

THE SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1962

VOLUME 63

NUMBER 1



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THE SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CHARLESTON, S. C.

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MIDDLETON CORRESPONDENCE, 1861-1865

Edited by Isabella Middleton Leland *

Henry Augustus Middleton,¹ second son of the Hon. Thomas Middleton of the Oaks Plantation, in Berkeley County, was educated at Harvard and Litchfield Law School. A large landowner through inheritance and marriage, even after the war he owned nearly 20,000 acres, as well as property in Charleston and Newport, R. I. His wife was Harriott, daughter and heiress of Cleland Kinloch of Acton Plantation on the Santee, and Weehaw Plantation on the Black River.

Oliver Hering Middleton, third son of Gov. Henry Middleton, and first cousin once removed of Henry Augustus, resigned from the Navy to live the life of a wealthy planter. He married Susan Matilda Harriet, daughter of Robert Trail Chisolm, M.D., of Edisto Island.

These letters are, in the main, a correspondence between Oliver's daughter Susan Matilda, and Harriott, Henry's daughter. The cousins were almost the same ages, thirty-one and thirty-three respectively when the letters begin.

Harriott's family consists of mother and father, the latter often absent on plantation and estate affairs, five sisters, and two brothers—Henry in the Hampton Legion, and Frank (Francis Kinloch) in the Charleston Light Dragoons. Twenty-one-year-old Alice (Alicia) is unmarried, and with Harriott lives with their parents at 69 South Bay (now Battery), as does their widowed sister Isabella (Mrs. Charles M. Cheves) and her children Bell, Lang, Harrie and Henry. Mary is married to William Lowndes; Elizabeth is Mrs. J. J. Pringle Smith, and Anne Manigault's husband is John Hunter of Hunter's Island, New York.

Susan, her parents, "the girls,"—Livy (Olivia) twenty-two, and Emma, twenty—and their sixteen-year-old brother Oliver live in New Street. Susan's sister Mary is married to Benjamin Huger Read of Rice Hope Plantation on the Cooper River; Ella (Eleanor Maria) to Benjamin Huger Rutledge.

The correspondence is part of a collection given to the South Carolina Historical Society by Langdon Cheves, III, son of Harriott's sister Isabella. From it a selection has been made of letters which seem to illustrate the temper, not only of the times, but of the writers.

[The first four letters are from Susan to Harriott, who is spending the summer with her family at Flat Rock.]

* Mrs. John G. Leland, great-granddaughter of Isabella Middleton Cheves.

¹ Notes on the Middleton family are taken from Langdon Cheves, "Middleton of South Carolina," this *Magazine*, I, 228-262.

Charleston July 26th [1861]

My dearest Harriott:

Cousin Lizzie² tells me I had better write. I hesitated about doing so until I had seen her.

I have just returned, and you will like to hear that she seems brave and hopeful about Henry,³ although as yet (it is now 2 o'clock) no telegraph had come direct from Mr. Smith—nothing later than Mr. Coffin's—telling of his and your fathers having started for Manassas.

But, since Jas. Lowndes's yesterday, we are all hopeful. I trust, darling, you are, too.

And Mrs. Middleton and Isabella and Alice. I have you all constantly in my thoughts, and am so thankful that you have been in part spared—those two dreadful first days—Monday and Tuesday, when we knew so little and feared so much. Wednesday, too, was a day of almost despair, but yesterday all seemed brighter. I feel a longing to hear, instead of a dread.

Today all is still—and like a very sad Sunday—the streets, however, full of soldiers, and the bells tolling. This afternoon the funeral of General Bee and Col. Johnson takes place.⁴ Poor Mrs. Johnson has not spoken since the news of her husband's fall, and cannot shed a tear. Mr. Wagner has taken her and her children to his house, and is all kindness, but she cannot be roused from this lethargy of grief.

Oh, are not these dreadful days? Each hour seems to bring its own sad tale. And many say there are darker ones still in store for us, in spite of this great victory. The brilliancy seems very faint, amidst all this sorrow and suspense.

I was glad to learn from Cousin Lizzie that your Mother bore the journey well. I hope you too are stronger than when we parted. Goodbye, dearest. I shall write soon again, and I hope, oh so earnestly, that it will be to wish you joy of good news of your brother. . . .

