Mary Boykin Chesnut's Illustrated Diary, Mulberry Edition

It is quite likely that Mary Boykin Chesnut visited the South Carolina College Library (now the South Caroliniana Library) on more than one occasion, possibly in the company of her father or her husband. She could not have done so as a college student, of course, because the college admitted only male students, all of whom, as a historical marker on the Horseshoe proclaims, “volunteered for Confederate service in 1861.” Nevertheless, Mary Chesnut’s name has been and ever will be entwined with that of the historic library because it is here that the various iterations of her famous Civil War diary are housed. In addition, the library now also holds the collection of almost 200 photographs in three albums that she amassed over the years containing images of her family and friends as well as other notables of the day.

Mary Chesnut’s original diaries and many of her family papers were previously placed at the South Caroliniana Library by Chesnut descendants, including several generations of Mary Chesnut’s nieces in the Glover and Metts families of Camden. The Civil War photographs have been placed at the South Caroliniana Library through the generosity of the Daniels family of Mulberry Plantation in Camden — Christopher W. Daniels, John H. Daniels Jr., Martha M. Daniels and Jane D. Moffett — who acquired the photographs at public auction in 2007 after they were lost to the family for more than 75 years. Visitors to

Simms Initiatives Website Goes Live

“No mid-19th-century writer and editor did more than William Gilmore Simms to frame white Southern self-identity and nationalism, shape Southern historical consciousness, or foster the South’s participation and recognition in the broader American literary culture,” said David Moltke-Hansen, director of the University Libraries’ Simms Initiatives to an audience of scholars and library supporters gathered on Nov. 14, 2011, in the Ernest F. Hollings Special Collections Library to celebrate the launch of the Simms Initiatives website (http://simms.library.sc.edu). The Simms Initiatives is a University Libraries’ project dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of information about Simms and his works. Speakers at the event included Dean of Libraries Tom McNally, Moltke-Hansen, Curator of the Simms Initiatives Todd Hagstette, and McClintock Professor of Southern Letters at the University of South Carolina David Shields.

Continued on page 19
Report from the Director

By Allen Stokes

At the Caroliniana, our patrons include undergraduate and graduate students, scholars in various disciplines and genealogists, all of whom are in search of information that may be found in manuscripts, published materials, university archives, visual materials, maps and oral histories. Over the years, every Caroliniana staff member has experienced the satisfaction of providing critical information to researchers by engaging in conversation. Careful and respectful listening are crucial elements in ensuring that interactions can be mutually beneficial to both the researcher and the staff member.

In today’s fast-paced world, conversation so often occurs through email and other social media. Each day, droves of students and faculty walk across campus while conversing on cell phones. Each year it seems there is an ever-larger number of reference inquiries handled through email. There are advantages and conveniences to this mode of responding to inquiries, but for most of us, person-to-person contact remains the most effective way of relating to patrons.

Outreach Programs

The South Caroliniana Library continues to provide outreach to other local historical agencies. We recently completed microfilming Methodist and Baptist church records of churches in Lake City, S.C., as well as a voter registration book and the minutes of the Lake City Council. Three members of our staff visited the Salley Archives in Orangeburg, S.C., to work with volunteer staff and to survey their collection. We discussed ways of enhancing accessibility, housing different types of materials and broadening community support. We recently loaned documents concerning the American Revolution in Camden, S.C., for an exhibit at the Camden Archives. In addition to microfilming our own newspaper collection, we have microfilmed newspapers for the Edgefield Archives and the Oconee County Library.

New Staff Members

We have spent an enjoyable summer and fall at the South Caroliniana Library getting acquainted with the following newly hired employees, and now, after almost an entire year, we are fully staffed.

Edward Blessing came to the Caroliniana Library from across campus. He served as a Curatorial Assistant in the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at Thomas Cooper Library and as a graduate assistant in McKissick Museum. Edward did undergraduate work in English literature at Campbell University and the University of Dundee in Scotland and completed his degree at the University of South Carolina in August 2008. He has since earned a certificate in museum management and a graduate degree in library and information science. Edward’s position, as an Archivist III, is new. He is focusing on processing large collections that require keen organizational skills. He is currently working with the Jak Smyrl collection that includes drawings, correspondence, clippings, images and other materials.

Fritz Hamer started work in September as the Curator of Published Materials after a career of 25 years at the State Museum as Assistant Curator and Curator of History. Fritz earned the B.A. in history at Arcadia University in Nova Scotia in 1976 and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in public history and history at the University of South Carolina. In addition to exhibitions that he curated at the State Museum, Fritz has conducted research in many repositories across South Carolina. He has authored several books, published articles and reviews in scholarly journals, presented papers at scholarly meetings, and administered grant-funded projects. Over the years Fritz has spent many hours as a researcher in the South Caroliniana Library. We are now the beneficiaries of his presence on the other side of the desk.

Andrea L’Hommedieu joined us as Oral Historian in June. Coming from Maine, Andrea had to become acclimated to Columbia in one of the warmest summers on record. A graduate of the University of Maine, Orono, and the University of Kentucky, where she received the M.L.I.S. degree in 1992, Andrea has worked at Bowdoin College on the Senator George Mitchell Oral History Project and at Bates College on the Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Project. She also has done extensive work on various laboring groups in New England, including textile workers, brick makers, and shoe workers. We are fortunate to have someone of Andrea’s background to continue the work in oral history begun by Nicholas Meriwether.

Linda Stewart joined the staff of the South Caroliniana Library in May as a Micrographics Technician. A graduate of the University of South Carolina, Linda is retired from a career with Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina, where she was the first female computer operator. By the time of her retirement she had advanced to managing a library of 250,000 magnetic tapes and optical discs complete with robotic silos and state-of-the-art image storage devices. She has volunteered with the Richland County Public Library and the Crayton Middle School Library. Linda’s hobbies include photography and scrapbooking, and, she says, these hobbies “make my new career in micrographics the opportunity to now work for the purpose of joy.”

Save the Date

We are all looking forward to the 76th Annual Meeting of the University South Caroliniana Society on April 28, 2012. The speaker will be Dr. William A. Link, the Richard J. Milbauer Professor of History at the University of Florida.
Intern Tim Mulholland spent the summer of 2011 in the cool rooms of the South Caroliniana Library, surrounded by 12 large boxes of photos, slides and letters. “I’m organizing the Willie Lee Buffington Collection, looking at each item, trying to figure out who wrote it, if it’s a letter, what the time period is, and putting it in context,” said the upstate New York native. “Mr. Buffington was a mill hand and a minister who was born in 1908 and grew up in rural South Carolina.

