Armstrong Collection: Dr. William James Armstrong and Louisa "Lula" C, Hanna Armstrong

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ARMSTRONG COLLECTION

Dr. William James Armstrong

and

Louisa “Lula” C. Hanna Armstrong

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1852-1924

Armstrong Family
Pictures, Letters and Documents
Yellow Fever and Memphis
Published Articles

William James. Armstrong III and Brenda B. Watson, 2005
Dr. William “Will” James Armstrong
and
Louisa “Lula” C. Hanna Armstrong

Courtesy of the Franklin Fulton Collection by permission of Ruth Hill Fulton McAllister

Beloved Memphis Physician and Surgeon, Memphis Yellow Fever Martyr
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Introduction

The “Armstrong Collection” was developed from the interest and dedication by family members and friends who saved, compiled, and transcribed letters and documents of Dr. William “Will” James Armstrong and his wife, Louisa “Lula” C. Hanna.

From pre-Civil War times, the couple was destined to meet, marry, impact history in the South, and provide the world with progeny who continue their values, beliefs, and hopes. Unfortunately, their marriage was to only last fifteen short years. But in that time they left a legacy that will continue. Dr. Will & Lula were married on December 2, 1863 in Artesia, MS. He died on September 20, 1878 (the next to last month of the last Yellow Fever Epidemic in Memphis) and she died on September 20, 1924 in Memphis, the 46th anniversary of his death.

During the Yellow Fever Epidemics in Memphis, Dr. Armstrong worked for the Howard Association and worked alongside the Sisters of "St. Mary's" Episcopal Cathedral and School. Each doctor had his own “district” of the City and effusive commentary was written about Will’s tireless dedication by the Sisters and his medical comrades. (Available on the Web)

Letters written by Will to Lula during their times of separation, along with other letters about her family, notes and documents saved by her, provide us today with their personal history as well as describe the times of devastation during Memphis’ most horrific period. They each dedicated Will’s life for Memphis and they both will always be considered Martyrs. Because of his care for the victims of the Yellow Fever Epidemics in Memphis, many lives were saved.

Chain of Custody - The following letters and documents were saved by Louisa C. “Lula” Hanna Armstrong (Mrs. Dr. William J. Armstrong I) and passed down: to her daughter, Mary “Mamie” Armstrong Rice in 1924, to her daughter, Nina Rice Albright in 1951, and in the 1970’s to her 1st cousin, William J. Armstrong III, son of William J. Armstrong II and grandson of Dr. William J. Armstrong.


The Memphis/Shelby County Death Index (1848-1945) Yellow Fever Deaths Index (1878) was developed from sources which included the “Life and Letters of Dr. William J. Armstrong”, West Tennessee Historical Society Papers, Volume 4, 1950. (http://history.memphislibrary.org/)

Perre Magness researched the “Life and Times of Dr. William J. Armstrong” articles and other documents for her two articles written for the Memphis Commercial Appeal in 1996: “Yellow Fever’s Fearful Toll Recounted” and “Doctor Succumbs to Fever's Horror”
The original letters were given by William J. Armstrong to Dr. Simon Rulin Bruesch (http://library.utm.edu/HSLBC/history/srb_bio.htm) with the University of Tennessee in 1986. Copies of the original letters were also given to Dr. Wright for Southwestern College at Memphis (Rhodes).

In 2003 Richard Nollan, University of Tennessee Health Sciences Historical Collections, Memphis, Tennessee (http://library.utm.edu/HSLBC/history/index.html), gave William J. Armstrong digital images of the letters/documents and from these images this document is partly compiled.

This document was completed for and at the request of William J. Armstrong of Arlington, Tennessee for the purpose of disseminating the Collection to libraries, historical societies, family and friends. The transcription and compilation of the “Dr. William J. Armstrong Collection” was prepared by Brenda Black Watson and Howard Watson of Memphis, TN <priority@comtutors.com>, family friends of William J. Armstrong III (2003-2005) who is the grandson of Dr. and Mrs. William J. Armstrong. This document is intended to be viewed on a computer and is presented on numbered CDs. An Index was not created but most names and places are in bold for easy “Search” or “Find” within the document. The transcribers corrected the contrast and coloring of many images of the letters and attempted to faithfully maintain the original spellings of each document. Permission is required for publication.

Reference numbers:
SRB - written on item (Simon Rulin Bruesch)
WJA - assigned by UT on digital file
Sources

This document serves as a compilation of material preserved and developed about the life of Dr. Armstrong and his wife, Lula by the following.

Louise “Lula” C. Hanna Armstrong
Mary Armstrong Rice
Nina Martin Rice Albright
William J. Armstrong III
Ruth Hill Fulton McAllister, Maury County, TN
Family of Franklin Fulton, Maury County, TN
Julian Armstrong, London, England
Dr. Marshall Wingfield, West Tennessee Historical Society
Perre Magness and The Memphis Commercial Appeal
Turner’s History of Maury County, Tennessee
Dr. Simon Rulin Bruesch and Richard Nollan
University of Tennessee Health Sciences Historical Collections
Chain of Custody

Dr. Armstrong Letters
Kept by Lula, Mary, Nina and Billy

Dr. William James Armstrong & Louisa C. "Lula" Hanna
1839-1878 & 1847-1924

Mary A. "Mamie" Armstrong Rice
Daughter
1871-1951

Edwin Lester Rice
1965-1927

Nina Martin Rice Albright
Granddaughter
1891-1979

William J. "Billy" Armstrong, Jr.
Grandson
1908-

Charles H. Albright
1886-1940

Pictures Courtesy of
William J. Armstrong, Jr. and the Franklin Fulton Collection by permission of Ruth Hill Fulton McAllister
Armstrong-Frierson Family Ancestry

The Scots-Irish Armstrong family immigrated to South Carolina in the early 18th century from Ireland, eventually migrating to Columbia, Maury County, Tennessee and Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee.

Armstrong

The progenitor of the Armstongs in America, James Armstrong, born about 1639 in Scotland. He and his wife, Mary Yates, on account of the Religious persecution which was common at the period, were compelled about 1670 to leave the lands they occupied in the Dumfriesshire, Scotland. They settled on the townlands of Ballykine, County Down, Ireland. They were staunch Presbyterians as were all the Scotch-Irish of the day. His grandson, James, born in 1703 in County Down, Ireland, and his wife, Janet Blakeley, immigrated to America about 1732 to Williamsburg District, Craven County, South Carolina. His grandson, James, born in 1764, and his wife, Agnes Frierson, migrated from South Carolina to Maury County, Tennessee & are buried there. Both James, as a 16 year old, and Agnes' father, Capt. William Frierson, fought at the Battle of King's Mountain which turned the tide of the American Revolution. Their son, Elias James, born in 1787, married Elizabeth McCauley Frierson, both born in South Carolina and both buried in Zion Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Maury County. Their son, William Osgood, born in 1811, and his wife, Mary E. Smith, born in 1815, had Dr. William James Armstrong, Civil War Surgeon and Yellow Fever Hero in Memphis who was born in 1839 in Columbia.

Frierson

Source: “ANTECEDENTS” Chapter I, William Frierson Fulton, Jr. Family Record and War Reminiscences, (Transcribed by James W. Martin, 1919)

SOMETIMEd about 1670 the ancestors of my maternal ancestor left Scotland and settled in the north of Ireland. In 1730, or thereabout, a colony from this settlement secured a grant of land from William III, Prince of Orange, in Williamsburg District, S. C. This grant consisted of a township of land twenty miles square. The colony dissatisfied with the exactions of the landlord system, and the demands of the clergy of the established church in Ireland, decided to brave the risks of an ocean voyage and the dangers that awaited them in the New World, and start life anew in the wilds of America. From 1730 to 1734 a large settlement was formed in Williamsburg District, S. C., named in honor of William III. Belonging to the Presbyterian Church, these people were embarrassed by having to meet the demands of their own church and at the same time support the established Church. This they deemed too great hardship to bear and at once set out to cross the ocean and take up their settlement on the grant of King William, which guaranteed them the full right and privilege of enjoying their own faith and belief without intrusion.

In this colony that settled this Williamsburg District was William Frierson, from County Down; near Belfast, Ireland. He had two sons, John and James, born in
Ireland, besides William, Thomas, Robert and one daughter, Agnes, born in South Carolina — five sons and one daughter. John, the eldest son, married Margaret Smith. Several children were born to them, but I mention only one, viz.: Margaret. She (Margaret) married James Frierson II, the son of the above-mentioned James I, brother to John, her father — thus marrying her first cousin. By him she had several children, one called James, for his father, being the third of the name. He married in South Carolina, had several children and moved to Tennessee, settling in the Zion community, near Columbia, Tenn. Of his children I only mention one, Elizabeth, who married Samuel Wilson of Green County, Ala. (now Hale County), near Havana, in the Concord Church community, and by him had one child, Fannie, who married Judge Thomas Wilkes Coleman of Eutaw, Ala. Her husband, Samuel Wilson, dying, she afterward married William Frierson Fulton, of Sumter County, Ala., and by him had two children who reached mature age, viz.: Robert and Florence.

Thus I dispose of John and James Frierson, the two sons of William Frierson, who, as already mentioned, were born in County Downs, Ireland. Now of the other sons of the said (Page 6) William Frierson, was one William Frierson, Jr., born in South Carolina. This son was a captain in the Revolution and led his company in action at the Battle of Kings Mountain, thus entitling his posterity to an honorable place among the S. A. R’s or D. A. R’s. He married Margaret Gordon of Scotch parentage and reared a family of five sons, and one daughter, Agnes, who married James Armstrong. He, James Armstrong, was a member of Lee’s Legion in the Revolution. They both died in 1830, within two weeks of each other. One daughter, Martha Armstrong married Paul Fulton (My grandparents), and their son, William Frierson Fulton, married first Elizabeth Dial (My mother), second Mrs. Meek (No children), third Mrs. Wilson (Two children, Robert and Florence), fourth Mrs. J. R. Fleming (No children)....

I am delighted and honoured to be invited to add this preface to the Life and History of Dr. William James Armstrong (my 6th cousin twice removed!) whose bravery in the face of grave danger, and the unswerving professional commitment he gave regardless of personal considerations to the patients under his care, mark him out as one of the truly noble members of our Armstrong family. In the end, he made the ultimate sacrifice in losing his life for the sake of others.

That he possessed such fortitude and determination to undertake what he regarded as the right thing to do as a matter of principle may stand in part as a tribute to his forbears whose ability to overcome persecution, hardship and danger in successive generations throughout their two hundred year history was probably inherited in his genes. In fact, the Border Clans in Scotland suffered hardship and warring through the fifteen hundreds also. Their lands continually were crossed and fought over by both English and Scottish armies that carried no provisions of their own, but rather ravaged the crops and livestock of its owners. However, such knowledge as we have of our particular branch of the family only starts there in the sixteen hundreds.

It is a sad fact that, owing to a lack of communication many generations ago, we do not know exactly where in southern Scotland our branch of the Armstrong family originated. We know from an ancestor that they came from Dumfriesshire somewhere between Annandale and Langholm in the Border country, but our best guess, based on one small clue in the family papers, is that they lived in the neighbourhood of the village of Half Morton. The first family member known to us is James who was probably born about 1639. We know, also, that this James, like so many of his fellow Presbyterians, had signed the Covenant, swearing an oath of loyalty to the king but also, and more significantly, to maintain Presbyterianism in the face of the threat of its enforced replacement by Roman Catholicism.

In 1662 Charles II, who hitherto had sworn in formal circumstances to support the Covenanters, declared that the Covenant oaths were unlawful and were to be abjured by anyone holding public office. Episcopacy was re-introduced and ministers who refused to accept the authority of the bishops were expelled from their livings. There followed a period of religious persecution and repression of the Covenanters who took up arms about 1665, leading to a rebellion that was quelled with great barbarity. James Armstrong, being attested and having his lands confiscated, was forced to flee Scotland for Ireland the following year, taking with him three sons by his first wife and two by his second. Their names were James, John and Martin, and their half-brothers were Robert and William. They all settled in or near Upper and Lower Ballykine, near Ballynahinch, County Down, in the north of Ireland. Here the greater part of the land was of poor quality and farming must have been a struggle, as indeed it would have been for the family, also, in the similarly poor soil conditions of the Scottish Borderland.
All such Presbyterian settlers, not altogether surprisingly, were considered by the indigenous Roman Catholics as unwelcome in the area, a factor that, on top of the hardships of trying to earn an existence, could only have contributed to the discomfort and insecurity of their day-to-day lives. To add to their troubles in 1702, upon the accession to the throne of Queen Anne, daughter of James II, and during the life of the family’s second James (c1675-c1763-est.), son of the first, the Test Act was passed. This Act required every person holding office of any kind in Ireland to take Communion in the Church of England, an imposition for many of the Presbyterians who regarded the Church of England as but one step removed from the Roman Catholic Church. In addition, England and Scotland had placed a high tariff wall against almost everything that was raised or manufactured in the north of Ireland. On top of all this, came several years of drought and famine, and it was under these circumstances that the Scots Presbyterians of Northern Ireland began to migrate to America in large numbers. A conservative historian estimated their volume to have reached half a million between 1705 and 1775.

During this period, most of which coincided with the life of John Armstrong (c1705-1752) - son of the second James, the Penal laws were in force, and although it was a crime to harbour a Roman Catholic priest, remembering the sufferings of his forefathers for their religion, he received into his house Father John Fagan and there protected him for several years, which kindness the good priest repaid in the best possible manner by undertaking the education of his family, a service which undoubtedly made a handsome contribution to the family’s ability to improve its standing, aided by inheritance and subsequent beneficial marriages.

This John, whose wife was Elizabeth Blakely, appears to have inherited land from his father-in-law Robert Blakely, also the business of malt making and grain merchant begun by him, and so the family started on the road to financial security, growing in prosperity rapidly during the lives of his son James (1733-1812) and his grandson John (1754-1837), peaking during the lives of his great grandsons, the Rev. James Armstrong, DD, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin and a highly educated man who could converse in Latin as well as several other languages, and his brother John Strong Armstrong, both Elders of the first Presbyterian Church in Ballynahinch. Both were greatly respected gentlemen who had married wives from wealthy families, both owning substantial Georgian houses in Dublin, John also owning several properties in Ballynahinch.

James Armstrong (1733-1812) was the father of six sons, four of whom emigrated to America between 1783 and 1815. Upon the death of his father in 1752 he inherited the business of Malting and Grain Merchant and a third of his father’s lands and farm, later adding a Distillery and Brewery as well.

In the year 1760, when the French under Trurot effected a landing at Carrickfergus, took the Castle, plundered the town and threatened Belfast, James Armstrong and his Uncle William led sixty men from the neighbourhood under the command of Lord Rawdon, afterwards Earl of Moira, to assist the King’s troops in repelling the invasion. There is a reference to this episode in a little work entitled "The History of the Volunteers" by Thomas Nevin, Dublin 1848, in which it states 'The first appearance of the spirit of Volunteering occurred in 1760 when Trurot and a small band of
Frenchmen landed at Carrickfergus and took the town. The people around Belfast fled to arms, and their appearance is thus described by Lord Charlemont - "The appearance of the peasantry, who had thronged to its defence, many of whom were my own tenants, was singular and formidable. They were drawn up in regular bodies each with his own chosen officers, and formed in martial array; some few with old firelocks but the greater number armed with what is called in Scotland the Lochaber axe, a scythe fixed longitudinally to the end of a long pole - a desperate weapon, and one which they would have made a desperate use of. Thousands were assembled in a small circuit; but these thousands were so thoroughly impressed with the necessity of regularity that the town was perfectly undisturbed by tumult, by riot, or even by drunkenness." The expedition ended by the embarkation of the greater part of the force.'

When in October 1779 the Kingdom was threatened by a French and Spanish invasion he was elected to act as Lieutenant of the Ballynahinch Company of Volunteers in which Corps he served for many years. By then he was living in one of the large houses which he built fronting Church Street and the Market Square in Ballynahinch, Co. Down. These houses were burnt to the ground in the uprising of June 1798, but he rebuilt them over the three ensuing years.

James Armstrong executed his Will on 13th August 1779. He had been thrown from his horse into a bog and had sustained injuries which eventually ended in Gangrene of which he died at his residence in Ballynahinch on 15th October 1812 in the 80th year of his age. Robert Bruce Armstrong, my great-great uncle, relates in his book that James was specially fond of field and other sports and was of singularly fine presence and physique. From Robert's father and uncle, John Strong Armstrong & Rev. James Armstrong, he had heard that they frequently remarked how rarely they met anyone who approached him in appearance.

Turning now to the six emigrant members of the family, they were:

1. James Armstrong (c 1703-1750), whose wife was Janet Blakely, was the second son of the original James who left Scotland and the great, great, great grandfather of Dr. William J. Armstrong. He joined Roger Gordon's party that left Belfast aboard the "Happy Return" and landed in Charleston, South Carolina in 1732. Amongst the inhospitable swamps and marauding insects around the Black River, he and his wife established themselves on the land, living in a log cabin initially in Kingstree, moving on to Williamsburg. He died in 1750 in Williamsburg, probably in an epidemic of influenza known as the "Great Mortality" that swept the township that year causing the death of about eighty people.

2. William Armstrong (1757-1823), a great, great grandson of the first James, was married to Anne Blair. Emigrating from Belfast in 1783, he settled in Hampshire County in that part of Virginia that later became West Virginia. His descendants who settled in Romney in that county are said to have undergone fifty-seven changes of occupation by Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War.
3. **James Armstrong** (1760-1793-5), brother to **William** above, having emigrated from **Belfast** either in 1779 or between 1790 and 1792, died of Yellow Fever shortly afterwards between 1793 and 1795 in **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**, the very disease against which, years later in Memphis, Tennessee, **Dr. William James Armstrong** so gallantly fought.

   **James** would have been proud to have seen his son **William** (1782-1865) sitting as the Member from **Hampshire County, Virginia** in the House of Representatives.

4. **Robert Armstrong** (1766-between 1819 and 1828) the third brother, emigrated from **Belfast** about 1786 and settled in **Allegany County, Maryland** where he married **Elizabeth Cressap** and had one son named **John**. Nothing further is known about him.

5. **David Armstrong** (1768-1836) was the fourth brother. He, like the others, resided at **Ballynahinch** where his property was destroyed during the Insurrection of 1798.

   He married **Ellen/Eleanor Baxter** of **Crossgar, County Down** and emigrated with his family and 39 other passengers on 21st/22nd September 1815 aboard the “**Westpoint**” (said to have been a superior ship to most), arriving in **New York** on 22nd November 1815 where he was Naturalized the following year. They settled first in **Springfield Virginia**, and afterwards in the town of **Romney, Hampshire, Virginia**, where **David** was granted an entertainment and drinks license at his home in May 1822.

   Before departure he bought outfits for himself, his wife, and six children (three girls and three boys) at a cost of £552.1.0½ on 20th September 1815 (Family papers). NB. The equivalent purchasing power/value of £552.1.1 in the year 2,000 was £22,763-53p, or about $34,600!

   He died 30th May **1836** aged 69 (29th April 1838 on his tombstone).

6. **David Strong Armstrong** (1778-1820) was the son of **John Armstrong** (1754-1837). **John** was a man of considerable standing as a Linen Merchant and Port Master for **Belfast**, as Commissioner for taking Affidavits in Chancery, and as Captain of the **Ballynahinch Volunteers**. He was probably the **John Armstrong** of **Magheradrool** (a parish encompassing **Ballynahinch**) who was given Flax Grants in 1796.

   **David**, a woollen and carpet merchant in **Belfast** until 1810, emigrated that year with his wife **Jane Warren** to **New York, New York**, settling in the Wall Street area of Manhattan, where he died ten years later and was buried in a vault of the Presbyterian Church in Wall street. This church is no longer there having been removed in 1844, and re-erected in Washington Street, **Jersey City, NJ**. **David’s** son **Hugh Warren Armstrong** was born in **New York** in 1803 but returned to **Holywood, County Down** with his mother after his father’s death.
Such, therefore, was the background and development of the family in Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was ironic that the first five members of the family, who through religious persecution and commercial barriers in Ireland felt compelled to emigrate to America, had to start yet again in a strange land in testing and difficult circumstances.

Thus the family had to become pioneers for one hundred and fifty years in three countries, and justly can be proud of their fortitude and achievements in successive generations.
Pedigree Chart of William James Armstrong
Dr. William J. Armstrong Family

Maury County, TN Biographies
Facts extracted from Turner's History of Maury County, TN

“William Armstrong was born 7/24/1839 near Columbia, TN, about one mile east of Zion Presbyterian Church. His parents were William Osgood Armstrong (6/27/1811- 8/20/1885) and Mary E. Smith (1/28/1815- 5/28/1859). William Osgood Armstrong’s parents were Elias James Armstrong (10/11/1787-8/7/1855) and Elizabeth McCauley Frierson (4/10/1794-8/12/1841), both from SC and buried in Zion Church Cemetery. He attended Stephenson Academy near Zion Church and studied medicine under Dr. Joseph E. Dixon. After the war ended, Dr. Armstrong returned with his wife to Maury County, where he practiced medicine until 1873. He moved his family back to Memphis that year, just before the outbreak of a Yellow Fever epidemic. Dr. Armstrong sent his family back to safety in Maury County and stayed in Memphis to give aid to the victims. After the epidemic was over, his family returned to Memphis, where they stayed until 1878, when a more devastating Yellow Fever epidemic hit the city. He again sent his family, which now included eight children, to safety in Maury County. Staying in Memphis to use his medical skills to aid in the crisis, he worked until he became exhausted and overtaken by the fever, died there on 9/20/1878, himself a victim of the epidemic from which he had saved many others.” http://www.tngenweb.org/maury/maury.html

Dr. WILLIAM “Will” JAMES ARMSTRONG was born in Maury Co., TN in 1839 to William Osgood Armstrong and Mary E. Smith whose issue were: Mary Eliza (Beecher), Martha Jane, Helen Smith, John Wilson, Annie Osgood and Ida Duncan. His parents are buried in Mt. Zion Cemetery (Presbyterian Church) on the outskirts (Mt. Pleasant) of Columbia, TN. Dr. Armstrong was a surgeon who served in the forces of Confederate Gen. Gideon J. Pillow. He and Lula met when he was stationed at a Confederate Hospital in Mineral Wells or Enterprise, Mississippi and she was living in Memphis. They are buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis. He played the violin and was a prolific and eloquent writer. The University of Tennessee Health Sciences Historical Collections in Memphis has the collection of Dr. Armstrong’s letters, giving a day-by-day account of the Yellow Fever epidemics of 1873 and 1878. Dr. Armstrong’s portrait was painted by one of his patients and will be given to University of Tennessee. There is a Yellow Fever exhibit at the Memphis Pink Palace Museum showing a physician consulting with the Mayor of Memphis. The audiotape features a recreation of Dr. William J. Armstrong in his conversation with the Mayor discussing the previous day’s deaths and the condition of the city during the Yellow Fever Epidemic.

LOUISA C. “LULA” HANNA She and Dr. Armstrong married on her 16th birthday in Lowndes County, Mississippi. She was the daughter of G. W. (George Washington) Hanna & Caledonia “Callie” Wilkinson who married in Artesia, Lowndes County, Mississippi (1847). (Capt. John Wilkinson, referenced in letter below may be Callie’s brother in Memphis.)
Lula, born in Tennessee, lived in St. Louis when she was young, moved to Memphis and, later, to Mississippi. According to the 1850 Missouri, St. Louis Co. Census, W. Hanna (27), an Auctioneer, and Caledonia “Callie” (Wilkinson, 20) were married and had issue: Louisa (Lula, 2) and two twin daughters, Ida and Ada (1). (Dr. Armstrong also had a sister named Ida.) The Hannas lived with or next door to Eliza Wilkinson (29), Mary S. Wilkinson (6), John E. Wilkinson (4), William W. Wilkinson (2), Susan Wilkinson (53), Edward Wilkinson (22), and Sarah P. Wilkinson (18). (Beverly “Bevie” was not born by this time.)

According to Lula’s obituary and Dr. Marshall Wingfield, “During the war, she (Lula) went to live with friends of her family in Artesia, Lowndes Co., Mississippi, from Memphis while her mother (Callie) served in Confederate Hospitals.” (Note: Artesia is 110 miles or 4 counties north of Enterprise, on eastern edge of MS, on the same railroad line.) The family, including the younger children, separated during the War. Callie Hanna, Lula’s mother, died shortly after the end of the War. Her father, G. W. Hanna, moved to St. Louis, Memphis and Texas. Lula and Will raised Callie and G. W.’s youngest children. A young child, “Little Callie,” died young at Lula’s home but “Bevie” (Beverly) lived to adulthood. Beverly was in the 1910 census in Lake County, TN, 1920 census in Pemiscot Co., MO, and 1930 census in Pemiscot Co., MO where he raised his family.

**ARMSTRONG-HANNA MARRIAGE** Dr. Armstrong was as a surgeon in the forces of General Gideon J. Pillow and was stationed in Enterprise, Clarke Co., Mississippi when he and Lula met in Mineral Wells or Artesia, Lowndes Co., MS.

Dr. Armstrong’s letters to Lula began during the Civil War, shortly after their first meeting. Their romance and courtship was very short. One of the first letters, written in March 8, 1863, asked permission to correspond. These letters continue until their marriage on December 2, 1863.

Will and Lula’s dedication to medical care was to continually impact their entire relationship of fifteen years. During the Civil War, Will and Lula remained committed to the care of the wounded soldiers. A family story relates that there was a shortage of quinine, needed by Dr. Armstrong to treat his soldier/patients, during the Civil War. Lula obtained the quinine and sewed it in the hem of her skirts. She heroically drove her horse and buggy through federal-enemy lines and took Dr. Armstrong the quinine for the soldier’s medical needs.

Following the War, Will and Lula set up housekeeping in Columbia, Tennessee until 1873 when they moved to Memphis, just prior to the first Yellow Fever epidemic that was to decimate the City of Memphis. When the first fever hit, Lula and the children moved back to Columbia for safe-haven. Will stayed in Memphis and cared for the victims. Lula and the children moved back to Memphis following the first Epidemic but were to move back to Columbia at the outbreak of the second Epidemic in 1878. Again, Will stayed on to care for the stricken. He died in September and the Epidemic ended the next month.

Lula was the recipient in Shelby County of a Confederate soldier's widow's pension following the death of her husband, Dr. William James Armstrong, under the name, Armstrong, Louisa Charlott (Pension # W5449 Shelby Co.). They had 8 children and she was widowed at the age of 31. Their eight children, born between the close of the War in 1865 to 1877, all lived to adulthood.
Armstrong Children

OSGOOD CLINE (“O. C.”) (11 Aug 1865) Lived in Memphis, married Winifred Darnell, whose father owned Darnell Lumber Co. They had a daughter, Will Shepherd. O. C. was president of Wm. R. Moore Dry Goods Co. and was Director of Memphis’ Bank of Commerce.

HARRY LEE (09 Dec 1867) Married Elizabeth Estes, daughter of Judge Bedford Mitchell Estes and Elizabeth Guion. They had two sons, Estes and Guion. Harry was the Cashier of a bank. Estes had 2 daughters; Virginia and Guion. Virginia had two children; Mary and Anne. Guion had three children; Virginia, Jeanne, Louis, Jr.

DWIGHT MITCHELL (04 May 1868) Married Ellen Barton, whose family owned Barton Cotton Co. Dwight was a prominent banker and head of the Commercial Bank and Trust Co. later consolidated with the Bank of Commerce. He is buried in Forest Hill Cemetery. Elizabeth, their daughter, made her debut in Memphis, married Guy Stollenwerck and lived in Chickasaw Gardens.

WILLIAM JAMES (“Will”) II (ca. 1870) Officer and Director of Wm. R. Moore Dry Goods. He married Heslope Armistead Bragg and had, William James Armstrong III, Jr. They built a home at 1260 Central next door to his sister, Mary, where William III lived for 5 years. Will moved to NY, started business and died there in 1943. He is buried at St. John’s Church Cemetery in New York.

MARY A. (“Mamie”) (14 Jan 1871). After Dr. Armstrong’s death, the Howard Society (forerunner of AMA) gave Mary a four-year scholarship to St. Mary’s School for Girls. She married Edwin Lester Rice who later became CEO of the Bank of Commerce in Memphis. William III was devoted to his Aunt Mary. Mary’s daughter, Nina Martin Rice, married Charles H. Albright. William III lived next door to Nina at 1260 Central Av. as a young child. He was ring bearer at their wedding. She was educated at a girl’s school in Tarrytown, NY. She died in 1979 and had no children. Through her, William III Armstrong inherited furniture from his grandfather, Dr. Armstrong.

ANNIE HELEN (ca. 1874) Died at the age of 24 following an appendicitis attack.

ERNEST S. (ca. 1875) Made a career in the military service. He was listed in Lula’s Obituary as living in New Orleans in 1924.

Armstrong Family Album
Sepia-colored pictures Courtesy of the Franklin Fulton Collection by permission of Ruth Hill Fulton McAllister

William & Lula Armstrong ca. 1867

Dr. William James Armstrong
Louisa C. “Lula” Hanna

William Osgood Armstrong
Father of Dr. Armstrong
Grandchildren
Osgood C. & Harry Armstrong
Mary Beecher ca. 1867

Dr. William James Armstrong 1839-1878

Louisa C. “Lula” Hanna Armstrong 1847-1924

William James “Will” Armstrong
Heslope Armistead Bragg 1880 - 1957

William James Armstrong, Jr. 1908-

Office Chair and Fainting Couch used in Dr. Armstrong’s medical office

Table built by Dr. Armstrong

James K. Polk Chair
The Armstrongs lived near the Polks in Columbia, TN
Lula, Osgood Cline, Harry Lee, Dwight Mitchell & William James Armstrong

Ca. 1870
WJA010-04-02 & 03

"Courtesy of the Franklin Fulton Collection by permission of Ruth Hill Fulton McAllister"
### 1850 Missouri Census

*4th Ward of St. Louis in the County of St. Louis*

15 day of August 1850

#### Caledonia “Callie” Wilkinson Hanna’s Family in St. Louis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>Married within year</th>
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<td>29</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>do</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan do</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Edward do</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>Clerk</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>W. Hanna</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Auctioneer</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
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<td>Caledonia do</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lewis P. Wilkinson *</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
University of Tennessee Health Sciences Historical Collection

“Read Me” File
April 5, 2003

The Letters of William J. Armstrong

Health Sciences Historical Collections
Health Sciences Library and Biocommunications Center
The University of Tennessee Health Science Center
877 Madison Avenue
Memphis, TN 38163
Voice: 901-448-6053
Fax: 901-448-7235
http://library.utmem.edu/HSLBC/history/index.html

The Letters of William J. Armstrong
1863 D 1878

BIOGRAPHY

William James Armstrong was born on July 24, 1839 about 6 miles west of Columbia in Maury County, Tennessee. He was the son of William Osgood Armstrong and his wife, Mary Eliza Smith.

William Armstrong read medicine under Dr. Joseph Edward Dixon (1831-1902), and received his medical degree in March of 1862 from the University of Nashville. In 1863 he met Louisa Hanna in Artesia, where her family sent her during the war. They were married on December 2, 1863. After the war, the newly wed couple moved back to Maury County, where the doctor began his practice. There is little correspondence during this period.

