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## Exploring Desert Stone

Steven K. Madsen

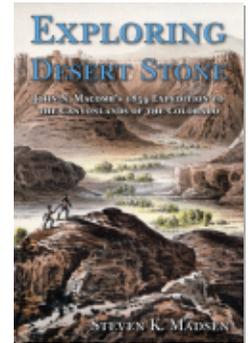
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LETTERS OF  
FREDERICK W. VON EGLOFFSTEIN TO  
JOHN N. MACOMB, JR.

The following correspondence illustrates the careful development of Egloffstein's monumental map of the Macomb Expedition. It represents a compilation of several survey maps and other pertinent primary sources. Nevertheless, it is based primarily on the 1860 manuscript map of the expedition, drawn by Capt. John N. Macomb and Charles H. Dimmock.

The map's evolution occurred over a two year period during the Civil War. Construction of the map began at the outset of the war. And though the cartographer held emigrant status, he joined the Union effort, served as an officer, and was severely wounded in battle. These events delayed the map's completion until mid-1863, followed by its publication the next year.

\* \* \*

Recd. and ansd. 16<sup>th</sup> May '61  
 1231 Chestnut Street  
 Philadelphia Pa  
 May 10<sup>th</sup> 1861.

Capt. J. N. Macomb  
 Corps Topl. Engs. U.S. Army  
 Washington D.C.  
 Sir,

I have the honor to report myself to you from Philadelphia, where I have located myself after due consideration at No 1231 Chestnut Street. This office is a few doors below the best photographic establishment in the city (and perhaps in the United States)—and not too far from my printer and the ruling machine, both occupying the same premises.

I have taken up your map while the photographer is going on with Capt. John Rodgers Sea-chart now promising a speedy termination.

The letter engraver, whom I also selected from among a number of unengaged competent men, intends to take up your plate at the end of this or the next week. I prepared a tracing of the lettering of all spanish words, which I will send you for examination, when finished, to guard against misspelling—Awaiting further instructions at your pleasure[.] I have the honor to remain

most respectfully your obedient servant  
 F.W. Egloffstein

\* \* \*

1231 Chestnut Street  
 Philadelphia Pa.  
 May 30<sup>th</sup> 1861.

Capt. J. N. Macomb  
 Corps Topl. Engs. U. S. Army  
 Washington D.C.

Sir,

I take much pleasure in acknowledging your letter dated May the 28<sup>th</sup> accompanied by the list of altitudes. I shall construct a profil[e] of the same and send the same to your Office at the earliest practicable period.

In making out the proof for the lettering I was forcibly convinced of the propriety of giving a hurried copy of the whole map, on tracing paper, to enable you to consult such of the Officers, passing through Washington, who have travelled over that region. Moreover I have given a touch of

india ink shading to the mountains, with the view of giving at once character to the masses of highlands. Being under the impression this additional work will in the end save many corrections, otherwise unavoidable. This tracing will enable you and Dr. Newberry to make at once valuable suggestions, where I should have failed to come up to the proper understanding. I will send this matter I think by next Monday. Had you been in possession of such a preliminary map, I am sure, we might have gained much valuable information and profited by the criticism of [?] Capt. W. D. Whipple has been at my Office, examined the map, and left a mem[o]randum to that amount on the uncovered map. I had just gone to the photographer next door and left the Office open, expecting the Captain every hour, according to your kind notice. This was unfortunate, but also unavoidable. Perhaps the Captain will see your map in Washington, as he left word of his intention to leave the City the same day at 3 O'Clock P.M.

I enclose a memorandum of the chief engineer of the Pennsylvania Central Railroad, with the latest and only additional information regards Mr. Blackwell. A young man, Clerk of the Continental, and now absent, is in charge of certain property belonging to Mr. Blackwell. When the same returns I may hear more and reliable information.

I am much pleased with the events of last week and hope for the speedy restoration of the "status quo" in the whole South. I am very busily engaged in finishing your tracing and delayed this letter until this evening, which may cause it to be delayed at the postoffice, should I not reach there before nine O'Clock this evening. Please let me know if Capt. John Rodgers is in the city of Washington or ordered to sea, as I intend to write to him, on business shortly. The Captains map is progressing but I can assure you I had yet many considerable difficulties to remove before I could do another step. This new process, when once fully mastered is as simple as all real valuable improvements.

