MUSCOGIANA
Journal of the Muscogee Genealogical Society

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Interested parties are welcome to submit primary source material and journal articles for publication in Muscogiana. Submissions should be e-mailed to calliebmcginnis@gmail.com as a Word document. To be considered for publication, material must be of cultural, historical and/or genealogical significance to the Columbus/original Muscogee County, Georgia, area that consists of Harris County, Talbot County, Marion County, Chattahoochee County, and the current Muscogee County. Vital information about living persons should not be included. All articles should be footnoted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, and should be 1000 to 5000 words in length. The Editors and the Editorial Board make final decisions on the acceptance of material for publication. Neither the Muscogee Genealogical Society nor Columbus State University can accept responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in material submitted for publication.

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On the cover: East side of Joseph Thomas Camp’s obelisk in Linwood Cemetery, Columbus, Georgia.
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In Memoriam
Peggy Joyce West
1935 - 2015
Muscogee Genealogical Society Treasurer
2006 - 2015

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From the Editor

In this issue of *Muscogiana*, we present three historical articles. The first, by recently-retired Columbus State University Professor of History Virginia Causey, has as its subject an early nineteenth century murder in Columbus: the murder of Joseph T. Camp by John Milton, who later went on to become the governor of Florida. Dr. Causey relates this incident to the antebellum Southern code of honor – and the violence that frequently accompanied it.

For our second article we present a piece written by Johnnie Warner, Director and Founder of the Columbus Black History Museum, and Dr. Richard Gardiner, Associate Professor of Social Science Education at Columbus State University. Their article treats a little known event in the civil rights history of Columbus: the 1958 visit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The authors give background information on King’s visit and speech at the Prince Hall Masonic Building and explore the possibility that a house bombing that took place later that same night may have been intended for King.

The last historical article is by Dr. Craig Lloyd, Emeritus Professor of History and former Archivist at Columbus State University. This article first appeared in the last issue of *Muscogiana*, but because of some printing errors, we are reprinting the entire article, with apologies to the author and readers for the inconvenience. Dr. Lloyd’s article provides a historical account on Margaret Sullivan, a Columbus resident and Carson McCullers scholar.

The fourth article in this issue is one of genealogical interest. It is the second part of the Death Register on file at Vital Records Section, Muscogee County Health Department, transcribed by Daniel Olds, a member of the Muscogee Genealogical Society and an avid indexer. Initially, it was thought that this index would be published on a serial basis in its entirety. However, the editor now concedes that including the names in this index into the cumulative online Muscogiana Surname Index, will be an overly-tedious undertaking. Therefore, a decision has been made to mount the entire Death Register on the Society’s website (www.muscoqeeqenealoqy.com) and cease publishing it in the journal. This will be our final installment.

We are sorry to announce that our editor, Ed Howard, has resigned due to increasing responsibilities at work. We truly appreciate all the work that Ed has done for *Muscogiana*. Currently, I am serving as interim editor – with the able assistance of Rachel Dobson, our Assistant Editor. Rachel is communications specialist and visual resources curator for the
Department of Art and Art History at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. We are grateful to have her on board!

With the next issue of *Muscogiana*, we will welcome a new editor: Mike Bunn, who now serves as Assistant Director at Historic Blakeley State Park in Spanish Fort, Alabama. Mike knows the Columbus area: he was born here, and grew up in Lee County in the rural community of Crawford. He holds masters’ degrees both in higher education administration and history from the University of Alabama as well as a graduate certificate in public history from the University of West Georgia. Previously Mike has been the History Curator at the Columbus Museum and the Director of the Historic Chattahoochee Commission in Eufaula. He has written or co-authored books on the Creek War, Civil War in Alabama, and the history of the Chattahoochee Valley as well as numerous essays and articles. We are very fortunate to have Mike join us. Welcome, Mike!

Finally, we would also like to take this opportunity to mention the loss of one of our valued Society members, Peggy West. Peggy served as our treasurer from 2006 until her recent death in March of this year. Our condolences to her family.

Callie B. McGinnis, Interim Editor
The Milton-Camp Murder: Honor and Violence in Old Columbus

By Dr. Virginia Causey

On January 23, 1832, Joseph Thomas Camp killed Sowell Woolfolk in a duel near Fort Mitchell, Alabama, across the Chattahoochee River from Columbus, Georgia. The duel had its origins in a conflict linked to honor, personality, and politics. Woolfolk was a member of the elite, one of the original Muscogee County, Georgia, commissioners, a large landowner, and state senator since Columbus had been founded in 1828. Camp was a lawyer, a young man on the make in the raw frontier town. The Weekly Enquirer deplored the "barbarous custom" of such affairs of "honor," but many prominent citizens had gone to watch the duel and such personal quarrels were common, though not always deadly.1 A year and a half later, Camp died at the hands of another promising young lawyer, John Milton, a political rival. These conflicts illustrate values of antebellum Southern white men and serve as a case study for examining the intersection of honor and violence in old Columbus. Personal honor was a man's most precious possession. To avenge a public insult, violence was an acceptable response, a notion that survives to a degree in modern Columbus.

Joseph Camp emerges from the historical record as a man with a violent temper, easily aroused. At Milton's trial in September 1833, testimony described Camp as a "violent man toward his enemies. His passions were easily excited, and he was a desperate man when excited, reckless of consequences."2 He had had several violent scrapes in Madison, Georgia, in the 1820s before he moved to Columbus. He also was publically censured by prominent men there for attempting to climb through a young woman's window in the middle of the night before being ejected by her brother-in-law.3 He came to Columbus in 1831 to get a new start and make his fortune.

The origins of Camp's feud with Milton also sprang from honor, politics and personality. We may think politics today are partisan and dirty, but they are pure as the driven snow compared to the 1830s. Two factions feuded in Georgia, the groups bound by personal loyalty rather than deep ideological differences. Camp and Milton were in different factions and each had political ambitions. The conflict began with an anonymous letter in the Columbus Democrat on June 29, 1833, harshly attacking Milton. Milton counter-attacked in the July 6 Enquirer, assailing the author of the letter as "a base coward and worthless scoundrel" who "has been publicly denied the privileges of respectable society in consequences

1Columbus Weekly Enquirer, January 28, 1832; John H. Martin, Columbus, Geo., from its Selection as a "Trading Town" in 1827, to its Partial Destruction by Wilson's Raid in 1865 (Columbus: Thos. Gilbert, 1874), 1:32.
2Columbus Weekly Enquirer, October 12, 1833.
3Columbus Weekly Enquirer, July 20, 1833.
of his moral depravity . . . “ He also alleged the author was guilty of stealing and forgery, alluding to a charge against Camp in Madison.4

Camp loosed his vitriol on Milton in the July 20 newspaper, calling him “a mere grub worm of the dung hill” and a hypocrite for posturing as a virtuous Methodist when actually he had attempted to seduce a married woman in his church. He lured her to the river, said Camp, and “attacked her in the open light of day” while his own wife was in church. He also claimed Milton robbed an innocent girl of her virtue and “bastardized her issue.”5

These were fighting words the men flung at each other. Historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown notes that “honor” was a concept almost wholly external in nature. Southerners made no real differentiation between the public and private realms. The opinions of others were an indispensable part of personal identity and self-worth. A man without honor had no reputation. A modern man might say, “I am honest,” but an antebellum southern man would say, “I wish to be regarded as honest.” Most public violent confrontations arose because one man disparaged the manliness or bearing of the other, usually through “ritual words” such as “liar” or “coward.”6