In 1873 they moved to Memphis, where he continued his practice. He volunteered
to remain in Memphis during the Yellow Fever epidemic, while his wife and five children were sent back to Maury County for safety.

In 1876 he was appointed Professor of Physiology at the newly organized Memphis Hospital Medical College. Classes were delayed until 1880 due to the epidemics of 1878 and 1879.

In 1878 Dr. Armstrong once again volunteered to remain in Memphis under the auspices of the Howard Association Medical Corps. Memphis had suffered Yellow Fever epidemics before, but this would be the most devastating. Dr. Armstrong sent his wife and 8 children to Maury County. He died of Yellow Fever on September 20, and was buried in Elmwood Cemetery.

Nearly all of the letters in this collection are written from Dr. Armstrong to his wife. Regrettably we have none of those from her to him. The letters that we have were written during periods when husband and wife were separated, most notably by the Yellow Fever epidemics of 1873 and 1878. Acquaintances and friends wrote some of the letters, mostly to Mrs. Armstrong, regarding the doctor. There are also bank drafts and other official documents included in this disc.

The letters have been reproduced on this compact disc using the portable document format (PDF). In this format they should be readable on any computer. The letters are arranged in electronic folders, in the same order as the originals. They are arranged in loose but not strict chronological order. The numbering of the letters is discontinuous because a number of notes and other inserts have been omitted.

These letters are a gift to the Health Sciences Historical Collections from Dr. Armstrong's grandson of the same name, William J. Armstrong.
File Folder WJA 010-02 D 1863
21 items

This folder contains letters from Dr. Armstrong to Miss Lula Hanna, which are dated 1863. In this year Dr. Armstrong was assigned to a station hospital in Enterprise, Mississippi, which was presumably under the command of Brigadier General Gideon J. Pillow. In his correspondence, Dr. Armstrong develops a relationship with Miss Hanna in Artesia, Mississippi. After a successful courtship they were married on December 2, 1863. The last item in this folder (WJA010-02-23) is a reproduction of their marriage certificate.

File Folder WJA 010-03 D 1864-1877
13 items

This folder contains a small number of letters, mostly from the end of the war to the Yellow Fever epidemic in Memphis of 1873.

File Folder WJA 010-04 D 1878
26 items

These letters about Dr. Armstrong's experience of the Yellow Fever epidemic in Memphis of 1878 describe the event from a doctor's perspective.

File folder WJA 010-05 D 1879-
6 items

Letters of condolence to Mrs. Armstrong.

File Folder WJA 010-06 D1878
24 items

Letters of condolence, news clippings, and bank draft receipts.

File Folder WJA 010-07 D Miscellaneous
10 items

Letters of condolence, book mark, business cards.

Richard Nollan
April 5, 2003
The page is a historical collection catalog entry for the University of Tennessee's Health Sciences Library and Biocommunications Center. The catalog entry is titled "Gloom Impenetrable: Yellow Fever and the Letters of Dr. William J. Armstrong, M.D. August - September 1878." The entry includes a historical background, a description of the content, and details of the letters included. The letters were written in response to the yellow fever epidemic in Memphis in 1878. The page also includes an exhibit note with information about the autograph letters and photographs included in the collection. The letters were written to family members and detail the experiences of the author during the epidemic. The text ends with a list of letters included in the collection.
Note with Collection

This metal box contains msc. Letters of Armstrong – Hanna families – see Armstrong Msc. Papers

S. R. Breusch
25 Nov. 1986
Dr. Armstrong and Family Letters
Pre-Civil War

1852-1862
My poor friend I will offer you no excuse for not answering that dreadful letter before, I had not courage. I could not bear to think about your dreadful misfortune. Oh my friend what must you have suffered, if it is such an affliction to me, what must it be to your poor heart-broken mother, how I looked forward to the time when you would come and bring them to us and now I shall never see them again never, Dearest friend although they cannot come to us we can go to them for that we can look forward and pray continually, while they are happier far happier than if they were still in this (wicked?). God took his pure sweet children to himself for his own wise purposes before they knew what sin or affliction was. I do not grieve for them but for you who are left behind. But you have still something to live for, they are not all gone, you have still a child on earth and your poor husband, and mother you must bear up for their sakes. Pray God that those blessings may be still preserved to you. Come away my friend come to us (Please?) and I will always welcome you with open arms, you must have change of scene now and not suffer yourself to brood over your misfortune. Think how precious your life is to so many who dearly love you and take more care of your own health. I hope it is not as bad as you think. Excitement and weariness have of course weakened you but I sincerely hope it is nothing more and that you will rally again for the sake of the dear friends who are still left to you. Fare well my dearest friend, and believe me no one sympathizes more truly with your misfortune than your

Sincerely attached

Jane

(Transcriber’s Note: This letter may refer to the deaths of Callie’s children, Ada and Ida. See 1850 MO Census.)
January, 1855

to Caledonia Hanna

from Mag Hanna Wosly

(Mrs M. R. Worly)

Memphis Tenn

Postal Stamp Jan 16

Mrs. Caledonia Hanna

St. Louis

By M. R. Wosly (Mosly?)

Memphis Tenn

June the 16th – 55

My Dear Callie

How often have I commenced letters to you, giving the particulars of one Dear Mother’s Death, but I could not finish them, and even now, I know that I can not write you all that she said during Her long and painful illness. She said repeatedly that she would never recover. Oh! With what calamity, and resignation, She bore Her afflictions, which were truly great.

Never can I forget the prayers which were offered up when She scarce could speak for us all - - She asked Their many friends to pray, and sing, with Her daily, yes hourly, the song she like most was, “There is Rest for the Weary.”

A (for?) coming before Her gentle spirit took its flight, she asked all to leave the room excepting my-self. I knelt beside Her Bed. She took my hand in Hers and said Mag: my child, I am going to (leave?) you all I know that you all will love, and take good care of poor little Louis. I want Him to go to church, and Sabbath-School. He must stay with you and Callie.

She told me to tell you, and Edward, that she would never see either of you again on earth, but to meet her in heaven. She told me to have her buried beside little Callie. Edward I suppose has told you, how she was buried.

The day before she died she asked me to read to Her. I read from Job, the 13th and 14th chapters several verses she requested me to repeat among them the fifteenth of the thirteenth chapter “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

She never spoke of getting well but twice. Oh Callie; if you could have seen Her in death. She did not shudder, even when in His Icy grasp, and after Her Spirit had passed to that “(bosom/house/heaven?) where no Traveler returns” a heavenly smile rested upon Her marble face. She looked as if she was asleep, and dreaming of that bright, and beautiful land, where there is no more sorrow, pain or Death where all is (bliss?) Alas! She was asleep but it was the “Sleep of Death.”

Oh that our end may be like Hers. She often spoke of her beloved Pastor Mr. Young and when her letter from the church came she tried to read it, but could not.
I wish that I could see you, to tell you the many things she said. I hope it will not be long before you come down. I would write more, but I do not feel very well -- and John is sick to night. I will send you a copy of some lines suggested a few evenings after Her Death which are intended for just you alone. Visit often.

My love to all.  Your Sister Mag.

(Transcriber’s Note: This is the only document that names Lula’s family members. Callie (Caledonia) Wilkinson Hanna is Lula’s Armstrong’s mother. Mag (possibly short for Margaret?) is Callie’s sister and Edward is Callie’s brother. Callie Wilkinson Hanna died in/before March of 1868 according to a letter written by Callie’s husband, GW Hanna. - See letter in Collection. AKAs for GW: George Washington Hanna, G. Washington Hanna, George W. Hanna. The reference to being buried “beside little Callie” may mean that Callie’s mother had named a daughter “Callie” who had died. This was common practice when a family wanted to ensure a family name be carried on.)
Civil War

Letters from Will
Before Sept 18, 1864

to Lula Hanna
Artesia, MS
from William Armstrong
WJA 010-02-03

This bundle contains everything for young __________ (paper torn) and one dress for Callie –

Miss Lula Hanna
Artesia
Miss

(Transcriber’s Note: The “Callie” referred to in this note is unknown or may be a younger sister. She lived with Lula and Will along with Bevie, Lula’s youngest brother. “Little Callie” died before a letter written Sept 18, 1864.)
March 8, 1863

to Lula Hanna

from William Armstrong

Enterprise, MS

WJA010-02-04 (File # not written on letter)

Miss Lula,

My dear friend,

Perhaps you have said ere this that my request for a correspondence was not sincere, but more than once, since I saw you, I had my reasons to believe that I would see you again face to face – which to me, would have been much pleasanter than sitting down to write, at this distance. Although corresponding, with a distance friend, is a pleasure, agreeable and somewhat expressive. Yet to me it is far pleasanter to engage in social converse with that friend. And as the heart speaks forth with emphasis and reliant expression, it over takes of emotion and feeling, to watch with delight the passing changes in the expression of its companion - -

I believe yet, that you and Mrs. Thompson are not satisfied about the pleasure of my visit to see you. I can assure you, that it was a visit that I often think of with delight and never to expect to regret one moment’s time spent with you – and you will be doubly sure as to how much I appreciate it. When I tell you that it came near costing me my commission an Inspector having paid us a visit during my absence. I came near being reported for disobedience of orders. You may be sure. I was excited about it, for a few days.

Your Ma has been sick for several days, with a slight fever, but today she is again sitting up, having improved very rapidly – it seems a great affliction to her to be sick for a short time, having been blessed with health so long a time – I hope, Miss Lula, you will not think that I have dared to write this poor scrawl of a letter, without getting the permission, that I promised you to obtain, before writing – I trust I may prove just as true to all promises that I make you – She gave her consent without any hesitation – She has never noticed the change of (rings?).

Hoping that this uninteresting missive may serve to dispel the gloom and loneliness of a few hours, and with many good wishes for your welfare –

I am –

Your best friend

W. J. Armstrong

Miss Lula Hanna

Artesia
My Darling Lula,

Although only two days since I left you it seems more than triple that time to me. “The long, long weary days” hung very heavily on my head. And every moment in the day I am thinking of my absent one – oh: Lula what I would give to see you now. This lonesome and _____ house: but every moment brings back the pleasant hours past and the painful realizations that they are gone and will probably not be soon re-enacted.

I must tell you that, as I predicted, I came home and found the house filled with its former (tormentors?), who failed to pass Jackson on account of the lightening there.

I have already told a glowing tale concerning our little travel up to Artesia - all the friends you meet with. The sights we saw and the conversations that we overheard – I told the conversation that you heard in the car at Lauderdale to Dr. H – with the additions which I said that I would make – he thinks it is a capital joke on you, himself and the preacher but I can’t think that you have any part or lot in the matter – by the way the Doctor and I walked to church today. He was _____ in his new suit and looked quite nice - but is decidedly the bluest man I ever saw but tries to put it all up on the condition of the country not seeming to think that his actions would speak anything to the contrary. He enquires specially concerning you and your comfort.

It is now believed that Mrs. B will postpone her trip altogether what is ______ ______. I do not know but guess that “Old Harry” has not yet refused to do his grand mission.

Yesterday evening at midnight I walked out to sit under the trees and I have never felt so lonely in my life. No sweet voice to chase away dull care. No bright eye to beam with love and look with cheerfulness on one cast-down. I sat all by myself, and after a while Mr. (Parham?) came and tried to make himself an agreeable substitute but I told him that there was no comparison – very soon however I retired. Breathing from my innermost soul a prayer to Almighty God for my dear absent all.

Your Ma was disappointed in her trip – when they reached Jackson, the enemy were shelling the town and they could not get through. And when I reached home at night, found her sitting up waiting for me. And she told me of the whole trip – her experience with the B’s and a great deal more than you or I ever knew. She is now endeavoring to arrange to make her trip by another route and you may see her yet before she goes.

Have you read the chapters for today? I must confess that I have not - but I have been thinking about them for some time and have more than once said to myself that you had already read yours. I know it is always necessary for me to have someone near to tell to me my actions and on whose actions I must rely as I told you the other day. I always think what sanctions my deeds will meet with the one whom I love and on the conclusion based from that I act.
“Mama” says you must be guarded in your every word concerning the domestic troubles of this House. I would make the same request but I know you too well to believe you would do anything wrong.

May God in his mercy protect you and soon return us all to our homes in peace and you & I “back to Memphis”

Yours in Love,  Will
July 23, 1863

to Lula Hanna

from William Armstrong

Enterprise, MS

WJA010-02-08

My Darling Lula,

This morning I was made the happiest recipient of two precious little missives. One dated July 13th and the other July 18th but why they should have (preferred?) coming together instead of coming separately in order the better to have (union?) away dull suspicions and seems to have (consume?) some parts of the dull time. Now (apportimince?) to us mortals, in this household, is something rather beyond my feeble abilities to take in but even (curry?) is that way. They made me happy and know that still one hearts beat in unison with his own and one soul as but the same.

I am glad, ____ happy to hear that you have been enjoying yourself so well and would have given any amount, had it been possible to have been with you, but, dear one, it is inevitable that we must be separated for a time. We cannot be together as we wish – The (Fatis?) have ordained that you and I must be separated for a while. I trust that it will not be always. Thus, when time, in its relentless course, shall have brought _____ _____ to all this trouble, and peace with it’s (calm?) _____ seems ______ shall have once more spread its wing above the raging storm and called all into quiet. Those in poor exile and refugees from the cruel hand of oppression and tyranny should once more find a safe resting place at Home – what a (charm?) there is in that word “home.” The weary soldier as well as the barrister feel what it is to claim such a poor (live?) Oh! what rejoicing what happy hearts there will be when it is _____ ____ announced that we have homes!

But all this calculation to make you sad – that I do not wish to do. I wish always to see ____ ___ make you cheerful although you claim to have once failed in that respect with me - but let all that pass.

Lula, I am glad that you have made “Auntie” your confidant – it is just what you should have done. She is the best friend you will find (outside?) your home and comes next to “Mama.” I am almost getting as foolish as a little child about “Mama” – the longer she is gone – the more I want to see her. I know I report her absence more than any one else – Every night I make it my special case to see that her chair and table are in their proper places, and that everything of hers, is safe and should I be permitted to remain until she returns, I will certainly try to welcome her most cordially. And if not forbidden with a “token of affection.” “Auntie” must not complain of my not remembering her – I did not know that she was (postier?) until I received your letter. But this time I want you to tell her sufficient to make up for lost time. Give her my very best regards and be (sum?) and kiss her for me. Kiss little Callie for me – bless her soul. I want to see her so much. I will not go to Tennessee for two or three weeks. I am waiting to see your Ma.

May God bless you and keep you in his care – and return you to

Your Will
I am glad, more happy, to hear that you have been enjoying yourself, and if there were a near approaching time, I should have been glad to have been with you. But, now, as it is uncertain that we must beapart for a while, we cannot be together as we used to be. Think of me always, and know that I cannot be always by your side. But, I hope to have news from you soon, and if there is any change in our plans, I shall be glad to hear from you again.

John

July 25, 1863
My Darling Lula,

For three days I have waited for a letter from you – but have concluded to wait no longer - I cannot blame you. but think it must be the fault of the mail. Your first, and only two letters, received came together and from that I could infer nothing else _____ a fault in the mail – I trust that you will not tire of these uninteresting epistles but take as an apology the golden rule. That I “do as I would be done by.”

Your friend and very kind escort, Captain Hanson, spent last Sunday with us. I met him at the door of my ward in the morning and was never more surprised to see any one. He tells that he has just escaped from the Irving Block at Memphis, that he got permission to visit his family and went through West Tennessee, was taken by the Federals 12 miles from the city and confined in prison, that he made his escape by jumping from the third story window of the Irving Block, concealed him self in the town for 15 days without being discovered although betrayed by his father-in-law and reported to the authorities, and finally escaped to our lines with many adventures and hair breadth escapes. All of which makes up a very pretty story to tell, but like many others, is full of contradictions and altogether a very infeasible tale. I listened to it all, and all else he had to say, and I must confess that my opinion of him is much worse than your own. I consider him a man who will speak when his counsel is not wished.
and who presumes a great deal on his own opinion. Politeness and nothing more, prohibited my giving him my whole opinion in plain words of what I thought of him. In some casual remarks made when speaking of you and “Mama.” He said that he had known you were at Artesia he would have called to see you.

Dr. Buffington received a dispatch from Dr. Lindale (Lindall) at Okolona stating that your Ma had written him that Mrs. Buffington was in a dying condition at Holly Springs. He has gone to see her and left me in charge. He telegraphed me from Okolona that his wife was better – I believe all the time that it was a hoax and that she wanted to get back here – and willaccomplish her aims but, thanks to heavens, I will leave and be out of the mess – this will be a sweet mess here, all together.

I send you by the mail, the first (number?) of your paper received and on yesterday sent you a letter from your “Uncle” – I will forward your papers as fast as they come. While playing “Nettie Moon” on my violin yesterday, during a twilight, a fervent wish was expressed by the whole crowd of us that – Miss Lula was here to accompany with her sweet voice - Yes, my darling. I would have been the “happiest of the happy” could that have been so. And I do trust that not many days will pass _____ we can realize that as _____ – Would to God that this wicked and devastating war was ended, and that we might all be once more in peace.

Give my best regards to Auntie and tell to take good care of my Lula

“Good bless and protect you” Your Will
August 2, 1863  
to Lula Hanna  
from William Armstrong  
Enterprise, MS  
WJA010-02-10

Enterprise, Miss Aug 2, 1863

My Darling Lula,

Although it is Sunday and I should be otherwise employed. Yet I can no longer refrain from giving you a right good scowling - Since your letter dated July 18” – I have heard a word from you although this is the fourth or fifth letter that I have written you. Not more than four days never passing that I do not write to you. Why am I thus treated? Will you tell me? Is it because my letters are troublesome and uninteresting? Or is it because you do not wish to write to me? If it is not something of this kind, I cannot imagine why My Lula treats me so – for the last week I have been anxiously looking for the mail every morning and as often as I have looked, just so often have I been disappointed and now I have become reconciled to see it when it comes and will not look for it so anxiously and be so badly disappointed. But, my dear one, you can write to me, and why are you not? Very soon, as I have written you, I will have to go to the Army of Tennessee, by order of Secretary of War and I shall be so far away that it will be difficult for us to correspond. (There?) why cannot we enjoy a correspondence while we are near together? – But I will retract a part of the “scold” if I get a letter tomorrow morning – this would had not come had I gotten a letter this morning.

Dr. Buffington telegraphed that his wife was “better” and I am looking for the whole family back with the exception of “Mama” – but thanks to the Secty. of War I will be rid of all trouble pretty soon.

I have been here for a week acting Surgeon Post and you can (inquire?) the (dignity?) and humor of my presumptuous self – and my housekeeping will bid defiance to any skill shown in that line by any of the former housekeepers. You not (explia?) – Come and see it and I know you will own up your inefficiency.

Remember this is not a letter but a note of “inquiry” but I trust I will have to write no more –

Give my Love to “Auntie” “God Bless You” Your devoted Will
May 3, 1863

My dear Mr. Sake,

Although it is Sunday, I shall not otherwise employ, as I can no longer refrain from giving you a night letter, the more so in as I have written you - but now more than four weeks never passing when I last wrote to you - why then I have learned from you the truth. To be sure I have learned from you the truth. Is it because my letter have been accompanied by misunderstanding? Is it because you have not wished to write to me? Of it the most contrary" 

with the report of "Dana" - but thanks to the Captain of the ship. I miss every one of you - I have been for a week in the city, but now you can imagine the severity of the weather - and that my health will not allow me to go to the country. So you go and I know. The weather is not suitable for me. It is too cold. But why cannot I enjoy a confinement while you are away? - but I do want a part of this hurry. If I get a little leave from the ship I am going to visit the city. But Washington. 

This is not a letter, but a note of Inquiry for I think I will have to write - have no time to write. 

Yours truly,

[Signature]
August 8, 1863
to Lula Hanna
from William Armstrong
Enterprise, MS
WJA010-02-11

Enterprise, Miss
August 8, 1863

My Darling Lula,

Your very unexpected letter of August 5th was handed me this morning — I said unexpected, because I had been so often disappointed when I looked, that I (concluded?) to fold my arms and quietly await the arrival of the precious little messenger — And really it seems from its extreme length and (torn?) that it was an effort on the part of the writer to make up a missive of such length - she not being aware that it might have been so long as a week since she has written before” — Would that “Old (Limb?)” could bring with him in his travels through this region something to soothe case and (dire surpass?) thus making smooth our pathway. So much in these “troubled times” —

Dr. B (Buffington) has not yet returned. Now can I imagine what causes his prolonged stay — it may be the illness of his wife — Your Ma remained with Mrs. B in Holly Springs attending to her. and by that means the Dr. has enabled to find out concerning her sickness - I sent your Ma word to hasten back, as I wanted to see her again before I left. I hope she will return with Dr. B.

Our family increases and decreases very often. The house is now full to the brim with M.D.’s. We are very hospitable and entertain all our friends that we can give a place to stand on — And if I can judge I am decidedly the best - housekeeper that we have had, at least the table will prove so.

If I can get off I will surely visit “Auntie” before I go to Tennessee. I know I should enjoy a visit then soon. Believing that my letters from certain indications are ______ on pleasant hours. I shall in future learn to lengthen the interval between their visits. And as this one will show, learn to curtail their (contents?)

“God bless and guard you” is the daily prayer of

Your Willie
August 25, 1863

to Lula Hanna
from William Armstrong
Enterprise, MS
WJA010-02-12

Enterprise, Miss
August 25, 1863

My Darling Lula,

You cannot imagine my feelings on receiving your last precious little letter, and decide to find another enclosure. For a time my thoughts imagined any amount of things, but my surprise was increased when I looked and found the signature “Auntie” — being more puzzled than ever I (grcaily?) devoured its contents to find what great (crise?) I had committed, but found that like her quite good self, so was the letter — with the requests made by her and yourself. I will comply as far as in my power lies, and feel it an honor to do something for her. You seem to fear she will bring up some accusations against you — and old (ada___?) says “A guilty conscience needeth no accuser” — I am sure, had you not been guilty of some terrible (misbehaviors/misadventures?) “Auntie” never would report you.

For two days I have been feeling quite ______ concerning Dr. B — and your Ma. I have telegraphed to Okolona twice, and can get no answer — unless they have had trouble with the late raids. I see no reason why they should not come home or at least send some instructions —

For the first time since you left, I had the ______ carriage to walk with a lady — and who do you think it could be? I came up with Miss Alice coming from Speaking, and I ventured to walk home with her - and strangest of all. I am going to call on her to-night. I feel just as uneasy as if I were going to see a lady for the first time. I have been trying to decide all evening, what I wear, and I think yet I will be compelled to get someone to assist me. If you were here, I would ask for some suggestions. As I have a letter to fix up for “Auntie” I must you to forgive this short and uninteresting letter.

May god bless and protect you,

Your devoted

Will
August 30, 1863

to Lula Hanna
from William Armstrong
Enterprise, MS
WJA010-02-13

Enterprise, Miss
August 30, 1863

My Darling Lula,

Again I am forced to write, instead of meeting and talking to you – but Dr. B has returned – and now I am free. He left last night for (Norton?) Miss. But will return to-morrow. I will be at Artesia on Tuesday or Wednesday – which day I cannot say, not knowing when Dr. B will return – I am very anxious to get loose from this (ramblus?) business – and wish to have a few days of quiet in the “Prairies.”

Your Ma still remains at Holly Springs and now expects to be out in about a month - my own opinion is that she remain because of Mrs. B who still remains there, in ______ to go into Memphis at the first opportunity.

I have just written a long letter to your Ma, which I will send by Mr. Parham in which I advised her not to go to Memphis again, but to return and get a quiet home in Dixie, Somewhere and be retired and quiet. I had strong reason for urging her to this manner of arriving.

Lula, I regret very much not getting to see your Mama before I leave – after I learned from Dr. B – that she had not returned with him. I could not go to sleep for a long time. So _____ was I impressed with the disappointment in not seeing her – but then is a ______ coming, where ______ from a (opinion?) will not cause so much separation. Where I can call my time my own and not be wholly my country’s.

I wish that I were able to tell you exactly what day I would reach Artesia but it will not be longer than Wednesday.

Hoping that I shall soon see your sweet face, and be with you – I will now subscribe myself

Your Will

My love to “Auntie”
September 4 & 6, 1863

to Lula Armstrong

from William Armstrong

Enterprise, MS

WJA010-02-14

Enterprise, Miss
Sept 4, 1863

My Darling Lula,

Just as I expected, I came home and found Dr. Buffington here and no expectation of leaving for a week. I was really perplexed to find out that he had given over his trip for several days and by his positive assertions to the contrary had compelled me to make so short a visit to see you – but he is going soon –

Mr. Parham leaves to-night instead of last night, which no doubt disappointing you in getting to see him. I gave him good directions about the letter which was to be left at the Depot. My trip from Artesia was very unpleasant owing mostly to the regret with which I was forced to leave and, thinking no one on the cars, with whom I was acquainted, all this mingled with a feeling that I was not needed at this place. Made me spend the time on the way – very unpleasantly – but my lot of disappointment, and the knowledge of being “subject to (cross?)” does not make me feel near uneasy or shudder so fearfully, as the threat which (for?) (probably?) made at the Depot – in regard to the reins of government (____ ______  to wield?). Have you heard anything of that since? Certainly “Cousin Liss” would not tell on you.

Since my return I see by a general order that all the Vicksburg prisoners will be sent here under command of General [William J.] Hardee. Mr. Shattuck will be compelled to report here soon and I hope to see you with Mrs. Shattuck – and I will promise you the best this house can afford but will not pledge that to be the best –

I called to Mrs. Stone today and had a nice time listening to her talk – she says that if she could have gone with your Ma to Memphis, that they could have talked the Feds out of anything that they wanted –

Do not give this uninteresting epistle a close criticism, “____ its imperfections by.” I ______ ___ nothing to interest you. (How did?) Mr. Shepherd succeed?

Give my regards to the family, and love to Auntie, retaining just as much for yourself as you wish

Love always Will

Enterprise - Sept 6" 1863

I hope that you will not think (hard?) of my not writing before this – but Mr. Parham started this very night. I reached home, and lost his poor roommate which compelled him to return, and, he has been trying to start every night since you will see that I wrote this letter several days since – Brown could not get any more cologne than I send.
am almost ashamed at the quantity, and were it not for the scarcity, I would not have to send it.

Enclosed you will find a letter from “Mama” and one she has written to me – She seems very despondent but I think it altogether useless, as she has friends, who will do all in their power to assist her – You, my Darling, I hope will not regret anything in the light which she has, and for which I ______ ______ her a severe rebuke – why be despondent when He, who has willed all these things, is able and willing to do so much for us –

Hoping that we shall all be soon blessed with his clear presence.

I am your

Will
September 11, 1863

to Lula Hanna

from William Armstrong

Enterprise, MS

WJA010-02-15

Enterprise, Miss –

Sept 11” 1863

My darling Lula,

Although I wrote you a letter, only two days since, I hope you will not consider this an intrusion on your time.

Dr. Buffington will pass by Artesia on Sunday’s train and wishes you to meet him at the Depot to receive the bundle which I wrote to you about in my last – He, as well as myself, is very anxious that it should go through safe is the cause for our being so very particular. We are fearful too that some prying eye might discover something of value within and be tempted to take them from

Mr. Shepherd was to see us yesterday – looking still a little unwell, yet very contented with his lot. I think it very wrong that every man should be taken from the country, and leave no one at home to take care of the women. But everything happens for the best, and taking this as my faith, I become reconciled to my fate. He was quite silent, more so than expected, not mentioning you but once or twice. He also said that you had shown (him?) to signature to several letters received by you. And on my signing my name on a paper close by him, recognized immediately the writing – and said that sometimes it was only “Will” and not the full name. I do not like to dictate but care not what intimacy exists in a family. It will not do to show everything to all its members.

We are anxiously looking for your Ma every day. I fear it will be some time before she comes. How did you enjoy your visit to Columbus? (Note: County Seat of Lowndes Co., MS) And how many sweethearts did you find?

Give my regards to all the family and love to Auntie. Kiss Callie for me.

God bless and protect you is the prayer of

Love, Will
September 17, 1863

to Lula Hanna

from William Armstrong

Enterprise, MS

WJA010-02-17

Enterprise, MS

Sept 17” 1863

My dear Lula,

For nearly a week, I have been impatiently awaiting some tidings from you and am, as often, disappointed from what cause. I cannot imagine – I have deferred writing this letter for two days, hoping to hear. Just as once before, I have given up in despair – why treat your best friend thus? But it may be, that such rebukes are unpleasant and I will (assent?) – but if this letter should contain anything which would indicate a state of “blues” or weakness, I hope you will forgive, when I tell you, that to-day I heard from home, by a letter, stating the gloomy and desperate condition of everything there, and the loss of property sustained by Pa (Transcribers Note: William Osgood Armstrong was a widower) and today, oh horrors! He, with his little children, it may be that they are turned out of their homes and banished without a cent of money or any support in the world - believing as I do, that this may not be half. I can but feel reckless and despondent – what a fate is ours, if inexperience (Transcriber’s Note: UT interpreted this word to be “independence”) should fail to be our lot - In your last you were upholding, in their notions, two vile reconstructionists near Columbus (Note: County Seat of Lowndes Co., MS), Frierson and Lyons, and if the authorities had given them their just deserts, they would have dangled between heaven and earth in less than twenty-four hours – what will such traitors bring upon us – nothing short of the worst and most brutal condition of slavery that ever was endured – and when that comes upon us, none will be so ready to see it enforced as these scoundrels - and now while they are in our power, let us give them their just deserts – I am afraid that you are becoming changed in your sentiments. But enough of political and military matters, so much talk, without some action is of little avail.

If your hear “Auntie” speak of sending some potatoes to us, please manage it so as to write to me, two days before, in order that I may be at the Depot, to meet them or they will be thrown out then and lost.

No further news from your Ma. I have heard nothing from the Dr. since he left – I dread to hear, for fear your Ma has persisted in going into Memphis -
I will send up that package of the gray dress __, to-morrow night to Artesia, and it will be there on Saturday – be sure and write if you have received both bundles, and safe - Recollect that such favors are always granted by me without any hesitation, and you need not fear to ask them – Remember me to the family. My love to Auntie with a kiss and one to Callie –

“God Bless You”

Love Will
My darling Lula,

I wrote you on yesterday that I would send you a bundle to night. Your letter of last Sunday came today stating that you have not received your presents last Sunday nor seen Dr. B (Buffington). As usual, Dr. B. made me write to you asking you to meet him at the Depot, but before my letter left the Post office, he changed his notion and went off Friday night, passing Artesia on Saturday instead of Sunday. It is strange, but he is so fickle, just as much as a lady. I am sorry that you were disappointed but much more so that you have not received your packages. I am afraid that it will be lost. I hope not for I charged him to be particular and give Mr. Brothers full instructions, and that he would take good care of it. Ask him for it. If it was left then _____. I cannot imagine what it means. Be sure to find out and write to me soon. Also if you have received this one. Write soon and tell me all about it.

My love to “Auntie” And all to you.