Most respectfully  
Your obedient servant  
F.W. Egloffstein

\* \* \*

Recd. & ansd. on the  
11<sup>th</sup> June  
See Pa. ck. bk. Wr.B8.

1231 Chestnut Str.  
Philadelphia June 2<sup>nd</sup>  
1861.

Capt. J. N. Macomb  
Corps Topl. Engs. U.S. Army  
Washington D.C.

Sir,

Your kind letter of the [21<sup>st</sup>?] instant I have the honor of acknowledging to day. I have sent yesterday the promised map on tracing paper under Major Bashi's address, directed to your Office; and also a short letter accompanying the same. I will now add a few remarks to the same, begging your permission to be as explicit as practicable.

This map is intended for your special use and I beg you to have it inspected and criticized by every body interested in that section of the territories. I have no doubt, but many of the Officers engaged in the Navajo war will pass through Washington just now and add by their private notes, comments, or recollections, to the skeleton now embodying the main lines of travel.

I had not time enough to tint the level plain, which deficiency will be easily corrected by a comparison with one of Lt. J.C. Ives's maps, showing part of the S. W. corner of your map. The [underfeatures?] of the map are rather light, or somewhat neglected, which you will kindly excuse, and explain to others, for I intended but to give a general idea of the masses of highlands, contrasting with the valleys and mesas in bold relief. The trails of parties passing over the country previous to your expedition I have marked in blue lines and the red lines will show at once the great amount of original work your map is furnishing, thus making a contribution to geography, which otherwise would have been burried [*sic*] perhaps forever in the reports and archives of the War Department.

The altitudes [elevations] are left out, as are many trails and names, which will be engraved, on the map, subject to your examination of the [running?] proofs, which will regularly reach your office, as the work progresses.

In marking this tracing I beg you to make out a list of corrections, on a piece of paper, instead of marking it on the map, which I will take care to correct on the original and also on the plate. The tracing thus remaining in your possession for further additions and changes. Many portions of the map are premature and the regular work on the original will improve greatly. For instance the San Juan Mountains, the Uncompahgre mountains and the main chain of rocky mountains North of your wagon road to Gunnison's trail, as I have not as yet made use of all the landscape views in our possession.

Your work and that of Capt. Gunnison connects at the Salt [La Sal] Mts. in longitude; Col. Loring's map connecting the two lines of travel diagonally across the San Luis Valley verifies this construction. Thus the whole of Capt. Gunnison's work is moved a few miles (3.75 [m?]) to the East, which agrees with the land office work of the upper del Norte, the latter being 15 m to[o] far West on Gunnison's map. Ives's and Whipple's work remain also unchanged as a body, but subject to the longitude of

Santa Fé and Albuquerque, so well determined of late. As regards the title I think the word Colorado Tery. could be added to Utah and New Mexico. The name of the former Secretary of War has been remarked by others being out of date. But this might be altered in substituting "the bureau of Topl. Engrs. War Department." However this is a question beyond my sphere and of no other than momentary importance, as your map will stand on record, I hope, for many generations after the settlement of the present political difficulties [Civil War]—

The blue river, or Na-un-ka-rea river has been called "Upper Colorado" by the settlers of Colorado Territory giving rise to the name of that territory; I have therefore added both Grand river and Upper Colorado. This river rises at Long's peak and is fully as long as Green river, deserving the main name Colorado as it drains the whole mountainous district between the del Norte and the Platte, snow capped mountains of alpine character; Green river being less formidable in every respect.

There is much to be done on your original map and the tracing is far more developed than the present accurate construction of the work in reality; which will explain some slight changes to occur in proofs from the plate itself in future. Dr. Newberry will be enabled to suggest many valuable points, since this tracing is at your command. I would like much to have your candid opinion of that general effect of the map. San Francisco Ms., Mt Taylor, Albuquerque Mts. Sierra la Plata, Spanish Peaks, Pikes Peak are scarcely as high as the Cañon of the Colorado near Padre Crossing is deep. I will have to reserve much power of shading therefore for this contrast and the minor canons will appear weak, although much bolder than on this sketch.

