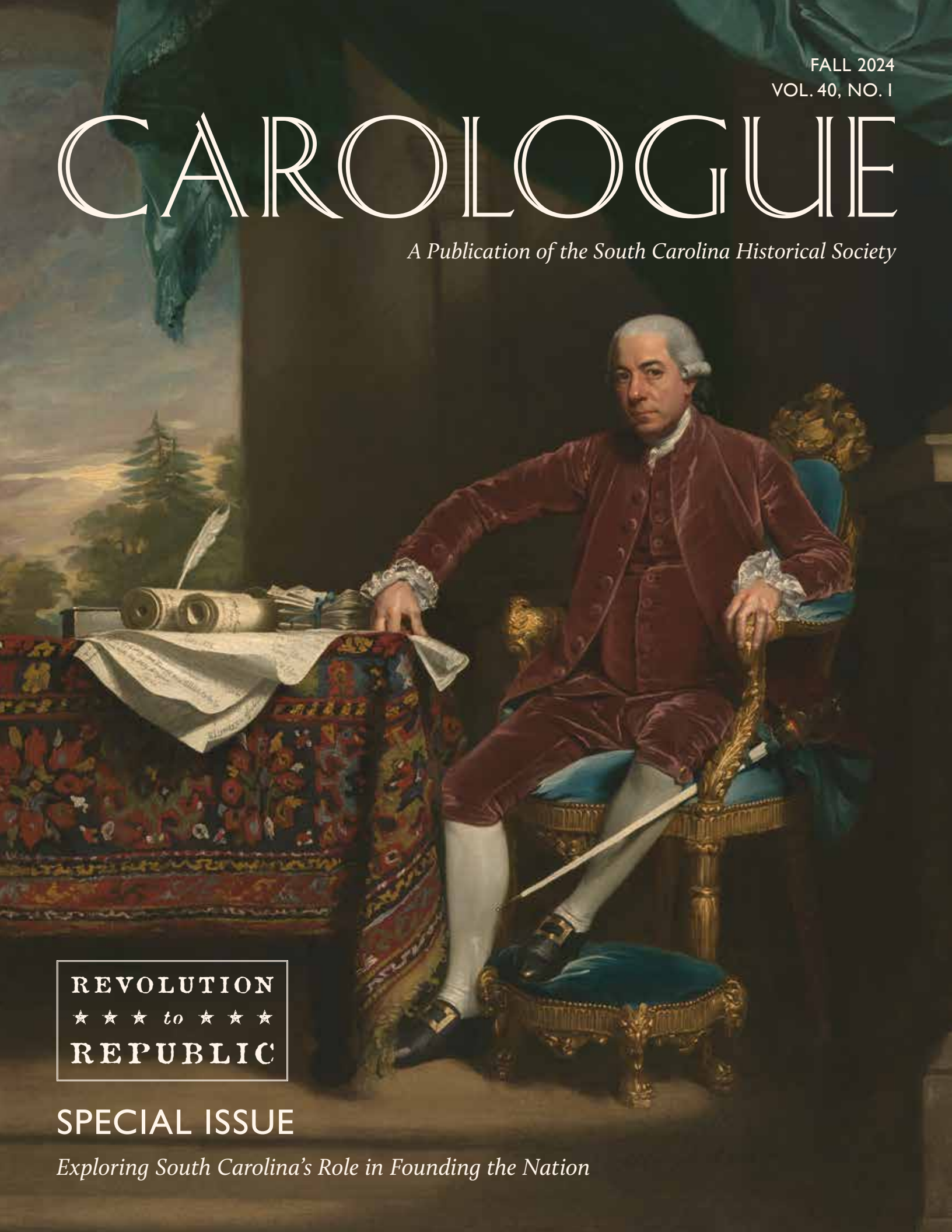


FALL 2024  
VOL. 40, NO. 1

# CAROLOGUE

*A Publication of the South Carolina Historical Society*



REVOLUTION  
★ ★ ★ to ★ ★ ★  
REPUBLIC

SPECIAL ISSUE

*Exploring South Carolina's Role in Founding the Nation*





## *Now Available in the Museum Shop*

The Museum Shop is delighted to offer prints from two renowned Charleston artists, Julia Homer Wilson and Elizabeth O'Neill Verner. The shop is selling 60 different Verner prints and 14 different Wilson prints. The prints, ranging in price from \$10-\$20, are available in the Museum Shop (100 Meeting Street, Charleston) and online ([shop.schistory.org](http://shop.schistory.org)). All prints are reproductions of original artwork and are being sold unframed. Visit us to learn more about these amazing prints!



**SOUTH CAROLINA  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MUSEUM**





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Henry Laurens (1724–1792) is depicted in a 1782 portrait by John Singleton Copley. For more on what this work conveys about Laurens and the fledgling American nation, see “A Revolutionary Portrait” on page 20. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; transfer from the National Gallery of Art; gift of the A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, 1942.

## Examining Henry Laurens



The commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution provides an important opportunity for the South Carolina Historical Society to educate the public about South Carolina’s critical role in our nation’s founding. To mark this historic anniversary, we are planning an exhibition in the Fireproof

Building, an exhibition to travel around the state, and Revolution-focused issues of *Carologue*. He corresponded with George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, the Marquis de Lafayette, and others while engaged in work for the Second Continental Congress, the Revolution, and the eventual Peace Commission to end the war. His papers were partially published under the auspices of the SCHS by USC Press in sixteen volumes between 1968 and 2003.

Surprisingly, however, the last comprehensive biography of Henry Laurens appeared in 1915, although two are currently in the works. In addition, unlike many Founders, including fellow South Carolinians William Henry Drayton (Drayton Hall) and Henry and Arthur Middleton (Middleton Place), we have no place to tell his story publicly. His grand town house in Charleston with four acres of gardens, at the southeast corner of East Bay and Laurens Streets, was demolished in 1914. His house at Mepkin, his primary plantation on the Cooper River and site of his death and burial, was torn down between the mid-nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

This issue centers around Henry Laurens: Huguenot, merchant, slave trader, planter, Revolutionary political leader, diplomat, husband, father, and the most prominent South Carolinian in the national story of the Revolutionary and Founding eras.

In the following pages, my colleagues and I consider various aspects of Laurens’s business and political careers as well as his family’s stories. As you will see, Hollywood should make a major motion picture about the Laurenses!

The South Carolina Historical Society is the most important repository for the study of Henry Laurens and his family. The SCHS’s first major acquisition following its establishment in 1855 was a large collection of Laurens papers—business and plantation records, account books, extensive political and diplomatic correspondence, personal and family correspondence—given in 1856 by his grandson Edward R. Laurens.

Laurens is a fascinating figure. He was the wealthiest man in the wealthiest colony, the largest slave trader in North America for a time, and the only American ever im-

Elizabeth Chew, PhD  
SCHS Chief Executive Officer  
[elizabeth.chew@schsonline.org](mailto:elizabeth.chew@schsonline.org)



## 2025 Winter Lecture Series

Save the dates for the 2025 Winter Lecture Series! The SCHS will return to Charleston’s First Baptist Church for the Winter Lecture Series, with four scholars sharing diverse perspectives on the American Revolution. Lectures will take place on Tuesday evenings in February and March: February 11th, February 18th, February 25th, and March 4th.

More information to come!



## SCHS Welcomes New Chief Development Officer

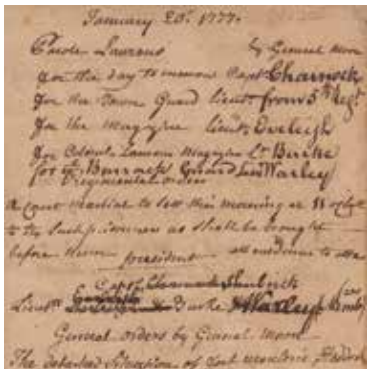


Taryn Mason earned her bachelor's degree in history from Georgia Southern University and a master's in museum and exhibition studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago. A native of southern Wisconsin, Taryn's passion for history led her to

the South Carolina Historical Society. With a deep love for history and museums, Taryn brings a wealth of experience in event fundraising, major giving, and a deep appreciation for the society's unique and vital archives.

