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ARTICLES

Patriotism, Poetry, and Personalities: The Politics of John L. Wilson and "A Pasquinade of the Thirties" by Richard Campbell	4
"Citadel's Whore"? The South Carolina Institute for Leadership and the Citadel-Converse Imbroglia by Joe P. Dunn	35
Binding the Republic Together: The Early Political Thought of John C. Calhoun by John G. Grove	100
"The Consequence of This Rigorously Protestant View of History": The Anglo-Catholic Mind of Frederick Adolphus Porcher by Mitchell G. Klingenberg	122
"They Are Supposed to Be Lurking about the City": Enslaved Women Runaways in Antebellum Charleston by Amani T. Marshall	188
The Big House and the Madhouse: Institutional Reform and the State in Tillman-Era South Carolina by Kevin Krause	213
Overshadowed: John Bachman's Contribution to <i>The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America</i> by Lester D. Stephens	282
Silver Spoons and Spyglasses: The Lifestyle of the Abbeville Gentry, 1820-1860 by Larry S. Bell and Marvin L. Cann	304

BOOK REVIEWS	65, 148, 241, 325
ARCHIVES UPDATE	83, 164, 258, 343
NEWS	89, 178, 272
INDEX, VOLUME 115	348

SILVER SPOONS AND SPYGLASSES: THE LIFESTYLE OF THE ABBEVILLE GENTRY, 1820–1860

LARRY S. BELL AND MARVIN L. CANN*

SILVER SPOONS AND SPYGLASSES REFLECTED THE WEALTH AND status of an emerging gentry class in the antebellum South Carolina up country. By the third decade of the nineteenth century, estate inventories and wills increasingly recorded ownership of luxury items among the local elite. Abbeville District was no exception. For example, the estate inventory of William Calhoun, the older brother of Senator John C. Calhoun, listed a dozen silver tablespoons, twelve silver teaspoons, a silver salt spoon, a silver butter knife, and a spyglass. The elaborately detailed instructions by Frances E. H. Witherspoon left “one of my silver tankards, a pair of my silver candlesticks, and one dozen of my silver teaspoons” to each of her three granddaughters.¹ In addition, articles and advertisements in two weekly newspapers, the *Banner* and the *Independent Press*, established in the district in 1844 and 1853, respectively, revealed the Abbeville gentry’s growing desire for conspicuous consumption, newly refined tastes, prized possessions, cultural aspirations, commitment to educating the next generation, and evolving political attitudes. Used in combination, the estate records and newspapers from Abbeville shed light on the lifestyle of the up-country gentry as the Civil War approached.

The General Assembly created the Abbeville District in 1785, carving it out of six smaller judicial districts in the lower piedmont that had been part of the colonial Ninety Six District. Initially, the state legislature delineated

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¹ Estate inventory of William Calhoun, January 2, 1841, Abbeville County Ordinary Court, Inventories, Appraisements/Sales, 1839–1855, 100–102; will of Frances E. H. Witherspoon, July 14, 1853, Abbeville County Probate Court, Will Record 2, 1837–1855, 251–255. Except where otherwise indicated, all citations of wills are to microfilm copies of the records of the Abbeville County Probate Court at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia. All references to estate inventories, appraisements, and sales are to documents in the Abbeville County Ordinary Court, microfilmed by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Citations of original documents in the Abbeville County Probate Court, Abbeville, S.C., are indicated by their box and package numbers.

Despite his contribution to *Quadrupeds*, John Bachman eventually fell under the shadow of John James Audubon as a fully equal partner. Thus, as previously indicated, Bachman lamented in his later years that he was hardly noticed as coauthor of the work even though he had "written every line." He had reason to complain about the loss of recognition. Although his claim of writing every line was an exaggeration, he did produce virtually all of the descriptions and synonymies and edited the lines supplied by the Audubons. Indeed, it was Bachman alone who made *Quadrupeds* a scientific work, and his indispensable role in producing this laudable study should not remain overshadowed by his better-known coauthor.

guide, not a work for the general reader. See Spencer Fullerton Baird, *Mammals of North America; the Descriptions of Species Based Chiefly on the Collections in the Museum of the Smithsonian Institution* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1859). For informative assessments of *Quadrupeds*, see Peck, "Audubon and Bachman," and Tyler, "Publication," esp. 110-115 and 177-182, respectively. Also pertinent, despite the misrepresentative title, is Victor H. Cahalane, ed., *Imperial Collections of Audubon Animals: The Quadrupeds of North America* (Maplewood, N. J.: Hammond, Inc., 1967).

Abbeville District's boundaries by the Saluda River on the north, the Savannah River to the south, Indian lands to the west, and the Edgefield District on the east. The judicial center of the district remained at Cambridge village (prewar Ninety Six) until 1800, when the legislature moved the courthouse to the site of General Andrew Pickens's blockhouse and spring. A pleasant village named for the district grew up around the courthouse and jail. By the mid-1820s, it contained about forty houses as well as an arsenal and a magazine for the militia.²

In the beginning of European settlement, Scots-Irish pioneers together with some Germans and French Huguenots took up land along the rivers and creeks of the Abbeville District. The most prominent early inhabitants, some of whom began long, illustrious family lines, were the Blacks, Calhouns, Alexanders, Nobles, Wardlaws, and Moragnés. Abundant land well suited to agriculture attracted a growing population. The U.S. census of 1820 recorded 13,488 white residents, 9,615 slaves, and sixty-four free blacks. The population had risen to 14,477 whites, 15,142 slaves, and 333 free blacks in 1840. This represented an increase of slightly more than 9 percent among the white population, while the number of slaves had grown by 63 percent. To serve the expanding populace, market towns like Cokesbury, Lowndesville, and Calhoun Falls sprang up across the district. Some free residents lived on the brink of poverty, but in general, the region was prosperous, and by 1860 Abbeville ranked ninth out of thirty districts in the state in per-capita wealth. The acquisition of wealth in the district created an Abbeville aristocracy. Stephen Olin, a schoolmaster who lived briefly at Cokesbury, described his new home: "The soil is fertile, the water is good, and the inhabitants carry in their faces the blessed image of health. I believe this to be as healthy a place as any in the Southern states. . . . I board with a rich family [George Connor Jr.'s] and live better than at Savannah or Augusta."³

Historians who have examined the social order of the South Carolina up country in the antebellum period agree with Mary Katherine Davis that "a wide social, political, economic and educational gulf separated the upper classes from the lower classes." The gap was measured, in practical

² Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina* (Charleston, S.C.: Hurlbut and Lloyd, 1826), 349. See also Mary Katherine Davis, "The Featherbed Aristocracy: Abbeville District in the 1790s," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 80 (April 1979): 137; David Duncan Wallace, *South Carolina: A Short History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1951), 337. Abbeville District lost territory with the later formation of Greenwood and McCormick Counties.