Will
September 25, 1863

to Lula Hanna

from William Armstrong

Enterprise, MS

WJA010-02-16

Enterprise, MS

Sept 25th 1863

My Darling Lula,

Your sweet little note came to hand this morning, and was gladly welcomed as the only one in a week – Do not speak of my indifference and neglect, but reflect for the moment on the number of times I have waited and that too particularly until some one, at home, would _______ you to discharge your duties by writing but it is not right for us to be quarrelling all the while – it is just as well to be patient.

Mrs. Shepherd is here and has been with me all day – You cannot imagine how much I appreciate his visits. Especially when he has been at home so lately – It is strange that when he accuses me of telling stories that no one interferes to say a word - but could say that they “did not care that I was mad” – for better take care a great deal is heard of which for never think.

I hope you will not be disappointed about your Ma’s (Transcribers Note: Mrs. Callie Hanna) arrival to-day but I have been looking for her here for several days and especially to-day but will be satisfied if she has gotten even to Artesia safely. Have you heard anything from her since the letter you sent? I do not think it will be right for her to stop with you, for she is needed so badly here, - I am preparing for a regular scowling about the house and ______ but will take it all to get to see her.

Did you not receive in the first bundle, sent by Dr. Buffington, all the articles that were mentioned, if not, why did you not state, that I might know what was missing – I was very weary until the letter came announcing that they were safe.

I have one of the prettiest ponies in Dixie and will hold it ready for you when you come – it was the saddle pony of a young lady in old Maury, and was brought and given to me to keep during the war.

Please excuse this badly written and uninteresting note, for the time to mail this is passing me.

My love to all, to Auntie and Yourself

Love, Will

I will promise a better letter next time. Will
Enterprise, MS
Oct 26th 1863

My Dear Lula,

I had almost concluded that you were going to verify your threats, and persist in not writing to any of us until today. When we were made the happy recipients of two nice little letters. Both of which I had the pleasure of seeing. I am truly glad to hear of your intention of visiting us. Nearly the whole family is delighted to hear of it. Would that it were sooner. What is the reason you have put the time off so long? It might as well have been this week as two weeks. But we will look for you and expect a prompt posting as to the date of your arrival.

I received a letter from Mr. Sheppard this morning. He is still at Meridian and doing guard duty on the train, and hopes to be replaced in that position. I trust that he will. My efforts to secure an appointment for him were fruitless, as he did not possess the qualifications necessary, namely that of a pharmaceutist. But yet we can make a detail for him, if he proves unable for service in the field.

Your Ma has succeeded in disposing of her goods at a very handsome profit, all that she could possibly spare, making a reserve of the best part for her absent daughter. Is that not kind? And does it not show who (is?) most thought of?

We has still an immense amount of noise about the house, the work and noise of one or more ______ Calliopes in the way of some young H----s about the place. But we will be compelled to keep silent, in main to preserve a peace in the family.

I told Dr. B. (Buffington) what we were meditating and he gives it his hearty sanction, as I told you he would. He says it should be so by all means.

When I reached home, I found a letter from Miss Lillie. Which gave me a good scold. As to her right for giving the scold I will judge myself. But failing to get one of my former letters, she concluded she has still a right to correct me if I wander from the
path of rectitude. I trust she will receive the one now written for her which will explain everything yet unknown and correct I trust any (erroneous?) opinions she may now form.

As yours was so lengthy, you should expect me in return to correspond. Be sure and come down soon. Very soon.

Remember me to the family. My love to Auntie.

We have never gotten the letters written just previous to our visit to Artesia.

God bless my Lula.

Will
November 15, 1863  

to Lula Hanna  

from William Armstrong  

Enterprise, MS  

WJA010-02-21  

Enterprise, MS  

Nov. 15th 1863  

My darling Lula –  

Since you have been so kind and (mindful?) to write this time – I must ask your forgiveness for my neglect –  

Nothing of any material interest has happened since you left, save the arrival of your Uncle George, who arrived here the night after you left quite ill, and has been sick ever since, being confined to his bed most of the time, he is now sitting up and complains of being better – Your Ma is still sick, having kept to her bed – nearly all of the day – I hope she will soon be up and well –  

Time drags slowly along, and every day brings me so much nearer to an era in my life of vast importance - may I be prepared for it – is the wish and hope of my soul, always lurking in my breast – God grant that all things may be for the best and that Everything may result in his glory  

The past week has not responded with the news, that I trusted it would bring from home but still I am all in doubt as to the condition and position of my home – but darkness cannot always last “some rain must fall (etc. etc.?)” (“from Lula?”)  

I will be glad enough to hear from “Auntie”, and hope as she is now well, that she will not forget the letter – Tell her that it was my good wishes for her recovery, that has brought the cure – I wrote to Mrs. Perkins yesterday, but think that she had best write as it will have more influence. I will write to Mr. Sheppard this evening – his (detail?) papers have never been returned, and I expect we will have them to make over and forward again – Something, I cannot tell what, has prevented their return –  

Dr. Buffington and I have just been (engulfed?) in saving the life “Jesse”, who was so greedily devouring his dinner that he was badly choked –  

Be sure and write me all the plans – not waiting to answer my letters –  

Remember me to all the family  

Especially to Auntie – and retain for a short time a small share for yourself –  

(Love?) Will
November 19, 1863
To Lula Hanna
From William Armstrong
Enterprise, MS
WJA010-02-22

Enterprise, Miss
Nov, 19," 1863

My dear Lula,

"Auntie's" letter to your Ma, came this morning, the one promised to me, has not yet made an appearance –

For a week, your Ma has been quite sick, indeed I might say very ill – we sat up with her one night, the whole night, as she was extremely ill – For two or three days she has been improving and to day she is doing very well being able to sit up in bed, and seems in very good spirits – I fear she will scarcely be able to come up to Artesia, though I have persuaded her to be careful and get no backset and she will be able to get-up – She regrets exceedingly, being sick just at this time – when she can be of so little assistance to you – I think with proper care she will be up, and will be able to tell the whole to you and "Auntie." She has substituted Mr. P and has him attending to all her wants-

Your Uncle George has gotten nearly well, and will leave in a few days for home – He says that he could not possibly visit any longer if the whole family were going to marry – I think he is very eccentric –

I have heard nothing from home as yet – my man Dick having not yet returned –

Remember me in Kindness to all of the family – especially to "Auntie" – reserving a slight portion of live for yourself –

May God, the giver of all (time?) and perfect gifts – be your guardian and protector – make you happy through life, and crown you with a diadem in heaven above –

Your Will

"Mama" says she gave you one or two bunches of black braid, you have certainly overlooked, Will
The State of Mississippi, Lowndes County,
To any regularly authorized Minister of the Gospel, Judge, Member of the Board of Police,
Or an acting Justice of the Peace for said County – Greeting:
You, or either of you, are hereby authorized to solemnize the Rites of Matrimony between
William J. Armstrong and Louisa C. Hanna
and join them together as Man and Wife in the holy state of Wedlock, your official
Certificate whereof you are to return together with this License into the office of the Clerk of
the Probate Clerk of said County within the time proscribed by law.
Witness, The Honorable Stephen A. Brown
Judge of the Probate Court of said County this the 1 day of
December, A.D. 1863
William H. Cook Clerk
By virtue of the above License, the Rites of Matrimony between
William J. Armstrong and Louisa C. Hanna
were duly celebrated by me on the 2nd day of December AD 1863
E. (H.?) Rutherford L. S.
Minister of the Gospel

The State of Mississippi & I, William H. Cook, Clerk of Lowndes County & the Probate Court
of said county do hereby certify that the within page contains a true and complete transcript of
the marriage license issued from this office to Wm. J. Armstrong to marry Miss Louisa C.
Hanna and of the return made by the minister of the celebration of the rites of matrimony
between the parties aforesaid as fully and completely as the same appears of record in my
office. Given under my hand and official seal this the 2nd day December, 1863
Done at Columbus W. H. Cook Clerk
Civil War

*Letters from Family and Friends*

*(Transcriber’s Note: Some of these letters may be out of order due to lack of full dates.)*
December 12, Civil War (probably before 12/1863)  
to William Armstrong  
from Mrs. Callie Hanna  
WJA010-07-08  

My Dear Dr.,  

I am safe at Mr. (Perry’s?) looking every moment for Mrs W & Dr. McKinney out – The freight train did not get here until ten last night – they waited in town – I received a note from Mr. W. this morning for the (lines?) to ________ (harness?) – Dr. Mc had sent them out with me in his blanket. We will have him to take care of all the way – Uncle George has not been heard of since he left – Salt all here but roads in miserable condition & rainy this morning – it will take us several days to make the trip on account of the roads – Met many old friends from Memphis here (with?) me at Alabama as soon as you get this & take good care of Bevie & Callie. Kiss both for me & ________ regards to all the family. I am sorry I left _______________ book – tell the Dr. to send it to me at ______________ & (write?) ________.

I think I remember all my ________ ____ __ if I could start before I get the (book?)  

be sure & write & believe  

affectionately  C. Hanna  

at Mr. Perry’s Dec 12th  

(Transcriber’s Note: Callie Hanna, Lula’s mother, died at the end of the Civil War or shortly after. Bevie and Callie, Lula’s younger siblings, are in Lula’s care.)
My Dear Will,

We arrived here three days ago. Dr. Oliphant heard we were coming and had rented a little house for us in the house (Jerry?) (Hamdon?) lived in on the street leading out from the bridge some distance from the (river?) in the old town. I (stayed) the first night with Mrs. Thralgard. They were glad to see me and regrets so much that aid not come - Dr. B (Buffington) sold him his horse and buggy again – We have to cross the rivers in Skiffs and flats. The town is a complete (ruin?). Maj. Bidwell came out to see me yesterday. he does not want to stay here long – Says Enterprise is inhabited by thieves. Says every man in the town will steal. I expect he and some others will mess with us. I will not be here long myself. What to do I cannot tell to take the children to Uncle George’s and then have to come all the way back to Hazlehurst will be too much of a trip and what to do with them while I go over there I do not know. I have been too unwell to think Since I have been here. I drove all the way & was never so tired in my life when I got here I do not see how I am to live under such a weight of care as I have. I am here now alone in this (censorious?) place & yet I have to remain until I am able to decide what is best to do & rest awhile. on (officers/expenses?) all this time. I feel sometimes that I shall go mad. I obtained this pass from Maj Lewis. We were two days in _____opolis. We ___ (Gen?) Scott gave Dr. B his orders. I think the hospitals will not be established here again. Dr. B is only around here to settle up the business & then perhaps will go to (Kennet?). I had to stay in a tent the time we were in _____opolis. It has come near killing me it was so cold. With out fire Maj Murphy came down with (planks?) to ______ my visit. The day I was to learn he went with me to Maj (Lewis’s?) office & told him I was all that (Gen?) (Barhain?) had write him & that he would vouch for me any time. He also gave me an order on Capt Bartlett for fifty pounds of flour. He told I could have my pass renewed every trip. I wrote a long letter to Mr. Ken March today. I may come up to see you. I will at any rate when I start to north Miss. Write me soon. Children all well little Callie talks about brother all the time

An (excess/excuse) writing my pencil is ____ from me I write love from _____opolis. Write immediately ____. Your loving mother

(Transcriber’s Note: This is written from Lula’s mother as Dr. Armstrong’s mother died in 1859 in Columbia and this note was probably written during the Civil War)
April 3, Civil War

to Lula Hanna

from Mrs. Callie Hanna

Enterprise, MS

WJA010-02-06

My Dear Daughter,

I have been here since the 24th of last month. I have been quite unwell ever since I arrived here.

Dr. Oliphant had rented us the only vacant house in this place & that is in the old town – at least half mile from the river on the same Street Mr. Miles lived on. I disliked very much to leave this neighborhood w lived in before – but as I shall leave so soon – it makes no difference. I have not (been) but lived out of the house. Since I come in, and that was to see Mrs. Miles she had a baby and it just lived one day. She is doing well. Mrs. Miles is with (Kennst?). I stopped the first night here with Mrs. Thralgard. They seemed to be glad to see me but regretted so much that you and Dr. A. were not along – Maj. (Morrison?) is with them again. Mrs. Thralgard will be over some time this week – it is troublesome crossing the river now – as the Yankees burnt the bridge. Maj. Bidwell has been to see (us?) – I am awaiting to arrange some Money Matters and get answers to our ______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ 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Aug 31, Civil War (probably before 12/1863)
to William Armstrong
from Mrs. Callie Hanna
WJA 010-07-09

Dear Dr

I would have written by Dr. B – but did not know what to say to you. I would (give?) you a great deal to see & have a (tiny?) talk – I have so much to say to you. Oh I am sorry that you are going to leave. I had hoped ______ could ______ with you as long as the war lasted. I have felt so sad & lonely - & without a protection. I feel now almost alone in the world – You do not know how nearly I am broken hearted. Oh that god would give us peace – that I might be with friends again.

I know that I shall never be happy again - & I only care to live for my poor children – how I love them - & can be so little with them – this is killing me – Oh this cruel separation from my darling children – Dr. remains until my return – I do so much want to see you. May god bless you is my prayer

Affectionately C Hanna

PS Dr. Matthews will take this to Columbus (Note: County Seat of Lowndes Co., MS) & mail it. I have written to (him?) a few lines in (hast?) CH
January 3, 1864

to Lula & Will Armstrong

from Mrs. Callie Hanna

Enterprise, MS

WJA010-03-02

I will telegraph you at Alabama when I arrive there

Jan 3rd 1864

My Dear Children,

I received your letter after it had been written stating that darling little Callie was sick. I do not know what in the world to do. The weather is so cold that I could but only travel at the risk of life – no one will hear of me starting & the roads are in such condition that it will take one week to go to Alabama. I would have come by (Canton?) but for the wagon & mules. If I can get Dr. McKinney to drive them to Alabama I will come by (Canton?). I will leave here in one or two days in some way – I find it impossible to get to Memphis. My trip altogether is a failure. I can do nothing or get any thing. This is the poorest (people?) in the Confederacy. I am almost crazy about Callie. (I see her my decision deeds are dizzying?) ___. Oh I hope she may be better. I hope to get a letter tomorrow. I can not leave until I hear from him – I am afraid to start to Alabama for fear a letter may come calling me home immediately. I will be with you all as soon as possible. I never was So anxious to be at home in my life – I sleep but little thinking of you all. If Callie should die in my absence I do not want to live – Oh take care of her. Kiss all & believe me your ever loving Mother, Callie

(Transcriber’s Note: To date, unable to find “Callie” in Census. She would seem to be Callie Hanna’s youngest daughter.)
My Dear Son,

Dr. Buffington handed me a letter when he came home this evening from you. I should have sent some word by (Bisber?) but all I have to say was ______ _______ to entrust to any one. And I was not able to raise my head from my pillow. Oh I have been so sick. How much I needed you, how I wanted to tell you what to do with my poor little children. Why God lets me live I cannot tell. I will know that it is for no good that I do. Yet I do (long hand to line ___?). I am so miserable and lonely. I so much want to leave yet I can’t decide where it is best for me to go. I do not want to go to north Mississippi to stay & how can I scatter any little ones again to the four winds and leave them to the care of those that care so little for them or perhaps give them to strangers. You cannot imagine how I feel but one thing I know my heart is “breaking” breaking.

I try to pray and believe God will take care of us. But I cannot do it. I am awake all night. I can not sleep for thinking.

I am so much alone since I came home that I try to think that is the cause of my low spirits. Since I was taken sick, week today, I have seen no one. Not Mr. and Mrs. (Thealgard). They called to see me two days after I was taken sick. I know she would come often if she did not have to cross the river. It costs (for?) dollars every time & of course I can’t expect her to come often. Dr. Oliphant spent one whole night with Dr. B. trying to keep me alive & I think he saved my life.

I was attacked a good deal in the same way that I was the time I was so sick in the (Gardeners?) house, only much worse and attended with a hard congestive chill. I can not stand alone yet. I have fever and suffer much with my head. Dr. O. & Dr. ___ both say I need iron but no one gives it to me. I know I need something & will die unless I get medicine. Dr. O told me that there was no iron at the hospital but would get me some. He is now arrived to Meridian & I have not seen him for two days. Dr. B. is busy & always forgets. Can you not send me some of the Tincture of iron, or could you come down. I can not tell how long I may have to stay here. I may be left here alone, as Dr. B. will leave very soon he is only awaiting orders. I shall telegraph John (Cowald?) to morrow to know what to do.

I have been told that it is impossible to get cotton in the federal lines down there, that it is always burnt and the most vigilant watch kept over the ______s. John may have bought sugar – if so I will so and get it out here. I know that I have got to work hard to make anything, & I am anxious to begin it.

I wish you to make all ___ing for the Rev. B A Young. Dr. (Rivers?) has charge of a school up there some where, not far from (Malose?). I think (Summerfield?) is (Tennessee?) (villa?). Some such name & he can tell you where Mrs. Jenny is. I think he must have ___ of a school ____ where he was president of the ______ Ala
school before the (Feds?) got there. He is an old friend and my (assist?) in the education of my boys. If I had Clay in some school I could do so much better. I am very tired. Must close. If there is anything more when (have/leave?) (him/home), (that will do of any since ____). You are more than __________ every thing about the house belongs to Dr. (K/B?). There are many little things that I will explain to you when I see you in regard to my self and others. Write immediately (to?), your Mother

(Transcriber’s Note:
Date indicated; 1863-1864. Believe this was written by Lula’s mother to Dr. Wm. Armstrong after the marriage since she refers to him as “Son.”
There is a two-sentence note written across and cross-direction. It is indecipherable.)
November 13, 1863

to Lula Hanna

from Hugh Magevney

Livingston, MS

WJA010-02-20

Camp at Livingston, MS

November 13th / 63

Miss Lou:

You will perceive from the heading of my letter that I have been ordered back to my company and am no longer enjoying the gayety which always prevails in the little town of Canton. We are encamped in a somewhat romantic little spot – at the foot of a very high hill, or rather a small mountain – while the General has his ___ ___ on top of the same, from which you can see the surrounding county for miles around. But with all this, the beautiful scenery does not kill the dull monotony which necessarily follows after having such a glorious time in Canton. Perhaps, however, it is better for both the moral and physical man: for the cool, fresh air of the country, we know is more agreeable and healthier than that of a town or city, and here where dancing, drinking, and dissipating of all kinds are laid aside, you find us scattered promiscuously through the woods, some reading novels, some poetry, and others some very instructive books, occasionally you find one who has not become entirely demoralized, reading the Bible, so you see although wishing to be in a town all of the time, we know at the same time that we are better, far better off in the country.

I understand that we will move to Jackson Miss in a few days where we will take quarters for the winter, provided the Yankees do not ______ us. What truth there may be in the rumor I do not pretend to say. I hope it may prove false for I think Jackson the last place on earth.

Sam Watt has been mustered into the company and is in my mess. Craft is in the Canton Hospital sick, together with John Martin another one of my messmates, who perhaps you know, he used to clerk in W.B. Miller’s store.

Oh! Miss Lou, you ought to hear our brass band we have the best one in the South – both string and brass band. You can imagine what delightful music we have; the other night while I was on guard they opened with “Sweet (Murmurs of Thy?)”, and you can imagine where my thoughts wandered as I stood and listened. I thought of you Miss Lula, of Oakland of our rambles through the woods and fields of our pleasant moonlight walks, when you were a girl and I a boy but now you are a young lady and I more of a man. But I won’t dwell on that any longer, if any one would see this they would swear that I was some broken-hearted disappointed lover.

Has you Mother gone to Memphis yet? Tell her to be sure to call and see my sister, I know she would be delighted to see her.

Miss Lula there is no news here that would interest you. Dr. Peters, the assassin of Genl. Van Doris was caught a few days ago by one of Genl. Jackson’s scouts and is now here a prisoner.
Please send me the words of “Thou hast called me back (echoless shores?)” enclosed in your next letter and write soon for I feel as though you and your mother (were/are) the only friends I have in the world.

Give my love to your mother, my regards to Mrs. Thompson’s family, ______ to Dr. Armstrong and believe me to be

Your true friend

Hugh Magevney

PS I am not in the habit of apologizing for my letters, but all I ask is that you won’t show this badly written thing to any one Your friend Hugh

(Transcriber’s Note: The Calling Card below may or may not be the same Magevney who wrote the above letter.)

Date Unknown
Calling Card
from Rev. H. E. Magevney
WJA010-07-02 SRB 060-07-02

Rev. H. E. Magevney may be the grandson of:

EUGENE MAGEVNEY
Tennessee Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee
Memphis’ first schoolmaster
1798-1873
September 11, 1864

To Lula & Will Armstrong
From Auntie (Mrs. C. Thompson)

WJA010-03-03

My very dear young friends,

I know you have long since been expecting a letter from Auntie, but my dear children, you will excuse me when I tell you what trouble we have passed through since you left – the Thursday after Lula left us Lis went home taking dear little Frankie with her to make short visit – she was taken sick Wednesday night – with a slight chill on Thursday Lis called in a Physician but neither the Doctor, George or herself thought there was much the matter with her at that time (but is crossed out) but little Marie’s dying so recently caused Lis to become uneasy, and she sent out for Frank to come in on Friday. (Franks?) & Ben got there Friday 3. O. clock in the evening – from that until Saturday morning she grew worse & died about 6. O. clock Saturday morning. I got there about two hours after she died. Oh, you don’t know what a shock it was to me, indeed it was a shock to us all & even now I cannot realize the child is dead having left us in so short a time in perfect-health & not being with her during her brief illness. I cannot realize her death. Poor Frank is almost broken hearted takes it so hard.

She died with Brain fever (Ed. Note: Meningitis) a disease that is prevailing in & about Columbus (Note: County Seat of Lowndes Co., MS) many have died with it – both old & young. We had little Frankie’s body taken to the Institute Saturday evening and Brother Shaffin preached her funeral on Sabbath morning Eight O. clock before the Sabbath School. I did not attend for I was too sick to go out – after the cool of the evening Ben, Frank & myself came out-home but what a lonely desolate home we had to come in to. I went immediately to bed, & did not get up until Tuesday had I consulted my own bad feelings I would not then got out of bed but I did this to assist others worse off than my self. Lizzie Campbell was with me when I was sent for to go in to see Frankie & she went in with me & never left us while we were there until Sunday morning we started home. On Monday morning Mrs. Campbell & Lizzie knowing how lonely we must feel out here they both came out to spend a couple of weeks. On Tuesday Mrs. C was taken with a chill about day light & was very sick, threatened with congestion we became alarmed & sent for Dr. (Owen?). By night when her fever began to cool off she became better but that same evening about four o’clock Lizzie took a chill and had very high fever during the night the next day they were both better. On Thursday they both had another chill notwithstanding we did everything & gave Quinine to prevent a return. They missed there chills yesterday but Mrs. C is quite frustrated & can hardly speak above a whisper. Lizzie is much better. They are anxious to return to Columbus (Note: County Seat of Lowndes Co., MS) where Mrs. C can have her family physician who understands her constitution. She is a very delicate lady & has heart disease. You don’t know how very nervous I was about them, especially Mrs. C. After all I had passed through, I could not bear the idea of them having a hard spell of sickness & perhaps die out here from so many of their friends in Columbus. Beside all this, we had several very sick negroes. Sarah, Tom and Robbie had (Bllious?) fever, & Lizzie’s Uncle Gabe in bed complaining with
numerous ____. I just felt discouraged & ready to give up. For we had had so much sickness & trouble but today finds me able to be up & attend to the wants of those sick ones. I feel my dear children that the dispensations of providence deals hard with me. Yet I will not murmur. No tis the hand of God that deals out these severe blows. Yet I am willing to trust Him. My life has been but a round of disappointments & sorrows & I have found the world delusive & near coming, as falling far short of furnishing that joy & happiness I once expected. But I know I trust the blessed future world will far exceed in Glory & happiness any thing I have ever imagined. It will far transcend my highest imaginations the glorious joy & peace of mind there will make me forget all the trials & sorrows of this world & cause me to wonder that I ever grew weary when the reward is so great.

Ben’s arm is improving fast but he has but little use of his hand. Frank is not well, & is very sad indeed. I have not heard from Liz & George since Tuesday. Then George was right sick. I feel somewhat uneasy about them for I think if they were both well Liz would have been out before this. She has not seen the work you sent her to make up for little Callie yet. I will give it to her as soon as she comes out. I do not think you have sent linen enough to make Callie’s apron with long sleeves. But she will look at it & write you word when she goes to make it up. O Lou I do wish you could come up again soon & stay awhile with us. We would all be so glad to have you with us. You must not make it long before you come & I want the Doctor to come to. You don’t know how (near?) you both feel to Auntie & how much she loves you all. I will send you some flour the last of this week if I get it from the mill. I intend to send tomorrow. We have had so much sickness is the reason we have not sent before this. We were so much obliged for the bundle you sent. Hope Auntie can help you out some this winter. I know that I can send you many little things which you cannot get for Money. For I know there are many things not in the country for sale. I want the Doctor, if he has it to spare & can do it conveniently, to send me a little blue dress & a little blue _____. I suppose I could get the blue ____ in Columbus (Note: County Seat of Lowndes Co., MS) but the _____ I cannot. I bought a little from the Doctor & had to pay one dollar a grain. All kinds of medicines are scarce & very high. I paid $15 for a very small paper of salts the other day. Not over four doses. I think this is perfectly outrageous. But we can do no better.

Ben & Frank send their love to you all & Frank says tell Lou to come up soon. You must both write to me often. Don’t wait every time for Auntie. She has many things to prevent her writing when she would love to write to you.

May God bless you my dear children & may you both live a long & happy life. Kiss dear little Callie for me.

Your true friend loving Auntie Mrs. C Thompson

I am expecting a short visit from Willie in a week or two.
Sept 18, 1864
to Lula Armstrong
from Cousin Liss
WJA010-03-04

Sunday evening   Sept. 18th /64

Dear Friend Lou,

It has been my desire for at least 2 weeks to write you a long letter, but my time has so busily been occupied with other matters (such as sickness) that I have been unable to write to any one.

Dear Lula – it does seem that – both yours and our family have been sadly afflicted. the past summer. There has been two dear ones taken from each family, and now we are left without any little pets. I fear Lou that we have been very sinful, that “God” has so sorely afflicted us. I believe “he” has some wise purpose in these sad dispensations - it strengthens our ties in heaven, and now that they can never come to us again, our great-aim, and object, - should be to strive to meet them. Oh, Lou are we doing our duty? Do we devote the time that is only our reasonable service, to “Him” that – has never ceased to watch over and care for us? It is true Lou that the trials we are called upon to bear are severe. Seems more than we can endure, but only think how much more so they might have been. You have still left a dear, kind husband to whom you can look for comfort – one that shares your every trial and trouble, so you see that – although you are chastened you are also bless. And now Lou let us not question the justices of our “God” but bow submissively to “His” will. Let us begin anew, and become what will. Let us striven to be honest and upright Christians such as will be pleasing in the sight of “God.”

Lou you may think I am taking rather too much liberty in writing thus plainly to you. I hope not. I feel Lou that you are very dear to me, and I write as though you were my Sister, I know that – I am not – such a Christian as I should be. But it is my greatest desire to a good one, and I want you to be also. Come Lou will you strive with me & Oh! let us be earnest - in our prayers, and try to lead a different – life, so that when death shall call for us we may meet – our loved ones, in an unbroken family above, never again to separate.

I came home Thursday evening, here the sad news of little Callies death awaited me, our house seems quite sad, when we think of the three cheerful little faces, that so lately have been snatched from our sight. We must not grieve for them, were it in our power we would not recall them from their happiness that must be theirs this bright Sabbath evening.

I am happy to say I found all well, though Aunt Frank has seemed quite unwell all day. I am in hopes there is nothing serious as she has had no fever. Lou you do not know how thankful I am that, through all the sickness, my dear mother has kept her health,
though she, and Aunt Frank are both looking badly. I do sincerely hope that – she will not – have a return of chills this Winter. We all want her to pay you a visit – think it will help her to have a little rest – from home, she says she will after a while, but cannot leave home just now. Aunt F____ send her deepest sympathy to you. Says she will come and see you a day or two when she gets well. Uncle Ben seems quite well his arm is improving slowly he thinks of reporting at Lauderdale at the end of his furlough which is (30) thirty days.

And last – though not least - comes my own “dear Boy”. I left him at – home with the “Blues.” He did not – like for me to leave him alone but – thought it – best, - as I had to come for something to eat. – Lou I do fee so anxious and uneasy all the time about – him. I am listening every day to hear, he has orders, to report – to his command, Maj. Whitfield has make an application to Gen Maury, but – as yet they have not – heard his decision. So you can imagine my anxiety. I feel as if I never can stand for him to go to the ranks again. Tell Dr. _ that – if George does have to leave, he must – share my trial by allowing you to stay a part of the time with me. I leave for home by light tomorrow morning. Would love to have your company over those long roads. Bettie and Cornelia were down to see us a little while this morning. Bettie looks quite interesting. See what – an example she has set – you and Dr. _____ (shame?) she tells us Laura (Sanderfor?) was buried last Monday.

Well Lou I have written you a long letter please answer if - soon all send much love. Ma says tell Dr they will try and get him (wheal?), - Uncle Ben says asks him what chance is there for him to get – on the Retired List. – Accept much love for you both from your Affect – Cousin Liss

Note written on top of letter:

Lou have you anything you would like for me to fix of the _______ and linen you send, - if you can spare the Linen I would like to get – it – from you. I will make your collar soon and send it to you. I am under many obligations for the (thread?) will make you any little thing you cannot do yourself – with pleasure.

Ma starts the sack of Flour to day with this letter from Artesia
Post Civil War

*Letter from Will*
September 2, 1870

To Lula Armstrong

From William Armstrong

Ashwood, Tenn

WJA010-03-06

Mrs. Lula Armstrong

Care Capt. Jno. Wilkinson

Memphis, Tenn

Ashwood, Tenn.

Sept. 2, 1870

My dear Wife –

From Letters of (the 30th?) just received, it is now nine o’clock, and I start today to town to get the papers of by today’s express, so they will reach Memphis right away. – You must recollect that Hanson has the deed to the Elliott St. property, if no more. He has also the tax receipts to a lot of property on Alabama St. and some others, some five or six papers in all, which you can ask him for to show to your Uncle John – I send all the papers today that I see will be of any benefit in Memphis also a number of accounts – which your Uncle John may be able to make something of – Tell him of the Gatewood letters relative to Arkansas laws, if they can be (cleaned?) up. I will send them right away – Tell him to do anything and all that he can. –

The children are all well, little Will is fat and saucy – he has been staying two days with me now. (Drump?) was up here and he stayed with us – I am having great many (peachus?) (dried?) –

Friends in the neighborhood all well –

I wrote you a letter two days ago – was so little left in me, that it was very short – I could go at any time for the pigs that your Uncle would send there – (I am in a great hurry this mainly as Clay has but Mrs.

Write soon –

Your husband, Will J. Armstrong

Be sure to get the papers of Capt. Hanson. He got them the day he took dinner with us, and if the case has already been gotten started by other parties he cannot (oblige/oblich?)

