



[William Crosfield Letters](#)

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Mammouth Cave House
October 9. 1859

My dear Mama,

I have to thank you
for long letters tho' unfortunately
the news is not by any means
so good as I should have chosen.
My first idea was that I should come
back right away still with so little
doing I do not see that I could
make it pay and while I am here
I may as well go on. If your apts
do not improve I shall come back
after New Orleans and then I fancy
I shall be ready by the time papa
will feel inclined to go about and
use his foot to his or its detriment.
For I am afraid from your histories
that it will be an affair of months.
If I do as Ray I shall be back in time
for the busy time which I hope will
come about Christmas: duty pulls
strong one way, inclination the
other and I am afraid that I do not
easily fall in with the idea of leaving
home for 6 months and coming back

in five: but I must be guided by my luckless journey and without further news. Under these circumstances I cannot ask you to continue such great letters as I am now doing. I enjoy them most thoroughly. I may miss them and it would be a labour lost so please stop them after as it would be the only sure place as it would be the only sure place.

Last Sunday I shipped a letter to what I had seen it in the rain. Richmond is a city that I am very glad to have seen already as I afterwards found that it did not delay my journey by the by. I must thank you all for 2 sets of letters, and do little Bertha. Richmond is very fine situated at the head of tide water on the James River - the Capitol is on a hill in the centre of the city and in the square has a very fine statue of Washington the first put up in the country - he is on horseback and around are pedestals to hold the statues of Virginian celebrities. There are already set up in memory of Jefferson, Adams and Henry. Round the city are hills making me think of a city of hills. On Monday morning I set off to make acquaintance with the city. This was at

Banwood a small place where we
crossed over to Bellair and found
myself in Ohio the heaven of so many
where the slave comes when he would
size his freedom, here the free slave
settles to receive decent treatment
and here emigrants find good
land at a reasonable distance
the sea board. In the afternoon I
passed through the capital of the
State, Columbus; a city which has
like all such places, a high domed
Capitol. At seven o'clock on Tuesday
evening I arrived at Cincinnati
and dwelling in your letters which
had been waiting my wandering
and I enjoyed them I assure you
I have read them more than once
"The Queen City of the West" "Hogopolis"
is built on high land on two terraces
the steam boat landing is of course
on the water's brink and as the river
is now very low the descent from
the first street to the water is very
steep so much so that I cannot tell
how they manage to get their goods
from the boats to the city. It is a very
flourishing place and fourth St
has many very fine stores, being
devoted to the retail business. On
this street there is a very fine Opera
house externally. This street is com-
posed of all sorts of houses, wood &
stone, high and low, fine and poor;
one end is the Fifth Avenue of Cin-
ti but "it aint no count" I found here
more Germans than in any other
city of the Union that I have seen
almost all the signs are German
and there is one quarter over the
canal which they call the Rhine.
I spent Wednesday and one half of
Thursday in the city and then
went by boat to Louisville. "Floating
down the river of the Ohio" has a
most poetical sound and I have
always looked upon it as a most
delightful journey though it seems
equalling the Rhine in beauty but
no such thing, it is certainly pretty
but that is all. The banks of the
river are high and their table land
The right bank (Ohio and

Indiana is very much finer land already and I fear I shall make
and very much better cultivated many more before I have finished.
that the other (Old Kentucky) claim. Sleeping 3 hours at Louisville I came
is perhaps a reason for the difference here by cars to within 12 miles of
At half past one at night the box the cave. The road is a new one which
arrived at Louisville. These I fear will in a few weeks carry passengers
more letters. I cannot understand from Louisville to Nashville and
how you manage with the poor form a good southern route. The
office for every letter that I get the country through which it passes is
one shut more than the last I very fine and very few slaves are
don't know when it will end visible (non sequitur) - filthy and
I can't more than that I don't very well wooded. Every one had
for the more the better though to descend at Woodlands, the now
afraid that I cannot write any terms and take stages for the
thing to compensate for such good various branches - the road which
newspapers. This one that I am at present leads to the cave is one
now writing is the most unsatisfactory of the most vile, most intricate, and
-ory for a German and a Frenchman most untracable roads that I have
are talking each in his own way met with in all my experience
our language and it is no easy of American roads. At future
matter to settle our ideas in such travellers thank heaven that a new
confusion but there is no help for "damned pit" is now being made
it for the day is very cold and At four o'clock three of us landed
this is the only room with a fire here without broken bones. and as
so I must do my best and you Sunday was near I wanted to go
must excuse my many mistakes into the cave for the short 7 mile
for I know I have made very no course at once but the landlady

said 'no'; so I had to be satisfied. bridge is soon reached and by it we
the company numbered seven and crossed the Bottomless Pit and after
we were soon acquainted, then of a blue light had exhibited the dismal
them had been into the cave the gloom of the distance and the depth
day and spoke of it with almost of the pit we passed into another
dingust. At eight o'clock yesterday we hall - the exit from this is through
all set off together for the 18 miles a cluster of loose rocks one of which
route we passed through the name is a huge slab supported by its
to the salt petre vats which were as follows and from its position has
in 1812 for purposes not altogether earned the name of the Scotchman's
friendly to our countrymen - no trap. We now came to another passage
there is the Rotunda a room above about 12 feet high - the road leads
one hundred feet high and semicircular through a very tortuous gutter
in form. Immediately on leaving whose sides are about breast high
this hall the long route diverges from and being only a foot apart this is
the main avenue just behind the "fat man's misery" and as this at
"Giant's coffin". This if formed of two last ends we arrive at "the great relief"
rocks one laid on the top of the other. Another hall which follows very quickly
it is 40 feet long and 8 ft deep. Now the last is called the "Bacon room"
soon the road descends from the cave from the fact of certain attempts
of the Wooden bowl cave, we are met at stalactites assuming this form. A
in the Arched way goes out from the dismal pool close by has been named
floor to the roof, this way has evidently the Dead Sea and almost immediately
been formed by the fierce action of the River Styx is crossed in a boat the
water, a circular indentation in water was low so that several times
the roof at the end of this passage we had to get out and walk whilst
is named Minerva's Dome. A woodpecker taking the duties of Pharon took
the boat to a further point. We were

now in the region of water and we
must again cross the water which
this point is Lake Lethe. Five hundred
yards further on we again embark
to commence our long sail on the ca-
river $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long the ceiling was
in height from 3 feet to 15 feet. in some
of the higher parts the echoes are most
sublime and there 4 Americans and
German and Frenchman and one
Englishman sang "God save the Queen"
Williamson were we and the pass of Echo
Chor are next passed and a very small
hole admitted us to Martha's Vineyard
where a flint formation very much re-
sembles bunches of grapes. We dined in Washing-
Hall and next to this was a hall with
flat roof covered over with white gypsum
call the snow ball room. Cleveland's
Cabinet is a mile & three quarters in length
and here the ceiling & walls are covered
with beautiful rosettes and alabaster
flowers. The termination of this is the Rock
Mountains which seems to be the end of the
cave tell you mount and find behind
"dismal hollow", then the road passes
to the left and soon we reach the end
where the most beautiful gypsum forma-
tions. The cave is a most wonderful
work without a doubt but I was some-
what disappointed there is no Dante's such as
had expected and I say "Carry me back to
old Virginia" I hope that I shall hear
much better news of papa by my next
and with love to every man woman
and child of my acquaintance I
remain your very affectionate son
W. H. Crofield