

Charleston Jan'y 25th 1841

My Dear Father¹

Lou² and I have been wishing for some time that Papa would write to a body, and tonight as I am alone, Lou having gone to the annual meeting of the Temperance Society, thinks I, now I'll write to dear Papa and see if I can tempt him by a letter, it has never failed yet to bring me a letter from him and I'll try it again, but I said alone, not so, for even now I have to jump and take my little good boy³ out of the fire, for he has pulled the shovel & poker down on him, he is the best little fellow I ever saw, he is doing very well now, but cannot walk yet. I commence writing but I am afraid I shall grow tiresome to you for I have nothing of interest tell you, _ By the convention in Fayette[sic] Mr. Summers⁴ was nominated for Congress, Dr. P⁵ says after a day's quarreling they at last ~~concluded~~^{decided} for Mr. S. by the timely appearance of Mr. Robinson⁶ of Logan, who commenced by a very good speech in defence [sic] of his politics having been charged by a member of the body of being a Loco, the

¹ "Father" refers to John Osbourne Laidley

² Probably Amacetta's sister, Mary Louise Laidley Buffington

³ Heber was George & Amacetta Laidley Summers' second-born child & the only one living at this time. He was born 2 August 1839. Tragically, he died 24 September 1843.

⁴ Amacetta's husband, Judge George Summers, was elected to the United States House of Representatives in March 1841 & served until March 3, 1845.

⁵ Dr. Spicer Patrick was a local physician & politician. He served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1845-1854. In 1861, he & Judge George Summers served as delegates to the Virginia Secession Convention. Both Patrick & Summers voted against secession.

⁶ Mr. Robinson?

**Amacetta L. Summers to her father, John O. Laidley,
January 25, 1841**

Munroe [*sic*] Mercer & Giles delegates came determined to have Mr.

Caperton⁷ nominated. I was at first very much grieved at having Mr. Summers nominated, for it will be such a break up, (I always take it for granted he will go) and I am afraid I cannot do credit to him there, and grace the circle to which I would belong and am not willing to stay behind, and another

[p. 2]

thing. I am afraid if he serves one term, he will have to another, and by that time his business will be completely broken up, and he will not feel like settling down again to writing declarations & pleas etc etc, but I know I am looking too far ahead (not a very common error of mine) but I look upon it as a move not to his advantage, if he gets off there at Wash-
-ington immersed in business & pleasure, and I am left behind he will forget his wife & child, however I will wait till the trouble comes, for after all he may not be elected. Mr. Dunbar,⁸ yourself & Mr. Thompson⁹ are talked of as his oppo-
-nents, so says our Oracle Dr. P_ Mr. Thompson he can beat, yourself nor Mr. Dunbar I imagine would run__

⁷ Possibly Allen Taylor Caperton, who was born in Monroe County, [West] Virginia. He served in the Virginia Senate & in the Virginia House & Delegates. He was a delegate to the Virginia Secession Convention in 1861. He served in the legislature of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. After the war, he was the first former Confederate to be elected to the United States States' Senate, serving from 1875 until his death in 1876.

⁸Possibly Judge Matthew Dunbar, who was Judge George Summers' former law partner. He was a highly respected lawyer & judge, whose funeral was attended by nearly everyone in town when he died in 1857.

⁹ Mr. Thompson?

**Amacetta L. Summers to her father, John O. Laidley,
January 25, 1841**

I received a letter from Theodore¹⁰ a few days since, he writes in tolerable spirits, his visit here was not very pleasant ~~was not very p~~ owing to the bad behavior of Ceres¹¹ she is a strange girl, she can throw off those attributes of female loveliness, modesty & delicacy more than anyone that I ever saw that pretended to have them^{at} all. I was sorry she came, she can be a very agreeable, but she was the reverse here. Lou received a letter from Cousin Peter,¹² he writes altogether about a young widow he has met with, she is young beautiful and rich and withall very much taken with him.

I am going to write to him and ask if he was one of those that took the horses out of the carriage, ^{and drew it themselves} that took “the divine Fanny Ellsler”¹³

from the depot to the hotel, did you see that account of her visit to Richmond. we see the papers filled with accounts

[p. 3]

of the young princess royal¹⁴ and the burial of the remains of Napoleon Bounaparte *[sic]*¹⁵ — The Episcopal ladies are sewing for the purpose of raising money to assist in building a Church

¹⁰ Amacetta’s brother, Theodore T. S. Laidley. He was a graduate of West Point Military Academy & enjoyed an illustrious 40-year career in the ordnance field. He invented weapons of his own design, holding eight patents.

¹¹ Possibly Amacetta’s cousin, Ceres Brown (1821-1866)

¹² Cousin Peter may be Peter Scales

¹³ Fanny Ellsler was an Austrian-born ballerina. In 1840, she began a successful two-year tour the United States. Several newspapers report an incident in Baltimore in which a half dozen young men removed the horses & personally pulled the dancer’s carriage to her residence.

¹⁴ Victoria, daughter of Queen Victoria & Prince Albert, was born 21 November 184 & created Princess Royal in 1841.

¹⁵ Napoleon Bonaparte’s body, originally buried where he died on the island of Saint Helena, was moved in 1841 to its current resting place, the Hotel des Invalides in Paris.

Amacetta L. Summers to her father, John O. Laidley,
January 25, 1841

in the licks, we all meet once every two weeks and sew, the
young gentleman have petitioned to be admitted to our meeting
the ladies admitted them on the conditions that they pay 1\$
a year, and cut & sew carpet rags enough to carpet the aisles of
the church and also to run for the prize in the agricultural
society__ the ladies and gentlemen also have a singing society
I attended the last meeting, they really sing finely, I did wish you
could
hear, ^{them} they sang, I see them on their winding way,¹⁶
a great many others equally as fine, they have all the par[illegible]
they
intend, learning sacred music, they have a German music tea-
cher. Lou is a member__ Papa why could you not get on a steam-
boat with Cousin Madison¹⁷ and come & spend a few days with
us, it would do you good, would be recreation for you, don't you
think you could, we would be so glad, Cousin Madison told
us that Grandma¹⁸ & Aunt Jane¹⁹ had been quite sick but I hope
they are recovered. I hope the rest are well, and yourself, are
in as good health as usual, we shall expect a letter from you
soon, we are in daily expectation of hearing from Mary.²⁰
Lou has come from the temperance meeting, and has joined
it, she says, they had an excellent speech from Mr. Stubbs²¹_
Lou and I join in love to all, I hope ma does not want Lou.

¹⁶ The lyrics of this hymn, published in 1824, were taken from an unpublished poem by the Bishop Reginald Heber with music by B. Himes.

¹⁷ James Madison Laidley was Amacetta's first cousin. He was the original owner of the Glenwood Estate.

¹⁸ Grandma?

¹⁹ Aunt Jane

²⁰ Mary?

²¹ Mr. Stubbs? Episcopal priest?

305_319_08_01

Amacetta L. Summers to her father, John O. Laidley,

January 25, 1841

Your child most affectionately²²

²² Although this letter is not signed, comparison with known handwriting samples as well as the contents confirms that it was written by Amacetta Laidley Summers