

DIARY OF JULIA JOHNSON FISHER

January 1st, 1864

Last night we retired in peace and quietude, feeling that we had been wonderfully preserved from the ravages during the past year. We had been so long unmolested that we almost ceased to fear for the future and to settle down in quiet indifference. All our neighbors had fled into the interior with one exception. Kate Lang had remained, although ready to flee at the first approach of danger. We were startled from a sound sleep by Sybil and Gussie coming in to tell us that a shell had just been fired on our Bluff, and that the Yankees were probably at the wharf. Mr. Fisher very incredulous went out to explore, but soon returned laughing at the lively imagination of the household, nothing was to be seen or heard. Gussie caught his gun and ran down to the mill. We went to bed again and to sleep. Soon Gussie returned with the information that the old mill was on fire and the Yankees had taken to their boats and gone down the river. So they had come at last and caught us napping. The pickets were roused from their slumbers by the firing of the shell and ran to the woods leaving horses and guns behind. The shell went through the warehouse bursting inside, destroying some nice machinery and throwing the door from its hinges. They then fired small arms; one shot raised a splinter on Mr. Brazil's House.

We conclude that they intended firing the new mill first, but perhaps seeing Mrs. Brazil, who was spinning by a bright fire, and knowing that her family might be endangered by it, dropped down to the old mill, where they soon made an illumination. Capt. Beadick's company came down in the morning viewed the ruins and returned. On Christmas night

"Fairfields" was burnt a little before, "Bellevue" both old homes of Mr. Floyd. This is the beginning of our New Year and we have had many deprivations since the beginning of this war, but no actual suffering. Our main living has been pork, rice and hominy--parched grits for coffee without milk or sugar. How often we talk of the good things we once enjoyed and wonder if we shall ever enjoy them again. A slice of bread and butter and a sweetened cup of tea would be a treat indeed, such a treat as we have not enjoyed for more than a year. Our severe trials appear to be just commencing. Thus far war has been in the distance, now its ravages are becoming tangible. Sybil feels almost overwhelmed with her many trials, and predicts a gloomy future. Our greatest trial at present, in this exile from friends. We feel completely bound--there is no way of escape. Only one letter has reached us in two years from home and that contained the news of my Mother's death. Oh! how I long to fly away and be free--must we be pent in the wilderness for years yet to come? We see no prospect of peace. People are afraid to let us have their negroes, we are so near the coast. We have now a man and woman and two children but they are not enough. Dianah is now away having her Christmas and we feel quite uncomfortable to be obliged to cook and run about in the cold. Although we live so retired and so plain, there is a good deal of work to be done on the place. Mr. Fisher and John are clearing up a new place and making fence for a garden. We have been down to see the ruins--the wind blows and it is the coldest day of the season--thermometer at 22.

January 3rd--Sunday

The children in the village are now old enough to begin to learn. A few weeks since we commenced having a Sabbath School. There are five in the class. Only one knew the alphabet, they seem very anxious to learn and learn readily, but Mr. Brazil is so frightened at the coming of the enemy that he has resolved to move away and that takes away the three little girls. I am sorry to lose them and they seem equally sorry to go. The Sabbaths are so quiet and lonely they weary us. The children now know all their letters and seem to have received their first idea of their maker. The oldest is scarcely ten years of age and very sickly. She told me today that although she could not read and write she can iron and scrub. It is said that she and the next, aged eight, cook, wash, etc.

If this war continues long I fear that such will be our fate, the negroes are becoming so scarce. Dianah returned after dinner with her two children--had walked about eight miles in the rain. She brought a hen and a bottle of syrup for Clarence--a Christmas gift. Mr. Linn came home to visit his family from camp, to the great joy of his wife who has been mourning for him. She and her little boy are entirely alone and pass as lonely a life as can well be imagined--having to sit by the fire week after week without sewing or knitting and almost without reading. There is no cloth to be had and no thread, no yarn--nor anything to do with. Time passes heavily under such circumstances. It makes us think of home and the abundance we once enjoyed; but however great our longings, there is no redress.

For three long years the world has been comparatively lost to us. We know nothing of the changes that have taken place during that time. In dress we are just where we were in 1860--for fashion, but rags and wrinkles are more plentiful. Mr. Fisher dressed very shabbily. I have used

bedticking--sheets--curtains and the linings of my dresses to clothe him and now we know not where to get anything more. All the old spinning wheels in the country have been put in operation and every thread that is spun has a quick demand. Mrs. Linn wears a course homespun dress that cost her \$42.00. Now we cannot purchase even at that rate. Mr. Linn brings the good news that old Black Nelly is coming to live with them again which has brought joy to the household.

