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## MIDDLETON CORRESPONDENCE, 1861-1865

Edited by Isabella Middleton Leland

(Continued from January)

[*Harriott Middleton to Susan Middleton, Albemarle*]

Charleston [April 1, 1862]

Thank you for your letter, dearest Susan. . . . Another ship ran the blockade last night. I have heard neither name nor cargo. Did I tell you that the *Cecile* got in last week, with a cargo of merchandise. It is reported that the *Herald* has got into some confederate port. I am told that the harbour is being very effectually piled. Only a very narrow and very crooked channel will be left and that going directly under the guns of Fort Sumter, so that should they make iron clad ships drawing only five feet they will not be able to enter. It seems that the *Nashville* carried to Europe a number of pilots and they come over in the various ships, and bring them in safely. They are paid very highly, at a hundred dollars a month. In spite of all these precautions, some people are hurrying off. . . . They seem to intend concentrating troops in town. I saw numbers of uniforms of all colours in the streets today, and I hear that Cousin Cleland's <sup>27</sup> brigade is to be here in a day or two. . . .

[April 3, 1862]

. . . The very negroes in the streets are talking of the hard times. I heard an old man and maumer in King street the other day discussing it. "Hard times!" exclaimed the man incredulously, "in this part of the town. Why I thought we only had them up town." "No," said the woman, "They are here and there and everywhere." Eliza Wilkins told me that she heard a group of negro men discussing them, and one exclaimed, "Hard times—yes, they is so hard, that I think they are almost as bad as the day of judgement." . . .

[April 7, 1862]

. . . Have you heard of an article in a late Quarterly Review—on the South? It abuses us in the most violent manner, and calls us savages and barbarians, and as a specimen of southern morality publishes a letter signed "Robert Chisolm." It is to his mother, and is extremely bloodthirsty in its way of talking. He tells his mother that he has got

<sup>27</sup> Lt. Col. C. K. Huger, S. C. Artillery.

a yankee scull as a drinking cup for her, and asks if she would not like another to put on the top of her what-not. Do tell me if there is such a person, who has a mother. Cousin Annie Russell was telling this to Mr. Henry Lesesne and he said at once that it must be a forgery—that several articles have been written by Americans for english papers and Reviews, and their insertion is obtained by paying highly. . . . Alas! Sidney Johnston! <sup>28</sup> Does not his loss weigh upon you?

Yours ever—in no writing mood tonight.

Best love to all

H[arriott] M[idleton]

[Susan to Harriott, Charleston]

Albemarle-April 13th [1862]

My dearest Harriott . . . Did you read McClellan's address to the "Grand Army" the other day? The Yankee-est thing, sounding as if it had been written by a man born in Massachusetts and "settled" in New York. I think the most disagreeable people I have ever known have been of New England origin, having undergone that transplantation. Every repulsive Yankee characteristic is intensified, sharpened, depraved, vulgarized by contrast with the intense worldliness of that would be "great city." If they could only be brought to comprehend how superior our "savagery" is, even as *they* paint us, to their false, material, mock civilization! As to "Robert Chisolm's" letter in the Quarterly. I have heard nothing of it, but I should not wonder if it is genuine (many letters you know were taken at Beaufort in Nov.) (One from Alex. Chisolm, I know, to his uncle, my cousin Robt. Chisolm, and one from Mrs. Henry King to Mrs. Leigh Howard, were published in the Herald) and I am "savage" enough not to be very much surprised, or shocked either, at the idea of a Yankee scull drinking cup. Compare it with any one of the million atrocities daily committed by *them*, whenever they have the power to insult, injure, or desecrate, *they* have somewhat dulled our refined sensibilities, and hate and revenge, such as *such* an enemy inspired, can scarcely be expected to be over-delicate, or squeamish. There is a young Robert Chisolm, of Coosaw, whose father's house was lately burned, who was here at the arsenal when the war broke out, a friend of Benti's.<sup>29</sup> He left school with his father's consent, and went to Virginia, fought at Manassas, I believe in the ranks, but afterwards got a Lieutenancy. . . . His mother was Miss Guerard, whom we all like and

<sup>28</sup> Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, C.S.A., killed at Shiloh.

