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## A South Carolina Upcountry Saga: The Civil War Letters of Barham Bobo Foster and His Family, 1860-1863

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This work is a stunning achievement on Charleston, South Carolina by Charleston native Louisa Pringle Cameron. Two other wonderful books by Louisa Pringle Cameron are *The Secret Gardens of Charleston* and *The Private Gardens of Charleston*. The content includes the following: Foreword, The Honorable Joseph P. Riley Jr., Plant Nomenclature, Introduction, Private Gardens: Courtyard Gardens: The Courtyard Garden of the William Elliott House, A Pied-a-Terre Courtyard, An Ansonborough Courtyard, A Double Courtyard, A Courtyard in the French Quarter, Peninsula Gardens: The Author's Garden, The Garden of the James Brown House, The Garden of the Isaac Motte Dart House, The Garden of the Albert Detmar House, An Artistic Garden, The Garden of the Gaillard-Bennett House, For the Love of Gardening, The Garden at the George Matthews House, An Old Charleston Garden, A Garden in the Old Walled City, A Garden of Quiet Contrasts, A Traditional Small Garden, Gardens Farther Afield: A Collection of Tropicals, A Country Garden in the City, A Garden Sanctuary on James Island, A Garden of Succulent Delights, A Garden with a Waterfall, House Museum Gardens: The Heyward-Washington House, The Nathaniel Russell House, Academic Garden: Ashley Hall, The Gardens at the Medical University of South Carolina, City Parks: The Charleston Parks Conservancy, Hampton Park, Horticulture at Hampton Park, The Battery, Cannon Park, Joseph P. Riley Jr. Park, Marion Square, Courtenay Square, Washington Square, Daniel Island, Live Oaks in the City, Cemeteries, Churchyards, and Graveyards: Magnolia Cemetery, The Unitarian Churchyard, Street Scenes: Appendix: Fifty-Two Weeks of Bloom, and Sources for Further Reading, as well as an Index.

One hundred fifty four beautiful photographs enrich the work revealing the wonderful lush plant life of Charleston.

The intriguing masterpiece shows six diagrams of designs for Charleston. Fascinatingly, Charleston has Noisette roses grown from China and Asia ten decades before that were brought to Charleston in 1842. Several types of magnificent foliage are mentioned like camellias, azaleas, hydrangeas, impatiens, lilies of the Nile, poppies, marigolds, daffodils, hyacinths, crape myrtles, morning glories, ginger lilies, elephant ears, jasmine, and gardenias, dogwoods, roses, and live oaks. Several kinds of outside décor are commented on such as loggia, pots of terracotta, fountains, benches, a bluff waterfall, courtyards, a terrace for dining, and a statue of a lion from London. Numerous living creatures in Charleston to be seen are made known like marsh rats, black racers, possums, raccoons, squirrels, egrets, quail, bats, wood ducks, black bears, turkeys, pigs, snakes, songbirds, small owls, fox, box turtles, and herons.

The Appendix: Fifty-Two Weeks of Bloom is handy and excellent for visitors to Charleston enchanted with blossoms. The appendix lists seventeen forms of foliage blooming in December, January, and February for example azaleas, camellias, magnolias, poinsettias, and roses. It lists forty-one varieties of vegetation flowering in March, April, and May for instance honeysuckle, iris, pear trees,

and peach trees, white and peppermint. In addition, the appendix lists twenty-seven types of greenery growing in June, July, and August like crape myrtles, caladiums, shrimp plant, pomegranate, hydrangeas, magnolia (southern), hibiscus, and geranium (hardy). Finally, it lists seven types of plants developing in September, October, and November such as chrysanthemums and camellias. Charleston areas to set eyes on are shared such as the Gateway Walk which allows people to view a Unitarian, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Congregational Church from the seventh century where daisies abound. Over two thousand Civil War soldiers are in the 1850 Magnolia Cemetery consisting of one hundred twenty-eight acres. Tradd Street, Meeting Street, and Queen Street residences plant window displays are lovely. The Medical University of South Carolina titled Tree Campus USA by the National Arboretum in 2013 enjoys over two thousand trees. Museums mentioned include Heyward Washington House, Aiken-Rhett House, Nathaniel Russell House, Edmondston-Alston House, Calhoun Mansion, and Joseph Manigault House. There are one hundred twenty parks in Charleston Hampton Park described to be the grandest. Frederick Law Olmstead, creator of Central Park in New York City, assisted in creating Hampton Park part of the World's Fair in South Carolina in 1901. *Charleston City of Gardens* is a superior accomplishment for academic and public libraries. The recommendation for audience are people seeking an awareness of Charleston and the best locations for gorgeous beautiful scenery.

