



## *Chapter Two*



## A “MOTHER’S LOVE”



*Large figure: Floride Bonneau Colhoun Calhoun, wife of John C. Calhoun. Featured below: Calhoun and Floride Clemson on either side of their mother, Anna Calhoun Clemson. At lower right: a carved likeness of Nina, Anna's third child, who brought joy to the family in a short, three-year life-span.*

Anna's adoration of her father did not diminish the affection she undoubtedly felt for her mother. Although somewhat of a background figure in her daughter's life, Floride Calhoun was the one responsible for raising Anna to be a southern lady. Caring for her family was the focus of Floride's life just as it was the focus of Anna's. The dutiful nurturing of her children was indeed a reflection of her own mother's life.

*"I think I deserve to succeed with my children for I devote myself to them,...."*

Anna Calhoun Clemson wrote the above words to her dear father in a letter from Brussels that in all likelihood he did not receive, considering the required post time from the date it was written, on March 4, 1850, and the day of his death, on March 31.<sup>1</sup> Although much of her correspondence with him had covered political matters, her world, like that of most southern ladies and women in general, centered around domesticity. The role of homemaker was one of increasing stature in the nineteenth century, when marriages like her own were no longer family arrangements but emotional unions based on love; and discipline that had been the mainstay of the parental relationship in the eighteenth century had, by the 1800s, given way to nurturing and affection as one of the important values in child rearing. Confiding to her father that she often felt very anxious about her judgments as a mother, she conveyed her concern, lest she should judge wrongly and make mistakes. Believing her nine-year-old son, Calhoun, to have the promise of manly talent and her seven-year-old daughter, Floride, to be one of the very smartest and most sensible little persons, she determined to do conscientiously her best in their upbringing.<sup>2</sup>

Only Calhoun and Floride, of Anna's four children, grew to adulthood, her firstborn baby girl having been lost in a fever epidemic at three weeks and her youngest, little Nina, having been struck down suddenly by scarlet fever at the age of three, in 1858. Considering the gender conventions of the day, Anna was not too concerned about the consequences of her actions as a mother to Floride, whose sphere as a woman was limited by a patriarchal society.<sup>3</sup> Actually, this gender subordination was universally accepted at the time and, therefore, was not strictly a southern phenomenon. Nonetheless, Anna was adamant that her headstrong daughter conform to lady-like behavior befitting her elite status. The future for Floride, Anna felt, would be best fulfilled by her adherence to the traditional virtues of the southern lady, or "piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity," as historian Barbara Welter has observed. For Anna's son, Calhoun, the prospects of his potential were promising for one who, at an early age, appeared to be of good mind and heart.<sup>4</sup> Sadly, the untimely deaths of twenty-eight-year-old Floride and thirty-year-old Calhoun, in the summer of 1871, ended the lives of those in whose happiness Anna had truly found her own. Blessed with the joy and care of little Nina, Calhoun, and Floride, Anna experienced as a loving mother great satisfaction as well as profound sadness. Looking at her relationship with her children reveals much about her and the person she was.

### *NINA*

On October 3, 1855, at age thirty-eight, Anna gave birth to a baby girl whom she named after her sister Cornelia. Known as Nina, this child was the delight of the Clemson family for the three years of her short life, spent at their Maryland farm home just outside of Washington, D.C. The Clemsons had established residence in this area after several years abroad in Brussels. Much younger than both her teen-age brother, Calhoun, and her sister Floride, Nina brought great joy to the family with her little winning ways.<sup>5</sup> Very gay and good, she called herself "papa's Nina" and was a little companion for Anna, who described her baby daughter as a great chatterbox when she was just over two-and-a-half years old.<sup>6</sup>

The task of caring for baby Nina, often very wearying, was primarily Anna's responsibility; however, she was assisted in the kitchen and with household chores by two German women, Augusta (Gusta) and Babette Sauer. Later on, she was aided by a black woman, Lucy, who washed and ironed, and Mrs. Lisette Daub from New York, who proved to be a treasured help with everything and a true friend, as well.<sup>7</sup>

Not long after Calhoun's departure in August 1856, for treatment in Northampton, Massachusetts, of a spinal affliction, and the departure of Floride for her aunt Elizabeth Barton's finishing school in Philadelphia, the almost one-year-old Nina began to suffer the ill-effects of teething. At times, this condition disturbed her sleep and, consequently, that of her mother, as well. Nursing Nina until the age of eighteen months, Anna found herself fatigued by the little girl's constant sucking at night when in distress from discomfort in her gums. "If this dont make me thin," she said in a letter to Floride, "nothing will." Despite the doctor's advice that in her fretful state Nina must not be fed at all and have only the breast for nourishment, Anna and the maid Babette together determined that the child did in fact need food. Pleased at her rapid improvement upon eating, they were glad they had acted on their own initiative.<sup>8</sup>

Much of Anna's time at home was taken up with sewing for Nina, who was described by her mother as the heartiest and hardiest little creature, as full of fun as a monkey. Calhoun, who after three months had returned home from his medical treatment in Massachusetts, was devoted to his little sister. His father thought there was never such a child as Nina,<sup>9</sup> who at the sound of his footstep called his name before she even saw him. Very fond of music, she clapped her hands while Clemson played the violin and, when she was two, had memorized the French melody "Mon ami Pierrot," a song that he had only occasionally sung to her.<sup>10</sup>

Although Anna described her little girl, at two years of age, as really pretty with her good colour and healthy looks, Anna had also declared that Nina, with her large head, red hair, pug nose and pale complexion, needed to improve greatly if she was ever to be known for her beauty. More importantly to her mother, Nina continued to be bright, good natured, and affectionate despite her constant mischievous behavior. Her worst habit, that of "screeching," Anna said, whether to show anger or displeasure, was admittedly disruptive to the household especially when company was there.<sup>11</sup>

Amusing Nina assuaged some of Anna's avowed loneliness in the absence of her other two children. Calhoun had resumed his studies in the fall of 1857 with his father's older brother, Baker Clemson, an Episcopal minister in Claymont, Delaware. After a summer spent at home, Floride had returned as a student to her Aunt Barton's academy in Philadelphia. Separated from Floride and Calhoun, a "hard trial" to bear, Anna wrote her older daughter that, "if it were not for Nina," she could not stand such a situation. Bad weather in the winter of 1858 prevented the Clemsons from indulging Nina in going to Washington as snow-covered ground and colder conditions hindered open carriage travel from their farm into the capital city. To divert her little daughter indoors, Anna brought some of Nina's toys into the sitting room. Nina played there busily with her own table and dishes, set of drawers, and a bedstead complete with a really beautifully dressed doll that she named "Floride" and called her "darling sister." Quite proud of her painstaking handiwork, Anna, who had clothed Nina's baby doll from chemise to crochet shoes, was rewarded by the little girl's taking pleasure in the one toy that she would not let out of her

sight.<sup>12</sup> Nina was a good patient for a child not yet two-and-a-half years of age that February. She took her medicine for catarrhal fever and thanked her “mamma” and “pappa” for whatever they did for her. High fever at night, coupled with a breathing difficulty that made sleep impossible, caused both her and her mother to lose much rest.<sup>13</sup>

By the time Calhoun returned home from his Uncle Baker’s in the early spring, Nina seemed very hearty and was much smarter than he had expected her to be. According to Anna, she was delighted with the young man whom she called “her darling brother” and was looking forward to the return of her “sweet sister Folide” in the summer.<sup>14</sup>

Nina, at age two-and-a-half, was in her mother’s eyes “really a good child—tho’ not too good.” Amiable, cheerful and affectionate for the most part, she was now well-behaved in the presence of doting company. Growing very pretty, she often asked when her sister was coming home so that she could curl her hair. The precocious little girl was truly a pleasure for Anna to see in the morning, looking so clean, fair and bright, pursing up her mouth and saying “kiss me mamma I love you dearly.”<sup>15</sup>

Anna did not mention Nina much in her letters to Floride during a trip with her father to New York and Newport in the summer of 1858. Indeed, Anna did not write about Nina’s sudden death from scarlet fever on December 20, until almost a year later. The unbearable grief that Anna endured upon the death of three-year-old Nina could only be expressed privately, and the overwhelming sorrow at her loss she poignantly put into words in her personal album:

Oh Nina oh my angel where are you? Why are you taken? When shall I see you again? Never—never. When we lose a friend of mature years we look forward to meeting them in another world with unmixed delight for let our separation be long or short—we resume our intercourse as we should on this earth after a long absence but when a mother loses her child it is lost forever. She may hereafter meet its pure spirit & enjoy a happiness of which we can here have no conception in so doing but her child she never meets again. That sweet dependence on the mother is lost—that feeling that no one can supply our place is gone—it *has learned to do without us & looking at it from here* every change in the sweet relation of mother & daughter must make their meeting hereafter a disappointment to a mother’s heart.<sup>16</sup>

Evidently the sculptor Hiram Powers, who in the mid-1830s in Washington had patterned busts of both Anna and her father, who was then serving in the U.S. Senate, was commissioned to do one of Nina from her death mask. The child’s marble bust was eventually placed in the Calhoun family’s Fort Hill plantation home, after the Clemsons came to live there in 1872.<sup>17</sup>

Nina’s marble bust served to keep her presence in the family in an age when the memory of the dead was preserved by the elite in various ways. Large and lavishly bound Bibles, with dates of life and death inscribed on colorfully decorated inserts, and both framed photographs of family headstones and locks of hair were all items of remembrance that could be properly



*marble bust of Nina*

displayed throughout the home. Jewelry fashioned from the hair of the “dear departed” was thought to be an appropriate accessory to acknowledge the life of a loved one.

The mourning rituals in mid-nineteenth-century America were influenced by those of the British during Queen Victoria’s illustrious reign when a lengthy lamentation period was fashionable. Although Victorians have been criticized for a seemingly morbid pleasure in commemorative customs for the departed, they were merely copying those of the upper classes in a previous generation in the eighteenth century. Funerals during the 1800s were often occasions for extended group gatherings that appeared as festivals where food was the focus; however, in reality the long distances traveled by family members necessitated that meals be dutifully provided. At a time when keepsakes were especially treasured, some flowers from little Nina’s grave in Maryland were sent to South Carolina by a former neighbor of the Clemsons’ in October of 1874, almost sixteen years after the child’s death. Carefully preserved by Anna, the leaves remain today in the extant collection of Clemson papers as a token of sad sentiment and the symbol of a mother’s love.<sup>18</sup>

### *CALHOUN AND FLORIDE*

Born only seventeen-and-a-half months apart, John Calhoun Clemson and Floride Clemson Lee died as young adults within seventeen days of each other, leaving Anna and Thomas Clemson shocked and devastated at the loss of their two surviving children. Calhoun, the first-born of the two, died last in a tragic accident that took his life less than three weeks after his sister had sadly succumbed to an illness.