After the newspaper assaults, the men regularly exchanged insults on the streets of Columbus. By the summer of 1833, both had gone around armed for weeks. Their friends feared for their safety. On Saturday, August 3, Milton sat with others in front of a tavern. Camp passed by on his way to get a watermelon from a wagon parked just down Broad Street. He went past Milton, then turned and demanded, “Who do you think is afraid of your pistols?” A Milton ally testified at the trial that Milton did not draw it, but he plainly saw the butt of the pistol and Milton’s hand on it. Milton shifted in his chair and replied, “I understand you intend to shoot or attack me on sight.” Camp walked a little way, but turned back and called Milton “a damned liar,” “a damned scamp, and a damned coward.” Milton retorted that they both were armed—there was a better way to settle this than with talk. Camp went down the street to the watermelon wagon and came back with a melon under each arm. He picked up a chair, put it right in front of Milton, and sat facing him. He felt around for his dirk knife—his nervous friend quickly handed him one. He did not want Camp to give Milton an excuse to fire by drawing a weapon. Deliberately, he cut the watermelons open and offered some to everybody except Milton. Milton called to the Negro boy at the watermelon cart and bought a melon of his own. After they had eaten, Camp went about his business, as did Milton. Not long after, however, they passed each other in the street. Rather than pass at close quarters, Milton angled toward the other side of Broad. After Camp passed him five or six steps, “he stopped and

4 Martin, I: 48; Columbus Weekly Enquirer, July 6, 1833.
5 Columbus Weekly Enquirer, July 20, 1833.
straightened himself, raised his left hand to the left breast of his coat, and his right hand up to his left breast,” and wheeled back in the direction Milton walked. But when he turned, he bumped into a man walking directly behind him and stopped, startled. Milton’s friends believed he was about to shoot Milton in the back, but was distracted when greeted by the man behind him.7

No doubt both men spent the next week meditating on their situation. The whole town was talking about and taking sides in the feud. On Sunday afternoon, August 11, Milton went riding with a friend and told him he thought things might come to a head the coming week. He feared he would be killed. With his family terrified for his safety, he could not concentrate on business.8

On Monday morning, August 12, the first day of the new circuit court term, Joseph Camp entered a store on Broad about 7:00 A.M. to buy a new set of suspenders. He took off his coat and vest and laid his pistol on the counter. Camp put on his new suspenders, then his vest. He shoved the pistol down inside it, and then reached in to grasp the handle. He unbuttoned a button, perhaps to make access to the pistol easier. Camp then put on his coat, picked up his umbrella and his old suspenders, and left.9

Milton told a friend that morning he believed Camp would attack him without giving notice. He reported that two or three people had told him not to go the courthouse – that Camp planned to shoot him that morning. Milton was on Broad Street when he saw Camp coming toward the courthouse. Milton stepped into John Howard’s store where he retrieved a double-barreled shotgun he’d hidden behind the door. Without a word, he stepped in front of Camp and discharged the first barrel, hitting Camp in the left chest. The blast spun Camp around and knocked him into the dusty street. He propped on his right hip and elbow, but Milton loosed the second barrel into his back and killed him. After shooting Camp, Milton walked to his office, but surrendered to the sheriff soon after.10

Milton should have been convicted of premeditated murder, but his defense attorneys, the judge, and apparently most of the jury were in his political faction. They accepted his plea of self-defense. Milton told the judge upon his arrest that Camp had long threatened “to shoot him in the street.” Most Columbusites saw his killing of Camp “as a legitimate act of a man defending his name and family honor against the threats of a proven enemy.” Though acquitted, Milton’s local reputation was too checkered for political success. He moved to Mobile in 1835 and then to Florida in 1845 where he was elected governor in 1861, finally achieving the political stature he craved.11

7 Martin, I: 49; Columbus Weekly Enquirer, Oct. 5 and Oct. 12, 1833.
8 Columbus Weekly Enquirer, Oct. 12, 1833.
9 Columbus Weekly Enquirer, Oct. 5, 1833.
10 Columbus Weekly Enquirer, Aug. 17. 1833; Oct. 5, 1833; Sept. 28, 1833; Oct. 12, 1833.
Violence is a theme that winds through Columbus history, and honor often played a role. Around the time of Camp's murder, several men published challenges to duels in the newspaper. Historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown argues that defense of honor was an important motive for Confederates in the fight against perceived Northern insults in the Civil War. In April 1878, a disgruntled reader sued Enquirer-Sun editor William E. Salisbury for libel. Just ten minutes after the court awarded the plaintiff only one cent in damages, the man fatally shot Salisbury in the back while he waited for a train.12

In 1889 Benjamin T. Hatcher, the major stockholder in Gunby Jordan's Midland Railroad, charged in the Enquirer-Sun that Jordan had manipulated the stock to his advantage, causing huge losses to other investors. Jordan strongly objected to this slur on his "honor as a gentleman" and demanded Hatcher withdraw his charge. Letters flew back and forth, hand-delivered by the confidants of each man. They exchanged "fighting words," and Jordan challenged Hatcher to a duel. Because Hatcher was partially deaf and might not hear the command to fire guns, his second proposed "the use of...bowie knives with ten-inch blades to be used in a ten-foot ring..." Jordan's second said fighting with knives was

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“unprecedented” and “barbarous.” He offered the use of any type of firearm, “shotguns, rifles, and pistols [and] to see that both principals heard the commands.” Hatcher declined. Local businessmen led by John F. Flournoy attempted to mediate. Finally, Georgia Senator Hoke Smith rode into town and persuaded Jordan to withdraw “his card” and Hatcher his “offensive language,” defusing the conflict.13

Two psychologists in a 1996 study documented a “culture of honor” persisting in the South. They found that Southern men value a reputation for toughness and über-masculinity and cannot tolerate insults. The scholars found the “public” nature of honor persisted and was a factor in the South having more homicides and violence than any other region. Today, some men transfer their personal honor to college loyalties. When an Auburn and Alabama fan come to blows over their respective schools, the notion of honor lies close to the surface. More deadly outcomes sometimes result, however. For example, in 2011, two local men clashed over their relationships with a woman, a conflict related to honor and characterized by “fighting words” exchanged between the two of them. The result was the murder of one and suicide of the other. In the early hours of New Year’s Day 2013, gunshots erupted at the Majestic Sports Bar in south Columbus. Several young men pulled their pistols after engaging in a bout of “beefing,” in which they flung taunts disparaging others’ honor and masculinity. An innocent bystander died in the hail of bullets.14

History lurks in the shadows of the present. We can only understand where we are today by comprehending our yesterdays. Even an event as distant and unique as the Milton-Camp murder can illuminate issues persisting in Columbus society, such as notions of public honor and resulting violence. Violence leaves a bloody trail through Columbus history, continuing into the present and often fueled by slurs upon a man’s honor.

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13 John F. Flournoy, D.P. Dozier, Cliff B. Farnie, Wm. A. Little, and T.E. Blanchard, letters to Gunby Jordan, July 6 and 10, 1889 and Hoke Smith, letter to G. Gunby Jordan, July 11, 1889, G. Gunby Jordan Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Columbus State University Archives, Columbus, Georgia.