“His story is amazing. At the time he began his libraries project in 1930, he only had a dime, literally, only a dime. So he bought some stamps with that dime and wrote letters to people asking for gifts of books that he could start a library with. Someone in New York sent him 1,000 books in 1931, and he started his first library with them.”

Faith Cabin Libraries
Buffington built his Faith Cabin libraries, as they were called, in the 1930s, ’40s, and ’50s, using volunteer gifts of books and money. The libraries were put in poor, mostly African-American, communities that didn’t have libraries.

“He was a great person, and the collection reflects that,” said Mulholland, who completed his master’s degree in library and information science with an archival concentration in August 2011.

“Working with the collection is a learning opportunity for me now, and what I’m doing will eventually make the collection available to students, scholars and the public.

“I like the fact that you get to see history as it was,” he said. “It’s one thing to read about how people lived, but to see it from their own eyes and letters is what really appeals to me. Stories like Mr. Buffington’s you can’t really find unless you look in an archive.”

— Kathy Henry Dowell is a communications associate with the University Libraries.

“There is no better place to explore the stories of the people and history of our great state than the South Caroliniana Library. Visitors to the library can discover South Carolina’s past through letters, journals, newspapers, books and a wide assortment of images. This fall, two important figures in South Carolina history were celebrated at the libraries: Mary Boykin Chesnut and William Gilmore Simms.

Chesnut’s journals have long been one of the South Caroliniana Library’s great treasures. A reception in November celebrating the reunification of those journals with Chesnut’s photograph collection was a momentous occasion. We are honored that the library was selected by the family to care for these priceless images, and we are excited by the opportunity to make them available for study.

With the launch of the Simms Initiatives Website in November, the work of William Gilmore Simms is now more accessible than ever. This project was an enormous undertaking made possible with funding from the Watson-Brown Foundation and support from faculty and staff in many areas of the University Libraries. This ongoing project will one day be the largest single-author digital repository.

Exploring the materials in the South Caroliniana Library would not be possible without the dedicated library staff. This year we were fortunate to welcome four new faculty and staff members to the library who will organize, record, preserve and assist researchers in accessing the wonderful stories of our state.

I invite you to visit and let history unroll before you.

— Alexander Smith

—I go into my library and all history unrolls before me.”

— Alex Smith

Student Intern Discovers the Willie Lee Buffington Collection

BY KATHY HENRY DOWELL

—from the DEAN OF LIBRARIES

Tom McNally

COLUMNS

3
Monday—February 25th

Since I last wrote in my journal I have left—my dear husband—ill in bed—sick, I thought—too sick to write. Sunday morning it seemed like a dream—that I was home, and that I had been so ill and away. I found my husband well—and apparently glad to see me. To work! I had worked. I could hear Sarah's voice for the pen as I turned over in the night.

After church Captain Luper—a land—called—he left me so much on Table. What is the mind he is—

To the dear old man in his—days—then he had to give up the Bank—he was in the Mazinian's since two years. When he left he had to be—

Was to take his daughter for a year to Tehran. When life comes this kind of life is hard. 100% service. The other man has to be letter L. Virginia.
the library can now see the remarkable connection between Mary Chesnut's written descriptions of the historic figures in her diary and the actual images she collected.

In November, the library hosted a celebration of the reunification of the Civil War photographs with the diary and recognized the publication of the two-volume set, *Mary Chesnut’s Illustrated Diary*, Mulberry Edition. The first volume comprises Chesnut’s *A Diary from Dixie*, which was first published in 1905. The second volume, titled *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War Photograph Album*, contains reproductions of the photographs together with annotations for each. Editors include Martha M. Daniels, a member of the Chesnut family, and Barbara E. McCarthy, assistant archivist at Chesnut’s Camden, S.C., home, Mulberry Plantation. Daniels and her family have been instrumental in preserving the plantation, which is both her home and the site of the family archives.

The volume includes photographs of many prominent people who were known to Chesnut and her family. Some of these are President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis, Gen. Wade Hampton III and his family, Gen. John Bell Hood, author Alexandre Dumas, Elizabeth Allston Pringle (who was known as “the woman rice planter of South Carolina”), and Baltimore spy Hetty Cary.

After a welcome from Dean of Libraries Thomas F. McNally, the large crowd of library friends and history buffs attending the celebration heard remarks from Henry G. Fulmer, head of the Manuscripts Division at the library; Martha M. Daniels; Harvey S. Teal, former President of the University South Caroliniana Society; Dr. Julia A. Stern, Professor of English and American Studies at Northwestern University; and Dr. Elisabeth S. Muhlenfeld, Emerita President of Sweet Briar College.

Additional highlights of the event were music performed by Celtic harpist Deborah Brinson Willkie and delicious refreshments that included Mulberry Plantation Cake.

**MARY BOYKIN CHESNUT**

Mary Boykin Chesnut (1823-1886) was the daughter of a South Carolina governor and wife of U.S. Senator James Chesnut Jr. of South Carolina, who played a pivotal role in the Civil War’s first shot at Fort Sumter and was an aide to Confederate president Jefferson Davis. Well-educated and well-spoken, Mrs. Chesnut was perfectly positioned to observe and record Civil War events as they unfolded. She wrote about them in an extensive diary widely heralded as one of that era’s greatest works of literature.

Chesnut began her daily journal in February 1861. That March, after receiving a photo album as a gift from former South Carolina governor John Hugh Means, she began to collect photographs. The diary offers a first-person view of the Civil War from the upper reaches of Southern society. She details what it was like to sit atop a house in Charleston, S.C., and watch the shelling of Fort Sumter and, later, what it was like in Chester, S.C., to receive news of Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox.

**REMARKS BY HENRY G. FULMER**

The year was 1861. From Charleston, Mary Chesnut wrote, “Our hearts are in doleful dumps. And we are as gay, as madly jolly, as the sailors who break into the strong room when the ship is going down.”

Poised on the very brink of cataclysm, the Southern Confederacy literally held its breath. Amid that giddy mix of anticipation and dread, some sought diversion by visiting the studios of local photographers. “To be photographed is the rage just now,”
Mary Chesnut observed. And, recognizing the appeal of the photographer’s art, former South Carolina governor John Hugh Means presented Mrs. Chesnut a photo book, in which, she noted, “I am to pillory all celebrities.”

One hundred and fifty years later we gather here not with a sense of impending doom but with a warm feeling of fulfillment. A century and a half ago Mary Chesnut could hardly have known that on this day people would gather to again remember the words that she wrote, and to view the images that became in essence the mirrors of her memory.

