

WOMEN IN COLUMBUS, 1828-1928

I am particularly pleased to be in Columbus today—for both personal and professional reasons. In the forty-odd years since I left I have returned here on two occasions, both concerning deaths in the family. The last time I was here - perhaps nine years ago—my son-in-law took us to ride to see the places with which I had been associated. On the site of one multi-columned home there was a colony of little houses. On another was a pile of mossy bricks and termite-scarred boards. On a third there was nothing but bare land, the only familiar object being the old elm tree where we used to swing as children. Coming out of Linwood Cemetery, my son-in-law remarked that he realized I knew a lot of people in Columbus but he didn't know they were all in the cemetery.

Today is so happily different. I am aware of the movement to preserve and restore other old homes and certainly I am delighted to discover many friends not in the graveyard.

However, there is still the challenge which faces me as I try to bring alive again the city on the Chattahoochee which was so important to me and which I described in the centennial history, written in 1928 and published shortly afterward. As you may know I used the penname of "Nancy Telfair." Perhaps you would like to know how that pseudonym came about.

A few years previously I was working on The Enquirer-Sun—incidentally, the first female to be a reporter there. One day, Mr. Harris told me to cover the prize fight scheduled for a few hours later. It suited me fine as I have always had more curiosity than discretion, and knew nothing whatsoever about prize fights. About ten o'clock that night I was reading over what I had written and began to consider the fix I had gotten into. I was living with my grandmother who was a lady from ante-bellum days. She was skeptical about my college degree, she thought my working for the newspaper was deplorable, and she was very unhappy because my job necessitated my coming home about two o'clock in the morning. To add to her distress because I went to a prize fight would be unthinkable and I telephoned the Harrises that I had to have another name for the story. He called me a coward but that didn't matter to me. After a few minutes he and Mrs. Harris decided "Nancy Telfair" might be suitable—"because you tell it fairly," they said, "and Telfair is a good Georgia name."

Since then I have used Nancy Telfair when I have written poems, plays, and such non-economic things as pleased me. I have made a living teaching and writing under my own name.

And this brings up a situation which really should be embarrassing to me, if I were bothered about embarrassments. You can't imagine what I think of my history of Columbus when I review it after fifteen years as Director of the University of South Carolina Press. No index, no notes, no bibliography—it is terrible! However, I finished it about the time I was 27 years old, and three months before my daughter was born. At that time, there was something more important ahead. But these days it makes me think of the happy widow whose spouse unexpectedly returned home. It was inconvenient, to say the least.

Of course, in preparing this talk I have largely depended on that masterpiece for information, in addition to Mrs. Worsley's history, Martin's, and another collection of materials. Perhaps, with a longer period of preparation and more resources, what I have to say might be taken more seriously. However, the people who invited me knew all about that when they asked me to come. And—that's that!

In considering the subject I expect to tackle, I urge you to forget our modern way of life, our conveniences, our means of livelihood, our sense of speed and frustration, but most of all - our way of thinking. To me—it is both dishonest and superficial to judge the people of the past by our present day mores and ethics. Our twenty-twenty hindsight sometimes results in maddening confusion as well as false interpretation. I must emphasize this factor because I see—hear—and read so much of this attitude these days as we get deeper and deeper into the observance of our bicentennial. So very much of all this makes me most uncomfortable because it appears so

superficial—so distorted when the authors or speakers apply our contemporary judgments to people and events of hundreds of years ago. It makes me think of a man wearing a high tophat and long-tailed coat, accompanied by his wife in a hoop skirt, both trying to get into a volkswagen. I don't think it really is advisable.

Thus—as I approach my subject I ask your indulgence.

In considering the part women played in Columbus, I think it would be well to review the history of the city and try to understand the situation in which they lived. For that purpose, I suggest five divisions:

Frontier

Industry

War

Resurrection

Expansion

Columbus is probably the last frontier town of the original thirteen states. It was planned deliberately for commercial and industrial purposes, laid out by competent citizens who had had practical experience in living in this climate and this area. A physician promoted the idea of health in the broad streets that meant good air circulation. Special areas were set aside for government buildings, churches, schools, and residences. Altogether, it was an excellent example of what we call city planning.