I hope this attempt will proof [*sic*] to you my desire and anxiety to make your map—a document of much value and an ornament to the bureau of topographical engineers. Much will depend upon my present success of the heliographic process. I hope for the best and will work my way indefatigably—to accomplish this great object.

In leaving Washington you had the kindness to pay me up to the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. Moving to Philadelphia, and establishing new Office &c. have consumed much money and I am obliged to beg you for one month salary, my means getting rapidly exhausted.

I am glad to hear Commander John Rodgers will be here. I hope to have something ready to please him as I feel much indebted to his encouraging this new process of engraving and topography.

Most respectfully

Your obedient servant

F.W. Egloffstein.

\* \* \*

19<sup>th</sup> June ansd. and  
sent 2 copies Emory's  
report and one map only  
by Ed. [?] via Continental  
[?]

Capt. J. N. Maccomb  
Corps Topl. Engs. U.S. Army  
Washington D.C.

1231 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia Pa  
June 12<sup>th</sup> 1861.

and wrote again on  
21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> authorizing  
expense of \$5 or \$6 for maps  
&c of use to us.

Sir,

Your letter enclosing a check of one hundred and twenty five dollars for this month salary I have the honor to acknowledge.

I am happy to hear your expenses as favourable an opinion of the tracing, which I have hurried much more than I wish to do otherwise; but time is precious, and you will have in a reasonable period running proofs of the work.

I understand Major Sheppard is in this part of the country, I fear it is not the same gentleman, who directed several expeditions from Fort Defiance through Navajo strongholds as the trails on our map prove.

If you should be able, Captain, to gather a few maps of the mining districts around Pike peak, there are some published, the work would gain much in value, and secure to the chart a certain longevity, so desirable after the endless labor of compiling the material, which is scattered over so many Offices, embraced in so many correct and erroneous maps.

I propose now to make a slight tracing, or as well send one of the final proofs to Mr. Pfeif[f]er in New Mexico, in order to get from him and through him the most reliable information of the San Juan Mountains, further a delineation of the parks of the upper Animas, Dolores, and Uncompahgrea Rivers. The construction I have so far given is vague and may be modified by future developments of that mountain district.

I take much pleasure and pride in combining the material on hand in the most solid, compact and correct way. Few maps have ever been constructed with more care to preserve the material of each party, exploring in their own fashion and mapping in their own language. We see the marked differences for instance in comparing the maps of Capt. Simpson, Emory, Whipple, Gunnison & Ives with your own. Every map has its own character, difficult often to read and impossible for one who has not been over the ground himself or close by. This new style of topography whether modeled or merely imitating the

plaster model, reduces these different languages of mapping in one, plain and readable.

There are many weak parts of the map, and as gold may be discovered in almost every section of that country, I fear the consequences; an early "exposition" of the errors embraced in the construction.

I hope to gather much more material before the work is ruled, or the last tint put on the top of the heliographic engraving. As soon as some proofs are advanced, to exhibit the skeleton geographical positions and triangulations, it would further our map much, if copies (preliminary) could be sent to New Mexico and the Pike Peak country or Colorado Territory, to such persons as Governor Gilpon, his Surveyor General, Mr. Henderson, Kid [*sic*] Carson, Leroux &c.—two at a time with the request to return one corrected copy to your Office.

It is strange how little our War Department Maps are distributed. Even the Army Officers are often met with in the field, commanding large bodies of troops not being in possession of the necessary maps already published for year past. If we can get an answer but from half of those addressed, the work would gain much in correctness and popularity. Your name is so well known in New Mexico and so highly spoken of, that there would be much readiness expressed in aiding in the construction of the map, by all parties who have travelled and explored in that region.

If you should come in sight of one of the oldest maps of New Mexico, published perhaps ten or twenty years ago, for instance "[Josiah] Greggs map" on the scale of 57 miles to the inch, embracing the country from the Western boundary of Missouri to the 108<sup>th</sup> merid. I would feel much obliged for the use of the same during a few days. On those old maps many valuable features are delineated which disappear on the recent publications.