<sup>29</sup> Henry Bentivoglio Van Ness Middleton, son of Arthur Middleton of Niewport Plantation, and Paulina, Countess Bentivoglio.

know very well, altho' she seldom comes to Charleston. A bright, amiable woman, but very gentle and refined. I don't think she *would* "like" a Yankee scull on her what-not! Mrs. Waties says, however, that her cousin, Motte Calhoun, Captain of a company from Alabama, told her there was scarcely a tent in his camp which had *not* a Yankee scull stuck on it! And Mrs. Wade Hampton, who went over the battle-field at Manassas not long after the fight, says almost the first thing she noticed was the men washing skulls and other bones at the stream, and Johnny<sup>80</sup> told us Gen. Walker constantly wore about the streets of Savannah a pair of spurs made of the jaw-bones of a Yankee! So, my dear, if all this is "*savage*," savages we must allow ourselves to be called, by the Sumner-like reptiles of the North, but, as long as our statesmen and soldiers write, and fight and die, like Johnston and Davis, I doubt not that the *really* civilized world will allow that, *for* "*savages*," we are a singularly noble and polished race. . . .

[Harriott to Susan, Albemarle]

Charleston [April 25, 1862]

My dearest Susan . . . Thirty negroes have recently returned from the Yankees. They say that there is great discontent among their race, with the Yankee treatment, and great desire to return to their old masters, but they are not allowed to do so. Some who have attempted it have been heavily ironed, which has frightened the others very much. One of Mr. Tom Drayton's negroes was taken by the Yankees on board of a ship. The officers asked him if he knew who Mr. Percy Drayton<sup>81</sup> was, and what the Southerners thought of him—"they couldn't think worse of anybody than they do of him. Sir, the fact is, we all spise him, Sir. Indeed, that's just what we do," was the answer. . . .

Mary Manigault has had quite a triumph lately. A young man of her husband's regiment came down quite sick and was placed in the Roper Hospital. The Committee had a great horror of ladies and had decreed that none should enter their walls. Mary however got a permit, as a favour, to see this young man. She nursed him carefully and handed him over "out of danger" to his parents, when they arrived. She then thought her mission was over, when she actually received a message begging her to go to the Hospital as often as she could, to see the in-

<sup>80</sup> John Izard Middleton, Lieut. C.S.A., son of Hon. John Izard Middleton of Crowfield Plantation, Georgetown County.

<sup>81</sup> Capt. Percival Drayton, U.S.N., brother of Confederate Gen. Thomas F. Drayton, commanded one of the ships which attacked Port Royal on Nov. 7, 1861.

mates. So she, an excellent servant nurse, and cousin Caroline<sup>32</sup> have gone into the service. Cousin Caroline you know has great talents for nursing. . . .

*[Susan to Harriott, Charleston]*

Albemarle - May 4th [1862]

My dearest Harriott, We came home last night quite upset by the news we heard in town, and, if I still believed it, it w[ou]ld be quite absurd for me to write to you as usual, for before my letter could reach you, according to the reports here, you would either be a prisoner like Lise, and Meta,<sup>33</sup> or flying from the enemy. Yesterday came a telegram from Pemberton<sup>34</sup> to the Governor requesting that troops might be sent down immediately as an attack upon Charleston was momentarily expected! We hoped Papa w[ou]ld have arrived this morning, but he has not come, and we think he may have been detained by having neglected to get a military permit to leave the city, altho', strange to say, the Columbia papers yesterday proclaim Martial law in Charleston, while the "Mercury" says nothing of the sort. Much to our disappointment Papa writes that he has decided not to move the negroes from Combahee, and we feel as if they had already taken themselves out of our possession, not having the confidence in their intention to remain, or in the Yankees not tempting them to escape, which the *man* of the family seems to feel. As to the Mounted Guard, it appears to *us* a very slender thing to rely upon when so much is at stake. Our people at Cooper River, too, are beginning to show us that they are by no means *safe*—five men having disappeared from there a fortnight ago, Mary wrote word. As they had a good boat, and a "Sailor" among them, we concluded of course they had gone to the fleet, but we hear they have turned up at the old place at Chyhaw. Are they not sorely troublesome people? I am sure I would willingly compound for half the amount of property in almost any other form. . . .

*[Harriott to Susan, Albemarle]*

Greenville

Thursday [May] 8th

My dearest Susan. . . . We determined suddenly on Sunday morning to set off on Tuesday night. Mr. Lowndes was to bring Mary and Frank

<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Cleland Huger, Mary Manigault's mother.

<sup>33</sup> Lise Rutledge, who was visiting relatives in Nashville, and Meta Huger, in New Orleans, were both trapped by the fall of those cities to the Federals.

