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# *Caroliniana Columns* - Spring 2023

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COLUMNS
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University South Caroliniana Society newsletter
Spring 2023

# Valuable in their Own Right: The Story of Three Pinckney Women Abroad

*By Constance B. Schulz*

*Based on an address delivered at the University South Caroliniana Society Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 14, 2022*

*Constance B. Schulz. Photo courtesy of Jack Allen.*

Thank you to the officers of the society and the Caroliniana staff for welcoming me to this event and giving me the opportunity to share with you some of the research and editorial work that your generosity has made possible. You and the library you support and represent have been among the most important financial as well as research supporters of the two Pinckney papers editorial projects from whose materials I will draw for this talk. It has been a real pleasure to be associated with you for the past almost-thirty-seven years.

For the past fifteen of those years, ever since I retired from teaching at USC in June 2008, I have had a new "post-retirement" identity as the senior editor of (and chief fundraiser for) two born digital scholarly editions: in early fall of 2008 we received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and began work first on editing the papers of two Pinckney women, Eliza Lucas Pinckney and her daughter Harriott Pinckney Horry. By the time we had completed editing the seven hundred and fifty documents of that project in 2012, we realized that the papers of the Pinckney men were also interesting and important, and, with the promise of a substantial gift from the University South Caroliniana Society, in 2013 we submitted a successful application to NEH to edit the papers of the Pinckney statesmen, Eliza's sons Charles Cotesworth and Thomas Pinckney and their first cousin once removed, Charles Pinckney. A year later we received additional support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the grant- funding division of the National Archives. In the ten years since the first NEH award, we have published three volumes of the *Papers of the Pinckney Revolutionary Era Statesmen* with the University of Virginia Press, which in January 2023 released online the fourth and final volume, bringing to completion full publication of 4,500 documents, with an additional 7,000 documents calendared, listed in the table of contents with a title giving the writer and recipient names and the date of the document.

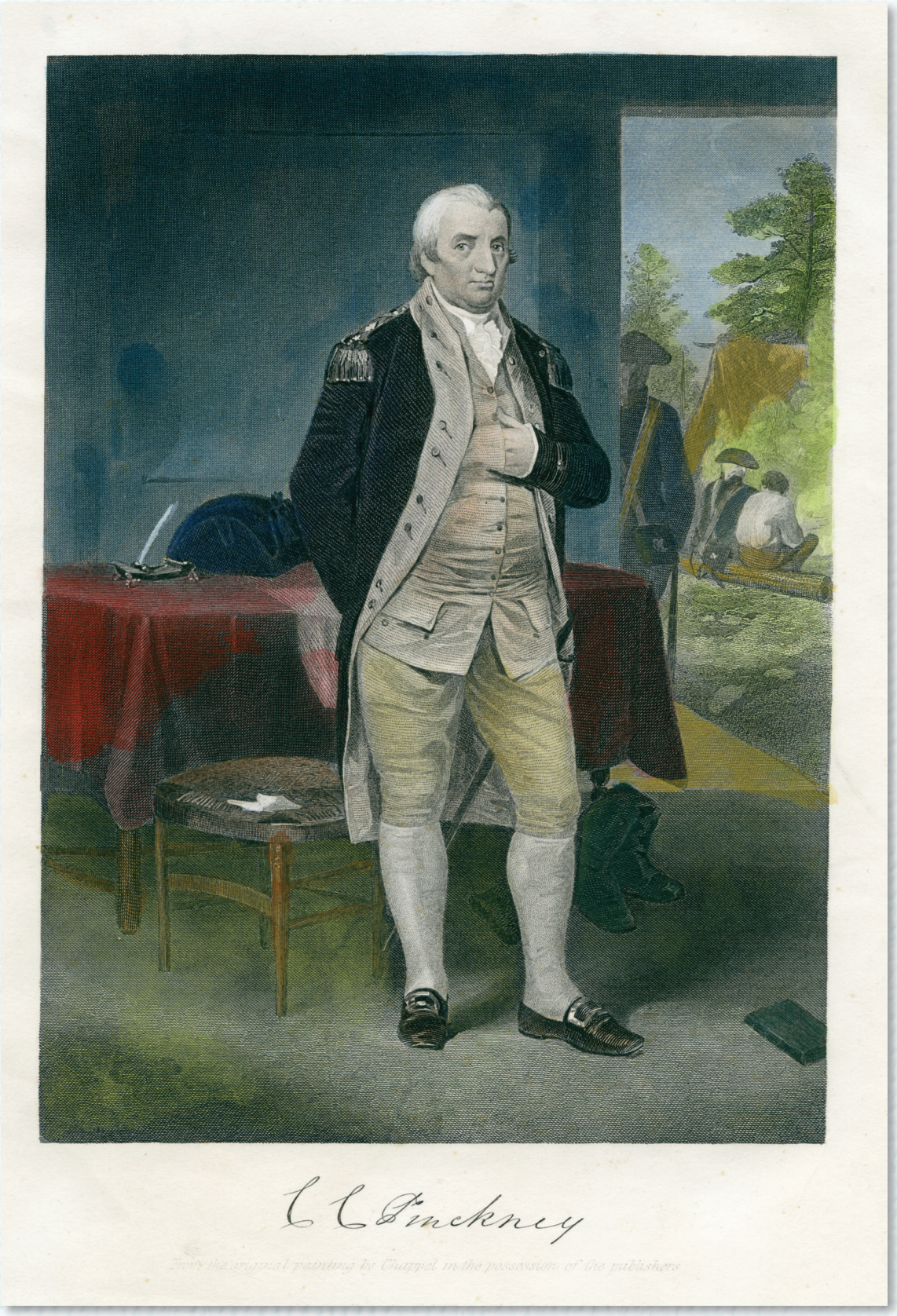



*Image of an engraving of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney by Johnson, Fry & Company (N.Y.), 1862, after a painting by Alonzo Chappel. From the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.*

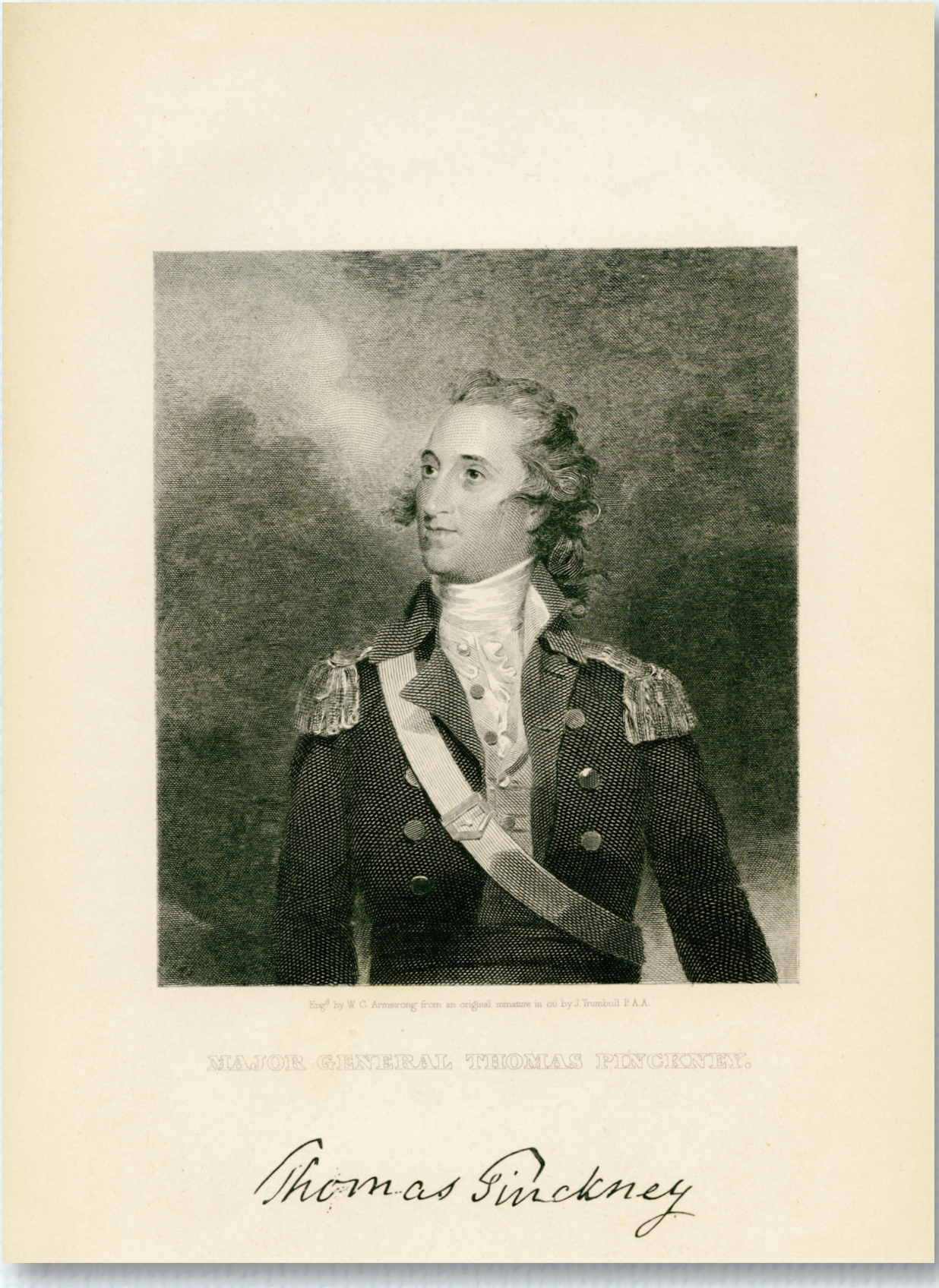



*Image of an engraving of Thomas Pinckney, c. 1865, by W.G. Armstrong, after a portrait by John Trumbull. From the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.*

