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The Confederate Post

By Patricia A. Kaufmann

The Gregory Siblings—Spirited Scots



As is often the case, a somewhat mundane soldier's cover from Winchester, Virginia represents an interesting story. Winchester's location at the north end of the lower Shenandoah Valley was the hub of key roadways linking the Ohio Valley to the eastern United States coastal plains. Sitting just south of the Potomac River, Winchester lay on the only route between the east and western United States with direct connections to Washington, D.C. Including minor cavalry raids and patrols, and occasional reconnaissance by various forces, it is claimed that Winchester changed hands as many as 72 times, and 13 times in one day.

The illustrated cover is handstamped DUE 10, as soldiers were allowed to send their mail free of charge with the postage to be paid by the recipient. It is endorsed, as mandated, by "W. B. Gregory Surgeon 2d Regt Ga. Vols." and addressed to "Miss Julia H. Gregory, Lynchburg, Va." — an Army surgeon to his sister.

William Bartleman Gregory served in Field and Staff with both the 2nd Georgia Infantry and the 12th Alabama Infantry. The family name was originally MacGregor, anglicized to Gregory somewhere along the way. His father, William Gregory III, emigrated to Virginia from Kilmarnock, Scotland in 1807 and became a prominent merchant and banker. Although William Bartleman Gregory was born in Virginia March 13, 1829, there was clearly a strong tie to the old country, as he received his medical degree from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland in 1854.

By the end of the war he was Acting Chief Surgeon of Gen. Charles W. Field's Division, 1st Army of Northern Virginia. He practiced medicine before and after the war in Alexandria, Va., where he died May 18, 1887 and is buried there at the Presbyterian Cemetery.

Dr. Gregory's beautiful sister, Julia Harper Gregory, also had an active role in the War effort. When the war commenced, she and her sister Isobel went with their married sisters to the interior

of Virginia, living in half a dozen different locations, including Richmond where Julia had graduated from the Richmond Seminary of Mr. A.M. Dupey.

While living at Culpeper Court House, they boarded at the academy of the Reverend John Walker George, which was turned into a hospital. Mrs. Monimia Carey presided there as a nurse and the Gregory girls often helped in the care of the battlefield wounded. Julia and Isobel helped sew the first Confederate battle flag for Generals Beauregard, Johnston and Van Dorn with her friends Constance and Hetty Cary.

Later in the war, when they were in the Valley of Virginia at Goshen, Julia and Isobel smuggled mail by fording the Cowpasture River and carrying it to safety, a deed that, if they had been caught, could have landed them in jail. When a MacGregor cousin in Scotland learned of this exploit, he exclaimed, "If the laddies over there are like those braw lassies, it will no be an easy matter to conquer Virginia."

After the fall of Richmond, the beautiful Gregory sisters returned to Alexandria, where they soon became social favorites. Isobel married Major George Johnston, CSA, and Julia married Captain John Seabury Chapman, CSA on November 17, 1868. In tribute to her siblings, Julia named one of her four children Isobel Gregory Chapman, born August 22, 1869, and her son William Gregory Chapman, born August 4, 1872.

I am indebted to F.T. Hambrecht for sharing from his unpublished database, as well as other information on this fascinating family. The information on Julia comes from the [1915] *Yearbook of the American Clan Gregory Society: Containing the proceedings at the gathering of 1914* by E.W. Magruder, Ware & Duke, Printers, Richmond, VA; pp 87-89.

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