



Pinckney family papers, 1765 – 1915
SCHS 495.00

Description: 0 .5 linear feet (1 box and 4 oversize flat files).

Biographical/Historical note: Prominent South Carolina family descended from Thomas Pinckney (1629-1701), a native of England who settled in Charleston, S.C.

Scope and content: Collection includes correspondence, a receipt for rent of the Sugar House in Charleston, maps, genealogical notes, surveys, and documents relating to the transfer of the Pinckney family's Market Street property to the City of Charleston.

Correspondence includes a 1793 letter to Thomas Pinckney (1750-1828) from Robert Morris (1734-1806); an 1801 letter from Samuel Stanhope Smith to Benjamin Rush; and letters between Thomas Pinckney (1828-1915) and parents Phoebe Caroline Elliott and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, his siblings, and other family members. Of particular note are several letters sent by Thomas Pinckney to his family while imprisoned at Point Lookout and Fort Delaware during the Civil War and a letter from Elizabeth Brewton Lowndes (d. July 1857) discussing "the trial of those unfortunate boys" which describes a fight that broke out at a "dram shop" between a group of enslaved men, two of whom were attached to Lowndes (John and William), over missing change. The remainder of the letter discusses Lowndes' struggles with the "management of negroes". Also of note is a letter of condolence from Mary Custis Lee to Cotesworth Pinckney upon the death of his father (Thomas Pinckney) in 1915.

Also included are indentures and other legal documents (1765-1825) pertaining to Pinckney owned land at "Colleton's Square" also known as Market Street in Charleston; documents pertaining to a 1789 lawsuit in which William Walker sued George Parker for the "harbouring of a Negro man slave called and known by the name of Adam"; and a 1791 survey of Saluda River lands owned by Thomas Middleton.

Preferred citation: Pinckney family papers, 1765 - 1915. (495.00) South Carolina Historical Society.

Note: See finding aid for published materials (several books and maps) received with the collection but cataloged separately.

Provenance: Gift of Isabella Breckinridge in memory of Josephine Pinckney and Frances Pinckney Breckinridge Williams, 2014.001.

Search terms:

Lee, Mary Custis, 1835-1918.
Morris, Robert, 1734-1806.
Pinckney, Charles, 1699-1758.
Pinckney, Eliza Lucas, 1723-1793.
Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth, 1746-1825.
Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth, 1789-1865.
Pinckney, Phoebe Caroline Elliott, b. 1791.
Pinckney, Thomas, 1750-1828.
Rush, Benjamin, 1746-1813.
Smith, Samuel Stanhope, 1750-1819.
Pinckney family.
University of Virginia -- Students.
Markets -- South Carolina -- Charleston.
Fort Delaware (Del.).
Plantations -- South Carolina.
Rice -- South Carolina.
Plantation overseers -- South Carolina.
United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Prisoners and prisons.
El Dorado Plantation (Charleston County, S.C.)
South Carolina -- History.
Letters (correspondence).
Deeds.

Folder list:

495/01

William Brailsford receipt for rent of the Sugar House, 1788.

1 item

Single leaf document; 4.5 x 7.5 inches

“The Commissioners of the Treasury [South Carolina] will pay unto Mr. William Brailsford or order the sum of Forty pounds sterling, being for one Quarters Rent for the Sugar House. . .”

Signed by Revolutionary War leader Thomas Pinckney (1750 – 1828) and countersigned on the verso by Brailsford.

495/02

Lawsuit, 1789

2 items

Documents pertaining to a 1789 lawsuit in which William Walker sued George Parker for the “harbouring of a Negro man slave called and known by the name of Adam.” Includes a complaint written by Charleston Cotesworth Pinckney, attorney for the plaintiff William Walker, a receipt for payment of damages, and a note documenting satisfaction of debt.

Fragile. Please use transcript.

495/03

Letter of introduction from Robert Morris to Thomas Pinckney, 1793

1 item.

Letter from Robert Morris (1734 – 1806) in Philadelphia to Thomas Pinckney, United States Minister to Great Britain pertaining to the character of William J. Bennett of Pennsylvania. According to Morris, Bennett is “a gentleman, respectable by his education, learning, manners, conduct, & fortune.”

495/04

Samuel Stanhope Smith letter to Benjamin Rush, 1801

1 item

Five-page letter from Smith (1751 – 1819), the 7th President of Princeton University and founder of Hampden-Sydney College, to Benjamin Rush (1746 – 1813) written in a highly eulogistic tone and relating to the death of Rush’s mother-in-law, the poet Annis Boudinot Stockton (1736-1801), also known as the “Duchess of Morven” so named for her husband Richard Stockton’s New Jersey estate. In another hand on verso (possibly that Benjamin Rush but more likely that of his wife Julia) is written “Letter from Mr. Smith of Princeton relative to my mother’s last illness.”