The stories of the three women I am sharing with you today are drawn from both of those editions:

- Eliza Lucas Pinckney, who was christened Elizabeth, but always signed her name "Eliza" (1722–1793)
- Elizabeth Motte Pinckney, known to her family as Betsey
- Mary Stead Pinckney

Eliza, who has long been one of the best-known women in South Carolina, has for nearly two-hundred and fifty years been credited by historians with the commercial development of indigo production in our state. There is no known portrait of Eliza. In several different periods of her life, she kept a letter-book recording the letters she had written. In 1972 her descendant Elise Pinckney published an edition of that letterbook, a publication that is the major reason we have known so much about Eliza since the 1970s.

Outside of indigo, what *do* we know about Eliza? From her letterbook, we know that at her father's Wappoo plantation, she experimented with many agricultural possibilities for her new country: oak, fig trees, mulberries for silkworms, ginger, cotton, Lucerne (or alfalfa), casava. She reported to her father in July of 1740 that, of all of them, she had "greater hopes from the Indigo."[1] In an undated letter written to her friend Mary Bartlett, probably in late spring or early summer of 1742, Eliza playfully reported, "I am making a large plantation of oaks wch. I look upon as my own property; whether my father gives me the land or not, and therefore I design many year hence when oaks are more valueable than they are now wch. you know they will be when we come to build fleets. I intend . . 2 thirds of the produce of my oaks for a charity"[2]

After Eliza's marriage to Charles Pinckney in 1744, although she continued to be active in the management of her father's three South Carolina plantations along with her husband, she refocused her energies on the management of Charles Pinckney's households in Charleston and on his nearby Belmont Plantation, and on her children; she bore four, of whom three survived infancy. Between 1753 and 1758, the Pinckneys lived in England, where he represented South Carolina as a special agent to the Board of Trade, and Eliza renewed old friendships that complemented her husband's political and mercantile networks. Their joint success led to a family decision in 1758 to return to South Carolina and sell or rent Charles' plantations and then to make their home permanently in England. In May 1758 they sailed to Charleston with their ten-year-old daughter, Harriott, leaving seven-year-old Thomas and twelve-year-old Charles Cotesworth behind at the Westminster school. On a visit from Charleston to his Belmont plantation, Charles contracted malaria and died in August.

Eliza remained in South Carolina as a widow for the remaining thirty-five years of her life, for the first decade managing Charles' properties for her eldest son. After Charles Cotesworth returned to S.C. in 1769, she lived either in her own house in Charleston or with her daughter Harriott Pinckney Horry at Harriott's Hampton plantation on the South Santee. Eliza survived the disruptions of the American Revolution and watched her family and friends rebuild their lives and fortunes and her sons achieve military and political acclaim. In 1792 she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Harriott helped her travel to Philadelphia in April of 1793 to seek a cure from a well-reputed physician, but the treatments were of no avail, and Eliza died there on May 26.

It is on Eliza's years in England as an adult that I want to focus. On April 11, 1753, Eliza and Charles set sail for Portsmouth, England, accompanied by their three children, plus William Henry and Charles Drayton, and several household servants. When they made landfall there thirty-five days later, they discovered the city in the midst of a smallpox epidemic, so the Pinckneys proceeded instead to London. Eliza immediately arranged to have the five children[3] quarantined and immunized by "variolation," the administration of live virus. They lived briefly in London while Charles renewed his contacts in London, and Eliza renewed her old friendships and attended the theatre. Years later her granddaughter remembered Eliza saying she never missed a performance in which the popular actor David Garrick appeared.[4] Within a year Charles purchased a villa in the village of Ripley, a coaching stop in Surrey on the road to Southampton, near the home of Eliza's schoolfriend Katherine Martin, now Lady Carew.

One of the most intriguing stories of Eliza's years in England is of the 1753 visit that she, Charles, and five-year-old Harriott made to Augusta, the Dowager Princess of Wales, and her young family at the royal palace at Kew, where the next generation of the royal family was in residence. The pretext of the visit was for Harriott to bring to the eight princes and princesses, ranging in age from two to sixteen, a gift of exotic Carolina birds, but the real purpose was to impress on the sovereign's family the importance and value of their Carolina colony.

Augusta's husband, Frederick, the Prince of Wales, had died in 1751 while his father George II was still on the throne; her eldest son eventually became George III on the death of his grandfather in 1763. The Pinckney visit lasted several hours, during which Princess Augusta took small Harriott on her lap when the child began to cry. In a remarkable seven-page letter, Eliza described talking with Augusta "with as much ease with her as with almost any of my acquaintance." Almost the same age, though separated by a great gulf in rank and status, the two young mothers discussed child rearing,

wet nursing, slavery, and the climate and agriculture of South Carolina. Eliza confessed to Augusta that she had been unable to nurse her children, declaring with pride, "I told her we had Nurses in our houses, that it appeard very strange to me to hear of people putting their children out to nurse." Princess Augusta, Eliza reported, "seemed vastly pleased" but "was surprised at the suckling blacks; the Princess stroaked Harriott's cheek, said it made no alteration in the complexion and paid her the compliment of being very fair and pretty."[5]

This letter, a sender's draft in extremely fragile condition, is the first time in her surviving correspondence that Eliza referred to herself as an American. It was recently given by the South Carolina chapter of the Colonial Dames to the South Carolina Historical Society. Probably written to a friend in South Carolina, no recipient's copy has ever been found. In addition to the transcription in our edition, a facsimile of it has recently been published in full in the catalogue of a 2016 art exhibit at Yale and at Kensington Palace in London.[6]

It is often claimed that Eliza brought to Princess Augusta, along with the Carolina birds for her young children, a dress made of silk, but more likely her gift of a dress to Augusta happened later. Eliza and Charles had brought with them to England silk thread spun by enslaved workers on their Belmont plantation, where she had also planted mulberry trees. Their Belmont plantation home, burned during the American Revolution, eventually became the site of the Charleston Naval facility, and there are still mulberry trees there, descendants of those planted by Eliza. The silk needed to be woven into cloth, and elaborate dresses cut and fashioned from the cloth. In 1755 Charles Pinckney presented Augusta "with a Piece of Silk Damask of the Growth and Product of his own Plantation . . . and dyed a fine Blue with Carolina INDICO, which her Royal Highness was pleased to receive very favourably; and to declare her Satisfaction in seeing such Improvements made in the Produce of our Colonies; and so much approved of the same, that she will honour it with her own Wearing." Three such dresses were made, and given to the Princess and two influential men in London, again to promote South Carolina products.[7]