³ Larry E. Pursley, *Federal Census of Abbeville County, South Carolina, 1810-1840* (Greenville, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 2006), 41, 169; Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 286; Olin quoted in E. Don Herd Jr., *Mount Ariel—Cokesbury, South Carolina: A Biography of*

terms, by substantial real-estate holdings, ownership of slaves, accumulation of wealth, exercise of political power, and access to a liberal education. Aside from these socioeconomic parameters, close kinship ties by blood and marriage often were significant markers of the upper class. Rosser H. Taylor concludes that cultural traits defined gentility as well. He writes that up-country gentlemen demonstrated "an exalted conception of personal honor, a deep sense of patriotism and service, and a personal involvement with religious and charitable institutions."⁴

In spite of the obvious disparities between rich and poor, Orville Vernon Burton explains the challenge of identifying the backcountry elite. The boundaries of their class were vague and elastic. The up-country aristocracy, to a far greater degree than its counterpart in the low country, was open to young men from obscure families if they possessed exceptional talent, married above their station, or proved intellectually brilliant.⁵ George McDuffie exemplified this upward mobility. Bright and capable, he rose from poverty-stricken origins in Georgia with the help of a mentor, William Calhoun, and a well-to-do father-in-law, Richard Singleton. McDuffie became one of the richest lawyer-planters in the Abbeville District and served as both governor and U.S. senator.

Louis Booker Wright further distinguishes the gentry of the interior from the rice planters of the coast by the former's less elegant lifestyle, smaller property holdings, and closer ties to the "common man." Low-country elites assumed these differences were significant and thought "no gentleman was ever born above the Tidewater."⁶ Although they were barely a generation removed from the frontier and distant from the sophisticated culture of Charleston with its mansions, balls, and concerts, Abbeville ladies and gentlemen nevertheless embraced the ambitions and copied the lifestyle of the low-country grandees as far as their rustic setting would allow.

an Upcountry Utopian Community (n.p.: privately printed, 1979), 1: 9. Olin's host, George Connor Jr., trained as a physician with his father and older brother. By 1834 he owned twelve slaves and was postmaster for the Mount Ariel community. On the Connors, see Joyce M. Bowden, *Four Connor Generations in South Carolina, 1790–1820* (Amherst, Mass.: White Poppy Press, 2014).

⁴ Davis, "Featherbed Aristocracy," 140. See also Rosser H. Taylor, *Antebellum South Carolina: A Social and Cultural History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 46–47.

⁵ Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 65–67; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 34; Taylor, *Antebellum South Carolina*, 45.

⁶ Louis Booker Wright, *Barefoot in Arcadia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974), 3.

The Abbeville gentry counted in their ranks ministers of "proper" religious denominations, especially Episcopalian and Presbyterian pastors, as well as academics and successful professionals from the fields of law and medicine. However, most gentlemen engaged in agriculture. Since a majority of Abbeville citizens farmed small tracts of land, averaging less than two hundred acres, extensive land holdings set the gentry apart from their less prosperous neighbors. One of the richest men in the district, Joel Smith, owned Stony Point, a well-managed plantation of 1,883 acres. In her will, Elizabeth Harris directed that her plantation of seventeen hundred acres be divided between her sons with each receiving half of a valuable woodland tract. Merchants and storekeepers who engaged in the retail trade were rarely considered members of the aristocracy unless, like James McCracken of Cambridge, they had acquired a plantation. When McCracken planned to leave the state in 1846, he offered a 597-acre plantation for sale. "The plantation is in good repair," he advertised in the *Abbeville Banner*, "and has on it a large wooden building erected in 1841 as a house of entertainment for travelers."⁷

A few Abbeville planters also held property in other states that was managed by business partners or overseers. While he left his South Carolina plantations to sons James and Joseph, John Gray gave "my land in the state of Alabama . . . to my daughter Anna." Allan Vance, who owned a house in the village of Greenwood and the 485-acre Wier Farm nearby, also had a seventeen-hundred-acre plantation in Boozier County, Louisiana.⁸ Mexican War hero and state senator Jehu Foster Marshall held two Abbeville plantations, Santuck with nine hundred acres and Long Cane with sixteen hundred acres, as well as the Wetumpke and Silver Springs properties in Marion County, Florida. At his death, Marshall's real estate was appraised at \$128,700. The will of Augustus Marshall Smith described his forty-five-hundred-acre plantation in Jefferson County, Arkansas, worked by 115 slaves, and stated that he owned other property in "various States in the North-West which I hold in partnership with other persons."⁹

Cotton was king on up-country plantations after the invention of the cotton gin, but it was a fickle master. David Ramsay, writing in 1809, said

⁷ Estate inventory of Joel Smith, *Inventories and Appraisals, 1855-1857*, 76; will of Elizabeth Harris, August 17, 1859, *Will Record 2, 1855-1859*, 259-264; *Abbeville Banner* (Abbeville, S.C.), June 24, 1846.

⁸ Will of John Gray, September 1, 1826, *Will Record 2, 1815-1837*, 304; will of Allan Vance, July 29, 1865, *Will Record 4, 1855-1868*, 517-520.

⁹ N. Louise Bailey, Mary L. Morgan, and Carolyn R. Taylor, eds., *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina Senate, 1776-1985* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986), 3: 1057-1058; will of Jehu Foster Marshall, July 17, 1862, *Will Record 4, 350-353*; will of Augustus Marshall Smith, January 7, 1861, *Will Record 4, 1855-1868*, 264.

that cotton had "trebled the price of land" where it could be grown. In good weather and when "the market is favorable the annual income of those who plant it is doubled," he observed. Dr. Henry H. Townes sold fifty bales of cotton for twenty-two hundred dollars in 1846 and bragged that it was "pretty good . . . for a poor doctor." The estate of Williamson Norwood, one of the wealthiest Abbeville planters, included a cash account from cotton sales of \$3,197.95 and 670 bales of cotton consigned to Adams, Hopkins & Company of Augusta, Georgia, valued at \$8,767.36 in 1848.¹⁰

The cotton economy temporarily collapsed on account of President Thomas Jefferson's Embargo Act and the War of 1812, the banking crises of 1819 and 1837, and severe drought in 1845. Amid these unfavorable circumstances, some planters, particularly those who were overly extended financially, faced bankruptcy. In one cotton recession, Abbeville planter Ezekial Noble, who was forced to dispose of land, livestock, and household furnishings to settle his debts, remarked that all he had left was "a fine house . . . and nothing in it."¹¹ Reverses in cotton production convinced a number of residents to depart for Alabama or Mississippi. The Connor family was typical of Abbeville planters who saw a brighter future in the West. George Connor Jr., with his brother-in-law Gabriel E. Treutlen and a dozen members of the extended Connor family, abandoned their exhausted land near Cokesbury to settle at Glennville, Alabama. The Reverend James E. Glenn, formerly the Methodist minister at Cokesbury, had established the community and welcomed his old parishioners.¹² Still, until the Civil War, cotton remained the principal source of generating wealth in the up country.

