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BELEAGUERED CHARLESTON:  
LETTERS FROM THE CITY, 1860-1864

Edited by MARTIN ABBOTT and ELMER L. PURYEAR

(Continued from July)

"Mudville" formerly Charleston  
Jany 18/64

Dear Liney

Yours 15th came to hand yesterday and Ma's was rec'd a week ago. I was waiting to collect the dividends &c before writing so as to make one job. I concluded that ink and paper had become obselete in your part and my surmise in regard to the former article is pretty correct. *Pencil* is absolutely obnoxious to my eyesight and I will only accept your excuse on the express condition that the experiment is not repeated.

. . . . .  
I am very sorry but you will be disappointed in your contemplated visit to town. You have just got to give up the idea entirely. Within the last week or so the Yanks have shelled the City unceasingly, without any intermission only at times the intervals between each one is diminished or increased, without however hurting any body. I dont want to insinuate that you are afraid of the Shells. I believe you have never heard one and I dont think you would find it comfortable with them dropping around you, which would be the case if you stop at Aunt Jane for they "drap" all about there now. One fell in John St east of Meeting, one in Charlotte St., in Calhoun St at Cor of Meeting, in fact they fall higher up town than formerly. It is stated that Beauregard said at first that they would reach John St as that was just within the circle of their fire. Mrs Hoff is in range but none have as yet come near enough to the house to be disagreeable. . . .

Charleston April 2/64

Dr Liney

Yours 29th Ult at hand yesterday. Was very glad to hear from you. I got home safely on Thursday night in good time. I rode down in the Mail Cond[ucto]rs Room and was introduced to Morgan. I dont think it will cost me much next time I come up. Met a Soldier with a canteen of first rate peach brandy and Locke and myself managed to Swallow

Will you Sir, comply with the demands of common justice? Or are you willing to listen longer to the cry of oppression? Will you make all your people equally free and happy? Do you desire to put an effectual end to all religious broils and contentions forever? Will you strengthen your own hands in defence of your bleeding country? Do you wish to enrich it by an influx of healthy inhabitants from every quarter of the world? Would you secure yourself from the fetters of any one denomination, with which the uncertainty of time may inundate this country? Will you give to every denomination the best security of future religious freedom and happiness that the nature of the case admits? Grant then the prayer of the petition; grant it in substance, if not in the very expressions. Let it be a foundation article in your constitution, "That there shall be no establishment of one religious denomination of Christians in preference to another. That none shall be obliged to pay to the support of a worship in which they do not freely join." Yield to the mighty current of American freedom and glory and let our state be inferior to none on this wide continent in the liberality of its laws and in the happiness of its people.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> The Petition of the Dissenters was introduced in the House of Assembly by Gen. Christopher Gadsden. Rawlins Lowndes and Col. Charles Pinckney "threw off the masque and argued strongly for having the church continued upon its former footing . . ." The other members who opposed the Petition accepted the clause relieving Protestants from the obligation of maintaining a church in which they did not freely join, but supported an amendment to strike out the clause, "That there never shall be an establishment of any one Denomination or sect of Protestants, by way of preference to another in this State." Their support of the amendment was based on the grounds that an established church should be continued because its functions in caring for the poor and managing elections were "interwoven with law. . ." The amendment was defeated by a vote of 70 to 60. McCrady, *History*, pp. 212-213. The Constitution of 1778 provided that, "The Poor shall be supported, and Elections managed, in the accustomed Manner, until laws shall be provided, to adjust those Matters . . . in the most equitable Way."

a little (?) of it. Strange to say the Soldier got alarmed and left our vicinity at the first opportunity.

I have not found a boarding house yet. Everyone I meet is of the same mind— Can't get a good place. Mrs Finneys boarders complain that they can see daylight through the bread. Another place I heard of charges \$50 per week for very poor fare. At a little place on King St I can get meals for \$5-each, which amounts to about \$70 pr week but them [then] I get enough to eat. I can always find a sleeping place. Bro Campbell of *Milnor* notoriety asked me this week to bunk with him. We met very suddenly. C had a bottle of bully brandy in his possession and we suddenly became excellent friends. . . .