495/05

Pinckney family correspondence, 1832 - 1845

4 items

Letter from Phoebe Waight Elliott to her daughter Phoebe Caroline Elliott Pinckney, Beaufort, 2 August 1832

Discusses family news, births, sicknesses and health.

Letter, Woodburn, [Charles Cotesworth Pinckney’s summer home], 31 July 1833 [or 1835]

This letter appears to be from “mother” and “father” and is in two different hands, the latter bearing the signature of “C.C. Pinckney” and the verso blank of the letter referencing “Rev’d C.C. Pinckney” and “Greenville” but dates do not correspond with Charles Cotesworth Pinckney [Sr.]’s lifetime.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from sister Maria, 28 October 1845

Discusses family matters, including her sadness at leaving Woodburn.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from father C.C. Pinckney, Aiken, 3 November 1845

Discusses news of family and friends including a trip to Savannah to purchase furniture for a town home, sister Mary’s arrival in Charleston in order to attend Ms. Bates’ school, travelling around the state for business, and the cotton crop.

495/06

Pinckney family correspondence, 1846

7 items

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from his mother Phoebe Caroline Pinckney, El Dorado, 16 January 1846.

Letter addresses school matters (“you were marked 4 in natural philosophy, but only 3 in mathematics and moral philosophy”) and other family news and information.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from sister Mary at Charleston, 24 February 1846.

Letter discusses family matters, travels, and includes remarks about schooling with Miss Bates in Charleston (“You know, or ought to know, that I am now a boarding school miss in her teens so take care of how you write me anymore improdent things”).

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from his mother Phoebe Caroline Pinckney, Eldorado, 31 March, 1846

Discusses the sickness of “Charlie” and the value of health (“I wished I could have whispered to you some things are more valuable than money, heath is one and if you had got sick for want of fire, you would have lost much more than you gained”) and news of family and visiting acquaintances.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from his mother Phoebe Caroline Pinckney, Hillside, 15 October, 1846

Discusses news of family and friends and Pinckney’s safe arrival at the University.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from father C.C. Pinckney, Aiken, 3 November 1845

Letter discusses family concerns and “anxiety about the character of your roommate”; school supplies, books, and clothing; and operations and crop yields at various Pinckney-owned plantations.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from Maria H. Pinckney, Hillside, 5 November, 1846

Discusses a recent visit to Caesar’s Head (NC) and the recent engagement of their brother Rev. C.C. Pinckney (1812 – 1898) to cousin “Hesse” (Esther) Barnwell (1824 – 1864).

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from sister Mary and father C.C. Pinckney, Eldorado, 16 December, 1846

Mary’s half of the letter is devoted to news of family and describing plans for the marriage of their sister “by candlelight at St. Peter’s” in January. C.C. Pinckney writes praise for Thomas’ academic performance and business matters pertaining to farming and plantation properties.

495/07

Pinckney family correspondence and papers, 1847 and undated

9 items

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from his father C.C. Pinckney and brother, El Dorado, 11 January 1847

Letter discusses family matters, holidays, and hunting and is written in two hands. The beginning is addressed to “My dear Son” and a note on the verso is signed “You aff. Brother”

Shipping receipt on Ludlam, Preston, & Co. letterhead, Richmond, 17 February 1847

Receipt from Ludlam [shipper] to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia “received of H. Ludlum & Co. in good order, on board small boat of Jurdon Giles one small box marked as in the margin to be delivered in the like good order, with all possible dispatch, to Thos. Pinckney, Esq. in Charlottesville . . .”

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from sister Mary, El Dorado, 2 March 1847

Letter discusses family matters, including the family coat of arms, trial of their mother with inflammation in her eyes, and news that “Uncle George received \$10,000 in the bequest of “an old Mr. Beaubien, who was once a dancing master in Beaufort and who has for a year or more been in wretched health.”

