Morancy. Alternatively, some present-day descendants of the Morancy family believe the woman pictured may be Matilda Butler (ca 1820s –?), an African American woman who had at least one child by Honoré Morancy.

A YouTube interview¹ with two Morancy descendants indicates that Matilda Butler was a seamstress who, according to a plantation ledger (not reviewed), was paid for her work. If true, this unusual arrangement may have allowed Matilda Butler to purchase her freedom and to marry Thomas Butler, the adopted father of her son with Honoré Morancy. As a seamstress, conceivably Matilda Butler may have had access to clothing and accessories of a finer quality, as appear to be worn by the woman pictured in this image. Seemingly less likely, though, is the possibility that an image of Matilda might accompany a Morancy family archive descended through Eliza and Caroline Morancy Hawkins. Additional research might well shed light on the identity of these sitters.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjPP9dWz1pM>

The remaining photography in the collection consists of a mix of identified and unidentified images. Identified images include: a CDV portrait of a young boy, seated with his hat in hand, backmark of "S.F. Brown, Photographer, Versailles, KY," manuscript identification on verso "Emilius Morancy Jr.,"; a CDV portrait of a young man, seated with his arms crossed and wearing a hat, no backmark, manuscript identification on verso "Honorius Morancy"; and a CDV portrait of a man wearing religious robes and a large cross, backmark of "Gurney, Photographic Artist, Natchez, Miss," and manuscript inscription "To my Friend Preston Hawkins / Natchez, May 26th 1876 / Bro. Sympharianth."

Unidentified cased images include: a sixth plate daguerreotype featuring a bust portrait of a young man, mat stamped at lower left "Webster," in half leatherette case; a quarter plate daguerreotype of finely dressed young woman, wearing a necklace of large double-strand pearls at her neck, photographer etched on the plate "J.W. Stancliff (John Wells Stancliff, 1813-1891)/ Louisville," possibly an image of Caroline Morancy Hawkins, housed in leatherette case with detached cover; a quarter plate ambrotype of a mustached man seated alongside a young boy, housed in leatherette case with detached cover; a quarter plate ambrotype of a well-dressed man, seated and facing the camera, with a smaller oval ambrotype of the same sitter; and a sixth plate ambrotype of a young child posed in an ornate red dress.

Later images include: a half plate tintype portrait of a young girl standing with arm resting on table; CDV-size tintype of a young boy seated in a small chair; a CDV-size albumen portrait of a young girl with a white bow, cut from mount into oval shape; and two late 19th-early 20th-century studio portraits, one of a man and one of a woman, both identified to the studio of "Misses McAllister Parker K.C."

Partial list of additional archive contents:

Partially printed ticket issued to Mr. (later Dr.) Emilius Morancy (brother of Honoré Morancy) to attend "Lectures on the Principles and Practice of Surgery by William Gibson M.D." University of Maryland. 7 November 1818.

Autograph letter signed from Charles Carroll Harper, grandson of Signer Charles Carroll, to Emile (Emilius) Morancy, describing a European tour. Paris, 16 October 1819. (Heavily worn, completely separated along multiple folds, possibly incomplete).

Statement of Indemnity Settlement settled upon Messrs. Emilius and Honoré Morancy, heirs of former slaveholding proprietors of a plantation in Cavaillon Parish, Saint-Domingue (Haiti). 9 December 1837. Paris, France. In French, no accompanying translation (heavily worn, completely separated along multiple folds, possibly incomplete).

Multiple letters in the archive were written by members of Catholic religious organizations, including: an 1865 letter to Caroline Morancy Hawkins from “Sister Severina,” a Sister of Charity at the “Louisiana Retreat,” a Catholic psychiatric hospital, regarding her husband Antoine Hawkins’s stay at the institution; an 1884 letter from an abbot at the Abbey of Gethsemani, Nelson Co., KY, to an unidentified member of the Morancy family, presumably Caroline Morancy Hawkins, sending prayers and acknowledging the death of Eliza Morancy; and an 1893 letter to Mrs. Blanche Hawkins, wife of Honore Morancy Hawkins, from “Mother Superior” of Visitation Convent, regarding prayers and a healing piece of linen being sent for her “suffering son.”

