

“THE WILSON COLLECTION” AT ACADIA UNIVERSITY

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ACADIA UNIVERSITY HAS enhanced its valuable Thomas Chandler Haliburton collection of printed editions by the acquisition of a family archive, donated through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wilson of North Vancouver, British Columbia.¹ “The Wilson Collection” is the only T. C. Haliburton family archive that has come to light thus far, so a brief description and review of its contents will be of interest. The archive is especially valuable because the papers Thomas Chandler Haliburton entrusted (when he moved from Windsor to Isleworth, London, in 1856) to his son, Robert Grant, then a Halifax lawyer, were destroyed in a fire in 1857.

The five T. C. Haliburton letters in the collection and the two letters written by his wife Louisa, reprinted here, reveal the hitherto hidden face of domestic life at “Clifton”² (Haliburton’s home in Windsor, Nova Scotia, from 1836 until 1856), both before and after the death of his wife Louisa in 1841. They complement and extend the letters collected in my 1988 edition of *The Letters of Thomas Chandler Haliburton*.³ “The Wilson Collection” offers numerous direct and indirect biographical insights into the world of Thomas Chandler and his children and reveals, for the first time, the attempts of his children to memorialize their parents. The two older sisters, Susannah and Augusta, in particular, actively planned to publish a selection of their father’s writing, prefaced by a memoir. Even though the plan did not come to fruition, they did manage to commit to paper (aided by their brothers Robert Grant and Arthur) many early memories of their mother, whose life and ancestry were largely a closed book to them.

The collection can be divided into 5 groups:

1. TCH letters and documents.
2. Neville family documents.
3. Letters received by TCH and other members of the family.
4. Family documents penned by TCH’s children and others in their attempt to write and record family history.
5. Photographs and prints.

Group 1: Letters and documents by TCH

THE GROUP CONTAINS FIVE personal letters by TCH to Augusta Haliburton, dated 18 April 1849, 17 September 1849, 2 May 1851, 17 February 1862, and 20 February 1864; a copy of a letter sent by TCH to Ellen Fowden Haliburton of Whitley, near Wigan, Lancashire, England, dated 30 November 1840; a copy of a letter (in TCH's hand) to Richard Bentley, dated 23 August 1843; a letter written to Alexander Fowden Haliburton, dated 21 March 1849; and a curious coded letter sent by Colonel Inglis to General Havelock during the Siege of Lucknow (1857), rendered into English by TCH.

The letters to Augusta, reprinted here, reveal how central she was to the running of Clifton following the death of Louisa in November 1841.⁴ And they reveal how close TCH remained to her even after his marriage to Sarah Harriet Williams.

1.

Lunenburg.
Wednesday 18 Ap [18]49

My dear Augusta

Court rose yesterday after a tedious and laborious session — I shall proceed tomorrow or next day to Liverpool — I am tired but tolerably well, with the exception of a weakness of chest which I think arises from cold

Tell Clarke^a — 1st potatoes must be put into hot bed, and the field potatoes sprouted 2 also corn (Indian) without delay — 3 I only want one sheep fattened as I have not food enough for all — 4 Team must be kept agoing, 5 no extra hiring but Latty who was to come on 16, till I return 6 Send Arthur to Dy Sherriff to say to Ross I will take the two cows — Songster^b will value them and any body else Ross chooses and he shall have credit for their valuation 7th. After Monday the 23d of April whenever ground is in order Clarke may sow the 4 acre field near hedge (plowd last fall) with oats —

7 I should like him to see Songster about filling up hole over Tunnel in pasture — My team & two men can help — *raise it a little above level as it will settle* —

8 Lowther must get a bottle of blistering ointment from Harding & blister my horses ankle — It must be first washed with warm water so as to let it penetrate and not waste ointment — Mr. Porter^c will shew him — if needful — Hotbed must be pushed, for we are always backward in that —

9 When did calf go? and who got it if not gone it had better be kept a few days for Butcher, as there is evidently a job going to be done by giving a bargain to some one —

10 Send to John Smith^d to make sky light tight When I return I will attend to floor
10 Tell Arthur to look at the work every day — it is a great check — *and see no cattle are poaching meadow lands*

11 Let Lowther clear front carriage yard & keep it in order removing the ladder to the back of the fence of coach yard — where it will be handy —

12 Tell Arthur any rainy day he cant get to school to see that the men split wood —

13 Arthur will tell Clarke that I want ground where oats were last year *very heavily manured*, for green crops it is better to have *at home* just now than *from Windsor*,

as it will expedite work — Let me be written to next week, giving me an acct at Shelburne of all work done up to that date

14 I have seen Church Times and am pleased with Bobs position at the end of the term

God bless you all — T.C.H.