Spending their first years at Fort Hill plantation, South Carolina, where they were both born, Calhoun and Floride lived in Europe from 1844 until 1851, when Clemson was the Chargé d’Affaires in Brussels. In a letter from abroad to her father in America, Anna identified “intelligence, energy, & a good temper” as “three sterling qualities in a woman,” revealing her personal values for the little girl, whom she described as one who would always be able to take care of herself. Anna also felt optimistic for a future of good fortune for her son, who possessed a developing mind, very noble character, and kindly disposition. Since both children wanted to take as their own their grandfather’s motto, “The duties of life are greater than life itself,” Anna wrote her “dearest father” about the admiration they had for him, thinking how much it would mean to Calhoun.<sup>19</sup>



*Calhoun*

After the death of statesman John C. Calhoun in 1850, a grief-stricken Anna in Brussels gathered for her son, her father’s nine-year-old namesake, personal memorabilia that praised the life of his grandfather. She lovingly entitled the collection “Sacred to the Memory of the best of Fathers” and intended it to be a lifelong inspiration for her little boy. She hoped that its perusal would induce him to follow and be guided always by the noble example of his grandfather’s unostentatious virtues, cheerful philosophy, and often-expressed sentiment about the importance of life’s duties.<sup>20</sup>

In 1854, three years after the Clemsons returned from Brussels, they were joined at their Bladensburg, Maryland, farm by Mr. Leopold Reis, a Belgian tutor hired to con-

duct lessons for Calhoun and Floride. His charge for their schooling being completed about two years later, Reis went south to the Pendleton area in South Carolina to work with the William Van Wyck family in the fall of 1856. Calhoun, who shortly before his fifteenth birthday had developed a spinal affliction, had been sent to Northampton, Massachusetts, in August for special treatment under the care of Dr. Charles Mundé. At the same time, Floride had been enrolled in her aunt Elizabeth Barton's finishing school in Philadelphia. Apparently class superseded regional identity in the selection of an appropriate academy for the young southerner whose father, after all, was from the North. Anna felt lost at home without her by then grown-up teenagers. However, she was busy with household demands and the care of her baby girl Nina.<sup>21</sup>



*Floride*

Separation from her children, as she wrote to her “darling daughter” Floride, now old enough to be a companion and friend, was a great personal sacrifice for one who desired in compensation her son’s improved health and her daughter’s development into an elegant and accomplished young lady. Anna wanted Floride to write her very often about everything she did and thought lest the almost fourteen-year-old girl stray from “the duties of life.” Floride’s attendance away at school marked her first absence from home and proved typically to be an emotionally traumatic experience for both mother and daughter.<sup>22</sup>

Above all, Anna expected obedience in her daughter’s behavior. She told Floride to “*rule your tongue*” and give as little trouble as possible to your aunt as well as your dear grandmother, Elizabeth Baker Clemson, in whose room the girl slept. Floride’s good behavior, Anna believed, was a necessity for her daughter’s happiness and a reflection on her own success as a dutiful mother. Settled at school comfortably with family, Floride, in Anna’s eyes, fared far better away from home than Calhoun did, sick and among strangers, although by all accounts improving and decidedly better.<sup>23</sup>

Undoubtedly Anna was pained to learn from her brother Pat, who visited his niece in Philadelphia, that her Aunt Barton did not find her to be as obedient as she would have liked. Further word from her husband that their daughter was obstinate and indifferent to the school’s rules made Anna all the more unhappy. She was hurt, as well, to think that Floride’s behavior was a reflection on her maternal supervision. Concerned about Floride’s faults, Anna also feared for Floride’s health at the news from Calhoun that his sister told him Floride had eaten chalk and slate pencils. Considering this school girl practice to be ridiculous and dangerous, Anna threatened sorrowfully to forego all correspondence with her daughter until she received a letter from her promising that she would never eat anything of the kind again. Pleased that the tone of Floride’s response showed a determination to correct her misbehavior, Anna was relieved to learn that the story told to Calhoun about the chalk was foolishly made “*in fun*.”<sup>24</sup>

Calhoun had returned home in November with his father by way of Philadelphia. Though far from well, he looked much better to his mother. However, plagued with a wretched cough and constant headaches, Calhoun was incapacitated for reading and writing and subject to a loss of appetite. Anna confided to Floride that she bore a continual

anxiety about Calhoun's health. She felt that Floride needed to be prepared should the necessity to reverse the accepted state of affairs arise and Floride, instead of Calhoun, become the mainstay of the family in the future. If Calhoun continued to be sickly, Floride might be called upon to function outside the confines of the female sphere for her family's welfare. Pleased at Floride's evident studiousness and improvement, Anna was comforted by her daughter's progress as her son seemed to languish interminably.<sup>25</sup>

Both parents were proud of Floride, whose letters to Anna from school were her mother's greatest pleasure while those to her father served to soothe a troublingly tenuous relationship. Anna assured Floride of her father's affection for her despite his irritation with her actions at home. She attempted to assuage the friction between the two by directing Floride to address some of her correspondence to her father specifically. Pleased at the decided improvement shown in Floride's letters and compositions, Anna felt confident that she would not become an abhorrent object, "a mere giggling school girl." Instructing her daughter to try to understand what she learned from her studies and thereby gain ideas, Anna also maintained the importance of looking neat and fresh and expressed the hope that Floride was improving in her voice and music.<sup>26</sup>

Anna was glad to learn from her husband of Floride's particular progress in singing, although to her father she looked well, "tho' *thinner*," after nine months away at school. The worrisome news that her daughter bit her nails was cause for motherly concern about what she described disparagingly as a "filthy & disfiguring habit." Suggesting that the girl wear strong mitts whenever studying or just sitting and even while sleeping, Anna was adamant that Floride cure herself of the offensive practice before she came home for the summer. She was, therefore, subsequently pleased to hear that the young teenager had in fact made a beginning in that direction.<sup>27</sup>

Floride's second year at her aunt's academy followed a summer spent at home with her family in Maryland. Unfortunately, her presence seemed to provoke her father's bad temper and, although Anna missed her daughter's companionship upon Floride's return to school in September of 1857, Anna found the "uninterrupted *quiet*" of the house after her departure to be a blessing. In the aftermath of an apparently angry dispute that had ensued on the day Floride left, Anna attempted to ease her daughter's mind with the assurance that all was well as long as she kept to herself and avoided Clemson, who had not seen his daughter off nor made any mention of her going.

The cost of his sister's school that Clemson grudgingly bore did not include the extra pocket money that Anna secretly sent to Floride with \$5 bank notes received from her grandmother, Floride Calhoun, in South Carolina. Directing her daughter to change immediately upon receipt all the notes into gold and entrust it to her aunt until the amount acquired a value of \$40, Anna also advised Floride to keep a record of every penny spent from this personal source. She seriously instructed her to make no mention to her father of the extra money. Afraid that Clemson would want to "*borrow*," she said, or simply use any amount sent by his mother-in-law, Anna later secreted a lump sum of \$30 at the bottom of a bundle carried by her brother Pat to Philadelphia and deposited with Floride at school. She reminded her daughter of the importance of the judicious use of money and complimented her discretion in the handling of such a large sum. Anna felt the money would be "*safer*" with Floride rather than herself at home because, from the early days of their marriage, finances had been an increasingly sore subject in the household. Clemson

had depleted his own funds to loan money primarily to her brother Andrew and also to her father.<sup>28</sup>

Confiding in Floride that she lived for and through her children, with her only happiness in their improvement and joy, Anna professed much pleasure in the excellent accounts of Floride's accomplishments reported by her Aunt Barton. Grateful to Floride for her efforts, Anna was further cheered by contented commentary from Calhoun, who, in November of 1857, had resumed his education with his uncle, The Reverend Baker Clemson, in Claymont, Delaware. Anna depended greatly on Floride's influence with her brother to guide him through life, and she stressed the importance of kindness and affection in her daughter's approach to Calhoun, admonishing her never to assume an air of authority or superiority over him. A condescending attitude toward her brother would have been inappropriate for Floride, according to the gender conventions of the day. Anxious about her son's welfare, Anna asked Floride to write all that she knew or heard about Calhoun and to visit him at his Uncle Baker's as often as convenient.<sup>29</sup>

The appearance of her children was as important to Anna as their aptitude and application in school, as she instructed Floride to urge Calhoun to be neat in his attire as well as in his person. She further advised Floride to have all that she needed to look respectable but was adamant that she "*never borrow even a collar.*" To Anna, that foolish school girl habit of borrowing was unacceptable and one that she could not condone for her daughter or for herself. "A lady," she said, "considers herself better dressed in a calico of her own, than the richest dress of another." Belaboring the point, she stated with conviction, "I do not remember ever borrowing the smallest article of dress in my life, & would do anything *except go naked*, rather than do so."<sup>30</sup>

Anna's contentment and exultation over Floride's progress in school was overcast in December when letters received from both her daughter and her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Barton, dealt with the subject of Floride's stubbornness. Although Floride confessed to her mother that she had been stubborn sometimes, she blamed her aunt for being hard on her and scolding her unjustly. Reminding her darling daughter that she knew Floride could be obstinate when she chose to be so, Anna affirmed that Floride should conform to the rules and strive to please her aunt, who had much to worry about with the responsibilities of her position as headmistress. Undoubtedly, Anna was appalled at the account of Floride's strident proclamation in class that she intended being the "*black sheep*" of the school. She beseeched her daughter to accept the prescribed gender behavior of a "lady" subject to sensitivity, manners, and decency. Criticized by her sister-in-law for Floride's shocking conduct, Anna acknowledged her responsibility to have been in relying too much on her daughter's own good sense to remedy the few failings that otherwise obscured her many good qualities. Anna was hopeful that, hereafter, her daughter's demeanor would be a credit to both of them and thus exonerate her maternal confidence. "Oh darling," she wrote, "come to your own better self & let these disgraceful scenes end. Dont stubbornly endeavour to excuse your own conduct & blame others—look your faults boldly in the face & determine to conquer them & if you have not the magnanimity to go to your aunt & ask her pardon as I should desire you would at least determine by your future conduct to prove your repentance, & determination to conquer your stubborn nature."<sup>31</sup>