I would like much to have the use of Emory's map for a few days only. Many of the Officers are in possession of a copy, perhaps Dr Newberry has a copy also. I do not trouble you in vain, and sorry as I am to ask you an unpleasant favor, perhaps the increased correctness of your map will repay you many folds for your troubles.

I saw to day for the first time Col. Meig's photograph on Chestnut Street. It is grouped with "the patriots" headed by the General in Chief, Major Anderson, President Lincoln, Mr. Dayton and a few others, in all twelve persons on one card. Opposite to this picture was another collection headed "the traitors" portraying twelve of the southern personages, only too well known.

Most respectfully  
Your obedient servant  
F. W. Egloffstein.

\* \* \*

Recd. & ansd. on  
The 1<sup>st</sup> July 1861.  
JNM.

1231 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia Pa.  
June 28<sup>th</sup> 1861.

Capt. J. N. Maccomb  
Corps Topl. Engs. U.S. Army  
Washington D.C.

Sir,

After having had the honor of seeing you at your Office in Winder building on Monday[,] I went in search of the Secretary of the Interior. But all was in vain, as Mr. Caleb B. Smith was not accessible. The next day I failed again to be admitted, when I called on the Prussian Minister, Baron [Frederick von] Gerolt, who kindly consented and presented me to Mr. C. B. Smith. I had as much success as could be expected under such favorable circumstances. The Secretary [of the Interior, Mr C. B. Smith] who had never seen maps of the new style, expressed his desire to have his map engraved like your present map of New Mexico, which he admired and inspected for at least one quarter of an hour. I left your kind letter and an estimate of the map of the Texas boundary survey in the Interior Department for final decision.

Baron Gerolt exhibited much interest in your map which he thinks is the first complete map of the most interesting part of Nord America ever published. As your map and the [Texas] boundary map join at Santa Fé, they will form a set of geographical maps much wanted in the scientific and travelling circles of Europe, and carry your name all over the world, where geography is cultivated. I hope that you will be able to secure two or three thousand copies besides your report, for distribution to the Universities, Academies, Geographical societies, Scientific institutes &c. of the United States and Europe. Baron Gerolt told me he sent originally Frémont's first map to the King of Prussia and Baron Humboldt; in consequence of which the King ordered the famous large gold medal of the knights of the "order of merit", to be presented to Frémont, the latter taking well care of having this presentation know all over the United States and Europe.

Fine thick paper impressions will cost you according to the quality of paper from 150 to 200 dollars per thousand, which will be well invested, as otherwise, your map would be bur[i]ed in a few libraries, never to be heard of again.

As I returned to Winderbuilding [*sic*] I was called for by the Office of Capt. A. A. Humphreys, who insisted upon my reading Mr. Ives's proofs,

unattended to for many weeks, and otherwise to be sent back again without notice to the superintendent. Dr. Newberry had left, Mr[.] Young who was asked to read the illustrations had left with Capt. A. W. Whipple. I finally consented for two reasons: First the woodcuts (70 in number) were too bad to pass without comment, second Capt. Humphreys paid my travelling expenses, or 8 dollars for two days work. Consequently I left Washington Thursday and report myself to you this Friday evening in my Office. Hoping this delay, caused by business otherwise unattended to by any of the Officers will not displease you. I am only sorry not having been in my Office in case you should have come on from Washington yourself to see me.

I left your tracing in the hands of Capt. J. P. Woodruff on leaving Windersbuilding [*sic*], wrapped up in brown paper and addressed to yourself.

Your kind letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> June I received on my return and acknowledge the receipt of Col. Emory's map and two volumes, which I will return during the next week. I found on my return a well ruled glassplate [*sic*] for the final printing of Com. John Rodgers map, of which I have promised to send a proof to Cincinnati early next week.

I will and have to tax my full energies once more to push those two plates through, especially since the Texas boundary map will perhaps make it necessary for me to return soon altogether to Washington notwithstanding the summerheat of Washington nights.