Keep this note by you

^a Probably Clarke was one of Thomas Chandler's "men": others mentioned in these letters are "Ross" (who looks after the horses), "Lowther," "Harding," and "D. Geldert." "Ross" is probably Nathaniel Ross (1797-1876), labourer; "Lowther" either Samuel or John Lowther, both labourers; "Harding" possibly "T. S. Harding"; Lennie Geldert was TCH's coachman. For help in identifying these people I would like to thank Larry Loomer of Windsor, N.S.

^b John L. Sangster was Haliburton's agent who looked after his gypsum quarries. The name was sometimes spelled "Songster," sometimes "Sangster."

^c Probably Reginald Porter (1813-66).

^d Probably John Smith (1802-72), eldest son of the carpenter and shipbuilder of the same name.

2.

Windsor 17th Sepr [18]49

My dear Augusta —

We miss you very much — Laura fancies she aint well but she only misses you and is very cross with every body, what she will do when I go I dont know, for she has to fly to me from necessity now — I go on Thursday bothered enough as you may suppose, from a variety of causes, *never* to occur again I hope — I like Ross very well, but I cant find a man for stable and 4/- a day is ruinous for the care of horses only — Ems letter will give you all the news — I tried Weldons recpt on Connolly's house^a and it is as good as paint it answers remarkably well — Thereafter I will do all those Windsor buildings with it — Materials for Connolly's have cost 2/ only I have 55 Bushels of potatoes of first rate quality — I thought it best to get them in — I shall make one of the men sleep here when I am gone — You have managed the accts so remarkably well, my best thanks are due to you — Warn Em. to be careful in my absence — D Geldert said rent was too high and gave warning — he succeeded so well last time he thought he would try his luck again, I told him very well, it was probable he could do better elsewhere — I hope he is the last of the Mohicans that I have to do with — I shall hope to see you here on my return — Love to Susan — Weldon and all — *Hoof B* [?] — like a spaniel is more civil the more he is kicked — he has insulted[?] Amelia T.C.H.

^a Probably John Connelly's house. Haliburton owned several properties on a triangle of land in Windsor, bounded by Victoria, Stannu and Albert streets, and described by Larry Loomer as Windsor's first "subdivision."

3.

Barrington 2d May 1851
Friday evening —

Dear Augusta —

I have reached this place 20 miles of Shelburne & 45 from Yarmouth which latter I hope to reach by dinner time tomorrow, with every prospect of a beautiful day —

HALIBURTON

Yesterday morning I received your two letters (including money one) by same mail — My foot is better I discontinued the poultices on Sunday last, and hope to be able to wear my boot by the time I reach Annapolis —

The pain has nearly all gone, but the foot is still swelled & tender — I have a very good easy winter shoe-cover which I wear, and can walk, but not exercise

I am thankful to escape so well for the agony I suffered at Liverpool was almost insupportable — I took 4 gout pills to kill pain, which they did, but they have had a very stupifying effect — I am mending fast, and the only inconvenience I suffer is from confinement —

Mem

1 I should like *meadows* to be rolled —

2 I hope to hear from you at Annapolis

3 The floor of *addition* must be on a *level with kitchen*, in other words it must be excavated level with cellar —

4 — I dont know what you mean by small passage by chimney — if you mean passage from 3d story to Geldarts attic, there is to be a door if you mean the passage by Harding's to back stairs there is to be a door there with light over it —

Your truly
T C Haliburton

4.

Gordon House,
Isleworth,
17th Feby [18]62

Dear Augusta,

I was just about writing to you when I got your letter — I have received the other day at board meeting your interest, which is this half year exactly ten pounds in even money, and is in shape of ten pound note —

Will you have it by post, cut in two, or entire, or in cheque, or how?

I am startled at your account of fire, but on reflection think old houses safer than new ones, which are not so well built — I congratulate you with all my heart on your escape which was a very narrow one — Mary Weldon is here to remain till vessel sails on Thursday — Poor thing!!!

Yours always T.C.H.

5.

8 Albert Terrace,
Knightsbridge,
20th Feby [18]64

Dear Augusta —

Our lease is out, on the 18th March, and I am most anxious to know when the Parkers^a return home — I am afraid they will watch our return & Mrs P. have the old man to be fed up by us till May or June —

If so I wont return yet, but make arrangements otherwise — Will you endeavour to find out their movements, from her, without letting her know when we go home —

If I find she is waylaying us, I will take a flat in the new Lodging House near Palace Hotel, but this is a great bore —

Try and find out and let me know — on Friday I spoke for some time in the house, and was utterly unconscious of having been ever effective in speech — On Friday next I speak again — At one time (3 months ago), I was afraid I never should be able — I am more than 7 inches less in circumference — I propose to stop when I reach 10 inches — When shall we see you in town —
Love to Alexander & believe me your always

Th.C. Haliburton

^a Haliburton's friendship with Robert Parker (1796-1865) of Saint John, N.B., was always warm, even to the end of his life. The "Parkers" referred to here are most likely Neville Parker (Robert's brother), and his wife. Mrs. Parker was something of an evangelical zealot and Neville came under her influence.