The painful topic of Floride's bad behavior was passed over in the new year of 1858 as Anna praised her daughter's presence in society when Floride began to attend formal

functions at age fifteen. Here again, Anna relied on Floride's good sense not to be swayed from her studies as she acquired a needful appreciation of the social scene during her last months at school and seemed to be having a nice time. Glad to hear from her sister-in-law descriptions of Floride's lady-like behavior and becoming looks in her new party dresses, Anna was, nevertheless, somewhat disturbed that her darling had been sick at one of the parties she attended. Fearing that Floride had been dressed too tight for good health, she proceeded to lecture her as follows on the "science of dress": "A dress that you cannot *fasten easily yourself*, if open, before, or another cannot, *without an effort*, if behind, is too tight." Adamant that there should be "*no pressure needed*" to close a dress, she held forth on a subject that she was sure she understood and whose rules, unlike style, never changed. The "*lines of the pattern*," she said, determined the beauty of the fit and not the tightness of the clothes. The French, a people who, she felt, appreciated dress better than any other, maintained that to fit well "a garment must be easy," and no one, she declared, could be comfortable or graceful when too tightly dressed.<sup>32</sup>

During this period, Anna once again tried to promote a mutually loving relationship between Floride and her father in the interests of family love and harmony that she prized dearly. Anna reassured her daughter of Clemson's love for and pride in her despite his worry that Floride sometimes spoke crossly, implying that she did not care for him. Equally pleased with each other's letters, Floride and her father seemed to be getting along better as Anna wondered why they did not write one another more often and hoped, in fact, that they would do so in the future.<sup>33</sup>

Her happiness over Floride's conduct and concern for her father waned with word from her sister-in-law that her daughter suffered a bad cold and cough at winter's end. Despite Floride's pledge to her mother in early April that she was well, Anna remained anxious at the news from others that she had actually been sick with pneumonia. Upset at Floride's lack of candor, she insisted that her daughter always tell her "*everything*," lest her letters be only a weekly bulletin upon which Anna could not rely for "the truth, the whole truth, & nothing but the truth."<sup>34</sup>

With just a short time left until Floride's return to Maryland in the summer of 1858, the separation between mother and daughter was nearing an end. Calhoun, who in the spring had enrolled at Hallowell's Academy in Alexandria, Virginia, was spending his weekends away from school at home in Bladensburg. Doing well in his studies, he was, Anna reported to Floride, "*growing frightfully*," just like their two-and-a-half-year-old sister Nina. It appeared to Anna that Calhoun might even be taller than his father, whose height was well over six feet.<sup>35</sup>

Counting the days until Floride's coming at the end of June, Anna was deeply touched by a letter from her daughter, who openly expressed such love and appreciation for her as a mother that she then felt life had yet many duties and pleasures left for her. The love and respect of her children was reward enough for a mother who, at age forty-one, saw herself as "*old, fat, & ugly*." "You will all be at home once more," she wrote to Floride, with Calhoun's holidays due to begin right at the time his sister was expected from Philadelphia.

Leopold Reis, the Belgian tutor who had been working with the William Van Wyck family in South Carolina for over a year after being employed by the Clemsons, was visiting in Bladensburg close to the time of Floride's anticipated homecoming. Although Anna thought that he would have already left for California by the time of her arrival,

she instructed Floride, who evidently did not care for him, to be nice if he happened still to be there. “*There is not the least need you should like him,*” she said, but she felt that the fifteen-year-old should not let her manner express her likes or dislikes so openly, especially to guests in the house. “Without the least hypocrisy we may be polite & pleasant to every one,” she declared.<sup>36</sup>

The lengthy, painful parting from her daughter was one that Anna did not dare repeat, particularly since Floride could continue to improve herself by reading wisely at home in Bladensburg and by taking music and singing lessons in nearby Washington, D.C. Not yet ready for her daughter to “*come out as a young lady,*” Anna simply wished to have her at home and thought as well that she should no longer be diverted from the household duties that would inevitably shape the course of her life. Joyful at the idea of having Floride with her again, she also acknowledged that the severe winter climate of Philadelphia posed an unfair risk to her daughter’s health.<sup>37</sup>

In late July of 1858, after only a month’s stay in Maryland following her return from boarding school, Floride was off on a trip to New York and Newport accompanied by her father. Continuing her travels the next summer, she visited her aunt, Clemson’s older sister, Louisa Washington, at her Harewood estate near Harper’s Ferry, Virginia. Described by Anna as “the kindest woman I ever knew,” Louisa, the mother of four children and the manager of a farm, was also the widow of Samuel Washington, a grandnephew of President George Washington. So, happy to hear how much Floride was enjoying herself, Anna wrote to her daughter that her only pleasure was in contributing to the happiness of those around her. In light of Floride’s proposed fall trip south to see her grandmother, Anna urged the young traveler to come home as soon as possible, considering their short time to be together.<sup>38</sup>

In the fall of 1859, Floride went to South Carolina escorted by Mr. William Van Wyck and his son Gussy, son-in-law and grandson of Samuel Maverick, whose Montpelier home was close to that of her grandmother’s in Pendleton. Mrs. Calhoun had, earlier in 1854, sold the family’s Fort Hill plantation to her son Andrew and moved to Pendleton the following year. At first renting a house that she called “Paradise,” she had later purchased the place next door, which she named “Mi Casa.” Delighted to hear how well and happy Floride was in her new surroundings, Anna felt certain her daughter would have a pleasant winter in the company of her grandmother. As usual, she instructed Floride to write about all that she did and all of the people she saw, reminding her that such letters would be her own greatest pleasure.<sup>39</sup>

Word from Mrs. Calhoun assured Anna that Floride, well on her way to becoming a belle, had received a great deal of attention when she went to the state fair in Columbia with her Uncle Andrew and Aunt Margaret from Fort Hill. Although hostile to his brother-in-law over an unpaid debt, Clemson, according to Anna, only “grumbled a *very little*” as she read tranquilly aloud Floride’s account of the event. Pleased and amused at her daughter’s own unusually well-written and very interesting version of what happened, Anna nevertheless warned Floride to avoid speaking out to everyone in such a way that



*Anna, who viewed herself as  
“old, fat, & ugly”*

she might become feared and disliked. With all her heart, Anna approved of her daughter's popularity, provided, she said, that she did not let her "head be turned & get *stuck up & affected*." She further admonished Floride to guard against boisterous behavior and to let simplicity guide her manners. Anna was proud that her mother and sister-in-law Margaret, whose courtship with Andrew had begun through her friendship with Anna, thought Floride's clothes to be so nice. Since she had selected her daughter's scanty, inexpensive wardrobe, she felt flattered about her own admittedly old-fashioned notion of style.<sup>40</sup>

Anna then turned to the serious subject of insurrection at the U.S. armory and arsenal at Harper's Ferry. Floride's cousin, a great-grandnephew of George Washington and the son of her father's sister Louisa, had been one of the hostages held by abolitionist John Brown in his abortive attempt in October to arm slaves in the area with illegally seized weaponry. Convicted of "treason, murder, and fomenting insurrection," Brown, who was sentenced to hang for his crimes on December 2, 1859, carefully cultivated his own martyrdom in his closing trial speech. The Clemsons were personally concerned for the safety of Louisa Washington, whose Harewood home was in the midst of the Harper's Ferry furor.<sup>41</sup>

Anna's primary interest, as the year came to a close, continued to be centered on Floride in South Carolina, where both she and her grandmother busily visited friends, who received them with great kindness and attention. Happy to hear from her mother of the good impression Floride was making, Anna was doubly pleased to find her child fulfilling the wishes and prophecies she had for her as she thanked her daughter for her expression of good wishes at Christmas. For Anna Floride's well-being was the basis of her contentment as she considered herself to be her daughter's most sympathizing friend from whom nothing would ever be concealed.<sup>42</sup>

While Floride and Mrs. Calhoun socialized down South, Anna did her own share of calling in Washington. The institution of visiting was one of the boundaries of the world in which most women lived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Described in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's work on gender in Victorian America as "that endless trooping of women to one another's homes for social purposes," it was a popular practice for Southern ladies.<sup>43</sup>

Anna was unsuccessful in seeing the South Carolina senators' wives—Catherine Hammond, of whom she was very fond, and Mary Chesnut, whom she did not know at all. Catherine Fitzsimons Hammond, who Anna thought to be "an amiable & excellent lady," and her husband James Henry Hammond, had lived in Mrs. Lindenberger's Capitol Hill boarding house with Anna and her father during one winter in Washington when Hammond was in the House of Representatives and Calhoun in the Senate. Although she expressed her fondness for Catherine Hammond, Anna never said anything specifically about her husband, whose term as governor had ended in disgrace in 1844. The disclosure of his sexual dalliances with his four nieces had outraged their father, Hammond's brother-in-law, Wade Hampton II, who spoke openly about the matter to influential friends. Hammond's own diaries, edited by historian Carol Bleser under the title *Secret and Sacred*, document his engagement "apparently *en masse*, in the most intimate cuddling" with the teen-age girls while he was governor of South Carolina from 1842 to 1844. Although Hammond essentially blamed the young women for his indiscretions, his political fate seemed sealed until his election to the U.S. Senate by the South Carolina legislature in

1857. From this forum, he would deliver his “Cotton *is* king” speech in 1858, and, until Bleser’s publication of his diaries, it would be for this speech that he would be primarily known as a political figure in the Old South.<sup>44</sup>

Anna did not know Mary Boykin Chesnut, wife of James Chesnut, Jr., but Mary Chestnut, like Anna Calhoun Clemson, was the daughter of a prominent man, Stephen Decatur Miller, a United States congressman, a South Carolina state senator and governor. Unable to see either Mary Chesnut or Catherine Hammond on her social calls in Washington, Anna did, however, visit with Miss Harriet Lane, the niece of President James Buchanan, and with Mrs. Jacob Thompson, wife of the Secretary of the Interior, both of whom kindly inquired about Floride and regretted her absence.