The inscription on the west side of the Camp obelisk reads as follows:

Sacred to
The Memory of
Joseph Thomas Camp
This monument
Has been erected by his
afflicted friends in honor
of his manly virtues, and
as a testimonial of their
grief at his untimely
Death
He was born in Nottaway County, State of Virginia
On the 30th day of April 1800,
and departed this life at Columbus
On the 12th day of August 1833.
Aged 33 years
A Missing Chapter in the Martin Luther King Saga:
His Speech in Columbus, Georgia, and
the Bomb That Exploded Later That Night

By Johnnie Warner and Dr. Richard Gardiner

Bombings related to the biography of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are well publicized in the canon of the King narrative. Stuart Wexler and Larry Hancock catalogued a long list of threats, both false and authentic, on Dr. King’s life. Perhaps the most perilous bombings targeted for King were the two that occurred at his Montgomery parsonage in 1956 and 1957. The deadly bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham where King and colleagues met in 1963 is also a central part of the civil rights narrative and is featured prominently at the beginning of the motion picture, Selma. Prior to his assassination, the most harmful threat to King’s life came in September 1958, while he was promoting his book, Stride Toward Freedom, in New York City. He was nearly stabbed to death by a mentally unstable woman who was convinced King was a communist. The doctor indicated that the knife came so close to his aorta that if he had sneezed, he would have died.¹


Strive Toward Freedom was Martin Luther King, Jr.’s first book, written in 1957-58 and released in September 1958.
Little known, however, is the fact that during the time that he was preparing *Stride Toward Freedom*, King may have escaped a dynamite explosion during a visit to Columbus, Georgia, where he gave a talk on the evening of July 1, 1958 at the Columbus Prince Hall Masonic Temple. Shortly after midnight that same night, the home of a local black woman named Essie Mae Ellison was bombed. This event during King’s journey is one that has been almost entirely overlooked by Taylor Branch, King’s principal biographer, as well as other King scholars; it is not even mentioned in Wexler and Hancock’s otherwise thorough catalog of threats against King. The story of the Columbus bombing, possibly targeted for Dr. King, is a missing chapter in the King saga. It is one, however, that adds more color and depth to the narrative as it illustrates the social context and dynamics that King encountered in his journey. The aim of this article is to chronicle and assess this historical drama that has heretofore eluded historians.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Interest in Columbus, Georgia**

Martin Luther King developed an interest in Columbus, Georgia, while studying at Morehouse College. As a student, he carefully analyzed the case of Primus King (not a relative of Martin), a black barber and pastor in Columbus, who in 1944 challenged the constitutionality of being prohibited from voting in the Democratic Party primary. Although the 15th amendment of 1870 guaranteed blacks the right to vote in the constitutionally mandated elections held in November, party primaries were considered private affairs not conducted by governments and therefore not subject to civil rights law. However, in postbellum Georgia, winning a Democratic primary was equivalent to winning the November election. No other party’s candidate contesting in the general election stood a chance against the Democratic nominee. Since blacks were denied the vote in the Democratic primary, they were essentially disenfranchised.

In the early 1940s a group of black men in Columbus calling themselves Social-Civic-25 Club (SC 25), led by a physician named Thomas Brewer, Sr., strategized to challenge the rules regarding voting in the Democratic primary. In order to get their case before a judge, the SC 25 needed an individual willing to challenge the rule in person: someone to go to the courthouse on primary election day to attempt to vote. The risks were great and no one seemed willing to, as Primus King put it, “put a bell on the cat’s neck.” King was alluding to an Aesop’s fable in which mice came up with a great idea to protect themselves from a cat so that they would always know when the cat was coming. The problem, of course, was that one of the mice had to be the one to sacrifice itself by adorning the cat. Primus King offered himself to the SC 25 as the one to “put the bell on the cat’s neck.” On Independence Day 1944, Primus King went down to the courthouse to vote in the Democratic primary. He was immediately grabbed by a policeman and asked, “What in the hell are you doin’ nigger?” King answered, “I’m going to

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vote, sir.” The officer replied, “Ain’t no niggers votin’ here today.” Then Primus King left the courthouse and immediately went to file a lawsuit. The attorney asked, “Do you know what you’re doing?” King answered, “Yes, sir, I know.” As soon as notice of the lawsuit appeared in the newspapers, Primus King began getting death threats. One phone caller told him, “You must want to be put in the river.” King’s response was, “Well, they’ve put so many Negroes in the river for nothing, I’m willing to go in there for something.”

Primus King’s case was heard in Macon in September 1945. The federal judge ruled in King’s favor. The Muscogee Democratic Party appealed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Primus King’s case was assisted by none other than Thurgood Marshall. Marshall was the lawyer who, nine years later, was victorious in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, and who was later appointed a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. With Marshall’s help, the U.S. Circuit upheld the lower court’s ruling. The Muscogee Democratic Party appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In April 1946 the U.S. Supreme Court refused to accept the appeal, and the ruling in favor of Primus King stood.

On the same day in 1944, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s father had attempted to do in Atlanta what Primus King would do a year later in Columbus. Both Kings were turned away from the polling place, but it was Primus King who took it a step further by challenging the legality of the exclusion. As a result, the senior Martin Luther King was quite fond of Primus King, saying, “He did so much with so little.”

1944 was also the year that the junior Martin entered Morehouse College. While at Morehouse, he opted to write a research paper on the Columbus civil rights strategy. Said Primus King in 1979 to a Columbus State University student interviewer: “M.L. did exactly what you’re doin, wrote about me when he was in school. I wouldn’t say that I’m the cause of M.L. bein’ inspired to do what he did, but he did just what you doin’ now, and it had to be a report...wrote about me when he was in school.” The plan of Dr. Thomas Brewer’s association to find a respectable individual willing to “put the bell on the cat’s neck” would serve as a prototype for Martin Luther King, Jr.’s activity in Montgomery. The model is reflected in the selection of Rosa Parks to risk arrest and put the bell on the busses’ neck.

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3Social-Civic-25 Club Collection, Columbus Black History Museum and Archives, Columbus, Georgia. Dr. Brewer was killed in 1956. Primus King, interview by Paul A. Davis, July 1979, transcript, General Oral History Collection, Columbus State University Archives, Columbus, Georgia.


