

**Partial Transcription, Letter from Thomas F. Drayton
To W. Heyward Drayton, July 15, 1865
Drayton Family Papers, Collection 1854**

Thomas Fenwick Drayton (1808-1891), was born in South Carolina, raised in Philadelphia, and after attending West Point, returned to South Carolina. Finding his army career unsatisfying, he resigned and established a plantation at Hilton Head. When the Civil War came, his pro-southern views set him against his immediate family. When the war began, Thomas was commissioned a brigadier general by his old West Point classmate Jefferson Davis. He commanded troops at significant battles including Port Royal, where his brother U.S. Navy Captain Percival commanded the Union gunboat Pocahontas.

When peace came, Thomas, along with many other former southern planters, found himself destitute. He tried to reclaim his confiscated land in South Carolina, but had no success. Though a bequest of \$30,000 from Percival helped Thomas and his family significantly, he spent the last twenty-five years of his life struggling to find consistent, livable employment. In this letter, Thomas is writing his step-brother William Heyward Drayton, (1817-1892), who was a lawyer in Philadelphia.

Milledgeville, Baldwin Co., Geo

15th July, 1865.

My dear Heyward,

...

I shall take the Oath of Allegiance to the U.S. this week, as until I do this I will not ... be allowed to take a letter out of the Express Office/Affair [sic]. After I have taken "the oath" it is very doubtful ~~which~~ how long it may be before I am restored to my former rights of a Citizen. It is very hard to ask for pardon, when one does not feel conscious of having done anything wrong or criminal. Under our Constitution Secession is is [sic] justifiable – and such to remain, ... the Constitution is amended [sic]. But both parties have reformed the question in dispute to the arbitrament [sic] of the Second [?] – and I now yield to necessity, not from conviction – and will not attempt another disruption of the Union upon this platform. All I now ask to have my hands untied, ~~with~~ and be allowed to go to work for my maintenance, and that with the least delay.

...

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Much love to Harriet & your children

Believe me as always

Your affect [sic] brother

Tho. F. Drayton

To

W. H. Drayton Esq.

Philadelphia