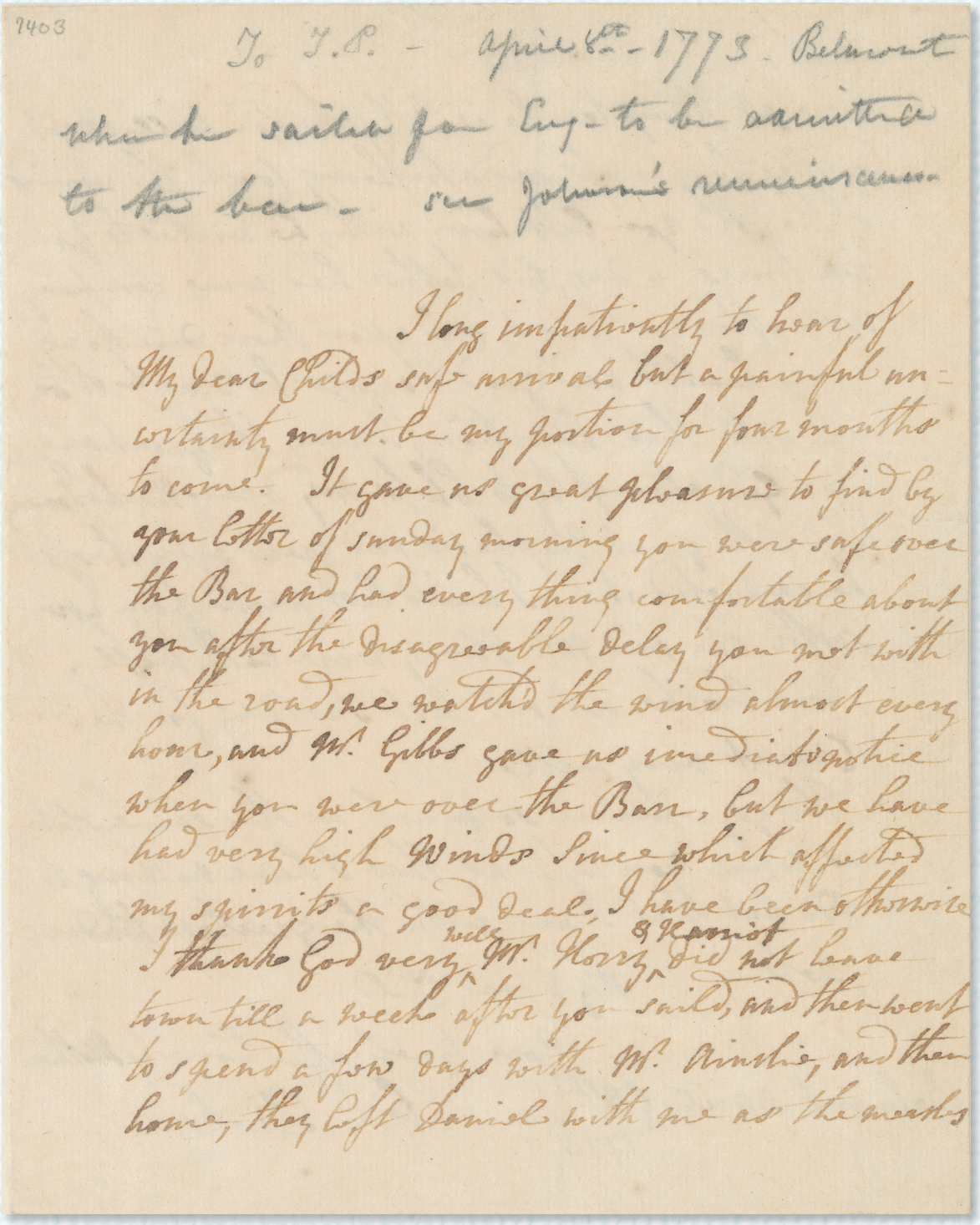
If Eliza's contribution to American diplomacy in the 1750s was in promoting the agricultural production of her country, the contributions of her two daughters-in-law forty years later were quite different. Both of Eliza's two sons were honored by assignments as ministers plenipotentiary, Thomas Pinckney to Great Britain and Spain from 1792 to 1795 and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to France from 1796 to 1798. Their wives and families traveled with their diplomatic husbands to London, Paris, and Amsterdam at a time when American diplomacy under the new United States constitutional structure was in its infancy. Europe was then engaged in a monumental struggle between Britain and revolutionary, then Napoleonic, France for world domination. It is that diplomacy which is the focus of the second volume of *The Papers of the Revolutionary Era Pinckney Statesmen* edition, covering the period 1792 to 1798, and it is from the documents published there that we know of the diplomatic contributions of Eliza's daughters-in-law.

Elizabeth Motte Pinckney or "Betsey," born in 1762 (of whom there is no known portrait), married Thomas Pinckney at the age of seventeen on July 22, 1779, in the midst of the Revolutionary War. Thomas, at twenty-nine, was twelve years older than she. Betsey's parents, Jacob and Rebecca Brewton Motte, gave the newlyweds as a wedding gift Fairfield Plantation on the south bank of the South Santee, one of the two principal homes in which Betsey had grown up, a house still occupied by Thomas and Betsey's direct descendants in the twenty-first century.

Betsey had never been much further from her parents' homes and South Carolina plantations than nearby Charleston, but her marriage to Thomas immediately enlarged her world. In the next thirteen years, in addition to bearing five children, she first traveled with him to Philadelphia when he was exiled there as a prisoner of war in 1780–1781. She traveled again after the war in the summer and fall of 1786, shortly before Thomas became governor of South Carolina, with a large group that included her mother, Rebecca, and her sister Frances (Fanny) Motte Middleton, visiting Newport, Boston, and New York.

George Washington's choice of Thomas Pinckney as the first U.S. minister plenipotentiary to Great Britain in the spring of 1792 filled Betsey with dismay. She had fallen seriously ill in 1791, and though recovered still felt the aftereffects of the disease. The four- to six-week voyage to London would cut her off from visits and easy communication with her mother, sisters, extended family, and friends upon whom she depended. She went, but did so reluctantly. She and Thomas embarked from Philadelphia at the end of June 1792 not only with their own five children ranging in age from three to twelve years old, but also with ten-year-old Sarah (Sally) Rutledge, the daughter of their close friend Edward "Ned" Rutledge whose wife, Henrietta Middleton Rutledge, had died that spring, leaving him with three young children to care for.

After a harrowing (to Betsey) voyage of five weeks, by the first of August the family had landed at Dover. Thomas Pinckney was immediately plunged into his diplomatic duties even before he reached London, and when the family arrived there on August 3, 1792, it was Betsey who dealt with much of the initial process of settling their large family of children, and the servants they had brought with them, into their temporary rented quarters on Hertford Street in Mayfair. The servants included at least one free woman, Mrs. Kiefe,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To T.P. - April 6th - 1773. Belmont
when he sailed for Eng - to be carried
to the bar - see Johnson's reminiscences

I long impatiently to hear of
My dear Childs safe arrival but a painful un=
certainty must be my portion for four months
to come. It gave no great pleasure to find by
your Letter of Sunday morning you were safe over
the Bar and had every thing comfortable about
you after the disagreeable delay you met with
in the road, we watched the wind almost every
hour, and M. Gibbs gave no immediate notice
when you were over the Bar, but we have
had very high Winds since which affected
my spirits a good deal. I have been otherwise
I thank God very well. M. Horry & Harriot
M. Horry did not leave
town till a week after you sailed, and then went
to spend a few days with M. Ainslie, and then
home, they left Daniel with me as the weather

*Images of a letter from Eliza Lucas Pinckney, 8 April 1773, from the Eliza Lucas Pinckney Papers, the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.*

were at Hampton he is I thank God well except a little hoarsness and a trifling Cough the remains of the cold you left him with; he writes to you ten times a day, his father had some company soon after you went, and upon their drinking your health and good Voyage he drank it too, but with this addition; I pray the Great and Good God almighty to bless my dear Uncle Tommy and with great Emphasis and great earnestness he express'd it. I heard last week from your sister, she and Mr. Horry were both well.

Your brother set out last Tuesday for the Circuit very well.

Things remain so much in the same state as when you left us that I have nothing to add but that I am with the greatest tender=
=ness

My dear Child

Your truly affectionate Mother

Eliza. Pinckney

Belmont April ye 8th.
1773

The last time I heard, Rice was £3. a boat is gone for ye Ashipoo rice
I just now heard from yr. Sister from George town all well as
we Dan and I. have not yet heard from yr. brother.
The former part of this letter was wrote a week ago.

*Image of a portrait of Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha Altenburg, Princess of Wales, 1754, by Jean-Etienne Liotard. Original portrait is part of Historic Royal Palaces, Royal Collection Trust.*

probably a nurse for the youngest two children, and at least two enslaved persons: Betsey's maid, Sidney, and Thomas's valet or manservant. Betsey wrote a description to her mother of Sidney in a brief, if telling, comment:

> Sidney sends [a dress] for her Mother with her Duty she has behaved exceeding well & is of great use to me she is so altered in her appearance with her cap & binder, Shoes & Stockings Stays, cotton gowns constantly that you would not know her. I offered to send her back in [the ship] Philadelphia, and since I have been here but she is not willing to go till I do. the blacks here are thought quality, they make no difference between black & white servants.[8]

Other servants — cooks, butler, maids — needed to be hired, and a school and then a governess found for the girls while Thomas arranged for twelve-year-old Thomas Jr. to be enrolled in Westminster school. By the 27th of October, the family had moved again, to Great Cumberland Place, which became their home, and the location for the next decades of the American ministerial offices.