Martin Luther King, Jr. Invited to Columbus

Martin Luther King's appearance in Columbus, Georgia, was orchestrated by two cousins named Nesbitt. Robert D. Nesbitt was the clerk and Chairman of the Board of Deacons at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1954. He was the head of the church pastoral search committee. When Dr. King was being considered for the pastorate there, Mr. Nesbitt traveled to Georgia and invited him to preach in Montgomery for the first time on January 17, 1954. Nesbitt also signed the letter inviting King to assume the pastorate at Dexter Avenue that year. The next year, Nesbitt's family members were all personally involved in the bus boycotts that King led in Montgomery. Delavel P. Nesbitt, Robert's first cousin, was born in Montgomery, but made his home in Columbus, Georgia. He was the manager of the Liberty Theater in Columbus and served as an entertainment promoter. Additionally, D. P. Nesbitt was actively involved with the Prince Hall Masons.6

Dr. King wrote to D.P. Nesbitt on the first of May, 1958. Nesbitt responded by telegraph the following day, making arrangements for King to come to Columbus. Nesbitt also requested that King bring Coretta, his wife, and that she would be paid to sing as part of the engagement. In preparation for King's appearance in Columbus, the Prince Hall Masons sought out a venue for the event. The most logical place would have been St. James A.M.E. Church, most prominent of the black churches in Columbus. The Masons went to the St. James A.M.E. Church board to request use of the church for King's visit. The church board rejected the request, citing the recent assassination of Dr. Thomas Brewer and another black leader, and threats by the K.K.K. They also included in their rejection the fear that King might speak on politics; they said that the church should be spiritual, not political.7

Dr. King's Return from the White House

The week before Dr. King appeared in Columbus, he was in Washington, D.C., petitioning President Eisenhower at the White House. June 1958 was the end of the groundbreaking experience of the Little Rock Nine: the first blacks to be integrated at Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas, compelled by the strong arm of Eisenhower and the military. But Arkansas Judge Harry J. Lemley decided to put an end to

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that integration for the following school year, 1958-59. Judge Lemley cited acts of violence that occurred during the year as warrant to close the school in the interest of safety. On June 23, King met with Eisenhower at the White House to protest Lemley's actions. When he came to Columbus the following week, King used the opportunity to continue to criticize Lemley's actions. Lemley's decision was of grave concern to King. He told his audience in Columbus that Lemley's decision was "a green light to violent forces in the South." The press reported part of King's speech in Columbus: "If Lemley's decision is not reversed, King said, such forces will feel that 'all they have to do is create a little violence to prevent integration.'

The Backdrop of Unequal Housing Opportunities

To understand the bombing that transpired when King came to Columbus, one must understand the white neighborhood "covenants" of the era. All around the United States before the 1960s, white homeowners entered into unwritten agreements that, in the event that they moved away, they would not sell their house to blacks. The rationale behind the covenants was as much economic as it was racial. The numbers provided by property appraisers and assessors made it clear that when a black person moved into a white neighborhood, it had an economic effect on the values of all the houses in the neighborhood. In this period, a common refrain was heard when a black family moved into a house on an all-white street: "There goes the neighborhood." But these covenants were essentially voluntary, without the force of law. And if a white family were eager to sell their house and move, they would not be the ones to experience any economic damages if they sold their house to blacks. So how could the whites that stayed in the neighborhood enforce the covenants? One method was intimidation through violence.

In late 1957 at a meeting of the Columbus City Commission, a complaint was publicly voiced that "Negroes were moving into the white neighborhood" near 26th Street and Fourth Avenue. Shortly thereafter a cross was burned in that neighborhood in front of one of the residences recently occupied by a black family. During the first week of 1958, four houses occupied by black families in that same neighborhood were damaged by dynamite.

Just three months later in April 1958, Mrs. Gibson Brooks, a white woman living on the edge of a

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white neighborhood in Columbus, agreed to sell her house at 2015 5th Avenue\textsuperscript{11} to Mrs. Essie Mae Ellison, a black woman. Mrs. Ellison purchased the house and moved in during May of 1958. At that time, Mrs. Brooks began to receive threatening telephone calls from a man identifying himself as Mr. Joe Musslewhite. Mr. Musslewhite tried to intimidate Brooks with threats of legal action for breaking the covenant. However, until Dr. King’s visit to Columbus, neither Brooks nor Ellison experienced any violence.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{King’s Speech and the Bombing in Columbus}


While Mrs. Brooks was receiving threats from Musslewhite, King’s visit to Columbus was being arranged. Letters were exchanged between King and Nesbitt concerning the details. On June 4th the decision of the St. James A.M.E. Church board to deny King the use of their sanctuary was reported. The board sensed that if King spoke in their church, violence was likely. The Friendship Baptist Church was


considered as an alternative, but in the end, the Masonic leaders simply decided to hold the event at their own temple. By June 30th, the location of King’s visit was known to the general public.\textsuperscript{13}

On the night of June 30th, 1958, a bomb threat on the Prince Hall Masonic Temple was called into the media in Columbus. As a result, security was increased around the temple. The Masons themselves mostly provided the security. Throughout the event Masons with guns were clearly visible on top of the building. The bomber or bombers had dynamite prepared, but due to the heightened security, they apparently could not get close enough to the temple to place the explosives without a real risk of being shot.\textsuperscript{14}

The bombers, however, may have had a plan B. Mrs. Ellison explained what she believed happened this way:

...There had been threats to blow up the Negro Masonic Temple where the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke on the night of July 1. However, police were believed to be guarding the Masonic temple, so I guess they decided to use the dynamite on me.\textsuperscript{15}

Dr. King gave his speech on the evening of July 1, 1958 at the Prince Hall Masonic Temple. Later that night, shortly after midnight, Mrs. Ellison’s house was bombed. The windows in her bedroom shattered and landed on her. After the bombing of Ellison’s house, Mrs. Brooks received a call saying, “the same thing could happen to your house.” Detectives were dispatched to Ellison’s house and officials indicated that the perpetrator would receive the death penalty if caught. No evidence exists to show that the perpetrator was apprehended.\textsuperscript{16}

The following night, Mrs. Brooks, the white woman who sold the house to Ellison received several telephone calls from a man who said little more than “you are free now.” But the following morning (Thursday), Brooks received another call in which the man said, “I’m damn glad I gave you a fictitious name. I see that you gave the information to the \textit{Enquirer}. You understand that the same thing could happen to your house.”\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13} See note 7.
\textsuperscript{14} “Columbus, Ga., Negro Dwelling Blown Up Today,” \textit{Greensboro (NC) Record}, July 2, 1958, accessed July 8, 2015, \url{http://www.genealogybank.com}. FBI Memo, “Bombing of Negro Residence,” July 2, 1958. Mrs. Minnie Wimbish and Evelyn Kirby, interview by Johnnie Warner, June 10, 2013, Columbus Black History Museum and Archives, Columbus, Georgia. Mrs. Minnie Wimbish and Evelyn Kirby, were the wife and daughter, respectively, of one of the armed Masons who was on the roof of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge on the night of July 1, 1958.
\textsuperscript{15} Subcommittee Number 3, Committee on \textit{Hearings before the Judiciary}, House of Representatives, 86th U.S. Congress, May 13-14, 1960, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{16} “Stiff Penalty,” \textit{Augusta Chronicle}.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
Mrs. Essie Mae Ellison and police detective C.T. Jones look at the damage done to her home in Columbus, Ga., by a midnight dynamite explosion.
Originally published in the *Columbus Ledger*, July 2, 1958, page 1.