Having spent a lifetime pouring her innermost thoughts into her diary and then painstakingly copying and recopying those words time and again, Mrs. Chesnut could little have known that one day the words and images she so meticulously collected and treasured would have been separated. Imagine how delighted, perhaps amazed, she would be to know that today they rest together in a building that would have been familiar to her — still read, still loved, still admired by those who seek in them a deeper understanding of our past. Imagine her delight at knowing they are again reunited, guarded, protected and preserved for all time.

Today represents a day when South Carolinians are once again giddy, giddy with the sense of pride that what for so long had been only dreamed of has now been fulfilled.

Succeeding generations of Mary Chesnut’s family have made this day possible. From the hands of a dear friend into whose care the diaries were entrusted and who shared them with the world, to the hands of those who entrusted them to the care of this institution, the reunification has become reality.

None could have dared hope that when Mary died and her photographs were separated from her writings, the photographs would be found far away having passed through the hands of more than a few who did not understand the importance of their return home.

But Martha Williams Daniels was one of those who never gave up hope. Through her determination, her dedication, and her commitment, Mrs. Daniels’ lifelong dream was realized when, four years ago, these precious images came home to Mulberry.

The publication this year of Mary Chesnut’s Civil War Photograph Album and an illustrated version of her Diary from Dixie represent a labor of love on the part of the present generation. Marty Daniels and Mulberry Plantation’s archivist, Barbara McCarthy, will be forever remembered for their contributions.

Today Mary Chesnut’s diary and her collection of Civil War images are reunited to be protected, to be cherished, and to be made available to future generations so that the epic can continue to be shared with those who will bear the responsibility of their preservation.

Were Mary Chesnut here today, she would smile, and she would join us in our applause for the woman of this generation who has made all of this possible. Join me now in welcoming Ms. Marty Daniels.

**Remarks by Martha M. Daniels**

Don’t we love a happy ending? And isn’t this a happy ending? My youngest brother, who is currently winning his battle with leukemia, wrote a song a number of years ago about being a child and sitting with his parents and hearing their bedtime stories, and the last two lines of that song are, “And the book is closed, and the room is filled with laughter.”
Today we celebrate, and I am so happy. I thank Dean McNally for his kindness, his hospitality, his diplomacy in helping us make all this happen; Allen Stokes for his leadership; Henry Fulmer for his superb scholarship and his kindness and his friendship, and he helped us every step of the way with the book. One of the first people who came to see the photographs and taught us about cartes de visite and photography and who was with us the whole way was Harvey Teal, and we are enormously grateful. Jim Kibler, this never would have happened without you. Jim knew when many other people had forgotten that the photos were out there, and he actually wrote C. Vann Woodward and told him about it. And I am humbled today to be in the presence of Dr. Betsy Muhlenfeld and Dr. Julia Stern, who really can tell you about Mary Chesnut. A special thank you to Barbara McCarthy. The detail in this book is her responsibility, and I applaud her.

Mary Chesnut was in a remarkable place in time, and she could see the unstoppable coming — the Civil War. In addition to her journals that chronicled these events, she collected the cartes de visite, which are photographs on card stock that were often exchanged like baseball trading cards. In that era, people had their photos taken so that they could give them away as mementos.

Mary had a worldview. Her photograph album was not a Confederate album; it was a panoramic, international view. She had photographs of clergy, foreign war correspondents, abolitionists, crowned heads of Europe, war widows, the northern politicians and people to whom the South appealed to come in to their side of the war.

If I had one message for South Carolinians today, I would say that in attics and trunks and cardboard shoe boxes all over this state are pieces of our common story, and maybe this can serve as an example, hopefully bringing more such gifts forward.

**Remarks by Harvey S. Teal**

Mary Chesnut wrote:

“A face as old and dried as a mummy and the color of tanned leather.”

“Fresh and fair with blue eyes and a boyish face but his head is white as snow.”

“A fat man’s cheeks quivering from being jostled on a train. I wondered why he did not tie up his face in his handkerchief to steady it.”

“Madame’s eyes were the counterpart of that broken winged hawk eye. It was the fiercest I have ever seen in a mortal head.”

“Clear brunette she is with reddish lips, the whitest teeth and glorious eyes. There is not other word for them.”

“Whose face is so strikingly handsome the wounded ones could not help looking at her.”

“Their faces are as unreadable as the Sphinx.”

“Her gloriously gray eyes that I looked into so often as we confided our very souls to each other.”

“Old India rubber face.”

“She has such a sweet face, such soft kind eyes; beautiful dark gray eyes. Such eyes are a poem. No wonder she had a long love story.”

“Her eyes were utterly without life, no expression whatever.”

“He laughed with his eyes as I looked at him.”

“The figure of Hercules, the face of Apollo,” cried an enthusiastic girl.”

“Her blue eyes were aflame and in response Wade smiled and
smiled until his face hardened into a fixed grin of embarrassment and annoyance.”

“An elderly Sister [of Charity], withered and wrinkled, yet with the face of an angel.”

“With those violet eyes she looked into the very souls of men.”

“Grim in death, with eyes staring wide open on the battle field, frozen they were, too.”

“She sits by her wounded husband, her eyes fixed; dead eyes to all.”

These quotes demonstrate just how keenly Mary Chesnut observed, studied and then described in her diary the eyes and faces of the cast of characters she met during the Civil War. As pigments of various shades and hues flowed from her pen onto the pages of her diary, she transformed some of these characters into “word portraits” of color, which, for a writer of lesser talent, would have been black and white only. Her colorful pen portraits equaled and often surpassed the images made with a camera by her photographic artist counterparts. These artists were confined to black and white at the time unless they hand-tinted their photographs.

With the same talent, skill and clarity guiding her pen, she also graphically portrayed the kaleidoscopically changing situations, events, locations, conditions and times she confronted during the war. As the war drew to a close, her pen poignantly pictured a world which, for her, had turned upside down. When Mary Chesnut finally laid down her pen, she had created on her Confederate canvas a magnificent pen picture of the Civil War without equal.

Over the sweep of time, historians, critics and other writers have agreed with this description and assessment of Mary Chesnut’s work.

In 1905, Isabella Martin stated in *A Diary from Dixie*, “In Mary Chesnut’s diary are vivid pictures… Her words ring so true that they start echoes.”

C. Vann Woodward used artistic terms to describe her writing: “It gives a vivid picture of the life she led.” “… her unforgettable portrait of the Old Colonel.” “Speaking of the Chesnut family as Mary pictures it at Mulberry…”

The noted author and literary critic Robert Penn Warren used similar artistic or “painting” terms in his description of Mary Chesnut’s work in *The Boston Globe*: “Her intimate view of the actors and actions of great consequence and as a human picture — tender, outraged, comic — of a great war. There is nothing quite like this book.”