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from father C.C. Pinckney, El Dorado, 20 March 1847

Largely the advice of loving parents including counsel on choosing friends “of very deserving character” with a caution about gambling which “has been deemed the prevailing vice of Virginians; like their use of tobacco, it is a bad habit painfully acquired.” Letter also has notes from Thomas’ mother and sister.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from sister Maria H. Pinckney, Beaufort, 13 May 1847

Discusses family matters and includes news of their father (“I am sorry to tell you Papa is quite lame; he hurt his knee about a fortnight since in slipping out of a boat and it has proved very troublesome.”) She goes on to say that in addition to rest, the doctor also “leeches” the leg. Maria also describes an “adventure” by boat to Savannah and a stop-over on Pinckney Island on the return trip to wait out a storm.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from his father C.C. Pinckney, Charleston, 2 June 1847

Addresses school matters and gives advice (“Should Dr. Holbrook be here when you pass through you had better see him and take his advice about your medical studies.”)

Letter to Thomas Pinckney from Mary, Charleston, Wednesday 20th [otherwise undated]

Discusses observing the exercises of public school children under the direction of Mr. Memminger and anticipation of a visit to the orphan house. Written in admitted haste.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney at the University of Virginia from his mother Phoebe Caroline Pinckney, Hilton Head, 25 April (no year indicated)

Expresses relief that Thomas was not killed or wounded in an “unfortunate affair at Charlottesville” which Pinckney later describes as a “riot” that must be “very injurious to the

Institution and must divide the minds of the students from their books more than they are aware of.” Also includes news of family and friends.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney from sister Maria H. Pinckney, Charleston, 2 June (no year)

Discusses plans for extended travel to Virginia and Niagara in the fall.

495/08

Pinckney family correspondence and papers, 1856 - 1858

5 items

Letter to Dr. Thomas Pinckney at Flat Rock, Henderson Co., N.C., from E.D. Smith in South Santee, 14 July 1856

Letter from Smith includes a report on “the ill patient Sampson you left in my charge” and a second-hand report on the “state of things on the plantation” from Mr. Morrison about the wellbeing of the “Negroes” and a crop of flourishing [rice] “covered with the sweetest sort of water.”

Letter to Thomas Pinckney, Mt. Pleasant, 25th June 1857

Letter is addressed to “My dearest Wicked T.” and is rather scolding for want of a previous response. Includes family details and news of the mountain house being “burned down.” Also mentions news that “the South Carolina College is broken up” due to a rift between the trustees on one side, and the students and faculty on the other. In Mary Pinckney’s hand though may be incomplete.

Letter to Thomas Pinckney from Aunt E.B.L., Charleston, 26 June 1857

Letter from Elizabeth Brewton Lowndes (d. July 1857), discusses “the trial of those unfortunate boys” and describes a fight that broke out at a “dram shop” between a group of enslaved men, two of whom were attached to Lowndes (John and William) over missing change. The remainder of the letter discusses Lowndes’ struggles with the “management of negroes”. She asks Thomas for help in this task and speculates that “if these two prime young men had had a good master, instead of an indulgent old mistress who acted more in what she thought they would like than what was for their real good, this dreadful blow would probably not occurred.”

Letter to Dr. Thomas Pinckney, Flat Rock, Henderson Co., N.C., from an unclear correspondent, 23 August 1858

Letter accounting for sales of rice by the bushell [from El Dorado plantation?].

Letter to Dr. Thomas Pinckney, Flat Rock, N.C., from Thomas M. Phillips, Fanymeade, 30 August 1858

Letter from Thomas M. Phillips, the plantation manager at Fanymeade, El Dorado, and Cedar Island, includes news of the rice crop, harvest, rice birds, harvest schedule of neighboring plantations, and the health and work schedule of enslaved people. Phillips declares he is “happy to inform [Pinckney] for what I seen and what have heard that I have got one of the best crops on Santee this year. I am fully satisfied that I will make 50 bushells per acre average.”

495/09

Thomas Pinckney Civil War letters, 1863-1864

4 items

Letter from Thomas Pinckney at McClellanville to Mary, 26 January 1863

Letter from Thomas Pinckney to his sister Mary while stationed at McClellanville discusses duties, acquaintances, and family news. He writes that he and his companions “have been living . . . a very quiet monotonous sort of existence looking out for Yankees so constantly and cautiously that at last one feels a sort of disappointment at not getting a sight of them except through a spy glass.” Thomas also mentions making “the acquaintance of a Col. Ley [appears to be written “Ley” but possibly references Fitzhugh Lee who served under J.E.B. Stuart at Gettysburg] from Va who came round . . . I found him a very agreeable man and that he knew most of my acquaintances in Va having been at the University a year of two before me, also the family at Shirley, he has been in service with both Stuart and Forrest . . .”