January 4th

Today Clarence is five years old. He is the darling of the household but in danger of being spoiled in consequence. Gussie has now arrived at the conscript age and is making arrangements to join the army. Fred has come home after an absence of two months. He has been to Thomasville to visit Julia (Ellis' widow) found her pleasantly situated, surrounded by a large circle of friends. She introduced him to several young ladies--and he is now in love with Thomasville--wishes his mother to move there as he has come to the conclusion we are on the jumping off place of creation. I only wish I could see a place to jump. Julia sent Mr. Fisher six yards of striped homespun for shirts, a rich and welcome gift and gratefully received. This induces us to take a retrospective view of things when cloth and shirts were abundant such as would now cost five dollars a yard. Extortion is carried on at a high rate. We fear that we have not seen the worst.

January 6th

We are now having our rainy season and we are drenched inside and out. The house leaks badly. Nails are so scarce that whenever a building is burned there is a quick demand for nails. Mr. Brazil has gone with his family to "Brookfield" to an old dilapidated house without windows and

almost demolished by the pickets. It is two miles from here. They think they may bring the children over to Sunday School. I am sorry to have them go--they felt so interested and anxious to learn. Now we have only Frank Linn and Clarence.

Yesterday Mr. Fisher and the boys went to Jeffersonton to Town meeting. Came home in a soaking rain and brought half a sack of flour which cost \$35.00. We could easily eat it in a week, but it will be kept for a luxury. The best thing that we have now is a corn cake, mixed with water. Our corn is ground in a hand mill, which holds about 4 quarts, and is very hard to grind. The rice is beaten from the hull in a mortar made from a log and burnt out, which is also a very hard process--particularly when there is a large hungry family to feed. Those two articles with pork have constituted our living for a year past, sometimes not all of that.

On Christmas day we fared sumptuously. Mrs. Lynn dined with us and furnished the turkey. We had some chickens and a piece of fresh pork. Gussie had been off ten miles and brought oysters--so we had an oyster stew and chicken salad, minus the greens, potatoes and rice. The turkey was dressed with corn bread. Our dessert was a corn meal pudding wet with water, enriched with bottled huckleberries and pork fat; sauce made of borrowed syrup and flour--it was excellent, how we did relish it! but we talked of the good pies and bread and cakes that linger in remembrance, and the nuts and apples that pass around so freely in that land of plenty. It is hard to be so entirely deprived of them but we

try to console ourselves with the fact that we enjoy better health and appetites. We are always hungry-- hungry the year round, but do not grow fat.

January 7th

Sybil made arrangements with Mr. Lynn for moving the machinery out the new mill to save it from the enemy. It is proposed to move it back into the woods, and cover it. There has been great destruction of property here by the pickets as well as the enemy. Instead of a protection they are a great injury; and nuisance--not one raised a finger to save any property from the fire, and no person has been near us. We are in a desolated region. Should the enemy burn us out we know not where to go.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" We can see the kind hand of Providence extended over us. Gussie has joined Capt. Beaddick's Company, and appears pleased at the idea of standing guard. He and Fred will be at home some days. We eagerly watch for the mail to see if there are any indications of peace--but all is black as midnight. They are bound to fight to the bitter end and bitter enough it will be. Sybil has sent about the country to get some syrup but none is to be had. It brings from five to ten dollars a gallon and sugar \$3.00 per lb. It is hard to sweeten at that rate. Confederate money is very lightly esteemed. Fred thinks it hard to live on pork and hominy but we shall be quite thankful if we can have enough of that.

January 13th

Rain--rain. There has been almost constant rain since the month came in. All have colds. We curl over the fire, eat heartily of hog and hominy three times a day. We have become so disgusted with the black muddy corn juice that is called coffee that we have resumed tea again. It is rather a bitter dose but has proved such a tonic for me that my allowance of food scarcely satisfies me. Fred is still dissatisfied with the lack of variety, but I think the lack of quantity is most to be feared. The boys draw rations,

about a quart of rice and a pound of bacon for fifteen days. The poor soldiers who have no homes to go to are to be pitied. Our boys are now here on picket duty. Will be off in a few days. It costs them a great deal to live in camp--provisions are so high. Pork \$ 1.50 per pound; Eggs \$2.00 per dozen. Mr. Linn has got a part of the machinery out of the new mill, it looks melancholy to see it taken down, before it has had time to run. It was raised at a great expense and just ready for operation when the war put a stop to all business here.

We are now beginning to plant the garden hoping to have something in the way of vegetables. We had very little last year, but fruit was unusually abundant. Every tree and bush being full--peaches and plums in the garden. Berries in profusion for miles around us. They afforded us good living for several weeks.

A letter has reached us from Aug and Ophelia informing us of the death of Frank. Poor Frank! has ended his sorrowful life after a long sickness -- dead a whole year before the tidings reached us. They write for us to go home. We are so desirous to go that we hardly know how to wait and yet we may be obliged to stay another year. This is the second letter that we have received during the last two years.