On 18 September 1840, Maria Edgeworth the novelist, wrote a note of thanks to Haliburton's daughter, Susannah, then in Liverpool, for she had just received a complimentary copy of one of Thomas Chandler's works.⁵ The letter was delivered by mistake to Ellen Fowden Haliburton at Whitley, near Wigan, Lancashire. Ellen wrote to Thomas Chandler on the 27 October 1840, enclosing Maria Edgeworth's letter, pointing out the error, and beginning a correspondence between the two families that continued throughout the 1840s. Ellen took the opportunity to introduce herself and her family to Thomas Chandler, knowing that on his recent visit to England, he had visited "some of the old localities of the family" in Scotland. Here is Thomas Chandler's effusive reply:

(Copy, not in TCH's hand)

Windsor, Nova Scotia, 30 Nov. 1840

My dear Madam,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind letter enclosing one from Miss Edgeworth to my daughter and beg you to accept my best thanks for the trouble you have taken and the flattering terms in which you have been so good as to express yourself. In truth the very sight of your name has a charm for me, that you have never been exiled can scarcely conceive — It is seldom I hear or see it unless addressed to me or my own family, for tho' my progenitors migrated to this western world more than 120 years ago, here I am alone without parents or brother or sister and no kindred near me but my own little flock under my own roof — The world is a world of strangers to me and every namesake is new to me. I have read your letter again and again with pleasure as the letter of a—Haliburton, as one of that dispersed flock which whenever found are the same, solitary and alone — I feel happy that accident has procured for me, what I much desired when

in England, an introduction to you — I had heard of your father and was several times asked if I was related or known to him, but knew no one of whom I had the right to ask to be the medium of our acquaintance. Nothing therefore was left to me but a self-introduction, and this is rather an awkward affair, and commonly regarded as one likely to have disagreeable sequel — This I the more regretted as I had been at great pains and expence to accumulate every family record, parish register, antient charter, and old document, as well as tradition relative to our stock, which I have traced to its origin, a Danish chief of the name of “Treucte” — This extends to a period of several hundred years and is as perfect perhaps as that of any other family in the Kingdom — You may easily suppose therefore my disappointment in not being able to know your father and hear his traditions on the subject, especially as I (with a friend of mine to whose antiquarian researches I am much indebted, and who is of the same name) intend hereafter to arrange these materials and print them for the use of the family only — The name is all we have, but it is a good one, thrice enobled, honorable in prosperity and respected even in its poverty — It is one of which tho’ am not weak enough to be vain, I confess I am proud, and as I believe this feeling to have a beneficial effect on the mind, it is one which I love to cherish in those who are to come after me. [Thomas Chandler then proceeds to relate the origins of the Haliburton family as he understands them] . . . From one or the other of these three great branches are all the Haliburtons now existing derived, but all have one common descent, “Treucte the Dane.” I have many curious anecdotes relative to the family, both in the olden time and in the commonwealth, and hope to have the pleasure some day of laying them before you — Walter Scott has acted with some disingenousness in this matter, and has had himself served by a jury as heir of the name and he’s buried in our vaults as last representative — To say the least of it, it was unworthy of him — his own fame was sufficient for him, and he might have left to the poor all they had “their language and their name.” But Walter Scott tho’ he has achieved many great things has done some very little ones also — And now my fair friend and kinswoman do not let me suppose that this is to be the last of our correspondence I pray thee better not to have known thee than to have lost thee thus — It is too agreeable a thing for me to receive a letter subscribed with my own patronymic, to surrender the hope that it will be the forerunner of others and that it will lead to a friendship that a common origin and a common name (and I think I may infer) a common pride of our stock seem to lay a substantial ground for — If you will so far honor me, I assure you it will confer a real pleasure on one, who has but few of his own family that have it in their power to add to his happiness — Should any of your family ever visit America pray consider that Nova Scotia is the nearest part to Europe, and that Windsor contains “Haliburtons” that will be right glad to welcome you to the new world. — We shall hope in that case you will consider our house your home here —

Please to present my respects to your father and the rest of his family and say to him should I ever again visit England (which I dare not hope, it is so difficult for a Judge to be absent from his duty) I shall avail myself of his permission to become personally known to him — you who write so easily and so well, will surely not deny me the favor of hearing from you again, may I therefore request your indulgence when I ask for the traditions of your branch and such facts as are within your knowledge of “our house” — With many thanks, I am dear Madam, Your affectionate “*Scotch Cousin*” Thos Haliburton.