With her diary and journals and books based on them published in 1905, 1949, 1981, 1989 and 1990; a Pulitzer Prize for *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War* by C. Vann Woodward; her induction into the South Carolina Hall of Fame; and her home Mulberry being designated a National Historic Landmark, could we reasonably hope for more from Mary Chesnut today? Perhaps not, but there is more! Much, much more!!

During the Civil War, while she wrote her much-acclaimed diary, Mary Chesnut conscientiously collected into photographic albums images of many of the cast of characters she included in her diary, a farsighted activity which further separates her from other literary writers or historians. We now have these lost-for-generations albums she collected for use with her diary and journals. Mary Chesnut knew her pen combined with the camera would produce an unbeatable combination.

We can thank Martha Daniels, a member of the current generation of the Mary Chesnut family, for mounting the campaign
whereby the family purchased the albums at auction in 2007. Martha, her daughter Marty and archivist Barbara McCarthy busily began researching them, looking toward integrating the photographs into a publication with the diary and journals. After Martha’s time ran out in 2009, Marty and Barbara completed Mary Chesnut’s work by producing this magnificent two-volume work, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War Photographic Album* and *Mary Chesnut’s Diary from Dixie*. Her collected photographs are on display here today.

There can be little doubt the hand on the pilot wheel guiding human endeavors directed these three ladies to complete the work of another, that great lady, Mary Boykin Chesnut — that work she began some 151 years ago. Because her literary work has now become a recognized timeless classic, join me in issuing this proclamation: Mary Chesnut now belongs to the ages.

**REMARKS BY DR. JULIA A. STERN**

I want to thank Henry Fulmer for inviting me to participate in this celebration of the installation of Mary Chesnut’s photograph album in the Caroliniana Library. I must also express my gratitude to Marty Daniels and her late mother, Martha Williams Daniels, for their remarkable and enduring generosity with their time, wisdom and unstinting sharing of unpublished family papers. Without these things, I never could have written my book on Mary Chesnut’s Civil War epic. I must also express my gratitude to Dr. Elisabeth Muhlenfeld, president emerita of Sweet Briar College, the author of the biography of the writer that has remained our gold standard for over 30 years, as well as co-editor with the late Professor C. Vann Woodward of Chesnut’s original 1860s diaries, and editor of her unfinished novels. None of my own work would have been possible without Henry’s aid, Marty’s personal and archival generosity, or Betsy’s foundational scholarship and incisive reader’s reports for the University of Chicago Press.

I had the privilege to talk in 2006 with the late Martha Williams Daniels and her daughter and fellow archivist Marty Daniels about their yearning to recover Mary Chesnut’s wartime photograph album, which had been lost for nearly 100 years and bought by private collectors who, both women feared, would plunder the volumes and sell off particular images for profit, destroying the integrity of this highly coveted and long-sought-after artifact. So it was with breathless excitement that Marty called me in 2006 to discuss the possibility that the family could reclaim the album at an auction that was taking place that coming weekend, two years after our initial discussion; Martha senior wanted to raise the troops to collaborate on the purchase of this unique and long-desired family and cultural treasure. Two days later, I got another message from Marty that her mother’s agents had been successful and had acquired the album, and that they avidly awaited its arrival at Mulberry Plantation. Martha senior only lived another several months, alas, but she had the pleasure of perusing the album with great care and attention; it always struck me as karmic that she had been able to restore the album to Mulberry (and eventually the Caroliniana Library) before she died.

It took an additional two years until I saw the album myself, on the joyful occasion of a series of events Marty so generously concocted to celebrate the publication of my book on the literary — epic — significance of Chesnut’s revised narrative; then, during some down time in the archives with Marty and Barbara McCarthy, her fellow-traveler and colleague, on my last afternoon, while they had returned to their annotating of every photograph that remained, I got to “play” in the albums myself, actually turning pages in wonder and incredulity as Chesnut’s cast of characters came to iconographical life in the pages of these volumes.

But what most fascinated me was neither general nor poet nor politician nor journalist, southern or northern. Seeing Abraham Lincoln’s image, I thought of Chesnut’s remark concerning poet Paul Haynes’s son, who said of that photograph: “But Mrs. Chesnut!!! He is a traitor!!!” Instead, I returned to the image that Henry Fulmer and Harvey Teal, leading scholar of the history of photography in South Carolina, had showed me several days earlier of a handsome, elegant, African-American woman in her 20s, wearing a beautiful striped satin dress and contrasting turban.

Henry knew that my idée fixe with Chesnut involved trying to understand her relationship to the black men and women held in bondage who were her daily companions, particularly Molly, her slave maid who proposed running a butter and egg business together on shares in 1862, and Laurence, General Chesnut’s slave valet. Nothing is known of Laurence’s postwar fate, a reality that gibes with his uncharacteristic drunk and disorderly conduct while the Chesnuts were refugees in South and North Carolina toward the end of the war.

Molly, however, resurfaces as late as 1878, in an account book that Chesnut kept to record sales of butter and eggs and other expenditures. “Three dollars for Molly, for February,” her former mistress noted. Chesnut’s entire income for that month in 1878 was only 12 dollars (beyond rent for “Negro houses” and an annuity from Mary Cox Chesnut, the General’s late mother.) That is to say, Mary Chesnut is paying Molly 25 percent of their profits because the business is Molly’s 1862 brainchild and because she has done, only can imagine, being younger and stronger than her invalid former mistress, the lion’s share of the work. Chesnut’s nieces Serena and...
Mary send love to Molly in most of their letters through the 1870s, affording us another piece of evidence that Molly remained with Chesnut long after the war.

I want to return to the un-captioned photograph of the black woman in the album. She is stunning, composed, and has very large hands. (Nearly every person to whom I’ve shown this picture has made this comment. Fascinatingly, it was the first response of the 30-something Polish American woman who has cleaned my house for over 10 years — “Look at her hands!!! They’re huge!”) I read this detail as an emblem of the ultra-capability the woman radiates from the image, a feature impossible to overlook, embodying not just competence but authority.

Of the some 200 photographs in the album, only six lack captions. Marty and Barbara have no reading for some of the distinguished looking gentlemen in this subset. But what do we make of the anonymous African-American woman in the silk dress, posed for a portrait in 1863 at an elegant photographer’s studio in Charleston? From a northern point of view, she must be a freed woman, most likely emancipated by the President’s Proclamation, or perhaps a member of the tiny free black middle class in South Carolina. To Southern slave owners, the federal government has no jurisdiction over the Confederate States of America, a sovereign republic. From all appearances, this woman likely is the slave of an affluent mistress. Whatever we imagine about this woman’s status, it is unlikely that she wound up at Quinby’s studio in an elegant and costly dress without some sort of white patron.