(Address written on the side)

Mrs. Lula Armstrong

Care Capt. (Jim?Jno?) Williams

Memphis Tenn

(Transcriber’s Notes: Lula may be visiting her Uncle, John Wilkinson, Callie Hanna’s brother, who may have been a Captain in the Civil War. Ashwood is the Post Office in Maury, County.)
Post Civil War

Letters from Family and Friends
February 22, ca. 1869

to Lula Armstrong

Artesia, Mississipp

from Mrs. C. Thompson ("Auntie")

WJA010-07-06

Direct to Artesia, Miss on Mobile O. R. (River?)

My dear, dear Friends,

I really feel ashamed to think how long it has been since I received your kind and welcome little letter and have it before me still unanswered. My dear children please consider the seeming neglect & I assure you tis not for want of affection or that I have ceased to love you, or that I have forgotten you. Many very many times – have I thought of you both, and wished from the depths of my heart – I could see you both - your little family – why I cannot realize that you are surrounded by a family of little ones of your own. I was surprised when I read your last short letter to learn that you had three children you did not say – how many were boys or how many were girls - whether all were boys, or all girls or whether one has the name of your Old Auntie. Do sit down & write Auntie a long letter & tell her all about your selves & the little ones.

I’m at a late hour to write a letter to you, I have so much to tell you so many changes have taken place since we parted – however I shall not try to follow up all the changes – only give you the particulars concerning my own family – As Dr. ("Threll"?) has visited Memphis & seen my sister – she no doubt gave him the news of our family. I was in Memphis last Sept. and if it had been possible or prudent for me to have remained absent from home longer, I certainly should made a desperate effort too have visited you. Oh, I do long so much to see you. Why can’t you come and make Auntie a visit. I know of nothing that would afford me more real pleasure. We are living now at Artesia. We moved home a year ago last month. Willie & myself have rented the "Dismuke Castle." I know you both remember the old place. If I am not mistaken "Will" before his marriage spent the night in this house (A/S. H.? ) a fidgety night too. We have bought 7 acres on the left of the railroad tracks just beyond that big culvert-bridge- about 200 yards from the Depot and Stores. Expect to commence building this week. Hope to have a nice comfortable home (now?) soon & plenty of room for friends whenever they come. Willie is merchandising here – doing very well. His partner is Mr. Carlton Billups. You would hardly know old Artesia. We have here a large new Hotel. The best I’m told on the Mobile & OB Road. Kept in good style. 4 stores. One (grocery?) - one Drug store – one Blacks Smith shop – two D. shops – 3 Doctors & five boarding houses – two Accadimy - one – for the whites in a flourishing condition. The other “The Martha Washington Institute Colored. We have given up farming entirely. Rented our farm to Sam W. Winston. His family lives in our house. Rylie & Burton Winston live at the place old Mr. King lived. All farm together. I did feel very sad to give up my old home at (Sylvian?) Grove. But I could not stay there alone so I moved up here to be with Willie & have it more convenient for Cousin Liss & Geo. to visit us. I have quite a family. Cousin Willie’s two Brothers, & a young man. All in his Store board with us. & Dr Lyon from Columbus (Note: County Seat of Lowndes Co., MS) a young physician – friend of ours, also boards in our family. & last though not least our precious little Baby. Did you know I took a little baby to raise? Took her when she was only week old. She is now 4 years old - & one of the prettiest & smartest little creatures that ever lived. Her Father was a chaplain in the Confederate Army. (Maj.?)
G.B. Stone. Her mother died when this child was just one week old - & I took her. She is baptized “Mary Curtiss” – but we call her “Bessie” a nickname her mother always loved. They were married eight years & this little darling was their only child. I feel very proud of her. She is so bright & smart - & I know she is of good blood & no mistake - Her Father has since then married & has a little son nearly as large as this little one of mine. Never was a child petted & loved more than our little “Bess.” She calls Lis & Geo brother & sister & Willie “Papa” and me “Mama.” Willie seems devoted to her & she to him. I will try & send you a picture of her this summer. I expect it would appear as strange to you to see Auntie nursing & taking care of her baby as it would for me to see my darling little Lula with her little ones around her knee crying “Mama.” I keep three servants “May” & her husband - & (lolse?) May has learned to be a good cook - washer & (cleaner?). Her husband is a smart dining room servant & good cook. (lolse?) is my house servant.

Geo and Lis live in Columbus (Note: County Seat of Lowndes Co., MS). George has gone into the grocery business for himself (remember he keeps no intoxicating drinks). He is doing very well. They board still at Dr. Shattucks. No likely heard of an increase in their family. Lis comes religiously to see me once a month or six weeks. Spends from 4 days to a week. She sends her best love to you both & a kiss to the little folks. Says do come & see us. She can’t believe you have three children. She must see to believe. Ben & Sister as you know are living in Memphis & expect you know as much about them as I do - as you hear often from them through your cousins. No signs of cousin Willie’s marrying as yet. I wish he would marry. Then I could have someone to look after things & come & see you. Can’t you recommend some nice good young ladies that would suit him?

Old Mr. King & family have all moved to Texas. Left last month. None of the girls married. Landrum went with them. He & Bettie do live very unhappy. He made nothing of whipping that dear child but he drinks whiskey all the time and a man that is always under the influence of liquor knows not what meaness to get into. She had two children - girl & boy. Mr. H. Hardy has moved from Texas to Missouri. Mary’s health is very poor. Eliza was still with them unmarried. I had a letter from Anna Stafford a few weeks ago. Anna I heard was to have been married this month to Bob Sheppard brother of (Bens?). But she wrote me her health had been wretched this winter & her friends were very much alarmed - for fear she had consumption. She inquired particularly as to you both. Eliza Shaffer & Mary her sister are both married. They each have two children. Eliza married an old man & as ugly as a “mud fence.” Mr. O’Neal. Perhaps you have heard all about them (inc’) this. But for fear not – I will only mention concerning them as they were your old acquaintances. They both married widowers with children. But had good homes for them & was pretty well off. Mr. Larrabee married Cary Claton – second to the youngest daughter of old Judge (Cleyton/Clayton). He lived in Aberdeen last year - but they have moved down (of?) Judge Clayton’s plantation & in (time?) farming this year.

Poor little Frankie Larrabee accidentally shot & killed himself instantly about two months ago. Mr(s?) L. is almost heart broken. So sad. Well about the “Smiths” – the old lady is still having children has two or three unnamed. So many – she can’t keep up in names (“Shurn/Thurn?”) is married a second time – has one child by his last wife. “Fayette” & Penn. are to be married in a few weeks. Penn married a young lady from Memphis. Miss Donsey – she is visiting an Aunt of hers living in Artesia. I don’t know the young lady Fayette is to marry – (Sheldere?) the old lady is still making & Dying
cloth. **Lissy Smith** is a young lady in (size?) off at school now – quite a change has come over the spirit of their dreams since the (man?)

Cousin **Willie** says *(Unreadable note written on the side.)*

All them 100 darkies here left them & they have had a great deal of trouble in getting along. They have money plenty–gold at that yet they are the poorest people in the country – For my own part being poor shall never worry me out of the few days allotted to me. I feel thankful that tis no worse with me than it is & - can (remember?) thoughtful enough that I have any little family around me. I have filled my sheet & still I have not said one half that I wanted – must ______ the rest for another time – I hardly think you can make out all I have written – for my heart & mind has been filled & running over with things I had to tell you - & often all I think I have said but little to interest you. Please my dear children write very soon & tell me all about yourselves - & you children how they look & their names etc. Send me yours & the little one's pictures. Cousin **Willie** sends love & I know cousin Geo & Liss would if they knew I was writing for they all love you both dearly. (Ming?) sends his Lou a great deal of love& asks her if she has forgotten – the old mule Doll & the ride on Sunday – Please come & see Auntie this summer.

Good by-(Love?) & a kiss to all – God bless you – Your Loving Auntie  **Mrs. C. Thompson**
March 14, 1868
to William Armstrong
from G.W. Hanna (Lula’s father)
Houston, TX
WJA010-03-05

Houston, March (14?) 1868

Dr Wm. J. Armstrong

Dear Son,

Your kind favour of the 9th inst, as also one from Louisa of the same date came to hand yesterday, and I can assure you, gave me great pleasure, to know that my poor boy Beverly was with you has relieved me of one of the heaviest (burthens/burdons?) that had accumulated upon my stricken heart.

thanks, Oh many thanks to you for your kindness to my poor child, I trust that God in his infinite mercy will yet spare me to repay you. I love my children almost to idolatry, and yet the world will censure me as having deserted them, but Oh! If you knew the anguish of my heart, causes my inability to assist them, you at least would feel for my woes – for years past, I have been unfortunate in my business career, and in that time I have suffered enough to drive any ordinary man into a state of lunacy, loss after loss, failure at almost every thing, until I became reduced to actual want – and I resorted to what so many thousands have done to soothe their trouble, drank deeply, thus making my condition worse & worse and the death of my angel wife, left me disconsolate – I came to Texas one year ago, with a hope of bettering my condition, but I found this State, similar to all others in the South, a poor place to recuperate a broken fortune. I passed through the terrible Yellow Fever Epidemic, and with only the greatest difficulty earned a bare support. I was just commencing business with a fair prospect of success – when I was crushed down to the dust – the account of which I send you. Where I shall go or in what capacity I cannot say – but I shall trust in my God, and do my best. I have not lost all my energy yet – and if I have any opportunity I will make a fortune yet – I shall write you soon again – but one thing you may assure, that now & forever I will remain a temperate man – I trust that Dear Lulu’s sickness has not been serious & that (all/are?) this reaches you she may be entirely well. May God bless her. Oh, I (want?) so much like to see her – my poor boy Clay is at Waynes (home?). Wife in the care of Mr. H. A. (Riggle?). I had hoped to have put him at college before this, but I hope for the future. I am in good health, a Father Loveth all – (Truly?) (Yours?) G.W. Hanna
First Yellow Fever Epidemic 1873

Memphis
First Yellow Fever Epidemic

Letters from Will
Dr. W. J. Armstrong

OFFICE: 249 Second St.

RESIDENCE: 288 ALABAMA ST.,
Next door to Dr. Steadman's Church.

(Transcriber's Note: Rev. J. O. Stedman, pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee, January, 1854-March, 1868. The Alabama Street Presbyterian Church was organized in 1868 by a colony of about thirty from the First Presbyterian Church, who chose the Rev. Dr. J. O. Stedman, a native of Fayetteville, N. C., and a graduate of Princeton College, pastor. A temporary church edifice was erected standing at the corner of Alabama Street and Jones Avenue..... http://www.wdbj.net/shelby/goodspeed/history/history5.htm )
My dear Wife, I am feeling pretty well today – a slight cold from the sudden change in the weather last night – a cold, cloudy day, and the cases of Yellow Fever dropped off last night and this morning, alarmingly, two and three dead in several houses –

We hope that it is not spreading much but it is hard to find out the whole matter.

You were not many miles away before Lewis came in and told me that Clay was very ill, that the Dr. could do nothing, for the lack of Quinine. I said nothing, not believing half he told me, finally, he came our and asked me to send him some, that neither he nor Clay had a cent – two noble specimens and can't make a living for one. He had something to buy Whiskey with. I noticed – he said Clay would not get well

I enclose you a letter from your Pa, not very palatable to me, - Your Uncle has been lying up in bed (some?) since you left – and one more of the (same sort?) (sounds?) my death - knell in Memphis – I will write to him that you are not in the city – and that Memphis is a bad place for penniless men or women, and advise him to stay in St Louis – that you are the only one of the family, that has any claim on my money – take no notice of his letter – do not let it trouble you – leave all that to me – It is a mystery, that you, my darling, are only, out of all, worthy – I love you the more for it – and trust that God will not let any such conduct come in among our little ones – You do not know how I miss you – I have had no coffee for two days – I see many things and say but little – I think you are all (relaxed/secure?) from your trip – Let the little boys, and Mary, have plenty of out door exercise, but watch for improper eating and Tell (Wilse?) I can get a place for him now – all the clerks have taken (wings?). This is the most desolate town you ever saw – today is observed as a day of Fasting and prayer by God’s people – Take good care of yourself and little ones – My love to all the family & share in Their & your prayers - Husband
October 10, 1873
to Lula Armstrong
from William Armstrong
Memphis
WJA010-03-08

My dear Wife –

I have endeavored to keep you posted for several days, about myself. I am still keeping quite well, through nothing but God’s mercy and providence, for stouter men physically, and better men, I think, are falling around me daily – I am scrupulously careful in my habits – and do all in my power to ward off disease, trusting the balance to an All wise Ruler – Nothing, but the most, urgent calls, ever arouse me at night – for two nights through entreaties and tears. I have been induced to get out of my bed – Hargraves, poor fellow, has Yellow Fever, and has been alone for two consecutive nights, his family all in Friars Point – I visit him two and three times a day, but cannot afford to sleep in the same room – last night I thought your dear uncle was taking the fever, and was quite uneasy, but he is all right –

Sunday morning – I have not had time to finish this letter until now – Dr. Rogers being sick, besides several other physicians, throws an immense load of work on those up – besides, I see by the morning papers that I am appointed, by the city to take charge of a certain district, from Jackson to Auction, north and South, and Main to Third, east and West – to overlook all the needy and destitute – the appointment was given without my knowledge and solicited by Dr. W. E. Rogers, Rice, Mitchell and many others besides a number of one of the relief committees, who found me a work in Pinch, one evening, and next morning told me that he had seen the authorities, and told them that I was already at work and I must be retained? – I did not know him - do know him yet – My Salary is $150.00 per month – probably last only one month – By remaining here, like a true man, I have made, I hope a host of friends and gotten the respect of all my profession – it is a hazard, but I trust will work out all right – I am very well today, but from over work, went home last night quite unwell a long night’s rest brought me our all night by morning except soreness - Will write you as often as I can, and try to keep You Posted – You did not seem to have gotten any letter asking for (Wilse?) as a match to your dear Uncle. Please (forward?) as soon as convenient, as I think they would be fine company for one another – if he has not energy enough to get to the Depot at Columbia – ask Pa to express him – Kiss the little ones

Love to all --- Your Husband
October 17, 1873
to Lula Armstrong
from William Armstrong
Memphis
WJA010-03-09

My dear Wife,

Although I wrote you a long letter on Yesterday, for fear of your having “high strikes”. I will write again this evening – I am very busy, all day long, with a host of calls to attend to, and when I get home at night, I sit and listen to Mary gab awhile and I go to (roost?), and woe to the man who disturbs me. I made a negro think last night, he has aroused an Earthquake – Everything is brighter to day. great decrease in the number of deaths, and the attacks now are very mild, compared with two weeks ago – I hope we are nearing the end of the Epidemic – Your dear Uncle keeps very poorly, and I wish you were here to minister to his wants, he suffers so much at night – and needs your advice by day – Your Pa is still here – I have never met him – Send Wilse down. I want a team – Tell Sweet, if I get some money, tomorrow morning that is promised I shall send her something – money is scarce, but easier with me than for a long time past – I wish I had some news to write you to fill the balance of this sheet, but I am our of Soap –

My love to all

Your affectionate W.J.A.
October 21, 1873  

Memphis  

My dear, dear Wife,

I received another letter from your to-day, and am ashamed to tell you, that this is the third day since I have written to you – but oh; my wife, if you could but appreciate my worn-out condition, at night, when after dark I get home and drop into a chair perfectly tired out, and Laura will speak up, Dr. such a man, and such a one, wants you as quick as you can get there” – I feel as if I could not get to the gate but go and return, thinking I will write, while she is cooking breakfast, but half the time I am gone then, and thus it is put off from time to time – I am writing now while she is getting my dinner –

Will God still spares me in good health and strength – thanks to his great name – for two nights we have had (severe?) frost, and a little ice and I must we now bid goodbye to Bronze John – but the cold snap has told and is telling today, on the sick, many who have to give up their lives – (Blount’s?) life has been hanging by a thread for 24 hours – D. Freeman is very ill – D J. Jos Williams is two and a half mile in the country very dangerously ill, and I am afraid to hear from him – my good and true friend Charlie Johnston is not expected to live the day. Although the fever has been on the decrease for more than a week, this cold spell has brought out many new cases – my list will go today, over thirty, and but for the horse and buggy I could not get around – my practice, from Saturday morning at 3 o'clock until bedtime that night, amounted to full $60.00 of good money – and every day will almost even a month’s rent – So don’t be discouraged about the future, to me, now, if life and health are (given/grim?), all looks bright – I have been trying for a week to find time to send your bundle, and will do it this week, for I think you can return in two weeks – I will give you marching orders the first day, I think it is safe – I could send some one to buy the things I want, but no one knows how my money comes like myself. And I think I can make is go farther – will send Harry a dollar – Mary Fithian, Laura Nays, is quite sick today – they will go (Homeopas___?), I think – it makes me feel good to hear of your enjoying yourself, away the neighbors – Your Pa sent for me a few nights ago, to a drinking saloon on Jefferson St., said he was very sick, was taking fever, wanted me to take care of him He hugged me often, very much against my wish – I sent a hack to take him to the Whitemon House, promising to call that night, I did so and the proprietor told he was
not sick, but had been drunk for four days – So I have not seen or heard of him since –
I expect he thinks me dutiful but I have no time to give to drunken men – I know he
was out of money and once fastened on to me, would be hard to shake off – He wants
to see you, to get a kiss & hug –

Write to me often    Your Husband
October 24, 1873  
Memphis, Tenn Oct. 24", 1873  

My dear Wife,

Laura and I have been sitting by the fire consulting over what to send you and what best & how much to buy, and can make but little out of it – I want to send you a waterproof something, to travel in. She thinks best to send the Gabriel dress pattern with the cloak extra, so as to make it to wear as either dress or walking suit. I will consult the lady at the pattern rooms tomorrow – I will send you some money extra, and we will write to Mr. Beecher to get you up enough to bring you home – it is a shame that they cannot get thirty-dollars

You had best engage butter and eggs, but get Pa to pack and send when we order, do not to attempt to bring them with you – Butter here now, is only 35 cts & eggs 25 c – but they will be very high you know before Christmas – tell (Dump?) I want to send her some money, that when the freezing weather comes, she can buy and send to me a few hanks of genuine sausage meat - what we get here, is not genuine. I would not buy eggs, until you think they are at their lowest – butter will be apt to be but little lower – if (Dump?) is selling or be likely to be able to fill your order get from her in preference to any one else – My head is full of Yellow Fever, and I want to make a selection of things to send you, but fear that I will make a mistake – I have prescribed for so many fever patients in the last six weeks, that I am almost incapable of doing anything else – besides the entire day is devoted to the sick – I send you a list of the Doctors of the City, as posted by some one showing those on duty at roll call. Those sick and wounded and the dead, and_______ as They are on the sheets-styled, (the rest), absent without leave. Poor Dr. Williams was buried today, and the city is in mourning – Dr. Blount [Dr. B.F Blount. d. 26 Oct. 1873], I fear will go next. He is yet alive, but delirious, stupid and manifests – no concern about himself or anything else – I telegraph his family, his condition every day – No one knows, but a few of us what this city has and is still enduring – My list of patients will average 30 per day and would go more, if I could attend to them. Tell Wilse not to give up the horse Trade yet, I see now that I will be compelled to have a horse & buggy – if spared. A large part of Dr. Williams practice will fall to me for Dr. Steadman is at work already – Mary Fithian has Yellow Fever and contrary to her and her mother’s wishes, Edmonds was _____. I called to see her today – she is not doing well, and I expect before light to be called to her – You will find many changes when you get back – You will have many to call to see you, who did not know you before –
Saturday morning  5 o’clock

Another day has passed and is too late to get a money order or to send your bundle, will forward both on Monday God willing – My work is fearful – but my strength good - You will be ordered home soon - fever on the decrease to day - Hope my baby is well by this time – tell her there will be something for her in the bundle – attend to her faithfully – oh! That I could see her

(Side Note)

Show this scrap to Maj. Fleming and let him see where his boy has been in the hour of danger and duty. Tell him that Dr. Williams (Dr. John Joseph Williams 1828-1873), poor fellow, was a son of Duke Williams - son to all

Husband
October 29, 1873

My dear Wife,

I sent your bundle two days ago, through Mr. Beecher, and am afraid from lack of time to give it proper though that I probably did not send (much?) things as will prove of service to you – I merely endeavored to get such things as I thought would make you comfortable on your trip homeward. From all the lights now before me, I think you may prepare to start home this day week (Wednesday), and on Thursday I will meet you at the Depot, or if engaged, will have a Hack ready for you, so that you need not buy any “Bus Tickets” on the Train – I trust that you can get (home/here) then. For I need you very much – if anything should turn up, that I think it prudent to remain a few days longer, I will telegraph Mr. Beecher – tell him so – and can stop you in that way – We feel that Yellow Fever as an Epidemic is done for, and in another week look for brighter times – I have had an hours rest yesterday & today – You wrote about My Sweet being sick and that is the last – what has become of her – God bless you all and allow you to reach home in safety

Your Husband

Envelope addressed:

Mrs. Lula Armstrong
Ashwood  (Post Office in Maury County)
Between the Yellow Fever Epidemics
September 24, 1877

to Lula Armstrong

from Pattie

Florence, Alabama

WJA010-03-13

My Dear Friend,

I have made several attempts to write to you since my arrival here in the city of Florence but up to this time my object has not been accomplished as you are truly aware, I am having an awful nice time up here as is always the case when I visit this region of country. Nearly all of my friends have been to call on me both ladies & gentlemen. I have been here now a little more than three weeks, and it doesn’t seem more than one – could stay as many more but don’t care to wear my welcome out completely. I did intend coming next Thursday, as my ticket expires then but Mrs. (Karnser?) made me write to Papa to have it extended another week as she says this is no visit at all. I have not heard from Papa yet therefore can’t tell exactly when I will return. I received a letter from sister Mary last week in which she said Maggie Clark was very ill – do hope she is recovering (ere?) this though the physicians seemed to think her condition very critical.

And Mrs. Katie B. has at last done something for her country. I am indeed delighted to know its all over with, as was really afraid she would have a larger audience to witness the performance than she expected, as she would insist on parading on Main Street. I have heard none of the particulars yet, imagine her experience will be some what amusing – no doubt she found it very different from what she expected. Did her old flame Dr. T. officiate or did they have Dr. Maury? No doubt Nellie (Drirr?) is some what disappointed as the (sis?) cheated her out of a namesake. I imagine she was about the first to call on the little stranger.

What is Ellen doing with herself these days? Tell her Jim came to see me several days ago and delivered her messages. Please give her my live in return when you see her remember me to the other members of the family also.

When do you expect your little ones home? No doubt you are getting very impatient to see them. I know the Dr. longs to see his little pet. Has he written her any love letters recently? By the way ask Dr. if he has received a letter since I left either for himself or for me. I hear none of my documents have reached him, consequently he did not have the pleasure of answering them. Have you seen (U.U. or V.V?) since I left? Suppose she is still sticking to her so called cousin, Mr. Hamilton. I do think without a doubt she is the biggest goose I ever saw.

Will ______ ______ letters to a close.

Give my love to Annie, (Sister/Siler?) & Mary Fithian when you see tem. My love to Dr. & all the rest of the children.

Please write soon to Yours truly Pattie T. Excuse pencil writing
Second Yellow Fever Epidemic 1878

Memphis
Yellow Fever in Memphis

Just after the Civil War, the city's population blossomed to approximately 55,000, making Memphis the sixth-largest city in the country. But, the boom wouldn't last long. The yellow fever epidemic ravaged the city to such an extent that by the end of the decade, Memphis was bankrupt and nearly vacant. As a result, the city lost its charter in 1879. It began to slowly recover when river trade resumed in the 1880's. (Memphis News Bureau)

Memphis suffered dreadfully from the Yellow Fever epidemic in 1878. This Epidemic was described by Dr. Armstrong: "It is not Yellow Fever, such as I treated in 1873, but it seems to be a plague sent upon our southern people, possibly for their great wickedness– Nearly every city & town in the whole Southwest is suffering from it, and its general symptoms are like Yellow Fever but in its spread in new districts, is unlike any other fever ever known before - surely the U.S. never witnessed such a thing before." (Dr. William J. Armstrong)

Yellow Fever, a disease carried by mosquitoes, moved by riverboat and railroad, from New Orleans to Ohio and nearly destroyed Memphis in 1878. Nationally there were 100,000 cases. Memphis was especially hard hit and a great exodus from the City followed quickly. 25,000 residents left the city in one two-week period. 19,500 residents remained in the City. 80% of the remaining population caught the fever and one-quarter (5,000-5,500) of the population died.

Those of selfless devotion dedicated their lives to the care of the stricken. These included Dr. Armstrong and other physicians with the Howard Association, nurses and religious orders such as St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral and police. 60% of those who ministered to the stricken did not survive.

There was a good chance of survival with good care, proper nutrition and rest. But, all businesses ceased to exist except for hospitals, police and city personnel. There were "no butcher stalls – no groceries – no feed stores" (Dr. William J. Armstrong). The Citizen's Relief Committee provided donations of money and supplies from other cities, but a point came when there were no goods to purchase within the city of Memphis.

So many people succumbed to the Fever each day that thousands were buried in family lots or into a mass grave in Elmwood Cemetery. This area became known as "No Man's Land," designated for public and charitable burial and donated to bury the victims of the Yellow Fever Epidemic. (Elmwood Cemetery) Many victims were also buried at Calvary Cemetery.

The City of Memphis went bankrupt. The State of Tennessee repealed Memphis' charter in 1879. Robert Church purchased the bond which restored the City's charter.

Martyrs Park, on the southern tip of Memphis' riverfront, honors those who remained in Memphis to care for its Yellow Fever victims. The statue commemorates the “suffering and courage of citizens
who tended the sick and dying during the epidemics that devastated the city in the 1870s." (Memphis Travel) Robert Church Park honors the man who purchased the first bond when Memphis sought to restore its charter in the 1880s after the Yellow Fever Epidemic: “a courageous act many local historians regard as the event which saved the City from extinction.” (St. Jude, Memphis)

An excellent reference for study of the 1878 Epidemic:

Yellow Fever Organizations in Memphis
There were several organizations devoted to the care of the Memphis Yellow Fever victims. Highlighted below are a few to which Dr. Armstrong refers in his Letters.

Howard Association
Curator, Waring Historical Library, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston

"Epidemics of yellow fever in mid-19th century America caused, in the port cities of the South, devastation and death almost unequalled in this country's history. In response to this horror, a benevolent organization of young men was formed to minister to the unfortunate victims through visitations, nursing care, supplies, and compassion. The group adopted the name Howard Association in honor of the British philanthropist and reformer, John Howard."

Sisters of St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral
Shelby County Tn - History - The Goodspeed Publishing Co., History of Tennessee, 1887
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St. Mary’s Cathedral (Episcopal) located on Poplar Street at the junction of Orleans Street. The church was founded in 1857, during the episcopate of the Rt. Rev. James H. Otey, D.D. It stands on a lot fronting 100 feet on Poplar Street and extends through to Alabama Street…. Dr. Armstrong worked hand-in-hand with the Sisters of this Cathedral as they provided care for the Yellow Fever victims. (See Published Articles in this document.)

Citizens Relief Committee
Shelby County Tn - History - The Goodspeed Publishing Co., History of Tennessee, 1887
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The Citizens’ Relief Committee, the Howard Association and the police all labored heroically in the performance of the most unpleasant but the most sacred duty—the nursing of the sick and the preservation of order and of life. The Citizens’ Relief Committee was burdened with the greatest responsibility, in caring for and distributing the supplies sent with such a prodigal hand from all parts of the world. As showing the magnitude of the work entrusted to their hands, which was performed with the most scrupulous honesty and fidelity, the following summary of donations to Memphis is introduced…….
Second Yellow Fever Epidemic 1878

Memphis

*Letters from Will*
August 17, 1878  
to Lula Armstrong  
from William Armstrong  
Memphis  
WJA010-04-04  SRB 060-04-05  

Memphis, Tenn  
Aug 17", 1878

My Dearest One,

I do hope you & the little flock got safely through, and are well – I have thought so much about the dear little pig [Reference to Louise, their youngest child, according to UT transcription] – if she was still sick that night & [etc.] - is she well now? I know Grandpa & her Aunts cannot help falling in love with her. You cannot conceive of the desolation of our good city – I do not suppose that one fifth of the white population are left in the corporation – On our street counting even as far out as Mrs. Cochran’s, there is no one left, until you would reach the poor families near Finnie’s, except Mrs. Fithian’s family & myself – poor Mrs. Nelson stood watch over me, according to her promise to you, one day, and she left last night, perfectly demoralized, leaving me “Beauty” in charge, as a special protection - Little Beulah Tatum was taken down on yesterday- but I hope will prove a mild case- Peter Tighe is no better & the result looks gloomy- I have reason to think from the reports of the last 23 hours, that the disease will not be long-lived- Much decrease in the number of cases- I do hope you & the dear little ones will keep well & that we may not be separated long. Kiss them all for me & do make them behave properly in their absence from home.