The FBI Report

The Federal Bureau of Investigation filed a report about the bombing. The FBI document suggests that the attack on Mrs. Ellison's house was perpetrated by blacks themselves in order to justify paranoia expressed in Dr. King's speech. King's speech included allegations that white supremacists had plotted to commit acts of violence against the black community. The implication of the FBI report was that a bombing in Columbus immediately after the speech would vindicate and verify the substance of King's message, so someone in the black community made it happen. According to the FBI report:

Chief Moncrieff [Columbus Police Department] stated that the Rev. Martin King of Montgomery, Alabama, a leader in integration had made a speech alleging race hatreds and persecutions of Negroes that same night in Columbus and shortly before the blast. He was of the opinion that this incident may have been designed to emphasize Rev. King's allegations and to obtain publicity and sympathy for various colored organizations.\(^{18}\)

The local police chief and his chief of detectives, Henry T. Whitley, told the FBI that they believed Ellison was "in" on the scheme because Mrs. Ellison claimed to be in the bed when the explosion occurred, but the bed was covered with debris and glass when the detectives arrived. They said that "this indicated to them that the bed was not occupied at the time of the explosion, otherwise an area where Ellison was laying asleep would have been relatively free from debris."\(^{19}\)

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
Members of the black community disagreed. The bombing that took place at Ellison's house could have been fatal to any of the occupants, including a nine-year-old who was in the house at the time. If done with Ellison's consent, the bombing was pathological. But, they protested, the bombing was definitely not an "inside job." The threats against both Ellison, the owner, and Brooks who sold her the house, began back in the spring long before anyone in Columbus knew that King was coming, much less what his speech would include.

Significance
On the night of July 1, 1958, the Prince Hall Masons on the roof of their temple in Columbus probably prevented the destruction of that building and perhaps saved the life of Dr. King. Dynamite had been prepared and someone intended to use it that night. Had the armed Prince Hall Masons not been on the roof that night, the story of Martin Luther King in Columbus could have been much more tragic. But the fact that the armed Masons protected King is not the end of the story. Essie Mae Ellison was the unfortunate victim of violence that night – violence possibly intended for King. Consequently, her name deserves a place in the Columbus civil rights narrative. The fact that she did not die a martyr should not detract from the reality that she narrowly escaped that fate.

But even as it happened, this story is an important and illustrative narrative about the nature and context of King's work that should be included in the broader narrative of the King saga. Until now, this chapter has been overlooked. In addition to the story of the bombing of Dr. King's house in 1956 and the deadly bombing of the Birmingham church in 1963, the bombing of Essie Mae Ellison's Columbus house, with its connection to Dr. King's visit to Columbus, deserves a place in history. In the summer of 2013, the Black History Museum of Columbus, the Prince Hall Masons, and Columbus State University provided
representatives for a reenactment of King’s appearance in 1958. One of the participants at the 2013 reenactment was Minnie Wimbish, then age 98, who had been a member of the platform party at the 1958 event.

The president of the Prince Hall Masonic Temple Association, Matthew Bonham, commented on the commemorative event in the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer: "We want to commemorate Dr. King’s one official visit to Columbus, and we think it’s important that the community know that the Prince Hall family opened their doors to him during his visit when others were closed." He committed to repeating the commemorative event on an annual basis. King’s visit to Columbus on July 1, 1958 and its companion story of the Ellison house bombing are important parts of U.S. and local history that should not only be kept alive, but raised to a higher level.

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20 Alva James-Johnson, “Momma Wimbish Reflects on 100 Years,” Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, April 24, 2015, accessed July 9, 2015, http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/2015/04/24/3686778/momma-wimbish-reflects-on-100.html. In this 2015 article, Mrs. Wimbish is listed as turning 100 in April 2015.

Margaret Sue Sullivan: An Appreciation

By Dr. Craig Lloyd

From the editor: This article first appeared in the last issue of Muscogiana, but some text was rearranged during the review process. The entire corrected article is reprinted here, with apologies to the author and readers for the inconvenience.

Margaret Sullivan, who passed away in December, 2012, was a remarkable citizen of Columbus, Georgia. Her papers recently donated to the Columbus State University Archives tell the story of an intellectual and educator whose master's thesis and doctoral dissertation on Columbus writer Carson McCullers enhanced scholars' and general readers' appreciation of her work. Margaret was a progressive, politically supporting the Equal Rights Amendment for women and Civil Rights for African-Americans while opposing the escalation of the Vietnam War. After teaching at Jordan High School, she taught literature at Auburn and George Washington Universities in the 1960s and early 1970s. Afflicted with lupus, Sullivan's promising career as a professor of literature was cut short. She returned to Columbus in 1972 and, despite recurrences of the illness, turned her talents to enriching cultural institutions in her hometown.

As a young child, Margaret moved with her family from Chipley, Georgia, to Columbus, where she attended Wynnton School and, from 1948 to 1952, Columbus High School. The CHS yearbook, the Cohiscan of 1952, records the many activities and popularity of the young woman. Photographed multiple times with her infectious grin, "Margie" as she was known then and throughout her life by family and acquaintances, is said to, "amuse herself and others with her wit" and is, "smart but hates to show it." She was a member of the Student Council and the National Honor Society, participated in the School's Debaters Society and Dramatics Club. As President of Les Amis, the French Literature Club, she sent an Easter CARE package to a needy family in France. As project chairman for Arnica Tri-Hi-Y, a student charitable organization, she hosted a Christmas party for orphans and donated a CARE package to a Korean child.¹

¹ CARE was a post-WWII American humanitarian organization, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere.
In the margins of the *Cohiscan*, many classmates wrote notes that capture the engaging, generous personality which characterized her throughout her life. One, Vola Therrell, remembered "our philosophical musings and all the fun we've had at football games...Even when I'm feeling blue, you always seem to cheer me up." Correspondents in later life speak of Margaret's gift for helping them overcome moments of depression. Her younger sister Patricia, for instance, wrote that a family friend "called me last night. She said the greatest gift anybody had ever given her in her entire life was the conversation she had with you, Margie...Just to know someone whom she could talk to meant everything to her." Many classmates recognized Sullivan's great potential, encouraging her, as one put it, "to be all you can be."

Sullivan maintained her ties to her CHS classmates through the years. Mitsy Campbell Kovacs was a special friend who remembered in her yearbook note "the fun we've had in Dramatics for the last four years." In an organization called "Footlighters," Campbell and Sullivan during their senior year read stories for children once a week on local radio station WRBL. Like Margaret, Mitsy pursued an interesting 

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*Notes:

*Sullivan, Columbus High School Yearbook for 1952, copy owned by Margaret Sullivan; Patricia Sullivan Conner, letter to Sullivan, February 2, 1976, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 19, Margaret Sue Sullivan Papers, Columbus State University Archives (hereinafter, MSSP, CSUA). Note: Vola Therrell, later Vola Therrell Lawson, went on to become the first female city manager of Alexandria, Virginia.
life in the two decades after high school. After graduating from Northwestern University, she served in New York City as personal secretary to the Greek ambassador to the United Nations and then as executive secretary to the Chairman of CBS, Inc., the television broadcaster. In later life, the two friends traveled to Europe. Margaret's fondness for her high school friends and experiences led her to organize the 30th Class Reunion. For this occasion, she composed a booklet detailing the geographical and occupational distribution of class members as well as short biographies of many of them. She also had the 
*Columbus Ledger* publish a requesting help finding the addresses of some twenty people she had been unable to locate.

Sullivan first heard of Carson McCullers as a junior at Columbus High. "I had somehow learned about a play on Broadway that was written by a former Columbustite. As I was taking Dramatics, I asked an English teacher who this Carson McCullers was. The teacher pursed her lips, drew herself up and replied, 'We don't talk about her. She's perverted.' At home, Margaret found, "Mr. Webster's definition of perverted - 'turned out of one's natural course.' Frankly that didn't seem such a bad thing...Wasn't

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3 Mitsy Campbell Kovacs file, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 5, MSSP, CSUA.
4 30th Reunion booklet for Columbus High School Class of 1952, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 5, MSSP, CSUA.
education all about rescuing us from our natural course and steering us in the ways of the best that had been felt, thought, and discovered in the course of our civilization?" 