## New to the Lowcountry Digital Library

A number of new collections are now available on the Lowcountry Digital Library. These collections fit with our ongoing Revolution to Republic initiative and can be viewed by visiting [bit.ly/SCHS-LCDL](http://bit.ly/SCHS-LCDL):



- **Second South Carolina Order Book and Related Records, 1777–ca. 1929:**

Believed to have been kept by either Isaac or Samuel DuBose, the 2nd South Carolina Regiment Order Book records the orders and activities of the regiment from

January 15 to November 22, 1777. A valuable resource on military life during the American Revolution, the book contains information about court-martials, rules and regulations for soldiers, and activities at Fort Moultrie and Fort Johnson, among other matters.

- **Continental Army Southern Department Records, 1778–1890:** This collection consists of an order book that was likely kept by John F. Grimké for the Southern Department of the Continental Army. It also includes a journal of the 1780 Siege of Charleston.

- **William Moultrie Correspondence, 1781:** In the first letter of this small collection, Lord Charles Montagu offers General William Moultrie a commission in a British regiment. In his reply, Moultrie turns down Montagu's offer and calls it a "dishonorable proposal."

## James and Charlotte Gignilliat Scholarship

Each year, the SCHS awards up to three Gignilliat scholarships to students of Huguenot descent. Students are judged on their compilation of a family tree, academic ability, and leadership qualifications. The Gignilliat Scholarship Fund was established in 1973 by Thomas M. Gignilliat, who stipulated that the recipients must descend from a Huguenot ancestor who settled in North America prior to November 28, 1787. Congratulations to the 2024–2025 recipients of the James and Charlotte Gignilliat Scholarship!

- **Claire Leuthner-Barrineau** is a graduate of Dutch Fork High School (Irmo, SC) and is currently triple-majoring in environmental science, history, and Spanish at Furman University. She plans to use her interdisciplinary background to succeed as an attorney.



- **Gray Bobo** is a graduate of Indian Land High School (Lancaster, SC) and will attend Mississippi State University where he plans to study data science with the goal of becoming a sports data analyst.



## Porter-Gaud School Exhibit Project

The SCHS's Virginia Ellison, Brandon Reid, and Melina Testin attended presentations by eleventh-grade students at Porter-Gaud School of the mini-exhibits they designed on South Carolina history topics, inspired by existing exhibits they saw on a visit to the Fireproof Building.





## Summer Happenings

1–2. The SCHS gave guests a chance to read other people’s diaries at our “Diaries & Drinks” event in June! This event featured an exclusive exhibit of some of the most interesting diaries, journals, and personal writings found in our collections. Selections included a letter book of Eliza Lucas Pinckney, the journal of Louis Manigault, John Henry Dick’s guest book, and the 4th South Carolina Regiment order book.

3. The SCHS got into the Carolina Day spirit with an illustrated map activity presented by Education Coordinator Melina Testin on the patio of the Fireproof Building during the parade through Charleston on June 28.

4–6. New interactive exhibits have been installed at the Fireproof Building to enhance the experience of all visitors, especially students, who may now participate in hands-on activities to learn about sailing, brickwork, voting, art, and more. Be sure to stop by the Museum to check them out!

7–8. The SCHS welcomed students and families to the Fireproof Building for the grand opening of its new interactive exhibits on August 24. In addition to testing out the activities, visitors added their artistic touches to a public mural on the patio.



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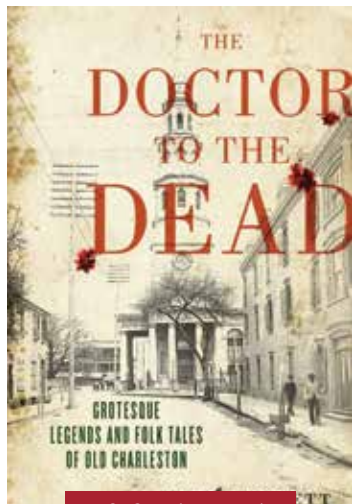


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## South Carolina Historical Society Gift Guide 2024

If you are struggling to find a gift for your loved ones this holiday season, then look no further than the SCHS's gift guide. The Museum Shop can be your one stop shop for everyone on your list. Gifts can be purchased in person at the Fireproof Building (100 Meeting Street, Charleston) or online at [shop.schistory.org](http://shop.schistory.org), and all purchases are tax free!

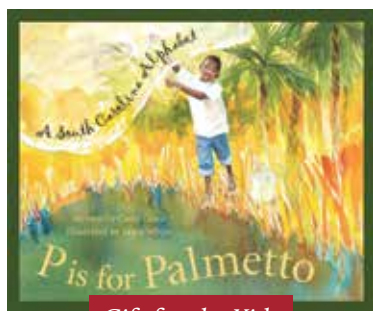


*Gift for the Reader*

*The Doctor to the Dead:  
Grotesque Legends and Folk  
Tales of Old Charleston*

\$17.99

Charleston's folklore and ghost stories come alive in this new edition of John Bennett's classic book.



*Gift for the Kids*

*P Is for Palmetto:  
A South Carolina Alphabet*

\$19

South Carolinians, both young and old, will treasure this collection of evocative pages of watercolor that covers South Carolina from A to Z. Educators will find its two-tiered teaching format useful in their classrooms.



*Gift for the Foodie*

Carolina Plantation Gold Rice  
\$18

The Museum Shop is proud to offer Carolina Plantation Gold Rice. It is certified South Carolina-grown "Carolina Gold" rice. "Carolina Gold" is only truly authentic when it is grown in the Carolinas.



*Gift for Him*

Map of Carolina 1729 Print  
\$50

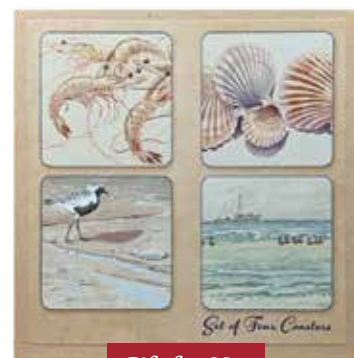
Herman Moll's Map of Carolina, published in 1729, depicted the extent of British power in the colonial Southeast. Its colored lines marked the boundaries of grants to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina. Moll identified battlegrounds where Carolinians and their Native American allies defeated the Tuscaroras in 1712 and the Yamasees in 1715. The map is printed on high quality, heavyweight, archival certified textured watercolor paper.



*Gift for the Decorator*

SCHS Christmas Ornaments  
\$18.99

The SCHS offers two unique ornaments for Christmas: the Charleston Tea Party Ornament, featuring an image of the Charleston Harbor, and the Poinsettia Ornament. Both ornaments are exclusive to the Museum Shop and are only available while supplies last!



*Gift for Her*

Shore Images Coaster Set  
\$18

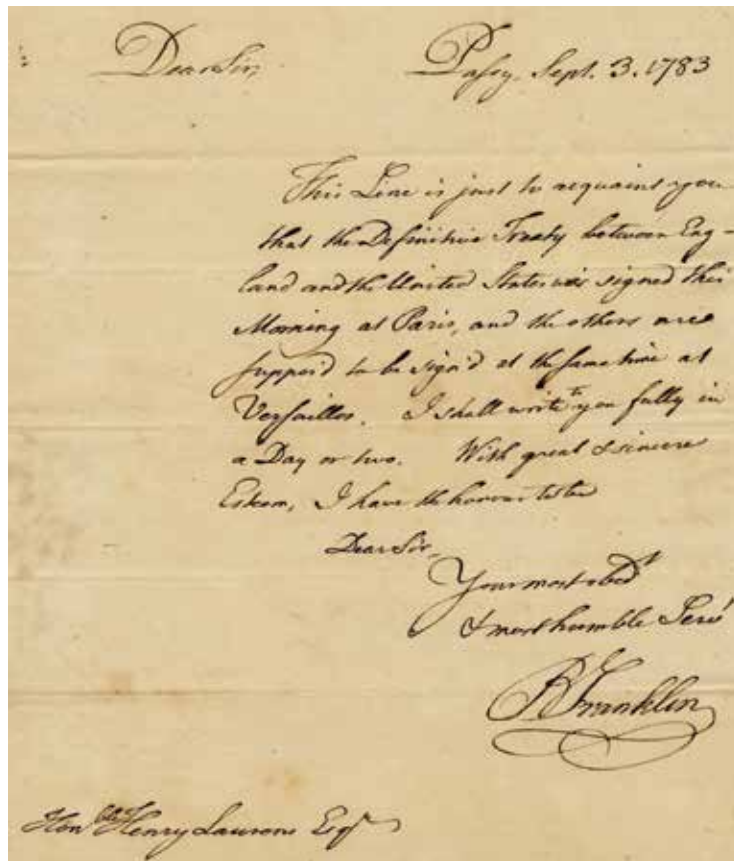
This set of four coasters features images from the Journals of John Henry Dick, found in the SCHS archives. Dick was a South Carolina artist, author, naturalist, photographer, world traveler, and conservationist.