Contrasted with this design on paper was the situation itself. For years there had been a settlement of traders among the Creeks and other Indians round-about. Theoretically they were not living on the Georgia side of the river at this time, but over in Alabama there was still a large and threatening group. A well-known road or trail passed through here, to cross the river on a ferry. Those who came this way included Andrew Jackson, LaFayette, Reverend and Mrs. Lorenzo Dow, Captain Basil Hall and his wife. About 300 whites lived in a small community a few miles down the river.

The site of the town itself was still a wilderness with pines, liveoaks, trailing vines of wild grapes and yellow jessamine, besides alligators, rattlesnakes, moccasins, midges, mosquitoes, as well as more pleasing inhabitants of the forest. When the town was laid out, ambitious settlers arrived in all the known vehicles of the time—carriages, carts, covered wagons and, of course, there were the horseback riders. Tents were set up for weeks before the sale took place. The optimistic prospectors impatiently waited for the auction in July, 1828.

Settlers came from as far away as New York and there was a sizeable contingent from the eastern part of Georgia whose forbears had taken up holdings there after the Revolution, arriving from Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland. Pioneering was a well-established habit with many of these early settlers.

Within a few years, hotels were built, a bridge was constructed, and several stage lines passed through the settlement. It was a most fascinating place with its blatant contrast of wilderness and culture. To me, the most remarkable situation was the publication of a newspaper two months before there was a town. Likewise, the presentation of plays before an audience composed of all sorts and conditions of men. Unfortunately but customarily, liquor flowed almost as freely as the Chattahoochee.

During these years, the women were too concerned with their home and family life to branch

out in other endeavors. There were schools for the girls as well as boys and as plantations were taken up along the river, the women took their responsibilities along with their husbands in the normal activities of that life.

Until the Indians were transported from Alabama in the mid-thirties, they presented the greatest contrast in the community. Dr. Edwin L. DeGraffenreid, one of the original commissioners, devoted a great part of his time to the Indians and his wife was a competent assistant. In many ways she tried to help the Indians adapt to the changing ways of life. A granddaughter of hers told me how the Columbus women visited the villages and tried to install modern improvements of the times. One day, she remembered, an Indian woman called from the front gate and she went out to see her. Among the vegetables and such produce as she had to display, the caller offered her some beautiful yellow butter. Mrs. DeGraffenreid did not buy that—it was displayed in the chamber pot she had recently given the visitor.

However, there were many outstanding women among the Indians of this area. Many were married to traders, to storekeepers, and there was also a mixture of the red men with the Negroes. I remember Aunt Creecy on my family's place. Her father had been an Indian.

Chief among the Indian women was Mary Musgrove Matthews Bosomworth. Of a prominent Creek family, she outlived two husbands and became the wife of an influential missionary. She had been educated in the colonies and returned to her own family. Of course, she lived in these parts many years before Columbus was settled, but this "Pocahontas of Georgia" has never received the credit due her activities. She was a friend to both Oglethorpe and to Button Gwinnett, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

The frontier period of Columbus history closed in the 1830's when the Indians left Alabama on their trail of tears for the midwest. With them went Paddy Carr, a peaceable chief, friendly and cooperative with the whites. His twin daughters had been named Ara and Adne for the daughter of a prominent general—Ariadne Abercrombie. The last few years before the departure of the Indians were marked by burnings and threats of massacre on the part of red men—certainly, not a condition to encourage city development.

For the subsequent thirty-odd years, Columbus expanded both in size and importance. Steamboats, railroads, as well as covered wagons passed this way. Mills were built and shops to repair mill machinery. Elegant homes were taking the places of the cabins and the little clapboard houses. Of the latter, my family had an example. It was a small one-story house, built above a basement to which was later attached the Gothic Redd Mansion where I happened to be born, in the same room in which my grandmother first saw the light of day which was in the little cottage before the big house was built. If I happen to refer rather often to my family in this review, I must ask your indulgence. I do not think they were extraordinary or unlike most of their kind and generation. I merely happen to know more about them and consider them as examples.