Group 2: Neville family letters

THE SECOND GROUP (Neville family papers) contains eight items, dated 1811, 1812 (2), 1814, 1837, 1839 (2), and n.d. The earliest is a letter written by Louisa's father, Captain Lawrence Neville, just one year before his death. In 1814, Louisa received and kept a vivid, eight-page, eye-witness account of the Battle of Plattsburg written on the 18 October 1814 by her brother, William Frederick, stationed in Chambly, Lower Canada. Two letters, written in 1839, by Louisa herself, offer additional glimpses of domestic life at Clifton. When Thomas Chandler returned from his year-long visit to England in March, 1839, he immediately sent his eldest daughter Susannah to stay with his new-found relations, the Burtons.⁶ His other daughter, Augusta, was sent to Boston for the summer to stay with the Fales family (Thomas Chandler's Aunt Abigail had married Boston merchant Samuel Fales). So when Louisa received an excited letter from Susannah in England, she sat down and copied out long passages from it into the letter she was writing to Augusta:

Clifton 22d October 1839

My dear Augusta —

I wrote you a few hasty lines by the Arcadian acknowledging the receipt of 2 letters from you & from Mrs. Dunlop and a kind postscript from Mrs Fales requesting to have you with her during the winter — I have prevailed upon your father with *some difficulty* to consent to your staying, feeling convinced the change of climate for several months longer would be of great service in restoring your health — he does not know how much you have suffered for the last two years — however that is settled and you are to stay — With regard to masters, as there is a piano in the house, I should like you to take lessons in music if it would not *annoy Mrs Fales* — I suppose the same master could teach singing also which you must try if they think you have any voice at all which at present is uncertain, as you have never tryed yet — The cake we have not got yet. Geldart will probably bring it up today, so you must make our best thanks for it, those your Aunt names shall not be forgotten, besides a number of others who will expect to come in for a share — You will no doubt miss Eliza very much but there are such facilities for getting about now, that she can frequently visit home — Your father intends having a Governess as tutor in the family next Spring to teach languages and other branches required, so that he thinks you had not take lessons in anything but music while in Boston, but just amuse yourself, take exercise, and endeavour to get well & strong — and to do your best to please and make yourself useful to your dear Aunt, by reading to her, & amusing her in any way you can — I hope they will treat you like one of the family and not put themselves to any trouble —

We heard from Susan by the G. Western & by last Packet — the first dated St Leonards 22d August written in very good spirits — She went with Mrs. Stewart to Southampton and from there to London by the rail road, where she stayed about 10 days at Mrs Ferons in Regents Park. She was delighted with all and every one she had seen, not disappointed in anything, and found things pretty much as she expected — The only part that exceeded her expectation was the extreme kindness

of her reception — She says ‘For the whole of the first week I felt completely knocked up by fatigue, but drove every day & went to the Opera one evening, where I was much amused — Mr James I admire very much. He is one of the most wellbred persons I saw & so like Gussy he is decidedly the flower of the flock — They tease him and call him my papa — but having had a tooth ache & not being able to go out, Septimus who is the kindest in the world is *pa 3d* & as Jane commanded me to call them all by their Christian names, it sounds rather absurd —

— On Saturday I received letters from Mrs Hopkinson, Miss Burton & Emily, which I answered — Jessie’s manners are like Mrs Grigors & Mrs Burton looks like Mrs Dalton and is remarkably lady like — I like her amazingly — all the children have taken wonderfully to me, indeed they are nice little things one & all — They all say my manners surprise them, and constantly exclaim “I think that I am talking to a person who has passed her life in the most polished circles” — they really make me feel very foolish by saying “where did you ever get those lady-like manners” — On Tuesday 16th I came with Septimus Mrs B & Arthur to St Leonards, where Miss Burton received me most kindly — The archery meeting amused me much. Helen got the bracelet and a gold arrow. At dinner I sat next a Major Bloomfield, a man who has changed his name to *Mason* for a fortune — at the ball I danced all the evening. Rose looks like pa — Helen like a[?] Almon and Mrs. John Ritchie, and Emily like Sally Wilkins in manners — how kind they are to me, Miss Burton makes a great many wonderments about my manners — A great party here and one at Mrs Woods tomorrow — The plans arranged are, I go on the 1st September to Mrs Hopkinson under escort of James — She takes me into Wales — & in the mean time I remain here — I am better but weak — they are pleased with my [music?] — I have been talking German to Decimus — I find my dresses are all the fashion’ — Susans other letter is dated Tunbridge Wells 1st Sept in which she says ‘I left St Leonards on Friday for here, and it has rained ever since I came. We go to London tomorrow — I have had a curious fortnight so many picnics & evening parties — I have been amused of course tho’ tired — The family have been most kind — Septimus & James tho’ still continue to stand fast in my regard of the men & the Doctor next — Rose is the image of papa & I do love her dearly, Helen too comes next — I have always had the best partners where I danced, and the pleasantest escorts at all the picnics — I saw everything in the neighbourhood worth seeing — I did not get so much acquainted as I hoped with the relations for I was constantly in company — Major Bloomfield was so in raptures with my Waltzes that I had to play them every evening to him’ —