## Benjamin Franklin's Letter to Henry Laurens

Nearly two years after the surrender of British forces at Yorktown, the American Revolutionary War came to an official end when Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay met with British representative David Hartley in Paris and signed a document titled the “Definitive Treaty of Peace between the United States and Great Britain.” Now commonly known as the Treaty of Paris, the document consisted of ten articles that settled everything from fishing rights to the territorial boundaries of North America. Most significantly, however, the treaty promised the withdrawal of British troops from American soil and finally recognized the United States as a separate and sovereign nation.

In this featured letter, Benjamin Franklin writes to inform Henry Laurens of the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Dated September 3, 1783, the letter states that the definitive treaty with England had been signed that morning in Paris, while the other treaties (presumably the ones with France and Spain) were set to be signed in Versailles. Franklin also promises to give Laurens a full account of the signing a day or two later.

This letter is part of the Henry Laurens Papers archived by the SCHS, and it is without a doubt one of the most unique and interesting documents that I have come across while digitizing the society's American Revolution materials. Donated to the society in 1856, the Henry Laurens Papers include a wide array of materials that cover Laurens's entire career, from his early days as a merchant and planter in Charleston to his later roles as a statesman and president of the Continental Congress. In 1781, Laurens also became a U.S. peace commissioner when Congress appointed him to participate in the peace negotiations with Great Britain. While Laurens did travel to Paris to sign a preliminary peace treaty in November of 1782, declining health prevented him from fully participating in the negotiations. Franklin, Adams,



and Jay led the negotiations instead, although Laurens corresponded with his fellow peace commissioners to give additional input on the treaty's terms. When Franklin sent this letter in 1783, it was to inform Laurens that all their diplomatic work had paid off, and it is easy to imagine the relief that Laurens must have felt upon learning that peace and freedom were officially secured. Along with the rest of the Henry Laurens Papers, we are working to make this letter available for viewing on the Lowcountry Digital Library, and I hope you check out the other materials we have digitized as part of our Revolution to Republic initiative.

—Annette Guild



### Conservation of Henry Laurens's Waste Book

In a project funded by an appropriation from the State of South Carolina, Northeast Document Conservation Center Assistant Conservator Abra Mueller carefully pieces together fragments from the SCHS's Henry Laurens Waste Book. Waste books were used in eighteenth-century bookkeeping to record daily transactions before they were entered into a formal ledger. This one tracks the daily business of Laurens's Charleston mercantile firm, Austin & Laurens. The informal account book was used to record the sale of goods such as rice, indigo, and rum, as well as the sales of enslaved people. It records the names of many local residents who had accounts with the firm.





The Robert Mills Society at the South Carolina Historical Society honors individuals and families who have chosen to include the Historical Society in their estate plans. By joining the Robert Mills Society, members ensure that their commitment to preserving South Carolina's history will endure for future generations.

Robert Mills, a South Carolina native, holds a significant place in American architectural history. Born in 1781 in Charleston, Mills became the first American-born professional architect, leaving a profound influence on architectural design and urban planning. His landmark buildings across the United States are celebrated for their neoclassical elegance and innovative engineering. In South Carolina, Mills's contributions include the Fireproof Building in Charleston, home to the South Carolina Historical Society. This building stands as a testament to Mills's architectural genius and a physical embodiment of the state's dedication to preserving its historical narrative.

The Robert Mills Society honors this legacy by encouraging estate gifts that support the ongoing mission of the South Carolina Historical Society. These generous contributions provide critical funding for the preservation of historic documents and artifacts, ensuring that the stories of South Carolina remain vibrant and accessible.

By including the South Carolina Historical Society in their estate plans, members of the Robert Mills Society play a crucial role in continuing Mills's legacy of enduring excellence and historical stewardship.

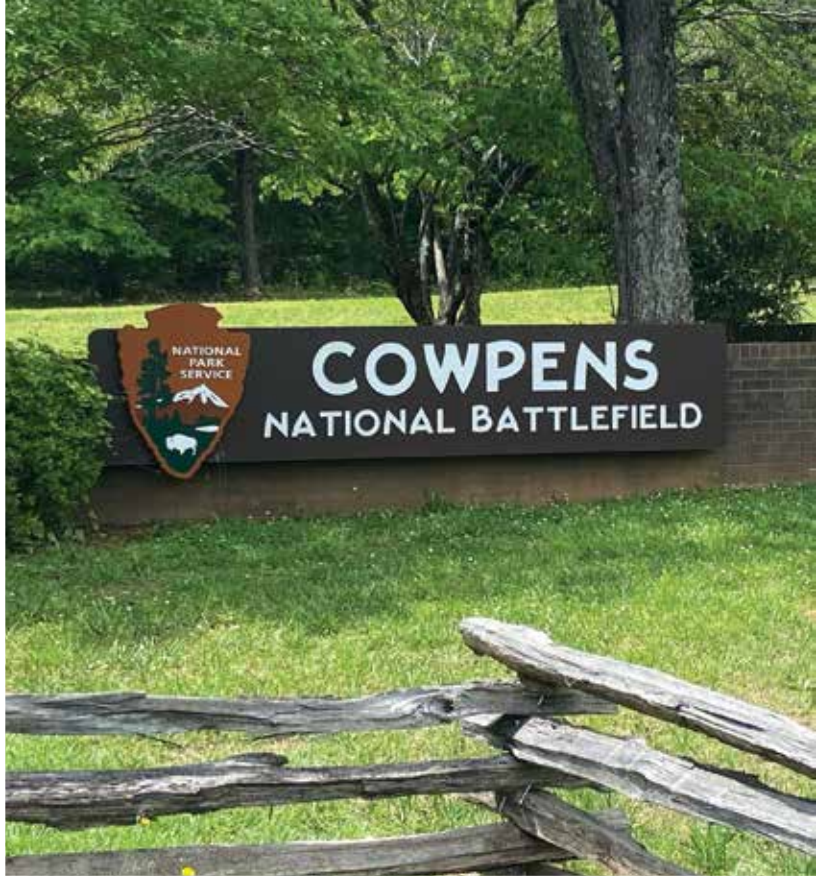
If you are interested in including the Historical Society in your estate plans, please reach out to Taryn Mason, Chief Development Officer, at [taryn.mason@schsonline.org](mailto:taryn.mason@schsonline.org)

If you have already included the Historical Society in your plans, please let us know. We would love to thank and recognize you!



ROBERT  
MILLS  
SOCIETY





## 2024 Fall Tour: *Gaffney*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.



Join us on Sunday, October 27th, for a tour of Gaffney, SC. First settled in the early nineteenth century and chartered in 1872, the “Peach Capital of South Carolina” serves as the seat of Cherokee County. It flourished as a hub of the upstate textile industry well into the twentieth century. Before settlement, textiles, and even peaches, Gaffney and its surrounding areas were the homelands of the Catawba Indigenous tribe. In the American Revolution, pivotal Patriot victories occurred in what is now Cherokee and adjoining York Counties. Featured sites on the tour include Cowpens National Battlefield, Fort Thicketty, the Nuckolls-Jefferies House, and many more.

This is a self-guided, self-paced tour. Tickets include access to all sites as well as a barbecue lunch. Detailed tour materials, including a map and information about parking, will be mailed to registrants ahead of the event.

Visit [schistory.org/events/fall-tour-2024](https://schistory.org/events/fall-tour-2024) for more information and to purchase tickets!







# Remembering

## JOSEPH H. “PETER” MCGEE

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BY FAYE JENSEN

*J*t was my first board meeting, and I was nervous. I'd lived in academia and was accustomed to working with young twenty-somethings. But these were bank presidents, attorneys, and skeptical business types. I'd met with Walter Edgar, the President of the Board, and a few others who served on the selection committee, but this meeting was new territory. I walked into the room and was immediately greeted by a gentleman with a twinkle in his eye and a ready smile. He put his hand on my shoulder, introduced himself as Peter McGee, and said how delighted they were to have me. He then whispered, “You know, folks really call us the *Hysterical Society*.” I was immediately drawn to this gracious man with the wonderful Charleston accent.