In addition to the house in town, the family had a summer cottage on the plantation where the iron and sulphur springs attracted guests from all around. Other families were likewise situated, I understand. Two days of travel were required in carriages and wagons to make the trip from town to the springs. Members of the family from near Augusta were frequent visitors and one summer Cousin Tom arrived, handsome and unmarried. One of the girls was immediately smitten and asked him to teach her how to swim. He complied reluctantly and told her to tie two hog bladders (forerunners of the inflated water wings now used), properly blown up, to her ankles. Charmed with his concern, she agreed. Fortunately, he stood by to pull her out of the water as her feet surfaced and her head went down.

In those days as Columbus was becoming known as the "Lowell of the South," the arts, education, and travel to the north and to Europe as well became popular—all actively supported by the energy, ingenuity, and cooperation of the women.

I was impressed, as I reviewed the history of Columbus, how the men and women worked

together to establish the cultural life in this "strangely concocted town," as Captain Basil Hall called the early settlement. Before 1846 I counted at least five schools for the girls and nearly a score of women teachers. Evidently, there was no prejudice against the education of women then and there.

Among the women teachers was Mrs. Jane Marks, long remembered and revered, also Frances Gunby, later Mrs. Bethune, who began teaching in 1831 and continued for more than a dozen years. She and her husband, General James Bethune, owned Blind Tom, the remarkable Negro whose musical skill became famous in this country and in Europe. She encouraged his talent and presented him to gatherings in her home.

Another teacher was Miss Hannah Briggs, from New England. She taught here for many years and married J. N. Johnson, also a teacher. Their daughter, Miss Mary Johnson, was almost a member of our family up on Rose Hill. Unusually well-educated, she was called upon to help us children when we needed special lessons in Spanish, or French, or Latin, or almost any other non-scientific subject to pass our courses or complete requirements to enter college.

Other women teachers from the north were the sisters (other references say they were the daughters) of Theodore O'Hara, author of the stirring Confederate poem, "The Bivouac of the Dead." He also conducted classes for the young people.

Yet another teacher of the female persuasion was Caroline Lee Hentz. She and her husband, Nicholas Hentz, were from Massachusetts and they came to Columbus in 1848 to teach. She was about 48 years old at the time. Already known for her writings, she made a special place for herself in the life of the city. Her husband died soon after they arrived in Columbus but she continued to live here for some years. She was a member of "The Histrionics," a dramatic club, which put on her play, "Lamora, or the Western Wild." Mrs. Hentz moved to Florida and died there in 1856.

In these early years of cultural and industrial expansion, the city's most famous author of Victorian times lived with her parents. Augusta Evans Wilson, who wrote the outstandingly popular book St. Elmo, was born in Columbus in 1835, the daughter of Matt Evans and his wife, Sarah Howard. When she was ten years old the family moved to Texas and later to Mobile, Alabama. It is said that she visited her mother's relatives, the Howards and the Seaborn Joneses, from time to time and the mansion, St. Elmo, still standing, was named for her masterpiece.

Her mother was certainly the dominant influence which directed Augusta's interest in a great variety of subjects and stimulated her in intellectual pursuits. She was "in every sense my Alma Mater," the writer said of her mother, "the one to whom I owe everything, and whom I reverence more than all else on earth."

The author's biographer, William Perry Fidler, refers to her exceptionally wide and thorough learning and also notes the poverty of her early life in the frontier town. However, he fails to observe the apparent absurdity of the situation, the side-by-side existence of sincere learning with raw, red-blooded events of the new town. To me, this is a remarkable picture. An example of how visitors considered the city is told by Historian Avery. In 1857, "Columbus is a fastidious place, used to city manners and college graces," he wrote. This was less than thirty years after the settlers built their homes in the wilderness. Still vital and vigorous, this energy was apparently being applied to the more civilizing virtues.

In addition to education and literary achievement, the women were active in local societies, assisted in organizing a public library, and were responsible for the establishment of the Orphans Female Asylum, a project of the Methodist Church.

When the Mexican War developed in 1846 Columbus was headquarters for a large body of troops. Here occurred the presentation of the first flag of Texas which was designed by Miss Joanna Troutman, later Mrs. Vinson, of Crawford County. It was received by Lieutenant Colonel Ward, who presented it to the troops in Columbus. With a blue star on a white field, it was the reverse of the banner of the lone star state of today. A United States flag was presented to the soldiers by Miss Mary Ann Howard who later became Mrs. Charles J. Williams.