A group of 3 letters written by Caroline Lowry Maher to her sister Eliza while she traveled abroad in Europe. Of particular interest is a letter written from Dublin in 1852, describing post-famine Ireland, including destitute beggars, mass evictions, and starvation. Caroline compares the plight of the Irish to enslaved African Americans, stating “our Negroes are wealthy and blessed people compared with these poor wretches.”

Three letters written by Francis “Frank” Hawkins to family members while a student at St. Vincents College, Cape Girardeau, MO., ca 1880s; an undated list, possibly in the hand of Frank Hawkins, entitled “Articles of Value at Lake Providence an[d] in our Homes to be disposed of,” noting Morancy family keepsakes including an oil portrait of “Grandfather Morancy” and a letter from Jefferson Davis; three letters, all written in the late 1870s, by [Edward] Preston Hawkins to family members while he was away at a Catholic boarding school in St. Louis, two of which reference sending his love to “Mammy,” presumably the same “Mammy” or “Mammy Jane” who stayed with the Morancy family during the war.

Twentieth-century ephemeral material associated with Francis J. Hawkins and his wife Ethel Cart Hawkins, including ration books, newspaper clippings, and a marriage certificate.

Sample Quotes:

Shelby County, Kentucky, Nov. 18th, 1830, Margaret Fitzgerald to her niece Eliza Jane Morancy, Vicksburg, Mississippi

“My dear niece,

I received your letter a few days ago, dated the 28th of last month, and was extremely glad to learn that you were all in good health &c. Your letter brought to my fresh recollection one of the most trying scenes of my whole life, the death of my dear mother. But I will endeavor to take your advice and bear my heavy affliction as well as I can. My situation is truly disconsolate and life seems almost a burden to me; being almost alone and laboring under great affliction with a disease of a pulmonary cast; and besides having from necessity the sole care of sister Elizabeth’s children and the whole concerns of our household on my hands. But I will try and bear it all with patience.

It seems you all desire me to come to Louisiana & spend the remainder of my days there. This I would gladly do if brother Milton would let his daughter Eliza accompany me, but this I am sure he will never do... Margaret Fitzgerald ...”

There is a very celebrated doctor lately come to Louisville, who cures everyone that applies to him almost; and I am sure if sister Nancy was to come to him he would cure her immediately and for a small fee – If she will come, it is very probable that I may consent to return with her home & perhaps she can by her personal entreaties, prevail on brother Milton to let her have Eliza also. It is my intention to try this new doctor as soon as I am able to go to Louisville and have funds to pay my way for a short time in

Louisville. He has performed a cure on one of our neighbors, who had been afflicted with a distressing pain in his side & hip for 28 years, besides many others which I have heard of. My advice to sister Nancy would be to come and try him. He is no quack, but a man of science, having two or three medical diplomas. Doctor Knight of Shelbyville, an eminent practitioner & popular physician, has gone to Louisville & entered into partnership with him & they now get more than the both can do.

“Cork, Ireland, August 10, 1852, Caroline Loewry Maher, to her sister, Eliza Jane Morancy, Milliken’s Bend, Louisiana