January 16th

We have had a dreary winter thus far. Cold and wet. Augustus' letter has increased our desire to go North. We have talked with Sybil about it. She felt at first unreconciled, but upon deliberation has concluded that it may be best. Mr. Fisher is feeble and feels as if he must go back where he

can mingle with friends, and have a living more congenial to his tastes. The undertaking seems great and hazardous. We know not how to manage nor who to apply to for advice or assistance. Mrs. Chappelle and Autie wish to go with us. It seems difficult for me to determine what is right. Mr. Fisher feels that he is not called to sacrifice his entire happiness to remain. It is hard to part with Clarence and there's after all an attachment to this forest home. The fruit trees that we planted with our own hand, the flowers that we have cultivated with so much labor, the palmettoes that we have so delighted to gather and braid--the fields of berries and the little sacred burying ground under the cluster of cedars all have a charm. I shall want to see them again and our light wood fires that are so bright and cheerful on a cold day, this is the sunny side. The more we think of going North the more good reasons present themselves for going.

January 22nd

Frank Linn got badly hurt by a heavy iron wheel which fell upon him. It was a very narrow escape from death--no bones were broken. Whatever may occur there is no physician within sixteen miles. It is a busy time here. Mr. Fisher is laboring hard with black John to finish the new garden fence. The little garden in the midst of the forest has a very pleasant look. Sybil has been three days boiling soap out doors. It reminds one of a gypsy camp when Dianah gets out with her baby stirring the pots. She has a pretty little mulatto three months old. We take it often into the house, nurse it and kiss it and put it in our own beds to sleep. It was a cold morning when it came to us--about three o'clock. Fred awoke us with the information that there was a fuss at the negro house. We ran as quick as possible and there was the little fellow on the cold floor shivering. He had met with a cold reception. We took him into the house before a good fire

and he looked as white as anybody's baby--he was soon nicely fixed in the clothes basket. Clarence was surprised and delighted with the sight and it has been his great pleasure ever since to hold and fondle little Josey. Major Bailey says he has given him to Clarence--whether he is in earnest or not we know not. We hear that Mr. Epstein (the postmaster) and his wife have fled to the Yankees. They passed the pickets in the night and had a boat hid in some creek. He is a Jew and did not like the idea of going into the army. Everything that can hold a gun must go, and many would like to flee.

January 26th

Mr. Fisher and myself went to see Mrs. Alberti (who lives in Florida and has just returned from the North) to get information. She found great difficulty in obtaining a passport to return and met with so many detentions and obstacles that it has quite dampened my ardor for going, but Mr. Fisher is in no wise daunted. I dislike to leave on account of Sybil and feel as if there is great uncertainty about going. We stayed over night with Mrs. Alberti, had a cup of real coffee and tea with sugar and milk, and biscuit and butter. Our ride was about 23 miles and all the way through pine woods. Now and then a house to cheer the sight. We were upset once by the breaking of a rein, the buggy was turned completely over and left in the gutter. We fortunately were near a house where we procured help. The spinning wheel was going briskly--the women were hard at work trying to clothe the family while the men were in the army. They were indifferent as to the termination of the war if it would only end that they might be kept from starvation. We stopped at Dr. Mitchell's. Mrs. Mitchell put on an old cloak to hide her rags and says they are experiencing great destitution. We have frequent applications from

people far and near for clothing. So far as we can ascertain people seem certain that the confederacy is short lived; that this year must terminate the war. Confederate money is almost valueless. Worth only five cents on the dollar. Dr. Mitchell prepared for me a bottle of cough mixture and a few powders--charged \$8.00. Sent in Sybil's bill, a little short of \$300 for eight or nine visits--and refuses confederate money. Julia writes that she will soon visit us and bring some necessary articles.

January 31st

Today ? t is 48 years old. I fear we shall be old women when we meet again--should we be so favored. Yesterday we had another letter from Augustus. Nothing new, but Mrs. Edward's marriage.

Mrs. Brazil with five children, one at the breast, with mule and cart came over to bring the children to Sabbath School. They seem very eager to learn. The weather is summer like, we sit with open doors and find the sun very oppressive.

February 1st, 1864

Went down to Mrs. Linn's. Found her quite depressed, the tears were ready to break through. To sit all day and look in the fire without work of any kind, her near neighbors gone, and husband gone back to the Army or to Savannah, was more than she could bear, and then she had been looking for three days for old Nelly--if she should not come that would be worse than all. While we were commiserating the forlornness of things in general, Nell's black head peered through the window, but it shed light within. We sprang towards her and felt that we could give her a warm

embrace. Light and joy entered the household in the form of an old worn out negro, thus we are lead to appreciate what we once cast away as almost useless. Gussie came home and spent the Sabbath in order to get a change of clothes. He is on picket near St. Mary's and enjoys it much as there is a family of girls where he can spend his leisure time. Fred is still at home groaning over pork and hominy. We indulge in flour once a day. Sybil has engaged \$100.00 worth of syrup--it is \$6.00 a gallon. It is thought that she may get a little sugar at \$2.00 per pound. Kate Lang says that Major Bailey paid \$6.00 a yard for calico in Savannah--it is now selling at \$10.00. Only \$100.00 for a calico dress--a fine state of things! Confederate money is hardly worth picking up. They are collecting an army of 80,000 to have a finishing battle in the Spring. God speed the right!