Margaret attended Duke University where she became a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most prestigious academic honor society in the nation. During her senior year, she wrote a paper on McCullers. After graduating in 1956, she returned to Columbus to teach at Jordan High School several years before attending Auburn University where she wrote her master’s thesis, "Carson McCullers: An Analysis of Four Major Works." She taught American literature for several years at Auburn then returned to Duke for her doctorate. Fellowships (she was a James B. Duke Fellow for one year) financed her three years there in the course of which she composed her dissertation, "Carson McCullers, 1917-1947: The Conversion of Experience."

During her research, Sullivan had solicited information from Mary Tucker who was McCullers' piano teacher during her high school years in Columbus, 1930-1934. Teacher and pupil were so close that for a time Carson considered a career in music rather than as a writer. Tucker’s husband was an army officer at Fort Benning and the couple moved to Lexington, Virginia, where Colonel Tucker was transferred in 1934. The loss of the presence of Mary Tucker was for a time a shattering blow for McCullers although the two corresponded for the rest of Carson’s life. Tucker was thus a major source and after many letters and some visits from Margaret the two women became close friends, a relationship that lasted until Tucker’s death in 1982.

In her last year at Duke, Margaret developed a friendship with Lillian Smith, the author of Strange Fruit and Killers of the Dream, both attacks on racism. Margaret visited Smith in her north Georgia rural home and planned to write about her. Sullivan wrote Smith about the defense of her dissertation and revealed her scholarly reading “all in preparation of my courses and work on you: Spiller’s Literary History of the U.S., Gilbert Highet’s The Art of Teaching, the poems of Francois Villon in a new translation by Galway Kinnell, and the two volumes of Robert Corrigan’s The New Theater of Europe.” Sullivan's lively intellect and charm also earned her the friendship of another well-known woman writer, Katherine Anne Porter, whose novel Ship of Fools had been a best-seller in 1962.

As she was finishing her dissertation, Margaret was troubled by arthritis in her hands, a symptom of lupus. Sister Pat joked in a note of March, 1966, that Margaret “must be pleased with the diagnosis of lupus as it proved she wasn’t hypochondriac as we thought.” After teaching as an Assistant Professor of Literature at George Washington University for several years, the lupus reappeared in an especially

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5 Margaret Sullivan, letter to Elizabeth (last name unidentified), August 18, 1996, Series I, Box 2, Folder 11, MSSP, CSUA.
6 Mary Tucker, letters to Margaret Sullivan, Series 1, Box 4, Folders 2-9, MSSP, CSUA. Note: Sullivan also studied piano, taking lessons from Maude Flournoy Dixon, who lived at Hillcrest, the old Flournoy house located at 1652 Carter Avenue. Margaret took piano lessons throughout her high school years; she was an accomplished pianist until arthritis made it difficult for her to play.
7 Margaret Sullivan, letter to Lillian Smith, August 15, 1966, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 8, MSSP, CSUA.
8 Sullivan-Katherine Anne Porter correspondence, October, 1975, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 16, MSSP, CSUA.
virulent form necessitating Sullivan's return to Columbus in 1972. The attack was so severe that doctors felt they might have to remove one of Margaret's feet and even feared for her life. Although the "foot operation never came off," as she wryly put it later, she did have to spend much of 1972 in the hospital of Emory University in Atlanta. When the disease went into remission, she returned to Columbus and the homes of her mother Cora on Wynnton Road and, after 1982, on Auburn Avenue. She lived here the rest of her life. Though less severe attacks of lupus recurred from time to time, Sullivan never drew attention to her malady and remained the buoyant and optimistic person she had always been. She continued to do research for a biography of McCullers and lent her skills in support of cultural life in her hometown.

Sullivan was always available for presentations on McCullers or on southern literature in general. She was an effective speaker. In 1961, Dorothy Hatfield, an English Professor at Columbus College, wrote that she could not thank her enough for "your brilliant talk on McCullers." She praised Margaret's "authoritativeness and for the excellent delivery of your lecture." In November, 1969, while teaching at George Washington University, she accepted an invitation to speak before the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington. The program chairman was struck by her "magnificent knowledge of the broad field of American literature" which "gave our discussion a broader scope it would otherwise have lacked. It is easy to see why your students are so enthusiastic in praise of you."10

Margaret had spent many hours in her youth reading the classics of American and European literature at the old Columbus Library on Mott's Green; she continued her reading during her high school years at the new Bradley Public Library, which opened in the fall of 1950. Library Director Loretto Chappell, according to Sullivan's niece Nancy Burgin, "picked out books for her to read that were beyond her age level to stimulate her."11 Later in life, Margaret was pleased to speak at the Library often on McCullers. In her talks, she sought to make accessible for her listeners the major themes in McCullers' fiction. For her, the author "had the ability to make the reader become all the characters. You can understand how a black woman feels, you can feel a little boy's fears, a dwarf's problems, a giant woman's concerns." According to Sullivan, McCullers "didn't take pride in being an outsider. Her characters...were lonely and wanted to belong." Margaret donated first edition copies of McCullers' books and other materials for permanent display in the Library. In 1982, she spearheaded efforts to create an historic marker in front of McCullers' childhood home on Stark Avenue. To finance this effort

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9 Patricia Sullivan Conner, letter to Margaret Sullivan, March, 1966, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 18; 1976 handwritten document by Sullivan, Series 4, Box 1, Folder 5, MSSP, CSUA.
10 Dorothy Hatfield, letter to Margaret Sullivan, November 20, 1961, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 6; Vivian Weiss, letter to Sullivan, November 25, 1969, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 12, MSSP, CSUA.

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and others, such as the establishment of the McCullers Center at the home, she established the "Friends of Carson McCullers, Inc."\(^{12}\)

When the newly renovated Springer Opera House reopened in 1965, Sullivan lobbied unsuccessfully to have McCullers' play *Member of the Wedding* as its first production. The new theater's first director Charles Jones wrote her in June, 1977, "In my heart I will never forgive myself for not producing 'Member' at least during that opening season of the Springer."\(^{13}\) Beyond her interest in McCullers, Margaret worked closely with Betty Britto in her local theatrical projects. A mutual friend, Clint Atkinson, wrote in 1978 that Britto had written to him, "what an aid and comfort you have been to her and I just want to add my own words of appreciation for your interest in her and her work." In 1982, Margaret participated in an eight-session acting class taught by Britto.\(^{14}\)

In 1974-1975, Sullivan collaborated with the Muscogee County School District in bringing eleven gifted students to her home during after-school hours for a seminar called, "Patterns - A Humanities Study." The students had weekly sessions at the 1411 Wynnton Road residence for a year. One of the attendees, John Van Doom recalls Margaret as a fascinating woman and excellent teacher. He felt fortunate that he had an instructor who had been a professor at George Washington University. Sullivan taught her students the relationship between mathematics and music and the classics of western

\(^{12}\) Sullivan quoted in *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, October 10, 1999, Section E, page 7; Sullivan, letter to Friends of Carson McCullers," Series 3, Box 1, Folder 15 MSSP, CSUA.