... yesterday evening Caroline and I escorted by the son of the proprietor (a boy of twelve) took a short walk – saw nearly all the Banks – they look inferior after the Bank of Ireland in Dublin – this city is built upon an island the Lee on both sides – there are six bridges connecting it to the main land I am told that as far as Queenstown twelve miles inland it is at the mouth of the river the scenery is beautiful and many splendid residences an addition to native beauty of we will go down as soon as Mr M is well enough. The exhibition opens at 11 o’clock & closes at five – Mondays and Fridays are 6 pence days – Wednesdays promenade days 12 shillings – Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Saturdays 1 shilling – I wish to see the Grandee so I hope Mr M will be well enough to go tomorrow. They have here a variety of ornaments such as bracelets, shawl pins, besides ruins of Abbey & covered in Irish bog oak when the Queen was here she wore them and now every body is purchasing it I think it very pretty & have bought a bracelet to let you see it – Ah Sis you would not enjoy traveling in Ireland there are so many objects of pity – they tell us they are lazy and impostures but this we cannot know – you can form no idea of it unless you saw it – As we were going to visit Mr. Fitzwilliams father I saw the most pitiable sight an old woman’s hair perfectly white, the mere wrapping of rags around feet & legs nearly up to her knees her bosom exposed arms uncovered sitting on the wet ground by the road side – this was on a cold morning ... At Mrs Moran’s Mr. Fitzwilliam’s niece we met with an Irish man (I will not say gentleman) who was very insulting to us – talked about slavery told us all the Americans prided themselves upon was wealth – for once I held my tongue – only told him he certainly had a great deal of candor to tell us so – I liked the English much better than I do the Irish I expected to be treated uncivilly by every Englishman I met but my experience has been different – I have ever been not only civilly treated but strangers were particularly polite. If I meet an Englishman in a car he bids me good morning & seems anxious I shall see his country to advantage – this has been the case so far and I tell you as you are an admirer of theirs & you know how thoroughly I have detested them – the first one I have to complain of I shall inform you - Two Irishmen have offended my ladyship – both Protestants- of our friends (for really they were kind enough to call them so) ...”

Dublin, Sept 1st, 1852 Caroline Lowry Maher to her sister Eliza

“Dear Sister,

We have had rain almost every day since we came to Ireland, we went from Dublin to Cork to see the Exhibition of the products & manufactures of Ireland & I was much surprised to find that Ireland could boast so much, for I had no idea she manufactured so much fine goods – satinets, silks, silk velvets, cloth, embroidery both on silk & muslin, laces, gloves - & almost every thing you could mention. From there we went to Killarney, by the way of Glen Gariff this road lies through a most beautiful country, the scenery is fine but Killarney Lakes & mountain scenery cap the climax Martha was in perfect ecstasies, to give you an idea I will tell that we walked five miles & a quarter through the Gap of Dunloe, up & down the rocks &c without feeling as much fatigue as I have often felt walking to Brother’s or to Ann’s. I attribute the excitement produced by the variety & beauty of the scene. From Killarney we visited Limerick & spent several days with Mr. Thomas Davenport’s family and I never met more kindness & attention in my life... I

did not see Mrs W Davenport, she was at Kilrush with her sisters. Mr D had a sail boat & we started down to see her but the tide was against us & we turned back after going about 20 miles down the Shannon. From Limerick we visited Mr Mahers friends, they all seemed delighted to see us, we spent a week, visiting from one place to the other & we could scarcely get away from them they wished us to stay some time but I was so anxious to hear from home (and we expected letters here) that I could not consent... One of his cousins in particular I took a great fancy to, He speaks of moving to Australia, but I persuaded him to go to America & I expect he will go out with us, at least he thinks of doing so now. We left Toomarara yesterday with the regrets & good wishes of all his friends. Martha caused quite a sensation one of his cousins was (I think) a good deal smitten. Some of his relations are in very good circumstances, others much reduced, but I think them all very clever. ...

I am much pleased with Ireland as it is a beautiful country, but the wretchedness of a great number of its inhabitants is beyond description. Our negroes in their worst working clothes are well dressed compared to them & I am told that they have none better and filth I cannot express to you how much of that I see amongst them they look as if they had not changed in three months, there are men, women & children begging at all parts of the country, you cannot travel on a coach that sometimes twenty children are not running after it, with "give me a ha'penny if you please" & when the coach stops crowds surround it begging & when they get a ha'penny, which is about one cent, they implore blessings upon the donor It is really distressing to witness it besides there are thousands in the poor house Men women & children in the poor house at Cork there are five thousand besides poor houses all over the country filled with them. Poor creatures who have been cast out by the landlords because they were not able to pay the rent & obliged to go to the poor house or starve. I saw in Toomarara whole streets where the tenants had been ejected & the houses torn down these poor wretches I am told many of them died of starvation in the ditches & under bridges. I was told at one time they died so fast that 8 or 10 had to be put in one grave & were carried to the grave in what they call a parish coffin, that is one with a hinge at the bottom that was placed over the hole or grave & the body dropped out & the coffin taken back for others, was not that terrible? When I speak of the poverty of the country to the citizens they tell me that times are good now comparatively speaking I am sure I cannot imagine how it could have been much worse Our negroes are wealthy & blessed people compared with these poor wretches. Even those who have what is called a house are miserable & wretched thatched roofs – some partly fallen in, dirt floors & every discomfort ... Caroline ..."

