

April 27, 1832
To: Harriet Shackelford
From: Melinda Bones in Winnsboro

Me Dear Sister,

Your precious letters of the 29th just reached me on last Saturday evening. I was standing in the front door very thoughtful and melancholy looking alternately at a certain office and then to the west-thinking of two mortals very dear to me. I had not seen W from the night I last wrote you of, and had not heard lately from you and you may be sure I felt sadly enough. I hoped-had good reason for not coming, but not withstanding I could feel happy, and for three weeks I had been suffering for which reason Mama begged me not to write to you as she said it was wrong for me to write when laboring under such feelings, and I felt too it was selfish; so I postponed it. Well on that evening I was thinking and wondering if Harriet was then thinking of me & just then the stage drove in. I sent to the P.O. and received your letter; before I had read it, it grew dark, so I sent for paper and went in the drawing room- lay down before the fire and had just got three words written when some one knocked and in walked W Oh Harriet, to get a letter from you and see him, when I was so low spirited and almost desponding! I leave you to guess my feelings I had felt sad but I soon forgot all the past when I again felt that I was beloved as dearly as ever. W said he could not come during court first would have unprepared him for business. I have seen him twice since, he asks me for you-asks me if you think I am attached to him, and a multitude of questions. Harriet, I fell happier than I have done for many a long day. Oh that I not only be thankful for my present happiness and not feel forgetful of the author of all goodness and mercy, but I must go on to answer your letter. You begged me not to write, but your letter was too late, and as it now is I cannot regret it. Harriet I am convinced you never have had an adequate idea of the unhappiness I have suffered. You know Mama has as much pride in her composition as any body need wish for, and yet she was not only willing but anxious I should do so. I did not write until I had thought deeply upon the subject and viewed every side and edge of the question, and concluded I could not be regarded more unhappy moreover I knew W to possess a high a sense of honour that, had he not a particle of love for me, that, would prevent his saying anything about it. He said that when he got my letter he believed that I had loved him although he could not believe it before. I hope Harriet you will not be distressed at what I have done, but from your letter I know you will when you have read mine and perhaps will now conclude your cousin is the biggest fool, and most contemptible creature on earth-but Harriet I was too too unhappy. Well this paper is too mean. I showed W P's...letters, mine and several others and I now hope there is nothing we can disagree about. There is but one source of uneasiness, which is our both being poor, but if he is willing I should be, to trust to providence. Harriet do not suppose I have done anything which you would have disapproved of, unless it was writing to him- do not think I would marry him unless he were as willing as I am. I told him so-but I must quit this theme. Harriet why was it in your last letter you wrote so unsatisfactorily? You tell me of persons and things and give no names. Who is it that has love you for 3 years? Is it not Mc___? and who is it that supposes you are engaged and is ready to despair? Why my dear sister no one sees your letters but myself so why should you use so much caution besides, recollect when I write you such things I always give names if it should be on a piece of paper scribe an du lait (?). Well then there is a third spoken of-and no name-yet I believe it is Martha's brother.

Well Harriet really nous have been wonderfully flattered of late by the particular attentions of the beaux- but as that I but gain possession of the and heart of one I cannot for the whole of the rest. Do in your next let me know a little more of particulars. Aunt Harriet received a letter from Sam yesterday, and she really seems to have been in a bad humour. She says your father when in Montevallo spoke of coming to Carolina-that he had heard some one had reported that he was broke and he intended coming back to let them see it was not so. She inferred that he had heard it as coming from them and seems to be very angry about it. Now I know that no soul from this house has written to your father's family since they were here excepting myself, and that I never said or heard any such thing. I do think though had I known that saying so would have brought you back I should have been tempted to have said it. Now I wish you to tell me who told your father for I being the only that writes often, feel very much concerned, and intend writing to Jane. Do not tell your father it it will vex him but just let me know all about it-it is a strange thing that people and relations when so far apart cannot be at peace. Have you written to lately? I intend doing so soon. Well some people will make themselves miserable whether there be a cause for it or not. Let us endeavor to be happy if we can. I once thought if Jane was married to W C she would be happy-but I do not know Well good night "sweet" Who says so?

May 1st I do not know My Dear Harriet, when I have been so long in writing a letter; I hope that as it is something extraordinary you will forgive me this time. Well this is the 1st of May-this evening three years I was with my dear Harriet. Oh well do I recollect every occurrence of that evening. When oh when shall we meet again?

May 5th

My Dear Cousin, I believe I have never been so long about a letter since you left this, and I really feel anxious to get this off if I am interrupted once or twice (as has been the case with this) I find it a difficult matter ever to get through. Well we have more delightful weather which I believe every one enjoys very much for we had so cold long and bad a winter we were almost stupified—and my ideas or mental powers seem not to have come entirely thawed yet. Our friends are all well-and going on just in the same old track they were three years since. Uncle & Aunt Evans were up this week-they are well and come up as often as ever. They persuaded to have Ann with them and I really am afraid the poor little thing will break her heart to get home. I never knew anything so puzzled as she was about you telling me to raise her for Edward. She wants to know how I will raise her, and what for, and a thousand things. She says "tell little Ebed" I have some doslings, a sing (swing) some tittens, and a wats (wax) baby-and that his little waife is a dood little waife. Aunts' youngest bebe is an interesting little child. Well Harriet guess who's married-you cannot so I will tell you- Eliza Moore-to James Cathcart, Edward Means to Claudis Hart and Jane Scots to J.H. Adams. I have never heard of as many wedding in one year in all my life I believe. Oh yes, and Isabelle Adger to W Boggs. Oh Harriet how I felt for her at the last, she was poor, pale and melancholy- they left W Ellisons last week and Alexander says it was a dreadful parting. I am sure it must have been. I do not know that I think she ought to have gone as she fatherless children, but I believe it was a wish to do good that caused her to take the step she has and I hope she may prove useful to the poor heathen to whom she has gone. You cannot think how difficult it is to talk about it and to see them actually going. I did not I confess feel greatly interested until I saw them just bidding farewell to the congregation and listened to his farewell address -this I assure you my deepest sympathy was shattered and enlisted in their behalf- Alas I fear the love of poor souls alone, could not tempt me to leave all; then

should we not pray for those who have gone; that their lives may be spared and their labors blessed. Poor Nancy Milling died last night; the old man is still alive, and I suppose will live to bury others as they are all delicate. James Crawford and Lan Barhley set off for Alabama a few weeks since, but did not expect to go up so far as your fathers; they passed through Selma and initially going to Tuscaloosa-then to New Orleans. I do with you could see them: oh it does me so much good to see someone that can say they have seen you all. Poor Cooper I listened even to him with pleasure. There is nothing more or particularly interesting; everybody and thing remains pretty much the same; have some new buildings in town and I think when you come back you will find it somewhat improved. Oh, when will that be? Tell Uncle three years have nearly elapsed and he ought to at least be thinking of when he will bring you all to see us once more. Harriet, do write me long letters; and often; tis useless to ask anyone else to write me. Give my most affectionate love to Uncle and Aunt, Natus, Samuel and Edward and ever believe me your unchangeable sister.