Letter from Thomas Pinckney at McClellanville to Mary, 17 April 1863

Describes events at McClellanville and Pinckney’s observations of “Yankees” aboard a boat carrying “the stars + stripes” and their attempts to unsuccessfully pilot the coast and “run the blockade.” Pinckney also discusses rice crops and farming.

Letter from Thomas Pinckney at Point Lookout to Mary, 14 June 1864

Describes being captured on May 28 and conditions at the prison (“We have good space for walking about and a fine opportunity of bathing in the waters of the Chesapeake which we enjoy very much.”) Includes envelope with the stamp of the censor indicating the letter had been examined for illicit content before being sent.

Letter from Thomas Pinckney at Fort Delaware to father C.C. Pinckney, 20 August 1864

Pinckney writes to tell his father that he and 600 other officers have been chosen for transfer to Hilton Head. (“I see the papers are alluding to a general exchange which I hope may be well founded for the sake of those left behind many of whom have been in prison four or five times as long as I have. I have been very fortunate in having been found out by my friends at the North who have been very kind to me.”)

495/10

Pinckney family correspondence, 1915

1 item

Letter to Cotesworth Pinckney from Mary Custis Lee, The Plaza, 7 December 1915.

Lee, the daughter of Robert E. Lee, CSA, expresses her condolences to Pinckney for his father’s (Thomas Pinkney, 1828-1915) death and is signed “your ever affectionate friend, Mary Custis Lee.”

495/11

Pinckney family genealogical correspondence and notes

4 items

Letter to “Miss Pinckney” from E.J. Cotesworth, Liverpool, 29 September 1897

Letter discusses family connections and interest in the life of Eliza Pinckney and “what a wonderful person she was and how fortunate Col. C. Pinckney was to have her for his 2nd wife.”

Letter to Mary E. Pinckney from James B. Heyward, 23 July 1901

Letter discusses family connections and genealogical research interests.

Handwritten genealogical note, n.d.

“Thos. Pinckney and Mary Cotesworth his wife came to Chas. SC in 1692. Their son Charles married Eliza Lucas. Their son Thomas married Elizabeth Motte and had issue Thomas who married Eliza [Izard]. Elizabeth “ “ married William Lowndes. Harriott Lucas (Lucy) married F.K. Huger. Charles Cotesworth who married Miss Elliott.”

Handwritten genealogical note, n.d.

495/12

Miscellaneous loose documents

Includes a cover sheet regarding a memorandum of title surveyed by . . . Pinckney . . . “plat of the within at El Dorado”, a facsimile of a map of early Charleston lands from the Shaftsbury papers at the BPRO, and several envelopes.

495/13

Land Records, 1791-1862

2 items

Manuscript survey of 460 acres on the Saluda River in Ninety Six District belonging to Thomas Middleton.

Resurveyed in 1791 by Alexander Johnston. Adjacent landowners include Samuel Black, Israel Gants, James Summers, Mr. Boultner, Mr. Merchant, and Mr. McCleery. According to the document, the first survey of this property was conducted by Col. Philamon Waters. Includes a receipt for four pounds paid for resurvey received from General Pinckney. Pinckney was tied to the Middleton family by marriage to Sarah Middleton (1756-1784).

Thomas S. Arthur mortgage for sale of lands to C.C. Pinckney, Sr. in Greenville District, 1 November 1862.

4 pages.

Mortgage is for the sale of a “parcel of lands situated in Abbeville District on both sides of the Greenville and Columbia Rail Road just between the Cokesbury Depot containing eight hundred fifty six acres more or less being the same land conveyed by the said T.S. Arthur to the said C.C. Pinckney senior . . .”

495/14

Documents relating to Pinckney Market Street Property, 1765 – 1804

4 oversize items (see flat files)

Indenture 23 April 1765

Elizabeth Pinckney (Eliza Lucas), widow of Charles Pinckney [patriarch], sells that “parcel of ground marsh . . . Letter (d) in Colleton’s Square in Charleston, to Robert Brisbane and William Brisbane of Charleston [signed and sealed by them].

Charleston Market Indenture, 28 March 1788

A lease for a year “to lay out a Street from the channel of the Cooper River to Meeting Street . . . to establish a public market.” from Charles Cotesworth Pinckney [signer], John Deas, Thomas Jones, Sims White, John Wyatt, and Mary Lingard to the City Council of Charleston.

Indenture and release of lands for the Charleston City Market with manuscript survey prepared by B. Beekman entitled “Plan of Market Street in the City of Charleston dated March 29, 1788.