Virtually all of the gentry and a large majority of yeoman farmers in the Abbeville District would have agreed with an anonymous writer that "slavery is quite indispensable to Southern civilization . . . [and] exists of right and necessity." With the expansion of cotton production into the piedmont after the invention of the cotton gin, the number of slaves in the district increased dramatically from 2,964 in 1800 to 19,262 in 1850. Some yeoman farmers owned a few bondsmen, but upper-class families often depended on the labor of large enslaved workforces. Slave property could easily account for 80 percent of a planter's assets. The census of 1850 listed sixteen hundred individuals in the district who owned slaves. Eighty-five planters owned forty or more. The former governor and senator George

¹⁰ David Ramsay, *The History of South-Carolina, from Its First Settlement in 1670, to the Year 1808* (Charleston, S.C.: Published by David Longworth, for the author, 1809), 2: 214–215. See also Lacy K. Ford Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 58; estate inventory of Williamson Norwood, December 28–29, 1848, Inventories and Appraisals, 1847–1849, 439–446.

¹¹ Noble quoted in Edgar, *History*, 275.

¹² Bowden, *Four Connor Generations*, 33, 44, 89–90.

McDuffie, who called slavery "the cornerstone of our Republican edifice," was the largest slaveholder with 202 bondsmen, while the richest planter, James Edward Calhoun, whose wealth was estimated at \$926,243 in 1860, owned 183 slaves. Robert E. Belcher worked 140 slaves on his land, Major B. Clark owned 119, and James Watson had 109. The gentry class enjoyed wealth and leisure because of the back-breaking labor of field hands and household servants.¹³

In their wills, planters frequently left individual slaves as bequests to family members. A planter of modest means, Josiah Patterson bequeathed "Billy and my Girl Caroline" to his wife, "to be her servants during her widowhood," and confirmed earlier gifts of slaves made to his children. John Crymes, who had no direct heir, distributed his estate to sisters, nephews, and a brother, Leonard, who inherited thirteen slaves.¹⁴

In some estate settlements, slaves stayed on the plantation as a labor force, but it was equally common for them to be sold to increase the cash value of the inheritance. Colonel John Hearst's executors sold seventy-six slaves, most of whom were purchased by his son. In January 1860, the estate of W. W. Belcher auctioned ninety slaves for an average price of one thousand dollars each.¹⁵

Gentlemen planters had little personal contact with the slaves who worked in the fields in stifling summer heat and winter cold; hired overseers directed their lives. But planter families often looked affectionately, if paternalistically, on household servants, and that attitude was sometimes reflected in final acts of consideration and compassion. Josiah Patterson provided for "my Faithful Old Servants, Ket and Judy, to have a Choice among my Children with whom to dwell" and instructed "that they be taken care of while they live." Leaving his slave property to his wife, John B. Bull mentioned "my good and aged servant Doritha" and made an "earnest request that . . . Doritha be treated with all that humanity, moderation and kindness which her advanced age and Faithful service call for." Elizabeth Harris urged her heirs to consider the "long and Faithful service of Bob and Boston" and provide them "kind and considerate treatment." Allen,

¹³ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 109; Ford, *Origins*, 70; Lowry Ware, *Chapters in the History of Abbeville County: The "Banner County" of South Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 2012), 50, 64, 69, 133; Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, South Carolina (Slave Schedules), Abbeville District (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1964), microfilm roll 432.

¹⁴ Will of Josiah Patterson, August 22, 1846, Will Record 3, 1837-1855, 17-18; will of John Crymes, Will Record 3, 1837-1855, 140-141.

¹⁵ Ware, *Chapters*, 50.

Aaron, Aleck, Nat, and Daniel, she directed, should "have the privilege of selecting masters [since] they are married and I desire to avoid separating them . . . from their wives."¹⁶

Slaveholders occasionally expressed a desire to emancipate individual bondservants. In South Carolina, the legal path to manumission was unobstructed until 1800, but in that year, and again in 1820 at the height of the controversy over the Missouri Compromise, the legislature enacted restrictions on the emancipation of slaves. After 1841 no enslaved South Carolinian could legally be freed, so some masters attempted to provide for the future welfare of favored slaves in their wills. Williamson Norwood is one example. The fourth largest slaveholder in the Abbeville District, Norwood wished to free five of his slaves, but he conceded that "the laws . . . do not at present permit me to do so." Instead, he left those slaves to his son James, asking him to "see carefully to their interest . . . and to see to the education of the children [even] by removing them to the free states." Reuben Starke named three slaves—Peggy, Polly, and Julliet—"to be emancipated or if that cannot be accomplished permitted to live at their ease with entire freedom in disposing of themselves as far as the law will allow."¹⁷

Successful planters made their operations as self-sufficient as possible. They purchased necessary items such as coffee, tea, cones of sugar, shoes for their family and the slaves, and lead to mold rifle shot, but they also strived to limit expenses. Backcountry plantations typically produced milk, butter, cheese, and pork, the primary meat in the slave diet. Flocks of sheep provided wool for clothing, while goose feathers stuffed prized mattresses and made writing quills. Among other livestock, James Wardlaw, a member of one of Abbeville's most prominent families, owned thirty-eight sheep, a flock of geese, and a Berkshire boar, a sire intended to improve the quality and weight of his hogs. After giving livestock to his children, Williamson Norwood's estate contained thirty cows and calves; five bulls, two of which were described as especially desirable Durhams; 225 sheep sold in nine lots; four yoke of oxen; and twenty-nine mules. Samuel Agnew supported his wife and five children on a plantation where the livestock included fifty-six hogs, thirty-one sheep, thirty-two cattle, thirty geese, and nine horses.¹⁸

¹⁶ Will of Josiah Patterson, 17–18; will of John B. Bull, April 8, 1843, Will Record 2, 1837–1855, 136–140; will of Elizabeth Harris, 257.

¹⁷ Edgar, *History*, 307; Ware, *Chapters*, 130; will of Williamson Norwood, April 17, 1847, Will Record 3, 1837–1855, 203; will of Reuben Starke, November 24, 1830, Will Record 2, 1815–1837, 385–387.

¹⁸ Estate inventory of James Wardlaw, July 12, 1842, box 102, pack 2517; estate bill of sale of Williamson Norwood, December 28–29, 1848, Inventories and Appraisements/Sales, 1848–1852, 99–106; estate inventory of Samuel Agnew, November 13, 1844, Inventories and Appraisals, 1839–1855, 37.

Agricultural implements and machinery on plantations were notable for their abundance and diversity. Log chains mentioned in many estate inventories indicate that slaves harvested timber for fuel and construction projects. Plows and hoes were the most numerous items of equipment because they were necessary for cotton cultivation, but scythes and cradles also appear in estate listings since they were used to harvest corn, wheat, and oats. Every plantation owned blacksmith and carpenter tools for use by enslaved craftsmen, and the larger ones tended to have a saw mill and a cotton gin on the property.¹⁹

Without exception Abbeville gentlemen owned horses and conveyances for transportation—buggies, carriages, ox carts, and wagons. Slave artisans likely made the vehicles that hauled materials on the plantation, but for personal travel, gentlemen could purchase coaches or buggies built in the “latest and most approved style” from the Deal & Taylor factory in Abbeville.²⁰ John Porter’s estate inventory valued his “new buggy & Harness” at \$140, while William Bowie’s estate contained a “Plantation waggon, Road waggon, [and] a new Carriage & Harness,” which together were appraised at five hundred dollars. When he traveled, Thomas W. Williams rode in a “Closed Pleasure Carriage” drawn by a “pair of matched Bay horses.”²¹

Fine, spirited animals like James Lomax’s “large and Elegant pair of iron-grey horses” were a source of pride to backcountry gentlemen who displayed them on market day, at court sessions, or at social gatherings. South Carolina horses came chiefly from two genetic strains: either animals brought to the New World by early Spanish explorers or thoroughbred stock later imported from Europe by low-country planters. Although tidewater plantations were the breeding centers for most superior horses, by 1840 the thoroughbred bloodline was dispersed generally across the state. There was “a Thoroughbred stallion in almost every neighborhood” as well as excellent brood mares. James Garden of Abbeville, for example, advertised the stud service of his stallion, Hilderbrand, “descended from the very best stock . . . both in England and America.”²²

¹⁹ Estate inventory of James Wardlaw. See also estate inventory of George Marshall, January 26, 1852, box 125, pack 3695.

