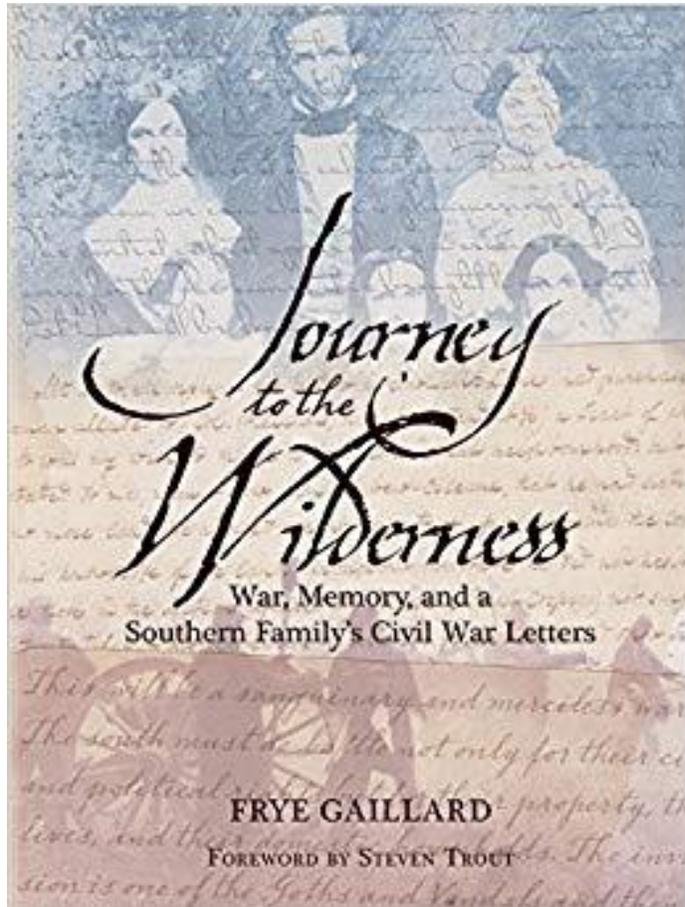


# Gaillard Family Civil War Letters



*The Gaillard letters handed down to Frye Gaillard and included in his book were not original, handwritten documents, but typescripts made from the originals. The images here are of calligraphic reconstructions of the letters made for the film.*

May 24, 1861

Dear John,

Your letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> of April was received in due time and you may think it very strange that I have not sooner replied to it. Your letter found me prostrated from a bowel complaint from which I have not entirely recovered. It has been a prevalent disease in our city.

But the more immediate object in view in now writing you is to reply to your request of a remittance. I find at the close of the week, I have not a dollar in the house to add to the proceeds of the succeeding week so that it is literally with me from hand to mouth. What the issue out of our difficulties will be no human foresight can indicate.

This will be a sanguinary and merciless war. The south must do battle not only for their civil and political rights but for their lives, and their domestic households.

The invasion is one of the Goths and Vandals and they should be met in no compromising spirit.

Thomas

April 1862

Oh this terrible war! Who can measure the troubles - the affliction - it has brought upon us all? It has pleased the Almighty to inflict upon us this severe chastisement - and it is our duty to submit in Christian spirit. We can not foresee His ultimate purpose in thus scourging our people with the direst of calamities. But even in the depth of our sorrow, we can also see a glimmering of mercy.

The contest is fast approaching a crisis, and I am not sorry for it. The sooner it is brought to an issue the better. Let His will be done.

Thomas

August 4, 1861

Dear Father,

I have been wishing to write to you for some time, but everything has been involved in uncertainty and the duties of an advanced post were so arduous that I was resting whenever I could get time.

At Fairfax we had a very trying time. A large number of the Regiment who had not been wounded gave out from exhaustion and were left in our rear. You can form no idea of the thirst created by the excitement and fatigue of battle.

The indifference with which one regards the dead and wounded is another astonishing feature. After action when the enemy had been driven off I began to gather the canteens of the enemy for our famishing men who could not leave ranks.

The first I got containing water was on a dead man.