I have given you long extracts from Susan’s letter knowing it would interest you more than any Windsor news of which in fact there is but little — Mrs Dixon from Gibraltar is here with 5 daughters, they are all at Mrs Mackays, but will move soon into th[e] [h]ouse [M ?ing] lived in — they are rather w[eak lo?]oking children, and she is a more r[at]io[nal] being than she used to be — Fanny Bliss goes with her uncle tomorrow to town — he is expected in the steamer tomorrow f[or?] the last time — do you remember the 19th of last October — Robert Prescott sent us some beautiful peaches lately — Mr Allison is dead which is a great affliction to them all, Mrs J. Fraser is with her sister in Halifax — Mrs Gibbs gave a concert here last week I fear she made but little — I had to lend my piano as they could not get one in the village — We have also had a play at the Academy. The boys performed very well — Miss Yates goes in the bo[at] tomorrow, she expects to pass the winter

at St John's. Mrs W. King has another son — And [Mrs?] Carver [has?] a daughter — Mr Valentine is here again I am sitting for him — he has taken an excellent likeness of Mrs Mackay and is now painting Mr King (the rector's) portrait

Pray remember me most kindly to our friends, and tell them how grateful I feel for their kindness to you ever your affectionate mother Louisa Haliburton PS. your father will write you about money

Laura and Emma are improving in their writing, the latter is now learning *La Colorutie retracee* I think you need not get any German books as we have so many — Mr Davis has borrowed some of them — Mrs Bliss hears of late from Elizabeth — She is very much pleased and was to spend some weeks in Liverpool before she went to Scotland

The cake has arrived safe — it is so beautiful that I intend to keep it for a time to look at before it is cut — I hope Mrs Fales got your fathers letter — The letter bag of G. Western will go next packet, he could not get it copied in time for the last. We have letters from Decimus — James — Mrs Hopkinson & Mrs Wood, the last addressed to me — what nice kind people they are

Spend as little money as you help Augusta this is a very expensive year for us
Your father will write soon

A little over a month later, Louisa replied to the letter from Mrs. Wood, mentioned above:

Windsor 25 November 1839

My dear Mrs Wood

Your very kind and much welcome letter — confirming Susans account of the amended state of her health, was a source of very good pleasure to us all — I entertain great hopes that a few months longer residence in England, surrounded as she has the good fortune to be, by so many kind friends, will quite restore her —

She is delighted with all she has seen since her arrival, and speaks with the greatest of gratitude of the very affectionate reception she met with from all the family and I trust nothing will be wanting on her part to endeavour to recommend herself to their favor by every means in her power —

'The Letter Bag of the Great Western' is now on its way to England — I think the subject a difficult one but Haliburton has treated it with his usual humour and tact, and I hope it will be well received — I believe we have to thank you for the papers containing the account of the archery meeting, I am glad Susan arrived in time to be present and that Miss Wood obtained the second bracelet — the pair must be very beautiful and valuable and as the gift of *Royalty*, will no doubt be carefully preserved as family jewels by her and her heirs for ever —

Susan is very fortunate in having the opportunity of seeing so much of England, and she appears greatly to enjoy her visit to Wales — I can scarcely persuade myself that I have not actually been at St Leonards, I have so clear an idea of it from the very pretty drawings you were so kind enough to send me, the lively recollections Haliburton retains of it, and the constant reference he is making to his visit among your kind and agreeable family —

Augusta has lately returned from [Boston] feeling I am happy to say, very much in health, the voyage and change of climate has been of the greatest service, and we longer consider her an invalid

I hope Mr James Haliburton will not relinquish his intention of visiting us next

Spring, and that he will bring with him my dear young relative Rose, whose acquaintance I have to make, Haliburton says he has a promise from him to that effect, and as the opportunity will be so good — one, I hope, my dear Mrs Wood that you will gratify as to entreat him to our care. We have but little inducement to offer in this poor country to a young person but what we can do, we will have great pleasure in doing to make his visit as pleasant as possible — I must again repeat my best thanks for all your kindness to my dear Susan, and with kind regards to Mr Wood and the young ladies, believe me my dear Mrs Wood your obliged humble servant
L. Haliburton

