

Ms. Leonard's next letter was written from Madison Springs a week later, but contains a great deal of information about Athens:

Madison Springs July 12 1840. My dear Sister, At Athens I soon felt "at home" at the "Planters Hotel." Mrs. Woolridge is a kind woman and does every thing to make us comfortable. the Southerners deserve the name and reputation they have for kindness and hospitality. We have hourly proofs, the ladies in Athens frequently sending in fruit. Mrs Dougherty⁴ (Mrs. Judge Dougherty, every body has a title civil or military) sent us in a lunch with many apologies that we would not feel *insulted*, but she thought so much of us and we were strangers etc. etc. warm biscuit, stamp butter, a plate full of sponge cake, a glass dish of preserves, another of apple jelly, and a plate of *great tangy baked Apples!* from my own observation, the Southerners care less for *appearances*, but more for *comfort* than the Northerners. I mean as speaking in general terms, always exceptions. here they dont mind as much about houses and furniture and I must add *neatness* as Yankees. Just give them a carriage & horses and niggars enough and they will "live in peace and die in a pot of grease."

Before quitting Athens I will say a word more. I went to see a Phantasmagoria got up by Major Jackson,⁵ one of the Proffessors in the College (of Botany & Chemistry I think) N. had an invitation from a boarder & went off in style. I prefered going with Mr. & Mrs. Woolridge. Sister would not go no how - Mr. Wood⁶ another [professor] or rather a "Tutor" in College boards there and a number of the Students and some lawyers. Mr Woolridge has a partner in business (rather a silent one generally) a Col Symmes - he is a Bachelor, *rather* advanced [age], reputed *very* rich - fifty thousand available, besides a whole town in Alabama, which *he* values at a million and a half.

I have been twice to the Botanic Gardens.⁷ it belongs to the State and is public for people to walk and look. a great many walk there when the weather is pleasant. it is a delightful place, full of birds. I found a mocking Birds nest, the old one sitting on the nest just above my reach in a beautiful little tree. mocking birds here are as tame as robins at the north, they are singing every where. there are some rare trees in the gardens - a weeping willow, the slip taken from Napoleon's grave at St Helena! the magnolia, Bay tree, tulip, locust, hickory, oak, chestnut, and a *bug bear* of tree standing by itself which a young gentleman told me gravely was the tepas or poison tree; but is nothing more or less than a large dog wood!

There is a brook running thru the gardens, and a little pond with the genuine pond lilies. then they have a Green House full of curiosities, the pine apple, half grown, the splendid passion flower, the *Carrion* flower of rare & beautiful colors blended, but touch