Your husband

Mary gave me a very poor breakfast- I am afraid she is not a good cook
August 19, 1878  
Memphis, Tenn Aug 19", 1878  

My Dearest One,

What merciful Providence, that I so often speak to you about, and in whom I wish I could induce you to trust, is graciously, as He has always done, looking over me, and today, my health is splendid- This morning, after a night of continual calls & the excitement of a terrible fire in the neighborhood, I had a headaches & felt bad generally, but towards dinner, got to feeling very well & have been laying up for four or five hours- I will not go in the hot sun on horseback, or out in the late hours of the night- I have made every endeavor to trade the Horse, but so far without success-

This is the most terrible Fever that ever invaded any country before- I do not know of a single recovery, so far, - I have had four cases, two are dead, one Peter Tighe is dieing, and the other in quite critical condition- for two days, its spread does not amount to anything, probably not more than 6 or 8 cases- but it is confined almost entirely to the Bayou, and its adjacent streets from Washington to Jackson- the western end of Alabama has suffered fearfully,- it is a Malignant from Malarial Fever, no doubt engendered by our continuous heated season, and the accumulation of decaying animal matter in the Bayou, in that particular portion named--- I have watched it & studied it closely, and cannot make it out the same Fever that visited us in 1873- but something still more deadly in its ravages- We had a very extensive fire from it Mrs. McDonald’s caught & before the fire boys could reach the spot, both were...
consumed and I suppose very little saved- as every body was closely housed & no alarm given until the fire was in progress- The Howard's (Howard Association) are bantering me, but do not want to pay my figures- I want $100.00 per week, and they want to give but $50.00, so that there is little prospect of a trade- I would not be surprised if they offer me $300/00 per month but that I will take it- it is very tempting-

I have not heard a word from you, yet, & am getting very impatient- Dr. Sam [Samuel C. Snyder] telegraphed from Lynchburg, Va, that you were well & safe at Decatur- How is my little pig?- and my boys? I know they will be liked by all, and that some one will want to keep them- Make the others keep in their places, & be kind & respectful to all- I do want them all to be respectful- You cannot imagine the desolation in the city- for squares you will only see a family, now & then, all are gone, and lonesomeness is itself lonely, making a gloom that cannot be conceived of, nor described upon paper-

You must direct all your letters to the office, as delivery upon our streets has been stopped, and I must go to the P.O. or get them at the Drug Store- Do write me a long letter & all the news- what the children are saying & doing & God bless you

Your Husband

Willie Shepherd has a fever that closely resembles the prevailing one, and I fear will prove to be such- Mrs. Fithian & family are sleeping in the house, and are very kind in watching after me-
August 21, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from William Armstrong

Memphis

Memphis, Aug 21

My Dear Wife – I am quite well, after a spell of sick headache today – am feeling splendid – Work is very abundant, but I think will not last – Howard’s sent me out today, & after a trip throughout the length & breadth of the infected district, do not see any cause for alarm – The people who do the writing & pointing do not go into the field & of course are badly posted – Kiss my dear little pig forty times for me – How I would like to see her & the boy – Give a father’s best love to them all – Tell sweet to be a good girl & I will bring her something nice – God bless you my dear one & may you love him for it – Your Husband
My Dearest One,

I never felt better in my life than I do now- I get as hungry as a wolf by 12 (PM?), and eat a full share of rations, although not in the style that you would have proposed for me-Mary does her best, but it is not as if your were here-

My work is fearful, some 30 visits before noon today- and, probably half as many this afternoon. The fever does not seem so violent in the last two or three days- and I trust it will grow more mild- the number under treatment does not compare with 1873, so far-

Will Shepherd is better, but your Aunt F. [Frank] was taken down this morning - Beulah is about well- it is a very hard battle to face if we are to hold against this fearful disease until frost comes- the thought almost makes me a deserter--- the end, of, when is it???-- Mrs. Fithian and family will leave me soon for White's Station – I regret this very much, as I am lonely enough now- and am afraid to sleep in the house alone for fear of being taken sick at night-

The papers have been publicizing the absent M.Ds very freely for the past few days- and it is, to say the least, comforting at such to be at home- Hawes wrote to Dr., Sam, that he has given his horse away to a poor Mississippian as he would never need him anymore for the practice of medicine here, and that he had sold his house & wanted the papers to make the transfer - I told him if he would give me a good price for mine that I would desert too-

Do not worry about me, but take good care of yourself & family, and I will love you more for it- Do kiss my dear little pig a thousand times for me- she is my theme at all meals. Tell the boy that papa thinks of him so much – and to the rest a fathers good will. Be of good cheer, and if you will sincerely & truly pray to God; He will spare us to meet again-

Your Husband
My Dear One, I have treated you too mean in not sending this sooner- but I cannot step out of the door but two or three are catching at me to come & see some one. Poor people I feel sorry- but cannot help them. One man has just walked from up on Washington to get me to come to his family. I am very well, as stout as can be, and eat all that I can get. I had to send to Mrs. Porter yesterday to get something – no butcher stalls – no groceries – no feed stores – we live on Bacon & Coffee & Milk. Be of good cheer and God will provide for us both –
My Dearest One, Aug. 24

Before returning for the night, I feel like thanking you for your nice good long letter – also one from Sweet & Cline – it is the first news since your card announcing your arrival [in Maury Co., TN] – and I am so rejoiced to know that you are well & enjoying yourself so much – but there is one thing above others, that runs my cup over with joy, it is to see you promise, to give yourself, if he spares us both, more unreservedly to Him & to bring our children up in his fear – Do not deceive yourself that this is an idle promise – but God will record it against you & will not hold you guiltless if it be broken – and will at some time disregard you now, when trouble comes- I hope you will not let this be a Methodist outburst but a solid, square, faithful promise, and he will reward you for it –

The outlook grows more gloomy, each day, and gives no promise of a break, short of frost – Oh, what a fight it will be, and how ceaseless – no one but the poor worn out physicians know what it is – my work is continuous – I will take my sleep – but have to quarrel for it – and I need some good diet, such as you give me – to strengthen me for the work – My fare is very poor - our market is shorter than you could even imagine it –
Will Shepherd & your Aunt Frank will I think get well – Mrs. Fithian moved in to take care of me & the horse, and is now convalescing from the fever – was sick in the room over the office – How is that? The fever you see is gaining every day – and I hope will soon be Killed out – will send you a paper – where shall I send it? – Kiss my dear children for me – and I do hope God will spare us all to meet at the old fireside soon – Your Husband

My dear Boy – It seems that you only could take time to write me a letter – Well, I will remember that for some time – I have a bad time about my horse since you went away – I rode for several days, but could not stand it, so I exchanged with Mr. Tate the hackman, for a lazy old thing that suits me, and let him drive mine – I cannot hire a negro to feed regularly – tonight I came in tired and worn out & then had to feed – Help Grandpa all you can – and let me know if you arranged for mail at Poplar Top, so that I can send a daily paper – Take some of the care of the little ones, off your Ma – Do not get hurt or allow the others to do so – Your father

My Dear Sweet - You think of your poor tired papa, I know – He is here risking his life, all, that he may be able to give you a home and comforts in life – Will you not love him for it? I know you do – and I want you to be a good girl & get on your knees every night & ask God To save your Papa from the pestilence – for He can only do it – Beulah Fithian is about well & she & Miss Juliette & Miss Mary love your Papa so much for what he has done – they speak of you often – and I believe they love you – But two or three Doctors have taken sick yet & I hope to escape – but it is so long before we can hope for a change – You must mind Grandpa & Aunts & then they will love you – Kiss my little pig a hundred times for one & little Ernest too – Papa wants to send you something nice, just as soon as possible – Now do be a good girl & don't give poor distressed Mamma any trouble - Your Papa

25” Sunday morning

Mrs. Porter is a full of entreaty for me to leave as you are – She sent me some chickens, apples [etc.] to eat yesterday & a note begging me to come out – That they were all distressed about me – Mrs. Jim Tighe is at Collins – has a little boy & the fever at the same time – Bad case – Mrs. [Alex?] Lytle will come nearer to this city in a few days – so that I can be reached – I got a good nights rest & feel splendid this morning.
My Dearest One,

Since writing you on yesterday we have had a light rain and as a consequence, a number more have been stricken down – I went to bed last night, weary & worn out instructed Mrs. Fithian to report me sick & unable for duty – I got a good nights rest & am all right today – When I got up town about 11 a.m. they were rejoiced all having heard that I was sick – Roger & others had called in search of me – But the Good One provides for me – and I am strong & was very hungry when I got a chance to stop for dinner – You know that I feel it my duty, God willing, to protect my life as a support to you and the little ones - and I am more particular now than ever – Mary is learning my tastes well now, and is cooking splendidly – Mrs. Fithian is convalescing but will be several days, yet, in bed – it is a dreadful fever to recover from – I witnessed a pitiful sight, [on] yesterday, in the death of a Dr. Robbins [Wm. H. Robbins, M.D., died Aug. 25th], who has been here only seven months & leaves a wife & several little children – Oh! It was heart rending to me – to see the bereaved ones & coming home to know how many were dependent on me – Ess [Henry Ess, M.D., volunteer in Howard Med Corps, 1878] stood it until this morning & I met him, leaving – I told him he was a cowardly rascal to leave us at such time –

I left your Aunt Frank yesterday morning with black vomit, & have not heard from them since –

God bless & protect you & my little ones – and may he grant that our separation will be of short duration – I feel like He will deliver me out of this great plague & let us see one another again

Good bye darling
August 28, 1878
Memphis, Tenn
Aug. 28

My Dearest One,

The fever is assuming a most fearful form and no signs of abatement, in fact, it looks more & more gloomy every day – The list, as you will see in the papers, I send, (embraces?) some of the best citizens of Memphis.

It is not Yellow Fever, such as I treated in 1873, but it seems to be a plague sent upon our southern people, possibly for their great wickedness– Nearly every city & town in the whole Southwest is suffering from it, and it its general symptoms is like Yellow Fever but in its spread in new districts, is unlike any other fever ever known before - surely the U.S. never witnessed such a thing before –

The paper will show that Your Aunt Frank is dead – poor woman, if she had had such attention given her, as she gave to Willie, she too would have gotten well – but, such a husband, he had to let her lie until he could telegraph to his brother for means to bury – Miss Sabra Hunter was buried this morning – so was Mrs. Thweatt – others will follow soon – I do not know what to think or do hardly – nothing but distress & death on all sides, and everyone pulling at a poor doctor, to “come this way first” – I reported as you will see, in my district one Hundred & twenty seven (127) sick in my district – one doctor has been given me as a help, but none work like me – Nuttell [Joseph. H. Nuttell. M.D. served in the Howard Med. Corps during the 1878 epidemic] sitting right beside me reported 33 sick in all & receives the same pay – but I am so rejoiced that God has given me health & strength to do this work that I feel like going on until the work is over –

You have no conception of its extent – and we who are here, cannot conceive of the End. Miss Fithian is gaining some every day, and will be up again soon – the balance are well – Poor old Sol Green is very low, and neglected by every body, save a negro nurse – I called yet today & found him with black vomit just commencing & (blistered?) him
making him more comfortable & this morning he is a little better, with some hope of recovery – You will see by the papers, the inhumanity of John Donovan, an old Irish politician who was only fifty miles away, and where his wife & family were taken down would not come, but sent word, “take care of my family” – the paper & people are giving him fits, and justly too – an old dog – He is a type of what many others are doing – if I break down I will go to Mrs. Porter’s & rest & then come to you – I have been here so long that I am afraid to leave – The Telegraph announces the death of old Dr. Hopson [Howell R. Hopson, M.D., died 25 August 1878], in Murfreesboro from Yellow Fever – so I might get away & fare likewise – here I could be missed etc. – but I hope not to need a ________.

May God bless you & take care of both of us, though there are afflictions in my daily prayer; & if he does, will you not love him more? – will you not try to raise our children in his fear & to love & respect his church & his ordinances? – Write often.

I will send you some money by the first –

Your Husband
August 30-31, 1878
Memphis - Aug. 30

My Dearest One,

I have a few moments before breakfast to devote to you – We have had a good rain & last night was quite cool – this morning is bracing & I feel much stronger & better for it, but fear its results for the sick – a dashing thunder storm might have been a benefit to all, but a rain such as we have had is, I am afraid hurtful –

Beulah is convalescent & Miss Juliette down – Charlie Wright & his father occupy one bed – The number of sick exceeds anything you can imagine – yet amidst it all, God is sparing me – and I am so grateful – I feel sometime as if my hands were crossed & tied & that I am good for nothing, death coming in upon the sick in spite of all that I can do - to run is folly – because I would most probably take the disease away in my system, and get sick when there would be no one to treat me – You do not know what I would give to be with you, and see the little ones; but for a time I must be content – Dr. & Mrs. Steadman [Pastor of the Presbyterian Church], with Mary & Stella, were first at Mrs. Richardsons & he thought that was not far enough, so he has gone to Florence [Ala], where Miss Ella is – Mrs. S. [Steadman] is not very well – Jimmie & Miss Ella are up at Covington [Tipton Co., TN]. I think the Dr. is thoroughly demoralized – and Keeps the poor women in a (broil?) – He is away & does not know what to do with his house – and that will be the cry with many a one before this “cruel war is over”

Aug - 31st – After a nights rest, I am feeling only tolerable – my tea was so weak at noon, that I had a headache all night – and headaches make us all suspicious, here – Do not worry, for I will have nothing undone, to protect myself – only I cannot cook – and Mrs. F. [Fithian] is not yet able to get out of bed – My love to all - & Kiss my children for me – oh! How I long to see you & them – to have a sweet family reunion - & around our little alter, give thanks to God – Kiss yourself for me
Sunday night
Sept 1st 1878

My Dearest One,

Gloom impenetrable, through which there is no view to mortal eyes, over hang, our
dear Memphis – the sights that now greet me every hour in the day, are beyond the
much talked of 1873; as that year was, to me, something new & beyond anything I had
ever known – our best citizens are going by the dozens, and we poor doctors stand by
abashed, at the perfect uselessness of our remedies. What it is, what it is going to do
with us all, is something which only, God, in his wisdom Can reveal – it is appalling;
[startling] & makes the very bravest quake – Oh! That God would have compassion on
us, and bring deliverance – for human power is altogether unavailing – Do not be
distressed for I am doing all that close attention to habit, diet etc. can do, to protect a
man against disease, and last night put on a light (menico?) undershirt to protect me
against the cool mornings – You cannot imagine how desolate and scarce we are left
of any thing – I had to get horse feed on Saturday from Beal St – Alex Lytle had been
hunting me all day – just to see how I was – they are about 3 miles out, & he says his
wife could not be any more distressed if he were in town, than she is on my account –
we talked of the troubles that we were going through & both cried, right in my office – I
tell you it breaks the stoutest hearts – I live on eggs – bread, some times Bakers bread
if I can catch it – coffee, tea, butter, milk & breakfast bacon – no vegetable wagons are
running – Mr. Daniel gave me all the milk I wanted while they were away – and it is a
great comfort.

I will send you a daily paper, but am afraid they will publish something about me – You
will see the names of some o four best citizens upon the
dead list – Woodruff, the Carriage man – I
expect to find both
Miss Mary & Juliet
Caims gone when I
got to the house this
morning – and do not
expect to see Dean
Harris alive – I
worked with him hard
last night – they have
completely adopted
one of the Sisters
offer to take charge of
me, if I get sick & I
have both their
Asylums in charge, at a good Salary – Poor old Sol Stile lingers & may get well – no one around him but a stupid negro – Mrs. Goldsmith was buried yesterday & he is down – a sad case is that of Mrs. Crocker, cor. Jones [AV] & Bradford whose husband died a few days ago, leaving her & five or six children, on a little infant that I delivered since the beginning of the Epidemic, and last night the mother went, leaving all those, without even a relation in this city –

The distress & anguish of 1873, does not reach this, by one Hundred fold – although the mortality so far, does not reach more than a fifth – I never was, in all my life, so full of sympathy & sorrow for suffering humanity – I feel sometimes that I must run away & then in the face of that I see that every one who moves away is taken sick & dies – so that if I remain some one will be near to attend me – God grant that I may be able to administer to the sick throughout – Be a good girl & I will love you so much – I write a short letter to my dear boy – Your Husband

Kiss all for me –
My Dearest One,

Another morning finds me perfectly well – and my work in abundance. I have just returned from a visit to the Rev Dr. Harris, who is dangerously ill with the fever – I do hope that his life will be spared, and that we will have him with us hereafter – he has been faithful so far, and would be missed so much – Miss Juliet is gone, & I fear Miss Mary will follow – Do take good care of yourself & the children, as we want some of the human race left, very few will be left here – Menken is dead – I will send papers and let you read for yourself – I get so overcome sometimes by the amount of distress & my utter inability to give any relief, that I feel as if I must run anyhow – I want to enclose you a P.O. order in this letter if I have the opportunity to procure one, but I must insist upon you using the monies that I send judiciously – as I am making it at the risk of my life, and if that life is not spared, where will the next come from – think of that, & take care of what you have – I do wish I could impress this upon you as I feel it.

Give my best love to the children, & family & I will write to them as I get the chance-

Your husband
My Dearest One,

You do not know how it delighted me on yesterday to receive your two letters, one of Aug 30 & the other of Sept 1st continuing one, a letter from Cline, the other from my dear Sweet – oh: it was such a treat, to a poor worn out physician, to know that his loved ones were safe & in health –

Today, has been one of Constant work & I thought I would surely give out before eight, but I held on, and now have taken my milk & have but a few calls ahead, between eight & nine & then to bed – I have quite a hospital, in and around my house – Dr. Harris & Mr. Parsons, both quite ill – Sisters Constance & Thecla, at the school – Jim Tige’s family, in Collin’s grocery – two sick at Goldsmith’s – two at old Tige’s – and poor Mary Fithian taken down today & in the same bed where her mother was sick – and although I sleep in this atmosphere God yet spares me to wait on the sick – how good – The sisters are very kind & attentive & seem to trust implicitly in all my instructions – I told you already, that they have employed me as Physician to their Horses – amounting already to near a Hundred children – and still “more to follow” – I hope Mary will have a light attack, but it is impossible to tell – it is the most treacherous disease, ever known, those you think are light, become the worst etc. -

I do want to see my little ones so much, & when I look ahead for six weeks, before possibly a good frost will come, to settle this dreadful sickness, I do not see how it is possible for me to work through it all – How I did it before, I do not know – but this is worse than all – The numbers of deaths as reported are frightful, yesterday 208, but that when the truth is known is simply the accumulation from day to day of what Jack Walsh could not bury & not the deaths for that day – some of the bodies lie three & four days, unburied – I produce horrid smells in the locality – so these bodies all accumulate for that day – as Jack was before his Honor for neglect of duty –

I feel like, I wish I could go to some secret spot where there would be no burning heads & hands to feel, nor pulses to count, for the next six months – it is fever, fever, all day long, and I am so worried – so tired of giving directions & - I will never risk another Epidemic, without you to regulate my tea & coffee – it is a great risk to me &
may cause me trouble yet — Mary is a good girl & a great worker, but she does not understand my palate yet — she has me some nice desert every day — and when all the closed stores are looked at it is surprising where she gets anything — You do not know how I would enjoy a fortnight in the country with you but such a life, such a life — (privation?), disappointment, ingratitude — close confinement —

Dr. Steadman & family, except Jimmie & Miss Ella, are now at Florence [Ala.] — the Doctor could not come this way, but kept his head eastward. He is fearfully demoralized — Not one word said, either, over Miss Juliet or Miss Mary, but with haste, in a few hours, (6/8), they were hurried to our beautiful city of the dead — The list will shock you, when you learn its extent — and know so many acquaintances & friends gone —

I have written to Auntie about Willie — it is so sad — so terrible and the manner of her sister’s death — you will think that after awhile that you have a pretty fair husband, compared with some others —

Gods richest blessings be upon you & the little ones, and may his care & love to you, draw you closer, nearer to Him, & with you, our dear children — Love to all — Your husband

Tell the children I will try & write to them tonight -
September 7, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from William Armstrong

Memphis

My Dearest One

I sent to Mrs. Beecher's twenty dollars by P.O. order for you – and I do hope you will exercise prudence & economy in its use – if I am not spared to you, you will soon need a few cents, where you now think you must have Dollars-

Everything with me tonight is terribly blue, on every side death & sickness – Mary Fithian her mother & cook Mary, all sick & where I am to get my rations of coffee in the morning, only He who tempers the winds, knows – I do feel so often, as if I can stay no longer – but like a coward, (seem?) – their “duty points with outstretched finger” to the work before me – and the little good, under God's blessing that I may accomplish, if I stay – but oh: The End

I am compelled to sleep in a villainous atmosphere – I have some two or three Doctors assisting me, in this Ward, but that leaves me more than my share, still to do – and I go as long as I am not wearyed, but when that comes, I go to my house & rest – if the Cook keeps well. I can get along very well –

I will lose Rev. Mr. Parsons to-night, and possibly one or two of the Sisters – Mr. Harris [Dean Geo. Harris of St. Mary’s Cathedral] with care will get well – I heard yesterday, that within a few days past, since Your Aunt Franks burial, that your Uncle Ben & Willie, were alone in the house for two days & nights, she too weak to do anything for him & he down with the fever – Mrs. Vogel's mother died this morning, and she stayed all night, in that house alone, with a burning fever, & no one to give her, even, a drink of water – Such cases of desertion are frequent & always result in death – (old?) Sol was left all night last night entirely alone, and could get no one to hear his cries for help: this morning, in relating to me, his fearful loneliness, he cried like a baby – I could do nothing, but sympathize – I could not stay – Harris is very low – I do not think he can live – and that Drug Store is the one doing the largest business in the city – Thweatt & Heyman are both dead – and all Rx's [prescriptions] have to go to Main Street – I get Horse feed from Beal Street & my own rations, just where I can – Nurses are more trifling than ever – (Transcriber’s Note: Dr. Armstrong's handwriting changes & text is now written with a pencil rather than his traditional pen) Flat on my back after dinner, I am trying to finish your letter – I turn down a chair & put a rest for my head on it & lounge for an hour or so – how I would enjoy the shade or a blanket or
sheepskin, with my two Lulas [his wife and youngest dau.]. I am afraid if I am spared to meet the little one, she will not know me – The old man would, How is he? (Transcriber’s Note: “The old man” is probably William Osgood Armstrong, the doctor’s father in Columbia, TN where Lula & the children are living when they are not living with the Beechers.)
dear boy – Mrs. Fithian in her anxiety about Mary has been thrown back & I fear the result – Mary’s fever is disappearing today – and I hope for the best for her – We will be so broken up here, when this “cruel war is over” that Society will have to begin anew – I hate to fill my letters with nothing but such news as I do, but there is nothing else here to tell – Bleak, dreary, waste is every where present, and nothing to cheer the worn & weary – it is now cloudy & we all hope for rain & frost-

Be of good cheer, I hope something is yet, bright in store for this poor unfortunate city – May God bless you & the little ones & spare us to meet again on Earth – Kiss them all & give a father love to Each –

Your husband
September 9, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from William Armstrong

Memphis

WJA010-04-33  SRB 060-04-34

My Dearest One,

I have concluded that I must write you again, and it is only to recount to you the horrors with which we are surrounded – I hate this, but there is nothing cheerful, hopeful, or that has been one ray of sunshine attached to it, in our whole city – gratitude should & must abound in some hearts, at last, that any of us are left – such a fearful plague, oh: none but eye witnesses can appreciate its horror – or can tell of its ravages – Mrs. Fithian, in her anxiety about Mary, would sit up, would wait on her, the result is a relapse that will end her existence tonight – She was up & well – and would have gotten along well but, for that imprudence – it will be a fearful blow to poor Mary – and I propose to say to her, that she can stay with us, just as long as she pleases – Sister Constance is dieing tonight & I now think Sister Thecla will get well – last night I was leaving the house, another Sister, who was well, followed me to the door, and when about to part, she handed me a note, which I supposed was a statement in relation to some physical weakness, that she was suffering from – and asked me to read it when I got home - I took it in my pocket, and beneath my name, on the envelope, were written these words, “an expression of the affection & gratitude of the Sisters” – within were nicely folded two fifty Dollar bills – my first impulse was to take it back, but I thought that would be a poor way to treat a present – so I submitted trusting, if I live, to repay them- They are a very nice set of Ladies, and are so grateful for all I do for them – tell the children not to speak of this, and I rather think you had best not let them read this letter – for I would not like for anything to be said about the matter –

Mary, the cook, has been right unwell for two days, but seems better tonight – I sent you some money, by P.O. order to Mrs. Beecher, but the mail arrangements are so irregular, that I do not know whether the box has been visited or not, and you must write if you do not, or do get it, so that I will know what to do – poor Harris will go tonight – Mr. Mundinger has a light attack & so has Charlie – she was quite weary about Mr. Torrance tonight – said he was sick & would have no one to see him – one man died in Donnelly’s house – I saw two of the worst cases that I have seen, out in Mrs. McComb’s house – both will die - & their father died a few days since – rather lucky that Dr. Steadman did not go there, aint it? – Mansford & that young man who used to come over with him are both dead.

My idea now is, that if the weather becomes cool, before we have frost to let you buy some goods in Columbia & not send anything from this poisoning atmosphere – I am afraid of that box – am afraid of myself & never eat or drink without a thorough wash – for my hands are on many hands & faces, sweating, from one meal to another – Do
take especial & close oversight over the children, these boys particularly – it is your duty to devote, at least, a portion of time to seeing that they behave properly - & when they transgress your laws, then use the rod, freely – Teach them that love to God embraces perfect obedience to parents – Learn them to pray – and let them bear me, in my exposure to this pestilence, on their little tongues to Him, & He will not despise their prayer – Oh! I feel so grateful for spared life to this (good?) moment - & may He, who notes the fall of the sparrow, bless, guide & keep you in all peace, & grant us to meet soon, is your husbands prayer.
September 10, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from William Armstrong

Memphis

WJA010-04-37  SRB 060-04-38 (date typed before 12/97)

Sept. 10” – (night)

My Dearest One –

a letter from you dated 5th, just received today & for that I had to go to the Post Office, as in old times, no mail – no groceries, no ice – you cannot conceive what a fearfully desolate place this is – one by one the Howards* & Doctors are falling, but up to this good time God is sparing me. I am so thankful – out of five of us, at the Drug store Dr. Sam [Samuel C. Snyder?] & A. B. are in Va – Harris is dead & Channing down with a pretty bad case – I am to write to his poor wife tonight – Mr. Torrance died today, alone & unattended – I offered to do anything for him, but he was so averse to my profession that I could not serve him – I feel so bad for poor Miss Pattie – I will write her tomorrow – I went our four miles to see Alex Lytle today – he has a bad case & poor Herbert Cairns is nine miles out, where he can go no attention whatever – his poor wife wrote me a very pressing note for ice, nurse & today, but I could get nothing – Mrs. Fithian will go tonight & poor Mary is so distressed – I told her today, that so long as we had a home, she should never want for one – but that she should be one of us – I am trying to stay this month out, here if I remain in health, but I am so wearied tonight that I do now know how I can go twenty days longer - & besides, it seems that those who go away, get sick. Ea. Foster ran out to Lagrange Sunday to see his wife & came back to get sick this morning – The cold after today’s rain may benefit us. I can’t tell – I can only hope – You cannot conceive how much more dreadful this is, than 1873 – there is no comparison – our very best are going – I do trust that you & the children will keep well & that we may see each other soon – Be of good cheer – God, I feel will work all things well & for his own glory –

Your devoted Husband

*(Transcriber’s Note: The Howard Association was a benevolent organization organized to aid the public during the yellow fever epidemics).
September 11, 1878
to Lula Armstrong
from William Armstrong
Memphis
WJA010-04-39   SRB 060-04-40

My Dearest One –

It is soon nearly 9, o’clock & I have just gotten in, & while waiting for a messenger for some medicine. I will give you a few moments – My heart bounds with joy at the mere hope that this cool night will possibly end our labors to a great extent, if not altogether in this fearful scourge – no one knows, but the poor weary Doctor what a delight, that would be, - an end to this dreadful suffering, distress & bereavement –

I am to write tonight to poor Miss Pattie, about her father’s death – How sad, all alone, unattended, he passed away, with no one to catch a message he wished to leave – Mrs. Fithian still holds out – depressed, weakened, worn out with disease – Mary is not so well tonight – possibly from impatience of the nurse. She is in the room over the dining room – I wish you were near to comfort the dear girl – she says that you & I are all that she has left – I called to see Willie Shepherd this evening, but she had gone – she is a (pet?) of the Ledger – I do not know what was done with his body, [Thos. Shepherd, Pontotoc St., d. August 21; Mr. F. Shepherd, Linden St., d. Aug. 26; B.E. Shepherd, Linden St., d. Sept. 8] probably it went to the Potter’s Field – Numbers of good men & women have been buried publicly, that would surprise you – I am feeling splendidly today – the cool breeze has braced me up – I wish we could have an inch of frost tonight –

Do love my little pig for me & that dear boy – I saw (Dvd?) [David] & his family yesterday & it was such a pleasant sight – Kiss all the children for me - & my love to the family - (Channing?) is very low tonight & I fear the worst will come – Of all the five I alone am standing. I wrote his wife today & telegraphed beside – I do so hope I will see you soon - God grant you health & a full share of His Grace - Your Husband
September 16, 1878

to Lula Armstrong
from William Armstrong
Memphis
Last Note
WJA010-06-13

My Dear Wife –

I have passed through the fever stages & have only to get the stomach right –
Hope I can do this & see you soon – Husband

Monday
Second Yellow Fever Epidemic  1878

Memphis

*Letters and Documents from Family and Friends*
No Date
to William Armstrong
Envelope
WJA010-05-07

Photocopy of an envelope addressed to Mr. W. J. Armstrong with no other information
August 19, 1878

Memphis, Tenn
Aug 19th, 1878

Dear Mrs. Armstrong,

I thought I would write a letter to you, and let you know how everything was getting along; the Doctor also wanted me to relieve your mind about his meals. The morning the Doctor wrote to you, Mary cooked her first meal, and it was very poor, the biscuits were very hard, and the coffee was not strong enough, and that gave the Doctor head-ache. I do not know what was the matter with Mary that morning, but she has done very well ever since. The Dr. is very well pleased with everything (so far as I know), and is in very good health. He keeps out of the sun as much as he can, and he will not go out at night, only for cases he cannot avoid. Peter Tighe is dying, and the Goldsmith’s have the Fever in their family. Mrs. Nelson and her son and daughter left the evening after you did, and Mrs. Collins is only waiting for Mr. Collins to come for her. Mrs. Vogel has also left. Mrs. Roberts, the one which used to come to our house, died yesterday. Mother thought sure she was going to have the Fever, she has been feeling so unwell but she took medicine last night and has been feeling splendid to-day.

Last night we had a very large fire in this neighborhood, and it caused a great deal of excitement. Mr. Becker’s house burned to the ground, and not a piece of furniture saved. Mr. McDonald’s house caught from it, and it is burned so that nothing in the way of building, can be done to it. You know, I suppose, that the McDonald has left the city, but the Beckers were here.

Mrs. Armstrong I am afraid we will have to leave the city if it gets much worse, but you need not be uneasy about either the house, or the Doctor, because Mary is going to stay and she will take good care of both.

We have stayed here every night since you left, or I should have said Mother and Father have stayed, I have been at Mrs. Collins, and on Saturday we moved over for good.

I think any one who is writing as doleful a letter as this, should not write quite such a long one. Give my love to all the children, and make them all kiss “Big and Little Lula” for me.

Hoping you all had a pleasant trip. I remain Your True Friend, Mary Fithian
September 8, 1878  
to Lula Armstrong  
from Pattie T.  
WJA010-04-31

My Dear Friend,

Your postal card reached me yesterday & very glad was I to hear from you, & glad to know that you & all the children were well. I know your anxiety about the Dr. must be very great being exposed as he is to all the danger, & I emphasize with you most deeply I can assure you. We can only hope & pray for the best & I trust that God will see fit to bring him safely through this terrible pestilence that has taken so many from our midst. I hope God in his all wise providence will soon stay this plague & the time will speedily come when we will all be safely united one more. How fearful it is to know that you are compelled to stay away from him. I never realized before how terrible it was & don't care how soon the time comes for us to return. I hope we will this year have the earliest frost on record, think the people throughout the land ought to be willing to make almost any sacrifice for the good of those stricken places where there is now so much suffering & distress.

Papa is still in Memphis. I am sorry to say, have done all in my power to get him to leave, but up to this time have failed in my undertaking. I cant help feeling alarmed about him & would give anything to know that he was perfectly safe. Mama is still in Miss. and is, of course, very much worried about the present state of affairs. Its perfectly terrible for families to be so scattered, no two of us are at the same place. I do hope we will never have to go through with anything of the kind again & if we do I hope we can all leave together.

I saw from Friday's paper that Mr. Mandenger was down though it did not state whether he had the fever or not been stricken with the terrible disease, though it seems almost like hoping against hope.

Mr. Robert Nicolas has the fever at Mr. John Wellfords, though is getting on remarkably well, he was considered out of danger when I last heard from him, hope he will soon be entirely restored. The Steadmans & Joyners are all here, also several other families from Memphis. Dr. S. came to see me yesterday evening. He is one of the (bluest?) men I have seen lately. I gave him your postal card to read & he seemed to feel very deeply for you & if complying with your request will do any good rest assured we will do all in our __________ _______ _______ _______ morning, they spoke very affectionately of you & seemed to sympathize with (duty?). Mrs. H. sends her best love to you & says if her humble prayers for you & yours will do any good she will always remember you in her devotion. Must now bring my letter to a close. Give my very best love to all & kiss the baby for me. Tell the boys I would be glad to hear from them & ________ will write occasionally.