The American community in London, among whom were many South Carolinians, welcomed the new minister and his family. From Betsey's limited surviving correspondence[9] with her sister Mary and her mother, Rebecca, but more importantly from the correspondence among others in which she is mentioned or acknowledged, we know that the family became involved in the life of a busy cosmopolitan city and beyond. The American consul in London, Marylander Joshua Johnson, and his family exchanged visits with the Pinckney family, and Johnson commented approvingly to Thomas Pinckney on the manners of "your Ladies."[10] The New England merchant William Vaughan called on them and became a friend to the family.[11] John and Angelica Schuyler Church had been living in London since 1785; their five living children were about the same age as the Pinckney children, and Angelica became a friend and mentor to the much shyer Betsey.[12]

Betsey, who continued to suffer from recurrences of her earlier illness throughout her stay in England, found much of it overwhelming. Shortly after arriving in London, she wrote her younger sister Mary on August the 16th:

> would you believe it! I have never been in the [Hyde] Park I live very near it, or at a play, or any where else & have not the least inclination to go, I have wishd a thousand time to be at Murphy's Island with my dear Mother & Sister,—I am so plagued about getting good servants and settling myself that I am almost crazzy, fortunately her Majesty is out of town & will remain their six weeks.[13]

Within a couple of months she had found time to explore her new surroundings, if only for the sake of her children, and reported to her mother on 3 October, "I have been to two plays but had not much relish for them, and carry'd my four eldest children to Astleys, and Sadlers Wells," but she was still daunted by the prospect of her official presentation to the queen at a weekly levee. She was grateful to an older South Carolina woman, the wife of John Gibbes, who helped her to shop for a dress, which Betsey described to her mother:

> I inclose a bit of the Gown, the coat is white satten covered with gauze & white flowers the coat alone will cost 18 pounds, the Cap, Handkerchief, & treble Ruffles are of blond lace, several large white feathers in the cap, purple Shoes with silver sprig on the toe a purple & Silver bow and a monstrous large hoop, I believe I shall be presented the middle of October. I wish it was over with all my heart.[14]

Betsey's health continued to be a factor in the family's life in England, and perhaps a constant background worry to Thomas Pinckney as he negotiated the increasingly difficult and treacherous diplomatic shoals of a Europe at war. During August of 1793, the entire family moved from London to the spa town of Cheltenham, in the hopes that taking the waters there would improve Betsey's health. Although Betsey reported to her sister that she was eating so much she would grow fat, "the severe fit of illness I had in 1791 set the bile so a float in my habit that I have ever since looked like a pompion or orange." She continued: "The waters of this place are esteemed most beneficial for bilious complaints, I am therefore determined to give them a fair trial, they taste and act very much like Epsom Salts, and are very nausious." [15] When she and Thomas returned to London to attend the required weekly royal levee, "Old Kiefe" and the new governess, Anne Nicholson, stayed behind with the children.

The following summer, as his wife's health continued to deteriorate, Thomas Pinckney hired a small house in Leatherhead, Surrey, to get away from the heat and noise of London, sending the four girls and little Charles Cotesworth, now five years old, with Kiefe and the governess Miss Nicholson for the summer, and moving back and forth to London with Betsey as often as possible.[16] Betsey and Thomas had brought young Sally Rutledge with them to London in August of 1794 to sit for a portrait when Betsey's health suddenly worsened,[17] and despite frantic appeals to physicians, Betsey died there on August 24, 1794. Only twelve-year old Sally was with her; Miss Nicholson remembered two years later delivering the news of their mother's death to Betsey's own children in Leatherhead.[18]

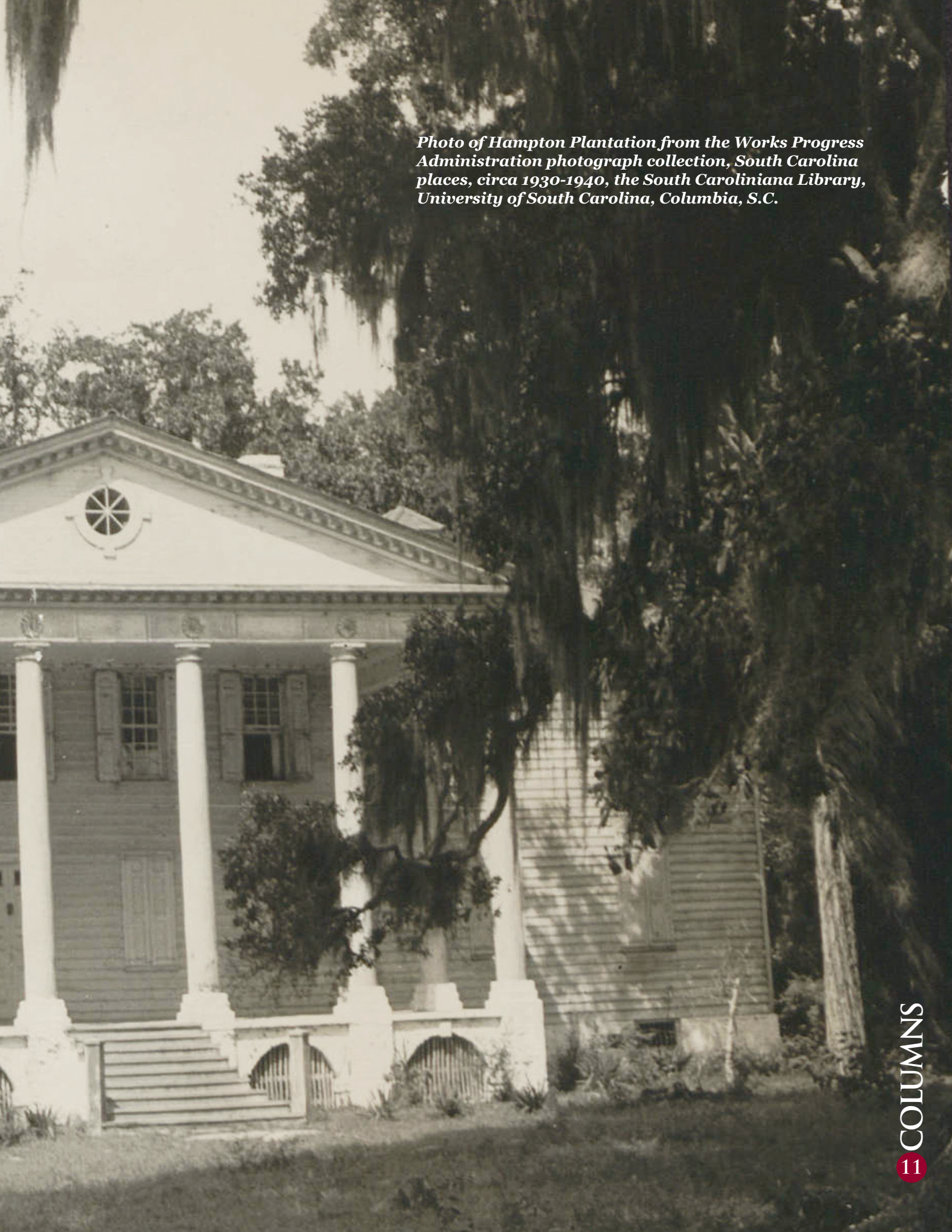


*Photo of Hampton Plantation from the Works Progress Administration photograph collection, South Carolina places, circa 1930-1940, the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.*

Thomas Pinckney, the United States minister plenipotentiary to the Court of Saint James and Great Britain, was now also the sole custodial parent of six children under the age of fifteen. London consul Joshua Johnson's nineteen-year-old middle daughter, Louisa Catherine (soon to become the wife of another diplomat, John Quincy Adams), reported that he dealt with his grief in part by frequent visits with Betsey's sympathetic friend, Angelica Church. Within six months, assigned by George Washington as an "envoy extraordinaire" to negotiate a treaty with Spain, Pinckney took his three daughters, Sarah Rutledge, and four-year-old Cotesworth with him to Europe. He left the children in the charge of Elizabeth and James Monroe in Paris, at school there at Madam Campan's with the Monroes' daughter, before making the difficult journey to Madrid. Thomas Junior remained in England at Westminster School. The family was not reunited again in England until early 1796.

What then can Betsey's meager documentary legacy tell us about her in particular, and about the earliest practice of American diplomacy under the U.S. constitution? One of the most interesting discoveries we made came from our close reading of the entirety of the documents. Thomas Pinckney did not have a secretary until the arrival of South Carolinian William Allen Deas in London in February 1793, and Deas disrupted the ministerial business by abruptly leaving to go home to South Carolina in the summer of 1793, not returning to London until late spring of 1794. Who, we wondered, helped Pinckney carry out the growing load of correspondence, filing letters received, writing or pasting into letterbooks the press copies of Pinckney's responses? As project staff found more documents written by Betsey and became confident of our identification of her hand, we were able to attribute to Betsey the handwriting docketing many of the documents received before Deas's arrival, and during his absence.

The ministerial office and the family home occupied the same building at Great Cumberland Place. It became clear that Betsey not only managed a busy household and oversaw the daily lives and education of six children, she served as her diplomat husband's file clerk and sometime secretary. Moreover, she frequently served as his hostess despite her poor health, and was required by diplomatic protocol to appear at his side at some ceremonial occasions. Wives, though unpaid, were, at least in the beginning, an important part of the diplomatic staff. Moreover, apart from her unofficial "official" diplomatic roles, Betsey's correspondence, and the evidence of her activities, tell us much about the material side of a diplomatic life: the clothing she needed for herself and her children; the furnishings and goods purchased for her household.

