

Christmas Greetings from Dr. Stevens:

In 1923 Stevens Park was established in memory of Dr. John H. Stevens and his wife Mary, who had moved to Dallas from northern Louisiana in 1870. Below are excerpts from a letter Dr. Stevens wrote to his wife's step-brother, John Chappell, back in Louisiana. Dr. Stevens is writing from and about his new farm, the fields of which are now Stevens Park Estates. He mentions his five month old son Walter (Annie L. Stevens wasn't born until the following year). He was fifty when this letter was penned. Born at Harrisonburg in the Shenandoah Valley, John Horace Stevens had attended Dickinson College in Pennsylvania and then received a Medical Doctorate from the University of Virginia. Following several years practice at the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia, Stevens moved to Louisiana where he was a doctor, farmer, and State legislator. At the opening of the Civil War, he enrolled as 1st Surgeon of the 2nd Louisiana Infantry regiment. By war's end Stevens had risen to the administrative rank of Medical Director for the 2nd Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. His return to Louisiana was rendered so onerous by Reconstruction that he left for Texas to start life anew.

Dallas, Texas
Dec. 10th, 1874

John H. Chappell, Esq.
Dear Brother,

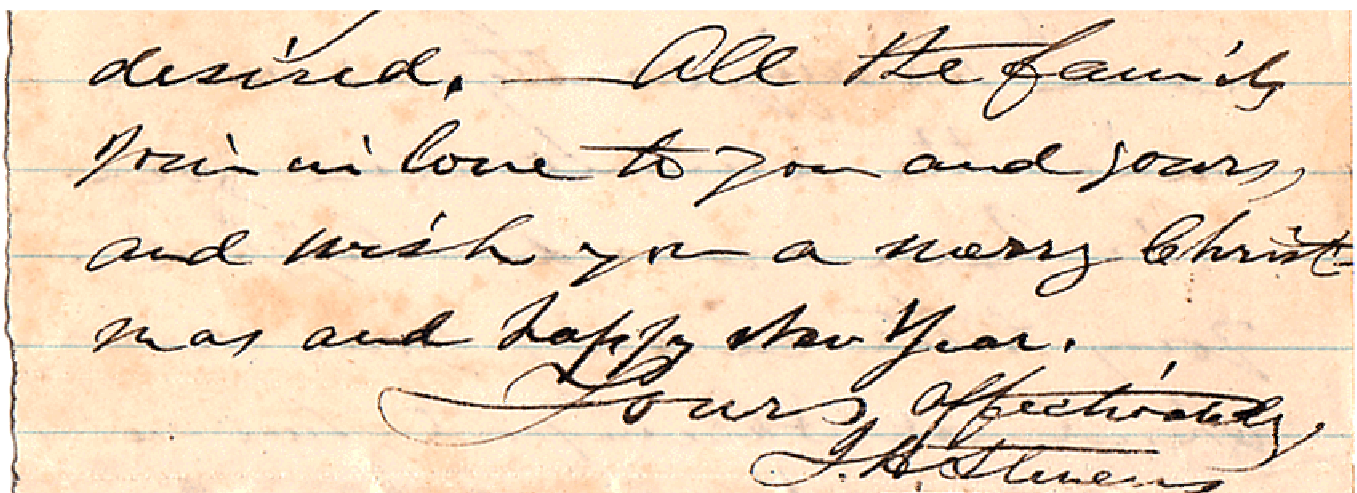
A leisure hour reminds me of a promise to write you, made through Mary. We have all been gladdened recently to learn of your improving health, and the continued welfare of your little family. You have something more now to live for than when, years ago, you were treading life's torturous pathway alone. The possession of a bosom partner and a cherub babe inspire new feelings and impel to a broader field of action. We can fully sympathize with you in your frequent and exalted references to your household treasure, for we too have a like object to command our admiration and shed a halo of joy around our hearthstone. Walter grows in interest with each recurring day, and his Mother is constantly discovering the development of fresh accomplishments to be added to his previous large store. First he laughed -- then he crowed -- now he squeals. ... Walter sends greetings to his cousin Sue Annie, and hopes, ere many years, to romp with her on the prairies of Texas. ...

We are gradually opening our farm. As yet it has been almost all DO -- little income. Everything has been absorbed in home improvements. This year's crop was a failure to a great extent. Still we are not -- at least I am not -- discouraged with farming prospects in this section. I think that future development will prove this, in every point of view, the best farming region in the Union. If you can make planting pay in North Louisiana, where cotton is the chief staple, we certainly ought to realize handsomely here, where we can produce twice as much cotton and corn per acre, with the additional advantage of successfully growing the cereals. ...

We have ordered shipped to you, to the care of your merchant at Shreveport, two sacks of our best flour. I think you will find (*it*) equal, if not superior, to that you obtain from the Northwest. ...

We are having most delightful weather. As a consequence the wheat and oats crops are looking as well as could be desired. All the family join in love to you and yours, and wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Yours affectionately,
J.H. Stevens



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