Please write soon & often to one who sympathizes with you (daily?). Pattie T.
The time will surely come when we will all be safely together again. How pleasant it will be to know that you are comfortable in every way. Your home will make you feel at ease and you will be happy to return to it. The people throughout the land will wish you well and expect to see you soon. The climate is mild and the air is pure. You can enjoy the beauty of the surroundings and the peace of mind that comes with it.

I am happy to know that you are doing well and that you are healthy. I hope that you will continue to be healthy and that you will be able to enjoy the beauty of the surroundings. I will look forward to hearing from you again soon.

Yours truly,
John Doe
Florence, Texas
March 21, 1861
September 9, 1878  
Florence, Ala  
Sept. 9th /78

to Lula Armstrong  
from Ellen Steadman  
Not WJA 010-04-35  SRB 060-04-36

My Dear Friend,

My love for you, as well as for your dear husband who has done so much for us and whose kindness we can never repay, prompts me to write a few words, feeble though they may be; of comfort and sympathy.

It is indeed a fearful and distressing time. Each day brings with it fresh sorrow. Many whom we have loved have been called into eternity; many more lie on beds of suffering with, perhaps, not even necessary comfort.

While death has entered so many families, yet God in His infinite mercy has preserved ours. Oh! How thankful we should be! Although separated by many miles, we have the sweet assurance that the same Father watches over us all. He is our “refuge in time of trouble.” He will never leave us nor forsake us if we just our trust in Him. Though He afflicts us, it is – for our good; for “whom He loveth, He chasteneth.” We deeply sympathize with you in your anxiety for the dear one of your number who is in the very midst of danger.

May God protect and keep him: may his efforts be crowned with success and in the Master’s own good time, may you all be reunited – a happy family. This is our earnest desire for you & yours.

Poor Pattie is very much distressed about her father. He has not yet left the city, and they are all so scattered that she is in a constant state of anxiety. I feel so sorry for her.

Papa, Mama, Lissie [Jessie] and Stella came to Florence last Tuesday night. It is needless to say that I am perfectly delighted to have them with me. Cousin Ella and Jimmie are pleasantly situated near Covington, Tenn. Quite a number of Memphians came up to Florence. I suppose you knew the Wrights of Memphis? They are here; also the Joyner family and several others whom I do not know. I wish you could be here with us. I intend writing to “Dr.” very soon. We watch the papers very closely to learn all we can
about him. Hasn't poor Herbert Cairns been terribly afflicted? Almost the whole family swept away in so short a time. But, my dear friend, I must not forget that I have other letters to write. I have so much to say that I hardly know where to stop.

I must say good bye for the present, however. All join me in much love for yourself and your little ones. Be assure that we will not forget you in our prayers.

Yours most affectionately  Ellen O. Steadman  Please excuse all mistakes
September 13, 1878

St. Louis – Sept – 13th 1878

My Dear Friend,

No doubt, you will be surprised to receive a letter from me written from this place. But here I am. Brought here by fate. I have felt so anxious to hear from you all & not knowing of any better way of doing so than by writing. I have concluded to try this way. I read the papers very anxiously every day. This with an aching heart to see if I can see anything from our friends in poor Memphis. I do hope the Dr. is with you, if not, I know you must feel very uneasy. I so often think of you & wish we were all back again at our sweet homes & as happy as we were before we left. We are as yet undecided whether we will return to Memphis in the fall or not. Tho’ I hope we will for I cant say I like St. Louis. Hill Fontaine & Co. have established an office here & they may continue it even after the fever. If so they want Mr. Martin to take charge of it, but I am terribly opposed to it for there is no place like Memphis to me. We have only been here a week are boarding in a hotel & it does not suit me at all. I have been sick nearly ever since I left home. Have had the worst chills (&/that?) anyone ever had. I am really getting to look pale & interesting. The children are all very well. We are just across the street from Lafayette Park & they spend much of the time over there. It is very cold here. We have on winter clothes & keep big fires & we came very unprepared for this. For I left all the childrens winter clothes at home.

Oh Mrs Armstrong hasn’t Memphis suffered? I was so sorry to hear of poor Mr. Lawrence’s death. Where is Mrs L. & Miss Pattie? & poor Miss Mary & Miss Julia to have passed away. Their places will be hard to fill. & so many, many others. I declare it makes one sick to think of it. Do write to me just as soon as you get this. I am so anxious to hear from you.

Mr Martin & the children join me in much love to you all.

Hoping to hear from you very soon. I am yours with much love.

September 14, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from Dr. R. W. Mitchell

Memphis

WJA010-04-41

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY

Dated Memphis 14 1878

Received at 7 10 PM

To John S. Beecher

Dr. Armstrong very sick but doing well today

Says must mot come here under any circumstances

RW Mitchell

MD

19 Collect

(Transcriber’s Note: Lula and the children were living with the Beecher’s in Columbia)
September 14, 1878  
to Lula Armstrong  
from M.E. Rogers  
Memphis  

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY  
Dated Memphis Tenn 14 1878  
Received at 7 10 PM  
To John S Beecher  

Dr Armstrong doing tolerably well third day  
Mrs Armstrong must not come  
will telegraph tomorrow  

M.E. Rogers  

16 Collect
September 15, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from M.E. Rogers

Memphis

WJA010-c

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY
Dated Memphis Tenn 15 1878
Received at 8 15 am 16th
To J S Beecher

Dr Armstrong doing well

W. E. Rogers

5 Collect
September 15, 1878

to Lula Armstrong
from Florence Patrick
Memphis

WJA010-04-45

Memphis Sept 15th / 78

Dear Lou,

No doubt you will be greatly surprised to receive a letter from your old friend Florence, but I was out to see your husband today and he asked me to write to you and tell you how he is getting along – hoping by day after tomorrow to be able to write you a letter himself. He says he knows what you have heard of his sickness, and as I am right from him I can tell you all about him. I was there yesterday – which was his third day and the fever not broken; to day his fever is broken and he is resting just as well as could be expected, every one says he is doing well and will soon be up. He told me to tell you that he, himself thought he was doing well to day, and would try to write in a few days. Lou, you know you used to tell me that he was inclined to be despondent. I think he is much too despondent for his condition. He has every attention in the world. Drs. Mitchell & Rodgers, a Mrs. Ainslee and Mr. Read, I believe, are his attendants. Mrs. Ainslee is a splendid nurse and watches him closely. He left me with him about two hours to day, and I was so glad to be of any service. I had the fever myself and Dr. Armstrong waited on me. I did not have a severe spell, but my sister, Mrs. Hudson did. I did not expect her to live but thanks to a merciful God she is now up. She and I walked out to St. Mary, & this morning – two of the Sisters there who waited on Less died with fever. Our city is like a ship dismantled – a city without inhabitants, and yet a great many must have stayed, for so many of our best citizens have died.

You must not allow yourself to be unnecessarily distressed, for every thing is being done for the Dr. that can be. Your girl Mary is still well and keeps things in nice order. I am charmed with your new house – first time I have seen it. I am going out to see the Dr as often as I can. I think it so much better for you to be safe away with the children. Hope they are well. If you feel inclined to write to me, and if there is any thing I can do for you I will do it with pleasure. You must not make yourself uneasy – all will come out right.

Very sincerely yours Florence Patrick
September 18, 1878
to Lula Armstrong
from W. E. Rogers
Memphis
WJA010-04-44

THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY
Dated Memphis Tenn 18 1878
Received at 3 ½
To J S Beecher

Friend Armstrong
Doing first rate

Rogers

6 Coll (Collect)
Dr. William J. Armstrong Collection

September 20, 1878  
to Lula Armstrong  
from Nina D. Martin  
St. Louis, Missouri  
WJA010-04-49

St. Louis  Sept 20th 1878

My Darling friend,

If anything could have caused me especial pain it was the sad news I received from the papers this morning. I will know how painful the well meant – but often mistaken kindness of friends at such a time, yet – still I feel I must write and offer you what consolation I can tho' I feel that it must come from a higher power than mine.

Your own strong sense of religion and our duty of resignation to a power that is beyond our control and a will that is ever beneficently directed towards one good, must uphold you in this most bitter trial.

It has indeed been a heavy blow and I scarcely know how to console you the least under so bitter an affliction. Just think my dear friend of One who "careth for all," and think of the bright and never ending future life of him whose spirit has passed away but for a brief period, whose soul only waits in heaven to hail the Wife from whom he has been parted. Do try and support your spirits – both for your own & your childrens sake. I look forward to that brighter & happier home to which we shall go to those who cannot return to us. I feel as if I could not say anything more.

Humane consolations are weak. May a higher Power do that which I cannot.

Ever sincerely your friend

Nina D. Martin
September 22, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from Benjamin Fithian

Memphis Tenn Sep 22/78

Mrs. L. Armstrong

Dear Madam

It is with deepest Sorrow that I write to you of your great Loss. You have been informed of your husband’s death. I wrote you on Thursday morning when there seemed to be no hopes of saving him he died and I alone followed him to his grave and seen him put to rest.

The next day after he was taken he sent the nurses out of the room and gave me some directions as to his affairs. I have about $21 dollars & he told me that the Howard Ass owed him $110. I have locked every thing up and am still staying at Your house and will continue to do until I hear from you and Mary gets well. Miss Florence Patrick was here yesterday and she said she would write to you full particulars. I cannot advise you as to your best course except do not under any consideration come here. I don’t believe you would be here a day without taking the fever. I will care for every thing as if it was my own, Mary is still here, She tells me that the Dr has not paid her her wages.

Write and give me directions as to the disposal of the effects or what I will do with Money.

Write as soon as possible

From your Friend,

Benj. Fithian

286 Alabama St

Mary send love to you and children
September 22, 1878

Memphis Sept 22, 1878

My dear Lou,

Since the hand of God has fallen so heavily upon us, I have not before felt so pained, so heart-grieved for a friend as I am for you. I (carried?) you such hopeful tidings in my last letter and I come with such black woe.

I think though that I am not the first messenger of devastation to you, but that you have heard before the sad, sad news of your husband’s death/ O had such hopes! When I was there last Sunday – a week ago to-day – he was doing as well as we could expect. In this fever I went away thinking I would not trouble you by prophesying evil which might not come, this saving you unnecessary pain. I say that the Dr was despondent but hoped he would get well in spite of that – as all yellow fever patients are so. And they told me he was doing well which he was until about Wednesday. Bess had a relapse so that I did not get out again until Thursday. I went quietly into his room as usual, he took my hand and bade me sit down by him as usual, but in a few moments I saw that he really did not know me - alas, my heart grew full of tears. He had said to me once in the beginning of his sickness that when he got better he wanted me to fix him some thing nice to eat. I asked him on Thursday evening if he could eat he said no. When right after asked me why I did no bring him something to eat. As all do, he would throw the cover off, and as I held it down I asked him why he would do that, he replied that he could not help it. (I?) it seems that some seconds he could understand, then his mind flew off. But I am sure he had fully arranged his heart and affairs before this fatal delirium drew on; his life has ever been upright in the sight of his maker and now you have one to draw you to heaven.

My friend, I did not mean to fill my letter into words of condolence, but thought your rather would hear the particulars of your husbands last days on earth, still let me say that you have my heart felt sympathy and I have grieved deeply with you in your sorrow. When I found that all was done that could be done for the Dr. that my presence was no more to him than a strangers, I (bursted?) sadly away, and as I reached the head of the stairs going down, he looked out of the (door?) and said, “Good bye.”

Mr. Fithian told me that the Dr. was always wanting (to go?) and would try get up and go to see his patients – that was after he became delirious. I had never seen any one keep so still and so well covered up, nor so prudent as he was before. In fact he almost doctored himself as long as he could. Dr. Mitchell said he came to see him as a friend, Dr. Rodgers as his physician. I went out again after the Dr. died and Mr. Fithian said he had written to you, and would telegraph. He said that he and Dr. Mitchel laid out Dr. nicely, he saw that a handsome metallic coffin was brought for him.
and went and saw him nicely put away. He was buried in the physician’s lot, opposite (Mother?) Stephenson’s monument.

Mr. Fithian paid that about the third day after the Dr. was taken, he called him in and told him all his business affairs. Mr. F. said he asked him several times if he wanted any word sent to you, but the Dr. always said no, (is?) else that I had written to you. He did not want you to come to him, knowing that you would take the fever just as sure as you came – and for your eight children’s sake you must not now think of coming. Memphis is like a wave of poison. If you come within its bounds, you or any one else is doomed. This disease has swept away, oh how many of our _________ citizens, for it was such that remained to their post until death struck them down. I think the Dr. was fearful all the time that he would die, though he still hoped. He was a very sick man but so patient and prudent. He had two nurses all the time and Mr(s?) Fithian was there to help, so that every thing that meek mortals could do was done – a nice God saw fit to make him one of the noble army of martyrs that have died that others might live. If Dr Armstrong had had any other disease, he would liked to have had you with him but I am confident if you had come it would have added to his cup for he would then have been troubled on your account. Do not reproach yourself for not coming, for wives have been taken from a loving husband’s care as well as husbands from the clinging arms of devoted wives. It is Lord will. You have no conception of the agony our city has endured. Whole families have been swept away or what is more sometimes only one and no left. How many little babies have been left to the mercies of this world. One man near us lost all of his family and now wanders around like one crazed. I have passed through more than human tongue can tell, but if we are spared I shall consider ourselves blest. Out of those who waited on Less when she was ill, five are dead. Oh, you will come back to a dismal place. Do not come until very late for your children’s sake. Mary, your girl, told me to ask you if you would want – to hire her any longer, that (His/the?) Dr having been taken down had not paid her, not that she is uneasy, but wished me to ask you if you still wanted. Mr(s?) Fithian said he (would?) stay. His daughter progresses about.

Lou please write and tell me if I can do anything for you.

Your friend

(F Crews?)

I enclose a letter of the Dr. that Mr. Fithian found on his desk written the night he was taken ill. Thought you would like to have it so took it upon myself to send it to you.

Flora
Dr. William J. Armstrong Collection

This proved, on which we came to the conclusion, that through a number of independent sources this conclusion was founded. We then concluded that at the time when you were not aware of the conclusion, you were not aware of the conclusion. However, after this conclusion was made, you were not aware of the conclusion. We then concluded that you were aware of the conclusion.

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September 22, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from Nettie C. Estes

WJA010-06-01

Sept 22 1878

My deeply stricken Friend,

I know not what to say to you to day for I stand ____ struck myself at your most grievous, grievous affliction. I feel as if I would mingle my tears with yours, & those of his dear little children – for I loved him – so strong – so nice – so brave & alone all – such a Christian! But it chose a ______ only Father, who is always wise and tender – (no matter how dark (His?) ______ seem / to take him. Your _____, from (labour?) to rest. I always try to think of those who have “gone before” as they are in those blessed ______” – of their bliss at finding themselves safe & oh! I know they still (live?) & think of those they have left behind in the world that is made such a dark blank by their absence. I know Death - & Oh! I know its weariness, its weariness, its loneliness. No human consolation may soothe come what – but thank God there is calm that nothing else. I do feel for you, dear Mrs. Armstrong most deeply & tenderly - & God (knows?) I (med?) have saved you & yours such a (pain/pang?) but we must not question His (love?). The One who has made us “a (bruised?) reed he will not break.” The summer and Fall of ’78 will he be long remembered in this country. So many broken hearts - orphaned children & childless parents. I dread to find so many gone when I return. Memphis will be a sad place for a long time. I am staying at the same place that Mrs. _____ Martin is & she & I have thought or spoken of naught else since.

We _____ in the papers that your dear husband was ill & then against that he was in a critical condition & alas! Alas! The worst. I hope that this ______ will be sanctified to you. I (think?) comfort (FROM?) alone may be given you. I do wish you ______ get me me to (emily?) for you to let me know how you & the children are. Good bye. I shall always remember you & cherish the remembrance of your dear husband as we of the pleasantest of my life. If you should find it convenient I so hope to hear from you – direct Lafayette Park Hotel, St. Louis Missouri Always your friend, Nettie C. Estes

(Transcriber's Note: One of Lula’s children, Harry Lee married Elizabeth Estes.)
Mrs. Lula Armstrong

Dear Mrs Armstrong

I do not wish to be intrusive in this the time of your great grief but feel constrained to express our sympathy for you in your present affliction. Dr. Armstrong and Mr. Stephenson were particular friends during their “boy hood days.” Ever since he first heard of the Dr’s sickness he has been anxiously hoping for good news from him and has prayed daily for his (spirit?) of recovery – and the good Lord willed it otherwise and each poor “worms of the dust” must submit. We pray that He may comfort the widow and orphan and be a (present?) help to them in time of need.

Yours with sympathy

Kate Stephenson

Sep. 23rd
September 23, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from Mr. A. Stedman

WJA010-06-03

My Very Dear Friend,

With an aching heart, I sit down to say a few words of condolence to you in your overwhelming grief. O, I had hoped to be spared this unspeakably sad duty. In fact, I need a comforter myself & so do we all. In your afflictions, we are all afflicted, though of course ours is not be compared with your sorrow. We have all lost one, whom we considered an indispensable friend. O that we could have persuaded him to leave the city with you and thus have saved his precious life. But are we sure it would have done so? Does any man live beyond his appointed time or die before it? These are deep things that belong only to God. We live only to be still as say, Thy will be done. Our dear doctor did what he believed to be his duty. His noble soul could not shrink from any self-denial where he thought God called him to labor. He has fallen, all covered over with the honor, the glory which good and noble deeds have created for him, and better, far better than all, he has fallen at peace with his God and Savior.

I fear this cannot be said of many of our physicians. Mr. Stedman is almost inconsolable. No man in our church had so much of his confidence & love. O, Is it possible that we shall never see his splendid face again? It seemed to us that we can never be happy again in Memphis. And does not this teach us hat we have been leaning too much on an arm of flesh. God is not dead and we would have us turn our trusting eyes and heart to him. We did not thank him enough when we had our dear one to comfort and take care of us. And now were can we look for consolation? My dear, dear, suffering friend, there is one and one only Physician for your wounded broken heart. Can you not cast your burden of grief and care on him? O do not try to bear it alone. Try not to (murmur?) but bow your head upon his merciful bosom, & he will sustain & comfort & provide for you. Day & night (have?) we begged for his life whom our souls loved; but now as we will pray for you & your little ones. May God comfort you with his love. Tell the boys to trust in God & do their best for mama & each other. They leave a great work before them, Mary & Nell must be your comforters & helpers. And darling little Lula! May Jesus bless his little lamb! Ellen feels that she had lost a friend that can
never be replaced & so we all. We must try to live nearer to our Heavenly Friend. In the depths of your distress Cry unto God, for he has said many precious & tender things to the widow & the fatherless. He will not forget you among thousands of others who call upon him now. I suppose you know of the death of Laura Lytle's husband. O what does it all mean & when will the end come? Let us walk in fear before the Lord of all the earth. In (truest?) sympathy & love

Mr. A. Stedman
September 26, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from (Pattie T.?)

Florence, Alabama

My Dear Friend,

Your kind letter of the 13th reached me about a week ago & would have been answered sooner but I have felt so little like writing of late that I would not attempt it. My darling friend I heard a few days since of your great loss, &, words are inadequate to express my sorrow & sympathy for you. My feelings on reading the paragraph in the paper are indescribable. I felt very sad indeed & my heart very naturally went out in sympathy for you & your darling little ones. Having lost my darling father recently & not being with him during his illness I can fully appreciate your sad, sad feelings. It is terrible to think of our loved ones being take from us in this manner, with no kind affectionate hand to minister to them in their last moments & no loud ones near to hear their last words or even to whisper an affectionate and cheering word to them. Oh, my darling friends it has been my lot to yours also to miss or be denied this last sad blessing. My dear friends you know you have my deepest sympathy in this your hour of greatest distress. I wish I could only find the words or say something that would help to console you at this time, but having just passed through the waters of affliction myself I know how vain all human aid is. – We are of course over our sorrow & who do all they can for us at the same time it is not within their power to heal the broken heart, they can offer their sympathy but not consolation, for that comes from above. The same hand that afflicts His children will also comfort them. “I will not leave you comfortless.” The dark wings of the dreaded angle seems to have covered our land & takes from our own happy homes those linked to us by the strongest ties of love. Sad through these afflictions (bu?) who can tell the comfort we have in feeling assured that those who have gone from us are now happier than we can conceive of? What greater consolation can there be than this? It should make us strive the harder to follow the Christian pathway that leads to the land where parting & sorrow are unknown, we should endeavor to keep (or?) lamps trimmed & burning “for in such an hour or you think not __________ _________.” “The Lord gave & the Lord hath taken away,” let us therefore go to him for the comfort & consolation which he alone can give in time of distress. Though hard as it is to give our loved ones up, we should strive not to mourn is those who have no hope, but bow in much submission to the divine will of Him who (doeth?) all things well. Mrs. (H?) seems to feel very deeply for you & extends to you her heart felt sympathy. I hope we may be able to get that comfort from above which the world although hard it may try can not give. We should try to keep up as best we can, for we must remember that we are not alone in our sorrow, thousands are worse off to-day than we are, these are certainly universal times we are living in. I hope this time is not far distant when we can again return to our homes, though for us it will be a sad, sad return with the much loved head & main stay of the household missing.
Must now say goodbye. I hope you will visit us soon as you feel you can.

My very best love to all of the dear little children. Your friend in much sympathy

(Pattie T.?)
Dr. Armstrong Obituaries, Memorials, and Notes
Dr. W. J. Armstrong

"Dr. Armstrong, Howard physician, died last night," is the slim announcement of the Associated Press Agent at Memphis which conveys to the world the information that another brave true spirit has fallen in the fight for humanity and has winged its flight to the God who gave it. To this community the announcement was particularly saddening, and awe rests upon every heart, and the stern warrior's eyes are ______ with feelings which never shame his manhood, for here Dr. Armstrong was born, here he was reared, here are the playmates of his childhood, the companions of his youth, the comrades of his army life, friends, relatives, all.

Dr. W. J. Armstrong was born in Maury county, Tenn., in July, 1839. His early education was obtained at Stephenson Academy near Zion church in this county, and his medical education at the University of Nashville where he graduated in 1862. Entering immediately the Confederate army, he was assigned to duty in the medical department. How ell he performed that duty is attested by many a battle scarred veteran.

Near the close of the wart between the States, he was joined in marriage to Miss Lula Hanna of Memphis, and when grim visaged was smoothed his wrinkled front he returned home with his happy bride and commenced the practice of his profession in this county. In 1872 he removed with his family to Memphis. Few among us do not remember the graceful and affable Dr. Armstrong. In person he was tall and rather slender, with a fine head and black eye, shaded by a well shaped brow, and a face at once beautiful – almost too beautiful for a man – and beaming with (beniguit?). Though extremely modest and retiring he was so remarkably handsome as to attract the attention of any crowd of gentlemen. Soon after locating in Memphis the yellow fever epidemic of 1873 visited the fated city, but his was not a nature to shrink from duty, and fearlessly he battled for humanity with the grim monster. Rising rapidly in his
profession as his abilities, worth and merit became known, he had attained an enviable reputation.

Upon the appearance of yellow fever in Memphis a few weeks ago, he sent his family, consisting of a wife and eight small children, to visit relatives in this county, while with calmness and determination he joined the Howards and turned his face to the foe. Most manfully did he fight, most heroically did he fall, yielding his life on the 22d of September in his efforts to save others.

In his domestic relations no man was ever more happy. The ______ of his family, he warmly reciprocated the affection and tenderness so lavishly bestowed upon him by his wife and children. In his intercourse with the world, his profession and his colleagues his conduct was a model. He had been for years an elder in the Presbyterian church and lived a pious consistent Christian life. In all the long list of those who have given their lives in the cause of humanity none should stand higher for devotion to duty and for excellence and purity of character than that of the Howard physician, Dr. W. J. Armstrong. No marble shaft lifting its head to Heaven may tell __ his heroic deeds, but they are inscribed upon the tablets of the recording angel which can never perish. To Mrs. Armstrong and the eight little new-made orphans we tender the sincere sympathy of the whole community.
ARMSTRONG – Of yellow fever, Sept, 22d, Dr. W. J. Armstrong, while employed as a physician by the Howards of Memphis.

He was born in Maury county, Tenn., and was not quite forty years of age. Modest and retiring in his manners, generous and warm-hearted, free as a flowing stream from a full fountain, a skilful and successful physician, an unassuming and consistent Christian, his society and friendship were warmly cherished, and his memory is tenderly embalmed in the hearts of all who knew him intimately. In his domestic relations no man was more happy. The idol of his family, he warmly reciprocated the affection and tenderness so freely bestowed upon him by his wife and children. In his intercourse with his colleagues and the world, his conduct was a model. For several years he was an elder in the Presbyterian church of his native place, and was also elected to the same office in the Alabama-street Presbyterian church, but his diffidence led him to yield to others, whom he considered more worthy and competent than himself.

He was graduated at the University of Nashville, and soon after was employed in the medical department of the Confederate army. Having served his county faithfully through her time of trouble, he married Miss Lula Hanna, formerly of Memphis, and in a few years made this city his home. He came just in time to prove how invaluable his services were in the epidemic of 1873. For devotion to duty, for purity and excellence of character, and all the qualities of a true gentleman, no man stood higher. A devoted wife and eight young children are left to meet him at the (curtain?) of eternal love, and gather immortality and (____) with him in the worship and service of _______ forever.

A Friend
October 1, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from Cornelia Jones & H. A. Friersons

(Written on the diagonal above salutation – “Thomas W. Jones”)

Dear Lula,

Our hearts of full of sympathy for you and your little helpless children. May God be to your husband father and comforter.

Your True Friends,

Cornelia H. Jones

H. A. Friersons

Oct 1st /78

(Transcriber’s Note: Dr. Armstrong was a Frierson on his paternal grandmother’s side in Maury County.)
October 3, 1878

to Lula Armstrong
from First National Bank
WJA010-06-43
WJA 010-06-42

Note from First National Bank, Columbia, Tenn. regarding contribution of Pittsburg Relief Committee to Lula’s account. (See document WJA010-06-31)

T. W. Keesee, Prest. No. 1713 Lucius Frierson, Cashier

First National Bank
Columbia, Tenn. Oct 3rd 1878

Mrs. W J Armstrong
Maury Co

I enclose herewith a draft on the Pittsburg Relief Committee for Fifty dollars, which I am instructed to pay you, a contribution from the Relief Committee of Pittsburg. Please endorse the draft on back, and return to me. I also send you a bank book showing a credit of (185.00 or $85.00) to you from the Shooting Club & the credit of 50 mentioned above. I send you some blank checks which you can fill & draw as you may desire. I shall be glad to attend any matter in town you may (want?), - with sentiments of highest regard & sympathy for you in your distress I am very (truly?) Lucius Frierson
October 3, 1878

to Lula Armstrong

from May Lee

Columbia

WJA010-06-23

Columbia Tennessee

Oct. 3, 1878 –

Mrs. W. J. Armstrong

Dear Madam

In behalf of the “Hit or Break” Club I am in instructed to offer you the enclosed amount which has been deposited in the First National Bank at Columbia, subject to your demand; as a testimonial of our high appreciation of your noble husband, and our kind feelings for his wife and little ones.

We know that no words of sympathy however true, can be a consolation in affliction such as yours, but in our heart of hearts (we?) take the wife and children of our noble friend Dr. W. J. Armstrong – May He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb bring that consolation which the world cannot give –

Most Respect

(Your sec?)

_____ H. Dew. Pres
October 3, 1878

First National Bank
Columbia, Tenn.
Oct 3rd 1878
Lula Armstrong

We have received this day
from (JRH Dew Prect?) Shooting Club of Columbia
One Hundred & Eighty-five Dollars
in current funds, and credit same to your account
Respectfully,

Lucius Frierson
$185.00
October 3, 1878
by Lula Armstrong
Deposit to First National Bank
WJA010-06-31

Pittsburg ($50.00) Contribution - First National Bank Deposit by Lula in Columbia, Tenn.

(See document WJA010-06-41)
October 3, 1878

To Lula Armstrong

From Lucius Frierson

Bank Note

No Number (See WJA010-06-43 and WJA 010-06-42)

First National Bank
Columbia, Tenn Oct. 3rd, 1878

Mrs. W J Armstrong
Maury Ct

I enclose herewith a draft on the Pittsburg Relief Committee for Fifty dollars, which I am instructed to pay you as a contribution from the Relief Committee of Pittsburg. Please endorse the draft on back & return to me.

I also send you a bank book showing a credit of 185.00 to your from the Shooting Club - & the credit of 50 mentioned above.

I send you some blank checks which you can fill or draw as you may desire. I shall be glad to attend any matter in town you may want, - with sentiments of highest regard & sympathy for you in your hours of distress.

I am very truly

Lucius Frierson
October 5, 1878
to Lula Armstrong
Account Credit
from Anonymous Lady
WJA010-06-41

Account Credit ($5.00) from a Lady to Lula's account in First National Bank, Columbia, Tenn.
October 8, 1878
by Lula Armstrong
$100 Deposit
to First National Bank
WJA010-06-35

First National Bank ($100.00) Deposit by Lula in Columbia, Tenn.
St. Louis – Oct 12th

My very dear friend

You can’t imagine how much I appreciate your letters & I could have answered you last sooner, but have not been well, have had neuralgia in my eyes & when I have it I am unfit for anything but I am feeling much better today & hope soon to be entirely well – Mrs. Armstrong I think so much about you & wish so often I could be with you but I hope it will not be very long before we will meet again. I know it will be sad for you to go back to your home but still I know it will be a pleasure to. Oh you have so much to live for. There isn’t many that have such promising little children. Do strive to be cheerful for their sakes……

Ma & Father left me yesterday for the farm in Ark, & took Joe & Millie with them. I do miss them all so much & have terribly blue all day. I am so foolish about Ma that I am really ashamed of myself. Her health has not improved much. She is very feeble & looks so badly. I feel miserable about her. Our children are all very well. The climate here seems to agree with them finely. I like St. Louis very much now but still I believe I would rather go back to Memphis to live. I do not like living in a hotel. I do not know what to do with myself. I met Mrs. (Pistol?) and Miss Kate on the street today, they spoke so affectionately of you & sent much love. Do you know where Dr. Steadman is? I see the fever has gotten to Florence & have felt so anxious about them & Miss Pattie, but I hope they have left there. When you write to Miss Pattie give her my love. Do write (me?) & tell me all about yourself & the children for there is no one that feels more interest in you than Mr. Martin & myself & if at any time we can be of any service to you do not hesitate to call on us. he joins me in much love to you & the children. Write me & believe me as ever your true friend

Nina Martin
November 1, 1878
by Lula Armstrong
$25 Check from First National Bank
WJA010-06-38

First National Bank ($25.00) Check by Lula in Columbia, Tenn. to Self
December 14, 1878
Resolution
from Memphis Hospital Medical College
WJA010-06-10

At a special meeting of the faculty of the Memphis Hospital medical college, held December 14th, the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, That the medical faculty have learned with sincere regret the death, September 20, 1878, of Prof. W. J. Armstrong.

