



**Naval Letters From Captain Percival Drayton,
1861-1865: Printed From the Original Manuscripts
Presented to the New York Public Library by
Miss. Gertrude L. Hoyt (Classic Reprint)**

Percival Drayton

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Excerpt from Naval Letters From Captain Percival Drayton, 1861-1865: Printed From the Original Manuscripts Presented to the New York Public Library by Miss. Gertrude L. Hoyt

The Drayton letters printed herewith came to the New York Public Library from Miss Gertrude L. Hoyt, with the following note:

My Dear Dr. Billings

The following letters were written during the war of the rebellion to my father, Lydig M. Hoyt and to Alexander Hamilton, grandson of General Hamilton, by Captain Percival Drayton, U. S. N.

He belonged to a distinguished family of South Carolina. His grandfather, William Drayton, was a jurist in colonial times, and on the adoption of the constitution in 1789, was appointed the first United States Judge for South Carolina. His father, also named William, was educated in England for the law and enjoyed an extensive practice in 1812, when he was commissioned lieutenant-colonel of infantry in the war with Great Britain. In this service he rose to be colonel and afterwards inspector general. After the war he became Recorder of Charleston and in 1824 was elected to a seat in Congress which he occupied until 1833. During this period occurred the great contest over Nullification. In the face of strong pressure brought to bear by the government of his native state and by his personal friends and relatives, Drayton steadily and effectively opposed that principle as fatal to the authority of the United States government. President Jackson offered him the Secretaryship of War and the Mission to England both of which he declined. On retiring from Congress, he found his residence in Charleston less agreeable on account of his position which he had taken in the contest over nullification, and he removed to Philadelphia where he succeeded Nicholas Biddle as President of the United States Bank, and died in 1846.

The strength of character which inspired William Drayton in his opposition to nullification, was continued in his son Percival who remained true to the national government when his native state and his own brothers had taken up arms against it and when he himself was tempted by offers of high command in the Confederate service. Born in Charleston, 25th August, 1812, he entered the navy as a midshipman in 1827, became lieutenant in 1838 and saw sea service with the Brazilian, Mediterranean, and Pacific squadrons. After duty in the naval observatory at Washington, he took part in ordnance experiments with Farragut, then ranking as commander, and with him formed an intimate and lasting friendship. In 1855 he was promoted to commander and in 1858 took part in the Paraguay expedition.

The opening of the War of the Rebellion found him on ordnance duty at the Philadelphia navy yard.

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