February 6th

The weather is now delightful and summer like. All are busy planting and clearing the land. Cabbages and radishes are up. As much as I wish to go North I feel reluctant to leave this beautiful climate that has been so conducive to health. My bronchial troubles give me a dread of chilling winds and snow banks. We have taken no steps yet for obtaining a passport. The difficulties seem to me almost insurmountable; but Mr. Fisher has more hope and resolution. Gen. Clinch is far from us and our means of transportation is limited and poor. We have not been able for some weeks to procure postage stamps so that we can not write letters. Sybil is trying to make a pair of shoes from hide of home made tanning. Mr. Fisher suffers with his heavy army shoes. Fred does not like to appear with holes in his forty-five dollar shoes, and poor little Clarence is scuffing around in anything that can be tied on. The negroes are bare footed. Shoes are not to be thought of for them. Oh! how we all long for

a time of peace and plenty, for our once happy land that was flowing with milk and honey.

Yesterday I told Mr. Fisher I had been preparing some little things in anticipation of going home. "Oh!" he says, "it revives me to hear you say so". We retire early to forget the loneliness, at the same time admitting that we have many comforts.

February 9th

We have had another letter from Mrs. Chappelle from Columbus. She is making preparation to leave in the Spring and will come to Kate Lang's and start from there. We hope to be able to go with them but to leave Sybil is the trouble. We live in hopes that there will be a change in our national affairs for the better before that time, though the papers and the people tell us that there is no prospect. We had a letter from Julia on Sunday saying that she would be at the nearest railroad point on next Wednesday which is a distance of eighty miles. Fred started off in a hurry as it would take him two days to go. It is a long tedious journey, mostly through woods and no where to stop at night but to beg a lodging with some private family. One feels that they are truly passing a wilderness life in Camden County and we are exiles indeed. A half barrel of syrup and small bucket of sugar holding 30 lbs came to Sybil yesterday for which she pays \$ 1 74.00. We are glad to have something for a luxury when Julia comes. We have only flour enough for three or four meals. The pork is nearly gone too, we must kill the only passable hog we have before she comes. Potatoes are getting low. Until the vegetables come in from the garden, we see nothing in prospect but corn and rice. That will go very

well with syrup. What if famine stalks throughout the land? It is impossible to submit to Lincoln rule--"They must fight while life lasts."

February 14th--Sabbath

Julia is with us. We are enjoying much. She and Sybil have gone to visit the graves of their husbands. Mr. Fisher is writing to Augustus. Yesterday Kate Lang came over in their double carriage to call on Julia. She brought me a letter from Mary--What joy to get a letter! And yet we expect that they will contain sad news. Benny's marriage depresses me and yet I should rejoice at his happiness, but with the loss of Emily we lose a great deal. Poor Et too sees much trouble and affliction, and Abby. How I long to see them all. So many changes sadden me. "Friend after friend departs-- who has not lost a friend?" I long to go to my family, but where can I go? Now we begin to feel separations and fearful changes. My heart is heavy and lonely. We are continually wondering what is best for us to do. Every gleam of sunshine is beclouded. Our bright visions of happiness have departed. Julia makes many plans for us but we are too short sighted to know which way to turn.

February 18th

A day of great anxiety. Rapid firing in the region of King's ferry, from sunrise until dark. Our boys are both probably engaged in the fray. Maj. Bailey sent word yesterday to Julia that she had better remain a while longer as it could be hardly safe to travel. We are in great anxiety. The weather very cold. Sleet and rain freezing as fast as it falls--a tedious night for the poor wounded soldiers. Julia and Sybil talk of going with the mule and buggy tomorrow to Dr. Mitchell's hoping to gather intelligence. Dianah is sick in bed and everything looks gloomy. The people generally are in a state of alarm. The pickets have all been called

in and we are entirely unprotected--hope to hear the result of the battle tomorrow, the Battle of Olustee.

February 21st

The battle is over--nobody hurt. The enemy came up the river for Mrs. Albert's lumber and shelled all day to keep our pickets off. A lavish expedition for their government. Julia has started for home with Adam. Sybil has gone as far as Mrs. Lang's with her. We shall miss her much, she is so full of life and talk. She has taken a baked chicken and eggs to stop at Dr. Mitchell's over night. Yesterday had a letter from Auntie Chappelle manifesting great anxiety to get North. Provisions are so high they are troubled to live.

February 25th

A letter from Esther telling that the homestead is sold. We have no longer a father, mother or home. I did not expect to see this day, nor such a time for our Country. Julia wrote us from the station that she was obliged to sleep in a negro house in the care of negroes one night, and that some of the wounded soldiers had come on the cars terribly mangled. The rebels are incensed at Mrs. Alberti, suspecting her of having dealings with the enemy. They threatened to burn all her buildings. Yesterday Mr. Fisher and Sybil went to Brookfield in the cart. Mrs. Brazil has named her little girl Julia Fisher. I know of no other reason than because I have taught her little girls on the Sabbath. Our peach and plum trees are in bloom but are injured by the severe frosts. We have had an unusually cold winter.