It was November 2006. At that meeting, and those that followed, I came to appreciate Peter's wry sense of humor. He and his childhood friend, Ben Moore, lit up our otherwise dry gatherings with hilarious banter. I also came to appreciate Peter's devotion to our organization and the Fireproof Building. I learned that his father served on the SCHS board in the 1950s and Peter followed in his footsteps, joining the board in the late 1960s. It was during Peter's first term that the society secured a contract on the Fireproof Building and launched a campaign for its renovation (which included installation of heating and air conditioning). Peter served on the Charleston City Council at the same time that he was president of the SCHS. When he rotated off for a short while, his wonderful wife Patti was on the board from 1977 to 1978. Peter returned to the board in 2003 and continued to chair the building and programs committees until 2008.

Even when not on the board, Peter was the society's advocate. He and Patti supported us financially, and his law firm donated office supplies and furniture. But his commitment went beyond finances. He was devoted to his city and his state and I, not being a South Carolinian, learned so much from him. I loved to pick up the phone when he called! I so enjoyed hearing about his childhood in Charleston. He once told me that he used to sit on the steps of the Fireproof Building and listen to Sam Stoney tell stories. If you have not done so, you should listen to his interview with the Historic Charleston Foundation on the Lowcountry Digital Library.

Peter's remarkable life was dominated by service to the nation, state, and Charleston. He served in the U.S. Navy, the South Carolina House of Representatives, and on multiple nonprofit boards. But he always had time for the SCHS. In 2017 we were again renovating the Fireproof Building and we desperately needed funding. Ginny Zemp and I came up with the idea to have three former board presidents roast one another. We knew immediately who to pick—Walter Edgar, Tom Tisdale, and, of course, Peter McGee. All three enthusiastically embraced the idea and we had a truly wonderful—and extremely successful—fundraiser.

When Peter passed away this past April, I was glad that I had retired. I think, if I were still at my desk, each time the phone rang I'd hope it was him. Our world is definitely a little less bright without that lovely gentleman with sparkling eyes and a ready laugh. ♥

*Faye Jensen is chief Executive Officer Emeritus of the SCHS.*



# My Internship at the SCHS Archives



Working as an intern at the South Carolina Historical Society provided me with so many opportunities to enrich my studies and my passion for history. The whole team, but especially Senior Archivist Molly Silliman, allowed me to explore topics that fascinated me and helped further my learning within the archival world. As an undergraduate student with a double major in French and history, my work at the society allowed me to apply the theories that I have learned in school and to expand upon my greatest strength: foreign languages. Over the course of the four-week internship, my biggest project included transcribing and translating selected pieces of collections which had not yet been translated from French to English. This excited me not only because of my love for foreign languages, but also because of the historical and cultural diversity of the letters which I came across.

I first worked on transcribing and translating letters from the Mazyck Family Papers, which includes correspondence written by the Mazyck, Delafons, and Malacare families in the early eighteenth century. One of the first letters I translated was written by Isaac Mazyck (1661–1735), a French Huguenot who arrived in South Carolina in 1686, and describes to his son in London the difficult conditions of life in early Charles Town. From a linguistic perspective, it was challenging and fascinating to “decode” early-eighteenth-century French; for example, the modern “i” was replaced by “y” in words like *j’ai*. The letters in this collection provide intriguing insight into the thoughts, hopes, and concerns of the early Huguenot families of the South.

The second collection I worked on, the Charles Thompson Haskell Family Papers, includes letters written in French by Sophia Lovell Cheves (1809–1881) to her childhood friend Eleuthera Du Pont. In these letters, a teenage girl of the antebellum period confides in a dear

friend about the challenges of her time: fatigue after long carriage rides, going to her first balls, receiving her first suitors, worrying about marriage, and eventually, having children. It was such an honor to explore the intimate moments of this young woman’s life as she came of age.

Finally, the third collection I had the privilege of examining was the Ball Family Papers. It contained letters written to Julia Cart Ball (1898–1966) during World War I from a French sailor whose schooner, the *Verdun*, was anchored in Charleston Harbor during the autumn and winter of 1918. By December, he was signing his letters to her with *votre petit ami*, or “your sweetheart.” Their correspondence lasted for another two years after the end of the war.

In addition to the translation project, I had also expressed a desire in gaining experience in the society’s museum. I spent a day shadowing Education Coordinator Melina Testin and Museum Supervisor Brandon Reid, who were both so engaged in answering all of my questions. Melina graciously allowed me to observe two tours of eleventh-grade students being led through the museum. She also showed me the designs for the museum’s upcoming interactive exhibit. It was fascinating to see the beginnings of

the process and learn how the society’s team has planned to create displays which are more engaging for children.

In total, my internship at the South Carolina Historical Society provided me with hands-on experience in the field of archival and museum work. It was such a pleasure to work with professionals who genuinely care not only about the preservation of South Carolina’s history, but also about keeping the treasures of history accessible to students, scholars, and the general public alike. ♥

*Kenzie Campbell is a student at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Eichstätt, Germany.*



*Campbell’s projects at the SCHS included translating letters written in French by Sophia Lovell Cheves to Eleuthera Du Pont in the 1820s. From the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society.*

# REVOLUTIONARY SOCIAL MEDIA: Henry Laurens's Pamphlet Wars

37  
THE  
CANDOR  
OF  
HENRY LAURENS, Esq;

Manifested by his

TO

Mr. EDMUND

*Presented to the S. C. Historical Society by F. A. Poole, 1876.*

Mr. LAURENS'S

TRUE STATE OF THE CASE.

BY WHICH

HIS CANDOR TO MR. EDMUND JENINGS

IS MANIFESTED

AND

THE TRICKS OF MR

ARE DETECTED

1783.

A FULL  
MANIFESTATION  
OF WHAT  
Mr. HENRY LAURENS  
FALSELY DENOMINATES  
CANDOR IN HIMSELF,  
AND  
TRICKS  
IN  
Mr. EDMUND JENINGS.

LONDON:  
PRINTED IN THE YEAR,  
1783.

*and not believed M<sup>rs</sup>. until May 6 1784*

*By Sydney Derrick*



*"[John] Adams, envious of every superior merit, has much labored clandestinely in injuring [Benjamin] Franklin and [Henry] Laurens, to secure his situation and answer further ends; and, by the means he has used, has succeeded better in serving the interests of his country here where his business has been done by others; for, however great his abilities as a Lawyer, they are the reverse as a Minister. Be discreet in giving Mr. Laurens a caution from that quarter; and at another time you shall be apprized [sic] of the secret of a conduct which is every way base and dishonourable."*

**O**n May 3, 1782, Edward Bridgen, a London merchant with extensive American contacts and ties to South Carolinians like Henry Laurens in particular, received an anonymous letter that included the excerpt above. It was meant as a warning for Laurens that American Revolutionary leader John Adams—who like Laurens was currently in Europe on a diplomatic mission—should be distrusted in diplomatic settings. And while the mystery still stands—the writer of the letter was never discovered—what followed were accusations, insults, and a parade of character witnesses in published pamphlets distributed at first to friends, and then to the American public. These events were even more remarkable given that the participants were all abroad during the heated exchanges.

Pamphlet wars were not a new endeavor for Henry Laurens, and they weren't new to readers, either. Pamphlets were akin to the social media of their day—they were written and published to spread news and opinions, including those that led to the American Revolution. As far back as the sixteenth century, English writers published pamphlets to argue issues like criminal charges, religion, societal roles for women, and even love. In Laurens's earlier published arguments with Judge Sir Egerton Leigh, he asserted that Leigh's power was too great and that he was too aggressive in enforcing trade regulations, to the detriment of American merchants. Leigh responded by authoring a pamphlet of his own accusing Laurens of not respecting the rule of law.