I have experienced a remarkable change Since my return. In fact it is a matter of much congratulation in these Starvation time[s]. I cant imagine how the astonishing change was brought about. You will no doubt be astounded and to come to the point, I dont eat half as much now, as before I left here. Since I got back up [to] the present time I have eaten but 9 breakfasts, 5 dinners and 2 suppers, Sixteen meals in nine days. For breakfast I take some tea, bread or crackers and fried bacon. Out of the 5 dinners I have dined out twice with friends. I never refuse an invitation from a proper source. I have no appetite. Yesterday I was at Kings restaurant and left half of the dinner. So you see this is getting on very cheap and at the same time I am satisfied. I intend to save my appetite until I come up again which I hope will be in about two or three weeks. I would like to get a nice ham cheap as I could have it boiled and it would last me some time. *The shirt and fowl trade is satisfactory.* Muldrow promised to send me some provisions, but I doubt if he will think of it again. I saw him last Monday. He had been busy and sick and made many apologies for his seeming neglect. He did not pay up but preferred if I was willing to pay in new Currency. . . .

Charleston April 18/64

(Answered Apl 25/64)

Dear Belton,

I sincerely hope that you are fixed as regards your situation. I dont see how they can do otherwise than give you a surgeon's certificate. It is fortunate that you have a friend in Col Shields and there is some consolation in the fact that you will lose one situation to get another equally as good as far as exemption from field duty is concerned. The fate of

our Fire Dept hangs as it were "on a thread," for our papers are simply endorsed "*indulgence granted until further orders.*" I look upon this as decidedly weak. We can be ordered to Camp at any moment. If such should be the case I intend to try my chances at an examination. I should not like to apply for a Certificate unless matters come to what I have stated. I hardly think a Situation you propose would pay. However I am none the less grateful for your remembrance and would like to hear more about it regarding Salary duties &c—

We have had but few fires since my last. Some people say it is owing to the fact that the "firemen have been exempted," but it is really because more attention is paid the lower part of the City by the police authorities. All boys and vagrants, black and white, found below Wentworth St are required to render a good account of themselves or be taken to the Guard house.

I have no doubt your experience with the Boarding Houses is far more extensive than mine. I dont pretend to complain or grumble at accommodations, fare or anything but find it hard that being out the army and with a tolerable good income I cant find a place I can call home.

The Yanks continue shelling the City with the usual damage to buildings. Robberies are becoming frequent. Old Cook in King St was robbed last week of \$2000 in specie and all his papers. His safe was broken open. One says and another states the key was left in it all night. Gen'l Evans was thrown from a buggy on Saturday and severely bruised.<sup>26</sup> *Ned West* was hit in the head with a brick same day and died from the effects thereof, and a man was garroted in Buzzard Alley and lost some specie and Confed. I seldom step out late at night and when I do I have a weapon about me. If I get a chance to let go the ruffains will be either killed or scared to death to say nothing of the neighbors who will immediately conclude that Gillmore has left one of his Notices. I have to acknowledge the receipt of many favors in the shape of papers which are a source of much information and pleasure. I like the Examiners Editorials. . . .

Yours truly

CHAS R. ROGERS

<sup>26</sup> Brigadier General Nathan George Evans.

Charleston April 23/64

Dr Liney

Your favors 10th and 18th inst, the latter enclosing \$240.60/100 Old Cur[renc]y at hand for which accept many thanks. I would have answered the first but was so disgusted with that Wingate man that I hated to think about him much less to write. I am glad he has got over the staggers at last for I am much in need of money, having funded all my surplus funds and it is impossible to get any money on or use the 4 *poor* cent certificates to any advantage just now. Wingate has over paid \$6.70 as I make it. \$240.60 Old currency less 33 1/3 % would give \$160.60 (no discount on the 60 cts) This added to \$60 in 5s gives \$220.60. The draft was \$213.90 therefore I have 6.70 in his favor. Ma had better pay him when convenient although he dont deserve it and I will credit her with it. The 50\$s are subject to the same discount as the 10s and 20s and can be exchanged for new Currency with 1/3 off. The 100s can *not* be exchanged for new currency but can be funded in 4% bonds at the rate of 66 2/3 cts on the dollar with an additional discount of 10 pr ct for every month they are in circulation after the 1st April. Ma Says *credit* her with \$60. I rather think she means *debit*. . . .

I did not see Muldrow but heard from him a day or two ago. He has no money—nothing but 4 *poor* cent bonds but promises to send me a lot of Bacon as soon as it stops raining. I did write him two weeks ago that probably I would be up about this time. I expected to leave here on a "purchasing tour," but the party succeeded in getting away himself. I hope however to see you early next month. Will give a weeks notice so that I will not be under the disagreeable necessity of looking up quarters. My bones have not lost the *feel* of one of those thumps I got in the Cart.

Owing to the scarcity of money I have been unable to get up that box but will do so as soon as possible and let you know. I will get the Sugar for the Dr. although it will cost about \$7 or \$8 pr lb. Porter sells Clarified at \$9. Think it best to get that.