In the 1850's Columbus continued its remarkable expansion, particularly in steamboat shipping, railroads, and mills. Anticipating the value of railroads, which reached Columbus in 1853, the women of the city organized a huge fair in 1851 to raise money for the purchase of a locomotive. It was put in operation on the line that went to Fayetteville, Alabama.

Chief among the industries, however, were the cotton mills clustering around the falls on the river and depending to a large extent on the cotton produced on the river bottom plantations. Both women and men worked in these mills, and judging by the custom in South Carolina, I should say the men were engaged in weaving and the women in spinning.

It is probable that the reference to women as belonging to the "distaff side" of the family refers to this custom. In early days the spindles would be handled in the home far more easily than the looms. Weaving sheds developed before the days of machinery and men left their firesides to operate them while the spinning of thread continued in the domestic centers. This brings up another matter which I should like to pursue if time permits.

As the movement for secession developed in the fifties, there was continuous as well as violent sentiment for both sides of the question. At length, however, Georgia decided to join South Carolina and a few weeks after that state withdrew from the Union, Georgia did likewise, January 19, 1861. Then followed the tragic years of hopeless effort, enthusiastic patriotism, and finally desolation when the city was burned.

At the beginning there was an air of fervent optimism, but this soon gave way to apprehensive foreboding, as the military companies completed organization and started out for the front. Equipment was seriously lacking. Columbus had had a history of military experience since its beginnings, what with the dangers of frontier life, of Indian fights, and as headquarters in the Mexican War. But the Confederate situation was different. I was told by a participant that he and other members of his company were drilled with only wooden spikes for weapons and, even when they were sent to the battlefield, not all of them had guns. They were expected to win and take weapons from the conquered enemies.

This did not continue, very long, however, as Columbus became a center of supplies for both the Navy and Army. With the men gone off to war, the women were called upon to work in the numerous and varied industries. It was said that, in proportion to population, more troops were furnished by this city than any other center in the south. Its situation on the river and the bridges resulted in constant streams of traffic from all parts. Being rather remote from the fighting in the west and in Virginia, it was considered a safe locality, also.

Accompanying all the commercial traveling, however, were other kinds. There were the sick, the wounded, the dead and the dying soldiers who came back home or who arrived to recuperate in this safe city in the interior. Another stream of visitors were the refugees who came from far and near, who were taken in by Columbusites and given a home, some from the conquered gulf port of New Orleans.

There were numerous hospitals in and near Columbus and the local women were faithful attendants there. Old Dr. Francis Tichnor and his wife gave what care they could. On one occasion a young boy, "Little Giffen of Tennessee," was discovered sick and wounded. They took him in their home and he became the subject of the poem that was one of the more popular ballads of the war, written by the doctor.

Early in the conflict, the Soldiers' Aid Society was organized to promote the work in the hospitals and with the refugees. Mrs. Mary Howard Williams was one of the early presidents. This organization, under another name, was still in existence when I wrote the centennial history. Becoming the Ladies' Memorial Society, it was responsible for the establishment of the annual memorial day for the Confederate soldiers, which was the forerunner of the organization, whose efforts eventually resulted in the national Memorial Day. April 26 was selected by the Georgia women as that was the day in 1865 when General Joseph Johnson surrendered in North Carolina.

Mrs. Williams was put in charge of establishing the Confederate Cemetery in Marietta, and due to her efforts, many soldiers were transferred from private and remote graveyards and re-interred there.

Accounts of fairs, of balls, and all sorts of entertainments held to secure money and supplies have been handed down from generation to generation. One of the popular young ladies of those days was Miss Julia Hurt, who was married to Acting Brigadier General Peyton Colquitt. The tale is told that just before a battle his company's officers were gathered around a camp fire reminiscing about home and sweethearts. Each man thought his prospective bride was the loveliest and they took their wallets out of their pockets to prove it. The fire light showed lovely smiling faces, and six of the pictures portrayed the beautiful Miss Julia Hurt.