Laurens's arguments with Edmund Jenings, an American-born attorney who desperately wanted to be a diplomat, however, were based on whether each was fit to represent the American people in government roles. While Laurens is known for his prominence in South Carolina and political roles in the Revolutionary era, Jenings was and is relatively unknown. He was close to John Adams, and served as Adams's contact with British newspapers, enabling Adams to spread his message of freedom

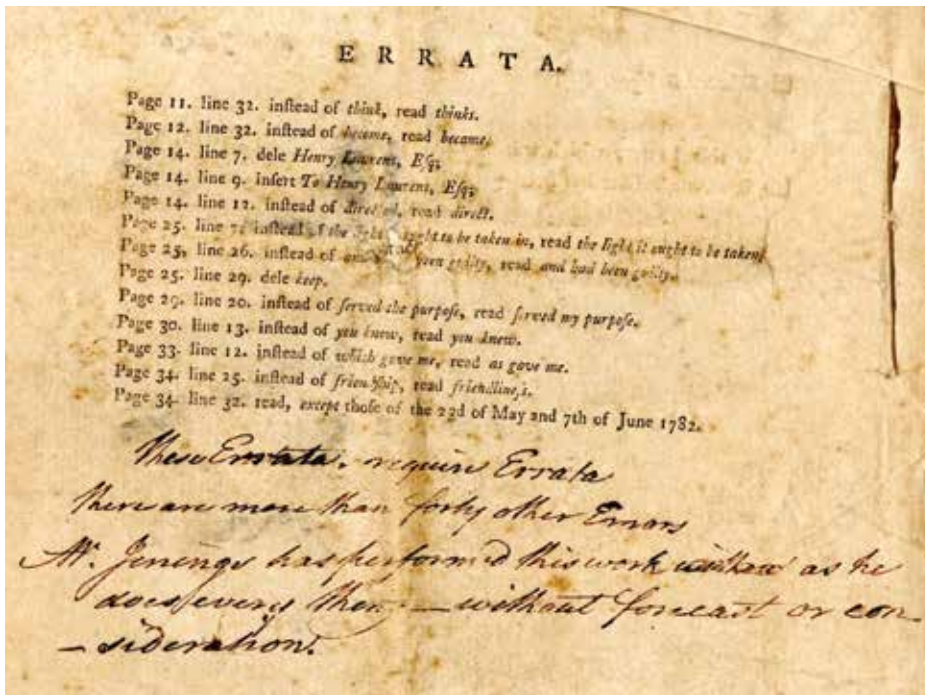
for America in England. But he never served in an official government role, despite being considered for positions. Other men pulled into the conflict between Laurens and Jenings included Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Edward Bridgen, who often served as a messenger in the conflict.

While the third and final pamphlet in the conflict, written by Jenings, was distributed widely in the new American nation, the first pamphlet was only sent to a few people. And the South Carolina Historical Society is the only known library to hold all three pamphlets in its collection.

By 1780, Henry Laurens was long established as a merchant, planter, and large-scale trader of enslaved people in South Carolina. Prior to independence, he served on the colonial assembly. In 1777, he was named a delegate to the Second Continental Congress, serving as president of the Congress from later that year until 1778. The next year, he was appointed minister to the Netherlands, tasked with securing Dutch support for the Revolution, including war loans. In 1780, as Laurens was traveling to Amsterdam, his ship was intercepted by the British. He threw all his documents overboard, including information on a U.S.-Dutch treaty and his commission from Congress, but it was retrieved by the British, and they used it to charge him with treason. At the end of 1781, Laurens was released from the Tower of London and eventually traveled to Amsterdam to raise money for American independence. Remaining in Europe, Laurens served as a peace commissioner in Paris, though he did not end up signing the Treaty of Paris, the treaty that ended the American Revolution.

The anonymous letter quoted above was written and sent in 1782. Laurens claimed in a later pamphlet that he immediately suspected Edmund Jenings of writing it, and that the suspicion was shared by others. After learning this, Jenings picked up his pen to defend himself, writing his own pamphlet titled "The Candor of Henry Laurens, Esq.; Manifested by his Behavior to Mr. Edmund Jenings."

*Opposite, the South Carolina Historical Society is the only known repository to hold the complete set of pamphlets exchanged between Henry Laurens and Edmund Jenings, an American-born attorney who served as John Adams's contact with British newspapers. From the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society.*



On the “Errata” page of the South Carolina Historical Society’s copy of “The Candor of Henry Laurens, Esq.,” Laurens notes that “these errata require errata” and “Mr. Jenings has performed this work as he does everything—without forecast or consideration.” From the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society.

The society’s copy of the pamphlet features a handwritten note across the top that reads, “To Whomever Mr. Bridgen pleases.” This is brought up later by Laurens in his response pamphlet, so this may have been Laurens’s personal copy, sent to him by Bridgen. In fact, there are many handwritten notes throughout the pamphlet, including one particularly barbed insult that Laurens wrote on the “Errata” page, where Jenings listed his minor mistakes and typos. Laurens writes, “These errata require errata. There are more than forty other errors. Mr. Jenings has performed this work as he does everything – without forecast or consideration.”

Jenings was an attorney born in Annapolis, whose grandfather had been acting governor of Maryland. After traveling to England to complete his education, Jenings never returned to the United States, though it’s clear in his writing that he considered himself an American. In “Candor,” he lays out his timeline of events, from visits with Laurens in 1782 prior to the anonymous letter, to the correspondence he exchanged with acquaintances after the anonymous letter.

The conflict is a confusing one, with comments and actions on both sides being taken in ways other than the authors claim were intended. However, the general timeline begins when Jenings offered money to help Laurens while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, through Edward Bridgen. Adams became aware of the offer and offered to reimburse Jenings from the American

coffers. Laurens declined the offer, but it seems this is the seed of Laurens’s feelings that Jenings was an interfering busybody with designs to make himself look good to those in power.

Jenings sent Adams a copy of the anonymous letter, solidifying Laurens’s notion of him as a meddler. Laurens spoke to both Adams and Franklin about his suspicions of Jenings, but neither man believed that it was in Jenings’s character to write the letter or make the accusations. Laurens responded by taking his beliefs wider, publishing his own pamphlet, titled, “Mr. Laurens’s true state of the case: by which his candor to Mr. Edmund Jenings is manifested, and the tricks of Mr. Jenings are detected.” His larger motivation was to prevent Jenings from serving in a public role, like Secretary for the Commission for Peace, for which Adams nominated him. In one particularly biting line of the pamphlet, Laurens compared Jenings to a common criminal. “I remember a Bermudian girl indicted at a court of sessions in Charles-Town before Mr. Justice Pringle, for tricks much less criminal than Mr. Jenings is now convicted of; and being found guilty, she was ordered to be publicly whipp’d...”

Eventually, Laurens and Jenings agreed to meet in person while both were in England to resolve the conflict. While Laurens walked away from the meeting claiming to have changed his mind, he later recanted. In his pamphlet, Laurens referenced a dinner that he spent with Jenings after this meeting, “For who but a Jenings would have dined with a man who believed he had written the anonymous letter? And I never invited him again.”

As an answer to Laurens’s charges, Jenings wrote the third and final pamphlet, “A Full Manifestation of what Mr. Henry Laurens Falsely Denominates Candor in Himself and Tricks in Mr. Edmund Jenings” in 1783, although no one received it until 1784. He published it to the American people for them to decide who to believe. In this pamphlet, Jenings responded to Laurens’s question on the dinner they spent together: “Who but a LAURENS would have invited to dinner a man who he believed had written it?” Jenings also made several insults against Laurens, including, “Would a man of real importance think it worth his while, or that it was necessary for the establishment of his rank to thrust his name before another in any writing, or in talking of him, contrary to the ordinary



rules of good breeding pursued by every man in every station of life?"

Laurens made no written reply. In a June 1784 letter to Thomas Day, he wrote that he was working on one while traveling at sea, but had to put it aside because of bad weather, and that he trusted the judgment of all who read both sides.

But while the dueling pamphlets may end there, the conflict did not. About a month before Laurens wrote to Thomas Day, Jenings wrote to Edward Bridgen, the friend who first received the anonymous letter. Jenings felt that he had ultimately sided with Laurens, and in the letter, Jenings challenged both Bridgen and Laurens to duel, including information on where Bridgen could find him to accept the challenge and arrange. The next day, Jenings wrote to John Adams about the duel offer, and a few days later Jenings received his last known letter from Adams. In it, Adams assured Jenings that he had always believed in his innocence regarding the anonymous letter and always would.

As heated as the conflict was, and despite the offer of a duel, it seems to have ended with a whimper, not a bang. No duel was ever fought, despite Jenings writing to Adams about the lack of response to his offer of a duel. "Let them take their time, I have done what I was under

the Necessity of doing in Consequence of their Insolence." In February 1784, Laurens wrote his last letter to Adams, seemingly ending their relationship over the small matter of unreturned letters he requested Adams send him.