\(^{13}\) Charles Jones, letter to Sullivan, June 16, 1977, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 1, MSSP, CSUA.

\(^{14}\) Clint Atkinson, letter to Sullivan, April 7, 1978, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 14; Betty Britto, "Talent Is Not Enough," *Columbus Magazine*, September, 1982, Series, Box 1, Folder 3, MSSP, CSUA.
literature. She was a friendly but firm teacher who did not tolerate inattentiveness and kept students focused on the subject of the day.\textsuperscript{15}

Denied an academic career by her illness, Margaret thus enjoyed a creative life in Columbus. By all accounts, she was happy in her various pursuits. However, there was one source of unpleasantness for her in the person of Virginia Spencer Carr. In the fall of 1969, Carr became an English Professor at Columbus College. She was a Carson McCullers scholar, intent, like Sullivan on publishing a major biography on the writer. A Floridian, Carr received her undergraduate education at Florida State University in 1951, her master's degree at the University of North Carolina, and her doctorate back at Florida State in 1969. Her dissertation was entitled "Carson McCullers and the Search for Meaning." Carr had learned of McCullers for the first time while teaching at Armstrong College near Savannah in the early 1960s. Her decision to come to Columbus College was predicated on her desire to have access to Carson's family members and acquaintances still in the area. She published an advertisement in the \textit{Ledger} requesting interviews with people who remembered Carson in her youthful years.\textsuperscript{16}

In 1970, Carr requested a meeting with Margaret. Sullivan said the meeting was cordial but she made clear to Carr that she would not talk about McCullers because she was writing her own biography. In September, 1970, Mary Tucker notified Margaret that Carr was soliciting information from her. Loyal to "Margie," Tucker had told Carr that all the information she had on McCullers as her piano teacher had been given to Sullivan when she was writing her dissertation. Carr was not one to be denied, however. A trapeze artist at Florida State in 1947 when the school inaugurated its circus program, she had immense vitality and her smiling southern charm belied a powerful will to accomplish her purposes. When she persisted in writing the piano teacher for information, Tucker answered jestingly that Carr should "enquire of a piano teacher as to what Bach repertory would be suitable for a very young and talented piano student."\textsuperscript{17}

Undismayed, in November, 1970 Carr penned another long letter describing progress on her research. She requested that Tucker allow her to visit, be interviewed, and "choose letters which Margaret had not used." Again Tucker refused saying Sullivan had all her information. She wrote Margaret that she "hoped this would produce a cease-fire," for Carr's pressure "is something like living near a volcano." Another major source for Sullivan had been Mary Mercer, McCullers' psychiatrist and friend in the last years of her life. Tucker wrote Margaret that she had received a Christmas card from Mercer on which she had written: "Tonight my doorbell rang and in the freezing rain stood a smiling Mrs.

\textsuperscript{15} "Certificate of Appreciation" to Sullivan presented by Braxton Nail superintendent of Muscogee County School District, Series 1, Box 5, Folder 15, MSSP, CSUA; Craig Lloyd interview with John Van Doorn, April 8, 2014.
\textsuperscript{17} Mary Tucker, letter to Sullivan, October 12, 1970, Series 1, Box 4 Folder 6, MSSP, CSUA.
Virginia Carr. I could not shut the door on her. She had my letter saying I would not see her!!! So I sat and listened to her and said nothing for two hours! I am appalled by her nerve." 18

Carr was unapologetic about her aggressive manner. She told colleagues at Columbus College that she had once waited two hours at the doorstep of Katherine Anne Porter before the door was opened to her. Del Presley, an academic friend of Margaret's and also a McCullers scholar, reported that in Jesup, Georgia, Carr had called on a relative of Reeves McCullers, Carson's husband. It was 8:30 a.m. and the individual had just returned from the hospital. Carr had said "I was just passing through...and thought I would drop in on you for a chat." Sullivan later likened this incident to "Hannibal marching into Rome—so laying waste to the place that even Del's closest sources don't want to talk to anybody." 19

Carr and Sullivan had agreements with major New York publishers for their biographies, Carr with Doubleday, Margaret with Scribner's. It was terribly frustrating for Sullivan, sidelined for much of 1972 with lupus, to know that her vigorous rival was scouring Columbus and environs for information and was planning to submit her manuscript to Doubleday for publication in 1973, although in fact Carr's *The Lonely Hunter: A Biography of Carson McCullers* did not appear until 1975. Frustration turned to anger, when Del Presley provided evidence in the spring of 1972 that Carr had lifted passages from Sullivan's 1966 Duke dissertation into her own at Florida State in 1969. Although Carr had cited Margaret fifteen times there were eight paragraphs that clearly should have been placed in quotation marks and attributed to her. To understand Margaret's bitterness, one example should be cited:

Sullivan:
"At times, he resembles a mechanical doll with a clock ticking inside and a high tiny voice that pipes "me too" no matter what is said. He seems a grotesque child-adult, juxtaposing without confusion the logic of both worlds."

Carr:
"At times, John Henry resembles a mechanical doll with a clock ticking inside and a high, tiny voice that pipes, "me too" no matter what is said. At other times he is like a grotesque child-adult as he juxtaposes without confusion the logic of both worlds." 20

Sullivan consulted her dissertation adviser at Duke, Arlin Turner, who suggested the course that Margaret followed. In October, 1972, she sent the evidence of plagiarism to John McKinney, Vice Provost and Dean of Duke who brought the matter to the attention of Graduate Dean of Florida State, Robert Johnson. In January, 1973, Johnson reported to McKinney that he had created a committee of English faculty members to review the case and make a recommendation. The committee's judgment was that punitive action against Carr was inappropriate for her dissertation was "quite different overall from Miss Sullivan and a respectable work." However, the committee felt there were a few instances "where the

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18 Virginia Carr, letter to Mary Tucker, November 15, 1970; Mary Tucker, letters to Sullivan, November 15, 1970 and December 19, 1970, Series 1, Box 4, Folder 6, MSSP, CSUA.

19 Del Presley, letter to Sullivan, January 10, 1972; undated Sullivan handwritten document, Series 4, Box 1, Folder 5, MSSP, CSUA.

20 Two-page document prepared by Presley giving paragraphs from Sullivan's dissertation and almost identical ones from Carr's unattributed to Sullivan, Series 4, Box 1 Folder 5, MSSP, CSUA.
observation of the rules of scholarship was less than adequate." Carr would be requested to write "an addendum" to be incorporated in her dissertation which would properly quote and cite Sullivan as her source. In the addendum, Carr acknowledged Sullivan and another author. She used the occasion, however, to write a short essay on authors who had written on the subject of "converting experience into art," citing James Joyce, Leon Edel, and Henry James. This pedantry with its implication that Margaret had not cited all her sources irritated Sullivan who in any case felt the FSU English Department had whitewashed Carr's wrongdoing.21

When The Lonely Hunter appeared, Margaret was angered by another Carr faux pas. McCullers' childhood friend Helen Harvey had written Carr in August, 1973, that none of Harvey's recollections of Carson be used in her book without her permission. (Sullivan held a copy of this letter) Carr had never sought her permission but used her reminiscences citing Helen Jackson instead of Helen Harvey, a boldly deceitful action.22 Sullivan sought to damage Carr by bringing her grievances to the attention of the editors of Doubleday before they published The Lonely Hunter. When Carr applied for a professorship at Georgia State University in 1985, Margaret informed the chair of the search committee about Carr's transgressions. In both cases, nothing was done. The Lonely Hunter became a best-seller, and Carr took the position at Georgia State. By this time, Carr had published a biography of writer John Dos Passos. She had moved on and paid little heed to Sullivan and her friends' animosity towards her.