I will soon write to you of my further progress and the pleasure it gives me to accomplish the task before me. Please be assured, Captain, of my sincere thanks for our kind assistance in this new contract for the boundary map.

Most respectfully  
Your obedient servant  
F.W. Egloffstein.

\* \* \*

Ansd. on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1861

1231 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia Pa.  
July 7<sup>th</sup> 1861.

Capt. J. N. Macomb  
Corps Topl. Engs. U.S. Army  
Washington D.C.

Sir,

Your encouraging letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> July I have the honor to acknowledge. I have since labored with some success on both your and Capt. John

Rodgers maps. Constructing your profile I find the barometric heights of the lowest altitude on Labyrinth Creek corresponding very well with Capt. Gunnison's data[sic] at the crossing of Green river. Your lowest position is 3,156.18 feet below Santa Fé, or the latter taken at 7,000 feet above the level of the sea, 3,843.82' positive altitude. I suppose the level of Grand river is about a thousand feet below this station which will give about 3,000 feet. Captain Gunnison's observation at the crossing of the Grand river is 4,440 feet above the sea 80 miles north or above your position; his crossing of Green river is 3,828 feet. This corresponds well and I see no reason to doubt the reading of your barometers, or the computation of the same, which is very satisfactory.

I will send you the profile with an impression of your steel plate shortly, when I will add a few remarks of minor points on the route.

In engraving the various trails I have considered to mark your wagon road in double lines thus =====. Please let me know as soon as convenient which is the whole extent of your roads. I suppose your roads commence at Fort Union via Apache Cañon to Santa Fé, thence along your trail via Santa Domingo, Algodones, &c. to Albuquerque. Did you cross the Rio Grande, or run a road west of the river? I have a vague idea of your having surveyed or built a road toward Albiqiu[sic] forming the now desirable connection between Santa Fé and the Pagosas mining district. Your wagon roads and the Public Surveys are important elements of the map and I will take care to engrave the same so, as to direct the eye of the reader to the same, without compromising the harmony of the whole map.—

I intend to lay down a little mountain work upon the plate serving as a skeleton for general information, however primitive for I am very anxious to get some impressions on the way to New Mexico during this summer, so we have a return and criticism from that region. The San Juan Mountains as well as the Sierra Blanca between Taos and Fort Garland have been much visited lately and many persons in New Mexico are able to furnish additional information, regards the upper valleys of the streams tributary to the Del Norte and the Canadian rivers.

I am sorry it got so late this morning that I have to close these lines in order to mail them in time. The days are so long and half past six in the evening finds me generally leaning over my steel plates, the only children I now possess, and take care of.

I have to ask you also for the month of July salary, as my funds are exhausted, much owing to my trip to Washington and the various accidents[sic] pertaining to the same.

If we should have rainy weather I will be able to send you soon an impression. On clear days, much time is lost in watching the photographic operations.

Most respectfully  
 Your obedient servant  
 F.W. Egloffstein.

\* \* \*

— Private—  
 Recd. on 13 July '61

1231 Chestnut Street  
 Philadelphia Pa  
 July 10<sup>th</sup> 1861.

Captain J. N. Macomb No inclosures [*sic*]  
 Corps Topl. Engs. U.S. Army  
 Washington D.C.

Dear Sir,

I enclose a few impressions of the first Island of Commander John Rodgers map, now printed.

His specimen, imperfect in some respects and nearly an aqua fortis proof, is however a satisfactory proof of the success of the heliographic process.

If examined by means of a magnifier you will see the delicate tint lines or grain of the work, my invention and forming a valuable new style of engraving.

I have sent impressions to Cincinnati to give I hope satisfaction to your brother in law, Commander John Rodgers, who has kindly encouraged me to master the difficulties of the experiment, which herewith closes. The rest is mechanical work which will require but ordinary diligence to give satisfaction. My photographer, the celebrated stereoscopist Mr. Langenheim gives me additional assurance, that I will be able to print thus on steel any given stereoscope.

I would like to return to Washington as soon as this plate is done, when I will have the pleasure to print on steel your portrait and that of Col. M C. Meigs.