²⁰ *Abbeville Banner*, January 5, 1848.

²¹ Estate inventory of John Porter, January 18, 1847, Inventories and Appraisals, 1839–1855, 273–276; estate inventory of William Bowie, April 20, 1845, Inventories and Appraisals, 1839–1855, 208–212; estate inventory of Thomas W. Williams, March 11, 1846, Inventories and Appraisals/Sales, 1844–1847, 384–393.

²² *Abbeville Banner*, May 8, 1856, and March 1, 1848; W. H. Mills, “The Thoroughbred in South Carolina,” *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (1937): 24.

Many up-country gentry owned thoroughbreds as saddle or carriage horses. Joel Smith's Bascomb, Leonard Wideman's Golden Warrior, and Samuel Perryman's Robroy were surely of Arabian stock.²³ Favorite relatives often received special animals as a gift or inheritance. Richard Covington, who may have owned the finest stable in the Abbeville District, left his "Arabian Filly Queen Adelaide" to a nephew. At least one Abbeville planter, James Creswell, introduced other breeds to the area apparently without much success. At "a considerable expense," Creswell purchased a "beautiful, high-bred . . . Mahogany bay" Morgan colt from a Vermont stable. When the Morgan stallion was four years old, he stood at stud at Creswell's plantation.²⁴

While most of the gentry owned horses only for personal transportation, a few engaged in the expensive hobby of breeding and training race horses. Richard Covington, for example, owned the "celebrated Race Mare Eliza Jackson." The highlight of the winter season for Charleston aristocrats was February race week when the fastest horses competed at the Washington Race Course. Abbeville gentlemen rarely attended the Charleston races, but they entered their horses and wagered on their speed at less notable races held annually in places like Augusta, Pendleton, and Limestone Springs or at informal contests arranged in conjunction with militia musters and political rallies.²⁵ South Carolina's strict law against horse stealing, under which a conviction carried the death penalty, indicated the importance of these animals. Kindred Kitchens, a homeless, "nearly destitute tramp from Georgia," was hanged in Abbeville in 1836 for stealing a prized stallion named Diogonese from Patrick Noble.²⁶

Abbeville gentry welcomed less speculative investments than wagering on their fastest steed. Although their economic interests were primarily agricultural, men of wealth sought investment opportunities in banking, industry, and railroads. Despite the political controversy over a national bank, the gentry had faith in the safety and potential profit offered by state banks. George Brownlee, whose estate sale brought in \$8,816.73 in 1844, held fifty-six shares in the Bank of South Carolina, 175 shares in the Planters and Mechanics Bank, and one thousand dollars in city of Charleston bonds. John B. Bull left his nephew James five thousand dollars "to be placed at Interest

²³ Estate inventory of Joel Smith, 72; estate inventory of Leonard Wideman, January 13–14, 1848, Inventories and Appraisals, 1847–1849, 195–197; estate inventory of Samuel Perryman, December 4, 1840, Inventories and Appraisals, 1837–1855, 115–116.

²⁴ *Abbeville Banner*, March 31, 1853.

²⁵ *Edgefield Advertiser* (Edgefield, S.C.), November 17, 1836; John Beaufain Irving, *The South Carolina Jockey Club* (Charleston, S.C.: Russell and Jones, 1857), 157.

²⁶ Larry Pursley, *Abbeville, South Carolina: Moments in Time* (Piedmont, S.C.: the author, 2011), 39.

at the Bank of Charleston," where he expected the funds to be carefully managed. Perhaps concerned about the young man's financial maturity, Bull directed that James "not be allowed to touch . . . or squander one cent of the principal, But only to . . . make use of the lawful Interest." At his death in 1842, James Wardlaw's estate of \$93,912.25, divided among nine heirs, included stock in five state banks and seventy shares in the Bank of the United States. Frances Witherspoon left the increased value and dividends from 128 shares of bank stock and sixty-five shares in the Greenville & Columbia Railroad to her granddaughter Mary McGehee.²⁷

Joel Smith may have owned the most extensive portfolio of any antebellum Abbeville planter. His investments consisted of stock in banks based in Hamburg, Columbia, Camden, Newberry, Charleston, Augusta, and Charlotte, North Carolina. Smith risked his money in the Georgia Railroad & Banking Company, the Atlanta & LaGrange Railroad, the East Tennessee & Georgia Railroad, the South Carolina Insurance Company, and the Commercial Insurance Company. Many of his investments paid handsome returns, but he also experienced significant losses. Smith's executors struggled to recover his investment in the Commercial Insurance Company when it failed. They reported to the court that his twenty-five thousand dollars in stock would be lost when the company closed, but they hoped to salvage his share of Commercial Insurance's Charleston real estate and the thirteen thousand dollars that Smith had loaned the company in a desperate attempt to keep it afloat. Alexander B. Arnold, who served the district in the legislature for six years, owned a Georgia plantation and part interest in a Habersham County, Georgia, gold mine. He further diversified his holdings by creating the Abbeville Mineral Springs Company, which bottled water reputed to have therapeutic qualities.²⁸

The construction of an intrastate railroad system afforded the gentry new investment opportunities. When the Greenville & Columbia Railroad received a legislative charter in 1845, Abbeville citizens rushed to subscribe \$180,000 to bring the route through their community. Thomas Chiles Perrin led the effort to secure rail service for Abbeville, and Joel Smith was one of the most generous investors. Eventually, he purchased eighty shares of stock and held \$103,420 in debt certificates of the railroad. Dr. John Logan held stock in the local road valued at ten thousand dollars before 1860. His will,

²⁷ Estate bill of sale of George Brownlee, March 28–29, 1844, Inventories and Appraisals/Sales, 1839–1855, 571–574; will of John B. Bull, 136; estate inventory of James Wardlaw; will of Frances E. H. Witherspoon, 254.