Write soon.

As ever

CHARLIE

Charleston June 7th/64

Dear Belton

We Firemen have had a devil of a time lately. One afternoon about three weeks ago the Alarm bell rung for fire, but instead of going to put out one we were marched to the Orphan House where we were addressed by the Major and requested to Volunteer a visit to Jim [James] Island and assist in shooting the Yankees should they appear. Of Course the boys agreed unanimously. They were armed and equipped and ready in an hour, but we did not go over to the Island. On Sunday following bang went the Old bell again and out we [went] as anxious and bloodthirsty as any rebel and this time eight Companies went over. Mine was not among them and I wasn't so very sorry. They returned to town after a bloodless Campaign of two days. Since then and until last Saturday we have done guard duty for the Provost Marshall and Enrolling officer. I liked the latter for it gave me an opportunity to practice that little game of looking at everybody's papers which the Soldiers took such a relish in doing some time ago. There was a fire down town last week and the Yanks dropped their Shells in town like peas. One struck the Phoenix Engine, demolishing one of the pumps, part of the brakes and tore open the side of the box. A negro with whom *Wm Thomas* had just changed places lost his arm.<sup>27</sup> It is almost miraculous that no one else was hurt. My engine (The Hope) was just along side and I tell you that shell came too near me to be agreeable. The boys stand them much better than I expected. Suppose all hands like myself think it much better than stopping Minie balls.

Yrs truly

CHAS R. ROGERS

Chastn June 25/64

Dr Liney

. . . on Sunday I was on Guard and had a busy time watching black and White Yanks all night at the Jail. Next day I was used up and it took all day nearly to get the dirt and mosquito scrapings off. I slew myriads of the Varmints for my hands were bloody in the morning. I believe by the ordinary process of washing in a basin of water that I would not have become clean in two days but the Man I board

<sup>27</sup> See the *Charleston Daily Courier*, June 1, 1864.



with has large bathing tubs and I availed myself of the same and intend to immerse weekly hereafter.

Well since then it has been too hot and I have been too busy to get the box ready. I would have sent more but I could not get a box to suit so you must be thankful for what I have sent. Please deliver the opium to the Dr. As for the Spoons I forgot to tell you before, that when I went to get them just after I heard from you ordering four, I found all sold. I am sorry. Saw some pewter ones at \$5 ea but they are too easily bent and broken. The Dress contains 9 yds at \$8.50—cheap. You may find a few spots in it but I warrant they wash out without injury or will take the goods back. Sound goods not a bit better are worth \$11. Narrow and inferior texture can be had for \$6. I hope Mrs. P. will be pleased. I think it a very neat pattern—reflecting great taste on the purchaser. The bal[ance] to her Cr now is \$20.17. I would send it now but thought possibly she may want something else. Let me know. The Copperas cost \$4—Soda Ditto— Sugar \$8 and Pepper &10. The Crackers are for the Small children, Old ones excluded entirely.

. . . . .

Charleston July 2d/64

Dr Liney

. . . . .

You must excuse this letter as I am writing in a big hurry and at the Commissary store house where I am on guard. The Yanks attacked our outworks on James Isl'd this morning early and succeeded in taking two of our guns and drove in our pickets. The Alarm bell was rung at a terrible rate and for some time there was much excitement, but everything is quiet now. The enemy has no doubt been driven back although we have no news to that effect. At this time 6 p.m. the Fire Brigade is still under arms. I dont think we will be sent over but will have all the Guard duty in our hands in the City, which is heavy enough already. I wont go over anyhow. As luck would have it 'twas my turn today for guard and here I am perfectly willing to stay as long as any fighting on Jim Isl'd is to be done. (I would not mention this last sentence to any one—

I had an *auction* yesterday my first attempt and I am glad to say it met with success. Rosa Beach was married Tuesday. Never asked me. Wasn't it unkind? Write soon.

As ever

CHARLIE

Chastn July 21st/64

. . . . .

I am glad that the Conts of box gave satisfaction altho I positively can not see anything so very dreadful in buying a whole pd of pepper at \$10. I shall be careful hereafter and not buy more than [than] ¼ pd of any article as that is the standard quantity we use[d] to buy (particular tea) "from *time immemorial*." Has the paper ceased coming? If so I will see Budds and have it continued. I sent some sugar to Muldrow this or rather last week to exchange for bacon for which I have an order. I have not heard from him, but presume he has rec'd the box. As soon as I get the bacon [I] will make some arrangement about getting lard from him. He has not been in town to my knowledge. I would like very much to see him.