Group 3: Letters received by TCH and other members of the family

THE THIRD GROUP of material (9 items) contains the first letters Thomas Chandler received from Ellen and Alexander Fowden Haliburton. Alexander's first letter to Thomas Chandler is dated 4 November 1842. He started writing to Thomas Chandler after several letters had been received by Ellen, letters which were shared with the rest of the family. One passage in Alexander's letter concerns James Haliburton:

I have now your last letter before me, and with regard to the Mr James Haliburton who you mention, I may remark that I was present with my brother at Gravesend, when he received his letter, and at that time we could not avoid having suspicions as to the genuineness of his blood, as he stated that he thought he had met my brother in Scotland formerly, when he bore the name of "Burton," of which my brother had no remembrance — I will, however, acquaint him with your remarks, and I am sure he will have great pleasure in making his acquaintance on his return.

Alexander's reluctance to embrace James Haliburton as his kinsman contrasts with Thomas Chandler's enthusiastic but seemingly short-lived friendship with James Haliburton, a man Thomas Chandler often invited and fully expected to visit him at Clifton. Whether or not he made the trip is uncertain. References to James Haliburton disappear from Thomas Chandler's correspondence after the early eighteen forties, even though James Haliburton lived until 1862.⁷

Thomas Chandler's passion for researching his Haliburton heritage and developing relationships with other Haliburtons continued until the end of his life. Copies of two letters from a Joseph Haliburton living in Paris (dated 27 May 1864 and 18 July 1864) also survive. The passion for exploring their lineage passed to his son Robert, who made his own visit to Scotland in 1859. Robert continued researching the Scottish descent of the Haliburtons for the remainder of his life.

Also present in the collection are notes to Thomas Chandler from R. H. Barham (8 July 1843) and Mrs. Frances Trollope (21 July 1849); a newsy letter to Susannah Haliburton (dated 16 December 1845) from Lady Amelia FitzClarence (wife of Lord Falkland, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia) inviting her stay at Government House in Halifax; and an autograph of Harriet Beecher Stowe

(who Thomas Chandler and Augusta met on the steamer *Canada* en route for England) dated 9 April 1853.

Group 4: Family Documents

THE LARGEST GROUP OF materials, the “family documents” (in excess of 95 items), throw considerable light on Thomas Chandler’s children, and through them on Haliburton himself. They are full of interesting comments and snippets of information about both Thomas Chandler and his wife Louisa, as well as the children themselves. In their middle and later years, the children began to reflect fondly on the days when their mother had been alive and the family had been intact. After her death, the daughters married, one by one, in the years leading up to 1856, the year of Thomas Chandler’s removal to England and the beginning of his new life with Sarah Harriet Hosier Williams. His sons embarked on their own careers (Robert Grant in the legal profession, and Arthur in the army commissariat).

In the mid 1880s, an interesting series of letters passed between Susannah (widowed and living in Halifax) and Augusta (widowed and living in Torquay, England), concerning an old project of theirs. Fourteen years earlier, they had intended, as a tribute to their father, to issue a selection of the best of their father’s writing, separating what they called the plentiful “wheat” from the “chaff,” and omitting the “nasty jokes” (which “poor mamma never could stand”). The project had been abandoned following the untimely death of Susannah’s only son, Haliburton, and Augusta’s husband, Alexander, both in 1873. But Susannah’s desire to memorialize her father revived when she discovered that the librarian at the Legislative Library in Halifax, F. Blake Crofton, was contemplating writing a life. The thought made Susannah shudder, and stirred her once again into action.

Augusta urged Susannah to put on paper all that she could remember about their mother. When Susannah sent her recollections to her sister, Augusta then made extensive marginal notations and showed the manuscript to Robert Grant, who added seven pages of his own commentary. Arthur even hired a researcher to search military and public records for information concerning the Neville family. The basis of their knowledge, however, remained the stories about herself that Louisa had passed on to her children. The stories recorded in their group memoir must have been seen by Emily Weaver in the 1920s because they form the basis of her article: “Women of Canada: Louisa Neville, wife of the author of ‘Sam Slick,’” which appeared in the *Canadian Home Journal* in 1924.

Further family correspondence includes a group of letters written by Alexander and Augusta during their extensive travels in the Holy Land in 1856. The recently-married pair tented their way across middle-eastern deserts with typical Victorian fortitude and intrepidity, carrying as many of the comforts of Victorian England with them as they could manage. Many items of a genealogical nature, written by Thomas Chandler’s children, complete the collection.