²⁸ Estate inventory of Joel Smith, 74, 86; Bailey, Morgan, and Taylor, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina Senate*, 1: 76–77.

probated in the turbulent, uncertain year following Appomattox, allowed his executors to sell the stock when they judged the time most favorable.²⁹

Veins of iron ore in the hills above the Broad River led to the growth of a backcountry iron industry, which turned out agricultural implements and nails, cannon and shot for the state militia, and later materials for the railroads. Iron manufacturing in the upper piedmont attracted capital from the Abbeville gentry. Originally chartered in 1832 as the South Carolina Iron Manufacturing Company by Governor George McDuffie and his partners, the King's Mountain Iron Company produced iron at furnaces near Coopersville. The King's Mountain iron works was probably the most profitable corporation in the up country, paying a 7 percent dividend in 1857. For John Logan, who held ten thousand dollars worth of stock in the company, this represented a healthy return on investment.³⁰

An early textile industry that wove cotton cloth for slave clothing and household goods attracted investment from gentleman planters as well. Christian Breithaupt's short-lived cotton mill in the Edgefield District had the backing of George McDuffie, but the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, chartered in 1845, built a far more successful factory. One of the original incorporators, Joel Smith contributed forty thousand dollars to this company, which was the prototype for future cotton mills in South Carolina.³¹

By mid-century, with wealth accumulated from cotton and investments, the richest of the Abbeville aristocrats occupied mansions that rivaled the homes of Charleston rice barons. Thomas Chiles Perrin, a lawyer, planter, and railroad president, built "one of the finest and most commodious mansions in the State." The Perrin house contained twenty-eight rooms with nineteen fireplaces, a drawing room "with beautiful mantle pieces of Italian marble," a large library, and a bathing room "supplied with pipes of hot and cold water." Although he was likely wealthier than Perrin, Joel Smith's Georgian-style house at Stony Point was not as grand. Still, the planter-investor lived in an impressive three-story residence with a sitting room, a drawing room, and multiple bedchambers on each floor. J. Foster Marshall, Samuel McGowan, and Armistead Burt employed Benjamin Johnson, an

²⁹ Estate inventory of Joel Smith, 84; Ford, *Origins*, 224; will of John Logan, May 11, 1866, Will Record 4, 1855-1868, 569-571.

³⁰ Bobby Gilmer Moss, *The Old Iron District: A History of Cherokee County* (Clinton, S.C.: Jacobs Press, 1972), 309; Ford, *Origins*, 267; will of John Logan, 569-571.

³¹ Ford, *Origins*, 64-65.

acclaimed English landscape architect, to design formal gardens at their homes along Abbeville's North Main Street.³²

Whether they owned grand mansions or resided in more modest dwellings, the Abbeville gentry filled their homes with furnishings as fine as they could afford. Costly furniture, crafted either locally or in Charleston from imported mahogany and usually finished with a high gloss, signaled a planter's good taste and financial achievement. Joel Smith furnished the public rooms of Stony Point with a mahogany banquet table and a dozen mahogany chairs as well as a secretary and a bookcase to match. Elizabeth Harris bequeathed her best mahogany furniture—a sideboard, a pie safe, a bedstead, and a wardrobe—to her son and granddaughter. Cambridge merchant-planter James McCracken left a dining table, a chest of drawers, a portable desk, and two knife cases, all in mahogany, to his daughter Mary Ann. The appraisal of George McDuffie's personal property listed a mahogany center table with twelve chairs and four mahogany bedsteads.³³

Abbeville ladies and gentlemen selected other expensive, decorative items for their homes. By 1848 they might purchase silverware at the local shops of Bailey & Owen or Robert Lisenbee. Many gentry displayed family images, preserved for posterity, with the aid of David Goff, who offered daguerreotype portraits. More elaborate and full-color representations could be commissioned from itinerant painters passing through the district or Clarage Kingsmore, an artist who resided in Abbeville village in 1850. Frances Witherspoon, for instance, left "my portrait" to a favorite granddaughter, Margaret Frances McCord, "because she is named for me."³⁴ To impress their guests, the gentry could engage landscape painter C. H. Bean, who offered "Fire-screens and Parlour Ornaments in a handsome style and on reasonable terms." After a visit to Colonel John Taylor's plantation, Mary Elizabeth Moragné noted in her diary the "pretty shade lamps, a picturesque Clock & a full length portrait of Gen[eral] LaFayette" displayed in the drawing room.³⁵

³² Lowry Ware, *Old Abbeville: Scenes of the Past of a Town Where Old Time Things Are Not Forgotten* (Columbia, S.C.: SCMAR, 1992), 49, 58; Pursley, *Moments*, 129; estate inventory of Joel Smith, 76.

³³ Estate inventory of Joel Smith, 77; will of Elizabeth Harris, 259; will of James McCracken, July 11, 1818, Will Record 3, 1815–1837, 57–58; estate inventory of George McDuffie, November 15, 1851, Inventories and Appraisements/Sales, 1849–1852, 456–457.

³⁴ E. Milby Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths, 1690–1860* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Museum, 1968), 1–2; John F. Schunk, ed., *The 1850 United States Census: Abbeville County, South Carolina* (Wichita: S&K Publications, n.d.), 94, 94B; will of Frances E. H. Witherspoon, 252.

³⁵ *Abbeville Banner*, November 17, 1847; Delia Mullen Craven, ed., *The Neglected Thread: A Journal from the Calhoun Community, 1836–1842* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1951), 175.

If they were so inclined, up-country planters indulged a love of music by owning musical instruments. John Speer had a Rosewood piano as well as a "music box," possibly a self-playing device operated by a metal disk. James Lindsay advertised a "very excellent Piano" for sale, while the wealthy merchant-planter William H. McCaw had a "fine Rosewood Piano" valued at two hundred dollars along with a violin and a flute for accompaniment. Did his children perform musical pieces while he played backgammon or chess? The inventory of his estate included these table games.³⁶

For special occasions, the gentry outfitted themselves in expensive clothing. The shop of John Lyon and John Lipscomb served gentlemen with clothes tailored from New York fabrics. The owners pledged that suits would be made up "in a style that will please any that may favor us with their patronage." In addition, they advertised an assortment of vests, a fine lot of kid gloves, and "Black Satin and fancy Cravats." Upper-class ladies might purchase apparel designed in New York or Philadelphia that "embraces all that is new and desirable." Among their choices were "Super French cashmeres, Rich fancy colored and figured silks, morocco and kid slippers [and] Fur and wool caps."³⁷

Dressed in their finery, those who lived within reasonable distance of Augusta could attend performances by the Augusta Theater Company, which staged Shakespeare's *Henry IV* in February 1838. The railroad brought traveling shows to Abbeville and smaller villages. An announcement in the *Abbeville Banner* invited residents to a concert by "McCarthy, the Blind Pianist" at the Marshall House in Abbeville as well as performances by a vocal and instrumental trio known as the Aeolian Minstrels, whose music had been "Flatteringly approved of . . . in the United States and Canada." An amateur theater group, the Abbeville Thespian Corps, offered a season of shows on the Marshall House stage. Productions included *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Tragedy of Pizarro*, and *The Gamester*.³⁸

In the nineteenth century, disease and death haunted the Carolina up country, and neither wealth nor social standing guaranteed the Abbeville gentry immunity to tragedy. Newspaper obituaries and church records described the effect of fevers and infections in the district. In 1827 medical student E. P. Gibert ascribed the epidemic fevers common to the district to the numerous "ponds and Lagoons . . . from which noxious vapors arose." Dr. Isaac Branch described a specific "congestive fever" that plagued the

³⁶ Wade Edward Speer, *William Speer (1747-1830), Abbeville County, South Carolina: His Life, Family and Descendants* (Marion, N.C.: the author, 1998), 99; *Abbeville Banner*, April 1, 1846; estate inventory of William H. McCaw, November 26-27, 1852, Inventories and Appraisals, 1847-1852, 140-149.