But most important is the fact that, whoever she is, her likeness found a destination in Mary Chesnut’s photograph album. Accordingly, Harvey Teal, Henry Fulmer, Marty Daniels, Barbara McCarthy and I all hypothesize that this woman is Mary Chesnut’s maid, Molly.

What to make of the lack of caption? One possible reason for its absence might be that Chesnut and all who shared her world would not have needed a narrative or even a name to decipher who was posing in this picture. Molly attended Chesnut throughout the war and beyond. All of Chesnut’s extended family knew her well. Post-bellum, Chesnut’s beloved niece Serena (Princess Bright Eyes) ended several letters from Baltimore with “and send our love to Molly.”

While some might read this as noblesse oblige, I would argue that for decades a powerful emotional bond existed between Mary Chesnut and Molly and that her most cherished relations (her surrogate children) understood and honored that connection. Cynics could argue that Chesnut did not deem Molly worthy of a caption, but I strongly doubt that this was the case. Or, one could opine that, as the photograph albums circulated long post-bellum, a random seeming black female figure, possibly a slave, failed to pique the interest of the wealthy collectors who purchased the volumes. Whatever the rationale, the unnamed woman remains one of the few black figures out of almost 200 portraits; on those grounds alone, surely her presence in Chesnut’s restored photograph album is significant. With this revelation, which gives me imaginative chills, my idée fixe regarding Chesnut and the blacks who surrounded her comes full circle. I had stopped believing that we ever could learn more about Molly. But with this extraordinary photograph, in the annotation of which I had the good fortune to participate, that inquiry is just beginning.

I want to close by drawing a connection between the images in the album and my sense that Chesnut’s revised narrative is an epic work of art. Let’s consider Marty’s and Barbara’s edition of the photograph album and the pictures it contains as illustrations for
Chesnut’s revised Civil War narrative; in that regard, we can think of the photographs as ekphrasis, the Greek term for a work of art residing inside a work of literature. So, for example, in *Iliad* 18:478-608, Homer presents us with Achilles’ armor, and particularly his shield, crafted by Hephaestus, endowed with Olympian qualities; the gods want to keep Achilles safe against the Trojans so that he can avenge the death of his best friend, Patroklos, whom Hector had killed when he mistook him for Achilles in the Greek hero’s borrowed armor.

Scholars point out the elaborate engravings on the shield, its concentric circles starting from the center and moving outward: the earth, sky and sea, the sun, the moon, and the constellations; a city at peace (a wedding and a legal case) and a city at war (an ambush and a battle); a field being ploughed for the third time; a king’s estate where the harvest is being reaped; a vineyard with grape pickers; cattle attacked by savage lions; herdsmen and dogs trying to beat off the aggressors; a sheep farm; a large, smooth floor (sprinkled with wheat sheaves) where young men and women are dancing; and the great stream of ocean.

Just as Achilles’ shield contains the entire world in its contours, so does the epic for which it stands in miniature. Epics are encyclopedic; they contain divinities and theology, history and politics, quotidian domestic life, a trip to the underworld (I argue that Chesnut makes two such journeys, to Alabama and her sister’s house of the dead, and in the return to Mulberry after the war, with old Colonel Chesnut a ghost of himself), oral traditions of music, poetry, song, catalogues and epithets, descriptions of the foundation of a culture, and a fault line revealing the inevitable deconstruction of that culture. So Chesnut’s revised narrative contains accounts of many lifetimes’ worth of reading in the literature of America, England, France, Russia, history, theology, prayer, poetry, novels and plays that she catalogues in her revised narrative. She gives us slave religious worship and discusses the cultural practices of her Jewish friend Mem Cohen. We see the Confederate government and military policy, and their fates. She shares representations of daily life on the home front of the white planter elite. She makes two trips to the underworld, as I mentioned. She includes reams of poetic verse and song, including slave spirituals, catalogues of meals, readings, women’s fashions, people attending receptions and soirees. Hers is a fifty-four-copybook account of the Confederate world in formation and the story of its unraveling before her eyes. As we consider Chesnut’s revised Civil War narrative an epic masterpiece, so we might begin to study her photograph collection for the ekphrastic insights it can add to our ongoing understanding of the richness of her writing and its complement, her collagist achievement.

**Remarks by Dr. Elisabeth S. Muhlenfeld**

Thanks to Dean McNally, Henry Fulmer, Allen Stokes, Harvey Teal and Marty Daniels for including me in so joyous an occasion.

Special thanks to Julia Stern for her insightful words. When I first learned of her proposed book, I told a colleague she was writing a book that needed to be written — one I had always wanted to write. I must tell you that she has done a fascinating job helping us understand Mary Chesnut’s skill and import as a writer of the first order. Hers is a subject that has been dear to my heart for decades.

As a young graduate student, I came to South Carolina to study at the then fledgling Southern Studies Program run by Professor James B. Meriwether. I arrived in the mid-70s, just as Dr. C. Vann Woodward came to work on a new edition of Chesnut’s famous diary. Woodward
knew that the famous *A Diary from Dixie* was not written during the Civil War but crafted nearly 20 years later, from journals kept during the war itself. His initial intention was to publish that original material. (In fact, on several occasions, he said to me, “I just can’t allow Mary to get away with” rewriting her own words.) As he immersed himself in the project, however, he became so impressed with Chesnut’s masterful revision that he published it in a nearly complete, scholarly edition, entitled *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War*. It was my good fortune to work with Dr. Woodward, eventually leading a team that transcribed all of the diary manuscripts — including thousands of pages of revisions.

I remember with absolute clarity my first visit with Dr. Woodward to Mulberry on a lovely winter afternoon. I was simply star-struck when I entered the foyer of the grand plantation house and was greeted by the elegant and supremely intelligent Martha Daniels, who led us into the middle library, touched a single match to logs laid in a grand fireplace and provided for us a perfect fire. I tell you I felt as if I had stepped into a movie — especially when Marty’s father, “Jack” Daniels, popped in, dressed in full hunting garb, and declared it was a “marvellous day” for shooting quail. I remember absolutely nothing that was discussed — only that when I got back to my little graduate-student house, it seemed miniscule. In the months to come, I was to visit Martha Daniels and Coy Hill many times, as both helped not only with the Woodward project, but then with my own work when I set about to do a biography of Mary Chesnut. At the time, I felt I was imposing each time I had to bother Martha Daniels. In retrospect, I think that the more questions I asked, the more involved and invested she became.

Marty Daniels is surely her mother’s daughter. If you haven’t already done so, read her absolutely wonderful introduction to the 1905 edition of the diary in which she recounts those years, concluding with our champagne toast at Mary’s grave at the end of a wonderful celebration of “Mary Boykin Chesnut Day.”