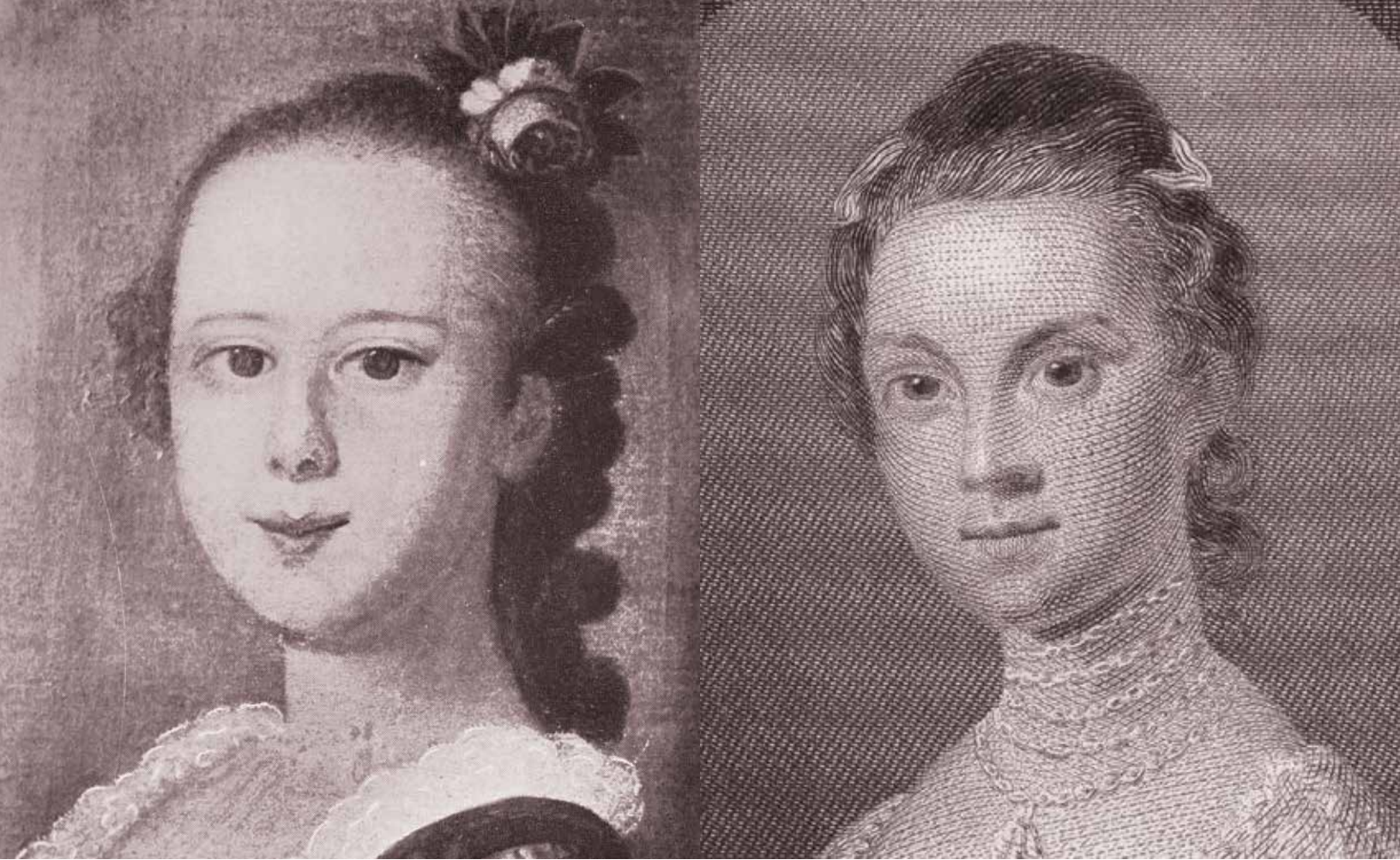
No author has even been confirmed for the anonymous letter. John Adams, according to a June 1782 letter at the Massachusetts Historical Society, believed it was possibly from a clerk at one of the Dutch financial houses that was left out of the 1782 Dutch American loan and was intended to sow discord among American ministers.

While it seemed to start as a petty drama, with an anonymous note causing strife among a few friends and acquaintances, it can be argued that the author eventually achieved their goal within the course of two years. Laurens and Adams, two American diplomats, ended their relationship. Jenings lost a friend in Edward Bridgen. Even Adams, who believed Jenings wasn't the author, backed away from him, perhaps to distance himself from the conflict. The pamphlets, in the larger context of an emerging nation, show the everyday conversations of the men who founded it—and how they were just men, dealing with the same relationship misunderstandings that happen today—perhaps without the escalation to duels. ♥

*Sydney Derrick serves as Librarian at the SCHS.*



*This unfinished 1783 painting by Benjamin West depicts the American delegation—John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens, and William Temple Franklin—during the Treaty of Paris negotiations. Courtesy of Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library.*



## WOMEN OF THE LAURENS FAMILY

### *Eleanor Delamare Ball Laurens*

Eleanor Delamare Ball Laurens (1731–1770), wife of Henry Laurens, is known to us almost exclusively via her relationships with the men in her life: her father, husband, and sons. She was born in 1731 on her father’s plantation in Berkeley County. She died at age 39 after giving birth to her twelfth child, only four of whom survived to adulthood: John Laurens, Martha Laurens Ramsay, Henry Laurens, Jr., and Mary Eleanor Laurens Pinckney.

Eleanor’s father Elias Ball immigrated to Berkeley County from Devon, England, at age 22 to claim an inheritance from his father’s half-brother: Comingtee, a plantation at the confluence of the east and west branches of the Cooper River. Eleanor was his child by his second wife, Mary Delamare. He became a successful rice planter and the patriarch of a dynasty that would eventually control twenty plantations in the lowcountry

and enslave 4,000 people, a story told by a descendant, Edward Ball, in the National Book Award-winning *Slaves in the Family*.

Henry Laurens was the grandson of Huguenot immigrants. A merchant, rice planter, and slave trader on a large scale, he played critical roles both in South Carolina and in the founding of the nation. He became one of the wealthiest men in the American colonies. Typical for the time, his marriage to Eleanor Ball in 1750 represented the proud union of two ascendant families.

Days after Eleanor’s death in 1770, Henry wrote to a friend, “I have lost a faithful bosom friend, a wife whose constant study was to make me happy. My children have lost a tender watchful mother and I who was well acquainted with her merits cannot help believing the public voice upon this occasion, that virtue has lost a friend.”

*Top, left, Eleanor Delamare Ball Laurens, the wife of Henry Laurens, died at age 39 after giving birth to her twelfth child. Top, right, Martha Laurens Ramsay, Eleanor’s oldest daughter, married David Ramsay, a physician, legislator, and historian, and gave birth to eleven children of her own. Eleanor Laurens portrait from Recollections of the Ball Family of South Carolina and the Comingtee Plantations (1909); Martha Ramsay portrait courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.*



## *Martha Laurens Ramsay*

In complete contrast to what we know of Eleanor, we know an enormous amount about the interior religious life of her oldest daughter, Martha Laurens Ramsay (1759–1811), called Patsy. When Eleanor Laurens died in 1770, Martha was eleven. The next year, Henry accompanied his sons (John, Henry Jr., and James, who would die in 1775) to England to enroll them in schools. Martha and her baby sister Mary Eleanor stayed in Charleston with Henry's brother and sister-in-law, James and Mary Holland Crawford Laurens. Martha had a lively intellect and in her letters to her father requested gifts like globes and pencils.

Henry returned to Charleston in December 1774, for an eventful next five years. That month, 14-year-old Martha created a *Covenant with God*, laying out lifelong goals for piety and self-improvement. Six months later, an unwell James Laurens moved to England with his wife, Martha (15), and Mary (4), seeking a more healthful environment. Three years later, with the Revolution underway, they relocated to Vigan, in southern France near Nimes, in the "Huguenot crescent." James died in France in 1784, and Martha, Mary, and their aunt returned to Charleston the following year.

In August 1783, with Martha in England with Henry, Mary Laurens wrote to him as his brother lay dying. She asks Henry to send Martha back to France to draft a new will for James if he himself is too ill to travel. This expression of dependence on a 24-year-old woman speaks both to Martha's intellect and skills and to Mary Laurens's predicament.

Back in Charleston after the Revolution, Martha, then aged 28, married David Ramsay, her father's physician, as well as a politician and historian. In addition to raising Ramsay's son from a previous marriage and adopting her brother John's orphaned daughter, she gave birth to eleven children, eight of whom were living at the time of her death at age 51 in 1811. Three days before her death, she told her husband about a secret diary. After her death, Ramsay combined her writings with correspondence and religious meditations and published them as "Memoirs of the life of Martha Laurens Ramsay, who died in Charleston, S.C. on the 10th of June, 1811, in the 52d year of her age."