³⁷ *Abbeville Banner*, June 16 and October 27, 1847.

³⁸ Craven, *Neglected Thread*, 70-71; *Abbeville Banner*, May 12, 1859, and June 1, 1850.

Abbeville population in the summer and fall seasons. The fever, he wrote, "usually attacks the robust and healthy . . . and they rarely survive."³⁹ These illnesses, almost certainly typhoid fever and malaria, took a heavy toll among the young. Mary Lomax, the twenty-three-year-old daughter of John A. Calhoun, died of a fever at her father's home on April 6, 1853, while a promising young physician, Dr. D. T. Riley, died of typhoid fever in 1859, "leaving a widow and a widowed mother." Mary Elizabeth Moragné recounted a sudden typhoid outbreak on her father's Oakwood Plantation in 1841. Just as she was preparing to attend a party, Moragné's light-hearted mood vanished when "Father was taken violently ill; [I] sent off in haste for the Doctor." Four other family members and several household slaves experienced a "raging fever" before Moragné nursed them back to health.⁴⁰

In addition to physical afflictions, aristocratic families sometimes confronted mental illness. This was the case for James Black, who stood among the minor gentry. Explaining the lack of a bequest to one son, Black wrote in his last will and testament that John, "who is not of sound mind . . . and who is now provided with a . . . comfortable home in the Lunatic Asylum," would receive only "my love, affection, and blessing." Black's will left two hundred dollars to the Commissioners of the Poor for Abbeville District as an expression of gratitude for the care provided to "my unfortunate son."⁴¹

Abbeville aristocrats often made generous contributions in support of churches and other charitable organizations. The Presbyterian church dominated the religious lives of the Scots-Irish gentry and their poorer neighbors. There were more Presbyterian congregations in the district than any other denomination, all of which had developed from the early Long Canes church. The place of worship for many gentry who resided in the vicinity of Abbeville village was Upper Long Cane Presbyterian Church.

Many backcountry folk were suspicious of the Protestant Episcopal church, regarding it as a foreign, low-country institution, but it attracted some prominent gentry families to its membership. Thomas Parker, a Charleston attorney who relocated to Abbeville, led the 1842 effort to establish Trinity Episcopal Church. Within two decades, Trinity counted many of the wealthiest ladies and gentlemen among its members. Perhaps their imitation of Charleston aristocrats extended even to religious faith and practice. A "beautiful Gothic structure . . . [that was] one of the

³⁹ Gilbert quoted in Joseph I. Waring, *A History of Medicine in South Carolina, 1825-1900* (Charleston: South Carolina Medical Association, 1967), 76; Branch quoted in *ibid.*, 77.

⁴⁰ E. Don Herd Jr. and Ann B. Herd, *Marriage and Death Notices from the Abbeville Banner, 1846-1860* (n.p.: privately printed, 1980), 47; *Abbeville Banner*, March 10, 1859; Craven, *Neglected Thread*, 210.

⁴¹ Will of James Black, December 27, 1844, Will Record 2, 1837-1855, 146-147.

handsomest edifices [*sic*] in the upper country" replaced the temporary wooden sanctuary in 1860. To toll the hour of worship in the new church building, J. Foster Marshall contributed the steeple bell. William H. Parker donated the marble baptistry, and Congressman Armistead Burt presented the bishop's chair.⁴²

The wills of the gentry contained bequests to a variety of charitable institutions. Andrew Giles outlined bequests totaling \$22,800 to his children and grandchildren with individual amounts ranging from three thousand to four thousand dollars. He added a gift of five hundred dollars for the benefit of Erskine College, recently established by the Associate Reformed Presbyterian church, and five hundred dollars to the Bible Society of the Confederate States. In a codicil dated one year later, Giles reduced the unpaid bequests to grandchildren by two-thirds. He also gave Erskine only \$250 and declared the Bible Society gift "null and void." The changes, he explained, were in "consequence of the loss of property occasioned by the emancipation of the slaves and the overthrow of the Confederate Government."⁴³

John B. Bull made a gift to the Presbyterian "Theological Seminary . . . located in Columbia, S[outh] Ca[rolina]." J. Foster Marshall, who died in the Battle of Second Manassas on August 29, 1862, left bequests totaling eleven thousand dollars to the Episcopal seminary in Camden, Trinity Church in Abbeville, and a private charity to aid widows and orphans of soldiers who served under his command in the Civil War.⁴⁴ Augustus Marshall Smith, preparing to embark on his first Civil War campaign, provided a cash bequest of fifty thousand dollars divided between his wife and son. He assigned one-tenth of the remainder of his estate to the Abbeville District members of the General Assembly, as trustees "for the benefit of the poor of said District, especially in regard to the education of the virtuous poor."⁴⁵

Even in their geographic isolation, Abbeville gentry seemed determined to remain intellectually engaged. Many acquired personal libraries embracing a remarkable range of literature. They read classical works like Edward Gibbons's eight-volume *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, a ten-volume collection of Shakespeare's works, and books on American history and biography. A Bible and a dictionary occupied important places in numerous households. Works of fiction rarely appeared in estate inventories by title with two exceptions,

⁴² *Independent Press* (Abbeville, S.C.), November 9, 1860; Albert Sidney Thomas, *A Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 1820-1857* (Columbia, S.C.: R. L. Bryan Company, 1957), 490.

⁴³ Will of Andrew Giles, July 9, 1864, Will Record 4, 1855-1868, 590-592.

⁴⁴ Will of John B. Bull, 137; will of Jehu Foster Marshall, 350-353.

⁴⁵ Will of Augustus Marshall Smith, 334.

Robinson Crusoe and *Don Quijote*. The frequent mention of a collection of John Wesley's sermons indicated the growing influence of Methodism in the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁶ William Bowie owned a large personal library of 318 volumes, but Governor Patrick Noble may have possessed the most eclectic book collection in the district. He read classical political studies like Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*, *The Federalist Papers*, and the writings of Thomas Jefferson. His bookcase held volumes on the history of England; Biblical archaeology; grammars in Latin, Greek, and German; a collection of poems; and a Methodist hymnal.⁴⁷ The gentry kept abreast of politics and current events by subscribing to the *Abbeville Banner* and the *Independent Press*. These publications covered local affairs, but more importantly, they reprinted articles and editorials from major newspapers examining questions of national concern and international developments.

