

Boulware Family Papers

Muscoe Boulware (1758-1825), progenitor of the South Carolina Boulwares, was born in Virginia and, along with his wife, **Nancy Pickett**, migrated to Flint Hill, Fairfield District, at the close of the Revolutionary War. This collection of approximately two hundred seventy-five manuscript items, including correspondence, bills and receipts, account ledgers, and promissory notes, documents the lives of Muscoe and Nancy Boulware's descendants, in particular the family of their second son, Muscoe Boulware, Jr. (1798-1832).

Among the earliest items in the collection is a number of letters from the Fairfield District Boulware's out-of-state relatives. One from Tho[ma]s K. Pickett, Franklin County, Miss., 20 September 1824, relates news of the family, crops, and his election as a county representative. Of particular interest, too, are the letters of Virginia resident Mark Boulware who wrote on 8 November 1824 from Caroline County to his uncle Muscoe Boulware concerning the sale of slaves to his South Carolina cousins: "I will give you a small sketch of the prices I think...may be able to purchase for likely young men...to 350 Women and boys from \$225 to 250 there has been a great many carried laterly from this quarter of the world to the south and all purchased I Believe on reasonable terms."

A similar letter, 29 January 1825, from Muscoe Boulware, Jr., to his brother William R.A. Boulware, a medical student at Philadelphia, speaks of the purchase of Negro slaves in Virginia: "...we are now don bying and Expects to start home to Morrow we have only Bought seven Negrows amongst whome are five fellows...and two young women we have purchased on verry good terms the highest we have paid is three fifty for fellows." Other letters concerning the purchase of slaves include those of 21 October 1825, 15 January 1826, and 24 February 1826 from Mark Boulware to his cousin Muscoe Boulware. Social details were not overlooked either. Mark Boulware's letter of 9 September 1826 gives a comical account of the failed wedding of cousin Reuben Boulware's former sweetheart: "I can give him a full detail of his old sweethart Widdow Micou who has been on the brink of Joining in mattrimony with Henry Samuel the day was set, the pastor attended, he also met together with his company, and was deprived of the pleasure of seeing his sugarpie as he called, by her concealing herself in a private room and sent a message to him that she had declined the notion of marrying him therefore he was entirely repulsed of his anticipation."

Muscoe Boulware, Jr., was married to Elizabeth McCullough. Following Boulware's death, Elizabeth married Daniel R. Stevenson in 1834. The education of the Boulware children, Thomas and Nancy, is revealed through a series of letters dating between 1845 and 1847. In one of the letters, 13 December 1845, Elizabeth Stevenson issued the following warning to her son, Davidson College student Thomas McCullough Boulware: "Christmas is near at hand I want you to be carefull...boys are apt to be in a great deal of mischief and you might loose your life

working with powder and guns....keep out of all riots and bad company." Sister Nancy Boulware wrote to Thomas on 14 February [18]46 giving details of her studies at Limestone Springs Female High School: "we study all day and about two hours at night the first lesson we recite when we go in school is grammar then geography then History then Arithmetic. we go in school at eight o'clock in the morning and come out at four back again at seven at night and out at nine we go to church every Sunday and have a bible lesson to say every Sunday night....it keeps me busy all the time we have nothing but bells one rings every half an hour in the day and one rings every Saturday at nine o'clock to sew and there we have to sit about two hours sewing the only time I have to rest is a little while Saturday afternoon." Another letter from Nancy, 24 April 1846, written on paper featuring a panoramic view of the school, comments on the excitement which her brother's photographic likeness was creating. The novelty of photography is again mentioned in a letter, 10 June 1846, expressing great satisfaction with Thomas' miniature and announcing Nancy's intention "to have my miniature taken before long."

On 7 June 1849 Thomas Boulware was married to Mary Jane Vinson. The only evidence of their courtship, an unsigned love letter in Thomas's hand, 9 May [18]49, was written from Younguesville and is addressed to "Dearest

Mary." Little is known of the couple's life from the time of their marriage until the outbreak of the Civil War. However, letters written by Thomas in February 1860 indicate that he was traveling at that time in Arkansas.