Group 5: Photographs and Prints

AN UNDOUBTED BONUS ARE the photographs and prints that accompany the manuscripts. Two new photographic images of Thomas Chandler in his later years can now be added to the ones we already know well [Figures 1 and 2]. Ten fine photographs of Gordon House are also in the collection, dated 1865. They are part of the same series as the interior photograph of Gordon House reprinted in my edition of *The Letters of Thomas Chandler Haliburton*.⁸ Haliburton is present in all his self-reflected glory. In Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, when not actually present physically in the photograph, he is present in portrait, print, or plaster bust. All the exterior shots including the one reproduced here [Figure 8] reveal a highly ordered and pleasant garden, very much the second Mrs. Haliburton's pride and joy. Also amongst the photographs are several of his children, Augusta [Figure 9], Laura, Emma Marie, and Robert, as well as fine interior shots of both Augusta's [Figure 10] and Emma Marie's [Figure 11] houses. The interiors of the daughter's houses in Torquay and Dover betray a love of art, prints, and Victorian bric-a-brac. They confirm the family's place in the pantheon of late Victorian middle-class respectability.

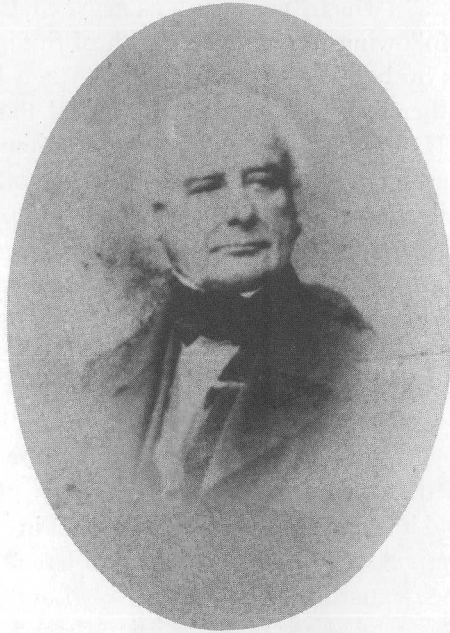


Figure 1. TCH by A. Claudet, 107 Regent's Street, London, "in later years after retirement in England."



Figure 2. Private Studio Portrait by Arthur James Melhuish,
12, York Place, Portman Square, London.

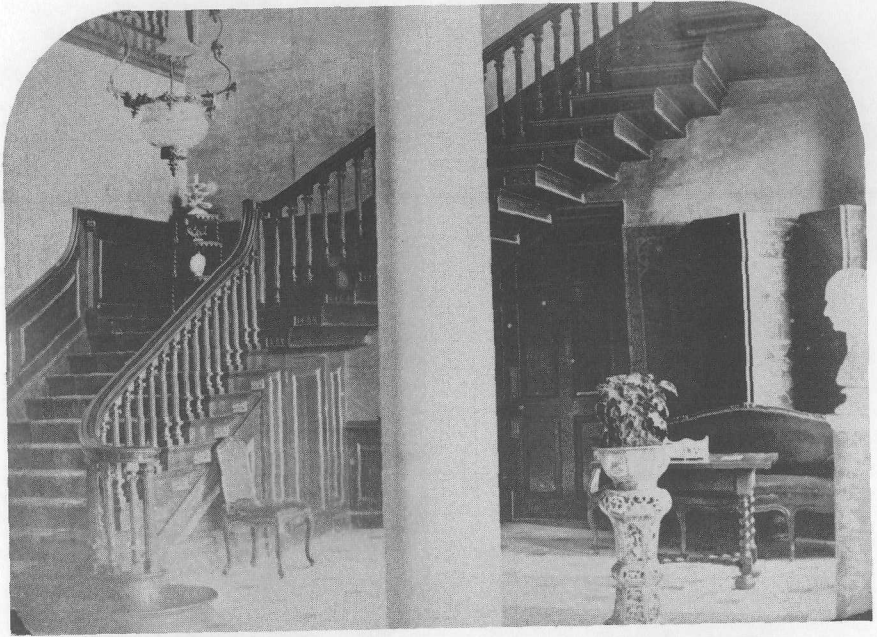


Figure 3. Stairway, Gordon House, Isleworth.



Figure 4. Gordon House.



Figure 5. TCH in his study at Gordon House.



Figure 6. Another view of the study.



Figure 7. TCH in the drawing-room of Gordon House.



Figure 8. An exterior view of Gordon House.



Figure 9. Studio portrait of Augusta Haliburton by Martin Jacolettry, Queen's Gate Hall Studio, South Kensington and Dover.