Until Dr. Moses Waddel left South Carolina in 1819 to assume the presidency of Franklin College (later the University of Georgia), students from upper-class families had access to exceptional training at his academy at Willington in a classical curriculum designed "to prepare a candidate for admission into the higher classes at northern colleges." Waddel's young brother-in-law, John C. Calhoun, was his most famous pupil. Another notable student of Waddel's was George McDuffie, who mastered Latin grammar in ten days and once recited 1,212 lines of Horace without an error.⁴⁸ Abbeville residents seeking a good education for their children could choose from a wide range of local schools. The Willington Academy had a stellar reputation, but fine schools for young scholars, male and female, were scattered around the district. For example, a single issue of the *Abbeville Banner* carried advertisements for eight schools urging parents to enroll their children in the upcoming academic term. Principal J. W. Jones, who taught at the male and female academies in Greenwood in 1846, advertised a ten-and-a-half-month session with tuition set at thirty-six dollars and board in a private home costing seven dollars per month.⁴⁹

Despite the establishment of Erskine College in Due West, Cokesbury village, with its concentration of devout Methodists, was the educational center of the district. Cokesbury and its predecessor communities, Taber-

⁴⁶ Estate bill of sale of Robert Child, December 15–16, 1846, Inventories and Appraisals/Sales, 1839–1855, 513; estate inventory of George Loman, December 25, 1843, Inventories and Appraisals/Sales, 1839–1855, 209.

⁴⁷ Estate inventory of William Bowie, April 20, 1845, Inventories and Appraisals/Sales, 1839–1855, 377; estate inventory of Patrick Noble, May 11, 1840, Inventories and Appraisals/Sales, 1839–1855, 26–29.

⁴⁸ Craven, *Neglected Thread*, xix.

⁴⁹ Ramsay, *History*, 369–371; *Abbeville Banner*, January 5, 1848, and December 16, 1846.

nacle and Mount Ariel, placed a strong emphasis on education, and with the help of interested donors, they supported six schools between 1820 and 1860 that attracted pupils from across the up country.

In 1829 the Mount Ariel Female Academy enrolled thirty-seven pupils who studied reading, arithmetic, astronomy, chemistry, history, and "the Holy Scriptures on the Sabbath." In addition, they learned needlework and "music on the Piano Forte." The male academy at Mount Ariel, later reestablished at Cokesbury, offered classical studies in Latin and Greek, arithmetic, chemistry, and botany to prepare graduates for college. After 1835 Cokesbury Female Academy offered classical studies as well as geography "with the use of globes and maps" and algebra. To educate young women beyond the academy level, the Masonic Lodge of Cokesbury founded the Masonic Female Institute in 1853. The Masons constructed an impressive brick building and, within three years, enrolled seventy young ladies. The institute's modern laboratory was equipped by Dr. Isaac Branch of Abbeville, who purchased scientific apparatus in New York to demonstrate the principles of chemistry, electricity, magnetism, and pneumatics.⁵⁰

With sound preparatory schooling, men from Abbeville earned degrees at well-established colleges like Yale College, the College of New Jersey, and the South Carolina College. Others had the advantage of studying at European universities or even the Inns of Court in London. William Moragné enrolled at the universities in Heidelberg and Berlin in 1841–1842.⁵¹ After a preparatory education at one of the academies or colleges, attorneys normally received their professional training by "reading law" in the office of a respected member of the bar.

In their wills, the gentry provided for their children's education. Leaving the bulk of his estate to be managed by his wife, Elizabeth, Aaron Lynch wished for "all my children both sons and daughters to receive a good collegiate education." James McCracken made a distinction between professional preparation for his sons and less challenging study at an academy or seminary for his daughters. "I will . . . that my sons have a classical and Collegiate education if they are found capable and be put to whatever profession they desire," he wrote, "and that my daughters have a good English education." Allen Vance expressed the hope that "Daughter Laura's education be made as complete as possible," and he wished for his son John "to take the propper [sic] steps to complete his Education . . . at the best Colleges the South affords." Jacob Britt had already educated five of his children at the time he prepared a will, so he left educational bequests only for the two youngest sons. "To make them equal to my other children . . .

⁵⁰ Herd, *Mount Ariel—Cokesbury*, 1: 38–39, 2: 132–138.

⁵¹ Craven, *Neglected Thread*, 192.

in point of education," Britt gave Charles and Jacob "the right and benefit of a Scholarship at Erskine College."⁵²

A few Abbeville aristocrats won regional or national attention for their creative and intellectual achievements. John C. Calhoun, the most influential southern politician of the nineteenth century, formulated original political theories on interposition, nullification, the concurrent majority, and by implication, secession. The doctrines that Calhoun espoused in speeches and essays shaped the southern view of the Constitution and stood as the philosophical justification for an armed rebellion against the Union. Apart from politics, Mary Elizabeth Moragné gained recognition as an author and religious poet. In 1838 she won a fiction contest sponsored by the *Augusta Mirror*, a new literary magazine, for a romantic novel entitled *The British Partizan*. She continued to write romantic stories and poems that appeared in the *Mirror* and the *Orion* until her marriage to a Presbyterian minister in 1842. She believed that authoring light fiction was inappropriate in her new role, and afterward, she wrote only on Biblical themes.⁵³

Not every member of the Abbeville elite sought elective office or enlisted in military units in times of war, but representatives of the upper class demonstrated their patriotism and civic consciousness by volunteering for combat and holding public offices. When President James K. Polk asked Congress for a declaration of war against Mexico, a majority of the South Carolina delegation voted against the request. However, Congressman James A. Black and Senator George McDuffie, both of Abbeville, supported the president. To augment the small American standing army of 8,349 men, the Polk administration called for fifty thousand volunteers. Across South Carolina, the Palmetto Regiment recruited soldiers to fight in Mexico. In the Abbeville District, J. Foster Marshall led the recruitment effort and became captain of Company E, also designated as the McDuffie Guards. He was assisted by Lieutenants John B. Moragné and John N. Cochran. One hundred privates filled the company ranks commanded by twelve commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Almost one-third of the Abbeville troops were from families that could be counted among the gentry.⁵⁴

⁵² Will of Aaron Lynch, June 7, 1862, Will Record 4, 1855–1868, 617–618; will of James McCracken, 57–58; will of Allan Vance, 517; will of Jacob Britt, January 21, 1861, Will Record 3, 285–286.

⁵³ Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (1948; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1954), 68–92; Craven, *Neglected Thread*, xiv; Ellen Chamberlain, "Moragné, Mary Elizabeth," in *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 664.

⁵⁴ Jack Allen Meyer, *South Carolina in the Mexican War: A History of the Palmetto Regiment of Volunteers, 1846–1917* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1996), 6–11.

On February 10, 1847, after a period of basic training near Charleston, the Palmetto Regiment sailed from Mobile to campaign in Mexico. Captain Marshall reported through a newspaper dispatch that "the Abbeville volunteers are in excellent spirits and enjoying good health" except for a few cases of mumps and one of fever. He expressed appreciation to Dr. Samuel Agnew for his dedicated service as the unit physician.⁵⁵ In Mexico the good health of the company would not last.