While still in Columbus in 1983, Carr sent a check of $50.00 to Margaret "so that I too may be a member of your Friends of Carson McCullers fund raising activity...I would like to do whatever possible to help you...in your efforts." She signed the note, "Sincerely, Virginia." Sullivan replied:

I regret that I must return your check...I find the idea that you are, have been, or could be, a friend of Carson McCullers unsupportable. Please do not ever attempt to communicate with me in any way again and please do not ever attempt to involve yourself in any way in any endeavor in which I am involved. Sincerely, MS23

Sullivan continued her own preparation of a biography of McCullers through the 1980s. In 1977, she spent several weeks at the University of Texas Library in Austin where she perused the McCullers Papers there. Sadly, the biography was never completed. In the last years of her life, she amazed family members and friends with her determination to live a full life in spite of the lupus which returned from time to time. She lectured at Elderhostels on McCullers and Lillian Smith. She enjoyed attending events at the McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians of Columbus State University located at Carson's childhood home on Stark Avenue. She also attended meetings of the Muscogee County Library Foundation and the local French Lit Club. When her body began to fail, her mind remained sharp.

22 Helen Harvey, letter (copy) to Carr, Series 4, Box 1, Folder 5, MSSP, CSUA.
23 Carr, letter to Sullivan, December 8, 1983; Sullivan to Carr, December 10, 1983, Series 4, Box 1, Folder 5, MSSP, CSUA.
According to Nancy Burgin, at the 60th Reunion of her Columbus High School Class held in the spring of 2012, Sullivan "was asked if she wanted to say something and just off the top of her head she recited a favorite poem." When she died later that year, members of the French Lit Club were her honorary pallbearers. She is buried at Parkhill Cemetery in Columbus.²⁴

Muscogee County Death Index
August 1890 – December 1918
Compiled December 10, 2001

Part 2: Names Beginning with Bl - Carl

By Daniel B. Olds

Information extracted from the Death Register on file at Vital Records Section, Muscogee County Health Department, Columbus, Georgia, pertains only to deaths that were reported and recorded.

Sequence of data from Left to Right:
- Last Name of Deceased.
- First Name or Initial of Deceased.
- Sex of Deceased.
- Race of Deceased.
- Age at Death.
- Date Death Reported.
- Remarks.

Example 1: Abercrombie, ?, F, C, 0, 26, June, 1892. Inf of Katie Abercrombie. Translation: First name unknown, was female, colored, who died at birth and whose death was reported on 26 June 1892. Katie Abercrombie was the mother of the deceased (A zero for Age at Death means died at birth).

Example 2: Adams, Codie, F, W, 30, 13, September, 1908. Mrs. Adams. Translation: Codie was female, white, who died at age 30 and whose death was reported on 13 September 1908. She was Mrs. Codie Adams.

Black, Lula, F, W, 5, 23, November, 1890.
Black, Robert, M, W, 60, 20, July, 1907.
Black, Sewell, M, W, 1, 17, November, 1903.
Blackburn, Charlie, M, C, 5, 6, August, 1892.
Blackman, Missouri, F, W, 60, 25, December, 1904.
Blackmar, Henry, M, W, 86, 2, August, 1896.
Blackmar, John, M, W, 30, 19, July, 1917.
Blackmar, Susan, F, W, 85, 13, May, 1895.
Blackmon, ?, M, C, 1, 28, December, 1906. Inf of Lizzie
Blackmon, ?, F, C, 0, 17, July, 1913. Inf of Emma
Blackmon, ?, M, C, 0, 12, December, 1916. Inf of Daisy
Blackmon, Alice, F, W, 10, 26, June, 1910.
Blackmon, Beulah, M, C, 5, 30, October, 1891.
Blackmon, Louis, M, C, 50, 12, April, 1892.
Blackmon, Mary, F, C, 30, 13, February, 1891.
Blackmon, Rosa, M, C, 50, 22, March, 1891.
Blackmon, ?, F, C, 0, 3, July, 1908. Inf of C. W
Blackshear, ?, M, C, 0, 1, October, 1912. Inf of P.
Blackshear, Charles, M, C, 1, 7, June, 1902.
Blackshear, Penon, M, C, 1, 31, August, 1913.
Bobb, P, F, W, 72, 7, October, 1906. Mrs.
Bockman, ?, F, W, 40, 9, September, 1911. Mrs.
Bodie, Roma, F, C, 30, 22, September, 1918.
Body, LeRoy, M, C, 60, 2, April, 1901.
Boggs, ?, M, W, 0, 30, September, 1914. Inf of W. H.
Boggs, Bessie, F, W, 30, 10, April, 1906.
Boggs, Eller, F, W, 30, 6, May, 1898.
Boggs, F, M, W, 1, 5, May, 1906.
Boggs, Jane, F, W, 60, 8, March, 1907.
Boggs, John, M, W, 50, 14, March, 1913.
Bohennon, Marion, M, W, 60, 29, November, 1916.
Boland, ?, F, W, 5, 30, June, 1902. Inf of W. H.
Boland, Andrew, M, W, 1, 14, March, 1891.
Boland, Frances, M, W, 70, 10, May, 1900.
Boland, J, F, W, 60, 1, May, 1909. Mrs.
Boland, L, F, W, 80, 27, May, 1907. Mrs.
Boland, Marie, F, W, 1, 5, October, 1894.
Boland, Martha, F, W, 75, 29, June, 1915.
Boland, Mary, F, W, 50, 14, July, 1917.
Boland, W, M, W, 40, 7, April, 1897.
Bolden, Lou, F, C, 40, 18, June, 1894.
Bolden, Melissa, M, C, 0, 12, September, 1891.
Bolen, Charles, M, W, 5, 12, May, 1905.
Bolen, Theima, F, W, 20, 25, April, 1918.
Bolin, M, F, W, 72, 23, April, 1908. Mrs.
Bolton, J, M, W, 70, 18, August, 1913.
Bond, Dovie, F, W, 40, 8, March, 1911.
Bond, Mollie, F, W, 50, 1, February, 1914.
Bond, Tempy, F, C, 1, 26, September, 1912.
Bonner, Anthony, M, C, 60, 14, October, 1909.
Bonner, Maria, F, C, 30, 18, July, 1909.
Booker, ?, F, C, 5, 10, July, 1905. Inf of Minnie
Booker, D, M, C, 60, 20, September, 1916.
Booker, G, M, W, 70, 30, September, 1912.
Booker, Laura, F, W, 60, 18, December, 1901.
Booker, Lavonia, F, C, 40, 19, June, 1904.
Booker, Minerva, F, C, 93, 13, August, 1914.
Booker, Minnie, F, C, 1, 13, January, 1908.
Booker, Susan, F, W, 77, 15, March, 1911.
Booth, ?, F, W, 0, 23, August, 1898. Inf of C. L.
Booth, Anna, F, W, 60, 12, February, 1914.
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