

# Beaufort Collection Includes Many Old Letters, Documents

## "On and After This Date, No Person Will Be Allowed to Visit My Farm Without Written Invitation," Notice Reads

By CHLOTILDE R. MARTIN

Beaufort, Dec. 26.—Special: Miss Florrie Lawton, of Beaufort, has by natural inclination and industry, made herself a repository for facts relating to events, places and people of the low-country. She is a sort of self-made historian, and collector, as it were, and has in her possession a veritable wealth of information concerning various happenings in the history of this section and of many people who brought them to pass. Miss Lawton makes no particular effort to classify her information, but has it, in the form of letters, photographs, manuscripts and objects. They are packed away in bureau and—drawers, in her home, and pasted to overflowing into scrap books.

She has been gathering information since she was twelve years old, she, says, prompted by a healthy curiosity in people and things. She keeps newspaper and magazine clippings, supplementing them more richly by letters and statements from the people concerned. When she wants to know something, she merely sits down, writes letters and asks questions. She has a natural instinct for preserving those documents which are most interesting and has in her possession letters which are more than a hundred years old, which tell of history-making events.

### Letters from General

Two of these letters were written by Gen. Abraham Eustis, of the north, who, through his wife, a Miss Izard, became one of the first owners of Tomotley plantation, Beaufort county. General Eustis' letters were addressed to Joseph Hazell, who was in charge of the plantation, and were before the time of mails and such things as envelopes and stamps. One was written in December of 1830, from Fayetteville, N. C., and was sent by a slave on horseback. It was sealed with wax. On the outside, below and to the left of the address, are the words: "By Quanina with a bundle for Lentz." A letter from A. G. Rose to Mr. Hazell was dated Charleston, October 18, 1855, and conveys the strange information: "Last Thursday being Thanksgiving day here . . ." Charleston was obviously a law unto itself even where Thanksgiving was concerned in those days.

Still another letter from Legare & Colcock, Charleston cotton factors, written in 1860, spoke of selling cotton at 37½ cents per pound, explaining as their reason for not holding it for 40 cents in part as

hall. And of interest to us all should be the question: "Where was Maybank street?" One Etienne Tavron in making his will in 1729 describes a town lot "in front on the Broad street wherein the market is now kept, to the northwest on a street laid out on the Town Plott and known by the name of Maybank street."

In addition to Dr. Shecut and Charles Fraser the sources consulted in this article were the Charleston Directories for 1807 and 1809 and the manuscript notes of Mr. Wilmot DeSaussure on streets and public buildings. These sources do so much to perpetuate the traditions of our city, that the object of this article is more to condense their remarks rather than to furnish original source material.

following: "and indeed whether the government may not attempt coercion which would commence by blockade—"

These letters are yellowed with age, but the writing is perfectly legible and the ink has not faded at all.

Among the articles in Miss Lawton's possession is the slave title of a child of five years named Cyrus, owned by Mary E. George, of Georgia. The title is dated 1860. She also has a collection of moneys of all kinds. One of the last named is a Confederate five dollar bill, which was cut into fifty cents bills. She also has a list of the members of the Ashley Dragoons, Company H, 3rd. regiment, S. C. V., commanded by Colonel Colcock.

### The Johnson Notice

The most amusing document owned by Miss Lawton, which is of particular interest to the people of Beaufort, many of whom knew the eccentric author until his death in his nineties a few years ago, is a notice, printed upon cloth, dated June 1, 1876, and signed by C. S. Johnson. Copies of this sign were tacked upon trees about his place, and proved to be such a curiosity that it is said many northern people obtained copies and took them away with them for preservation. The notice is headed: "Hands off!" and reads as follows:

"On and after this date, no person will be allowed to visit my farm without a written invitation signed by myself.

"No fruit to give away.

Cash or its equivalent will be required for all fruit disposed of, none gathered except by myself and none for sale at the farm at any price.

"The above regulations are made necessary:

"First: By the persistent efforts of those who refuse to regard fruit as property, but unhesitatingly appropriate to their own selfish purpose the labor and toil of years.

"Second: The impossibility of the Proprietor getting his pants on in time after the arrival of a raid during the warm season. Annoyances under this head have caused me much improper language and serious reflections.

### No Bogus Friendships

"Third: A desire to evangelize the human race.

"These rules will be strictly enforced. Fraudulent affections, bogus friendship and other transparencies vanishing with the close of the fruit season will secure no privileges and the same are hereby abolished as well as imaginary verbal invitations.

"All violations settled in court.

"Remember what befell Adam and Eve."

This sign is reminiscent of some of the later ones posted at intervals in the trees surrounding Smith Johnson's property just across the river on Ladies' Island. He was a venerable, white-haired, white bearded old gentleman, who lived alone in the queer old shack he had built for himself in a most beautiful location in the woods. He was very generous and kind to those who struck his fancy and very bitter and unrelenting toward those whom he disliked. His slender figure, clothed alike in summer and winter in blue denim, topped by one of those shell-shaped straw hats, was a familiar sight on the