The occasion that brings us together now is another significant one in Chesnut studies — the publication of Mary Chesnut’s photograph albums — lost and nearly forgotten for decades (and were it not for the good auspices of Dr. John O’Brien, very nearly lost forever).

The homecoming of these cartes de visite to South Carolina and the South Caroliniana Library, where they will be reunited with Chesnut’s journals and manuscript novels, brings home to me a couple of observations.

First, the photograph albums highlight how seriously Chesnut approached her self-imposed job of chronicler of her times. With only a few years of formal schooling, she was nevertheless richly and broadly educated. From the outset, as the Confederacy formed and Mary began keeping her diary, she proceeded quite deliberately to immerse herself in the work of earlier memoirists and historians. We have long known that she clipped and preserved news articles, sought out the latest magazines and newspapers from here and abroad, read all the au courant books she could get her hands on. These photograph albums attest to how carefully she set about — from March 1861 well into the Reconstruction years — to amass as full a historical record as possible.

Secondly, these cartes de visite are a reminder of the power of visual images. Despite the fact that she was not trained as a photographer, Chesnut understood the potential of photographs to add dimension to her diary entries. As she wrote in her introduction to the 1905 edition, “I have preserved so many of these portraits in the collection that I can hardly think of the book without them.”

In conclusion, I want to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to this special event — to Dr. Woodward and Martha Daniels for their tireless efforts in bringing these cartes de visite to light, and to all those who have supported Chesnut’s work over the years. Mary Chesnut, a true Confederaite, would have been thrilled with this homecoming.

Mary Chesnut

COLUMNS

MARY CHESTNUT

COLUMNS
As Marty Daniels’ introduction suggests, the photograph albums themselves contain many wonderful images, but two special treasures. For the first time, we are able to see Mary Chesnut’s nephew Johnny Chesnut and Mary’s maid Molly — both important to her written work.

As I have discussed elsewhere, Chesnut uses as a structuring device the three most important men in her life. Chesnut’s father-in-law, James Chesnut Sr., monarch of all he surveys, serves as archetype of the antebellum world. In 1861, the latter is a vigorous, courtly man; by 1865, we see him, “blind, deaf — apparently as strong as ever, certainly as resolute of will.... The last of the lordly planters who ruled this Southern world.” Chesnut’s portraits of her father-in-law throughout the entire revised journal punctuate her most evocative passages about plantation life.

Just as old Colonel Chesnut personifies the antebellum world, husband James Chesnut Jr., statesman, first senator to resign his seat, looking handsome as he dashes about Charleston in a red sash, represents the Confederacy — marked in Chesnut’s mind by high ideals marred by anachronistic beliefs and indecisions. It is Chesnut’s nephew John Chesnut (“Johnny,” the model for her hero in her manuscript novel “The Captain and the Colonel”), who becomes the “Cool Captain” in her revised journal, the cheerful young man, “the very perfection of a lazy gentleman who cares not to move unless it be for a fight, a dance, or a fox hunt.” Following Appomattox, it is Johnny who can put the past aside and stride forward. In the original diary, Johnny appears only occasionally, although Mary and James are deeply fond of him and proud of his service. In the book of the 1880s, however, he assumes increasing importance at war’s end. It is Johnny who wants to get on with life: “And Johnny! His country in mourning, with as much to mourn for as country ever had!... To my amazement he wants me to give a picnic at Mulberry. Just now I would as soon dance on my father’s grave.” Johnny personifies youth and embodies what hope there is in 1865.

Chesnut gives absolutely no hint in her revised journal, written in the early 1880s, that Johnny had in fact died of illness in 1863. I know of no more remarkable or moving indication of how carefully she worked to prevent any anachronism from sneaking into her book. The photograph albums reveal a special poignancy, for there are two pictures of young John Chesnut. One taken just before the war shows a young man delicately handsome, almost a Byronic figure, but a second depicts a young soldier, now bearded, thin, and subdued.

The photograph albums yield as well a likeness about which Julia Stern has commented eloquently: a picture of a slim, straight, very dignified black woman who is almost certainly Mary’s maid Molly, who traveled with her as a slave during the Civil War and stayed on as her servant in later years, running a small dairy business with Mary that brought spending money into the household. Although Molly is not mentioned in the original diaries, she is a significant presence in the book of the 1880s.

Molly symbolizes perhaps the most complex issue Mary Boykin Chesnut had to deal with as she transformed diary into book: slavery. Her treatment of the defining element of her society is multifaceted, and her own thoughts and emotions regarding slavery are complex. She shared the racism of her era; at times her demeaning comments are painful to read.

Nevertheless, ample evidence exists that Chesnut developed abolitionist sentiments as a teenager and remained unalterably opposed to slavery all her life. In her original Civil War diary, she finds the sight of a slave auction sickening. She famously muses in 1861, “I wonder if it be a sin to think slavery a curse to any land.” Sumner said not one word of this hated institution which is not true.

Some critics have sought to show that Chesnut softened her opposition to slavery in the 20 years between diary and book, and that in solidarity with her class during Reconstruction, her racist sentiments intensified. The criticism is unwarranted. Quite the contrary. As I have discussed elsewhere, in the original diary, slaves and the subject of slavery seldom appear, but throughout her work of the 1880s, slavery and slave culture permeate the book. The murder by slaves of Chesnut’s relative Betsy Witherspoon dominates the months of September and October 1864. Chesnut shows the consternation caused by the murder; the fear of slave insurrection, usually just below the surface, now laid bare; the interdependence of slave and master; the wishful thinking of the whites that their slaves can be counted on to care for them as “family.” As war marches on, Chesnut tells of savage masters and mistresses, and callous friends who abuse their servants. She provides a remarkably detailed picture of the work done by the house slaves at Mulberry, trained by her venerable mother-in-law to be ready in the middle of the night to warm a second nightgown with irons kept always at the ready should their mistress become cold. (For much of this, one must read the Woodward edition of the journal, Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, for in the 1905 edition, many incidents at Camden, Mulberry and Columbia are omitted.)

Particularly when she is in Camden, Chesnut the observer provides repeated glimpses of slave culture, almost always from a distance. She looks down from her third-story window at Mulberry to see the half a dozen coachmen laughing, talking, “bookling” gloves, and “small footmen . . . playing marbles under the trees.” She goes one afternoon to the “negro church on the plantation” at Mulberry and listens to the minister preach “hell fire — so hot I felt singed.” But for the most part, she shows the reader the eerie inscrutability of the slaves from earliest days of the war until its end. As news comes of Lee’s surrender, Chesnut agonizes over how her world could have come to ruin. “And these negroes” she observes, “— unchanged. The shining black mask they wear does not show a ripple of change — sphinxes.” Taken on the whole, Mary Chesnut’s brilliant book perhaps presents a fuller and more nuanced picture of white and black living side by side through the Civil War years than any other book of the era. Thus it seems to me fitting, somehow, that although we think this photograph is of Molly, she will likely remain unknowable.