Resolved, That we regard the death of Dr. Armstrong as a most painful affliction to his family and an irreparable loss to the profession and public,

Resolved, That as a faculty we have lost a colleague whose conscientious counsel, high standard of honor and earnest desire for improving medical education, commanded our esteem, and whose genial manners and christian virtues always rendered his society attractive and entertaining,

Resolved, That his life was lost in the faithful discharge of duty, under most trying circumstances.

Resolved, That we extend our deepest sympathy to the widow of our late colleague in her bereavement.

Resolved, That these resolutions be published in the city papers, and that a copy of them, duly attested, be presented to the family of our deceased brother.

F. L. SIM, Chairman,
HEBER JONES,
R. B. MAURY,
December 20, 1878

Resolution
from Hall of Equity Lodge
WJA010-06-15

Hall of EQUITY LODGE No, 20, A.O.U.W.

memphis, December 20th, 1878

At a meeting of the Lodge held on the above date, the following Tribute of Respect was unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, The announcement has been made that this Lodge has lost, by death, the following brothers, VIX:

DR. W. J. ARMSTRONG
JACOB SCHNEIDER
THOS. J. WALKER.    H. W. FERGUSON.
JOS. E. RUSSELL.    SAM'L CANNON.
J. H. LAWRENCE.    JNO. W. ENNIS.
E. E. FARBISH.    A. K. GILLEN.
J. B. WEAVER.    B. R. GATES
THOS. KOFFARD

Who fell victims to the terrible scourge which has afflicted our city, be it by Equity Lodge No. 20, A. O. U. W.,

Resolved, That we, the members, unite in expressing our sorrow for your loss, and bear testimony to the many sterling qualities, which so conspicuously characterized our deceased brothers.

Resolved, That EQUITY LODGE has lost in them most worthy members; our city its most self-sacrificing citizens; humanity, noble examples of heroism, and their families the irreparable bereavement of kind husbands and loving fathers.

Resolved, That this Lodge extends its sincere sympathy to their afflicted families in this sad hour of their distress.

Resolved, That these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of this Lodge, and that a memorial page be set apart to perpetuate their memory, and a copy be sent to the family of each of our deceased brothers.

Resolved, that our Charter be draped in mourning for the period of thirty days.

Respectfully submitted in C., H. and P.

N. L. Avery,
S. P. Ledbetter
S. E. Gardner

Committee.
December 20, 1878

Memphis Dec 20th/78

to Lula Armstrong
from Equity Lodge No. 20

The -

Condolence of Equity
Lodge No 20. A. O. U. W.

is hereby -

tendered to

Mrs. Dr. W. J. Armstrong

By order of the Lodge
(Col.?) Coleman

Recorder
1879 – 1881 Period

Letters from Family & Friends
September 1, 1879

to Lula Armstrong

from NWD

WJA010-05-03

Covington Tenn

September 1st 1879

My very dear friend

Words cannot express any pleasure in hearing from one I love so much and have had such anxiety - about - I was so hurried in leaving Memphis that I did not see any of my friends or learn where they went to - I have been (limited?) several times to write to you but not knowing certainly where you were and having to write so often to (bumpy?) prevented Dumpy has been in St. Louis ever since we left Ms – until one week ago he went to Texas I had a telegram from him today saying he was right well I do not hear from him often owing to the irregularity in the mail I think it is so hard that he cannot - be with me and (realy?) I do not see how I can stand to be separated any longer I feel as if he must be with me through any daily expected trouble – he was to see us the middle of August but was obliged to go back he begged me to bear up through it bravely but my heart fails me when I think of not having his kind attention and cure at that time. I am the bluest creature you ever saw wish I was near you & think it would do me good to hear you chat awhile Mrs. Martins family are in St. Louis I do not know of the where abouts of any of the rest of our friends. I had a letter from George (Proudfit?) a few days ago he says our house is all right so far I am in daily dread of hearing of it being plundered his family had all kept well up to the time he wrote although the fever was all around them. I suppose you saw the account of Old Mrs. Loops death she died of the fever in Alabama she will be sadly missed by the family I see in Saturdays paper that Mrs. Dr. Collins is getting better I think strange she remained in the City Mrs. Van Anderson and daughter are also doing well. What became of Mollie Weaver the Hollins family are nearly all dead Mr. Wiley is down with a bad case (tell?) Earnest the last papers report Mr. Rhineheart getting well. Mrs. Daniel is staying at Mr. Wilsons she was right sick last week had a chill and continued fever from it she is up and was down to see us since Nannie has had several chills and is now troubled with boils Maggie & myself have been very well the children are perfectly happy every time a horse is caught they must have a ride whether it is in the wagon buggie or on horseback. I never go our except sometimes to take a ride – the whole (Davie?) tribe are up in this neighborhood & I
don’t know what I would do if it were not for them they go in town every day and by what means I hear from the Post Office regular farmers think they do well to hear from the Office twice a week but that does not suit the poor cast-off Memphians. Pa sends kind regards to you & Lula. he often spoke of ______ his babe Nannie speaks of writing to Mary next week but tell her not to look for a letter until she see it for Nannie dislikes letter writing very much. Give my love to Miss Hellen and to the children Nannie & Maggie send kisses to Lula & Earnest. Please write soon – with much love I am as ever

Your fond friend       NWD
Mrs. Lulu Armstrong  
Columbia, Tenn’

Dear Friend,

I received your kind letter several days ago. We are all very well. Brother bears his enforced idleness much more patiently than I supposed he would. Ma sighs for Home – She gets so weary walking around doing nothing- She does not want to visit, but we get her out occasionally. She has not had a severe attack of Head-ache since we came here; & she is much stronger than she was last summer. I manage to keep busy nearly all the time. I do not enjoy idleness very much, though I do not want to be compelled to work. I read the Home news in the papers, but cannot feel as much interested in general news as I should. I was sorry to hear of Maj Guy’s death. I am glad that Mrs. Dr. Collins is pronounced out of danger. We seldom see a Memphis paper. I noticed a few days ago, that our friend Mr. Wiley had the fever. I was so glad that Ed Moon recovered, for his Mother’s sake. She has had so many bereavements.

Are you not sorry for Professor Stewart’s Wife? A widow twice within one year! Truly “God moves in a mysterious way” ---- but they that seek the Lord have his promise that all things shall work to-gether for their good” - though there are many things we will not understand until we reach the “shining shore.” We are to walk by Faith, not sight, you know. Our denomination has a church here & I go to Sabbath-school as well as church some times. I go to the Baptist & Methodist Churches sometimes too.

I have read several interesting books lately – “The Opening of the Chestnut Burr” is very interesting. So is “A Face Illumined,” & A Woman’s word & how she kept it.” I have commenced reading “Adam Bede” one of George Elliots works.

Since I wrote I have attended a large Picnic & Squirrel Stew. An old Bachelor of about 60 summers, more or less, escorted 4 of us. Of course it poured down rain in the afternoon & we did not get home until nearly dark. We stopped at a way-side store until the storm was over. There is to be a Concert Friday night, I believe. Of course we expect to go. A party of us intend going our on a Fern expedition soon. I want to take Ferns, Grasses, & Autumn leaves home with us, to brighten up the house for winter. This is a delightful place to visit. We had the pleasure of a visit from another Memphian a few days ago. Doesn’t the time glide by rapidly? I can hardly realize that we have been here 6 weeks. Ma sends her love to you & the children & hope & prays that we may all reach home again safely. I forgot to tell you that I am thinking of learning to ride Horse-back. You can imagine how graceful I will look!
I hope we will soon have the pleasure – all of us – of talking face to face.

My love to your-self & children.

Your true Friend

Lizzie Bell Nelson
October 12, 1879

to Lula Armstrong
from Heber Jones, MD
Memphis

Heber Jones, M. D.
Office, Masonic Temple
Residence, 303 Lauderdale
Office Hours, 11 to 12 A.M., 4 to 5 P.M.

Memphis, Tenn., Oct 12th 1879

Mrs. W. J. Armstrong
Columbia Tenn.

My Dear Madam,

I am about to make a final report upon the distribution of the money put in my hands for the relief of Drs. Families & as I wish to send receipts for the full amt. I write to ask your receipt. I assumed six months dues for you in the Building & loan association i.e. $240.00 I have a small balance on hand & tho I have given you more than any one else, I still propose to help you a little – I will hold $60.00 subject to your order, will send to you or hold for you as you may prefer. This with that $240.00 to building & loan association will make three hundred dollars ($300.00). Will you be good enough to sign the enclosed receipt & send back to me just as soon as possible – I have to report on the 20th of this month & have barely time.

Please let me know whether you wish the $60.00 sent to you – It is subject to your order

Hoping you & yours are enjoying good health. I am

Very truly (Yr. fd.?)

Heber Jones
September 28, 1881

to Lula Armstrong
from Ida Duncan Armstrong
Columbia
WJA010-05-06

Sept 28th 1881

Dear Sis Lula,

I know that you have thought strange of me not answering your letter, but I have so many things to take up my time that I cannot tell where it goes, but I have holiday today owing to a big circus being in Columbia, & all the children going to it. I would like to have seen the procession myself, but did not have an opportunity of going. Annie went I suppose with cousin Sam, as she left home yesterday morning to do so. I don't know of any news to write, as I suppose (Dump?) tells you every thing that happens. Have you heard of Aunt Katie’s death? I feel so sorry for Miss Matt. She misses her mother so much. You know she had been bedridden for seven years and Miss Matt had sole charge of her all that time.

We are all delighted at the prospect of a visit from you. If you can possibly come, don’t give it out. I thought that U would have had the pleasure of inviting you up this Fall, but that is a failure for this time at least, and may be forever for all that I know. I have a school of eleven scholars and am teaching in the Stanfill house. I have a nice room, and pleasant scholars and greatly prefer it to the Academy. I have lots to tell you about the way I have been treated by Mrs. Everett and Mrs. Bunch. We are all looking forward to your visit with a great deal of pleasure, and hope you will not disappoint us. I do not know when I have heard anything that caused me more pleasure. The report is that Mary & Mr. Jones are to be married this Winter but I don’t know whether they will or not. I wish they would if they are going too, for I want to go to a wedding; if not my own somebody else’s & I believe I would rather it would be Mary’s, as my own. As I told you before don’t you tell this, for “there’s many a slip twixt the cup and the lip,” and I would not be surprised if it slipped any time. This is enough for this time. Give my love and a kiss to all of the children, and accept a large share for your own dear self.

Write soon.

Your affectionate sister
Ida

Your affectionate sister
Ida

This is the second letter since dinner, and I think that is doing first rate for me

(Transcriber’s Note: Ida Duncan Armstrong is the youngest sister (b. 1855) of Dr. Will Armstrong in Columbia, TN. Lula also had twin sisters, Ida & Ada.)
20th Century

Lula Armstrong Obituaries
MRS. W. M. ARMSTRONG SUCCUMBS TO ILLNESS
(M. is crossed out & replaced with J.)

Dies at Home of E. L. Rice at Age of 77,

Mrs. Lula Hanna Armstrong, widow of the late Dr. William Armstrong succumbed to an illness of more than one year's duration at the home of her daughter, Mr. E. L. Rice, 1274 Central Avenue, shortly before last midnight. She was 77 years of age.

Mrs. Armstrong was born in Memphis, the daughter of G. W. Hanna, one of Memphis’ earliest merchants and property owners. Dr. Armstrong was a surgeon in the Army of General Pillow. During the war Miss Hanna went to live with friends at Artesia, Miss., while her mother performed service for the Confederates in hospitals of the south. Here the romance was begum that crystallized in the marriage of Dr. Armstrong and Miss Hanna in 1862.

After the war Dr. and Mrs. Armstrong moved to Maury County, Tenn. Eight years later they moved to Memphis and made this city their home. During the fever of 1878 Dr. Armstrong lost his life while he was battling with the scourge. He was at that time a member of that valiant band known as the Howard Association, men who remained while the dread fever raged.

Mrs. Armstrong was left a widow with eight children. She reared all of them and remained in Memphis until 1918, when she went to New Orleans to make her home with a daughter there. Mrs. Armstrong became ill in New Orleans, suffering a paralytic stroke and returned to Memphis in August of last year, but never recovered. For two days before the end mercifully came, Mrs. Armstrong was in a state of coma.

Surviving are four sons, Harry L. and Osgood C. Armstrong, of Memphis, William J. Armstrong, of New York, and Ernest S. Armstrong, of New Orleans, and two daughters, Mrs. E. L. Rice, of Memphis, and Mrs. J. W. Mayo, of New Orleans. Funeral arrangements in charge of Spencer-Sturla had not been completed last night.
Mrs. Armstrong to Be Buried in Elmwood

Funeral services for Mrs. Lula Hanna Armstrong, widow of the late Dr. William J. Armstrong, who died Saturday night after an illness of more than a year, will be held at 3:30 o'clock this afternoon from the home of her daughter, Mrs. E. L. Rice, 1274 Central avenue. Interment will be in Elmwood cemetery. Dr. C. H. Williamson, of First Presbyterian church, will officiate.

Mrs. Armstrong was a native of Memphis and the daughter of G. W. Hanna, one of the city's earliest merchants. She suffered a stroke of paralysis in New Orleans last year, from which she never fully recovered.

Mrs. Armstrong, the mother of the late Dwight M. Armstrong, is survived by four sons, Osgood C. and Harry L. Armstrong, of Memphis; William J. Armstrong, of New York, and Ernest S. Armstrong, of New Orleans, and two daughters, Mrs. E. L. Rice, of this city, and Mrs. J. C. Mayo, of New Orleans.

Dr. & Mrs. Armstrong moved to Maury county, Tennessee, after the Civil war. Eight years later they established their residence here, prior to the yellow fever epidemic. When the city was swept by the deadly scourge, Dr. Armstrong became one of the valiant band of men known as the Howard association, which fought the disease until it was checked. He fell a victim to the fever in 1878.
ARMSTRONG FUNERAL FROM E. L. RICE HOME

(Handwritten – CA Sept. 22, 1924)

Interment to Be in Elmwood Cemetery Today

The funeral of Mrs. Lula Hanna Armstrong, widow of the late Dr. William Armstrong, will be held from the home of her daughter, Mrs. E. L. Rice, this afternoon at 3:30 o’clock with services by Rev. C. H. Williamson, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. Interment will be in Elmwood Cemetery.

Mrs. Armstrong, who was the daughter of G. W. Hanna, one of Memphis’ oldest merchants, and who was born in this city, died shortly before Saturday night after an illness of more than a year. Mrs. Armstrong suffered a stroke of paralysis while in New Orleans. She returned to Memphis, but failed to rally from the illness.

Surviving are four sons, Harry L. and Osgood C. Armstrong of Memphis, William J. Armstrong of New York and Ernest S. Armstrong of New Orleans, and two daughters, Mrs. E. L. Rice of Memphis and Mrs. J. W. Mayo of New Orleans. Mrs. Armstrong was also the mother of the late Dwight W. Armstrong.
Miscellaneous Documents
No Date
to Harry Lee Armstrong
from Converse & Unknown
Card
SRB 010-07-01

Bookmark
No Date
Picture of Two Unknown Women
WJA010-07-10
No Date
from Mrs. L. H. Armstrong
Card
WJA010-07-03  SRB 060-07-03

Mrs. L. H. Armstrong
288 Alabama Street
Published Articles
“The Life and Letters of Dr. William J. Armstrong”
Dr Marshall Wingfield
The West Tennessee Historical Society Papers, No. IV, 1950, pg 97

Dr. Marshall Wingfield, minister, historian and prolific writer, contributed significantly to the preservation of historical events in Memphis as well as other numerous historical articles. "Dr. Marshall Wingfield was widely regarded as the foremost authority of the history and genealogy of Franklin County, Virginia.”

Dr. Wingfield presents an historically accurate description of the period of “The Life and Letters” and provides important transcriptions of parts of “The Letters” while telling the Will and Lula’s gripping story.

Dr. Wingfield interviewed the family and invited Dr. and Mrs. William J. Armstrong’s grandchildren (William James Armstrong III and Nina Martin Rice Albright) to the meeting of the West Tennessee Historical Society meeting

The Reverend Dr. Wingfield was also the pastor of the First Congregational Church in Memphis, founded about 1860. Known during the Civil War era as Strangers Congregational Church, the congregation changed its name to First Congregational in 1909. http://www.firstcongo.com/.

Originals of this article are located at The West Tennessee Historical Society and the Memphis Public Library.

The WTHS is the umbrella heritage organization for the Western Grand Division of Tennessee. Within its twenty-one counties, it supports historical programs, archives, publications, preservation, markers, museums, and other historical collections.

Copy of the article may be purchased:
West Tennessee Historical Society
P.O. 111046 Memphis, TN 38111
http://wths.tn.org
“The Life and Letters of Dr. William J. Armstrong”
Dr. Marshall Wingfield
The West Tennessee Historical Society Papers, No. IV, 1950, pg 97

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF DR. WILLIAM J. ARMSTRONG

By Marshall Wingfield

William J. Armstrong was born July 24, 1839, in a two-story log house which still stands one mile east from Zion Presbyterian Church in Maury County, Tennessee, and six miles west from Columbia, the county seat. His father was William Osgood Armstrong (1811-1885) and his mother was Mary E. (Smith) Armstrong (1815-1859). His paternal grandfather was Elias James Armstrong (1787-1855) who married Elizabeth McCauley Frierson (1794-1841) in 1809. Elizabeth McCauley Fricson was the daughter of William Frieron (1767-1820) who married Jane Frierson (1773-1817) in 1792. Jane Frierson was the daughter of Robert Frierson (1740-1808) and Elizabeth (McCauley) Frierson (1746-1822). Dr. Armstrong’s great grandfather was James Armstrong (1764-1837) who married Agnes Frierson (1759-1837) in 1785. His great grandmother, Agnes Frierson Armstrong, was the daughter of William Frierson and Margaret Gordon.

Dr. Armstrong’s first schooling was in Stephenson’s Academy for boys located near Zion Church. At that time there were two schools near this church, the other being for girls and known simply as the Female Academy. Franklin Fulton states that he has not been able to establish what medical school Dr. Armstrong attended, but has ascertained that he studied under Dr. Joseph E. Dixon, a practicing physician of Maury County, who was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. The writer has not been able to go beyond the research made by Mr. Fulton and so

1 Personal letter to the author, April 26, 1950, from Franklin Fulton, Clerk and Master of the Maury County Chancery Court at Columbia, who states, “I have seen and examined the family Bible. . . . Since early childhood I have known of Dr. Armstrong and the fight he made in Memphis during the yellow fever epidemic, and how he sent his family back to Columbia, Tennessee, to remove them from the danger. My mother, now in her 81st year, recalls that when Dr. Armstrong’s family reached Columbia, that her father Sam R. Watkins took them into his home at the corner of 8th and Walker Streets. This was the same Sam R. Watkins who wrote the Civil War book, Co. Aytch.”

2 Ibid.

Thus came the end of earth’s pilgrimage to Dr. William J. Armstrong. The strength of the pioneer was in his frame and the goodness of the saint was in his heart. Since he lived, it is a prouder honor to be a physician and a nobler thing to be a man. To honor devotion is to honor him. To praise unselfishness is to sing his praise. To trace descent from his loins gives a more exalted heritage than to trace descent from royal lineage. Some day a great hospital bearing his name may rise where he fell. Thus could the devoted physician return to the city that he loved and for which he died.
"Yellow Fever’s Fearful Toll Recounted"

Perre Magness

The Memphis Commercial Appeal

June 13, 1996

YELLOW FEVER’S FEARFUL TOLL RECOUNTED

(First of two parts)

William J. Armstrong was born July 24, 1839, in the Zion community of Maury County, Tenn.

Trained as a doctor, he served as a surgeon in the Confederate Army in the forces of Gen. Gideon Pillow, also from Maury County. He fell in love with Lula Hanna in Artesia, Miss., where she was living during the war. She was the daughter of G.W. Hanna, a Memphis merchant. The romance flourished, and they were married on Dec. 2, 1863, the bride’s 16th birthday.

When the war ended, the couple settled in Maury County, then moved to Memphis in 1873, where he practiced medicine. They had been in Memphis less than a year when an outbreak of yellow fever caused the doctor to send his wife and children back to Maury County for safety.

His letters to his wife give an account of the terrible yellow fever epidemics that decimated Memphis in the 1870s.

Oct. 10, 1873: “I am still keeping quite well, through nothing but God’s mercy and providence, for stout men physically, and better men, I think, are falling around me daily. I am scrupulously careful in my habits and do all in my power to ward off disease.

“I see by the morning papers that I am appointed by the city to take charge of a certain district from Jackson to Auction north and south, and from:

PERRE MAGNESS

Past Times

Main to Third east and west, to overlook all the needy and destitute. The appointment was given without my knowledge and solicited by Drs. W. E. Rogers, Rice, Mittall and many others. My salary is $150 per month — probably last only one month.”

Oct. 24, 1873: “My head is full of yellow fever and I want to make a selection of things to send you, but fear that I will make a mistake. I have prescribed for so many fever patients in the last six weeks that I am almost incapable of doing anything else. Besides the entire day is devoted to the sick. I send you a list of the doctors of the city. . . Poor Dr. Williams was buried today. . . Dr. Blount I fear will go next — he is yet alive but delirious. . . . No one knows, but a few of us, what this city has and is still enduring. My list of patients will average 30 per day and would go more, if I could attend them. . . I see now that I will be compelled to have a horse and buggy, if spared.”

Oct. 29, 1873: “I think you may prepare to start home this day week. I trust that you can get home then for I need you very much. If anything should turn up that I think it prudent for you to remain a few days longer, I will telegraph Mr. Beecher and he can stop you in that way. We feel that the yellow fever is an epidemic is done for.”

For the next five years, Armstrong practiced medicine in Memphis and tended his family. In 1878, another outbreak of yellow fever occurred, and again Mrs. Armstrong went to Maury County, this time with five children, one a newborn. The epidemic of 1878 made the 1873 outbreak seem mild. From the first report of the disease on Aug. 10 until Oct. 19 when frost occurred, there were 17,000 cases of yellow fever resulting in 5,516 deaths in Memphis, including Armstrong on Sept. 20. Before he became ill, he wrote frequently to his wife.

Aug. 19, 1878: “This morning, after a night of continual calls and the excitement of a terrible fire in the neighborhood, I had a headache and felt bad generally, but towards dinner got to feeling very well and have been laying up for four or five hours, I will not go in the hot sun or out in the late hours of the night.

“Last summer’s most terrible fever that ever invaded any country before. I do not know of a single recovery so far. . . It is confined almost entirely to the Bayou and its adjacent streets from Washington to Jackson. . . . You cannot imagine the desolation in the city. For squares, you will see only a family now and then. So many are gone that lonesomeness itself is lonely, making a gloom that cannot be conceived of. . . . You must direct all your letters to the office, as delivery has been stopped and I must go the Post Office to get them.”

Aug. 22, 1878: “My work is fearful. Some 30 visits before noon today and probably half as many this afternoon. . . . It is a very hard battle to face if we are to hold against this dreadful disease until frost comes.

. . . Mrs. Fithian and family will leave soon for White’s Station. I regret this very much as I am lonely enough now and am afraid to sleep in the house alone for fear of being taken sick and children not worry about me, but take good care of yourself and family. Do kiss my dear little pig a thousand times for me. . . .”

Aug. 30, 1878: “We have had a good rain and last night was quite cool. This morning is bracing and I feel much stronger and better for it, but fear its results for the sick. . . . The number of sick exceeds anything you can imagine. . . . I feel sometimes as if my hands were crossed and tied and that I am good for nothing, death coming in upon the sick in spite of all that I can do. . . . Oh, how I long to see you and them, to have a sweet family reunion and around our little altar give thanks to God.”

Perre Magness is a Memphis freelance writer.

“Doctor Succumbs to Fever’s Horror”

Perre Magness

The Memphis Commercial Appeal
June 20, 1996

May recover. Mrs. Goldsmith was buried yesterday and is in good. She was in all my life full of sympathy and sorrow for suffering humanity. . . . God grant that I may be able to administer to the suffering throughout.

Sept. 3, 1878: You do not know how it delighted me, yesterday, to receive your two letters. It was such a treat to a poor worn out physician to know that his loved ones were safe and in health.

Today has been one of constant work and I thought I would surely give out before night, but I held on. I have quite a hospital in and around my house. Dr. Harris and Mrs. Parsons, both quite ill. Sisters Constance and Thelma at the school. Jim Light's family in the Collins genius, two sick at Goldsmith's, two at Old Tigue, and poor Mary Fisher. I have filled up the night of Labor's.t and am the same bed where her mother was sick.

The numbers of deaths are frightful. Yesterday 200, that is simply the beginning of what Jack Walsh could not bury, nor the deaths for that day. Some of the bodies lie there or four days unburied and produce horrible smells in the locality. . . . I wish I could go to some secret spot where there would be so few drowning heads and hands to feel, no pulses to count, for the next six months. It is fever, fever all day long and I am so weary of giving directions. . . . The list will shock you when you learn how many acquaintances and friends are gone.

Sept. 3, 1878: I must write you again, and it is only to remember to return to your work. I am nothing but a ray of sunshine attached to it in our whole city. . . . None but eyewitnesses can appreciate its horrors or can tell of its ravages. Mrs. Fithian in her anxiety about Mary would sit up, wait on her and the result is a relapse that will end her existence tonight.

Sister Constance is dying tonight and I now think Sister Thelma will get well. Last night as I was leaving the house, another Sister who was very well, had a terrible scene all night and now about her, she handed me a note which I showed was a statement in relation to some physical weakness she was suffering, and asked me to read it when I got home. I took it from her and put it in my pocket and handed it to my wife when I got home. I took it from her and put it in my pocket and handed it to my wife when I got home. I was so astounded that I could not understand it.

Leaves the house at 3 A.M. and was at the door before it was light. Channing is down with a pretty bad case. I am to write to his wife and tell her about it. I have not heard from the Armstrongs in some time.}

I was four miles out to see Alex Lytle today. He has a bad case. Poor Herbert Cains is in a name, on the envelope, were the droppings of the fever and hemorrhage, a letter of apology to Miss Edwards for the way he was treated, and on the back of the letter were 17,000 people who caught yellow fever in 1878.

Perre Magness is a Memphis freelance writer.
IT is with deep emotion, and inexpressible reverence and tenderness, that I undertake the task of compiling, from letters, notes, and memoranda which have been placed in my hands, a brief narrative of the acts and sufferings of our beloved in Christ who died of the pestilence at Memphis last year.

The little band of devoted souls whose history during those dreadful days and nights we are about to read, consisted of the following persons:

The Rev. George C. Harris, D.D., Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral
The Rev. Charles C. Parsons, Rector of Grace Church;
Sister Constance, Superior of the work at Memphis
Sister Thecla, teacher in St. Mary's School;
Sister Hughetta, teacher in St. Mary's School;
Sister Frances, in charge of the Church Orphan Home;
Mrs. C. Bullock, residing at the Sisters' House;
Miss Margaret Murdock, residing at the Sisters' House.

To this number were afterwards added:

The Rev. Louis S. Schuyler;
The Rev. Wm. A. W. Dalzell;
Sister Ruth, from Trinity Infirmary, New York;
Sister Helen, from Trinity Infirmary, New York;
Sister Clare, of St. Margaret's, East Grinstead, England.

Besides these, mention is to be made of William Armstrong, M.D., and Major Mickle, residing with Dr. Harris.

The residence of the Sisters was at No. 352 Poplar Street. The house stands next door to the cathedral, and is mentioned in the following letters as "St. Mary's." It was turned, by degrees, into a dispensary and a store-house of supplies. In addition to this, they had the Church Orphan Home. Later, as the disease spread and the number of deaths increased, the Relief Association made an earnest appeal to them to take charge of the "Canfield Asylum," which they did, August 29th, as will hereafter be related more fully. The daily celebration and the daily offices were maintained in the cathedral during the prevalence of the sickness, excepting at brief intervals when the priests were either ill or dead, and others to take their places had not yet arrived.

The week that followed the death of Sister Constance was one of special trial, sorrow, and darkness. On Tuesday, September 10, the good physician, Dr. Armstrong, of whom mention has been made so often, was attacked.

"One day more has gone, dearest Mother, of the five that must probably pass before we can know with any certainty the end of the deadly attack under which our dearest
Sisters lie ill. Both are dangerously ill to-night. Dr. Armstrong has made his fourth visit to-day, and will return in an hour with Dr. Mitchel for consultation. ... I never saw dear Dr. Armstrong so distressed as when he left.

On Saturday, September 14, Dr. Armstrong died.

As one reads the record, one seems to hear the slow tolling of a passing bell, and with it the refrain, *Beati mortui!*

So went those dread days.

What Dr. Armstrong was to them, may be inferred from letters and memoranda such as I have already quoted from. "The beloved physician!"

"Dr. Armstrong is surely one of the kindest men in the world. He has been here some two hours, equal in value to two weeks in ordinary times." (From a memorandum made at midnight, in the room of a dying Sister.)
CHAPTER EIGHT

Planting

THE COMMUNITY HAD SENT a Sister south in 1871, when the Sisters could spare only one Novice to work there, so eager were they to help Bishop Quintard. Charles Todd Quintard and the Mother Superior were friends from Connecticut days, and had followed each other's vocations with keen interest. His medical career had taken him to Georgia and then to Memphis, where, influenced by Bishop James H. Otey, he had studied for the priesthood and been ordained in 1856. During the Civil War, he left the rectorship of the Church of the Advent, Nashville, to become Chaplain of the First Tennessee Regiment; his singular devotion earned him the honorific title "First Chaplain of the Confederacy." Like Mother Harriet, he was of Huguenot ancestry, black-eyed, magnetic, buoyant and direct. Several generals, including the fierce and formidable Braxton Bragg, were baptized by Chaplain Quintard and presented for confirmation. He was equally popular with the troops. A veteran foot-soldier commented, "Wall, when things was sort of quiet, he preached to the boys, when thar was sick and wounded, he doctored, and when the Yanks pushed us hard, he tuk a gun and fit."

Though some supposed he had "fit" himself out of all chance of being a bishop, the Church fortunately was bigger than sectional prejudice. His election was confirmed by the standing committees of the dioceses and he was consecrated Second Bishop of Tennessee in 1865. He set about energetically to rebuild his war-torn diocese. In 1867 he organized a home for war orphans; it was for help in this work that he turned to Mother Harriet.

Post-war poor as they were, the Churchmen of Tennessee within a few months raised $14,000 for the orphanage by contributions alone; Bishop Quintard forbade fairs or lotteries. By July, 1869, a building was ready on donated land in Buntyn, five miles east of Memphis. There still remained the problem of finding a suitable staff. When in 1870 a young woman from Nashville offered herself for the dedicated life in the Church, Bishop Quintard sent her to Mother Harriet in Peekskill to be trained, with the understanding that she would be returned to work in Tennessee. She had not long been clothed as Minor Sister Martha when the Bishop, pressed for help, begged for her return. The Mother yielded reluctantly, and Sister Martha took over the management of the Home from 1870 to August, 1871. Sister Martha's devotion so impressed a young society woman of Memphis that she became a Sister; she wrote of her impressions:

I had never before been in an orphanage or any institution of the kind, and I was impressed by the utter poverty of the place and also by its order and cleanliness. On arriving the Sister took me at once to her own little room. Through forty years of abiding in Religious Houses I have never seen a more perfect little cell. The
whitewashed walls and the clean-scrubbed floor were spotless. Across the window was drawn a white cotton curtain. One common deal chair stood by the narrow cot with its snowy coverlid and small pillow. At the other end of the cell was a table on which was placed the Sister's Bible and Manuals of Devotion, her Crucifix and two candlesticks. Before the Crucifix was a small glass vase holding a few sweet roses. The Sister explained to me that this room was both her cell and oratory. "We have no real Chapel," she said. "The children's services are held in the schoolroom now, but when the Church is built I can say my offices before the Altar there."