The diplomatic story of Mary Stead Pinckney differs extensively from that of her sister-in-law Betsey. We have found no evidence of a portrait of Mary Stead. She was the daughter of wealthy Charleston merchant and extensive landowner Benjamin Stead and his wife, Mary Johnson, and through her mother the granddaughter of longtime colonial South Carolina governor Robert Johnson. Like the Pinckneys, the Steads were related to half the elite planters of South Carolina. Stead moved his family to London in the late 1750s, and Mary, born in 1752, was raised there and in Paris when the family moved to France during the American Revolution before returning to America after the war. She married Charles Cotesworth Pinckney in 1786 after the 1784 death of his first wife, Sarah (Sally) Middleton, and helped him to raise his three daughters.

When George Washington appointed his former revolutionary war aide-de-camp as minister plenipotentiary to France in 1796, Mary was delighted to return to friends and places she had not seen in over a decade. Forty-four years old, she knew the French language and many of its people. She and Charles Cotesworth took with them his youngest daughter, fourteen-year-old Eliza Lucas (named after her grandmother), and landed in Bordeaux in the fall of 1796 to make their way across revolutionary France to Paris, arriving there December 5, 1796, and settling temporarily in an apartment in the first arrondissement in the Hotel des Tuilleries on the Rue de St. Honore. There, Mary's fourteen-year-old nephew Ralph Stead Izard also joined the household, as did young Henry Rutledge.

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney's mission in Paris was even more troubled than his brother Thomas Pinckney's had been in London. The French were outraged at the U.S. for ratifying the Jay "Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation" with Britain in 1795, regarding it as a rejection of the 1776 Treaty of Alliance with France during the Revolution. The ruling French Directorate was determined to punish the upstart Americans and refused to recognize Pinckney as minister. Within two months of the family's arrival in Paris, Delacroix, the minister of foreign affairs, abruptly revoked their permission to remain in the city. In February 1797 Pinckney took his family to Amsterdam and waited there for further instructions from the American government.[19]

They were to remain in the Netherlands for seven months. In May, President John Adams appointed Pinckney to head a special commission to France to negotiate a settlement of the increasing tensions between the two countries, appointing John Marshall of Virginia and Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts to join him. Marshall arrived first, and after waiting impatiently for Gerry, he and the Pinckneys set out

in late September 1797 for Paris, followed by Gerry in early October. The three commissioners shared a house in the 6th arrondissement, on the Rue de la Fontaine Grenell in St. Germain. The Pinckney family occupied the upper floor, and Marshall and Gerry had smaller apartments on the ground floor. Their mission — which has become known to all the world as the XYZ Affair — failed spectacularly; Talleyrand, the new French foreign minister, demanded bribes, for which Pinckney became famous for blurting out "No, No, Not a Cent." The three Americans became divided over strategy and tactics, cleverly manipulated by the French secret agents (redacted as Monsieurs "X," "Y," and "Z" in the American press when Pinckney's correspondence was published), and in the end Pinckney and Marshall went home, leaving Gerry behind.

Although John Adams did all he could to prevent an open declaration of war, the country prepared for one anyway. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney's return home was delayed by his young daughter Eliza's lingering illness from measles, for which he asked and obtained permission to travel to the south of France to restore her health — only to find himself on his return appointed (with Alexander Hamilton) as one of the two major generals responsible for raising and training an army. The land invasion it was meant to prevent never materialized; the Convention of 1800 brought peace from the "Quasi War With France."

Through all of this drama, Mary Stead Pinckney was a keen observer, and a loyal, perceptive and supportive spouse. Of the sixty-four documents of her correspondence during the brief two years she was in Europe, we are publishing forty-four to or from Mary to various relatives in Carolina.[20] Her principal correspondent was her cousin. Margaret Izard Manigault. The Izards had lived in Paris near the Steads during and after the revolution, and although Margaret, born in 1768, was sixteen years younger than Mary, they were lifelong friends as well as cousins.

The letters Mary Stead Pinckney wrote from Paris and Amsterdam are *all* long! They contain phrases in French, and they include sections in code or cypher, which we have translated. They are filled with descriptions of the countryside she passed through or the gardens she visited; her homes in Paris and Amsterdam and their expense ("We pay for five very indifferent rooms, two of which smoke very dreadfully, 25 louis or 8 pr. Week"[21]), and the homes and furnishings of her friends; the fashions of women's dresses, head coverings and hair styles; the arrangements of the rooms, the food presented, and the games played at the parties she attended; discussions of plays, operas, and concerts she had seen and the books she had read; and gossip about and life stories of the people to whom she was introduced. Both her American friend Mary Hering Middleton and another young woman of her acquaintance gave birth, and Mary Stead described their pregnancies, the folk remedies for their pregnancy-related discomfort, and the successful birth of their infants. Those letters, and her descriptions of the medical advice associated with her stepdaughter Eliza's months-long recovery from the measles, give an intriguing picture of medical practices in Europe at the time. Some of her letters made us laugh out loud, such as her droll description of a party of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen making a summer expedition from Amsterdam to a nearby beach — where they surprised a group of young men swimming there in the nude:

> For these several days past I have been a fancying a walk on Scheveling beach a very delightful thing, & yesterday as it was very hot I succeeded in prevailing on General Pinckney to accompany me thither. At 7 then we all five stuffed into a sort of coach, which they call a phaeton here, & drove along the beautiful avenue to Scheveling— we tried . . . to prevail on the coach man to go down to the beach—but neither bribes or entreaties availed. We then got out to walk, & after walking a hundred yards, a dozen or two naked men rushed out of the sea—we then turned, & as many presented themselves on the other side, & we were obliged to make direct across the sands of the beach for the dunes: or high sand hills which, heated, & out of breath we at length gained, & seated ourselves on the prickly thistles & brambles till the sun was set, when we resumed our walking hoping to herd these tritons & get down on the beach—but their numbers increased & we were glad to make the best of our way to the carriage.[22]

Mary's friends and relatives had all sent her to Paris with lists of requests for jewelry, furniture, fine china, fashionable clothing, and the fabric or lace to make it, and her letters all include her frustrated and futile attempts to fulfill these orders.

Though these social, fashionable, and commercial comments are themselves potentially highly important in providing researchers with contextual details for the diplomatic events in which Mary Stead and her family were involved, her letters contain much more. She observed, if she did not directly participate in, the important political and diplomatic maneuvering and events that were the reason she and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney were in Europe in the first place. Shortly after

*Photo of Fairfield Plantation by C.O. Greene in 1940 as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Library of Congress.*

*Image of an oil on canvas portrait of Margaret Izard Manigault, 1794. From the collection of the Buffalo AKG Art Museum.*

her arrival in Paris, she wrote to Margaret Manigault's mother, her aunt Alice deLancey Izard, a detailed description of Pinckney's attempts to present his letter of credence to the French and its rejection, followed by an analysis of French politics and European military affairs.[23] Her letters describe the pariah-like treatment she and her husband received socially from the diplomatic community in Paris before their expulsion. She complained of boredom and the lack of fashionable entertainment in Amsterdam:

> There does not seem to be any bustle in this great city; it is as quiet as Charleston. I am told it is very much altered in trade & gaiety since the revolution. Perhaps it is the listlessness of the surrounding objects which renders me dull. . . . Perhaps my mind is too much engaged by what passes in the political world, in which our dear country is so much interested to receive much amusement from sights.[24]