Milliken's Bend, July 27th1856, Anne Morancy Jackson to her sister Caroline Morancy Hawkins

"My dearest sister,

I received your dear letter yesterday and hasten to reply – I had been waiting to hear that you were once more settled that I might know where to direct, you said nothing about remaining there all summer but I presume you intend it or you would have mentioned going on with Mr. Hawkins.

The health of the bend is as good as usual in the summer, we have no epidemic, and have great hopes of escaping the fever as there is yet none in New Orleans. Agnes has been quite sick out at Richmond but was able to come in yesterday, and I hope with prudence she will keep well. I spent two weeks with Ma & pa they seemed lonesome and wished me to remain awhile and I spent quite a pleasant time. – Mr. Dangle is now spending the summer there, his health as usual is bad and Pa invited him to remain with him during the summer ...

We have quite a pleasant summer and an abundance of fruit which I suppose you have not – your description of your trip over the mountains was calculated to dishearten any one having the trip in view

except such a courageous person as myself – I feel now that I would enjoy the trip very much – I am so sick of this monotonous life I believe I would undertake anything for a change you have no idea how lonely I feel here you all being away –

You must not let Mary Lowry give you the slip this summer – I expect she has so many admirers she will find it impossible to bring home her heart – Tell her not to let the English Baron take it with him – that would be too far away.

I received a letter from Aunty from Louisville she made no mention of a trip north, she intending going to Graydon and from there to Woodford. ... A. E. J ...”

[N.p., n.d., pre-war?] Caroline Morancy Hawkins, to her mother Eliza Morancy

Dear Ma,

The children and I acknowledge ourselves much in you're an Aunt Jane's debt, for all the nice butter, cakes, etc. What would the world be without mothers? (in more senses than one), for who so well knows how to bestow favors that make up the happiness of life after all, as the affectionate mother's heart. As I grow older, I find myself every day shutting out the world more and more, only to have more room for the few so dearly loved. But enough of this, for fear you might accuse me of being romantic or misanthropic, which last, might not be a very unjust accusation. Sister will say I have been reading Byron. Well! So I have, but rather because his style agrees with my mood, than any effect he has had upon me. And I have been reading Pope too, who is a greater favorite with me, and you know all his works have been aimed at the vices and follies of men. And now speaking of books, please tell sister to send to send me "Paradise lost", and if you have any thing that you could spare I should like to have it Miss Landon's works would be very acceptable, if Mary has finished reading them, and I will take the utmost care of anything loaned. I should like to be rich, for only one thing, to have a fine library, and plenty of leisure time to read.

Mrs. Frank sends you all many thanks for the articles sent, and kissed my hand for you, she says she is very comfortably fixed now.

I spent the day with Mrs. Montague yesterday and as usual – a very pleasant day, and a very nice dinner. She and Miss Alice bot bid me send their love to you, and inquired particularly when you would be out. I told Mrs. Montague I would ask you for some grape cuttings for her, which she is very anxious to have. She has some flowers her sister brought from the Kings garden at Naples, she promised me two bulbs, and when I get them I will give you one. She has a great many seeds of annuals from the same place, which I suppose would be prized from the circumstances ...

I send you a piece of venison, which I have been saving several days for you and am very sorry there is so little, but thought as the family is small you may be able to make a dish of it. We have had a great deal of game lately, as the gentlemen are always hunting now. ... Caroline

Much love to Mammy Jane. Mr. H was quite sick day before yesterday and has had the chills sine Prince was in the Bend. I have despaired of his ever being entirely rid of them Please ask sister also to send "Don Quixote" if she has finished with it."