Sister Martha, however, was destined to offer her worship in far more glorious surroundings. Upon her return to Peek-skill for further training and profession, she became seriously ill, worn out by the year in Buntyn. She died at the House of Mercy on August 29, 1871, and was buried in the Sisters' cemetery at Peekskill.

For a time the Church Home was without a Sister, but in the autumn of 1872 Mother Harriet wrote to Bishop Quintard that the Community had decided to make a foundation in Memphis. She posed three questions, probably in the order of their importance to her:

Shall we have the privilege of a Daily Celebration?

Can the Sisters look upon you as their Spiritual Guide?

As to temporal affairs, we have no money. Can the house be secured to us free of rent for one or more years? Will any gentleman or gentlemen hold themselves responsible to make up any deficiency in our current expenses for one or more years? The school should be a "Boarding and Day School." Will a strong effort be made to secure pupils from all parts of the Diocese?

The Bishop's reply was apparently satisfactory, for at the Chapter in May, 1873, the Mother announced the appointment of Sister Constance as Sister Superior of the new foundation in the South. Sister Constance, then twenty-eight, was what was termed "accomplished", meaning in her case that she was a talented artist, an able teacher and linguist, and possessed of charm which "might have adorned the most brilliant social circle," according to a eulogist. Reared a Unitarian in Boston, she had overcome family opposition to be baptized and, finally, professed in holy religion. Her natural gifts were enhanced by strength of character and gifts of grace.

With such a promising Superior the Mother sent three splendid helpers. Sister Amelia had gained valuable experience working among the poor in lower Manhattan and could take charge of the Church Home; Sister Thecla, a native of Georgia recently professed, would work in the proposed school; Sister Hughetta, twenty-five, still a Novice, was a member of the eminent Snowden family in Memphis, and could help in establishing the school.

The Sisters felt the impending separation keenly, for it was to be the first time that more than forty miles had separated them. The entire Community gathered at St. Mary's Hospital to wish the four Sisters Godspeed. At Cincinnati they parted temporarily, Sister Amelia going to Nashville to visit relatives, Sister Thecla to Georgia, and Sisters Constance and Hughetta hurrying directly to Memphis.

Bishop Quintard had given over the Bishop's residence west of St. Mary's Cathedral for the new school; he and his family planned to remain year-around at their mountain home in Sewanee, where he was Vice-Chancellor of the recently re-organized University of the South. While the Sisters prepared the school and living quarters for
themselves, they were guests of Sister Hughetta's brother, Colonel Robert Bogardus Snowden. The work of cleaning and renovating fell to the Sisters themselves, for their assets totalled $235, obtained by selling a watch and some jewelry. With $125 of this sum they bought a silver Communion set, leaving them $110 to open the school.

All was in readiness for classes to begin when, early in the morning of October 1, a message arrived from a Roman Catholic priest begging the Sisters to help nurse victims of yellow fever, which had broken out in his parish. Five of the Franciscan Sisters were desperately ill, Father Walsh reported, two had died, and the epidemic was spreading fast. The Sisters packed up improvised medical kits and then telegraphed Peekskill for permission to take on the nursing assignment. The Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral, their friend the Very Rev. George C. Harris, sensibly advised them to find a physician to teach them a little nursing; meanwhile, he proposed to investigate the epidemic. When Father Walsh learned from Dean Harris that the Sisters were not nurses but teachers, the Roman priest thanked them warmly but refused to let them expose themselves.

The Sisters were exposed soon after, however. As the daily deaths mounted to seventy and more, the Howard Association, a relief society of young business men, mapped the city into nursing districts, and the Sisters agreed to be responsible for the Cathedral district, adjacent to the stricken area. In all, the Sisters cared for sixty patients, of whom only eight died. Sister Amelia hurried from Nashville to take over the Church Home, where the healthy children were being moved to another orphanage. Sister Thecla joined Sisters Constance and Hughetta in setting up a relief agency in their own quarters to dispense meals to the ministering priests, as well as medicine and food to the sick. The moment a Sister appeared in the street she was besieged with pleas for help, often for shrouds.

With proper nursing, the yellow fever victim had a good chance to recover. The disease ran its course in one to five days, with headache, backache, high fever and congested face. A day or two after the onset of the fever, internal hemorrhaging began, accompanied by jaundice. At this point the victim either died or recovered, and with recovery enjoyed lifelong immunity. Not until 1881 would Carlos J. Finlay find that mosquitoes transmitted the disease. In the seventies it was believed to be spread by night air; lime and carbolic acid were spread in the streets and homes to purify the air.

Sailors infected with the virus would arrive in port, where they would be bitten by carrier mosquitoes. The 1873 epidemic began precisely in this way. Early in August a steam packet from New Orleans docked in Memphis for supplies and left behind two feverish crew members. The disease was soon spreading, slowly at first, through the Irish settlements of Pinch and Happy Hollow. By the first of September half the city's forty thousand residents had fled. Of those remaining, five thousand had yellow fever and two thousand died. The city lay paralyzed in a deadly silence, broken by an occasional mule cart loaded with coffins, rumbling down a deserted street white with lime.

The Sisters were on duty from six to six and still could not minister to all who asked their help. They omitted the recitation of Matins to perform their own housework and prepare sick rations. At seven o'clock was the Celebration of the Holy Communion. After breakfast they met with Dean Harris in the little dining room provided for his temporary use. After receiving directions for the day's work, they disinfected the house
and placed squares of disinfectant-soaked linen under their clothing. Two Sisters then went on house calls, one stayed to finish housework and the other answered the bell and dispensed wine and whiskey to applicants at the door. At noon all went to the Cathedral for the Litany and noon prayers, and after dinner three went out with soup and medicine on house calls. After Vespers and tea, they relaxed, complying with Dean Harris’s request that there be "no fever talk at night." They then arranged for night nurses for desperate cases, made up their accounts of expenses and donations to show Dean Harris the next day, and finally fell exhausted into bed.

Contributions poured in from many quarters, with Dr. Dix alone collecting as much as $1,400 a week, but prices had sky-rocketed and Dean Harris warned that some of the money must be saved to relieve the distress that would follow the epidemic. At times no amount of money would hire a nurse. Once the only nurse they could find was a dull girl unable to read, write or remember the doctor's orders. As the contagion mounted, the Sisters reported that their baker had died, their butcher had closed his store and begged them to come nurse his son, and their apothecary was dying. Bishop Quintard wrote encouragingly from Sewanee, Bishop Potter sent fatherly encouragement, and Dr. Dix toiled untiringly on their behalf. But when the middle of October came without the arrival of help, and when Sister Thecla appeared to be weakening under the strain, the Sisters were discouraged. That evening Sister Constance wrote to Mother Harriet:

A pouring rain—another bad thing—it just stirs up the horrible filth of this wretched city, and leaves muddy pools to stagnate in the sun. There is no drainage—no system of cleaning the city—everyone carries the kitchen refuse into the back alley, and the pigs, which run about the streets, eat it up. I have disinfected this house thoroughly, from garret to cellar, with lime, carbolic acid, and copperas—and today the health officer came and threw tar-water all about the place— spoiling our nice clean galleries and spotting our hall carpeting in the most unnecessary manner.

If spotted carpeting offended Sister Constance’s Boston sensibilities, she was comforted by one consolation:

One comfort we have that we never had before, and perhaps could never have under any other circumstances—the Reservation—always in the Church. It is not often possible to go in, but we have the key, and it does not take long to run through the little gallery leading from the Community Room. That, and the daily Celebration, do make such a difference in our life here!

Sister Sarah, who had trained three of them in the Novitiate, wrote expressing the satisfaction of the New York Sisters to hear of the daily Celebration in Memphis, for in the Blessed Sacrament is our Strength—and in your needs, this Daily Bread from heaven will renew your powers to do and suffer, so that you will not fail, nor faint.

Other words of encouragement poured in, none so welcome as the notes from Dr. Dix, "our Reverend Father", as they invariably called him. He expressed his concern and spoke of waiting anxiously for the daily "all are well" telegraph dispatches. In the last week in October he reported that upon his visit to Boston the previous Sunday an offering had been taken at the Church of the Messiah for the Sisters’ sick-relief fund.

By October 27, nursing demands slackened and food preparation increased, as recuperating patients regained their appetites. Sister Constance described Sister Hughetta getting the list of invalids’ orders into portable shape—the birds into their little baskets, the soup into numerous little pails, the jelly into anything that will hold it—
and we shall be busy all day in carrying things to those of the sick who cannot send for them—for you could hardly hire anyone to go into the fever-rooms, even to set down a basket. Besides, we usually have to warm the soup, & feed the patients ourselves; having by great good fortune, secured a number of the little cans of extract of beef, we usually carry some with us, and make beef-tea on the spot. Mr. Harris has grown quite used to carrying soup without spilling it, and even good old Dr. Samson has just walked off with a little bird in one hand, and a bottle of brandy in the other. I rather doubt if his patient ever sees that bird, for he is not very skillful in carrying things.

By November 1 the worst was over Dean Harris wrote the Mother praising the Sisters' utter forgetfulness of self, their brave hearts shown by the steady step, unfailing readiness & cheerful faces in the worst of the dangerous work.

Bishop Quintard sent the Memphis Sisters his benediction "out of a heart penetrated with gratitude to God for giving you to me as my 'fellow helpers' in Xt Jesus."

In her own appraisal of their experience, Sister Constance measured her phrases with Yankee economy. If the terrible year should ever be repeated, she assured the Mother, the Sisters would be equipped to be "really good fever nurses."

CHAPTER NINE

Pruning

EVEN AFTER THE EPIDEMIC and exodus of 1873, St. Mary's School in Memphis registered forty students for the year and managed to pay all expenses. With this encouragement, the Sisters enlarged the school by buying a lot on the east side of the Cathedral for $7,000, borrowed from Mr. Robert Brinkley, Colonel Snowden's father-in-law. The two houses on this property contained between them seventeen rooms, which the Sisters remodelled and refurnished during the summer of 1874. In September St. Mary's opened with eighty pupils; in addition, a nearby house became a free school for poor children, taught by an Associate, Mrs. Emma Clarke.

For the next four years, the three Sisters worked staggering schedules. Sister Constance as Superior kept the accounts, supervised the Associates, managed the academic department and taught Latin, French and history. Sister Thecla was sacristan of both the Cathedral and the school chapel, had charge of the music department, taught piano to the younger girls, managed the primary school, and taught English and Latin grammar. On Friday and Saturday afternoon she also visited the poor and sick with a companion, Mrs. Harris, the Dean's wife and an Associate. Sister Hughetta was in charge of the house, taught art, mathematics and English composition, and supervised the Guild of the Holy Child, a branch of a devotional society for school girls originated by Mother Harriet at St. Mary's, New York.

Recalling the poverty and hard work, years later, Sister Hughetta added that they lived "in a flow of charity and prayers that made life very sweet and all burdens light." The water was frozen in their pitchers on winter mornings and in summer the city lay in a steaming stench; but hardships were mitigated by the conviction that St. Mary's "was probably the best Church school in the southern states at that time." The Sisters took pride in each Commencement and recalled it as a glittering social event. Each graduate received a diploma hand-illuminated by the Sister Superior. After the Bishop's blessing there was a social hour with scores of white-gowned girls with huge bouquets of flowers and scores of little girls running about with the flower baskets of
the seniors; of dignified fathers and happy mothers smiling upon their children, while in and out of the crowded rooms moved the stately darkey waiters carrying ice cream and cake on large silver trays—the fine trays being the property of rich and kindly neighbors.

The valedictory address of 1876, delivered by one Miss Lizzie Montgomery, was too long for publication in the local papers, but its conclusion appeared, "too beautiful to be omitted" and stands as a perfect period piece of commencement oratory:

Schoolmates—Farewell! I fain would not have it so. What words can express my feeling for you! If the poet can say so much of the frail, soulless flowers of our parterres and fields, what does he leave me to say to you, my beautiful flowers, with germs of eternity in each heart? There is nothing more to say. To you whom in this 'rose-bud garden of girls' I have likened unto flowers, rich, rare, sweet flowers—one so pure and fair I have named a lily, another the Goddess of Flowers herself, and one in all her youthful beauty a rose, another a modest daisy, others violets and heliotropes, pinks and pansies, all buds and blossoms—may your lives be as gentle and lovely as these flowers; may no dark shadows, no heavy storms impend your pathway, so that when Death comes to call from each circle its fondly cherished one, angels may bear that soul to its God.

The Church Home, too, flourished in these five years, in part through needs arising from the yellow fever epidemic. After the first year, Sister Amelia had been obliged by frail health to surrender the direction of the Home. The Board of Trustees paid her high tribute in a resolution forwarded to the Mother Superior on October 7, 1874. By her patient labor, they said, Sister Amelia had made the Church Home "what it never was before, a clean, sweet, cheerful and homelike place." Not until 1877 was Mother Harriet able to replace Sister Amelia with another sister, the recently professed Sister Frances.

Thus the summer of 1878 saw the work in Memphis well enough established that Sisters Constance and Thecla felt able to return to Peekskill for rest and retreat at St. Mary's Convent, a three-story frame building completed in December, 1876. They had been there for two weeks when, on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, August 15, news arrived that Memphis was once again in the throes of a yellow fever epidemic. The two Sisters left at once, stopping in New York long enough to arrange for the forwarding of money and medicine. When they departed on August 17, Dr. George Houghton, Rector of the Church of the Transfiguration, stood on the steps of their carriage in front of Trinity Infirmary to give them his blessing.

Upon arriving in Memphis, they at once set about turning their residence at 352 Poplar into a dispensary. Though records show that at this point deaths averaged only ten a day, memories of 1873 had already thrown the city into a panic. By mid-August twenty thousand residents had fled. A rigid quarantine had been imposed, gangs of men had been set to cleaning the streets, and freight by rail or river from Vicksburg or New Orleans was forbidden entry. Boats from the north with such necessities as coal or coffins (ordered from Cincinnati by the thousand) were permitted to anchor in the river and unload their freight onto barges. Still the death rate mounted. The Board of Health debated the advisability of detonating fifteen kegs of powder to cleanse the air, but finally settled instead on burning one hundred kegs of pine tar. Desperate and baffled, they voted on August 29 to prohibit the importation of watermelons and ordered that fever victims be coffined and buried within six hours of death. One reads these minutes with mingled sorrow and despair. The Board members were certain that
the disease had nothing to do with the open bayou which traversed the city, becoming in some places an open sewer. The suggestion that somehow the fever stemmed from "animalculae" following the course of the bayous was hooted down in derision. No, the Board decided, yellow fever was transmitted in the atmosphere, polluted by the privy vaults which honey-combed the city.

Less concerned with the cause of the disease than with its effects, the Sisters noted at once that the 1878 version was more swiftly virulent than that of 1873. The earlier fever had run its course in sixty hours; this frequently ended in horrible convulsions in twenty-eight hours. The death rate doubled by August 27 and reached seventy in one day by August 30. In house after house the Sisters found victims alone and unconscious, without medical or nursing attendance. Scraps of notes found among Sister Constance's papers after her death trace the mounting horror. By Sunday, August 25, Sister Frances was reported down with the fever at the Church Home and the other Sisters shared the night nursing with their devoted Associate, Mrs. Nannie Bullock. Sister Hughetta became ill on Monday night, August 26. It was nearly impossible to find nurses. Sister Constance wrote, "Met five or six negroes, tried to secure nurse, they said they 'were mighty jubious about this here fever', would not go."

As she answered one call, Sister Constance was met by a man who thrust a telegram into her hands and demanded that she read it. It read, "Father and mother are lying dead in the house, brother is dying, send me some help, no money." It was signed "Sallie U." Sister Constance went at once and found a pretty young girl in mourning, one corpse on the sofa, another on the bed, and a delirious, nearly naked young man rocking himself back and forth in his great agony, in an atmosphere so horrible that the Sister was sickened.

This type of scene was repeated again and again in the day's work. Five doctors had fled the city, and at times an undertaker's services could be procured only by the vexatious process of obtaining a police order. The workers were hampered in small ways, too: the horse lost all his shoes and there was no blacksmith to shoe him. Dr. Houghton sent $889, but money was fast losing its value as goods became increasingly scarce.

The Relief Association prevailed upon the Sisters to take over an orphanage for Negro children, the Canfield Asylum, and make it a reception center for all fever orphans without distinction of race or religion. Since the Asylum was in a part of the city not heavily infected, the Sisters felt justified in telegraphing Peekskill for help; in the meantime, Sister Hughetta, who had recovered from her bout of what was probably dysentery, was placed in charge. On the way to the Asylum, in a part of the city not heavily infected, she and Sister Constance were accosted by an angry mob demanding to know by what right they were bringing in children from infected areas. Sister Constance listened to their complaints and reassured them gently, finally quelling their anger with the question, "Are you not willing to trust the Sisters?" A few men mumbled, "Yes, we are," and the mob made way for the driver to proceed. The Asylum was opened next day. Within four days fifty fever orphans were received, each being bathed in carbolic solution and dressed in clean clothes before admission.

The Sisters in Peekskill were in their semi-annual long retreat when the telegram requesting help reached them. Father Grafton, the conductor, decided to end the retreat at once and return to Boston to see what the Society of St. Margaret could do to help. Of the Sisters of St. Margaret who volunteered, Sister Clare, a trained nurse
from East Grinstead in England, was chosen to go. She was to meet two Sisters of Saint Mary, Sisters Ruth and Helen, in New York for the trip south. Sister Ruth, who had been called out of the retreat, wrote a brief note to her Novice Mistress, Sister Sarah:

You will understand how gladly & unreservedly I give myself to our Beloved. The bitterness came long ago, before my Profession—there is only the sweetness now.

And to her Godmother she wrote, "Pray for me, that in life, in death, I may be ever His own."

The three Sisters left Trinity Infirmary on Saturday, August 31, and arrived in Memphis on Monday to find the Sisters there becoming dispirited and downcast. Dr. Harris had been taken ill on Saturday, and by Monday his condition was critical. Mr. Charles C. Parsons, Rector of St. Lazarus and Grace Church in Memphis, came down with the fever on Monday, leaving them without a priest. The daily deaths now exceeded eighty; four Roman Catholic priests had died, and one Sister. They felt increasingly inadequate as members of their own band fell ill. Only a few hours before he was stricken, Mr. Parsons wrote to Bishop Quintard a description of the fearful conditions, adding,

The Sisters are doing a wonderful work. It is a surprise to see how much these quiet, brave, unshrinking daughters of the Divine Love can accomplish in efforts and results.

In their state of exhaustion, the Sisters were depressed by the panic on all hands, and by the sight of the death carts loaded with eight or nine rough pine coffins. There was the heat, the mosquitoes, the green gold flies and the wailing of the hysterical negroes. And all was worse by night when the fever fires flickered and the mule-drawn death wagons rumbled by to the long-drawn cry, "Bring out your dead!"

One hopeful sign was that Sister Frances had recovered from what was assumed to be a light attack of the fever, and now Sister Clare was available to help her nurse the children in the Church Home Infirmary. Sisters Helen and Ruth went to help in the Canfield Asylum. With both priests ill, there was no longer a daily Celebration; the Sisters at the Asylum realized suddenly one evening that the day had been Sunday, but one commented, "Every day is the Lord's Day now."

On Thursday, September 5, Sisters Constance and Thecla were stricken with severe attacks of the fever. Sister Constance had spent Wednesday night watching by Mr. Harris, who showed signs of recovery. Sister Hughetta, on returning from a sick call at one o'clock Thursday afternoon, found her lying flushed with fever on a sofa in the parlor of St. Mary's, dictating acknowledgement letters to Mrs. Bullock. The two persuaded her to go to bed, but she refused a comfortable mattress, telling them, "It's the only one you have in the house, and if I have the fever you will have to burn it." They had no sooner gotten the Superior into bed than Sister Thecla came from a death-bed watch and said calmly and quietly, "I am so sorry, Sister, but I have the fever. Give me a cup of tea and then I shall go to bed." She too refused to infect the one good mattress.

By Friday morning Sister Constance was unconscious most of the time and in one lucid moment said to Sister Hughetta, "I shall never get up from my bed." That night Mr. Parsons died. Major Belton Mickle wrote,

Some hours before his death, and while his mind was yet clear he received the announcement of his approaching dissolution without a shock, and with the simple
"trust that he had done his duty." I asked him if he had any request to make. He replied: "Take me away from here." I said, "Where do you wish to go? Will you go into the Church?" and, as if the world was fading from his view, and he beheld everything in a spiritual light, he thought of the Church, not as a building made with hands, but as the congregation of Christ's flock, and Baptism as the door of entrance, he signed himself with the sign of the cross and said, "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross."

Mr. Parsons had faced death many times in the Civil War, never more bravely than now. He read for himself the commendatory prayer in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick and, shortly before he died at 10:30, murmured the words of the first Christian martyr, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, breveted a lieutenant colonel, he had commanded the Union artillery at Perryville, Kentucky in a thunderous bombardment which had been witnessed with admiration by Chaplain Quintard. After the war, while an instructor at West Point, Parsons had been present in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, and heard Bishop Quintard preach on repentance and the divine life. The result was his confirmation and ordination. Mr. Parsons was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, a layman, Mr. John G. Lonsdale, Jr., reading the burial office. "If his life was beautiful", wrote Major Mickle, his death was glorious: if, living, he would have built up a splendid parish—dying, he has done more to build up and strengthen the Holy Catholic Church than any other individual of his generation.

On Saturday morning Sister Ruth received a triple blow—news of Mr. Parsons' death and the heartbreaking word from Dr. William Armstrong that neither Sister Constance nor Sister Thecla was likely to survive. Without clean clothes or any help, she had put all forty children at the Asylum into wrappers. During that fearful Saturday, two more children came down with fever; Miss Waring, a nurse who had come from New York to help, was raving in delirium; the other nurse had to be dispatched to the Church Home to replace Sister Clare, who was needed to care for the sick Sisters. The city's food supply was dwindling toward famine, and even stores which still had stocks of food were closed. Sister Ruth was subsisting on soda crackers and water.

She wrote from the bedside of a feverish child at 6 p.m.,

**Dr. says Sr. Hughetta will have the fever tomorrow. Have telegraphed all to Mother. Mrs. Bullock also threatened. Sr. Helen, Sr. Clare & I the only workers now. Twelve cases at ch Home Infirmary. Howard As. Promised to send two nurses there if possible. I do try to be brave & cheerful. Another child just down with fever.**

When the news of Mr. Parsons' death was published, some thirty priests from all over the nation volunteered to Bishop Quintard for duty in Memphis. The offers of non-acclimated persons were all declined, but that of the Rev. W. T. Dickinson Dalzell of Shreveport, La., was accepted. He arrived on Saturday night, to the immense relief of the Sisters. Trained physician as well as priest, wise and competent in every way, he administered Holy Communion to Sister Constance on Sunday morning. That afternoon arrived the Rev. Louis Sandford Schuyler, twenty-seven, assistant at the Church of the Holy Innocents, Hoboken, NJ. He was not acclimated, and had in fact been too frail in health to complete his Novitiate with the Society of St. John the Evangelist at Cowley, but he had been in Peekskill to supply for a few days when the Memphis Sisters telegraphed that they were without a priest. He left at once for the Church of the Transfiguration in New York, where Bishop Quintard was staying,
and from him received permission to proceed as far as Louisville. There he received from the Bishop word of Mr. Parson’s death and permission to continue to Memphis. Dr. Dalzell was most impressed with his smile and gentle manner, but wrote,

I asked him if he had ever seen Yellow-Fever, and if he realized the risk he ran in coming to Memphis. To my dismay I found that he was utterly unacclimated, and that he had come, not as many others had come, with the hope, if not assurance, that he should escape, but as the brave soldier leads the forlorn-hope knowing that all the chances are against him, but with a burning desire to help the suffering, to work while his strength lasted, and then give his life cheerfully for Christ's sake and the Church.

Sister Hughetta wrote later that Sunday, September 8, was the darkest day of all. Some two hundred new cases were reported, and as many deaths. She felt herself growing weak and feared she would die before Sister Constance. Late in the evening she was put to bed with a raging fever, and at midnight heard Sister Constance in the next room exclaim "Hosanna!" again and again until her voice trailed off. It was her last word. At ten on Monday morning Sister Constance died. She was robed in her habit and carried to chapel, in her arms some white roses that Dr. Harris had received and wanted her to have. Mr. Schuyler read the burial office, and Sisters Frances, Clare and Ruth, with Mrs. Bullock, drove out in a raw drizzle to Elmwood Cemetery where Dr. Dalzell read the interment prayers. The body had to be placed in Mrs. Bullock’s family vault until the following day, for the demand for graves exceeded the diggers' ability to supply them.

In the same letter in which Sister Ruth reported these details to the Mother, she appealed for rubber sheets, old towels, a scrubbing brush, a dustpan, and for prayers, concluding,

I have just whipped a big boy for tying up a goose & beating it, & filling the babies mouths with red pepper. With forty such children our hands are full.

Strengthened by the daily Celebration, now resumed, the Sisters spent the next three days working hard and adjusting to a change in the weather—the heat gave way to a cold drizzle in which the street fires from burning bedding and sickroom furniture smouldered dismally. On Tuesday, the good physician Dr. Armstrong was stricken; on the following day Sister Clare and Mrs. Bullock became ill. On Thursday, September 12, Sister Thecla entered into rest, and late in the day Mr. Schuyler was put to bed with a high fever. The remainder of the story is awful in its brevity:

On Saturday, September 14, Dr. Armstrong died.

On Monday, September 16, Mrs. Bullock died.

On Tuesday, September 17, the Rev. Mr. Schuyler died.

On the same day, a few hours later, Sister Ruth died.

On September 17, the Rev. Charles R. Huson arrived from Florida to assist; he was stricken with fever in a few days, but recovered. Sister Frances fell victim to a second attack of fever on October 1, and on October 4 died. She had labored against overwhelming odds, with twenty to thirty children desperately ill and nurses difficult to find, even at the highest wages. Nineteen of her charges died, and she went to her bed from her God-child's grave. All but four of the children at the Church Home had the fever. Sisters Clare and Hughetta recovered sufficiently to put the Home to rights.

When frost finally came, 5,150 persons were dead and Memphis itself died—the city's charter was revoked, and for many years Memphis was merely a taxing district
in the State of Tennessee. High and low were taken. The toll included Dr. Paul Otey, son of the First Bishop of Tennessee; Mr. John P. Trezevant, senior warden of St. Mary's Cathedral; the Sister Alphonse, Mother Superior of St. Agnes Academy; some thirteen Roman Catholic priests and twelve Sisters and Brothers, whose deaths while nursing the sick are memorialized in Calvary Cemetery; the Rev. E. C. Slater, pastor of the First Methodist Church, whose interment was registered at St. Mary's Cathedral; and, toward the end of the plague, Jefferson Davis, Jr., only son of the President of the Confederacy, over whose body Dr. Dalzell read the burial office on October 16.

The deaths of Mr. Schuyler and the Sisters of Saint Mary elicited a flurry of newspaper publicity which is difficult to explain. Others had died unsung nursing yellow fever victims—following the epidemic of 1855 one issue of one Church paper carried obituary notices of five priests in as many dioceses, all apparently beloved pastors of bright promise. But certain worldly considerations in the '78 story appealed to the new mass readership press. Mr. Schuyler was of aristocratic background, a Roosevelt on his mother's side, and son of the Rector of Christ Church, St. Louis; moreover, he was only twenty-seven, and his personal charm made his oblation seem more poignant. The Church papers and the penny-dreadfuls vied with each other in describing the Sisters' youthfulness and accomplishments and in tracking down their family connections. They noted that Sister Ruth was the daughter of a County Judge in Newburgh; that Sister Thecla was of the Irish McMahon family that had sought refuge in France.

Tributes poured in from many sources. Col. J. B. Keating wrote, in the Howard Association report of the epidemic.

It would be impossible to speak in too high terms of laudation of these women. . . They had won for their order an imperishable renown. . . They had proven that heroism and Christ-like self-denial are not the virtues of a particular sect.

Colonel Keating voiced a commonly mistaken idea of their vows when he added:

They had set an example worthy of the sisterhoods of apostolic times, and had silenced those of their creed whose Protestantism blinded them to the possibilities of an order whose vows are voluntary and to be revoked at will.

The Bureau of Relief of Hartford, Connecticut wired to Bishop Quintard,

To Sister Constance, to Sisters Thecla, Frances and Ruth, and to all who thus count not their lives dear unto them . . . we seem clearly to hear Him say: "Inasmuch as you have done

Dr. Dromgoole saw in the epidemic the reconciliation of the sections alienated by war:

With a lavish hand the North has soothed the fevered brow of Southern suffering . . . the demon of discord and contention has been hushed amid silent tears over the martyr's midnight grave.

Dr. James DeKoven saw the deaths of the Sisters as "giving the Sisterhood a place in the hearts of the people which cannot be shaken." This analysis seems borne out by the expressions of sympathy which poured in from many sources. A sermon preached by the Rev. John Jay Joyce in St. John's Church, Washington, D.C. on All Saints' Day, 1878, is ample evidence that in every quarter generosity, charity, and sacrifice had won friends for the religious life:
As we read the record of these days, we hear of woman's tenderness, of woman's devotion. In every age of the Church's history we find in time of trial woman standing by the side of man, and vying with him in his work for Christ. Though the Priesthood was, for reasons, to be filled exclusively by men, yet Our Blessed Lord did not by this lower woman's privilege or woman's position, for "He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," and ever since the days of that Virgin Mother woman has repeated her words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Early was her work organized, and made a powerful auxiliary for the propagation of the faith, by means of those quiet and gentle ministries, which are often the mightiest. And it is an indication, not a slight one, that we are getting back more and more toward primitive and Catholic methods, that we are reviving the Order of Deaconesses and instituting Sisterhoods to aid the Church's work of love and mercy. . . "The Sisters of St. Mary! God bless them," we doubt not is the thought of many a living one today, as it was the thought of many a dying one over whose last hours they ceaselessly had watched.
VII.

MEMPHIS

http://justus.anglican.org/resources/pc/bios/harriet/harriet7.html

THE story of Memphis has been told in full already; [1] it must be too well known to need repetition. And yet some mention of it must be made, so great is its importance in this history. Before the memorable year 1878, many spoke against these faithful and devoted women: after that year, the tongue of calumny was silent, while men looked on with beating hearts, and eyes dim with tears. For God then gave to His faithful the crown of martyrdom; their names became sacred thenceforth, ennobled by the love which shrinks not from death, in appalling form. The light is still shining on the graves in Memphis, where they rest who laid down their lives readily, joyfully, eagerly, for God, for the brethren, and for those who had no strength nor courage left; ……