Indenture: Two sheet folio [21 x 27 inches]

Survey: [21 x 9 inches]

From Charles Cotesworth Pinckney [signer], John Deas, Thomas Jones, Sims White, John Wyatt, and Mary Lingard to the City Council of Charleston.

This document is signed and sealed by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney [signer], John Deas, Thomas Jones, Sims White, and John Wyatt.

Transcription of first 1/3 of page 1:

“Whereas the City Council of Charleston did propose to the said Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, John Deas, Thomas Jones, Sims White, John Wyatt, and Mary Linguard to lay out a street from the channel of the Copper River to Meeting Street one hundred feet broad, and in the said Street to establish a Public Market or Markets for the purpose of vending all sorts of Butcher’s Meat, Poultry, Game, Fish, Vegetables, and provisions, and all such other matters and things as they may or shall choose to direct should be sold here, and did request the said Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, John Deas, Thomas Jones, Sims White, John Wyatt, and Mary Linguard to cede to this said Council of Charleston, and their successors, for the purposes aforesaid the land requisite for the site for making the said Street. And whereas the said Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, John Deas, Thomas Jones, Sims White, John Wyatt, and Mary Linguard did agree to the said proposal on this express condition, that their lands bounding on the street so to be laid out should not be taxed, particularly and exclusively towards making the said street (or any canal should one be made) or erecting the said Market or Markets and if the said Market or Markets should not be placed there within the term of two years, or shou’d hereafter be removed from thence, that the said Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, John Deas, Thomas Jones, Sims White, John Wyatt, and Mary Linguard and their respective heirs and assigns, shall have a right to reassume the land ceded by them to the said City Council, for the aforesaid purposes, and should thenceforth . . .”

Report of the City Council and Agreement relative to the cession of Market Street, 24 April 1804.

Certified true copy bearing the Charleston City Seal (embossed with red ribbon and ink) and certified by [G].M. Bounetheau, Clerk of Council. Report addresses the failure of the City to meet the conditions specified in the deed of lands given to the City by Charles Pinckney in 1788 to be used as a City Market.

495/15

Documents relating to Pinckney Market Street Property, 1804 - 1825

2 items

Letter, from Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Thomas Winstanley regarding “the Governor’s Bridge to the Channel”, Charleston, 3 September 1805.

**signed by Charles Cotesworth Pinckney;

“C.C. Pinckney vs. City Council of Charleston. In Equity, Charleston, January 1825. Circuit Court.

Sixteen page legal brief and decision regarding the delay in making improvements (drains, piling, roads, buildings, etc.) to the Market lands as specified in the original deed. Includes information on the way in which streets were constructed in Charleston, the construction of drains, and assessment of taxes on land owners in order to subsidize infrastructural improvements.

495/15

Galley proof of “*Reminiscences of the War and Reconstruction Times*” by Thomas Pinckney

Never published. See also SCHS 34/0594 for typescript with holograph annotations. According to this item, the originals were in the hands of Thomas Pinckney of Fairfield, 1978.

Published items received with this collection but cataloged separately include:

Pinckney, Charles. *Three Letters, Written, and Originally Published, under the Signature of a South Carolina Planter*. Philadelphia: Aurora-Office, 1799.

Call Number: PAM 973.4 1799 Pinckney

Ramsay, John. *A Sermon Preach’d to the Protestants of Ireland, Now in London, At the Parish Church of St. Mary le Bow, October 23, 1713*. London: Printed by S. Keimer, for T. Woodward, near the Inner Temple Gate, and sold by J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane, 1714. A single leaf [fragmentary] laid in may be in Charles Pinckney’s [the patriarch’s] hand; his signature and bookplate on front pastedown. Bound with four other contemporary sermons.

Call Number: R 252.6 .R76 S47 1714

Elliott, Stephen. *An Address to the Literary and Philosophical Society of South Carolina; delivered in Charleston on Wednesday, the 10th of August 1814*. Charleston: printed by W.P. Young, 1814. Signed Gen’l Thomas Pinckney upper right corner [where paper is largely chipped and worn but signature still discernable.]

Call Number: PAM 815 1814 Elliott

Published (facsimile) Maps:

- A Map of the Whole Territory Traversed by John Lederer [from Justin Winsor's Narrative and Critical History of America]
- **Call #: 33-123-07**
- A New Description of Carolina, 1672
[*From Charleston City Directory, 1887]
Call #: 33-123-06
- A Draught of the Town and Harbor of Charles-Town, 1711 [Bien, c. 1890]
[*From Charleston City Directory, 1886]
Call #: 33-123-05