Figure 10. Interior of Grafton House, Torquay, the home of Augusta Haliburton: photo by Cox & Durrant, Torquay.



Figure 11. Interior of Emma Marie Haliburton's house, East Cliff, Dover.

“THE WILSON COLLECTION” offers direct glimpses of Haliburton himself, his family circle at “Clifton” in Nova Scotia, and, later, of his Gordon House world. We literarily look over the shoulders of his children, during the final years of their lives, as they reflected (from the comforts of their later years) on the world they had long left behind. “The Wilson Collection” provides invaluable personal and pictorial glimpses of the private world Thomas Chandler Haliburton inhabited, and bequeathed to his children. The paradox, of course, is that Haliburton’s passport to all this Victorian respectability was the often indelicate and robust “Sam Slick.”

NOTES

¹ The acquisition of “The Wilson Collection” by Acadia University would not have been possible without the initiative of the editors of *Canadian Literature*, the generous assistance of Professor Carole Gerson, Department of English, Simon Fraser University, the encouragement of Iain Bates, Librarian at Acadia University, and financial assistance provided by Acadia University. The photographs were prepared by Gary Boates, Audio-Visual Department, Acadia University. I would like to thank Charles and Patricia Wilson for their placing of this collection in the public domain and for granting permission to reprint both letters and photographs.

Charles Wilson descends from Thomas Chandler’s daughter Emma Marie Haliburton (1828-1911) who, in 1850, married the Rev. John Bainbridge Smith, Mathematical Professor at King’s College, Windsor, N.S., and Anglican minister. They later moved to England. The documents were brought to Canada by Emma’s youngest daughter, Emily Agnes (1864-1941), who emigrated to Victoria, British Columbia, in 1912. Charles Wilson’s father, Emily’s nephew, also emigrated to British Columbia and inherited the material from his Aunt.

² I can find no confirmation that the name “Clifton” derives from the birthplace of Louisa Neville, as is generally assumed. Details in the papers of the “Wilson Collection” suggest that Haliburton’s family felt that they had property rights at “Clifton” on Kale Water in the Scottish Borders region. The family’s interest in their Scottish roots started with Thomas Chandler’s grandfather, and was continued by his father, who wrote enquiring after the exact nature of the family’s links to “Clifton.”

³ Published by University of Toronto Press.

⁴ Besides Augusta (1823-1891), the other children mentioned in the letters are Laura (1824-1910), Emma Marie (1828-1911), Amelia (1830-1902), Robert Grant (1831-1898), and Arthur (1832-1907). Susannah (1817-1899), the eldest daughter, had already married John Wesley Weldon, judge of the Supreme Court of New Brunswick in 1848. She was his second wife. The *DCB*, XII, 403-404, spells her name “Susanna” (admitting that burial and death records spell it “Sussanah”). As Lady Falkland writes: “Farewell *Susannah!* I know not if Susannah as [sic] one or two *Ens*” (16 December 1845). Clearly, she never anticipated two “s’s.” The family referred to her always as “Susan.”

⁵ A fifth edition of *The Clockmaker*, First Series, now owned by Mr. C. Buhagiar of Toronto.

⁶ Besides James Haliburton (1788-1862) and his brother Decimus Burton (1800-1881), Haliburton had been introduced to Jane Burton (1792-1879) who married

Thomas Walker Wood (1786-1867), her daughters Emily (1815-92), Helen (1816-1903) and Rose Anna (1818-1847); Septimus Burton (1792-1842) and his son Arthur; Octavia Burton (1796-1846), who married Edmund Hopkinson (1789-1869); Henry Burton (1799-1849); Alfred Burton (1802-1877); and Jesse Burton (1804-1844), who married John Peter Fearon (1804-1873), most of whom are mentioned in the two letters following. My thanks to Neil Cooke of London for supplying these family details.

⁷ According to Neil Cooke of London, England, who has extensively researched James Haliburton's life, his later years are almost a complete blank.

⁸ 180. Larry Loomer of Windsor, Nova Scotia, speculates that the series might have been designed to be viewed through a stereopticon.

THE CHAIR

Kevin Roberts

I have put down my tools, hung
the plane, square, saw up
in their allotted space because
the fir, though kiln dry, bucked
its grainy twist, refused me, pulled
its mulish dance against its imagined
shape, resists the straight back, solid
four legs

I hang my apron, hammer down, smell
the sweet chips, shavings fallen
in a scuff on the floor

finally the effort wearies, the wrist
weakens, the eye fails at the straight
run of every edge

I consider that the wood
should have stayed ringing in the trunk
sprung diurnal out to branches, leaves
silent but graceful, its own artisan
without pretense