Not long afterward she and young Colquitt were married and she left home to be near him. He never returned, being killed in battle.

Columbus women—far too many to cite by name, in addition to those whose names are not known - were concerned with many other activities besides the hospitals, the refugees, and special events. One of their more significant activities was gathering up woolen blankets, rugs, and such articles along with household metals that could be used in supplies for the fighting men. Even salt was scarce and dirt floors of smokehouses had to be dug up for that article. Substitutes for tea and coffee, sugar made out of local cane, and many other items characterized the meals of rich and poor alike.

An interesting woman of these times and practically unknown was the school teacher who came from Connecticut, the Widow Beecher. Born a Beecher and formerly married to a Beecher, she was known as a cousin of Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was one of the greatest stimulants for war that swept the country. She arrived in these parts to teach negro children in Alabama, the story goes, and later after instructing classes of white children, married Mr. James Comer who had a plantation in Alabama as well as a large brick house in Columbus on the old Talbotton Road.

As Mrs. Comer, she was immediately an ardent participant in the social life of the times and apparently very popular although amazingly eccentric. Not long after the marriage, however, he moved out of the townhouse and took up a more peaceful abode on his plantation. She continued in the city.

Discarding her widow's weeds she immediately adopted the latest fashions and dressed in high style with a profusion of laces, ribbons, jewelry, furs, and flowers in addition to silks and satins and velvets.

Somehow, though, she seemed never thoroughly at ease. One reason was her remarkable New England energy and her impatience. She could never accommodate herself to the slower activities of the hot climate nor to the lackadaisical ways of the many servants about the place. Outdone with what she considered their lazy ways, she donned trousers and assisted in repairing the roof, went down in a well to help clean it, and directed the building of a zig-zag fence.

Besides her social tactlessness, however, and other cantankerous behavior, was her practical interest in the welfare of the poor, in religious matters, and as war fell upon the country, her sincere devotion to the Confederacy. Blankets, rugs, pewter, cooper, and all such materials were contributed from her home for the troops in the field. Money and her enormous physical energy were also forthcoming. She was loved and respected in a strange half-humorous way during her many years in Columbus. She was a member of the Ladies Memorial Society.

Mr. Comer died after a few years of married life, and she married a Dr. Pleasants who turned out to be a most unpleasant man. She gave him \$3,000, it is said, to go away and leave her alone after not too long a time and she resumed her name as Mrs. Comer. She died in 1901 and was buried in Linwood Cemetery, her coffin draped in a Confederate flag.

As the war progressed in these parts life became more hectic, food and clothes were hard to

get, and worst of all, most of the men were gone. During the latter part of the war, the home guard was characterized by a large number of old men and teenage boys. A false sort of optimism was adopted but there was desperation beneath. As Sherman approached in 1865, fear became more pronounced. Vast relief was registered when Columbus was not on his path but it was only temporarily as other bodies of troops were found to be headed this way. Refugees from Atlanta arrived to tell of the flaming disaster in that city.

Thus it was in mid-April when certainty of attack became evident that Columbusites were fearful and desperate. As an example of what took place in many homes I cite my grandmother's recollections. Before she died in 1923 I made it a point to take notes on her accounts and I believe they represent the general feeling of the times.

In her father's home, the old Redd place on Rose Hill, the family were gathered together with solemn foreboding on the night of April 15, 1865. It was the Saturday before Easter Sunday. Besides the six children who lived there, several cousins were visiting from Greene County, and probably there was Mrs. Mellichamp, a refugee from New Orleans. The father of my grandmother was an officer in the supply forces and her mother, with the youngest child, was seriously ill in an up stairs room. A special guest was Captain Isadore Guillet, a Frenchman and Confederate sympathizer.

The family gathered in the sitting room and talked about the battle which they were certain would take place. Captain Guillet was eager to show his prowess and he had his own horse he expected to ride. The family objected and tried to dissuade him. He insisted, however, and scorned the warnings. Already his brother had been killed on the same animal and he had willed it to a nephew, in case he did not survive. That he and one of the girls were particularly interested in each other lent a further anxiety.

In the kitchen, then detached from the main house, the food for Sunday had already been prepared. The family came of Scotch-Irish stock and would have no cooking on Sunday, which was dedicated to religious services and study. Such was no doubt the situation in many other similar homes in the city as a large proportion of the citizens had the same background.