Christmas Day [1861?] Eliza Morancy to her daughter Caroline Hawkins

“My dear Child,

... Mr. Parham has offered his place near us for sale for \$ 20 an acre cash how I wish you could live near us – if Mr H does change but I suppose that could not be had now. Let me know if the report is true & where M H expects to go... E J Morancy

I have received a letter from James Nolan dated Nov 7 he was well & with his company at Manassas – he is I suppose now at Savannah Georgia as the company was ordered there.

P.S. As Jane is going to the depot in a buggy I send you the article I spoke of & also a bundle of fruit trees for Mrs Montague ...”

Eliza Morancy, to her daughter, Caroline Hawkins, undated likely Spring 1862

“Dear Caroline,

I am really concerned to hear that dear little Morancy is still sick & Mr. Hawkins so unwell. ... Peyton [enslaved man] thinks a carriage cannot go out even now & the water is rising yet – We hear today that it has fallen 3 inches at the Lake & is at a stand here – but the Yazoo is kept high by the water running in from the crevasses & will prevent a fall here for some time. The levee at Youngs Point gave way several days ago & the water is rising in the field now – near the Church. Dr. Buckner’s levee was partly cut a night or two ago – this would be indeed a misfortune to all of us if it should take place again as to succeed. ...

You may have seen the Governor’s proclamation to burn the cotton – your Pa says he has no legal to do this as the legislature did not pass the act – but public opinion will sustain him I hear that Mr. Jones of Compromise will guard his with arms & will shoot down any man who attempts to do it. I hope no one will be so rash as to burn it unnecessarily – perhaps now the French & English will soon come to buy & we can sell it to them – Your Pa says that his crop at the present prices will bring \$ 70,000 & this is too much to sacrifice unless it is absolutely necessary. When we hear that transports are taking cotton below this point & the Federals are going into the interior ours is at Stockland (which I think they will be afraid to do) it will be time enough then – I hope we will save it as then we will be perfectly free from debt & able to pay the taxes, I think the country need not be impoverished more than is obliged to be. My children will reap the benefit. I hear that the cotton in your region is perfectly safe at least until the river is low. Dr. Jackson is appointed to have the order carried out – the Captains of Companies are to do it & I fear they may be too rash. I hear that the Commodore told the people of New Orleans that private property would be respected & they will fear to attempt to take cotton knowing it would ensure its destruction. – We hear today that Forts Jackson & Philip have surrendered & there is a rumor also that Fort Pillow has been evacuated. Your Pa says they will soon have undisturbed possession of the river. I fear the scheme of guerilla warfare will be adopted & even a Capt of the army who was here a day or two ago said it would require the strictest discipline to keep the men from pillaging & doing mischief as there have been many instances of this unless the companies could be composed of gentlemen.

I hear of nothing more than the reports I mentioned but what you know – the Capt I spoke of was just from Corinth & said a battle might take place at any day now – I am told that 8 persons were killed & several wounded in N. Orleans for showing sympathy for the Union army by hurraing for Lincoln I suppose some poor ignorant people who might have done it without much reflection for no one who reflected a moment would have been so foolish. Mrs Jones told Cory that the City was like a Bedlam – people running about – women & children crying &c & the destruction of property immense Molasses Sugar & bacon

destroyed & this too when the city is nearly destitute of provisions – The people of Vicksburg are not much better. All that can go have gone out into the country & stores &c are being removed. Your pa was called on today for negro men to make fortifications below the town & every one else here sent some – tho it is perfect folly to attempt it. Some one said the guns would be captured as at New Orleans – 200 cannon were taken there – Genl Lovell & the soldiers under his command were at Camp Moore when I heard last.

I purchased a barrel of flour for you on my return as there was only 2 to be sold in the Bend. I sent as much as Peyton can carry – Please send the books you will find in the bag to Mrs Purnell . When you see her give her my love & kind regards to Dr P & to Mrs Selby also.

