

## 15 Charles Clinton Beatty to Elizabeth Beatty

[Charles Clinton Beatty Letters, Firestone Library, Princeton University.]

Charles Clinton Beatty (1756-1776) was the son of the Reverend Charles Beatty of Pennsylvania. The political sentiment of the entire Beatty family was proclaimed when the youngest of the six boys, born in 1766, was named William Pitt Beatty. Charles attended the Reverend Enoch Green's classical school in Deerfield, New Jersey, before moving on to the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), where he graduated in 1775. An enthusiastic Whig, he marched off to war in January 1776 commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Fourth Pennsylvania Battalion. A few months later he was killed when a friend accidentally discharged a loaded rifle. His sister, Elizabeth, was four years his elder. The martial spirit and Whig politics permeated the college at Princeton, whose alumni in great numbers fought for American independence.

Nassau-Hall May ye 28th 1775

Dear Cleona,<sup>1</sup>

I have just done reading your letter and to shew my punctuality and my great regard for you would not let a moment pass 'till I had answered it. I had need to make some apologies & must confess I hardly used you, Dear Cleona, genteely, affection being out of the question, when I went quite a different road [than] amongst my relations and friends. I ought to have given you the preference, but the mind of man is delighted with novelty and is soon cloyed with a sameness of objects.

But how can your patriotic spirit be so dull, when all around is war and bloodshed—certainly you have heard of the skirmishes at Boston, and can you not sympathize with the distressed people there? You need not speak here without it is about Liberty. Every man handles his Musket and hastens in his preparations for war. We have a company in College of about 50 Officers and all among ourselves, another company they have in town. I have spent a very agreeable vacation—seen a good deal of the country and made many acquaintances. Seen Dicky Howel<sup>2</sup> in Newcastle and had the company of four fine ladies from that [town] to Philad[elphi]a. I heard from Arke<sup>3</sup> since I returned, and he like a warrior is out every day exercising at Elizabeth Town, and intends to defend his Country. He is very well, seems to be contented & Mr. Spinage<sup>4</sup> likes him much. Aunt Mills & Hacket<sup>5</sup> have moved there so that he has now some friends it is to be hoped there. Our Class to shew their patriotism intend commencing in Homespun, How I shall get mine I cannot tell, perhaps your goodness can find some scheme. But it is time to conclude. Yours sincerely,

CLINTON

1. "Cleona" was Charles's nickname for Elizabeth; she was commonly called "Betsey" by the family.

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2. Richard Howell (1754-1802) a young Bridgeton, Cumberland County, lawyer; he was a classmate of the Reverend Philip Vickers Fithian, who married Betsey Beatty in 1775. Howell later served as governor of New Jersey (1792-1801).

3. Erkuries Beatty, who was three years younger than Charles. While Charles studied in Princeton, Erkuries labored as an apprentice to Elizabethtown carriage maker Benjamin Spinning. The younger Beatty also served in the Pennsylvania Line during the revolutionary war, remaining in the military until 1792 when he retired to Princeton and commenced a long and highly distinguished political career.

4. Spinning; see above note 3.

5. Mary Reading Mills, wife of the Reverend William Mills, and Elizabeth Reading Hackett, wife of John Hackett.