Abbeville soldiers served honorably and fought in some of the bloodiest battles of the war. The McDuffie Guards saw action at Contreras on the march to Mexico City and Churubusco, a stronghold defending an approach to the capital. The toughest fight involving Abbeville troops occurred when a Mexican army counter-attacked at Puebla. The American garrison survived a twenty-eight-day siege, though First Sergeant W. L. Hodges wrote that "we lived on gruel made of flour and water. I was never so nearly starved in my whole life." The McDuffie Guards led the assault on Chapultepec "under a [defensive] fire that mowed us down like hay." Sergeant Frederick Selleck, later promoted to lieutenant, planted the palmetto flag on the enemy's parapet.⁵⁶

Abbeville native Lieutenant Patrick Noble, an officer in the regular army and the son of a former governor, was killed in Mexico. He instructed his executors to purchase four gold watches as a remembrance for his brothers, a silver tea set and a silver tray for each of his sisters, and a gun for his young nephew and namesake "when he arrives at the age of sixteen."⁵⁷

The Palmetto Regiment was discharged in Mobile, where the average private received \$7.92 in travel expenses for the trip home. The campaign took a heavy toll on the unit. Twenty-one enlisted men and two officers died in Mexico primarily from malaria and typhoid fever. Four men were killed in action, including First Lieutenant John B. Moragné, who was mortally wounded at Chapultepec. After his body was shipped home, he was buried at Willington with full military honors in a funeral attended by nearly three thousand citizens.⁵⁸

Abbeville gentry assumed leadership positions in local government, winning elections for mayor, sheriff, clerk of court, and probate judge. They also sat on appointive commissions to manage poor relief, roads and bridges, and public buildings.⁵⁹ House members and senators elected to the

⁵⁵ Captain J. Foster Marshall, letter to editor, *Abbeville Banner*, March 17, 1847.

⁵⁶ Hodges quoted in Meyer, *Palmetto Regiment*, 102-103; J. F. Marshall, letter to editor, *Abbeville Banner*, December 8, 1847.

⁵⁷ Will of Patrick Noble [Jr.], December 20, 1848, Will Record 3, 1837-1855, 230.

⁵⁸ Meyer, *Palmetto Regiment*, 117-127; Herd, *Marriage and Death Notices*, 16.

⁵⁹ "Upstate District Officials in 1859," *Upper South Carolina Genealogy and History*, January 1995, 34.

General Assembly tended to be drawn from among the well-to-do planters and attorneys who could afford the expense of serving in Columbia. A roll call of Abbeville legislators who served between 1820 and 1860 included the names of Alexander B. Arnold, James A. Black, J. Foster Marshall, George McDuffie, Patrick Noble, Thomas Chiles Perrin, Joel Smith, and Thomas Thomson. Noble and McDuffie also occupied the governor's office.

Men of the gentry class understood public office to be their rightful calling. They shared John C. Calhoun's view that "if the capable and worthy retire [from public life, then] the designing, or worthless will take their place."⁶⁰ In the politics of state and nation, a large majority of the Abbeville gentry embraced the ideals and subscribed to the doctrines of Calhoun, their native son who was the dominant southern politician of his age. They supported his call in 1830 to nullify the protective tariff and argued in favor of states' rights as Calhoun had defined that constitutional theory. George McDuffie, John Lipscomb, Dr. John Logan, Andrew Bowie, Samuel L. Watt, and Armistead Burt represented Abbeville at the nullification convention where they voted unanimously to nullify the tariff bills of 1828 and 1832.⁶¹ In the wake of the Compromise Tariff of 1833, they accepted the decision to rescind the nullification ordinance. Perhaps influenced by Calhoun's tempered moderation, most rejected the position of Robert Barnwell Rhett and the radical secessionists when the next sectional crisis erupted over the admission of California as a free state.⁶² However, the dramatic events of the following decade intensified feelings of southern nationalism, and political opinion among Abbeville's leaders shifted strongly in favor of separation from the Union.

Following the election of Abraham Lincoln, Abbeville aristocrats organized one of the earliest secession rallies in the state. On November 22, 1860, a crowd of three thousand gathered in Abbeville village to demonstrate support for secession and elect delegates to a state convention summoned by the General Assembly. Thomas Chiles Perrin presided at the rally, assisted by Judge David Lewis Wardlaw, Colonel John A. Calhoun, Dr. John W. Hearst, Captain John Brownlee, and Dr. John Logan. Augustus Marshall Smith, son of the late Joel Smith, was "marshal of the day" and led the parade of five hundred militiamen and special guests to the site of the meeting. Speaker

⁶⁰ Calhoun quoted in J. Franklin Jameson, ed., "The Correspondence of John C. Calhoun," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1899* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 2: 395.

⁶¹ *Journals of the Conventions of the People of South Carolina, Held in 1832, 1833, and 1852* (Columbia: R. W. Gibbes, State Printer, 1860), 24-25.

⁶² *Abbeville Banner*, July 21, 1849; Ford, *Origins*, 195; Robert Barnwell, *Love of Order: South Carolina's First Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 165.

after speaker asserted the South's right to leave the Union and assured the audience that the North would offer little resistance. Former congressman Armistead Burt, now a confirmed secessionist, insisted that secession would not cause a civil war. "I will guarantee to drink all the blood that is shed in a wine cup," he pledged, "and a very small wine cup at that."⁶³

Across the state, the men chosen to attend the Secession Convention in December 1860 "comprised the very elite of South Carolina." That was certainly true of the Abbeville contingent. Edward Noble, John A. Calhoun, Thomas Thomson, John H. Wilson, and David Lewis Wardlaw joined with the other convention delegates in unanimously endorsing the secession resolutions adopted at the meeting.⁶⁴

The bloody conflict that followed the secession of eleven southern states had grave consequences for the upper-class whites of Abbeville. The district lost 346 men in Confederate service. Among the casualties were the "Five Lost Colonels" of Abbeville village. These neighbors, who owned houses along North Main Street, were men of wealth and promise. Augustus Marshall Smith died in the Battle of Gaines Mill; J. Foster Marshall, who had survived combat in the Mexican War, fell at Second Manassas; Augustus J. Lythgoe, a civil engineer who married into the Wier family, was killed at Murfreesboro, Tennessee; James M. Perrin died at Chancellorsville; and John Calhoun Simkins, son-in-law of Judge Wardlaw, died in the defense of Battery Wagner at Charleston.⁶⁵

The war brought economic devastation as well. The disruption of cotton production, financial losses associated with investments in Confederate bonds, and the emancipation of slave property erased a large portion of aristocratic wealth. After Appomattox, many of Abbeville's antebellum planters faced the same reduced circumstances as Dr. John Logan, who apologized to his son for the lack of an inheritance. In his will, Logan explained that "having lost most of my property by the result of the late war—I am unable to leave him any of my now small estate."⁶⁶ The glory days of the Abbeville gentry had ended.

⁶³ Ware, *Old Abbeville*, 93.

⁶⁴ Charles Edward Cauthen, *South Carolina Goes to War, 1860–1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), 61; Harold S. Schultz, *Nationalism and Sectionalism in South Carolina, 1852–1860: A Study of the Movement for Southern Independence* (1950; repr., New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 228–229; Ware, *Old Abbeville*, 75.

⁶⁵ Ware, *Old Abbeville*, 94–95.

⁶⁶ Will of John Logan, 569–571.