March 13th

The children came from Brookfield and we had our little Sabbath School. They were attentive and learn well. We have had another letter from Augustus which has given us much satisfaction. It is so cheering to get tidings from home. And, one from Fred, who is now in the Florida war. He is seeing hard times. They are fighting with great desperation. Since his letter came they have had another battle. We are all feeling lonely and discouraged again. Mrs. Linn is mostly confined to the house and feels that she can hardly bear her secluded life much longer--her husband is in Savannah. Sybil is in great doubts as regards the future. We would all, if we could, spread our wings and fly away to liberty and friends.

March 15th

Mr. Fisher is 76 years old today. Kate Lang and all the children walked over to see us this morning and settle an affair with the negroes. Willie Bailey dined with us on rice and hominy. Our pork is gone and there's no prospect for any meat at present. The pigs fatten too slowly to supply the demand. Mr. Fisher caught a squirrel in a trap which was served for his breakfast. Kate says they are obliged to economize closely at their table. Famine threatens to follow in the wake of the war. Fred writes that he has but one meal a day which he cooks himself and his house suffers for want of food. The Confederates fight like tigers with a yell and a whoop.

March 20th

No news yet from Gussy and we fear no mail. No one but Franky came in to S. School. We have been out of meat some days. Live on corn and rice. Yesterday Kate sent us a potato pie, and radishes, such a treat! And one day in the week Mrs. Linn gave us a piece of venison. We have kind and thoughtful neighbors. They send many nice bits. Don't know

when we shall have a pig ready to kill. No one has anything to sell--all are short. It takes a fortune to send to the City--Shoes \$ 100 a pair--Flour \$ 200 a barrel Eggs \$ 3.00 per dozen. It is thought there will soon be a reduction.

Gussy took over \$ 1,500 with him. Hope no evil has befallen him. He has been gone ten days.

March 20th

Gussy has just come with a loaded mule. Goods sent by Julia in exchange for some cast off clothing. For mine she has received \$ 217.00 Confederate money--worth about 5¢ on the dollar. Having no opportunity for spending the money I concluded to invest it in land thinking it might become profitable. Sybil has received some mourning goods and cloth for the boys. Once worth from ten to twelve cents a yard--now from six to twelve dollars bringing a calico dress to \$ 100.00--a calico shirt to \$ 40.00. The bubble must burst before long.

We feel a great longing for Englewood. It constitutes my day dreams. We want Northern comforts. It is tedious to spend half the time catching fleas and the other half in sleeping and eating hominy and rice. The thought of milk, potatoes and good bread makes us mourn for a return of good times.

March 25th

I have sent a letter to Mary to learn more of the Dutch cottage, and what the prospects are for obtaining it. We have not yet a passport for going North and the time is drawing near when we wish to go. Miss Chappelle writes from Columbus that they are nearly destitute, and must, if possible, get North. They will spend a few weeks with Kate which will lighten their

trouble in a measure. It takes a long time here to accomplish anything. We are so far away from everybody and everything. The railroad is about 80 miles distant and it costs a fortune to go anywhere--\$30.00 per day for board--\$10.00 to stop over night and everything in the same ratio.

March 28th

Today I am fifty years old. Half a century! I feel mute with amazement. Time, how short! and what a life?

March 30th

Mr. Fisher went over to Maj. Bailey's today to consult about getting a passport. This seems the most difficult part of all. I have but little faith in getting one and it will make a heavy expense to go to Savannah--probably cost a \$100.00. Sybil seems to be getting in a bad way. Her whole body swells badly and has a good deal of pain. If she is no better we shall be unwilling to leave her. We have been obliged to kill a pig. Poor and tough, hardly fat enough to fry itself.

April 3rd

By economizing the pig lasted us eight days. Now we are again without meat and on short allowance. Last night Mr. Fisher caught in a trap rice birds enough for supper. They are very small and without butter or pork to season are not very rich eating, but everything eatable is worth saving. The pigs are all poor and slab sided, look half starved. They cannot fatten on rough rice, it is miserable food, the horses refuse it. We long for the North. Englewood fills my waking thoughts, a snug comfortable kitchen (a thing unknown here) freedom from fleas and thousands of poisonous insects, good inviting food, such as we had been accustomed to having until this war broke out--and freedom--sweet freedom. Why did I not understand and price my liberty more.

April 6th

We still eat our rice and corn three times a day. No meat. We are surprised to find how comfortable we can be with so little. Surely, man's necessities are small. Mr. Linn came home on ten days furlough. He says that flour is \$3.00 per barrel--Men's coarse boots \$250.00. He bought a bottle of squills for \$5.00 and a pound of soda for \$5.00 for Sybil.