## *Mary Eleanor Laurens Pinckney*

Eleanor Ball Laurens died less than a month after giving birth to Mary Eleanor Laurens (1770–1794), called Polly. Mary moved to England and then France with her uncle, aunt, and sister Martha at age four, returning to Charleston when she was fifteen. When Martha joined their

father in England in 1782, Mary took on the role of caring for her aunt and dying uncle. More French than American when she returned to Charleston in 1785, she married Charles Pinckney, a first cousin once removed of Charles Cotesworth and Thomas Pinckney, a signer of the Constitution, future Governor of South Carolina, member of the U.S. House, and a U.S. Senator. Polly died after childbirth, like her mother and countless other women of the era, but at the even younger age of twenty-four.



## *Mary Holland Crawford Laurens*

Mary Laurens evoked the ire of her brother-in-law Henry during a family drama in 1782. She and her husband James Laurens cared for Henry's two young daughters when he left Charleston in 1771, but as the childless couple grew older, they became dependent on their nieces, especially Martha. When Mary and James allowed a propertyless French merchant to mention marriage to Martha, Henry was apoplectic at their usurpation of his patriarchal role for such an unsuitable match. He suspected it was because Mary and James wanted to keep Martha near them in France to nurse them in their ill health. Though Henry wrote them and his sons furious letters about the matter, the three eventually reconciled, aided by the fact that he succeeded in preventing Martha from marrying the Frenchman. After James's death, Mary continued to rely on Henry's support.



## *Frances Eleanor Laurens Henderson*

In the popular musical *Hamilton*, Henry and Eleanor's son John Laurens is portrayed as a Revolutionary hero. His actual treatment of his wife and daughter, however, was the opposite of heroic. His daughter, Frances Eleanor "Fanny" Laurens (1777–1860), was born to Martha Manning Laurens, the daughter of a friend and close business associate of his father's that John Laurens impregnated and married in London shortly before leaving her and his legal studies to join the Revolution. Fanny would never meet her father, even though she and her mother attempted to see him in France in 1781, with her mother dying on that journey. Fanny went to live with James and Mary Laurens and her aunts Martha and Mary in Vigan, moving with them to Charleston in 1785. Martha Laurens and David Ramsay raised her. Ten years later, at age 18 and against their wishes, she eloped to England with a Scottish merchant named Francis Henderson, with whom she had a son, Francis Henderson, Jr. She divorced Henderson, who took their son away, and at the age of 76 married James Cunningham. ♥



# A REVOLUTIONARY PORTRAIT: John Singleton Copley Paints Henry Laurens

Usually for such a prominent member of the founding generation, especially in history-conscious Charleston, Henry Laurens's immediate material world has largely vanished. Neither of his primary residences survives and very few objects of his daily life have been publicly preserved. Given the absence of Laurens's material culture, we can now know him from his documented actions, his extensive surviving writings, and a few portraits painted during his lifetime.

Only twelve days after Laurens's release from the Tower of London on December 31, 1781, American artist John Singleton Copley announced in a London newspaper that he would paint him. Copley, the preeminent portrait painter of elite colonial Bostonians, had moved to London in 1774, where he initially avoided the appearance of partisanship by painting clients on both sides of the American conflict.

Although his affluent sitters routinely commissioned portraits to adorn their houses, Copley created Laurens's likeness for commercial reasons. The London *Morning Chronicle* announced that the portrait would be engraved by the skilled artist Valentine Green so high quality prints could be produced. Later newspaper advertisements announced that the prints would be sold by John Stockdale, a London publisher, bookseller, and American sympathizer. Laurens, Copley, Green, and Stockdale likely agreed on this arrangement before Laurens left the Tower, with the print and not the painting being the main objective.

The financial motivation for producing and selling prints was to aid hundreds of captured American sailors held on British prison ships on the south coast of England. The fate of American prisoners in British hands had been a major preoccupation of Laurens's while he himself was one, writing secret letters to British publications, including some printed

by Stockdale, to raise awareness of his and others' situations. It was a cause he championed, funded, and personally lobbied the British government on after his release.

Curtailing abuse to American prisoners in Britain was a cause for many sympathetic members of the British public. As art historian Paul Staiti has written, Laurens "was the closest thing to a living American martyr to be found on the eastern side of the Atlantic," so his portrait would generate great interest. Stockdale planned to pair Laurens's portrait print with an engraving of a full-length portrait of George Washington to create a set of images of American leaders of both the military and political sides of the Revolution. By the end of the war, these were enormously popular in Britain.

In addition to serving an important concern for him, Laurens's portrait demonstrated his resilience and reasserted his prominence. It also created a product that would be printed by the hundreds, or even thousands,

*(Continued on page 22)*



Above, a 1911 drawing by Alice Ravenel Huger Smith shows Henry Laurens's Charleston house, which was built in 1763 and demolished in 1914. Top, Laurens is portrayed in Valentine Green's engraving of John Singleton Copley's 1782 portrait. Smith drawing from the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society; Green engraving courtesy of Mabel Brady Garvan Collection, Yale University Art Gallery.





## HENRY LAURENS'S MEPKIN: Plantation to Abbey

**I**n 1681, the 3,000 acres on the Cooper River that originally comprised Mepkin Plantation were granted to Peter, Thomas, and James Colleton, sons of Sir John Colleton, one of the eight original Lords Proprietors. The name Mepkin may have derived from Makkean, the Cusabo name for the area. It passed to two further generations of Colletons before they sold it to Henry Laurens in 1762.

In the early 1760s, Laurens was expanding his commercial interests to include growing rice and indigo with slave labor. He eventually owned four plantations in South Carolina, two in Georgia, more land in both colonies, and town lots in Charleston, about 20,000 acres in all. The income from his plantation and mercantile businesses, including what was at one time the largest slave

trading company in North America, made Laurens one of the wealthiest men in the North American colonies.

Following his wife's death in 1770, Henry and his children were all absent from South Carolina, and therefore Mepkin, for long periods of time until the mid-1780s. Between 1770 and 1774, Mepkin and Henry's other plantations were managed by his brother James with the assistance of John Lewis Gervais, a fellow Huguenot who had arrived in Charleston in 1764. When Henry was away again from 1780 to 1785, James was abroad as well, so Gervais and others kept an eye on the overseer at Mepkin and managed the businesses.

Following his return to South Carolina in 1785, Henry  
*(Continued on page 22)*

*Top, counterclockwise from top left, an 1803 watercolor by Charles Fraser captures the Mepkin Plantation house built by Henry Laurens; an early-twentieth-century photograph depicts the shingle-sided house that was renovated during the ownership of James Wood Johnson; the Mepkin Abbey gardens provide a place of repose today. Charles Fraser watercolor courtesy of The Gibbes Museum of Art/Carolina Art Association; early-twentieth-century photograph from the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society; present-day photograph by SCHS staff.*

*“Revolutionary Portraits”*  
(Continued from page 20)

and seen by far more people than a single oil painting.

The portrait, now in the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery, captures more than one watershed moment for Henry Laurens and the fledgling American nation. Copley depicts Laurens as President of the Second Continental Congress, wearing a plain velvet suit in a grand interior Copley invented to represent the courtroom in York, Pennsylvania where the Continental Congress met in 1778.

The painted papers on Laurens’s table contain enough legible clues to connect them to important achievements of Laurens’s presidency of the Continental Congress (November 1777–December 1778). The partially unrolled document on the bottom of the stack of three is marked Confederation July 1778, a reference to the ratification by eight states of the Articles of Confederation, our first attempt at creating a national government.

The sheet above bears the signature of King Louis XVI of France with the words “We Pray God very dear Friends and Allies to take you into his Holy Keeping,” an obvious reference to the military alliance between France and the colonies achieved in May 1778.

The topmost paper relates to the Carlisle Commission, an ill-fated group dispatched across the Atlantic by British Prime Minister Lord North in June 1778 to seek a negotiated settlement with the Continental Congress to end the hostilities. The document represents the treaty, sent to Congress on June 9, 1778, after the group’s inauspicious arrival in Philadelphia after the French alliance and as the British army was evacuating the city. The lower right-hand corner contains the names of the members of the Commission: the Earl of Carlisle, William Eden, and George Johnstone. The treaty acceded to many of the demands of the patriots, including establishing free trade and giving Americans seats in Parliament, but it stopped short of granting the colonies total independence. For this reason and others, Laurens refused it.