I have collected one dividend and the State Int[erest]. The other dividend is not payable until the 25th in all amounting to \$150. I have about \$50 to Ma's Cr on the open A/c and will send up some money soon. It is very dull here now and money tight and expenses heavy. Since April I have not done as well as I expected, and I have come to the conclusion that the prospect is poor for a single man and a conscript at that. There is a Steamer fitting up here to run the blockade. A friend has spoken for a situation for me and if accepted I intend to leave if I can get off. *Do not say anything about it* as I have rec'd no answer yet. I hope you will approve of my determination as it would be much pleasanter to go *with* your approbation than without it.

I have been unable to find the barrels for Dr. B. Have inquired almost everywhere. I will keep a look out and buy as near his limit as possible. I am certain they will not be less than \$10 ea, presuming that he wishes the four to contain 100 galls in the aggregate.

. . . . .  
CHARLIE

Chastn Augt 6th/64

Dr Liney

. . . . .

You can all set your minds at ease on the blockade question for the present, as the place I applied for was already promised away. Business *with me* is a little brisker just now. I have done some running around this week. Am resting to day and fixing up my office affairs, writing letters &c. *Whittemore* has woke up at last and entrusted me with several Commissions. Old King say "it is no more than their business to give

me all their business." Franklin whom you may recollect arrived here on Wednesday in the Str [Steamer] Gen'l Whiting. He is mate. Looks well altho' has been sick. Fred sent me his respects and a box to Ned Jordan. The Str is at quarantine and as soon as she hauls into the dock agreeable to invitation, I shall try some Nassau fare. Have already indulged in some fine brandy and Havana Segars. Its really worth something just to smell either. I will have Franklin with an order, particularly for something in the wearing line for Lizzie and Anna.

I sent you a box on Wednesday Containing some tea, biscuits which I drew in my rations and some homespun Mr A sent for Tophy to make aprons, which I hope will reach you safely. My Rations consisted of biscuits bacon Rice and soap for 16 days service. They are worth \$40. Mr. A sent me the Stripe 13 yds costing \$4 pr yd and I now have some cheap and cool summer clothes. The goods are very nice and fine.

Mr. Muldrow wrote me to day that he had engaged the Ham &c for you but that you would not state what quantity, preferring to leave it to me. Now you know more about it than I and you must let me know how much Sugar to send up as soon as possible. My other Sugar swap with him has fizzled and I have ordered it sent back.

The Weather is powerfully hot in this part of Dixie. I still have guard duty to perform. No fires lately, but plenty of shells this week. Love to all. Write soon.

As ever

CHARLIE

Chastn Sept 2d/64

Dr Liney

Your favors 12th 15th and 30th Ult and the Collars came safely to hand for which accept many thanks. If not too much trouble I would like you to finish the remaining five to make up the dozen, as *all* of my *turn down* collars are worn out and I have only a few *garrotes* left that I can wear without danger of having my neck sawed off.

Mr Franklin is in port yet. I have been aboard the Str several times and dined sumptuously. He has been very unfortunate in his ventures, but says he will remember me next time. He is to take me out, if he comes back master of the ship. Swan is expected in shortly and very likely I may get a chance with him.<sup>28</sup> I may as well tell you

<sup>28</sup> Both of these were captains of blockade runners.

now that I am going to leave the first opportunity, and trust to luck for success. I have given F—a small list and I am satisfied he will bring it when he comes back. I have also given a list to *Jno McKinlay*, a brother of those girls who went to dancing. They are nice people from the Old Man down. The latter gets hold of some good brandy occasionally and I always come in for a pull or two at it. One of the girls made me a beautiful Palmetto hat. It is plaited very fine and nice and resembles an imported Straw. It is admired by every one. It is a good thing to keep on the right side of people.

For the past two weeks the Yanks have had a lively time with their fuse shells. They burst up in the air with a tremendous report and scatter the fragments in every direction. Three or four lives have been lost, (all negroes and cows) and several persons have been injured seriously. This week most of them have exploded in the neighborhood of George and Calhoun Sts and twice a day I have to run the gauntlet of the fragments on my way to and from meals, for I am still eating at the St Daphne, George St betw Meeting and Anson.

We have also plenty of fires. From 10 o'clock last Saturday to the same hour Monday no less than five. Three were in the Meeting St Ice house, one in President St and the last but most destructive in Hayne St. Fortunately the Yanks did not shell much. We have been blessed however for our escape seems almost Providential—

As ever

CHARLES