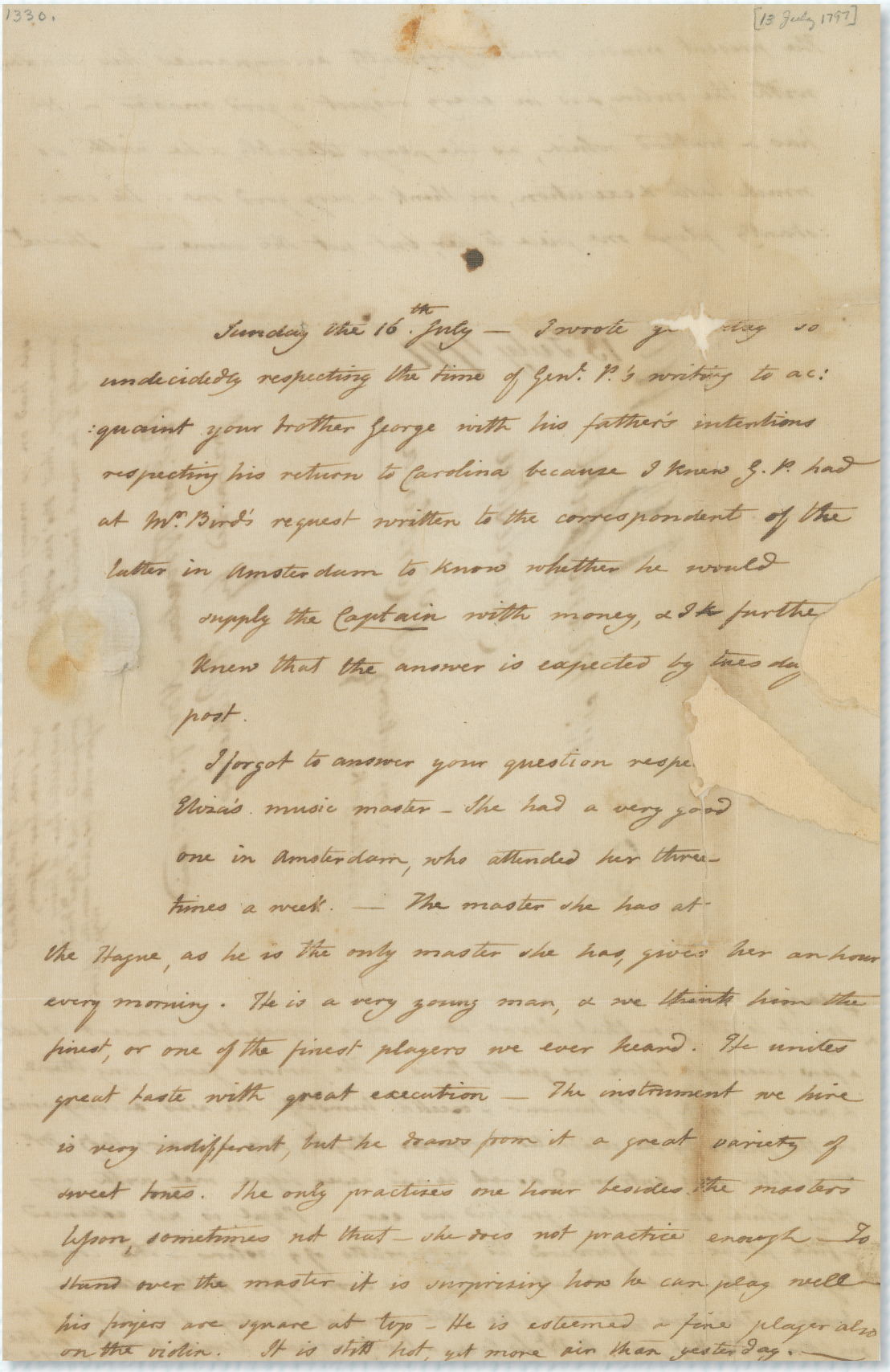
She went on then to describe attending the Batavian National Assembly as it drew up a new constitution in the aftermath of and to conform to French military occupation of the Dutch provinces.[25] Her letters not only describe, they comment on the progress of Napoleon's armies through Italy, the reception by the Dutch and French citizens of that military news, and her conviction that the values of her own country's republican virtues far exceed those of Europe. She wrote of her husband's new charge in 1797 to return to France to prevent war if possible, but reflected thoughtfully on the chances for peace:

> Mrs. Marshal has not yet been to the Hague—her husband's eldest brother is one of the commissioners appointed to act with General Pinckney. War, my dear Cousin, is a dreadful scourge, & I believe I love ease & hate inconvenience as much as any body, yet I think, I hope, if I had a choice to make, I should prefer it to undue condescension. I have heard & read enough to be convinced that submission will not avail a nation with the french republic.[26]

We have become used to thinking of and writing about these three Pinckney women based on their domestic stories, whether we define "domestic" as their own homes, or as their own country. Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Betsey Pinckney, and Mary Stead Pinckney would not have seen themselves as part of the important work of American foreign affairs. But the efforts Eliza Lucas Pinckney took to persuade her British friends and her sovereign of the importance of South Carolina to the British Empire, and the contributions of Betsey Pinckney and Mary Stead Pinckney to the beginning of diplomacy in the early American republic, are worth noting, though they themselves would have downplayed their roles.

Indeed, Mary Stead wrote to her cousin Margaret Manigault in October 1797, after describing briefly the efforts of the American ministers to receive appointments to meet with Talleyrand to fulfill their mission, "My political information is very bounded, but such as it is I beg you will not use my name beyond your own circle of particular friends. I can do my country no good, but I would not do it any harm."[27] Their letters to friends and family, however, give us a window into the personal lives of the ministers who represented the U.S. in the 1790s. Betsey's effects on Thomas Pinckney's diplomacy, her work filing and copying notwithstanding, might perhaps be seen more as a negative influence: did her continued unhappiness, illness, and eventual death distract him from his official duties? Or instead, did her familiarity with his work through her unofficial secretarial duties give him a domestic listening ear that enabled him to plan his diplomatic strategies and activities more clearly?

Mary Stead, because of her voluminous letter writing, gives us a clearer picture of the degree to which a diplomatic wife who is an intellectual equal might be an influential partner in her husband's diplomatic enterprise. Washington, and then Adams, chose Charles Cotesworth Pinckney as minister to France at least in part because he was more neutral toward revolutionary France than most other Federalists. He left for France in 1796 predisposed to be sympathetic to the country itself, if not to its current leaders, influenced by his own experiences with French officers during the revolution, but also by his wife's affection for France and its people and culture. Her connections as they passed through the countryside from Bordeaux to Paris, and the reports she absorbed there and in Paris of the recent experiences of former friends under changing revolutionary governments, were certainly shared with her husband. She was chagrined and angered, as was Charles Cotesworth, by their treatment in Paris in 1796. She understood, and deplored, the machinations he faced on his return as head of the peace mission in 1797–1798. Her liking for John Marshall and her growing scorn for Elbridge Gerry and the way in which he was manipulated by Talleyrand and the French agents, whom she knew socially as



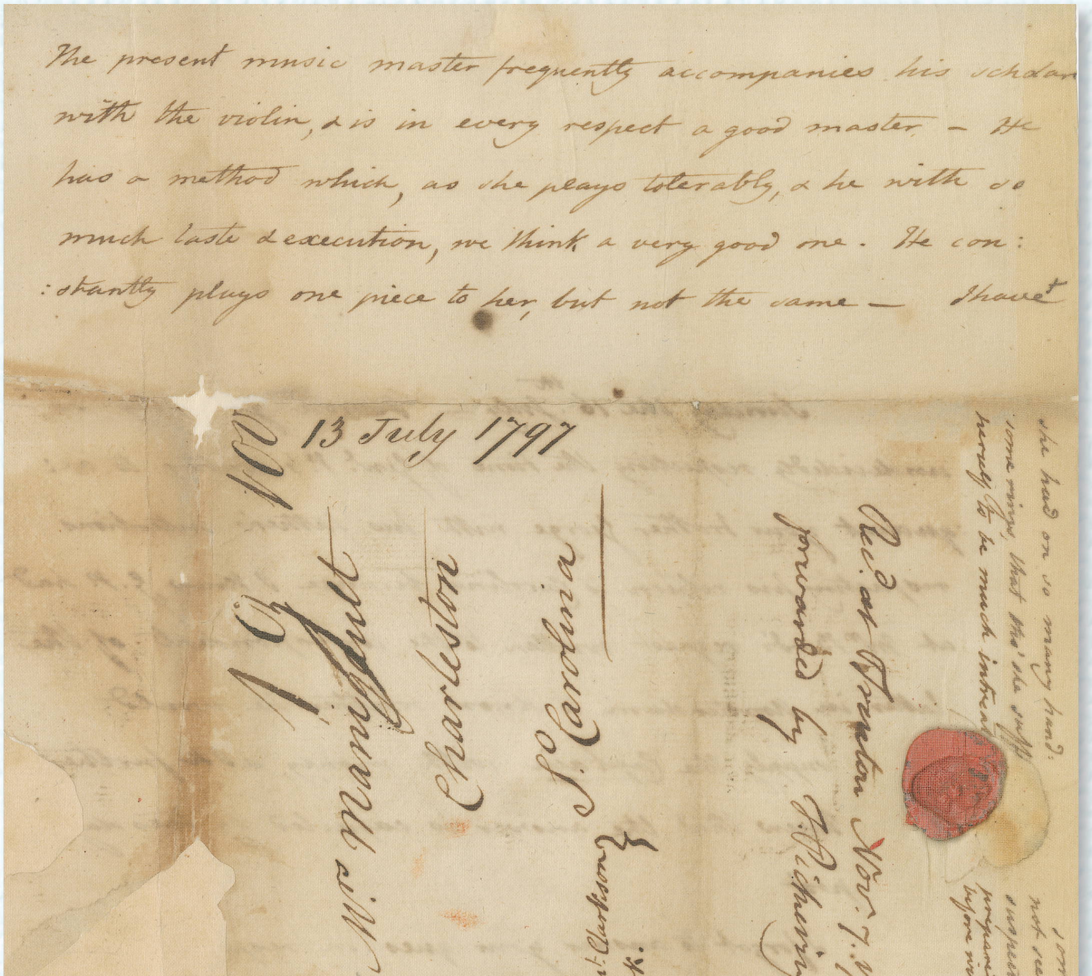
1330.