So Marty Daniels and Barbara McCarthy have provided us with abundant treasures here that help us understand Mary Chesnut and her world a bit better. It is a particular personal pleasure to be a part of today’s celebration of that fact. Thank you and congratulations.
REMEMBER ...
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA MEMORIES

BY GENE ATKINSON

When everyone would dress up for the football games? Females in wool suits, hats and high heels, males in a coat and tie.

When all you had to do to enter a football game was to show your ID? No tickets!

When very few students wore blue jeans or sweatshirts, as styles were a little dressier then?

When female students could not wear pants, only dresses or skirts? If they did wear pants, they had to wear a long coat to cover up their legs.

When freshman girls could only go out three nights a week? Curfews were at 11 p.m. on weeknights and midnight on Saturday.

When dormitories had only one phone per hall?

When the old Field House (basketball venue) burned two times in a matter of months in 1968, thus hectically pushing up the construction schedule to open the new Carolina Coliseum? In fact, they were still installing the turnstiles and other items an hour or two before the first game.

When physical education classes were held on the field in front of the Undergraduate Library (now Thomas Cooper Library)?

When Capstone was built as an honors dorm for females? Shuttle buses were used to transport the girls because it was “so far” from the main campus.

When big names performed at concerts before entertainers’ fees skyrocketed? For example, on the night before the Carolina-Clemson football game in 1965, a concert at the Township Auditorium featured the
Lovin’ Spoonful, the Shirelles and the Supremes, all big-time names on the same bill.

When Dr. Wade Batson took classes on field trips to identify plants and trees? Students had to really be in shape to climb over the hillsides, briar patches and riverbanks.

When Dr. Charles Coolidge in history class looked down from his 6’6” height, intimidating students with his questions? He also led the graduation processions every year for years carrying USC’s ceremonial mace.

When everyone used to go out to the Saluda River rapids for sun and fun?

When ice cream was five cents a scoop at the Gamecock Room in the Russell House, and guys would get four or five scoops?

When the maintenance men in their green coveralls were called the “Green Beetles?”

When Kate Salley’s [Palmer] cartoons in The Gamecock newspaper featured “Terrible Tom and the Boys” (President Tom Jones)?

When cars could drive as well as park on the Horseshoe?

When most of the campus buildings were painted “battleship gray?”

When there were only 10 minutes between classes?

When there were Saturday classes until 1 p.m.?

When there were classes on Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving?

When it snowed and students would get cafeteria trays out of South Dormitory (now Patterson Hall) and sled down the steep hill, sometimes landing in the pond?

When Cogburn’s Grill always had a waiting line for their famous steaks?

When the Dairy Bar on Main Street was run by all those little ol’ ladies who served their famous pimento burgers?

When the Brick Shack (a cubby-hole-like restaurant on Pendleton Street) had all those old comic books to read?

When students could eat at the Lavender Scallion, the Cornell Arms Cafeteria, or the Kollege Korner?

When the Cornell Arms Pharmacy would cash a $10 check and only charged 10 cents to do so?

— Gene Atkinson, ’69, is a member of the society’s Executive Council.
Top left: “Look Mare, No Mom,” 2006-08 (Collection of the artist)
Top right: “Mare’s Breath Over the Fence,” 1992 (Collection of Shoshanna Abeles)
Bottom left: “Self Portrait with Horse’s Skull,” 2001 (Collection of the artist)
Bottom right: “Portrait of a Parasomniac,” 2008 (Collection of the artist)
Sigmund Abeles, a noteworthy South Carolina artist who has selected the South Caroliniana Library as the official repository for his personal papers and manuscripts, was spotlighted by two shows at the Columbia Museum of Art during the summer and fall of 2011.

“It Figures” highlighted Abeles’ work as painter, sculptor, draftsman and printmaker while the adjacent exhibition, “An Artist’s Eye: A Journey through Modern and Contemporary Art with Sigmund Abeles,” featured representative works by fellow artists selected by Abeles as guest curator. A promotional statement on the museum’s website noted, “Sigmund, now 77, embodies the kind of insightful critical thinking and pure joy in artistic expression that comes from close observation and decades of experience in the art world. His reputation as a member of the National Academy, an artist and teacher, and his connections to South Carolina ... gave him the perfect set of ‘eyes’ to form ‘An Artist’s Eye.’ ‘It Figures’ is intended as a complement to that show — a way for the visitor to understand visually the artistic makeup, philosophy and lineage of Sigmund Abeles that finds its very personal expression in ‘An Artist’s Eye.’ Each show enhances the other. With ‘It Figures,’ we are granted access to Sig’s creative mind. Having the ability to appreciate his work as an artist informs what we see through Sig’s eyes as a curator.”

A portion of the “An Artist’s Eye” exhibit and a different selection of Abeles’ works will be on display Oct. 2012-Jan. 2013 at the Franklin B. Burroughs-Simeon B. Chapin Art Museum in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., to an orthodox Jewish father and a self-proclaimed “modern orthodox” mother, two-year-old Sigmund Abeles and his mother left Brooklyn (and his father) in 1936 for Myrtle Beach, S.C., where his mother built a boardinghouse. Although Myrtle Beach was largely bereft of an art scene, it was along the Grand Strand that Abeles was introduced to his two passions — horses and art — for it was there that the outdoor garden sculptures at Brookgreen Gardens became his first studio. “I taught myself to draw from all those mostly nude figures that never moved,” he recalls. And in his childhood encounters with those bronzes by Anna Hyatt Huntington, for the first time, he says, “I literally made contact with art.”

During his high school years, Abeles came under the influence of Gerard Tempesta, an artist who had moved to Myrtle Beach in 1950. It was an apprenticeship under this artist that “so set my head and work that I gained little from all my subsequent formal art school study.”

First enrolled as a pre-med student at the University of South Carolina, Abeles persevered with art as his chosen vocation and eventually graduated with a degree in fine arts from USC. During his time in Columbia, Abeles befriended a group of artists including J. Bardin, David Van Hook and Catherine Rembert, all of whom were associated with the Columbia Museum of Art (then at its Senate Street location) and the adjacent Richland Art School.