Knowing that Floride would be pleased at the news, Anna was glad to tell her of Secretary Thompson’s offer to her father to head the agricultural department of the Patent Office, a prominent position that Clemson proudly accepted in January of 1860. Anna was elated about the job, thinking that the salary would be very acceptable.<sup>45</sup>

Anna was eager for her daughter, who was favorably regarded at the continual round of weddings and parties in Pendleton during the Christmas season, to complete plans for a trip to the races in Charleston in early February. Appropriate clothes had to be sent ahead, and she was concerned about their arrival in time for the festivities. Anna was also “*really vexed*” to find out that Floride had worn “the cape like your dress” to an evening party instead of the full dress of low neck and short sleeves attire that Anna preferred for her. In the evening, she told her daughter, “a girl or *young lady* should always wear low neck & short sleeves at all events not a *cape like her dress*.” Whatever her daughter’s ideas were on the subject, Floride, who wore full dress very well, must go out in the evening, as did others of her age, attired in low neck and short sleeves. When in Charleston, Floride could ask her hostess, Floride Noble Cunningham, a favorite cousin of Anna’s, for advice on what was accepted as proper dress in that respect. Anna averred that a woman should carefully avoid attracting attention to herself by singularity in dress.<sup>46</sup>



Floride Elizabeth Clemson,  
age 15

Anna’s cousin and her daughter’s hostess-to-be in Charleston, Floride Noble Cunningham, was also the sister-in-law of Anna’s Barhamville schoolmate in Columbia, Ann Pamela Cunningham. Using the nom-de-plume “The Southern Matron” for the first four years of her efforts on behalf of the women of America to own and preserve Mount Vernon, Ann Pamela Cunningham was by 1860 ready for the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association to take formal possession of “this sacred spot.” Anna insisted that Floride go and see her old friend in Charleston if she and cousin Floride Cunningham were on friendly terms. Concerned about what she termed the “*bad reputation*” attributed to Floride Cunningham’s husband John, Anna warned her daughter to show no family familiarity to one she called such a “*bad man*” though she must necessarily be polite and pleasant. Apparently, Anna’s reference to Cunningham’s “reputation as a roué,” based on rumors of his unfaithfulness to his wife with both black and white women, masked between mother and

daughter the issue of miscegenation. This painful subject was a source of bitterness and distress for elite southern womanhood in the antebellum era.

The personal letters and diaries of southern ladies express privately their anger and humiliation at the sexual transgressions of the white male master, the journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas of Georgia being one such example. This diarist notes the issue of miscegenation and, consequently, adultery as two evils of slavery that she found degrading more so to the white man than the black woman, even though she knew she should keep silent on the subject. Within whatever household on the plantation, black and white women were powerless to prevent sexual violence.<sup>47</sup>

Anna was actually relieved to hear later from Floride that the trip to Charleston had been canceled as she was getting very anxious to have at home her daughter and son, who had been away on a hunting and fishing expedition in Florida. Insisting that Floride return to Maryland by the first of April, Anna supposed that she would take the opportunity to bring with her the son of Mrs. Calhoun's cook and personal maid, Nelly, who had died in childbirth a few years before. Little Andy, like his mother, was given especial treatment as a slave, and Anna wanted to begin his training when he was young.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time, Anna also mentioned to Floride how worried she was about the possibility of losing permanently her invaluable household servant, Mrs. Lisette Daub, whose services would be very much needed in the summer. When in early March Anna, at age forty-three, suffered a miscarriage, the reason for this concern was apparent. Touched by her daughter's letter of comfort and cheer, Anna was very appreciative of such kind words from one who seldom expressed her feelings. Other letters from Floride delighted Anna with their words of affection and sympathy. Both Floride and her brother, who had joined his sister in South Carolina by the end of March, finally returned to Maryland in the spring of 1860. They were accompanied by their grandmother, whose visit with the Clemsons extended until well into the fall, and by the young slave Andy, who would later assume the status of Floride's personal property.<sup>49</sup>

Anna, who really preferred entertaining guests in her home to socializing elsewhere, planned for the almost eighteen-year-old Floride to begin her debut in Washington society during the winter. The city's society had long been influenced by accomplished southern women, with their inherent good taste and acquired social ability; and apparently Floride was very much liked and admired by President Buchanan's niece and official White House Mistress, Harriet Lane, though there was a twelve-year age difference between the two of them. The young Miss Clemson was an invited guest to a small state dinner, held on October 4, in honor of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) during his acclaimed royal tour to Canada and the United States in the summer and fall of 1860. Miss Lane described Floride as "beautifully dressed & looking very handsome," which made her mother and grandmother proud. Some thirty years earlier, her grandmother had also been "an elegant lady" in Washington when her husband John C. Calhoun was Vice-President.<sup>50</sup>

Only a few days after the White House festivities for Prince Edward, Floride was off to New York City and a visit with the family of her father's good friend, the late Charles Leupp, formerly a successful leather merchant and art collector. Pleased to hear that she was enjoying herself, Anna was grateful for the kind attentions shown to her daughter. Concerned about Floride's reported sore throat, Anna urged her to take care of herself and always write exactly how she was feeling. Further complaints from Floride about her

throat prompted Anna to suggest that she come home soon in light of New York's unsuitable cold, damp climate in the fall. Eagerly looking forward to being with Floride again, Anna warned her daughter to avoid worrying her father, who had recently returned from official government business in Europe, and to bear patiently whatever behavior she might encounter from him.<sup>51</sup>

Anna felt that, because Calhoun was visiting in South Carolina with his grandmother and great-uncle James Calhoun, the Clemson household, free from the young man's exuberance, could exist in a more tranquil state with Floride's cooperation. However, Republican President Abraham Lincoln's election in early November 1860, perceived as a triumph for slavery's opponents by the South, put the Clemsons in a great state of excitement at the attitude South Carolina assumed in support of secession. Although acknowledging southern honor to be at stake, Anna worried that the alternative to drawing back was a dreadful one, and she looked upon it as "*the beginning of the end.*"<sup>52</sup>

In both the North and South, the anti-slavery sentiment of the Republican Party bespoke of revolution. The dire prediction from Calhoun, on his deathbed in 1850, of the union's disintegration transpired a decade later, as South Carolinians seceded in the interests of what historian Walter Edgar has said was "the good order and harmony" of their lives threatened by abolition. Prompted by Lincoln's election, South Carolina's secession in December preceded the subsequent formation of the Confederate States of America in February 1861. Historian Lacy K. Ford, Jr., who described Calhoun as "that quintessential Southern statesman," concluded that a unified South Carolina seceded because of the old "country-republican" ideal of personal independence strangely strengthened by slavery. His examination of the important South Carolina Upcountry explained why the white majority of the Old South supported the secession movement.<sup>53</sup>

Clemson resigned his government position on March 9, 1861, and, accompanied by Anna, made a brief business trip to South Carolina, where she was able to visit with her mother at her *Mi Casa* home in Pendleton. Receiving news, in Anna's words, that rendered war between the North and South "inevitable & imminent," the Clemsons decided to return on April 11, the eve of the firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston's harbor, quickly to their son and daughter in Maryland, anxious lest any rail tracks be destroyed. For Anna's mother, Floride Calhoun, who later found it impossible to say how much she missed her own "darling daughter" Anna, the parting was particularly difficult at such a crisis time with the outbreak of the most frightful of catastrophes in civil war.

Another member of a prominent South Carolina family who, like Anna, was living away from home at the start of the war in 1861 was Eliza Middleton Fisher. Daughter of Henry Middleton who had served in Congress with Calhoun, Eliza was married to Joshua Francis Fisher of Philadelphia, where she would spend the war years as a southern sympathizer waiting "in anguish" for an end to the conflict.<sup>54</sup>

The first shots of the conflict provoked by President Lincoln's decision to provision Fort Sumter were described vividly in the diary of Mary Boykin Chesnut, in Charleston with her husband James Chesnut, Jr., who had recently resigned as a United States senator. On April 12, hearing the chimes of St. Michael's at 4 o'clock in the morning and cannon fire thirty minutes later, Mary Chesnut first knelt in prayer and then joined other excited women and men on the rooftops to watch the shelling light up the sky.<sup>55</sup>

The onset of war between the North and South in 1861 divided the country for four

years, separated friends and families such as the Clemsons and Calhouns and, in the words of historian Bruce Catton, brought an end to America's "age of innocence." The future would not be lived by the traditions of the past, and Americans would have to endure a terrible ordeal before life could be resumed in peace. A time of trial and triumph that tested ideology and individuals was at hand, and the ensuing conflict would excite the interest of generations to come as no other event in the nation's experience. Perhaps the continuing study of this trauma is an attempt in part to treat a wound that has not yet healed.

Despite the reality of war and its uncertain implications for the future, Clemson made an effort, when again settled in Maryland, to plant crops and fruit trees on his farm. His mother-in-law back in South Carolina, concerned that her grandson Calhoun was doing nothing but lounging about the house when she thought he should be training in Richmond to fight with the Confederate army, also got word to Clemson that he should send Anna and Floride to the South. Fearful of fighting in Baltimore, Mrs. Calhoun felt that the Clemson home would be surrounded by conflict and the family subject to insult and plunder and devilmint of all kinds.<sup>56</sup>

Although mindful of her mother's concern, Anna decided to remain in Maryland with her daughter when her husband, under suspicion of disloyalty to the Union government like other secessionist sympathizers, and her son, Calhoun, went South in June 1861. Maryland, as a border state between the nation's capital and the rest of the Union, maintained a precarious position throughout the war. Unionists and secessionists created unrest everywhere and especially in Baltimore. Apparently Clemson himself was confident that friends and family, along with the household help, would look out for the welfare of his wife and eighteen-year-old daughter. The Southern sympathies (not unlike Anna's) of the wife of former President John Tyler, for example, did not keep Julia Gardiner Tyler from leaving the Confederacy upon her husband's death in 1862 and going to live at her mother's estate on New York's Staten Island. Like Anna, whose father had served as Secretary of State under Julia's husband, the President's widow was loyal to the South while living among the enemy.<sup>57</sup>



*Calhoun,  
in military attire*

Twenty-year-old Calhoun Clemson enlisted at Camp Pickens (now Sandy Springs), Anderson District, in South Carolina, as a private in a Confederate rifles' regiment. Early in 1862, when many northerners believed in war and an easy reunification process, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant, effective from December 16, in Company H, First Regiment South Carolina Artillery. One of the founding officers of this battalion and the colonel of the regiment was Calhoun's own cousin Ransom, the son of Anna's late uncle, John Ewing Colhoun. By 1863, when the reality of the war's lengthy duration and sweeping scope was apparent, Calhoun had resigned his commission and accepted an appointment in the regular Confederate army as first lieutenant in charge of Fort Ripley in Charleston's harbor and, according to his mother, had been promised the rank of captain.