Though Laurens returned to Charleston in 1784 without the portrait, he and his family maintained connections with the image. In 1782, while Laurens was in France for the peace negotiations, he requested his agent Edward Bridgen purchase two copies of the print for his daughters. He or a family member later commissioned Charleston artist Charles Fraser to make a painted copy of the Copley portrait from the print. The Fraser copy is in the Gibbes Museum of Art in Charleston today. ♥

*“Henry Laurens’s Mepkin”*  
(Continued from page 21)

left public life and retired to Mepkin. He tersely described in a letter to William Bell what he found after his five-year absence, “Here I halted for a week to look and enquire a little into my shattered estates. Everything I heard or saw was in deplorable [condition].” He lived in the overseer’s cottage while he built a new house, the British having burned the previous one.

A May 1, 1788, notice in the *South Carolina Gazette* announced a wedding at Mepkin: “On Sunday evening at Mepkin, in St. John’s Parish, Berkeley County, the Hon. Charles Pinckney, Esq.; to the amiable and accomplished Miss Mary Laurens, younger daughter of the Hon. Henry Laurens.”

Henry died at Mepkin in 1792. According to his wishes, he was cremated, and his ashes were interred there.

Mepkin passed to his son Henry Laurens, Jr. (1763–1821). Two more generations of Laurenses owned Mepkin until 1851 when they sold it to the South Carolina Society under a lease agreement completed in 1855.

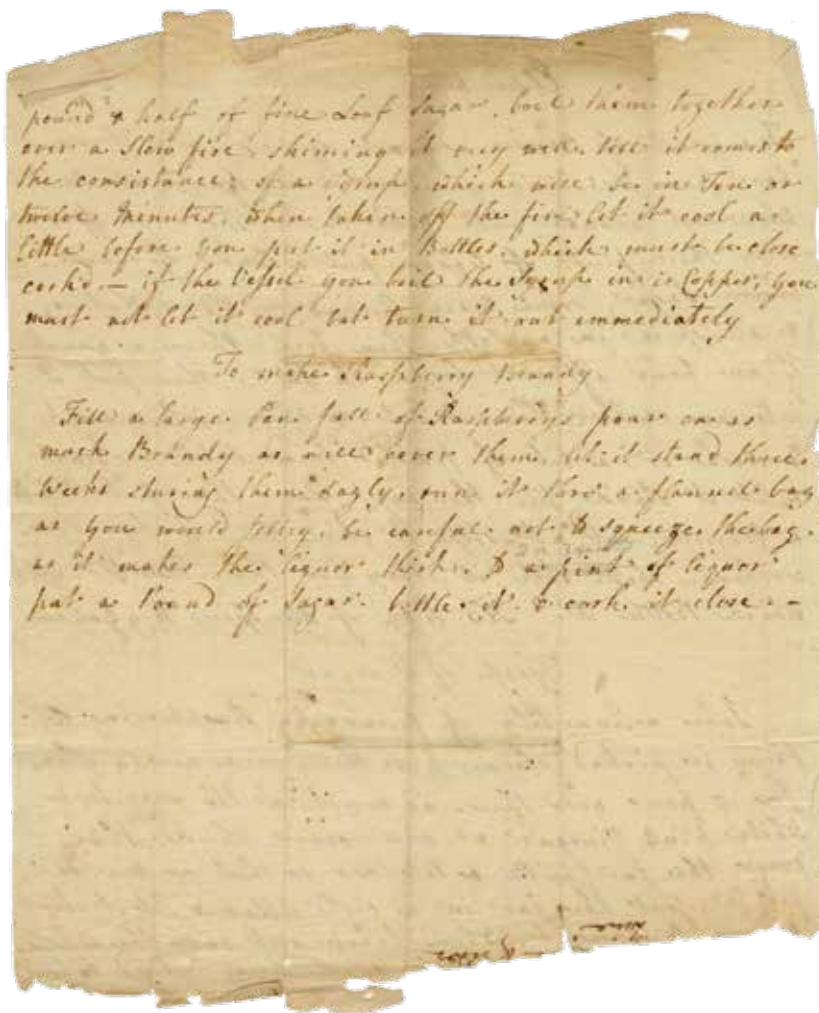
Mepkin had three additional owners after 1855 before James Wood Johnson, a co-founder of Johnson & Johnson, purchased it in 1916, at a time when many wealthy Northerners were acquiring Southern plantations for winter shooting and other forms of recreation. During his tenure Johnson acquired at least three other contiguous plantations and either built or altered a shingle-sided house visible in early-twentieth-century photographs. When he gave Mepkin to his daughter, Helen Johnson Rutgers, in 1931, the property consisted of close to 10,000 acres.

In 1936, Henry R. and Clare Boothe Luce bought 7,200 acres for a reported \$150,000. New York architect Edward Durrell Stone designed a new modernist house and several other buildings at Mepkin for the Lucas, including a forester’s lodge, laundry building, and farm manager’s house. Clare Booth Luce commissioned Loutrel Briggs to design extensive gardens.

In 1949, Henry Luce sold 4,000 acres to a lumber merchant and gave the remaining 3,200, including the gardens, to a religious community, the Trappist monks of the Cistercian Order, as his wife, a recent Catholic convert, wished.

Today, the monks of Mepkin Abbey live in silence and solitude, according to the Order of St. Benedict. They originally operated an egg farm, and today grow and sell fresh and dried shiitake and oyster mushrooms. They also operate the St. Francis Retreat Center and a virtual Forum on Contemplative Ecology. The public is welcome to visit the Abbey. ♥





## Harriott Pinckney Horry's Recipe for Raspberry Brandy

Looking for a fun recipe to try this holiday season? Try making this colonial recipe for raspberry brandy from our archives. This recipe was recorded by Harriott Pinckney Horry (1748–1830), daughter of Charles (1699–1758) and Eliza Lucas Pinckney (1722–1793) and wife of Daniel Horry (1737–1785). As a hostess in Charleston, Horry would have likely served this recipe to some of the most elite members of South Carolina society before, during, and after the American Revolutionary War. This recipe only requires a handful of items and ingredients to make and would be a fun addition to a holiday party. We think Horry would approve of measuring with your heart when you're entertaining a crowd!

### Ingredients:

Raspberries  
 Brandy  
 Sugar

### Other items needed:

A large pot  
 A strainer or cheesecloth bag

Fill a large pan full of Raspberries. Pour on as much Brandy as will cover them. Let it stand three weeks stirring them daily. Run it through a flannel bag as you would jelly, be careful not to squeeze the bag as it makes the liquor thick. To a pint of liquor put a pound of sugar. Bottle it & cork it close.





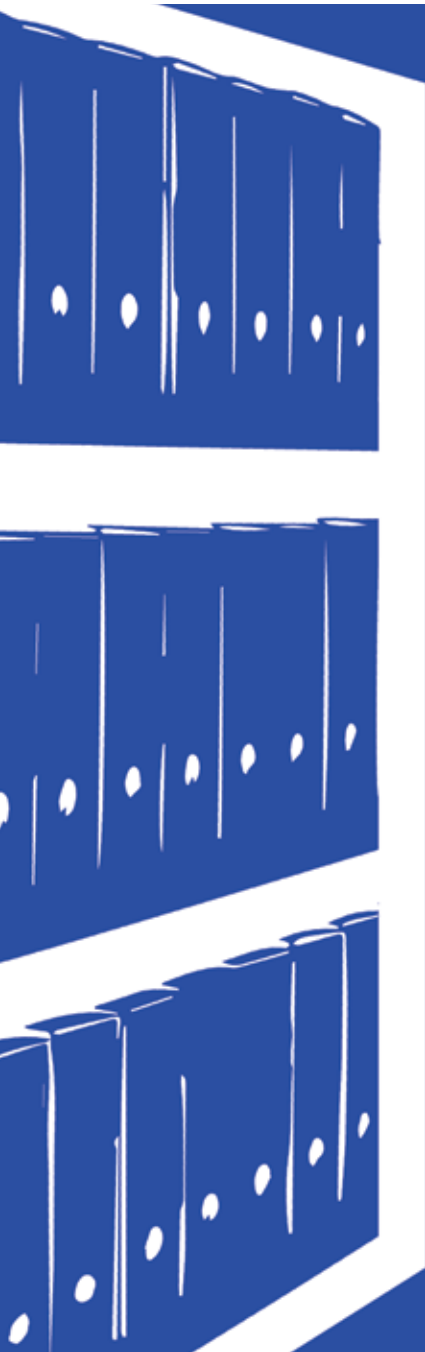
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