Charleston—August 6th

My heart is full of love for you, and my thoughts are with you constantly, and yet, before such a sorrow as your's I feel silenced, lest any word of mine should only add to your grief and pain.⁵

² Harriott's sister Elizabeth, Mrs. J. J. Pringle Smith.

³ Henry has been wounded in the battle of First Manassas, July 21. He died six days later.

⁴ Brig. Gen. Barnard E. Bee and Lt. Col. B. J. Johnson were both killed at First Manassas.

⁵ News has been received of Henry's death on July 27.

Since the 21st the interest is painfully intensified. The war and what is connected with it seems to absorb every thought and feeling. We are all busy too, doing what we can for the Aid Societies. It is a great satisfaction to be able to help a little, to do something, if ever so little, for those who have done and suffered so much for us. . . .

Charleston—Saturday 24th

One cannot help, however, very serious thought about what the autumn may bring to us. There seems but little doubt that a descent upon our coast will be attempted, and I have not heard of any one, except Gov. Pickens, who considers "the state impregnable." Gen. Ripley⁶ says it is Charleston they mean to attack, and he has information that Foster,⁷ who was in Fort Sumter last winter, and who is a first-rate soldier, is now in New York organizing the expedition. But one hears so many well-authenticated lies nowadays, the capacity to believe seems slow and deadened, and I shall never realize that the enemy are coming until they are thundering at our very doors. . . .

Charleston—Saturday Sept. 7th

You ask about Mary's children. . . . They are violent *patriots*, and are fully "posted up" on political and military topics. I wish you could have seen Middleton's⁸ little sad face when I told him of General Bee's poor little children whose father had been shot at Manassas, and then the bright triumphant smile wh[ich] lighted it up as he said: "But *we* got the battle, though." They were in a state of great excitement yesterday about "the Yankee prisoners," and insisted on Isaac's driving by the jail, and stopping the carriage to have a peep at them looking from the windows. Mr. Rutledge's company formed part of the escort. He says he never saw such a *bad*-looking set of men. Concoran⁹ was especially vulgar in appearance. It was funny to see the prisoner Zouaves eyeing *our* Zouaves who were guarding them. It was feared there would be some demonstration against them, and several Companies declared

⁶ Gen. Roswell S. Ripley, C.S.A., married Alicia, daughter of John Middleton of Crowfield and Harriott's third cousin. He was at this time commander of Confederate forces in South Carolina.

⁷ Capt. John G. Foster.

⁸ Mary's son, Middleton Read.

⁹ Probably Col. Michael Concoran of 69th regiment of New York Volunteers, who was captured at Manassas.

they sh[ou]ld be stoned as they passed thro' the streets, but I am very glad they were allowed to march on unmolested except that one voice asked if they had "seen Old Abe lately?" at wh[ich] the prisoners laughed.

. . .

[December 11 the Oliver Middletons' house on New Street burns in a fire which destroys a large part of Charleston. They move to "Albemarle," outside Columbia. The following letters to Susan are, with the exception of one from Isabella, all from Harriott, whose family has returned to Charleston.]

Charleston—Wednesday night
[January 8, 1862]

. . .

I saw a letter from Mrs. Pinckney,¹⁰ two days ago, written from Norfolk, very happy she says to be on southern soil again. She tells of a day spent in New York, and several days in Baltimore. She and cousin Rose¹¹ went together to Washington and visited Seward¹² to ask for passes. He refused, saying he had already refused 200 ladies. Mrs. Pinckney describes herself as looking him sternly in the face, and saying "Do you refuse a pass to such an old lady as myself, to return to my own loved South, to pass my few remaining days there." Seward did look at her, and said that in consideration to her "great age" he would grant her a pass. She then asked for one for a grandchild. He said she might take a granddaughter, but not a grandson. She expressed great indignation at being "subject to such a varlet" and at the refusal of a pass to the granddaughter of that Revolutionary hero, General Pinckney.

. . .

A gentleman told Alice that from the *signs* at Port Royal he judged that we had killed a good many Yankees. Alice asked a lady friend what the "signs" meant. She said the number of legs and arms lying about! . . .

Charleston—Jan. 12

. . .

It is said that Manigault Barnwell and ten men came near taking Boutelle¹³ prisoner. They met Mr. Legare's coachman bringing away his master's horses. The man told them that Mr. Boutelle and three others

¹⁰ Elizabeth Izard Pinckney, wife of Col. Thomas Pinckney, daughter of Ralph and Elizabeth Izard.