Next day General Wilson arrived and the fight began. Late in the afternoon and into the night it continued. The girls and other women from neighboring homes gathered on the hill behind the Grigsby Thomas house and looked across the river. A building had been set afire to give light for the invaders and "The flashes from the guns looked like streaks of lightning darting from the lower bridge up the river, as far as we could see."

The hours that followed confirmed the apprehension of the evening before. Captain Redd could not return home as he was captured and young Guillet could never come back. He had been shot and killed. Nor did all the servants return. Instead, as Easter Monday advanced a body of troops camped out in the grove in front of the house and began to raid the premises. There was not a man on the place. The lady of the house, still very ill, had her bedroom invaded by soldiers looking for escapees, and my grandmother, the oldest child, was sent with a young lady cousin downtown to the Yankee headquarters to ask for a special guard to protect her mother. Hand in hand they went down Rose Hill to the Mott place where General Wilson's headquarters had been set up.

"Sparks from the burning buildings fell down on our dresses," she told me. But they persisted and fortunately they secured the guard they wanted.

Back at the house, they found their wide-skirted dresses spread out in the yard, with cornmeal, molasses, and other food dumped on them. "Nurnie," the children's nurse, had refused to leave and for two days the household had nothing to eat except what she could sneak out of the soldiers' meals she was compelled to cook. She knocked a hole in the pantry wall and hid bits of food there until she could safely give it to the children.

Captain Guillet's funeral was held at the house and he was buried in the family plot in Linwood. Still, the father did not return as he had been sent to Macon other captives.

Of course, it is well known that in Macon it was learned that Lee had surrendered and the

war was technically over, but results had to be realized.

There was the constant stream of women visiting the hospitals and the prison camp, now full of their own men. The story is told about George Fontaine, about fourteen years old, who had been captured—one of the pathetic group of young boys and tottering old men, who had been called up to defend the city. Mrs. Henry Meigs, young Fontaine's aunt, arrived at the prison with a huge tray of food, covered with a large white tablecloth that hung over its side. It was carried by one of the colored serving boys, about the height of Fontaine. In the prison, the two boys changed places and the latter escaped. Mrs. Meigs knew the colored boy could get away easily.

The shock of the battle and the growing realization that their way of living was destroyed continued for months. One of the smaller tragedies in this burned and devastated city was that in the Armstrong Bailey family and it doubtless illustrates what happened in many another household. He had been killed at Gettysburg and only a houseful of women remained. At the time they were living in Sherwood Hall, as the home was later named. When so-called peace eventually came and newcomers arrived from other parts of the country, some with good and some with evil intent, one of the more prominent families, whose name began with a B, purchased the Bailey's silver because of the initials engraved on it.

Despite the public and private tragedies, however, Columbus was remarkably successful in beginning again a progressive and efficient system of life.

During the first few years after the war, the occupation troops, the carpetbaggers, and scalawags dominated all commercial life. Certainly, the most spectacular event was the murder of G. W. Ashburn, who was not a Yankee, but a native of North Carolina. The only part played by women in this special event was their abode—both black and white—in the brothel where he was killed.

The subsequent arrest, imprisonment, and trial of numerous prominent, as well as lowly Columbusites, had a great deal to do with Georgia adopting the 14th Amendment to the national Constitution and the state's return to the Union.

As before mentioned, the resurrection of Columbus in business and normal life was remarkably rapid, not at all like the ten miserable years in South Carolina. To my mind, there were several definite reasons for this, chief of which was that the river with its falls and its steamboats and the rich plantation cotton lands alongside were still available. Another factor I believe was that this disaster of war took place less than forty years after the city was established in an uninhabited wilderness and there were men and women still living who had participated in the settlement and the civilizing of the area. A third element was the fact that many of the industries and other business enterprises had been founded in whole or in part by men from other areas, particularly the industrial centers of New England. As you recall, both commercial and educational leaders had come to Columbus from the north.