By 25 June 1861, Boulware was in Richmond, Va., a member of Co. A, 6th Regt., S.C. Volunteers. His letter of 31 July 1861, written from Camp Pettus, reports that his unit was involved in the repair of railroads and relates details of the daily regimen: "we get up at half past four, drill at 8 & 10, dinner at one. drill at 2 P.M. 5 P.M. and at half past 6 so you see we have very little time to play....we have 4 So. Ca. Regt in this Brigade & about 10,000 Carolina troops in the advance." Concerning Yankee prisoners taken after Bull Run, he writes: "they are scattered all through the woods and perishing for something to eat....We have got more prisoners now than we can take care of. Before the Battle they say in Centerville that the Yankees only wanted to fight the So. Car, but I think they are satisfied now....A great many of them want to quit now and they say that they did not volunteer to invade the South but to protect the city of Washington & that only for three months. Some of them had served out their time the morning of the Battle and they say that Scott promised to take them to Richmond with but one small fight at Manassa[s]....Our men are in fine spirits and you ought to hear how they talk of *when* they will be in Washington."

By summer's end 1861 Boulware's optimism remained but the grim reality of war was beginning to make itself known. Writing on 18 August [18]61, he noted: "I think we are getting along very well so far and if we are as successful in our future battles as we have been I do not think the war will last long....It rains here all the time, sometimes we have to bail the water out of our tent with tin cups but we have managed to get some hay now and can sleep a little dryer....I have my Rifle and forty rounds of cartage to carry besides my clothes and Blanket and that is a good load

on a march." The same letter reports the presence of mumps and measles in camp and the lack of coffee and shoes: "I am nearly bear footed." On 12 September 1861 Thomas wrote: "Our men get shots at the enemy nearly every day. I believe every day since we have been here. You can hear the musket all day on both sides....Our boys are in fine spirits and anxious for a fray but the Yankees are too cautious. A general engagement cannot be put off more than a day or two....I do not see how two armies can keep from it and be within a mile of each other....We now carry 350 men into the field when we could once carry 950." Three days later, 15 September 1861, he confided: "I do not think there is much chance for this war to end soon but they say the darkest hour is before day....We have been out but a short time and it seems to me like an age....War is a dreadful thing but civil war is a great deal worse. It seems that the longer it continues the worse it gets and one party or the other will have to be almost exterminated. *We* never can be conquered."

A resurgence of patriotic fervor pervades Thomas' letter of 25 October 1861 written from Bull Run: "We are all determined to conquer or die and I think there is no doubt of our success....We are a favoured people so far and I think our case is just enough to justify us in supposing that we will be victorious in the end although we may meet with several defeats. They can bring more men into the field than we can but we have the advantage in firmness and determination. If we are not whipped before the northern Congress meets I think peace will be made....None of us know how the war will terminate, it is all conjecture." "You are a blest people there to what they are here," he continues. "God forbid that the enemy should ever invade the state of So. Ca. or that we should have to keep an army of this size to protect her. You do not know what I have seen here. Women and children exposed to both armies and I believe ours are as bad as the other, I have seen them distressed so much that I thought death would be a relief."

Sickness and disease plagued Confederate camps throughout the war. Thomas's own concern for his physical well-being is frequently discussed, and in a particularly melancholy letter dated 3 October 1861, he mused: "Every one tells me that I have changed more than they ever saw any one. Now would it not be nice, if I should come home on the 20th of Ap[ri]l next and walk into the house and hold a long conversation with you and you not know me. I do not...think I *could* control my feelings long enough to do it and I do not think I will try it; for I want to hold you in my arms too bad for that." Other letters voice similar concerns. "How I would like to be in a comfortable bed with you for a bed-fellow these cold nights but I think of the time when such will be the case and that keeps up my

spirits," he mused in a letter of 7 December 1861, then went on to express his desire for books to read: "I miss Shakespear[e]...a great deal and often wish I had a copy. I believe I could get along with a copy of his...work better than without it and if you should have a chance to send me one do so." Other letters mention Thomas's efforts to satisfy his wife's request for a photograph. One such letter, 27 December 1861, notes that fellow soldier James Pagan had declared "I look like a man who had been out on a piratic cruise for ten years in the type I sent you, but it was the best I could do."