¹¹ Mrs. Pinckney's daughter, Rosetta Ella, wife of Ralph Stead Izard, Jr.

¹² U. S. Secretary of State.

¹³ C. A. Boutelle of U. S. Coast Survey.

were playing billiards on his master's table at that moment, and he was sure of him, having known him for some years. Mr. Barnwell placed his men around the house, or was about placing them, when Branch¹⁴ came up, and refused to allow it, fearing an ambush. Was it not too provoking.

Affectionately yours,

Isabella Cheves

Charleston—Friday evening
[January 24, 1862]

.....
Mrs. Pinckney came here on Wednesday and I asked her a few questions about Newport. She says that the hotels were very badly attended and all lost. The Fillmore is to be sold. There were not near as many carriages as usual, nor near so much gaiety. All the rich people are violent against the South, but the shopkeepers are much opposed to it. She noticed no indications of stringency in money matters, except that many persons intended to spend the winter at Newport and nearly all the cottages were to be occupied. . . . Miss Womely had borrowed Mr. Meuse's undergarments! to cut from for the soldiers. Mrs. Pinckney discovered that poor women make these shirts of thick woolen twilled and sewed beautifully for 11 cents! Cousin Rose and herself made your friend Mrs. Henry Tiffany's acquaintance. . . . Mrs. Pinckney says "We used to get together, shut all the doors and windows and then *vomit* secession." The good people there still expect to crush us to death whenever they choose, but they are aware that they were beaten at Manassas. At first they thought it a victory, but the truth came out in the end. Mrs. de Yough's son was in the battle and acknowledged without shame that he saw everybody else running, and so he also ran as hard as he could. She says they are making jokes about it all the time. . . .

She tells a good story of Mrs. Julius Pringle. She was introduced at the court of Prussia. The master of ceremonies, or whoever it was who introduced, asked "Shall I say Mrs. Pringle of America?" "No," said she sternly, "Mrs. Pringle of *South Carolina*, if you please." Don't you think she ought to be indicted for libel? . . . James Lowndes came in yesterday morning. . . . His furlough is almost over. He says that he had no idea that they had fought a great battle, until the next day when he met Ferguson who told him so. . . . He saw Ricketts¹⁵ being brought off

¹⁴ Col. John L. Branch commanded a rifle regiment of S. C. militia.

¹⁵ Gen. Ricketts, U. S. A., lost his leg at First Manassas.

the field in a blanket, only his red head appearing outside. . . . Mary was amused at James asking, "What is the matter with B. . . . He has grown so old since I last saw him." "Nothing," said Mary, "but that he has been able to get no hair dye lately." It seems the prisoners were represented as having grown grey with suffering, until the same cause was discovered.

Charleston—Friday evening
[January 31, 1862]

.
 You ask about a secret expedition to Edisto. I had heard about it but as I did not know about its truth, I did not mention it. There have been in town stories of recounters with the negroes. Of the three told, two are certainly with some foundation, the third may belong to one of the two others. Did you not see in the papers, about a month ago, that as two or three of our men were carrying along three prisoners, when something had drawn their attention from the prisoners, the latter fell upon, mortally wounding two, and escaping. We all supposed these prisoners to be Yankees, but the Richmond Dispatch says that they were negroes, and I am told, that 12 of our men met fifty armed negroes, a fight ensued, we killed a great many, and took three prisoners, the others escaping. This story I suppose to be true. I hear that about ten days ago there was a secret expedition to Edisto. Some negroes having fired on our pickets on John's Island, our men followed them to Edisto, and there took several of them, killing others. It is said that the women fought so violently when they were taking off the men that they were obliged to shoot some of them. The third story which is certainly true, is that the negroes on or near John's Island having behaved very outrageously, nine of them were taken, four are to be hung at Willtown, and five are here lodged in the jail, and will be either hung or shot. These two last stories may be the same, but are, I fancy, different, as the nine were certainly taken on or near John's Island. There is great demoralization every where, and the sooner this most insolent foe is driven from our shores the better for our domestic peace. . . .