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***A South Carolina Upcountry Saga: The Civil War Letters of Barham Bobo Foster and his Family 1860-1863.*** A. Gibert Kennedy, ed. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-1-61117-924-8 (cloth), ISBN: 9768-1-64336-02205 (ebook), \$49.99 both formats. 360 p.



For the reader or researcher seeking a first-person account of the Civil War, this volume is the perfect book.

Consisting of letters exchanged primarily among Barham Bobo Foster (1817-1897) and several family members, primarily his sons, Lewis Perrin Foster ("Perrin," 1837-1862) and James Anthony Foster ("Tony," 1839-1862), this is a fascinating, disturbing, and sometimes poignant account of a Spartanburg, South Carolina family's experience of the early years of the Civil War.

The Fosters were a fairly substantial planter family owning 43 African American slaves in 1860. Thus, this correspondence reflects the values and world view of the white upper class although the Fosters did differentiate themselves from the truly wealthy low country planter class occasionally in their letters. However, the devotion of the Fosters to the cause of the Confederacy, their love of South Carolina, the bravery, especially of Perrin and Tony Foster, in the face of sometimes brutal combat conditions, and their family affection and devotion makes for inspiring reading on a purely human level no matter one's personal background or opinion regarding the rightness of the Confederate cause.

One of the more fascinating things to catch this reader's attention was the dawning realization that the war would not be over quickly and that the Yankees (spelled variously) were far from the craven conscripts mocked by Perrin in his early letters home. Attending the Secession Convention in Charleston, Barham B. Foster wrote to his daughter Sallie on December 25, 1860, "It is believed by the wise men that there will be no war" (12). As it turned out, Barham and his older son Perrin eagerly volunteered to join the forces being raised in South Carolina; Barham serving as Lieutenant Colonel and Perrin eventually being promoted to Captain. Younger son Tony joined about a year later and served in the rank of Corporal. All three ended up serving in Virginia with Perrin and Tony reaching Maryland. A typical early assessment of the supposed inferiority of the Union forces is expressed by Barham in a September 19, 1861 letter to his wife, Mary Ann Perrin Foster: "...the truth is our boys out shoot them and they are afraid of us. I am of the opinion in a fair open field fight we can easily whip three to one" (119-120).

Ill health was a reality conveyed by these letters too. Barham B. Foster eventually resigned his commission in very early 1862 suffering from dropsy (edema, the build-up of fluid in his limbs). Ironically, Barham would live until 1897 outliving his sons and, later, his wife as well. Perrin suffered from jaundice, a severe cold, and later abscesses on his lip and his right arm but, otherwise, was very active and saw combat several times, Perrin was killed by a bullet through the forehead at the Battle of Fredericksburg December 10, 1862 having been preceded in death by his brother, Tony, who was killed by a bullet through the chest September 13 at the Battle of Harpers Ferry.

What little mention is made of African Americans in these letters is intriguing. Typically, a well-to-do Confederate would be attended by one of his slaves brought along to tend to chores like such as cooking. Less expected by this reader was the account related by Perrin to his mother, Mary Ann, in a July 20, 1861 letter in which a slave from a

Louisiana regiment captured a Union officer and was rewarded by being given the officer's guns (63 and 73). This suggests there was, at least for some slaves attending the Confederate forces, a surprising amount of freedom of movement and permission to bear arms. More typical is the employment of a family slave by both Barham Foster and his son, Perrin, named Mid for camp tasks such as doing their laundry and cooking. In an August 7, 1861 letter from Barham to his wife, Mary Ann, he notes that some slaves are running away to the nearby North but in regard to Mid, "...he has had thousands of chances to be free he choses [sic] to stay with us...he could not be induced to leave us" (91). Barham was wrong; Mid did run away. Perrin refers to Mid in several later letters speculating that Mid probably had died in his attempt to seek freedom in the North.

Some of the early letters also provide interesting insights into topics such as wartime profiteering and the unreliability of newspapers in terms of accurate reporting of what really was going on.

One very helpful feature of this book is the explanatory text and notes supplied by A. Gibert Kennedy. This helps to both clarify family and local community connections mentioned in these letters and also to interpret the meaning of these letters in connection to the broader history of the Civil War. The book is scrupulously footnoted as well. The serious historical researcher will find this book exhibits appropriate standards of scholarship and is not simply an uncritical compilation of family letters by an admiring descendant.

*A South Carolina Upcountry Saga* is recommended for both academic and public libraries. The serious academic researcher and students seeking primary sources in Civil War history will find this book to be very helpful and informative. The more casual reader with an interest in Civil War history will also find this to be an enjoyable read. The humanity of the Fosters and others with whom they corresponded is appealing. This reader, a descendant of at least one Union soldier, felt sorrow upon reading of the death in battle of the Confederate brothers, Tony and then Perrin Foster.

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