The new year 1862 brought renewed hope that Boulware and his fellow soldiers might return home at the end of their enlistment. This optimism is reflected in Thomas's letter of 11 February 1862: "My time will be out now in 60 days. The 11th of Ap[ri]l will not come around as fast as a 60 day note in Bank. I do not think I will be home before the first of May as there will be such a crowd going home at that time and I expect the most of them will be drunk, and I want to avoid that as much as possible." According to official records, T.M. Boulware was discharged from Confederate service on 25 February 1862 due to ill health. As late as the summer of 1862, however, he remained in Virginia. From Richmond Thomas wrote, 20 June [1862], of escalating Confederate casualties: "If you and I live to see this war over I want you to see where we have buried our dead. Of all the grave-yards you ever saw, I think this one will make fifty of the largest. I saw this morning fifty or more coffins there to be put in to-day."

The final Civil War letters among these papers were penned in July 1862. In the first, 3 July, Boulware wrote: "It is no use for me to write war news to you as you see them sooner by the papers, but you do not know the suffering that the wounded undergo[.] You can see them lying on the side walk and in the passages. I give up my bed to them and sleep when I can. I slept one night in the setting room on the lounge and last night on the floor in the parlor. We must have ten or twelve thousand wounded soldiers here now and the big fight has not come off yet....I will go to the Battle field tomorrow if I can get a waggon, and bring some of the wounded in. We are whipping them but it is costing us dear. You have no idea how many we have lost." The second, dated 8 July, notes that a Confederate hospital had been opened at Richmond's Spotswood Hotel: "I had about 60 wounded men to attend to and have not slept any for four nights. We are now moving them to different hospitals....We have in this place and Manchester 20 or 30,000 wounded soldiers and they are dying very fast." Unable to continue serving in the military due to medical disability, Thomas returned home and later acted as an agent for the Confederate government receiving and weighing corn at Blackstock.

Following the war, as did many Southerners, Boulware sought reparations for wartime damage to his property. A letter of 23 April 1866 from C.D. Melton, Chester, promises little in the way of financial assistance: "I regret that I am wholly without information as to the chances of reimbursement by the Govt. for wrongful taking of property such as that of which you complain. We are not without many official expressions that such acts are without authority, but I know no instance in which any intimation is given of a willingness of the Govt to make good to parties the losses so caused by their agents. The present temper of the Govt would seem to be unfavorable to such claims." Other post-Civil War letters discuss the rental of Boulware's Blackstock plantation lands, prices of provisions, shortage of money, Federal bankruptcy law, and attempts to collect debts.

Times were hard throughout the former Confederate states, a fact evidenced by letters from Thomas's cousin Gray Boulware, a resident of Caroline County, Va. Writing on 17 March 1867, the *Virginian* complained: "These are times to try a mans soul. No nothing and No Money, I have four hogs and two cows, *and five children* and expect another in April, aint I doing a big business in this Federal world." A similar letter, 29 April 1867, notes that he expected to have to sell household furniture in order to satisfy debts, and that of 7 December 1868 reports that

although he had declared bankruptcy twelve months earlier he still needed to borrow money: "I would like to borrow fifteen hundred dollars for two years....I can make at least that much clear when I get both my mills in full blast, but getting started is the point. If I just could sell a negro or two but I cant find a purchaser."

All the while, T.M. Boulware was fighting his own battles. Columbia merchant J[ohn] Meighan wrote on 22 November 1869 pressing Boulware for hard money: "My creditors will not accept of any excuse they want money & money they must have nothing but cash will satisfy them."

Arkansas resident J.R. Watson, a former investment partner, wrote on 27 October 1867 advising against selling out since land was worth nothing in that state, requesting that Boulware send him fifteen or twenty hands by the middle of January 1868 so that he could make a crop, and alluding to his difficulty in collecting money on a note held by Boulware. Little Rock attorneys Duffie & Duffie responded to Thomas' queries on 4 September 1867 by advising that suit could be filed for debts due Boulware by Watson in state and federal court but that state jurisdiction might soon be obstructed. "As regards notes given for negroes we think it doubtful whether they can be collected," the attorneys advised. "Several of the courts in various states have held in such cases that the consideration has failed. The question has never been adjudicated in the Supreme Court of this state and the judges of the various circuit courts have held differently on the subject. If the

judiciary should be reorganized here, under the late acts of Congress, which will probably occur, the new judges will be of that class of *politicians* who will hold that with respect to such notes, the consideration has failed. We would therefore advise you to compromise by deducting all the interest and part of the principal of such notes, rather than risk them in suit." Subsequent letters, 7 November 1872 and 30 January 1873, from John S. Duffie discuss further details of legal action against Watson.