<sup>34</sup> Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton, C.S.A.

was urgent that we should leave town before he went, and if we did not go then, it would have to be delayed a fortnight owing to circumstances, so we packed hard and came. There was a great panic in town and Frank thought there might be some foundation for it and if there was it would become still greater and we might find many inconveniences. The agitation amongst the servants in town was becoming very unpleasant and we did not care to subject ours to it any longer. . . We shall rest today and go on in the mail stage tonight.<sup>35</sup> . . . Do you not hope that Charleston may be saved. I don't mind our house but I can't bear to give up the old streets and buildings, and the churches. I feel such a strong personal love to the old place. . . . Charleston was in a very sad state when I left. There was a general impression that it would soon be attacked, would probably be taken, and that we were forever parting with our homes and goods and chattels. I suppose there must be some foundation for a so general an impression, which seems also to be shared by those in command. Oh! for two victories in the West and on the Peninsula. . . .

[*Susan to Harriott, Flat Rock*]

Albemarle [May 10-11, 1862]

. . . last night the girls went to the Pickenses',<sup>36</sup> for the express purpose, Emma confessed, of seeing little Mr. Beauregard. Mrs. Pickens having let fall in her note that she expected "some cadets," they being "the only victims left to us now." They had their curiosity gratified, and pronounced the young gentleman the express image of his father<sup>37</sup>—they could not get a word out of him however, for the poor boy speaks only broken English, and being very quiet and shy, does not encourage any advances even in French. Emma however did hear him gasp out to Mrs. Pickens (who, after his cousin had indulged the company with the "Marseillaise," asked *him* to favour them with a song also) "Je n'ai jamais chante." . . .

Albermarle, Friday [May 16, 1862]

. . . How lucky you all are in having a comfortable home in a fine climate ready for you! There is so much difficulty here, in this mean little town, in finding a place of refuge, even at an exorbitant price, the extortions which are practised upon the low-country refugees, by the so-called "*best* people in Columbia," are enough to disgrace the place forever, and I

<sup>35</sup> They are on the way to Isabella's house at Flat Rock, N. C.

<sup>36</sup> Gov. and Mrs. Francis W. Pickens.

<sup>37</sup> Gen. Pierre G. T. Beauregard.

heard a lady not long ago say with the bitterest indignation: "I do believe, if we had gone to the heart of *Connecticut*, we sh[ou]ld not have fallen among such a set of *screws*!" . . . Mrs. Izard and Mrs. Chesnut<sup>38</sup> were here yesterday, and said they heard Mrs. Davis was only waiting in Raleigh until she was *invited* to come to Columbia! in which case she would probably pass the season in North Carolina. Mrs. Chesnut added that she had suggested to Mrs. Preston<sup>39</sup> that *they* were the people who could with convenience and propriety extend such an invitation to the President's family, but Mrs. P. made no reply and immediately changed the subject of conversation. Mrs. Davis's daughter I hear is really a little beauty, and very sweet and charming, but young "Jeff" is a striking contrast to his Papa, by no means fit to be introduced into genteel society and although only four years old remarkable for his unlimited knowledge and use of profane language! I hear too, which has troubled me a little, that President Davis does not write his own messages, Proclamations, etc., but it is much more comfortable not to believe it, and to hold fast as long as possible to one's faith, and hopes in him, now that he is being so universally blamed, and even doubted. . . .

Albemarle [May 27-29, 1862]

. . . That two steamers did get in from the West Indies is certain—we have just had palpable proof of it in a basket of fruit from Mr. Read, pineapples and bananas really look like curiosities. But the boats brought better things than these—arms, and news of the arrival in Nassau of two iron clads . . . as soon as they get their armament in they are to fight their way, *it is said*, into Charleston, so perhaps the old place may yet be saved! . . . From Georgetown we have no news yet except that Mr. Read writes that the Crowfield Mill was burned by Capt. Tucker of the Waccamaw Cavalry not by the enemy. . . .

. . . We got a letter from Livy enclosing one from Helen. They are all at Kingstree and expect to go on as soon as their negroes get there to Darlington. On Thursday morning before they were dressed the miller Daggett dashed in and told them there were two Yankee gunboats opposite Mr. Labruce's coming on slowly. Uncle John<sup>40</sup> was away, and the carriage had not got back, as we feared, but aunt Sally and Ri got

<sup>38</sup> Mary Boykin Chesnut, wife of Col. James Chesnut, and author of *A Diary From Dixie*.

<sup>39</sup> Wife of Gen. John S. Preston, chief of the Conscript Bureau during the latter war years.