There is much interest felt about Savannah. Mr. Izard writes that Lee's ¹⁶ staff are divided as to the possibility of its being taken. Lee is very indignant at finding that the inlets were not efficiently obstructed. He had been assured that they were and therefore paid them no attention. Mr. Izard says it is not known whether the cuts into Savannah river are

¹⁶ Gen. Robert E. Lee took command of the Dept. of South Carolina and Georgia November 8, 1861.

deep enough to float the gun boats. They are trying to place more obstructions on them. If they do get into the river only Fort Jackson remains to defend Savannah. It is three miles below the town. Whether it can oppose the gun boats, no one can tell, and opinions are divided. Some even think that the town will not be attacked. Meanwhile, the planters are in anxiety about their negroes. Mr. Izard wants for the present merely to move his to the highland. Cousin Joe ordered a steamboat, intending to carry off his and the estate negroes. He did not tell them, but they somehow found it out, and men, women and children took to the Swamp. Their example has been followed by the people on various other plantations, principally near Savannah, They have not gone to the enemy, only to the swamps. . . .

Charleston—Monday Evening
[February 3, 1862]

.
Charles Haskell has just come from Nashville. . . . He gave Lise the particulars of the fight at Fishing Creek.¹⁷ It seems the difficulty was false information that only a small portion of the enemy had crossed the river. A council of war was held on the subject. Zollicoffer¹⁸ and all the other officers were for attacking, but Crittenden¹⁹ said he believed the information to be traitorous and was opposed to the attack. However, he gave up his opinion to that of the others. The attack was made only by two regiments of Mississippians and cousin Arthur's²⁰ battery of Artillery. They were met by overwhelming numbers. Zollicoffer sent off for instant reinforcements. His men fought in the most desperate manner, made five bayonet charges, and were forced to retreat to their entrenchments. The enemy surrounded them, as their force overlapped one of our sides Zollicoffer took it of course for reinforcements coming in and with his two aids galloped up to them. When within a few yards they were shot down. He says it was a pure case of murder. It seems that they should have been taken prisoners. That it is an outrage to kill three men when entirely in their power. The reason of the indignation against Crittenden was that the reinforcements were not sent. The feeling against him is intense and he has to be attended by a bodyguard of a hundred men. He was not drunk. . . .

¹⁷ A Confederate defeat, known also as Mill Springs or Logan's Crossroads.

¹⁸ Gen. Felix K. Zollicoffer of Tennessee.

¹⁹ Gen. George B. Crittenden was officially censored for this defeat, after which he resigned his commission and served as voluntary aide to Gen. J. J. Williams.

²⁰ Capt. A. M. Rutledge.

Charleston—Friday evening
[February 14, 1862]

There was a party at Fort Sumter a few days ago. Several ladies and gentlemen went down to spend the evening, intending to return at half past nine. All went merry as a marriage bell. They danced and talked and laughed and had a charming collation, and at half past nine made their adieus and were about departing on the loveliest of moonlight nights. The Ripleys and Ingraham²¹ party went off in style in a row boat. The others repaired to the steamboat. Alas! it was sticking in the mud! The tide would not be high until between two and three. They tried to talk and laugh, but all things failed. Two ladies stole away, found an empty room, wrapped themselves up in shawls and slept soundly. The others struggled through it almost dying of sleep, and all resolved to eschew fort parties in future. . . .

Charleston—Sunday evening
[March 2, 1862]

. . . . I don't think I have mentioned that five gun boats appeared off White Point yesterday or the day before. An attack was expected and troops hurried there, but nothing happened. . . .

The *Nashville* has got into Beaufort N. Carolina. It is said to have brought in a few arms, and a son of Captain Ingraham's! The *Carolina*, of the Trenholm line, has got into a Florida port, tho' that is supposed to be a secret, bringing a cargo of 15,000 arms, and plenty of gun powder. All the cargo of the *Gladiator* has been brought in gradually. Then the *Isabel* and three schooners got out two nights ago, and five more are to go out tonight. The harbour has presented quite a gay appearance for the last few days. A great many sloops and schooners lying about, and they are busy building the new fort²² between Sumter and Moultrie. They are building it on a shoal and have four of the heaviest guns ready to be mounted. This, they say, will effectually seal up our harbour, and make it impossible for anything to pass, making "assurance doubly sure." . . .

²¹ Capt. Duncan N. Ingraham, C. S. N.