We had letters from Julia with \$70.00 for me and \$50.00 for Sybil, for old clothing. Money not worth shucks. We can neither spend it nor keep it. It will be good for nothing after the first of July. This currency business is a perfect swindle. Kate sent over for Sybil to go to King's Ferry with her tomorrow. The weather continues cool. It has been an unusually close winter--from the breathings of the northern snowhills.

April 8th

Last night we were awakened by a shell and rose from our beds to see the new mills and the adjoining buildings on fire. The little schooner came again and finished its work. Now all is gone. Sybil had gone over to Kate Lang's to pass the night to take an early start in the morning for King's Ferry as no one was hurt she continued her journey. Mr. Fisher and Lynn saved the machinery in a small out house. Gussy secreted himself and fired five times at the invaders. The pickets ran for their lives.

April 11th

Mr. Linn killed a pig and sent us a piece. The first meat we have had in eight days--with the exception of a rice bird. We were all eager for our supper but the pig was so poor and green that it made us sick. I awoke in the night distressed with hives--my body was covered with rash. All have been busy since the fire picking up nails--it is said there are none in the

confederacy. A few weeks ago they were worth \$300 a keg, now more. Mr. Fisher and John are now hurrying to plant corn. The nights are so cold nothing grows fast. Sybil had a tedious ride to King's Ferry. Kate bought a common calico dress for \$120.00 ten yards. Merchants prefer to keep their goods until the new issue. This banking business is a great swindle. People who deposited gold for safekeeping are obliged to give it up for this confederate trash.

April 13th

We went over to Kate's in the morning. Mr. Fisher took us in his cart as far as the creek. I wished to lend them \$75.00 but they had no use for it. Shall probably lose it. Kate gave us a piece of fresh meat half dozen potatoes and a saucer of fresh butter. Such a rich day for us. I think we must gain some fat. Mr. Linn left at noon. His furlough was up and he must go leaving his wife in hourly expectation of illness. Before leaving Savannah he bought two pounds of coffee for \$30.00. On the road he discovered that someone had given him a paper of peas in exchange. He purchased a sack of flour for \$125.00 that he had not found when he left here. The country is threatened with starvation. Maj. Bailey has gone fishing. He says he has commenced drawing up our papers—a slow process. Miss Chappelle is very impatient.

April 15th

Had a dish of boiled rice and dry corn bread for breakfast. Nothing on it. For dinner a soup made of the beef bone that Kate gave us with rice and corn bread. It is a rainy day and gloomy. My thoughts continually at the North. I am homesick and I wonder what is my duty in regard to going, whether it will be made plain to me. It seems as if I could not stay

contentedly another year and what shall we live on if we go North? It is a question that we cannot solve. I can hardly wait for mail day to come, and yet we are disappointed week after week. Now that we have been favored with letters I want them to come thick and fast. How long the three last years have been. They seem like a vast uncomfortable dream. Once I wished for a "lodge in a vast wilderness". I have realized the fallacy of such a wish, and now I am led to say "Oh, Solitude, where are thy charms?" Give me Society, Friendship and Love. So "divinely" bestowed upon man. I did not appreciate the blessing when I had it and this is a deserved chastisement. May I receive it with profit. Mr. Fisher is planting corn. Sybil is scratching in the garden. My homemade shoes are too thin to admit of my going out in the wet and so I stay in and think so hard of home. Oh! such a longing to see the girls and partake of their northern comforts once more--how little can they realize our forlorn situation.

April 16th

The day dawns upon us more cheerily out of doors but the weather is still cold for the season. Had another corn cake and boiled rice for breakfast but Grace came over from Kate's with a piece of drum fish and a bunch of radishes for dinner which was a great luxury. Providence does not leave us to starve in the wilderness--Yet like the Israelites we are continually murmuring.

We have had lettuce twice from our garden. All the vegetables are backward--and hard to keep from frost. Crows, ground moles, hens and other things too numerous to mention. We plant and raise here under great difficulties. At supper we were obliged to fall back upon the rice and corn.

April 17th

On Sabbath mornings we look with great impatience for the mail. Today a letter came from Fred. He was in good spirits--he had found a pair of saddle bags containing clothing and had found also a pretty girl from Virginia. He was before Palatka in Florida and expecting a battle daily. We received a paper also, drawn up by the Camden Coites suing General Gilmer for a passport for us. I do not like it, and think I will write for myself. No satisfactory news in the papers. A dish of lettuce and eggs was added to our corn cake at noon which relished nicely. Last night was very cold, a frost in some places.

April 18th

We were called about 3 o'clock this morning to Mrs. Linn. We hurried down but found the boy there before us. Old Nelly was officiating. It is a nice fat baby. The people here are quite like the Israelitish women. They hardly give a baby time to turn about. This is the fourth baby that we have waited on since the war broke out. Our mulatto "Josy" is the prettiest baby of the three--he is a handsome, cunning little fellow. Clarence claims him as his. He says he is going to Camp Tackle-em (Tattnall) this morning to buy him a pony. Went over to Kate's in the afternoon. She gave us a basket of radishes, and a basket of flower roots. Maj. Bailey intends to send our petition to Savannah on Saturday, next. Yesterday Mr. Fisher succeeded in driving up three cows which gives us about two quarts of milk per day. We can now wet our rice and hominy and although it does not taste much like milk, it is a valuable acquisition. We fare well.