The side of the canteen was bathed in blood up to the very mouth of the canteen on one side. My thirst was so great that regardless of this I turned it so the water would run out at the bloodless side, emptied it into my own and drank it. Before I went into battle the very sight of the blood of a dead man would

have caused me to shudder. After our own men had been provided for I gave water to several of the wounded enemy. They seemed very grateful and were surprised at our kindness.

The moral effect of the victory can not well be calculated. It has thrown confusion into the ranks of the enemy and in spite of the confident and defiant resolution of their Congress, has involved the whole object of the war in doubt and distrust.

I feel very hopeful that next spring will end the contest and bring a recognition of our independence - it may come before that time. With love to all I remain

Your most affectionate son,

Franklin

July 17, 1863

Dear Maria,

The battle of Gettysburg was, I think the most sanguinary of the war and was as clear a defeat as our army ever met with. Our Brigade suffered very severely. As soon as we started we came under fire of the enemy's batteries. We were, in ten minutes or less time, terribly butchered. A body of infantry to our left opened on us; and as a volley of grape would strike our line, I saw half a dozen at a time knocked up and flung to the ground like trifles. It was the most shocking battle I have ever witnessed. There were familiar forms and faces with parts of their heads shot away, legs shattered, arms torn off, etc. The enemy's infantry came up and we stood within thirty steps of each other. They loaded and fired deliberately. I never saw more stubbornness. The bullets literally came down upon us as thick as hailstones.

The battle was an unfortunate one. Our army went into it in magnificent style and I never saw it fight better but the position defeated us. For this I blame our Generals. It was caused by their overconfidence. The greatest misfortune is that

it destroyed the unbounded confidence reposed in Gen. Lee. Before, the army believed he could not err. They now see he can. Bosie and Moultrie are both well. Remember me to Cousin Sally's family and Mr. Robertson's.

Yours affectionately,

Franklin

February 29, 1864

Dear Maria,

I received your letter three days ago enclosing one from Peter to Aunt Louisa announcing the death of my Father. It was the first intelligence I received of it. It saddened but it did not surprise me. His life has been an illustrious example to all his descendants and I trust it may have its influence upon generations yet to come.

I am sure that no person living can point to anything mean or little in his character or disposition. The memory of my Father and Mother I shall ever cherish with pride as well as veneration.

I have no news to communicate. Our Army has fallen back to this place on account of the loss of our cavalry, the greater part of which has been ordered to the West.

Kiss David and Rio for me.

Yours affectionately,  
Franklin

October 5, 1863

Dear Maria,

I have never had such a reaction as followed our recent trials and hardships. From the time we broke up camp in old Virginia extending several days after the battle of Chickamauga we were tumbled about night and day until we were almost worn out. When the terrible excitement of the battle was over it took me a week or more to recover from the depression of reaction.

On my way from Chattanooga to Tynah Station on the Railroad from Chattanooga to Cleveland I met some Vicksburg troops. I met right face to face with Sam who was hunting for me. This meeting you may know was no less pleasant than surprising. He was going one way and I another so we could not be together more than half an hour. He is heartily sick of the war. He is the most domestic member of the family. His children he says can not understand why he does not remain with them and that seems to worry him.

We can only pray God to stay the further exaction of blood but if he exacts still more before he grants us that for which we struggle, patience and acquiescence in his demand and hopefulness of final success must be our supports. Failure would be to us universal death.

Your affectionately,  
Franklin

February 27, 1864

Dear Syd,

For two or three days past I have been most anxiously looking for a letter from some of you. Two days ago I received a letter from Maria Porcher enclosing one from Peter to Aunt Louisa conveying the sad news of the death of our dear Father. I can not say that I was surprised. It is a melancholy reflection to me that while he has only been dead a few weeks I have not seen him since 1853. Since then what changes have taken place. Father's life has been an illustrious example to all his descendants and I trust in God it may have its influence even to generations of our family yet unborn.

I am very anxious about you all. From last accounts the enemy seems to have designs upon Mobile. Where you are going to and what arrangements you will make I should like very much to know. Give my love to all.

I remain your affectionate brother,

Franklin

*Last letter received from my dear brother who was killed at the battle of Wilderness.*