Despite the prevailing winds of abstraction that were sweeping across the nation, Abeles remained resolute as a representational, figural artist. In 1954 he set off for New York City. But New York at this time had a far different outlook on art. As Abeles recalls, “While Abstract Expressionism surely did elevate New York as the new center of art ... and ... the art was damned exciting ... there was just so much damaging fallout. Terrific representational painters were now ignored, not shown or written about again; seriously, major figures and their careers were marginalized, even destroyed.” “I honestly felt like I was living in an art dictatorship,” he has written.

Between those early years in New York and moving there again in 1994, Abeles taught for 30 years in New England, first at the Swain School of Design in New Bedford, Mass., and then at Wellesley College, Boston University and the University of New Hampshire.

‘THE HIGH CALLING OF VISUAL IMAGERY’

Today, figural artists from the second half of the 20th century are experiencing a renaissance, a period of rediscovery and reevaluation. Artists like Abeles, the recent museum shows point out, remind us that the most common subject in the history of art — the human figure — still has the power to capture our imagination. “I have to be as true to my conviction of the high calling of visual imagery that hopefully has resonance with other human beings and cannot simply allow photography to take over the visual realm exclusively.”

As a member of the National Academy Museum of Art, Abeles has received numerous awards, and his work, frequently included in group shows, also has been the subject of many solo exhibitions. In addition to being widely collected privately, he is represented in the permanent collections of such institutions as the British Museum, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Fogg Museum of Harvard University, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Academy of Art, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Museo de Arte, Ponce, Puerto Rico.

THE LIBRARY’S SIGMUND ABELLES COLLECTION

The accretion of Abeles’ personal papers and other manuscripts, 1955-2010, received to date by the South Caroliniana Library are representative of the repository’s ongoing partnership with the artist. Comprised in large part of correspondence files, the collection also contains appointment books, consignment sheets and sales records, invitations to exhibitions, notices and catalogues, photographs, and miscellaneous printed items, including published reproductions of his work.
Correspondence with collectors, gallery owners, and museum directors and curators documents the exhibition and sale of his work. In addition to letters from family, former students, printers, collectors, museum directors and curators are core units of correspondence with other artists, some of them former teachers and fellow academicians, many of them among late-20th-century America’s most distinguished figurative painters and printmakers.

Of particular significance are the files of correspondence with David Van Hook and J. Bardin, two artists who, along with Abeles and Jasper Johns, were a seminal part of the art world in South Carolina during the 1950s and 1960s. The letters from Van Hook, who began a lengthy administrative and curatorial association with the Columbia Museum of Art in 1951, present a 35-year insider’s view of the museum and the local art scene. The letters from Bardin also convey vital information on art and artists in the state from 1961 to 1992. In June 1992, for example, Bardin observed, “The local art scene (if there’s much of any here) seems dead & buried for the hot season ahead. Your show [McKissick Museum’s Sigmund Abeles Retrospective] is the class act. It offers something for the few loyalists, the few stranded here and the few visitors.”

The esteem in which artist colleagues further afield than those in South Carolina have held Abeles for years resounds throughout a letter of 15 February 1988 from fellow American artist Herbert Waters. “I feel that your body of work is both strong and beautiful, and that you come so very close to uniting Art and Life. It is something to create pattern and form that explain and enhance the poignancy and beauty and even tragedy of life, as well as humor.”

Summing up his own work, Abeles has written in “Who’s Who in America,” “I strive to observe life with a penetrating eye that I hope can go beyond surface reality to reveal psychological and visual truth, even magic.” And, perhaps, it was that same striving to observe and record life with a penetrating eye that led this iconic American artist to partner with his alma mater in the preservation of his personal archives so that others — of both today and tomorrow — may have greater insight not only into his life but also into the art scene of which he has been a quintessential part for well more than six decades.

— Henry G. Fulmer is Curator of Manuscripts at the South Caroliniana Library.
The Simms Initiatives website was constructed during the past 18 months under the leadership of Moltke-Hansen and Hagstette. Funding support came from the Watson-Brown Foundation of Thomson, Ga. Bibliographic consultants included Visiting Simms Research Professor Jim West, who is the Sparks Professor of English at Pennsylvania State University, and Jim Kibler, Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Georgia.

Kate Boyd, head of the University Libraries’ Digital Collections, and her staff created the website using materials from the South Caroliniana Library, which is the largest single repository of Simms manuscripts and publications in existence. The site will feature thousands of works by Simms, including more than 130 books.

‘A RESOURCE FOR SCHOLARS’

“Our goal is to produce a comprehensive bibliographic database that will be a resource for scholars studying the works of a man who was at the nexus of American literary culture,” said Moltke-Hansen. He added that the site should appeal to anyone interested in 19th-century American culture, the development of American literature, the literary elite of the mid-19th century and other topics related to the era, from the Civil War to the westward movement.

In addition to full-text online versions of Simms’s books and other works, the site will include biographical material and a bibliography of all Simms’s published writings. Future additions will include education-directed materials for teachers and students, visual and cartographic resources, and a growing array of links to other related, digitally available materials.

USC Press will issue 62 volumes by and about Simms in print-on-demand editions by the end of 2013. The first of these is The Letters of William Gilmore Simms, Volume VI. Also in press is William Gilmore Simms’s Unfinished Civil War: Consequences for a Southern Man of Letters, with an introduction by Shields and contributions from Moltke-Hansen, Hagstette, Kibler and others.

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS

Charleston native William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870) was a leading literary figure of his day. His works include novels, short stories, essays, poems and book reviews. He was also an influential editor of cultural journals.

Simms was a respected contemporary of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Washington Irving, Henry Wordsworth Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Fenimore Cooper and Edgar Allan Poe, who called Simms “the best novelist which this country has, on the whole, produced.”

“Simms was definitely one of the most significant figures in antebellum Southern literature,” said Hagstette. “He was heavily plugged into the literary culture of the South, as well as the New York and Philadelphia literary circles. He had vast correspondence with many major writers and intellectuals of his day.”
MEMORIALS

In Memory of
Mr. John B. McLeod

Contribution from
The Rev. Dr. Roger M. Gramling

In Honor of
Christie Fant

Contribution from
Mr. Ben F. Hornsby Jr.

University South Caroliniana Society
CAROLINIANA COLUMNS
Issue No. 30
Fall 2011

Executive Committee
Mr. Kenneth L. Childs, president
Dr. William C. Schmidt, vice president
Mr. Franklin Beattie, vice president
Dr. Allen Stokes, secretary/treasurer

Editor
Nancy H. Washington

Photographer
Keith McGraw

Caroliniana Columns is published semiannually for members and friends of the University South Caroliniana Society.

No part of this publication may be used without written permission.

Correspondence may be addressed to the editor at Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208.

The University of South Carolina is an equal opportunity institution.