In Maryland, Anna heard fairly often from her son and husband in South Carolina, where Clemson remained with her mother for two years until he also joined the Confederate service in May 1863. Based on his scientific credentials as a chemist, he was sent as a first lieutenant to Texas to head the state's unit of the Nitre and Mining Bureau, Trans-Mississippi Department.<sup>58</sup>

During Clemson's absence, Anna was in close touch with his uncle Elias Baker at Altoona, Pennsylvania, and it was to him that she confided how tired she was of "this dreadful war," "ruining the country north & south." Although relieved that both her husband and son were well, she felt keenly the frightening uncertainty of the future and did not expect to escape without her share of troubles.<sup>59</sup>

Confederate defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in the summer of 1863 ultimately assured a northern triumph, although war would be waged for almost two more years. In reality for Anna and Floride, despite the hardship of separation from Clemson and Calhoun, who had joined his father's mines and metal works bureau, their life in Maryland did not prove to be unduly hazardous during the war years. Conflict notwithstanding, Floride even continued with her travels, making over a month-long northern trip from the end of July to mid-September.<sup>60</sup>

Beginning her journey at the Greek-revival mansion of her father's uncle, Elias Baker, in Pennsylvania, she wrote to her "Darling Mother" that the excitement of traveling soon dispelled her "dumps" at leaving Anna, whose presence would have made her perfectly content. Settled comfortably in Altoona in such a large affluent neighborhood where the subject of war seemed not to matter, Floride wrote her mother that she had taken "a great fancy" to everyone. As usual Anna expressed pleasure in Floride's enjoyment and was interested in an account of all her daughter's doings. Apparently the southern sympathies of neither mother nor daughter were offended by the nonchalance of their northern relatives to the conflict consuming the country. The fact that Clemson and Calhoun were in Confederate service seemed of little significance in light of Floride's welcome by her father's family.

The person of D. W. Lee, Clemson's financial advisor and the brother-in-law of his late friend Charles Leupp, was a source of pleasant companionship for Anna in a house quite dead without Floride. In the absence of the Clemson men, the protection of their southern ladies had passed to one dubbed by mother and daughter as their "gallant defender." Lee, described by Anna as "*charming & fascinating*," was also a suitor of Floride's and the uncle of her bosom friend, Laura Leupp. The Clemsons had known the prominent Lee family of New York for several years through Thomas Clemson's friendship with Charles Leupp, whose marriage to the daughter of Gideon Lee, Sr., a businessman and political figure, entwined thereafter the lives of the Leupps, Lees, and Clemsons.<sup>61</sup>

Although Anna regularly sent Floride summaries of the war news, she cautioned her to "*be quiet*" about the southern cause among her relatives in the North. Elated to send the report that Charleston was still withstanding attack, she was hopeful for another glorious victory over the attempt of Union forces to capture the coastal city. The valiant resistance of Charleston, the civilian population of which had been the target of Union bombardment for four months, was blessed news for Anna and Floride to share as "a day of fasting & prayer," designated in the South as August 21, 1863, approached.<sup>62</sup>

Grateful to hear from Floride that her father's family never mentioned the fighting

and were much more considerate of her political views than she ever dreamed possible, Anna reminded her daughter of the fact that Uncle Elias's Alleghany Furnace iron works had "*enormously increased*" in value since the war started. Floride saw for herself on a tour with her cousin Sylvester the extensive nature of her great-uncle's machine shops with all possible kinds of working in iron. Though Baker family members were "sincere & earnest christians" to Floride, Anna found them, like other good northerners, in "favour of a war of invasion, for the avowed purpose of abolition, & subjugation, against their brethren"; and she found it indeed hard to fathom in light of the very principles fought for by their common forefathers.<sup>63</sup>

When Floride desired to be baptized in Altoona, Anna gave her blessing because the virtue of piety was paramount over all others for the southern lady. "Religion," she wrote to her daughter, "were it not a duty, & an instinct, would be a necessity. We must have something, not of this world, to sustain us in the many trials & temptations of life, & you more than others, need a deep & abiding faith." Apparently, Floride who attested to her own weakness, had always felt that she personally needed the support of faith and, for some time, had been convinced of the truth of most of the tenets of Christian belief. Anna was glad that Floride had elected the Episcopal church, her family's choice on both sides. Her paternal uncle, Baker Clemson, performed the baptismal sacrament on August 23, in the morning service at St. Luke's Church, with two cousins standing as witnesses. Instructing Floride to "*live*" her religion daily and not to expect miracles from it, Anna told her daughter of the very sincere sympathy she held for religious faith. Floride, indebted to her mother for such a kind letter, trusted that her baptism would enable her to be a better daughter.<sup>64</sup>

But Floride, who had initially been dispirited at leaving her mother, found herself, after a month away from home, once again down in the "dumps." She took a good crying spell over newspaper headlines that heralded the continuing bombardment of Charleston by Union artillery. Floride was distraught by Anna's fear that "*in time*" the city must fall and keenly felt her absence from those who would sympathize with and understand her anxiety during the country's difficult days of trial. Despite the kindness of her northern relatives in the face of her concern, she knew they were overjoyed at what made her miserable.<sup>65</sup>

Missing her mother and regretting to leave Altoona after such a pleasant visit, Floride expected to enjoy visiting Niagara Falls before returning home to Maryland. Along with four other young women, under the protective wing of Uncle Elias, she set forth in early September 1863, on a trip similar to one made by her mother so many years before, in the summer of 1836.<sup>66</sup>

Anna hoped that Floride's trip would be as enjoyable as was her own undertaking when she was nineteen years old. She remembered that she had not really cared about going but that her father had decided the chance to travel with fellow senator Colonel William Preston and his wife, Louisa, afforded a good opportunity for her to see the northern portion of the country. Delighted with sightseeing in Philadelphia, Anna wrote to her dear friend, Maria Simkins, in South Carolina that she was even more glad to be a southerner. The very people, true northerners, with such splendid houses in the fashionable streets, reportedly lived sparingly on "*shad*," a type of herring, six months out of the year and seldom opened their homes to guests.<sup>67</sup>

Defining New York as the greatest city on the continent with an air of bustle and prosperity exceeding anything she had ever seen, Anna also described in her album a dinner party hosted by one of the town's millionaires as more splendid than the state dinners in Washington. Her short time sailing from New York to West Point was most enjoyable, as was the two-day stay at the latter. Entertained by gentlemanly cadets at one night's evening ball and on a moonlight rowboat ride up the Hudson the next, she had found that West Point, in its exquisite setting, fulfilled the wildest dreams of her imagination.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to Col. and Mrs. Preston, Anna's other traveling companions included the charming South Carolinian, Miss Susan Hampton, the youngest child of prominent planter Wade Hampton I, and the very agreeable William King, senator from Alabama. Every want of the blissful party was met by Susan's slave Delphia, joined by Senator King's German valet, Fritz. Anna, Susan, Senator King and Fritz were surrounded by carpet bags atop the coach that traveled from Albany to Saratoga. From that vantage point, Anna took her first view of Niagara by moonlight.

Like her daughter some twenty-seven years later, Anna could not put into words her feelings about the Falls, convinced after a five-day stay that Niagara was, she wrote in her album, "a thing to be *felt* not described." Floride, in her time, wanted her mother there to enjoy it with her and even cried when she first caught sight of what she never imagined would be so grand. The great Falls, she wrote to Anna, surpassed her highest expectations when first seen from the Canadian side. Glad to be out of the so-called *United States* in a place so thoroughly English, Floride further elaborated on the impressive sight she observed from underneath the Falls. Much against the wishes of her companions, who feared for her safety, she and a mulatto guide went under the torrential stream of water, stood on a rock ledge, and looked up and out at the shooting Falls about six feet from where they were standing.

The day that Floride took off her hoops (and all above them) and donned an oil cloth dress to go under the Falls she did not know that her brother Calhoun was taken prisoner by Union cavalry troops in Bolivar County, Mississippi. At the time of his capture on September 9, 1863, as a lieutenant in the Confederate army serving in the mines and metal works bureau headed by his father, Calhoun was in charge of a seven-man squad transporting Confederate currency for General Kirby Smith's department payroll. However, his mother and sister would not learn the details of his capture until early in October, shortly after Floride's return to Maryland.<sup>69</sup> Floride admittedly anticipated being back at home after such a seemingly long absence, being tired with, but not of, traveling and wanting so much to see her mother. She promised Anna that she could account satisfactorily for nearly all the money that she had spent.

In her diary for October 4, two weeks after her return home, Floride recorded news of Calhoun's capture and imprisonment from an article in the Philadelphia *Inquirer*. Anna immediately attempted to arrange a trip to see her son on Johnson's Island in Lake Erie, near Sandusky, Ohio. She contacted President Abraham Lincoln, who acknowledged in writing, on Executive Mansion letterhead, to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton his respect for her late father and granted her permission for the privilege of a visit with the secretary's approval. But Stanton, according to Floride's diary, rebuffed Anna, stating that he would let her go when northern ladies were allowed to visit the prisoners South. Although she went to see him personally, he again refused her request.<sup>70</sup>

In one of the first letters written to his mother and sister from prison, Calhoun Clemson commented on the cold weather and the crowded conditions caused by over sixty men sleeping in the same cramped room contaminated with vermin; however, the fact that he said he was well cheered Anna and Floride, who quickly sent him what his sister called “a nice box of eatables.” Besides this food, Calhoun also received from D. W. Lee, his father’s financial advisor and friend, the sum of \$20.00 as immediate funds.<sup>71</sup>

In the absence of the Clemson men, Lee, the “gallant defender,” had assured Anna that he would execute “with great pleasure” her and Floride’s requests. With regard to Calhoun’s situation, he encouraged her to persevere in the attempt to secure a pass to see her son but advised against her pursuing a transfer for him from the island to a prison on the mainland.