April 21st

We are short on allowance today. A saucer of rice and skim milk for dinner. We shook a half pint of cream in a glass jar and thus have produced our first butter--perhaps a small tea cup full and we are to have

some rice cakes for supper. Gussie has come from camp to help us. He says the confederates have burnt Mr. German's house and mill at King's Ferry to prevent the lumber from going to the Yankees. Mrs. Linn and baby thrive well. She has nothing to live on but corn meal and rice; but she is very uncomplaining and bears all patiently. We are making inquiries of all we see if there is anything in the shape of edibles to be found in the county; but nobody knows of anything--not a point--The pickets are living on field peas and rice, and the animals are suffering. There is money enough and nothing to buy.

April 22nd

There is a better state of things today. Kate has sent us a nice piece of beef and Mrs. Linn a piece also. The cows are now coming in and we shall fare very well with milk.

April 23rd

We were surprised today by the arrival of Fred from Florida. The regiment have a furlough of a few days and then "on to Richmond" is the word. It is thought that the crisis is near, that there the event must be decided.

April 25th

Fred left today. Last evening we had a letter from Julia and \$80.00 for me--\$35.00 of which I lent Fred and \$10 to Gussie. Mr. Fisher is very impatient for his passport. The weather is now becoming summer like, berries are ripening and the forest is looking fresh and beautiful.

April 26th

Killed a pig!

April 27th

We went over to Kate's for the mail. Found her sitting on the front steps, dressed in her new calico and knitting. She looked very smiling and soon told us that she and the Major were married on the previous evening. There was not time to send to us or we should have been summoned. Mr. Bullock, the minister, came at night while she was milking. The Major had been off all day cow hunting--after supper the Major brushed his hair, Kate put on her new calico, the negroes all gathered about the doors and the knot was tied. The children were delighted. Kate loaded us down with flowers and radishes and we trotted home full of curious emotions, hardly describable. The Major is going to Savannah in a day or two and will carry our papers with him.

April 28th

Summer is here in earnest. Thermometer at 90 in the shade. Major B. was over this morning cow hunting. He says that Mr. Floyd has taken the papers to Savannah. Had a letter from Autie last evening. She finds it difficult to procure a passport. Must write to Gen. Beauregard and thinks we must do so too. Mrs. Bailey sent us some pork and peas and a saucer of butter. We are living very well.

April 29th

Fred came again unexpectedly. Has four days furlough. The orders for going to Savannah were countermanded. Our little pig is gone and we are again without meat, but having milk and occasionally a dish of greens. Sybil goes to Mrs. Lynn's every morning to dress the baby. We fancy that he does not breathe just right and feel a little disturbed about him. Mrs. Lynn is doing very well.

May 4th

A cold time since May came in. Almost a frost. The warm clothing that had been packed away was brought again into use. Fred came home and

Gus too to get something to eat. The soldiers are poorly fed and we have been living for some days on milk, and rice. Today we had the first peas from the garden and with the addition of a little piece of bacon from Kate had a splendid dinner. I was very hungry and it tasted good. How rich we should feel now if we had plenty of bacon--once a despised dish. Now the greatest luxury.

May 8th

It is growing warm again, but the cold weather has made us all sick with severe colds. Yesterday morning Dianah came to my bedside in great distress, blood running down her face. In breaking a board with an axe a piece flew up and struck her in the eye. She lay in bed all day and suffered severely. It was a hard day for all. John had to cook and he moves like a snail, and then the pig that was killed the night before must be taken care of. Oh! how much we miss the negroes, if they are poor, lazy and saucy. Fred dressed up in his best and went off about ten miles to a little party. Gussy went down to the shore and brought home some oysters. Kate sent me three skeins of cotton yarn to knit. We have so little to employ us that we begged to knit for her and are now finishing off the sixth pair of stockings.

May 15th

Another Sabbath. We almost dread them. They are such days of idleness and wickedness. Read letters from Ophelia and Julia. We are so anxious to hear from the North and wonder they do not write oftener. Everybody there seems flourishing. Here we are on the last squeeze--plenty of confederate money, but nothing to buy. Major Bailey intended leaving today for Savannah and would attend to our passports. A slow process--but it may be in time. Have been nearly sick the past week with my cold--when the weather is settled and warm, hope to be better of it. It

is said that so cold a spring had never been known here. We still find fires and thick clothing comfortable. Had I a home how eager I would be to fly. I want to go North and have some enjoyment of life once more. I am there almost every night in my dreams, but the home is always lacking. If we go North, where shall we go? The future is very dark. Today I am trying to console myself that day must soon dawn. Everything is so dark. When we had our fill of comforts they were not appreciated. I did not make a right use of the blessings and now like an unprofitable servant I seem to be cast out as a cumberer of the ground.