Give my love to Mr H – I hope he will soon be well again Kiss my darling Morancy a dozen times & Eliza too – Remember me kindly to Jane Rose & all the servants. Tell Jane that John Beonso is well & Caroline better. ... E J Morancy

P.S. The barrel of flour is a birthday gift to you – do not laugh at this. I hope times will not be so hard always. I will send it to you as I can but will keep it for your use. ... the water is coming in our field – it is nearly across the road John could not go to Dr. Daney's to night on account of it – I will send a horse for Jane on Sunday – Henry will go & if he can get to the depot she can get back – Peyton has a fever this evening but may be well enough to go on horseback to-morrow & will let you know the state of the road & she can then know if Henry can come. If she cannot come that way – perhaps she could go in a skiff To Mrs Scotts as Mary intends doing – tho I fear there might be danger in that way.

I hear from Cory that the commander of the gun boats was surprised at the rashness of the people in New Orleans he said that they would not interfere at all with private property that their object was to restore the Union & that they would do if it cost a ten years war - but when it was doe the South should have every right that she ever had – they felt sorry to see the destruction of property- sugar, molasses cotton all belonging to individuals. Perhaps after all they may not interfere with cotton except to offer to buy it & we can refuse to sell to them & sell to the English & French who will soon be here. – This will be their best policy ...”

Eliza Morancy to daughter Caroline Morancy Hawkins, May 1863 [portion of left edge of sheet missing]

“My darling child,

... I must give you an account of our affairs your pa insists on my going to Kentucky & I expect to leave this week with Mr. Byrne & Mr Riegart – I shall go Mr. Dumesnils & from there to Nazareth perhaps - Your pa promises to go up in a week or two & as Dr Anderson & family are here & Mr Fontane promises to stay with him & Jane too – have consented – I preferred to wait for him but he will not let me do so. O! darling how I wish you were with me & I think you could come Mr. Tompkins & Ann ought to take Cleora & family or I fear she may die here. This dreadful war will ruin us all. If Philip was here I could take him tho I am sure Harriet would go as all do here. Your pa stays to dispose of his cotton as it is our only resource & he can sell to a citizen or Englishman – I am distressed to think of the horrid state of affairs – I hear that as soon as practicable – 70,000 Federals are going to Monroe & I suffer greatly in anticipation. Is it possible for you to come & go with me or can Mr. Tompkins come William can tell you whether it is possible but as we have no conveyance I could not send for you ... E Morancy”

“Milliken's Bend Decr. 17/63, Honoré Morancy to his children

"My dear children,

William Lowry who is now at my house will forward this to you and I take this opportunity to inclose several letters from your mother which will give you an idea how she is getting along. I have returned again to my house with our furniture from Stockland, as I could no longer remain there on account of robbers who were some time ago infesting the country. I am at present very quiet here and am treated with marked kindness and civility by the officers here, as well as by Genl Hawkins who commands the district. He is a cousin of R. D. Hawkins. My health has been generally good, but I am at times troubled with the vertigo. As to something to eat and wear I have no cause to complain For under the reign of plunder and lawlessness which prevailed in this parish previous to the advent of the present set of officers, we have lost every thing except a few cows and a very few mules. Louis if you had any cotton left for the gin, it has all been stolen, I will try to trace it up if possible. I have only got twelve thousand dollars for all the cotton I had – the most of it was burned by the confederates last July, about a week or so ago I was thinking of going out to see you all and I had a permission from Genl Hawkins to do so, and bring you all in if it was advisable, at least for the present, to leave here. I think if Louis could leave home it would be advisable to come in, as I have a good deal to advise with him about, there is no danger in coming in he would not be molested in any manner. If there was any means among you to purchase cotton and the confederates would not burn it it would be a good thing ... If you have any mules left you should try to keep them, there are scarcely any mules in this parish... H P Morancy

Jane wishes to be remembered by all of you and wishes particularly to send her love and respects to Caroline and wants very much to see the baby"