[13 July 1797]

Sunday the 16th July — I wrote yesterday so undecidedly respecting the time of Genl. P.'s writing to acquaint your brother George with his father's intentions respecting his return to Carolina because I knew G. P. had at Mr. Bird's request written to the correspondent of the latter in Amsterdam to know whether he would supply the Captain with money, & I further knew that the answer is expected by Tuesday post.

I forgot to answer your question respe. Eliza's music master — She had a very good one in Amsterdam, who attended her three times a week. — The master she has at the Hague, as he is the only master she has, gives her an hour every morning. He is a very young man, & we think him the finest, or one of the finest players we ever heard. He unites great taste with great execution — The instrument we hire is very indifferent, but he draws from it a great variety of sweet tones. He only practises one hour besides the masters hour, sometimes not that — she does not practice enough — To stand over the master it is surprising how he can play well — his fingers are square at top — He is esteemed a fine player also on the violin. It is still hot, yet more air than yesterday. —

*Images of a letter to Margaret Izard Manigault, 13 July 1797, from the Manigault Family Papers. From the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C.*



The present music master frequently accompanies his scholar with the violin, & is in every respect a good master — He has a method which, as she plays tolerably, & he with so much taste & execution, we think a very good one. He con: :stantly plays one piece to her, but not the same — I have† always forgot to tell you that I was at a very agreeable concert & ball a few evenings before we quitted Paris. The famous Garat sung there, & was in high good humour & excell'd himself — he was accompanied on the piano by the celebrated composer Pleyell, & by a young lady. Mr. Middleton was entranced, & said he had never before met with any thing which so completely gratified his ear — Pleyel is not esteemed a fine player — he afterwards led a quartetto of 4 violins — the concert began at 6 — ended at half past [illegible] & soon after 11 the dancing began — This was not one of the little musical meetings I wrote you of in my letter of the 11 of Jun.: Mr. La Caze, a lovely woman, play'd sweetly on the harp & —

she had on so many hand: some rings that tho' she only wore? to be much interested

some I saw who had not seen her before, suspected her of being surprised — but Mrs. Izard said before with her hand and seen the rings then.

100

13 July 1797

19

Mr. Manigault
Charleston
So. Carolina

Minerva, Capt. Clarkson
via New York.

Rec.d at Trenton Nov. 7. 1797. and
forwarded by T. Pickering.

*Twentieth-century reconstruction of the building that contained Thomas and Betsey Pinckney's home and the ministerial office at Great Cumberland Place, which was destroyed during the London bombings of World War II. Photo taken in 2019. Courtesy of Rachel Love Monroy.*

individuals, may simply be a reflection of her husband's increasing disillusionment; she may also have been an important influence in his staunch refusal to be threatened or cowed into changing his responses.

What I hope all of this suggests is that wives and families matter in many ways in the period when women did not have an open public role in politics or diplomacy. We cannot overhear the pillow talk between husbands and wives of two hundred plus years ago, but it is worth seeking out the knowledge and attitudes of the wives who shared in the diplomatic roles assigned to their husbands.

*—Dr. Constance B. Schulz, Distinguished Professor Emerita of the Department of History at the University of South Carolina, is the project director and senior editor of* The Papers of the Revolutionary Era Pinckney Statesmen *and* The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry*, both born-digital editions published by the University of Virginia Press in its Rotunda Founding Era Collection (supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and the University South Caroliniana Society).*

Endnotes

1 Eliza Lucas Pinckney to George Lucas, July [1740], in *The Papers of Eliza Lucas Pinckney and Harriott Pinckney Horry Digital Edition*, ed. Constance Schulz. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2012. http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/PinckneyHorry/ELP0738. All following citations to Eliza Pinckney's writings are to this edition.

2 Eliza Lucas Pinckney to Mary Bartlett, [1742].

3 The Pinckneys took with them to England for the boys' education William Henry and Charles Drayton, the two grandsons of South Carolina's lieutenant governor William Bull.

4 Harriott Horry Ravenel, Eliza Pinckney (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896).

5 Eliza Lucas Pinckney to unidentified person, [1753].

6 Joanna Marschner, ed., *Enlightened Princesses: Carolina, Augusta, Charlotte, and the Shaping of the Modern World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press and Historic Royal Palaces, 2017), 515–524 and 532–537.

7 Ben Marsh, "Silk Hopes in Colonial South Carolina," *Journal of Southern History*, 78 (November 2012), 846–848. Charles Pinckney quotation is from the *South Carolina Gazette*, April 3–10, 1755.

8 Elizabeth Motte Pinckney (Mrs. Thomas) to Rebecca Brewton Motte (Mrs. Jacob Jr.), 3 October 1792, in Constance B. Schulz, ed., *The Papers of the Revolutionary Era Pinckney Statesmen Digital Edition*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2016–2023). Unless otherwise noted, all following quotations are from this edition.

9 We have found only seven documents by or to Betsey during her stay in London, although from her extant letters she apparently wrote and received many more.

10 Joshua Johnson to Thomas Pinckney, 10 October 1793.

11 Elizabeth Motte Pinckney to Mary Motte Alston, 16 August 1792.

12 Thomas Pinckney to Alexander Hamilton, 6 November 1792.

13 Elizabeth Motte Pinckney to Mary Motte Alston, 16 August 1792.

14 Elizabeth Motte Pinckney to Rebecca Brewton Motte, 3 October 1792.

15 Elizabeth Motte Pinckney to Mary Motte Alston, 28 July 4–August 1793.

16 Thomas Pinckney to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, 8 July 1794.

17 Thomas Pinckney to Edward Rutledge, 22 August 1794.

18 Ann Nicholson to the Pinckney daughters, 15 September 1796.

19 Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Harriott Pinckney Horry, 18 February 1797.

20 Those we are calendaring are primarily letters Mary Stead Pinckney received from correspondents in England and France, most notably a dozen of the sixteen letters from Mary Hering Middleton, a young American matron living with her husband, Henry, in Paris, who wrote frequently and at length of the antics of her small children.

21 Mary Stead Pinckney (Mrs. Charles Cotesworth) to Margaret Izard Manigault (Mrs. Gabriel II), December 1796, describing the Tuileries apartment.

22 Mary Stead Pinckney to Margaret Izard Manigault, 13–15 July 1797.

23 Mary Stead Pinckney to Alice DeLancy Izard, 18 Dec 1796.

24 Mary Stead Pinckney to Mary Izard Pringle, 16 March 1797.

25 Mary Stead Pinckney to Margaret Izard Manigault, 23–28 May 1797.

26 Mary Stead Pinckney to Margaret Izard Manigault, 13–15 July 1797.

27 Mary Stead Pinckney to Margaret Izard Manigault, 5–11 October 1797.

# Letter from the President

It hardly seems possible that spring is here already! Yet, the evidence is undeniable, as azaleas, camellias and dogwood trees blossom in abandon and tree pollen alternately dusts or blankets everything in sight. There's a certain feeling of rejuvenation as Daylight Saving Time somehow seems to extend our days, however artificially. And let's face it. With warmer weather and more colorful landscapes, we are inspired to do more.

The Executive Council of the Society has been very busy! We welcomed two new members — Columbia attorney Victoria Eslinger and retired IBM professional Harry L. Walker, both USC alumni — while welcoming back former councilor Dr. Bobby Donaldson as vice president, now elected to serve a full term of his own. With our committee structure revitalized, every councilor now serves on at least one working committee and is also assigned to at least one task force. We are a working board, committed to growing the resources of the Society, increasing our membership, presenting interesting programs, and forging new and exciting partnerships with both campus and community allies.

On November 1, 2021, the new dean of libraries, David Banush, came aboard. We were delighted when both he and Provost Donna Arnett joined us for the Society's fall program event, "An Evening with Congressman James L. Clyburn." If you were not there, you missed a real treat! This was not your typical lecture or a political meeting with an agenda, but, rather, an informal gathering of friends. A consummate student of American history, without benefit of notes or props, Congressman Jim assumed the role of raconteur and professor, regaling the audience with lesser-known tales of South Carolina's and our country's past. A diverse audience of students, journalists, professors, attorneys, bankers, artists, businessmen, former legislators — a cross-section of South Carolinians — were enthralled by Clyburn's knowledge and recall, mesmerized by his storyteller's style and buoyed by the opportunity to engage in direct conversation with him.

Since the program took place just weeks after the election, many were curious about Clyburn's plans for the future. Questioned about stepping back in his many legislative roles, the congressman stated his intentions to step back somewhat in order to bring younger, able people forward. Nonetheless, he assured the gathering, he intends to continue as an active and energetic participant in the legislative process, working to bring different sectors together to get more of the agreed upon Democratic agenda passed.