It was this situation that still attracted entrepreneurs from elsewhere and which no doubt aided in the rapid recovery of Columbus from destruction. The subsequent several decades were in some measure a repetition of the period between the Mexican War and the Confederate disaster, with the addition of utilization of new inventions and modern improvements.

The war, itself, however, was certainly not forgotten. The Ladies' Memorial Association had annual services in the opera house followed by a visit to the cemetery when the remaining Confederate soldiers in their gray uniforms, fired across the graves where the cross-barred flags waved. I can remember going to the cemetery on such an occasion, and I remember how we children were scared as well as proud when the shots rang out, and how we put our hands over our ears because the noise was so loud.

The women also set about and succeeded in their efforts to erect the Confederate Monument on Broad Street.

Besides the industrial recovery there was also the resumption of education, the establishment of a public library, and various social and literary groups. I should like to call attention especially to

the public and private schools and point out how, always in the history of Columbus, the education of its young people—boys and girls alike—accompanied the development of industrial and, commercial life. There seemed to be the unspoken assumption that the latter could not successfully exist without the former. Special schools for the dinner-toters, kindergartens, and other institutions that provided courses corresponding to junior colleges were organized. The romance of the schools has been well described by Mrs. Worsley in her history of Columbus.

I should like to call your attention particularly to the McIlhenny family. Three generations with the name of John D. McIlhenny have been intimately connected with establishing and encouraging public education, and it is said the original impetus for this movement came from Bernice, the wife of the first John D. McIlhenny.

Among the literary women of the last part of the 1800's was Louisa Clarke Pynelle, author of popular books for children as well as grown-ups; and there was Mrs. James Cook, originally Mary Louisa Redd, who used two pseudonyms in her books dealing with a super-romantic interpretation of the south.

Chief among her accomplishments of the women in these years was the establishment of the Georgia Woman Suffrage Association by the Howard sisters of this community, chief of whom was Augusta, the youngest of the twelve—I think there were twelve—children of Augustus Howard. His second wife, Ann Lindsay Howard, lived at Sherwood Hall with the younger children. As far as modern times are concerned, I think this is the most significant event of women's activities in the history of Columbus up to the present day.

It came to the surface about 1890 as Augusta became convinced of the unfairness of the laws which laid taxes on her widowed mother, yet gave her no representation in the government these taxes supported. Mr. Howard had died when she was a young child and the pressure on her mother to rear the large family was tremendous. I came to know the family very intimately in the 1920's and recall the stories of little food, of old dresses patched and patched again, of one hat to be used by five sisters and when so used made it necessary for the other four to stay at home.

Vehemently concerned with the unfairness of the situation of women, Augusta induced her mother and four sisters, Ruth, Alice, Claudia and Miriam, to join her in writing letters to women in other places in the state, inviting—even urging them to join her in correcting this condition. A few favorable answers received and an organization was begun.

In 1894, Augusta and three sisters went to the national annual convention in Washington and there invited the group to hold its next meeting in Atlanta. On November 10 of that year, after it was certain that the convention would be held in Atlanta, Augusta wrote a long article in The Atlanta Journal, describing the notable women who were expected to attend.

From January 31 through February 4, with another informal session on the day following, the women gathered in Atlanta, hundreds of them from 38 states. Augusta had charge of arrangements and she went to Atlanta on Monday before the Thursday when the meeting would convene. As the plan for the meeting was her own idea, she did not investigate means of paying for the gathering but assumed all expenses herself. Following the sessions in Atlanta, the Howard sisters entertained Susan B. Anthony and other notables for three days at their home, Sherwood Hall.

As Dr. Elizabeth Taylor has gone into this movement here in Columbus very thoroughly and I see a reference to it in the program for today, I shall not review details of the events in 1894 at length. I have read Dr. Taylor's article which was published in the "Georgia Historical Quarterly" and have reviewed long accounts in the Atlanta papers. It is amazing that the antagonism exhibited then, eighty years ago, is practically identical with what is popular today.

While the result of the activities of the Howard sisters had been successful in securing the vote for women, their ardent participation in the movement had both tragic and sad effect in their family life. In time they became atheists and vegetarians, besides suffragettes. A Bible, annotated by Miriam, shows their resentment toward God because he was always referred to as He or Him or His.