Other documents reflect Boulware's dealings with Federal Reconstruction officials representing the Freedmen's Bureau. Writing on 23 December 1865, Thomas sought clarification concerning the division of crops. "I wish to make a division of my crops," he wrote, "...and would like you to send some one to represent the Freedmen. I want to do what is right and just to them and I want to fix it so that I will not be troubled hereafter. If you do not send some one will it do for me to call in one or two of my neighbours? The contract is there in the office but they all refused to sign and I am not willing to give them the third now as they have done little or no work since the crop was gathered..." The Bureau's response, penned on the reverse of Boulware's letter, advises: "You can call in two of your neighbors, but must divide in accordance with the endorsement on your contract. If there are any reasons why you should not make a full division, it will be better for you to make deductions for first time." A sworn affidavit, 9 January 1866, states: "We the undersigned having been called on by T.M. Boulware to represent the Freedmen and women on his plantation on Rocky Creek; have measured the corn and peas carefully and find nine hundred (900) bushels of corn and Forty (40) bushels of peas, one third of which they were entitled to by contract presented. After deduction for lost time...we find them entitled to one and a half (1 1/2) bushels of corn each, with the exception of Four (4), who are entitled to Six bushels each; a full share, of the Peas they are entitled to one peck. This includes what was eaten by them during the ten weeks lost time."

Settlement of the 1865 crop did not meet with everyone's approval. In January 1866, there were complaints by Boulware's freedmen that the corn and peas were not being equitably divided. When summoned to appear before Provost Court at Chester to respond to charges brought by freedman Henry and his family, it was revealed that the labor contract filed at the provost office had been lost. And the problems continued. On 27 April 1866 Boulware complained: "One of the Freedmen...I hired for this year has left me and left his wife and children, one of whom is insane. I would not report the fact but some of the rest say they will leave also if I cannot compell them to stay. I have planted corn for him to work and have the land prepared for cotton all of which I will have to loose, besides his feed....He has another wife, but whether he has gone to her or not I cannot say....If I can get the power of keeping him off my place and keep the others from leaving, I would not mind it." Provost Marshall and Provost Judge E.P. Clark responded, 7 May 1866, authorizing Boulware to have the freedman arrested and the contract annulled.

An undated statement from Boulware requests the Provost Marshall "to give me an order to keep Freedmen (my former Slaves) off my premises and roaming over the place. If I say anything to them they threaten to report me to Hd. Qr. There is not a day or night but some of them are here and they cannot have any business. An order from you to that effect I think will stop it. They cannot get any more meat but may get into my corn." Clark's reply, 11 June 1866, indicates that he was willing to "annull your contract so far as relates to those who will not work." Among the other freedmen's documents present in the collection is a diary/account ledger, 9-13 December 1867, recording Boulware's payments to freedmen for agricultural work.

Other postwar materials include letters and bills and receipts relating to T.M. Boulware's son, Tommie, while a cadet at King's Mountain Military School. Correspondence with R. Patterson & Co., Philadelphia, reveals Boulware's connection with the Northern firm which handled the rental of former plantation lands and advances made for plantation supplies. A World War I era letter, 16 September 1918, written by Pvt. Marshall Gray Boulware, "Somewhere in France," comments on the progress of the war: "I think if we keep the Boch going much longer he will be `fini,' as the french say (I dont know whether that's the way to spell it, but it sounds `comment se')."

I have given up all hope of learning french. It dont sound any more like they write it than it does like English. I can say `bon jour' Comment allu vous, etc, but that is about as far as I can go. I can buy most anything, and can count too." Writing again, from Neuwied, Germany, 14 May 1919, Gray Boulware, noted that it has been almost a year since leaving the United States and reports that he had been transferred from the 3rd Corps to the 3rd Army Headquarters: "Well, everybody is blue again....we dont know any more now as to when we will get home than we

did before the armistice was signed. I tell you I am getting good and tired of this kind of business. I begin to think that we never are going to get home at all. I have tried to keep cheerful and optimistic all the time, but this last has about got my goat. Why should they keep us over here while there are men going back home who came just before the armistice was signed. I dont like to grumble and criticize, but I for one want to go home."