Shortly after the new year began, the Executive Committee met with Dean Banush in the first of what we hope will be a continuing effort to regularly meet and collaborate in support of the South Caroliniana Library. Dean Banush also attended the spring meeting of the full Executive Council, fielding questions from Council members and sharing his vision for the future. At that meeting, he introduced the new director of libraries development, USC alumna Jennifer Campbell. We look forward to working with Ms. Campbell as well.

We continue to be excited about the prospect of reopening our storied South Caroliniana Library. Interim director Beth Bilderback shares details elsewhere in this issue. Suffice it to say, we are literally counting the days, expecting that the highly anticipated move will actually begin this spring and culminate with an event-filled fall celebration! Stay tuned for upcoming programs and activities.

This issue features the talk given by Dr. Constance Schulz at last year's annual meeting. Dr. Schulz has retired after an illustrious career in the Department of History, where, in addition to a full teaching load, she took the time to mentor numerous students in the Public History Program. No stranger to the wonderful collections in the South Caroliniana Library, and abetted by grants from the Society, Dr. Schulz utilized these resources in editing the papers of American statesmen, in particular, Thomas and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. But it was the lives of the Pinckney women living abroad that provided the fodder for her talk. We trust you will enjoy reading about them in this issue.

This year, the annual meeting and luncheon will be held at noon on Saturday, May 13, at Capstone. We are anticipating another exciting program, headlined by guest speaker and distinguished poet and professor Nikky Finney. She holds a Carolina Distinguished Professorship and the John H. Bennett, Jr. Chair in Creative Writing and Southern Studies. Finney is currently serving as executive director of the newly established Ernest A. Finney, Jr. Cultural Arts Center, located in the Waverly community, in Columbia. Named in honor of her late father, the former S.C. Supreme Court chief justice, the center, much like the South Caroliniana Library, seeks to preserve, promote and enhance the rich cultural legacy of our state. We hope you will join us for this special occasion.

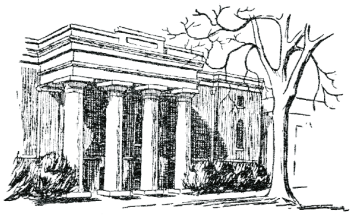
Finally, please join me in noting with appreciation the invaluable service of three council members, Dr. Allen Coles, Dr. Henrie Monteith Treadwell, and Vice President Lynn Robertson, whose terms will conclude in May. We wish them well as we say, "So long!"— for now.

As always, we encourage you, our members, to communicate with us your questions, comments, and ideas. You are important to the workings of this body.

Respectfully submitted,

***Beryl***

Beryl M. Dakers



UNIVERSITY SOUTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY

## Recent acquisitions made possible with USCS support:

- Five manuscripts, 1864–1865, regarding the impressment of an enslaved man named Anthony from Wiley J. Davis in Fairfield County in November 1863 to work on Fort Sumter and his death from pneumonia a month later in the Charleston Negro Hospital
- A promissory note, 25 January 1855, M.D. and J.W. Russ promise to pay Thomas Jefferson Withers of Camden for the hire of two enslaved men, Alexander and William, to pull up the railroad track in the Hermitage Swamp
- Inventory, 1830, completed at the time of the sale of Lexington Plantation in Christ Church Parish and including a list of enslaved people
- Account book, 1840–1855, documenting William Wright's operation of the mercantile firm of Wright & Adams as well as the purchase of Wright's Ferry across the Catawba River. It also includes Wright's accounts as commissioner of public buildings and notes occupations, sale of slaves, and use of slaves to secure mortgages.
- Three account books, various years between 1845 and 1878, of the mercantile firm Clinkscales and Robinson in Due West, including accounts kept with African American residents during Reconstruction
- An early Dutch map of the Southeast coast, 1785
- A letter from Henry Laurens in Charles Town to William Fisher, 1783, in which Laurens talks about the state of the rice crop

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803-777-3131 ▪ USCarolinianaSociety.org

Editor's note:
The Fall 2022 issue of *Caroliniana Columns* contained an error. The photos identifying Kelsey Moore and Morgan Vickers, which ran on pages 41 and 46, were reversed, misidentifying Vickers as Moore and Moore as Vickers. We deeply regret the error and apologize to both Ms. Moore and Ms. Vickers, and to our readership.

# South Caroliniana Library renovation scrapbook photos

South Caroliniana Library's Johnston Room (Horseshoe side)

South Caroliniana Library's Kendall Room during renovation this spring

South Caroliniana Library's lobby during renovation

South Caroliniana Library's reading room, looking toward the Kendall Room

# Letter from the Dean of Libraries

Dear friends,

I am delighted to introduce myself as the new dean of libraries here at the University of South Carolina. I've been on the job since November 1, and in the many meetings, events, tours, and programs I've attended since, the love for the South Caroliniana Library and its mission has shone through. Seeing such support is deeply gratifying.

I understand how eager everyone is to see the South Caroliniana once again open to the world. Several frustrating delays, many traceable to the lingering aftereffects of the global pandemic, have plagued this project. However, I believe we do see light at the end of the tunnel and hope the building will open for staff and collections in the late spring or early summer. Once we have more clarity on the timelines, we will finally be able to hold a proper celebration of the reopening. I anticipate that will happen sometime this fall. Please stay tuned for further details. In the meanwhile, thank you for your ongoing support of the South Caroliniana Library. The work would simply not be possible without support from loyal friends like yourselves.

With thanks,

David Banush

# Report from the Interim Director

*by Beth Bilderback*

Spring has come early to Columbia as the azaleas and dogwood are in full bloom, as well as the oak, pine, and other pollen producing trees. While we celebrate the beauty of spring, the staff at the South Caroliniana Library continues to prepare for returning to our beautiful building on the Horseshoe.

We anticipate receiving a certificate of occupancy in a few months. Once we have that, we can move collections and staff members back into the building. The library and its services will be closed for about six weeks to accommodate the move and settling into the building. Our website (www.sc.edu/library/scl) will be updated with our closings.

The public celebration of the renovation of the building will be this fall. Leading up to the big event will be public tours of the building. And our new exhibit space will be open to the public during our regular hours. We hope to offer additional events highlighting our collections in our new space, and news about these will be posted on our website.

The library is excited about a new partnership with the university's Center for Civil Rights History and Research. As part of the center's multiyear grant from the National Parks Service, the Special Collections libraries will have access to resources for processing and digitizing collections with civil rights materials. One of the first collections to be digitized as part of this effort will be the Richard Samuel Roberts glass plate negatives, which document the African American community in Columbia in the 1920s and 1930s. There also will be opportunities for collaborative outreach initiatives. We look forward to working with the center to expand the understanding of civil rights and the African American experience in South Carolina.

We continue to acquire, process, and make available materials documenting the diverse history of our state and are very appreciative of the Society's support in these endeavors. A list of recent acquisitions funded by the Society is listed separately in the newsletter (page 23). Please keep an eye on our website for reopening and events updates, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter!

# MEMORIALS & HONORARIA

| In Memory of: | Contribution from: |
|---|---|
| Joyce M. Bowden | Adam M. Lutynski |
| William L. “Bill” Cain | Raejean and Frank Beattie |
| Senator Niels Christensen | Anne Christensen Pollitzer |
| Thomas Moore Craig, Jr. | John W. Tucker, Jr. |
| Dick Elfenbein | Dr. Jessica Elfenbein and Robert Feinstein |
| Sloane Cooper Ellis | The Honorable G. Thomas Cooper, Jr. |
| The Reverend W. Babcock Fitch | Raejean and Frank Beattie |
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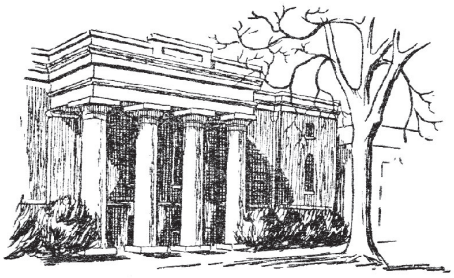

## UNIVERSITY SOUTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY

Members of the University South Caroliniana Society receive this newsletter, *Caroliniana Columns*, twice a year. If you're not a member, and you're enjoying this issue of *Caroliniana Columns*, please consider becoming a member today.

Go to **USCarolinianaSociety.org** and follow the links under "Becoming a Member." Or call 803-777-2740 to request a brochure and membership form.

The University South Caroliniana Society is the patron organization supporting the South Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina. The Society works to acquire and preserve materials documenting South Carolina's history and culture.

Membership dues and income from the Society's endowment are devoted primarily to the purchase and preservation of South Carolina materials for the South Caroliniana Library's collection. Scholars from around the globe use the collection to enhance our understanding of South Carolina's history and how that history has helped shape the South, the United States, and the world.

For video content, search for "University South Caroliniana Society" at www.youtube.com.


Caroliniana COLUMNS

**University South Caroliniana Society**
CAROLINIANA COLUMNS
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Spring 2023

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