*Elias Baker*

Heartened by this support from Lee, Anna turned to Clemson’s uncle, Elias Baker, in the hope that he might be acquainted with someone in Washington whose word would carry weight with Secretary Stanton in regard to the desired pass to visit Calhoun. Although Uncle Elias was more than willing to accompany Anna to Sandusky, he thought that she would have trouble in getting the coveted permission to see her son without federal authority. He did not know any important political figures but desired very much to assist her and promised to speak on her behalf to his lawyer, S. S. Blair, a former congressman. This gentleman, who had become acquainted with both Anna’s father and husband some twenty-years earlier, promised to do everything he could in her favor when he was next in Washington.<sup>72</sup>

Separated from her son for over two years, since the summer of 1861, Anna felt increasingly frustrated at her inability to secure the necessary pass. She would of course prefer a parole for him to come home until a possible prisoner exchange. She dreaded his exposure to the increasing cold as winter approached, though he was relatively comfortable on Johnson’s Island under the command of Colonel William Pierson. Calhoun had a history of weak lungs that in part had forced his withdrawal from the Virginia Military Institute before the beginning of the war.<sup>73</sup>

Anna, who felt she should see for herself if her son was suffering, was downhearted that family matters interfered with Mr. Blair’s plans to go to Washington before the end of the year. Although Calhoun’s regular letters were cheerful, she knew he would hide whatever would make her miserable. Troubled with worries about her son in prison, the management of her farm and her daughter’s always delicate health, she was grateful for the kind interest of Uncle Elias. He, like Anna, was greatly disappointed that Blair, who made a short trip to Washington early in 1864, proved not to be a man of his words and promises and apparently did nothing to further her favor with Secretary Stanton about the pass. Considering that the former congressman was a Democrat, he did not, in any case, have much chance to get what Anna wanted from the Republican secretary.<sup>74</sup>

In reality, Anna’s eagerness to go to Ohio was tempered by the great uncertainty surrounding the fate of the prisoners on Johnson’s Island, and, according to Floride’s diary, her mother had given up going to Sandusky. A letter from Calhoun at the end of January stated that “dame reumor [*sic*] with her thousand tongues is buisy [*sic*] with reports of our

speady [*sic*] removil [*sic*] from this land of cold & ice” to some point he thought likely to be rather worse than better.

Also in doubt at this time was Anna and Floride’s personal situation in Maryland, as the Clemson women faced a probable move of their own in the spring although they did not know where they would be going. Anna had become convinced of her inability to manage the farm without reliable help and was frustrated in the face of enormous prices for everything. She hoped that Uncle Elias could get someone to rent the place and rid her of both a burdensome load and a great expense.<sup>75</sup> Mother and daughter, concerned over their own fate as well as Calhoun’s, faced an uncertain future in a world troubled and torn by the turmoil of war.

In his letters to Anna from prison, Calhoun had expressed to his mother and sister the poignant yearning to see them:

There is no use telling you how much I desire to see you. & F but it is not allowed so I can only wish & that has to do....Suffice it to say my thoughts are always about you & F. and I sencearly [*sic*] hope the time will soon come when we may all meet [*sic*].

However, in February, he accepted resignedly his mother’s decision to cancel her trip, for the time being, and wrote to her: “I am glad you did not come for *without a pass you cannot see me* & ten to one you could not get across the bay.”<sup>76</sup>

Rumors of a possible move for the men on Johnson’s Island persisted, but, by the end of February, Calhoun’s location indeed seemed permanent. Perhaps the loss of hope that a prisoner exchange might take place prompted him in a March 27 letter to write his mother about his wish to see her and his father.

I had a dream about you & the old jentleman [*sic*] last night: you had both come to see me, and I was very glad to see you; but yett [*sic*] there was something on my mind that made me sad; I suppose it was my being a prisoner, thoug [*sic*] I was not on Johnsons Island so much for dreams: I mention this to show you how much I think of you all, thoug [*sic*] I will not say like the poet ‘that even in a dream to be blessed is so sweet that I ask for no more’. I will amend the above by saying that I ask for something more.

This plaintive appeal was a call from Calhoun that Anna could not refuse.

Apparently, after several months in prison, during which time he had derived much pleasure and comfort from all the boxes of provisions and bundles of clothes sent to him from the two he termed his “most considerate sister and devoted mother,”<sup>77</sup> the young Confederate captive was suddenly overwhelmed by the enforced separation from his family. Within less than a month’s time after receiving this sorrowful statement of longing from her son, Anna made arrangements for the trip to Sandusky.

Although Uncle Elias had offered to accompany her, she accepted instead the assistance of Calhoun’s friend, G. H. Dunscomb, an Englishman who numbered among Floride’s several suitors. Concerned about her daughter’s poor health, weakened by both intestinal and optic disorders, she was comforted by recent word from her husband, who

was serving with Confederate forces in the South, that at least he was well. Leaving Floride in the care of friends, Anna departed with Dunscomb for Sandusky on the morning of April 18, 1864.<sup>78</sup>

A twenty-hour train delay in Pittsburgh made for a dismal time that Dunscomb described in a letter to Floride that he wrote upon arrival in Cleveland on the afternoon of April 20. While her mother had spent a sleepless night suffering in the midst of crying babies in overheated railway cars, he was also quite miserable on a bench in a Tavern Bar Room. Anna, disgusted with the whole trip, soon recovered, and her spirits revived after meeting a couple on the same errand as she.<sup>79</sup> Eager to succeed in seeing her son on Johnson's Island but worried for fear of failure in obtaining the necessary pass from U.S. Army headquarters in Sandusky, she was increasingly excited and uneasy.

The weary travelers changed trains in Cleveland in the afternoon and arrived safely but exhausted in Sandusky that evening. The next morning, Anna received a most cordial and courteous reception from General H. D. Terry, who had assumed command of the U.S. prison at Johnson's Island earlier in the year. Seemingly, with no difficulty, she was granted the coveted pass to see her son.<sup>80</sup>

Accompanied by Dunscomb, she crossed over from the mainland to Johnson's Island and, later, in a letter to her daughter, wrote of a most unreserved conversation she had there with Calhoun, during a two-hour stay before her return to Sandusky. Her remark that her son looked "very well, save a sore leg" sounded somewhat subdued considering their long-awaited reunion. Dunscomb's description of the meeting was decidedly more colorful in his own letter to Floride. Her mother was ready, he wrote, to "break a blood vessel or go into hysterics" at the sight of Calhoun grown much bigger and very good looking.

On the morning of April 22, Anna and Dunscomb again went to Johnson's Island for one last visit with Calhoun before starting back to Maryland that evening. As Anna prepared for the trip home, Dunscomb wrote to Floride just before leaving on the train. Not only was Calhoun's condition much improved, but her mother had appeared to be "holding court," surrounded by a "little levee" of federal officers. Obviously taken with Anna's charming manner, Union General Terry and his staff extended great courtesy to a gracious southern lady who had braved enemy lines to see her son in a Yankee prison. Fortunately, the journey to Johnson's Island was a successful one for the thankful mother who was relieved that her son seemed to be healthy. She could not have foreseen then the hardships he would have to endure in the dark days that lay ahead.<sup>81</sup>

The same week that Anna returned to Maryland from her visit with Calhoun, a family tragedy affected Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his wife Varina. On April 30, 1864, their five-year-old son Joseph was killed in a fall from the corner of the porch of the Confederate White House in Richmond. Within two-months' time following their loss, Varina Davis gave birth on June 27 to a baby girl, Winnie, who would be known one day as the "Daughter of the Confederacy."<sup>82</sup>

In earnest, Anna began preparations to leave Bladensburg and the burdensome responsibility of her farm. Her plan to go to Beltsville, near Baltimore, on the railroad depended mainly on getting a good and responsible tenant although the amount of annual rent was an important factor, as well. Early in June, a Mr. Edward Towers took possession of the property for \$40 a month, a sum less than the \$600 to \$700 yearly income that she had hoped to receive.<sup>83</sup>

Anna wrote to Uncle Elias from her new, comfortable quarters within a mile of Beltsville, which Floride described in her diary as a very pretty five-room place surrounded by trees. Undoubtedly glad to inform Clemson's uncle that her husband was living quite well, although anxious about his family, Anna regretted to say that Calhoun fared very badly. Since the departure of Union General Terry, food rations for the men had been reduced to meat and bread, and the sutler was not allowed to furnish anything for them.<sup>84</sup>

Correspondence from Calhoun convinced Anna of the rigors of his year-long confinement and the need for her to persevere in the attempt to get him away, possibly on an exchange of prisoners. With the help of D.W. Lee, the "gallant defender," she had some hope for her son's release as well as passes for herself and Floride to go South to join her husband and mother. Now that the responsibility for the farm had been relinquished, she wrote to Uncle Elias that nothing any longer kept her from going South if she could do so. Although no southern passes were being given out at the end of October, she thought that she had a good prospect of success to procure them soon and was hopeful that Calhoun could be exchanged before she left. She dreaded another cold winter of captivity for her son with his weak lungs and was especially concerned about no longer being permitted to send him food and comforts.<sup>85</sup>

She continued to be stymied "*in all directions*," and, at the end of November, she told Uncle Elias that she saw little chance of getting off until perhaps after spring. Floride recorded in her diary her own wish for passes to return South. Both she and her mother felt keenly the uncertainty of the state in which they lived, waiting for events. Anna trusted God's wise judgment, she wrote Uncle Elias, admitting at the same time that she sometimes almost lost courage.<sup>86</sup>

A few days after receiving a telegraph message from Sylvester Baker (on December 7, about his father Elias's death), Anna and Floride learned unexpectedly that they would be given passes by General George Shepley, the military governor of Norfolk. Though saddened by the loss of dear old Uncle Elias, a kind friend whom they had loved very dearly, mother and daughter nevertheless quickly got their things ready to leave once they received word that they could go. Apparently, a business friend of Clemson's, Tazewell Taylor, had approached General Shepley about the matter of Anna's request. Since one of the general's beloved cousins, Mrs. Gideon Barstow, was a close friend of Anna's, he decided in favor of her personal petition to travel South.<sup>87</sup>

The Clemson women departed, encumbered with five trunks, a large carpet bag for shawls, and two baskets of provisions, along with two hand bags that were later supplemented along the way by the addition of a huge umbrella. Despite their friends' efforts to dissuade them from leaving Beltsville within a week of Christmas, Anna was determined to join her mother in South Carolina, and Floride would not be left behind alone. They stayed a day and a half in Baltimore, tending to shopping and making arrangements. Then, escorted by Calhoun's friend, G. H. Dunscomb, the travelers left late in the afternoon in a wretched little boat for Norfolk. Buffeted by a cold wind that made sleep scarcely possible, they arrived first at Fortress Monroe, off the Virginia coast early in the morning, entering the city by nine o'clock. General Shepley cordially received them at his office, where their passes were issued. Politely treated by the people at the Atlantic hotel during their weekend stay, mother and daughter even went to church on Christmas. In Dunscomb's company, they boarded the next morning a special "flag of truce" train for

Suffolk, a place that, upon arrival, looked abandoned to them.<sup>88</sup>

At two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, they left behind their faithful escort, Dunscomb, and trudged forth on foot in the falling rain. Walking with their driver on soggy ground alongside the only available horse and buggy, followed by two mule carts loaded with their baggage, the weary women went some twenty miles, covering half the distance after dark. Continuing their trek after a night's lodging, they did the remaining eight miles to Murfrees Depot, about forty miles from the next scheduled stop at Weldon, North Carolina, where they would be able to board a train. Bidding their driver good-bye, they waited until early afternoon in a log hut at the station and then crossed the Blackwater River in a boat ferried for them by the first Confederate detachment they had seen since starting the trip.