<sup>40</sup> Hon. John Izard Middleton of Crowfield Plantation, Georgetown County. Aunt Sally was his wife, and Ri (Maria) and Helen were their daughters.



into a buggy and Helen and Oliver, the overseer, walked behind with a carpet bag—in this way they went by the main road to the next place above, Rice Hope, where, in spite of everybody's advice they insisted on taking a boat and crossing to Pedee—luckily the Yankees were so busy they got over unperceived and were in the Pedee canal before the shelling began—they fired about twenty times, Helen thinks, one shell passing through a negro house and a fragment through one of the servant's aprons! The paper will tell you of the thievery of rice, but does not add that they lost a great part of their ill-gotten goods—they had not gone far before the toll boat about wh[ich] they had neglected some necessary arrangement in loading filled with water, was cut loose, and sunk with everything on board. From Mr. Oliver's summer house, where Aunt Sally took refuge for that day and night, they could see the smoke of the burning mill and barrel house, but I do not know who actually committed what seems to us all here a very needless act of destruction. The negroes fled in the utmost terror, followed the family across the river and implored to be allowed to go with them farther. The three who went off with the enemy they suppose were forced, for one old man about the mill who declined accompanying them says they said, "Oh, very well, you are so old we will not force *you*." There was a flat at the wharf filled with things ready to start for Plantersville—these the Yankees opened and began tossing about—when this old negro assuring them "those things belonged to black people, to my family, house servants" they very politely let them alone. Helen thinks they will perhaps save but little in the way of clothing, etc. . . .

Albemarle, June 1st [1862]

. . . A letter yesterday from Livy gives us some details of the Pocotaligo fight. The Rutledge Rifles dismounted and fought across the road at Screvon's bridge until midday, when, just before our reinforcements arrived, the Yankees broke and retreated—they stopped to dine under some fine oaks at a Mr. Elliott's, where Stephen Elliott's<sup>41</sup> artillery company opened upon them, and dispersing they fled, pursued by our cavalry—no dispatch later than that had been received at Headquarters. Did you hear of their firing a volley upon Mr. Dan Heyward from his own piazza? He was riding up to his house, not aware of their being in possession, and of course unarmed, but got off unhurt. Livy says she finds many more people in town than she had expected—the Battery was "crowded" in the afternoon—people attracted, I suppose, by the soldiers quartered

<sup>41</sup> Major Stephen Elliott, son of Bishop Elliott. He rose to the rank of Brig. Gen., C.S.A.

there—who are said to be perfectly well disciplined, and very orderly—they are constantly singing “Dixie” and “Psalms!” The obstructions in the harbour are progressing and the new Fort on Morris island wh[ich] is to have the guns from Forts Moultrie and Sumter which do not bear upon the channel. Charleston can be made safe in two months, and the three “Monitors” wh[ich] are being built at Green Point, N. Y. for its destruction, cannot be ready before July, so we can hope on still. . . .

Pemberton is much censured. The 1,000 men at Mars Bluff cannot protect the property wh[ich] his removing 200 from Georgetown Fort left exposed. He had, the very day the enemy went up the Waccamaw, issued an order forbidding the destruction of all rice and rice mills, but Capt. Tucker was in Charleston and his lieutenant acted foolishly—the burning of the Crowfield mill is considered, as it seemed to us, senseless and useless, the machinery, they say, c[ou]ld easily have been removed, and the rice rolled in the river. . . .

Albemarle [June 8-10, 1862]

. . . rumours of the wildest kind fill Columbia every day now, but I think it would only bother you if I wrote them to you. We have lately had (by report) the President actually arrived here, Stonewall Jackson with 50,000 Marylanders in Washington, and the heavy cannoning of the city of Charleston *distinctly* heard at this distance! . . .

We have heard from the girls at Darlington. They were at a miserable boarding house . . . and speak of Aunt Sally as bearing the excitement and fatigue cheerfully enough but as suffering a little since reaching Darlington, from a diet of bacon and cabbage!—At Society Hill, I hear, Fanny Frost and her party lived for ten days on dry rice and hominy until some provisions c[oul]d be sent to them from Charleston. . . .

Afternoon—Boundary St. Columbia

We are actually in our new abode, which really begins to look quite habitable, pine tables and chairs notwithstanding. . . .