²² Harriott must refer to Fort Ripley, built on the Middle Ground between Fort Sumter and East Battery.

Charleston—Sunday evening
[March 16, 1862]

Cousin Lizzie²³ was told by Mrs. Ingraham the other day that her son who came out in the *Nashville*, told her that in England they received a great deal of attention. Several of the great people called on them, amongst others Lord Palmerston.²⁴ They gathered from what they heard that there are two great obstacles to our recognition. The first is they think that if they break the blockade war with the North would ensue, and then, that we should reunite and fight England. The other reason is their having done so much against slavery they don't like to allow to the world that all their sacrifices have been a great national error. . . .

Charleston—Wednesday evening
[March 26, 1862]

. . . . we went around to see Hal.²⁵ She was very agreeable, as indeed, she always is, and gave us a very animated account of a visit from General Evans.²⁶ She saw in the yard a man whom she took for the bricklayer, as the chimnies had been smoking badly. Presently the door opened and Motte Pringle entered followed by the bricklayer, whom he introduced as General Evans. They chatted together, and in the course of talk he asked if they were much frightened in town. She said, "Not much, they looked upon the harbour as sealed up, but had some fears about his side." Upon this he coloured, and said he was sorry they should be afraid of the side, which was under his command, and the ladies might be sure that the enemy could only reach the city over the dead bodies of himself and every man in his command! "Oh," said Hal, "the ladies feel perfect confidence in having Leesburg in their rear, but they thought the government was too much given to appointing able generals and then not properly supporting them, and we could not bear the idea of their dead bodies being heaped up." He told her that fighting on one's own hook was all very well, but to order one's dearest friends into the thick of the fight was a terrible trial. . . .

²³ Elizabeth Pinckney Huger, not to be confused with Susan's Cousin Lizzie.

²⁴ The British Prime Minister.

²⁵ Harriott Rutledge Ravenel, Mrs. St. Julien Ravenel, author of *Charleston the Place and the People*.

²⁶ Brig. Gen. Nathan G. Evans, Cmdr. Third Militia District of S. C.

(To be continued)

A SKETCH OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, PENDLETON

By Barbara Norton *

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the old Pendleton District received large migrations from the lower part of the state, where many families left their homes during the "sickly season" and journeyed to the blessed coolness of the healthy up country. From Charleston came such men as Dr. George Hall, Dr. Thomas L. Dart, and John L. North; from Santee came Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Francis Huger, and Thomas Pinckney, Jr.; from Woodstock, in the Goose Creek area, came Barnard Elliott Bee.¹ Some of these men and their families spent the summers or only a few months each year in Pendleton, but others became permanent residents. Whatever their status, most of these newcomers took a prominent part in the affairs of Pendleton.

Prior to this period the up-country religious interest was almost exclusively Scotch-Irish. Most of those who moved into Pendleton from the lower part of the state, however, were Anglicans, and the need for an Episcopal church soon became apparent.² About 1819 a group of Episcopalians in Pendleton wrote Bishop Bowen in Charleston requesting a rector for the church they hoped to establish soon. They learned, in reply, that some \$400 had been appropriated in the spring for a missionary to Pendleton for the summer and fall, and that the Society in Charleston would supply at least \$500 to help in establishing a new church.³ True to its promise, the following year the Society made plans to send the Rev. Rodolphous Dickinson to act as missionary for Pendleton, Greenville, and the Greenville Armory.⁴

On June 17, 1820, a group of residents of the Pendleton District met at the Court House to discuss the building of an Episcopal church. Benjamin DuPre acted as chairman. Five vestrymen were elected to draw up subscription papers: Benjamin DuPre, Thomas L. Dart, Laurens McGregor, Dr. George Hall, and Thomas Pinckney, Jr. A letter

* Mrs. James H. Norton, Warner Robins, Georgia.

¹ Lawrence Fay Brewster, *Summer Migrations and Resorts of South Carolina Low Country Planters* (Durham, 1947).

² Albert Sidney Thomas, *A Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 1820-1957* (Columbia, 1957), p. 598. (Hereafter cited as Thomas, *P. E. Church*.)

³ Charles Hanckel, Charleston, to Warren Davis, Pendleton, Sept. 8, 1819. MS Records of St. Paul's Church. (Hereafter cited as MS Records.)

⁴ Thomas, *P. E. Church*, pp. 598-600.