After an overnight stay in Weldon in a room with no fire and broken windows, described by Floride as the dirtiest she had ever seen, mother and daughter once again forged ahead, traveling by train to Raleigh and Charlotte. For the last twenty-five miles of the trip, because of the train's breakdown, they found themselves crowded into a baggage car, mostly with soldiers going home on furlough. Despite a dangerous speed, further engine failure caused them to miss their connection to Columbia, South Carolina, and they had to remain overnight in Charlotte.

Arriving in Columbia on the morning of December 30, they went the rest of the way to Mrs. Calhoun's *Mi Casa* home in the company of one of her neighbors, Fanny Adams, whom they met on the train from Charlotte. She offered them a ride to Pendleton in her carriage. According to Floride's diary, her grandmother was not much surprised at their coming but was overjoyed to see her loved ones,<sup>89</sup> who had by all counts proven themselves capable of the challenges confronted throughout their harrowing ordeal.

The presence of Anna and Floride at *Mi Casa* was a great comfort at a dismal time for a domicile that included not only Mrs. Calhoun but her daughter-in-law Kate and two of her sons, besides a few servants. Both Mrs. Calhoun and Kate were sickly and in great need of help with all the responsibility faced by women alone. Floride, in fact, found the greatest need among the very dispirited people she saw to be that of men, as every able-bodied male in Pendleton was in Confederate service, fighting the battles of his cause. Truly the long days of war had forced many elite southern women to acknowledge their own individual identities without the masculine protection that supported their privileged position and defined its accepted weakness.<sup>90</sup> Three generations of Calhoun and Clemson women, together in South Carolina in 1865, faced the end of the Confederacy with little food, in fear of Union raids, and with few men left to fight. Like their female contemporaries, who also endured a world disrupted by conflict, Floride Calhoun, Anna, and Floride Clemson were distraught by the uncertainty of the frightening future that lay ahead. Their situation in Pendleton was experienced elsewhere in South Carolina by many other women of such prominent families as the Petigrus, Allstons, and Porchers. Not only had the war shattered the institution of slavery, but also the precarious pedestal (perhaps, in actuality, only present in postwar romances) that enshrined the southern lady had been broken.<sup>91</sup>

Adèle Allston and Louise Porcher, sisters of the late James Louis Petigru, South Carolina's preeminent lawyer who defined his family's prominence in the nineteenth century, also faced the Confederacy's fate as women alone without any males to provide protec-

tion from marauding Yankees. Adèle Allston had been widowed for almost a year since the death of her husband, Governor Robert Allston, the very wealthy Georgetown rice planter. With her daughters and a few black female servants, she fled their home at the Chicora Wood plantation on the Pee Dee River at the end of February 1865. They returned to the family's inland Croly Hill farm, where they had lived in retreat much of the time since 1863. Burying the wine and silver before the Yankees arrived, they had neither a white nor a black man to protect them while federal soldiers unsuccessfully searched the house and grounds for the hidden valuables. No one was harmed.<sup>92</sup>

Louise Porcher, like her sister Adèle, also faced the enemy without any male protector, after her husband Philip had been conscripted into the militia that February. At her Goslington home on the morning of February 21, she was told by retreating Confederate troops from Columbia to expect the Yankee army. A warning from an advance of federal officers threatened harm to both mistress and servants by black soldiers, at whose arrival Louise trembled. In her own words, “wild hideous figures naked to the waist brandishing their arms & pointing their guns as if to shoot us as we stood still on the piazza,” the black troops devoured the supplies saved for the women who watched and waited. The Porcher house became the headquarters of the Union commander, who, after a little over two weeks, allowed Louise and her party to leave and take the train to Charleston.<sup>93</sup>

Within a week of the taking of Columbia (on February 17, 1865) by Union troops under the command of General William Tecumseh Sherman, Floride Clemson noted despairingly in her diary that there seemed to be little opposition from a dejected populace to the Yankees' march of destruction in South Carolina. Hearing in church, on February 19, the dreadful news of the capital city's surrender, Floride professed a very anxious and desponding heart at the thought of what might yet happen in the state. The scarcity of provisions in Pendleton, the coming of many more expected refugees, and the quick conclusion of a disgraceful peace prompted her unfeigned plea for God's mercy and protection.<sup>94</sup>

In reality, the citizenry of Columbia, reduced in wartime to mostly women, were critical of Georgia for succumbing so quickly to Sherman's army and solemnly promised to fight in the face of impending doom. Frenzied preparations for a bazaar held in the statehouse in January stifled fear and hysteria as the emotional week-long event with its magnificent decorations shut out the surrounding horrors that lay ahead. The removal of all Confederate forces from the capital city on February 17 left a reality of utter desolation for Grace Brown Elmore, whose mother, Harriet Chesnut Taylor, was the granddaughter of the man who owned the land upon which Columbia had been built. Standing at the gate of her house to give wine and blankets to the retreating soldiers, the young twenty-five-year-old woman, single and alone with her mother and sisters, awaited the Yankees, who came and pillaged but did not defile their persons.<sup>95</sup>

Before the onslaught of Sherman's army in Columbia, Grace Elmore, like many other upper-class women, most of whom were single and childless, worked as a volunteer on the South Carolina College campus, which was converted into a military hospital. Under the determined and dedicated leadership of the state's most intellectual woman, Louisa Cheves McCord, daughter of the late Langdon Cheves and widow of David McCord, both of whom had been prominent in law, politics and banking, the hospital became a home to wounded Confederates. Louisa, a well-regarded writer on political economy and social

theory, had effectively defended slavery and women's subordination to men in her poetry and drama. McCord was said to be "South Carolina's preeminent bluestocking."<sup>96</sup>

On the morning of February 17, Louisa McCord stood on the staircase of her Columbia home to keep Union soldiers from abusing the women hiding upstairs. Although struck, grabbed, and pinned to the wall by the leader of a crowd of seemingly inhumane men, this brave southern lady was saved from further attack by the arrival of General O. O. Howard. Second in command to Sherman, this officer proceeded to make her house his headquarters.<sup>97</sup>

The fact that the beautiful capital city had been "laid in ashes by the Northern Vandals" after a four-day occupation in February was reported by Floride in her diary, following a month-long lapse in her writing. To help alleviate the suffering of those who were starving, utterly destitute, and homeless, she and her mother and grandmother gave as much as they could afford at the time— \$200, some cloths, five bushels of corn, and a ham.

A month after the fall of the state capital, Anna's brother Andrew died suddenly of heart congestion, on March 16, as Floride noted in her diary. He had just visited *Mi Casa* in response to a note from Anna, telling him about Mrs. Calhoun's poor health and her desire to see her sole surviving son after over a year-long estrangement over the debt he still owed for the purchase of Fort Hill some ten years earlier. Mother and son both enjoyed being together again. Now, with Andrew's death, Anna remained, as Floride remarked, the "only one left of all the seven children grandfather left when he died." A year later, Floride Calhoun would file suit against her son's family for his estate's unpaid debt for Fort Hill, and a few weeks before she died in July of 1866, the court decision for foreclosure against her daughter-in-law, Margaret, and the grandchildren would be issued.<sup>98</sup>

Late in April of 1865, the news of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender and President Abraham Lincoln's assassination reached Pendleton, bringing a sense of bewilderment to the community. Fearing no mercy from the Yankees, the women at *Mi Casa* were terrified by the frequent sound of alarms all during the month of May. For three nights in succession, they were roused from bed before midnight by warning sounds that signaled the imminent menace of raiders. Although everything of value had been buried, they remained vulnerable to the threat of personal insults and were dreadfully afraid in the face of the worst horror imaginable.

Above all other dangers, women feared rape, which dishonored white women more than death itself, sexual purity being one of the virtues prized by the southern lady. In actuality, the violation so feared by the southern lady was endured repeatedly by African-American women during the antebellum era. Historian Catherine Clinton's book, *Tara Revisited*, recognizes rape as "a frequent byproduct of slavery," with black female slaves as the primary victims of white men. Ironically, the protectors of privilege were at the same time perpetrators of violence in a patriarchal society where race determined the deed.

Fortunately the approximately one-thousand Yankees who passed through Pendleton at the end of May did little or no harm to persons or private property. No one of them set foot on *Mi Casa* although many rode right by the gate and all passed in full view over the opposite hill. Other than the taking of some horses at Fort Hill, there was apparently no significant damage done there, either.<sup>99</sup>

In the same month that the women at *Mi Casa* prepared for the worst from the

Yankees, Confederate President Jefferson Davis held his last War Council, meeting some forty-five miles away from Pendleton in Abbeville at the home of lawyer Armistead Burt and his wife, Martha, a Calhoun cousin. The overnight stay of Davis and his men in Abbeville was part of their journey from the fallen Confederate capital of Richmond through the defeated Confederacy.<sup>100</sup>

With the arrivals in Pendleton, first of Calhoun and, then, his father in the summer of 1865, the Clemson family was reunited at Mi Casa with Mrs. Calhoun. Kate Calhoun and her two boys, who were there when Anna and Floride came from Maryland, moved away to another house and eventually returned to Kate's family's home in Florida. Both Calhoun and Clemson looked pretty well upon their return from Confederate service, although Floride noted in her diary the drastic deterioration of conditions on Johnson's Island during the last year of conflict. Food rations were severely cut, and many prisoners of war died of starvation while some were killed by the sentinels, and a few actually killed each other. Unsuccessful in his many attempts to escape, Calhoun said that the prisoners "nearly went mad" as they lost hope in the face of "constant disappointments." Despite the dreadfully stooped nature of her brother's over six-foot stature, Floride described his otherwise very fine figure as well-proportioned. Even with his rough manners and profanity, she thought him to be "quite elegant, & styelish" [*sic*] when he chose to be.<sup>101</sup>