Columbia [June 15]

. . . Mr. Alfred Huger,<sup>42</sup> who brought up his family the other day and has been twice to see Ella, says he *knows* Pemberton has the most positive orders to defend Charleston to the last, altho’ he added, “the last he was afraid w[ou]ld very soon come,” and Mr. Read writes that they are pressing negroes constantly in the streets to work on the bomb-proof sheds wh[ich] are being built all about for the inhabitants to take refuge

<sup>42</sup> Postmaster of Charleston.

under when the place is bombarded. This does not look as if they meant to surrender without fighting, as one report has it, nor to burn the town as indefensible, as says another. There is no truth in the rumour that the forts had been demanded with forty-eight hours to consider their answer, but all agree that in spite of the newspapers we were "badly whipped" on James island last Tuesday. I can hear of no ladies that we know still in town, and Mr. Read says it is now "indeed deserted." *Our* end is scarcely recognizable—the ruins have been levelled for a camping ground, and there is a bomb-proof battery being built on the New St. lot, we hear. What a change has been worked in six short months! And yet this makes me hopeful for the future, and I try not to remember how much easier it is to destroy than to replace. . . .

Our poor Pemberton goes about wringing his hands and declaring he has not a friend in Charleston, but Evans told him that unless he c[ou]ld be allowed to attack the Yankees on James island, he w[ou]ld break his sword and leave the service. Pemberton is said to have yielded and an attempt was to have been made last night or tonight on the enemy's works. We are to have between ten and twelve thousand men (Benti writes yesterday that soldiers from town and Adams Run have been crossing over all day), and Evans hopes to "wipe out those Yankees." God grant him success, for they say driving them from James island is our only hope of saving Charleston. . . .

Columbia June 19th [1862]

. . . Yesterday afternoon we went to see Mrs. Young at the "Congaree." She came in, in a silk so rich and stiff, that it might almost have entered independently, told us of her hasty flight from town, and how Lewis's<sup>43</sup> clothes had been riddled at the Chickahominy while he was searching for Gen. Pettigrew's body. You know people have said hard things about Lewis on that occasion, his dispatch was unhappily worded. "I am safe. Gen. Pettigrew was left on the field mortally wounded," but it seems the blame was not deserved, for, at the time of his fall all his aids had been sent off to bring up fresh troops. Mr. Dan Ravenel came in while we were there and read us a letter he had just got from Mr. McCrady. We cannot too highly admire the bravery of our men at James Island—the Yankees, he says, fought like tigers, all except the Massachusetts reg[imen]t wh[ich] broke and ran without firing a gun! Isn't that fine? . . .

Mr. Alfred Huger read Ella Tom Huger's<sup>44</sup> last letter, wh[ich] she

<sup>43</sup> Lewis Young was one of Pettigrew's aides.

<sup>44</sup> Lt. Thomas B. Huger, commanded the *McRae* at New Orleans. He resigned from the United States Navy to join the South.

says sounds prophetic, and Prof. Venable, now a capt. of artillery, and among the last of Lovete's men to leave the city, writes that the one bright spot in his recollection of N. Orleans is Capt. Huger in the rigging of his vessel cheering on his sailors as they were going down to the fight. Ella also read Meta's<sup>45</sup> letter giving an account of his illness and death. She says the house was literally filled with flowers, sent by people of all classes, and the coffin covered with wreaths and garlands yards long. She was persuaded not to put our flag upon the coffin, but placed one inside. All New Orleans were at his funeral, the galleries of the church crowded with the enemy. One of the officers called to see him before his death, and he consented to receiving the visit, saying he was "now at peace with all the world," but, glancing at the card he shook his head on reading the name—"No, I cannot see *him*—he is a *Southern* man." I suppose you saw that the ship he commanded last, the "Iroquois," was one of the four which the "McRae" fought so gallantly. The sailors were constantly, during the action, calling out "Capt. Huger" from the deck, and Brock, the engineer of the "McRae," told the PostMaster their chief object was to get alongside the "Iroquois" and board her—but they never could manage it. He had orders to fight his way to the engine-room and take possession there, for, once on board, Capt. Huger's plan was to fight *his* way to the quarterdeck, where he said he was confident the crew would obey his orders, and he sh[ou]ld head her for the Gulf at once. . . .

This place fills up daily—there are six ladies here supporting themselves by clipping Conf[ederate] notes. The widow of Gen. Bartow<sup>46</sup> and several from Washington and Richmond. They work six hours a day and are paid forty dollars a month. We are going sightseeing soon to see this money made, and to the top of the new State House! . . .

Always aff'tly your's,

S[usan] M[iddleton]

[Harriott to Susan, Columbia]

Flat Rock

Thursday-June 19 [1862]

. . . Ellen King . . . looks old and completely worn out. This is no time for engagements! As Lizzie Ravenel said this evening, "If a person is engaged one day, they ought to be married the next."—Oh, Susan, what trying times these are— . . .

<sup>45</sup> Margaret Deas Huger, daughter of John Middleton Huger, was Tom's first cousin once removed.

<sup>46</sup> Killed at Manassas.

(To be continued)