Should you have a good photograph handy please send it on, as it would not take a moment more time, whether I print or expose to the sun, two, or half a dozen pictures, save the laying of the [e]tching ground, a few minutes operation.

Most respectfully  
 Your obedient servant  
 F.W. Egloffstein.

\* \* \*

1231 Chestnut Str.  
Philadelphia Pa  
July 16<sup>th</sup> 1861.  
Tuesday.—

Captain J. N. Maccomb.  
Corps Topl. Engs. U.S. Army  
Washington D.C.

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge your favor of the 13<sup>th</sup> a.c. enclosing the draft of \$125 1/100 on New York Sub-treasury, for which I beg to accept my sincere thanks.

The triplicate vouchers accompany these lines. I am happy to learn of your arrangement, as regards the two days voucher, which I made mention of to you in my last before letter. I thought there might be some discrepancy in the monthly accounts, so I informed you of the same, notwithstanding the protestation of Mr. Smith Thompson to the contrary. You know from experience so much better how to arrange these matters of liquidation. I have been a few hours in Washington, on Monday, going and coming so rapidly as not being able to see you personally. Called for to attend the summons in the matter of engraving the Texas boundary map, I suce[e]ded to prearrange a favorable result for taking up the new contract in about two weeks hence.

I am fully satisfied with drawing one more month of salary for drawing your map, when I hope your appropriation will be sufficient to cover the original amount of 800 dollars for the engraving. Perhaps if money should be left to your account, the item of lettering, might be defrayed out of the same, this latter however depending entirely upon your own approbation or such arrangements as you feel pleased to make.

Have the kindness Captain to let me know the full extent of your wagon roads in New Mexico, so I am under the impression there are some of your improvements on routes of travel West of the Fort Union and Santa Fé road.

I had certain offers made to me lately, to engage in volunteering, which I however respectfully declined, giving at present more than ever attention to topography. I sent you a little specimen of part of Commander John Rodger's map on last Friday. My unexpectedly fortunate success in heliography will also secure this process to your map, even without modelling the work so elaborately. Everything will turn out right and your engraving and map stand for many generations on record as an ornament to yourself and the bureau. I have the honor to be most respectfully

Your obedient servant  
F.W. Egloffstein.

\* \* \*

Recd. on the 28<sup>th</sup> Oct. '61

1231 Chestnut Str.  
Philadelphia Pa  
October 26<sup>th</sup> 1861.

Major J. N. Macomb  
Corps Topl. Engs. U.S. Army  
Washington D.C.

Sir,

I have the honor of submitting to your examination a proof of your map, exhibiting the lettering thereupon.

The title is not as yet cut in full for the reason of changes, which may deem advisable.

I will have the honor of calling on you in Washington during the next week, hoping to receive further instruction from you. I felt very sorry of having been absent from my Office, when you called on me during your short tour through this city.

Most respectfully  
Your obd. sert.  
F. W. Egloffstein.

\* \* \*

Recd. on 1<sup>st</sup> Feby 1862  
opened by some other [?]

F. Nicholas [St?]  
January 22, 186[2]

Col. J. N. Macomb  
Corps of Topl. Engs.  
Washington,

Dear Sir,

Your two letters have reached me on my return to this city from a tour in the interior states.

I will send you a proof of your map, the same being much advanced, the work along the outward and homeward trail is finished and much besides, to make a handsome display.

Most respectfully  
Your obedient servant  
Baron F. W. Egloffstein.

\* \* \*

Washington D.C.

May 30 1863

Colonel J. N. Macomb

Topl. Engrs. U.S. Army

Dear Colonel,

You would much oblige me by sending that letter, you once required from Dr. Newberry, as Prof. Baird can not give me the copies of the Colon[el's] Report without Newberry's order.

Your plate is doing well and you will receive a good impression of the same during the week.

I have the honor Colonel to be

most respectfully

your obedient servant.

[illegible] F. W. v. Egloffstein.

[Note from Macomb]: Wrote a request to Newberry to send to Egloffstein an order on Profr Baird for the works, as many copies as he may have determined [illegible].