Determined to care for her family in the aftermath of America's bloodiest war, Anna also faced the responsibility of ministering to her mother, who then suffered terribly with what had been diagnosed as incurable cancer. The struggles of her children, Calhoun and Floride, to find themselves as young adults in a world where opportunity and hope seemed lost gave her cause for further concern. Mrs. Calhoun's condition caused an impatient Floride to postpone a visit to Maryland, Virginia, and places in the North as, now that the war was over and her family reunited, she admitted to her mother an often overwhelming feeling of homesickness for those that she had left behind. Although she dramatically likened life in Pendleton to being "buried alive," Floride actually did have some good times there. Undoubtedly, Anna worried about her daughter's well-being in the distressful world around her as Anna encouraged Floride's participation with other young people in riding parties, costumed festivals, balls, and tableaux—festivities where she was much admired and which she seemed to enjoy.<sup>102</sup>

Mrs. Calhoun's death came after a year in which her seemingly incessant "*screams & cries*," described as such by Floride in her diary, had resounded throughout the house. Assisted by Floride and an experienced nurse, a Mrs. Burns, Anna bore the burden of her mother's illness though often worn down by what Floride saw as her grandmother's unreasonable demands. Unable to bear the pain and addicted to opiates, Mrs. Calhoun, in her granddaughter's eyes, would be saved from all her misery if only she could die instead of carrying on with constant moans, cries and shrieks. Apparently a neglected abrasion from a kidney infection had brought on the dread disease that, according to Anna, had "eaten away" the lower part of her mother's abdomen and "split open her groin, nearly to the bone." The terribly offensive odor from the cancerous discharge permeated her room and sickened all those in attendance during the hot summer days that preceded her death at the age of seventy-four. Following a slight stroke that made speech and sensibility virtually impossible for the last two days of her life, her fearfully emaciated figure finally succumbed to its ordeal with cancer in the evening of July 25, 1866. Coincidentally, a few

months before Mrs. Calhoun's death, confirmation of a report was received in Pendleton that Kate Calhoun had died from "bilious dysentery" at her family's home in Florida in May.

Anna and Floride made the arrangements for Mrs. Calhoun's funeral, which was held at 6 o'clock in the evening of July 26, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the Reverend A. H. Cornish officiating. Fortunately, Clemson and Calhoun, who had gone to Dahlonega, Georgia, on business returned in time for the service. In the presence of a large crowd, Mrs. Calhoun, whose husband had been buried befitting his stature as a statesman in St. Philip's Churchyard in Charleston, was laid to rest beside their daughter Cornelia and son William Lowndes. Her brother, James Edward Calhoun, would later be placed between the graves of his sister and her son, after his death in 1889.<sup>103</sup>

According to the terms of Mrs. Calhoun's will, inclusive of codicil, as read on August 6, 1866, Anna was named her mother's principal heir. She was the first recipient of three-fourths of the bond and mortgage claim on Fort Hill owed to her mother by her brother Andrew's estate, along with most of the extant personal property and furniture, silver and jewels. However, litigation over Fort Hill that now centered on Anna and the Andrew Calhoun family would not be resolved until January 1872. Floride Clemson, who acknowledged her grandmother's noble part on her own behalf, received outright a fourth part of the Fort Hill property title and was the designated successor to her mother's separate estate that would go to her brother, Calhoun, only if she died without either a will or an heir. Thus the Fort Hill land that had been inherited by Anna's grandmother, Floride Bonneau Colhoun, upon the death of her husband in 1802, came to Anna and Floride through Mrs. Calhoun, who had received title to the property after her husband's death in 1850.<sup>104</sup>

Soon after her grandmother's funeral, Floride began preparations for her trip back North, and Calhoun, still without the regular employment that he had hoped to find at the end of the war, left Pendleton once again for the Abbeville District. The sportive gentleman who had joined the Confederate cause in 1861 was now a sober young man who seemed to be very anxious to get to work. Floride noted in her diary Calhoun's supposed interest in a saw mill "& other irons in the fire." Since Calhoun's behavior often irritated his father, Anna was glad to see him go. In reality, her son spent most of his time away from Mi Casa in leisure, visiting at the Millwood plantation home of her uncle James Calhoun, who considered the same young man who had made his father mad to be "hearty, cheerful & always ready to make himself useful."<sup>105</sup>

Even though Anna appeared to Floride to be never lonely, she missed the companionship of her daughter during her nine-month long travels. A year after her return to Mi Casa, Floride contracted pneumonia in the summer of 1868 and thereafter suffered from a chronic inflammation of the lungs. However, the debilitating condition did not deter her efforts to publish poetry, dedicated to her mother, that she had been writing since the early years of the war. Trying to help raise money for her war-impoorished neighbors, she sent her poems to Benjamin Latrobe, a family friend in Baltimore, in the hope that there would be a market for her work in magazines. Instead, Latrobe arranged for the printing of over 500 copies of a small volume entitled *Poet Skies and Other Experiments in Versification* that claimed its author to be C. De Flori, an appropriate pseudonym to provide the proper protection of Floride's privacy as a young lady. But none of the poems that glorified

the Confederate cause were suitable for publication in Baltimore, in December, 1868, and so those heartfelt pieces of her daughter's were preserved by Anna in manuscript form and, much later, were eventually published. Floride, like other women of the Civil War era who became writers of letters, journals, songs, poetry and novels, created a world of literary fantasy where she could, in the words of historian Drew Gilpin Faust, "invent new lives, and could imagine new selves, new identities and new meanings" in the attempt to survive.<sup>106</sup>

Early in 1869, the twenty-six-year-old Floride became romantically interested in Gideon Lee, Jr., of New York. Like her mother Floride was a southern lady who found no problem falling in love with a northern gentleman. The fact that status superseded regional identity was obvious in their choosing one another. A man almost nineteen-years older than herself, Gideon was a veteran of the Mexican War of 1846, a first lieutenant in Captain Baylor's Company, Chevallie's Battalion, Texas Mounted Volunteers. He was the brother of the "gallant defender," D. W. Lee and uncle of her good friends, Laura and Isabella Leupp. They could perhaps have met during the trip Floride made with her father to New York and Newport in the summer of 1858, although such a meeting was not documented in any extant family papers. Their engagement in the spring of 1869 came after a two-month courtship that followed Gideon's arrival in Pendleton at the end of February.



*Gideon Lee*

Anna found her future son-in-law to be an honest and sincere man and thought that he and Floride were very devoted to each other. However, in a private letter to her Uncle James at Millwood, she also expressed concern about the cost of the forthcoming wedding that Clemson said he could not possibly finance. Anna, on her own, had written to Henry Gourdin, a longtime Calhoun family friend and her husband's financial agent in Charleston, about the possibility of using some stock he held in her name as collateral for a \$500 loan from Uncle James. Mortified to think that her daughter might have to be married without appropriate clothing befitting her background, she assured her uncle that she would be an honest creditor if he could save her from such a painful embarrassment by granting her request for money.<sup>107</sup>

James Calhoun not only agreed to loan Anna the amount that she needed but also sent the bride a gold chain, a lump of pure gold for the wedding ring along with some wines and liquors and "1 bottle Madeira 43 yrs. old," all from his private stock. Fascinated with gold mining before the Civil War, he continued to be preoccupied with it afterwards and was successful enough with the endeavor to make a wedding gift of a lump from his mine to his great-niece, Floride. Although he could not attend the ceremony himself, his generosity helped make it the special occasion that Anna desired for her daughter, despite the querulous behavior of both Clemson and son Calhoun about the wedding.<sup>108</sup>

Married at ten o'clock in the morning on August 2, 1869, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the happy couple received friends for an hour or so and then, early in the afternoon, left Pendleton by train for Carmel, New York. There Gideon had previously acquired his "Leeside" home, consisting of 150 acres of farmland that included a house later completed in 1870. Although Anna admittedly missed Floride, she was pleased to

read her weekly letters from the happy new bride. Delighted by her daughter's apparent joy in marriage, Anna unselfishly did not wish her back.<sup>109</sup>

On May 15, 1870, Floride gave birth to a baby girl, Floride Isabella, an event that not only brought joy to the family but made even more meaningful the relationship she had with her own mother. Sadly, when little "baby Lee" was just barely fourteen months old, Floride died, on July 23, 1871. Entries made in Gideon Lee's journal reveal, in early June, a serious flare-up of his wife's respiratory troubles that soon spread. Although he spent much money for the best medical treatment available in New York City, his beloved Floride succumbed at home after great suffering to probable tuberculous peritonitis. Her grief-stricken family back in South Carolina had been duly informed of her deteriorating condition by the distraught husband. The baby girl, Floride Isabella, would be raised by a stepmother after Gideon Lee's marriage, in 1876, to Ella Lorton of Pendleton, a close friend of his late wife.<sup>110</sup>



*Floride Lee,  
age 2 1/2*

Floride Clemson Lee, dead at age twenty-eight, was apparently the elegant and accomplished young lady that Anna had envisioned her to become when she entered boarding school as a thirteen-year-old girl in 1856. From a sometimes rebellious and disobedient youth whose misbehavior both saddened and dismayed her mother, she had matured in Anna's eyes into a "noble & talented woman, & a universal favourite."<sup>111</sup>

On the evening of August 10, 1871, Calhoun Clemson, less than a month after his thirtieth birthday and six years since his release from a Yankee prison, was killed in a train wreck not far from Pendleton. Riding on the Blue Ridge Railroad, he suffered a fatal trauma when a Greenville Railroad lumber train, following too closely, collided with the passenger car in its path. Warned by the Blue Ridge conductor of the imminent collision, several passengers, including Calhoun, attempted to get into the forward baggage car. At the moment of impact, suspended between the two cars, he was thrown violently ahead against the door facing and died instantly when one of his ribs ruptured his heart. This terrible accident, only seventeen days after his sister Floride's death, left the Clemsons devastated. The following words, inscribed on young Calhoun's tombstone in St. Paul's Churchyard, indicate the intensity of emotion sustained for both the defenders of the South and the objective to which they committed themselves:

Noble, Patriotic, Brave  
On The Other Side Of The River He Has Joined The Gallant Band  
That Fought Beneath The Torrid Banner Of The "Lost Cause."<sup>112</sup>

The future of good fortune that Anna had anticipated for her son, long before in a distant land, had not come to pass. Ill health, the dreadful ordeal of civil war and its aftermath, and ultimately, an avoidable calamity could not have been imagined by the loving mother who, at that time, took such delight in her little boy.<sup>113</sup>