June 18 [1864?] Eliza Morancy, to her daughter Caroline Hawkins

"My dear dear daughter,

How delighted I was to hear that you are with your dear father – both on your account and his – I have suffered very much fearing that he might be molested again – since I heard of poor Chatham's death – I beg you will not leave him & if possible hope that you will live with us so long as we both live. I cannot bear to be separated from all my dear children – I have longed often to go back but hoped your father could come up & it would not only rest him but be of great advantage to his health – tho' the danger of guerillas firing on boats made me anxious both when he came up & when we would go down for I intended to go back to the Bend if he could not stay here – but I much prefer living in Ky until the war is over & if our cotton had not been burned we might have bought a little place near Frankfort or Louisville where we could have the advantage of church & schools for my dear grand children when I hoped to have my family at least every summer with me – you my darling could stay all the time as Mr H might come too – if Dr J could not & my dear Louis think of this for I still hope it may be done if we could dispose of some of our lands – I cannot bear to live in the Bend away from all my dear family except dear Victoria & she would perhaps come up to school her children & we might in time that are gone & put them in the cemetery at Frankfort – It is a most lovely place & I wish to be put there when I die if possible - - I was surprised & gratified to hear that dear Caddie J sister Cleora & Mary Bruce arrived last week Caddie is at Lexington. I will send for her as soon as possible. I hear that there is martial law there now – but I believe Morgan has left the state & we can soon get her – Bettie & the children wish to see her & I am very impatient to see once more my dear child & hear all the particulars of what has taken place since she left – Dear Ann wrote me saying that she was not very well & the fatigue she has had to endure since all the servants left had exhausted her – O! how it distresses me to think of all my dear children have endured & may yet endure but I hope they will bear their trials with

patience & resignation to the will of God & then all their suffering will be blessed – they know that God sends these trials tho man is the instrument & they should try to cast out all bitterness of heart – for if they do not forgive they cannot be forgiven – pray for this spirit my dear child & I hope your sufferings will work out a greater glory in eternity & soon we must all leave this place of trial whether prepared or not. Col. Philip White is here from Philadelphia – he tells me of a very remarkable circumstance & will send me some papers giving the account when he returns – an Italian priest in Philadelphia has the gift of miracles – cures the most inveterate diseases by a prayer & making the sign of the cross – he does not know whether he gives any thing or not – he said he was doing this when he left. My dear child – pray for your father & get him to read some pious books – I pray continually for him & for you all.

I wish you would send this to dear Ann as I have not time to write now & will write soon to her- I have sent three or four letters by Genl Steel to be sent by flag of truce as Mrs D wrote me to do - & many by private hand – always open to be inspected but she says she has only received those sent by your father I will hereafter write to him to be forwarded. I am very anxious that she should get some clothing & dear Eliza could come up if possible – would there be any opportunity to send from Vicksburg – I wrote to Eliza last & enclosed \$ 1 to buy stamps at Little Rock & several times put stamps in the letters I fear she did not get them – I will settle with Mary Bruce for the articles I am truly glad she got even that few – I am using the strictest economy in order to save for my dear children I cannot bear to think that they will suffer anything it is in my power to prevent. – Write often my darling & give me particulars first of yourself and father & dear little one of dear Vic & family – of Jane & Rosa I can never forget them for their kindness to you & my dear husband – Let me know what servants are on the place of those belonging to us – if Chatham has been heard of what things were stolen at Stockland – if you can use the carriage I thought you might get some gentle mules to put in when you go to see Vic – If you have milk & butter – fresh meat chickens &c – All that you think would interest me – where my dear L is & Mr H – Agnes & the children – dear Corry's widow too I have written to her but have had but one letter from her – Ada & Louisa are well when I heard last – Mrs Bledsoe has built a large house at Emmitsburg & keeps house ... E J Morancy

Is the garden dear Corry made all destroyed? I wrote weekly to your father until lately the road was so injured that the mails could not come or go, but I hope now they are repaired ...”

Louisiana State University has a group of Morancy family papers in their collections consisting of 120 items and 2 printed volumes.

\$ 12,500.00