May 15th

The bees have been swarming all the month. I think there has been twelve new swarms. Mr. Fisher and Sybil have been badly stung, their faces and hands badly swollen.

May 17th

Had a letter from Julia with \$2.00 enclosed, saying she had one hundred more for me. The amount looks well but where is the value. Am not able to buy a single article and cannot take it North. No one wishes for the money. All have more than they want. No one has anything to sell. All want to buy. We could sell the last article from our backs. Mr. Fisher had a pair of shoes made by one of the pickets. The soles were from the mill belting, the vamps from coon skin tanned at home, and the quarters of cowhide. They are too hard for his sore feet, but they will probably sell for about ten dollars. His feet are nearly ruined by bad shoes. It seems that Major Bailey did not go to Savannah but sent the papers by mail. Last January was none too early to begin this business. The South are full of hope for their cause, the accounts we get are certainly not cheering for them.

May 21st

How rejoiced I am. Had a letter from Mary. I have held on to it nearly all day and read it I know not how many times--how can I stay here any longer? It is too irksome. If I could I would go today. We hear nothing from Savannah. It is foolish for me to write.

June 3rd

Major Bailey sent over for my money as he is going to Atlanta to join the Army. I had the day previous sent \$150.00 to Savannah to be returned in the new issue, but gave him an order to draw it if he wishes.

June 4th

Went over for the mail and dined with Kate on bacon and string beans. A thunder shower came up and she sent us home in the buggy, with poor old Martha, the mule. Fred returned in the night.

June 7th

Dined with Kate. She was disappointed at having no letter from Bailey.

June 12th

Have been suffering the past week from a strain in my side. No letter yet from the North and no passport. The prospect is that we must stay another year. Mrs. Chappelle must be about starting.

June 19th

After so long a time they send to us from Charleston that we cannot leave here unless we run the blockade. So we have permission to remain here until the war closes. We are getting very destitute of clothing, but it is useless to fear for the future. We may suffer, but many are already suffering. It is doubtless better for us to remain here at present under

trying circumstances. We will hope for the best. Bailey returned last week on furlough to Kate's great happiness. A seven days rain has kept us from going over.

July 10th

Nothing further from the North. We look for letters in vain. Ed Richardson came home last month from Virginia with a wounded heel--a ball passed directly through it. Fred and Gussie have both gone to Tennessee to join Johnston's army. They left the 1st of July. The whole regiment has gone and we are left to the mercy of the blockaders. We only number four men in a region of eight miles and they are lame and decrepit. Mr. Fisher is now confined to his bed with a bad abscess in his right breast. Suffers very much. If the enemy come and wish to take us, there is nothing to prevent them. We went over to Kate's yesterday. She is complaining. Mrs. Smith with six children, and one at the breast, with a negro, came to pass Sunday with her--hope she will enjoy it.

August 2nd

Last night a small boat came up the river. The enemy landed and burned up the house that the pickets occupied--they are supposed to be deserters from across the river. The pickets in their fright ran to warn Maj. Bailey but left us in happy ignorance until morning. We have heard two or three times from the boys. They were feeling well, but we are constantly anxious. The enemies are getting a strong hold on Georgia. We go to Kate's twice a week for the mail. It is all the visiting and recreation that we have. She seems to enjoy it as well as we, and loads us down with good things. There is now here a new set of pickets, young boys from fourteen and up. They are abundantly supplied with melons from our garden. We have enough for ourselves and our neighbors. Were we near a market we could realize a handsome sum as they are selling from

\$5.00 to \$10.00 but no one has any money now. The soldiers are gone, and besides they are receiving no pay.

August 21st

Kate and family have gone to Valdosta to visit her mother. It is lonely without her. We went over yesterday for the mail, but heard nothing from the boys. It is monotonous here. I have no spirit to write. Some days we are very desponding. It seems as if we should never meet with our friends again. I hope we may have patience to wait. Mr. Linn has been home on a week's furlough. His baby was four months old before he had a sight of it. It is a pretty child. Called Arthur Stuart. Ed Richardson's foot is still very bad, but he is obliged to show himself in Savannah once in thirty days. He is going again tomorrow. It is two days journey to the cars and he has nothing but a cart to go in.

August 22nd

We have been startled at last by the appearance of a gunboat. The pickets ran in great terror. The negroes were sent over to Maj. Bailey's. Mr. Fisher drove a cart load of trunks into the woods and then stationed himself where he could watch the doings of the enemy. Mrs. Linn, Sybil and myself were left to receive them. Mrs. Linn with her two children seated themselves on the front steps. Soon eight men came up and immediately surrounded the house, and inquired for Richardson. He fortunately had left that morning for Savannah. They could not take Mrs. Linn's word but searched the house. Sybil ran down thinking that Mrs. Linn might be frightened, and met six more at the gate.

The result was that we were taken by the Gunboat with only a few moments warning, and sent North where we arrived (after 19 days cruising) on the 11th of September, 1864.

<http://www.gagenweb.org>