They were condemned by men in the family and some of the women as well. After the constitutional amendment was passed, permitting women to vote, I recall how disappointed some of the sisters were that the country had not been suddenly improved and how few of the old limitations had been removed from the life of women. One change for the better I can report, however. That was improvement of the behavior at the polls when elections were held. Nights on voting days were violent occasions. Women would not dare go away from home except when competently escorted, as drunkenness, brawls, stabbings, and shootings were common.

Incidentally, when Augusta's mother had to sell one of the houses that furnished a significant part of the family's income, the cause of Woman's Suffrage sank especially low in the household.

As the nineteenth century closed in Columbus, the city saw the third of its military encampments disbanded. This was Camp Conrad in the North Highlands area. About seventeen years later, Benning would be organized and give Columbus a history of being the center of military activity for most of its near 150 years.

In covering the first quarter of the Twentieth Century, which formed the last part of the history I wrote, it was particularly difficult—even impossible to evaluate the many factors and movements that were shaping the city—there was no perspective.

However, besides the growth in industry, in water power, and in the establishment of Fort Benning, I should like to draw attention to a few special achievements of the women.

In the field of education this was particularly noticeable. In 1921 Miss Edwina Wood became the first member of the school board and the only woman to hold that position in Georgia. Her work with the kindergarten projects had been outstanding for years. Certainly, teachers had low salaries then as always. I remember my aunt with her monthly paycheck of about \$30.00. In establishing the library, the women continued their efforts that dated to the times before the Civil War.

The establishment of the Milk Fund for under-privileged children by Mrs. Max Rosenberg, through the Jewish Ladies Aid Society, was another significant program of the women. Assisting children of all creeds and color, it was enthusiastically supported and units were established throughout the city. A few years later Mrs. Rosenberg was named Columbus' best citizen of 1931 by the Lions, and later her name was placed on the Honor Roll of the Federation of Women's Clubs. Nowadays the free school lunches have taken the place of the numerous milk stations of the past.

In government women were also coming to the front. They favored the movement to secure the commission form of government and Miss Anna Griffin was elected as one of the first commissioners in 1922.

The activities of the women's clubs and the garden clubs should also be mentioned. The former have inspired all sorts of derogatory jokes on the part of the men. Neither they nor the women have really considered the fact that these clubs were sponsoring and executing the same sorts of projects that later became the purposes of such service clubs as the Kiwanians, the Rotarians, and so on. Then, when the garden club movement grew in importance, has anybody ever brought out the fact that this modern excitement with ecology had long been habitual with the women? I am afraid that, in these two instances, neither men nor women have considered their history nor provided a proper evaluation.

Women authors of this period whose writings had more than local circulation included Julia Howard Gatewood, whose young sisters were the Howard suffragettes, Rebecca Redd, Louise Hart, Annie Pond Crawford, and Emma Moffett Tyng.

Perhaps the lovely and talented actresses of those bygone days may be remembered by a few these days. There were Louise and Justina Huff and Juliette Compton. All found husbands elsewhere and rarely returned to Columbus. Little Helen Parrish and a younger sister appeared as child actors in several pictures, the latter appearing with the famous baseball star, Babe Ruth, in the movie, "When Babe Came Home."

Of course, the greatest event during the years being considered was the establishment of Fort

Benning. Columbus came to be known as "the mother-in-law of the Army," as the years passed, thus confirming the importance of the girls hereabout.

An incident of the old meeting the new occurred when the post was named for General Henry Benning, following the suggestion of Mrs. J. E. Minter. In the fall of 1918, I believe, there was high celebration when the fort was considered a permanent post and it had a name. A great parade was held on Broad Street and among the spectators were my grandmother and aunt, the former a completely unreconstructed rebel.

Opposite the old Transfer Station they stood and spotted Miss Tina (or Caroline) Benning in the lead car behind a big United States flag. My grandmother, a timid, old-fashioned lady who wore widow's weeds and a long black veil could not control her emotion. She stepped off the curb, shook her fist at her long-time friend and cried out, "Tina Benning, I am ashamed of you—riding down Broad Street behind that old rag," and she pointed her finger at the stars and stripes.

It was probably in the summer of 1920 that I first became interested in working on The Enquirer-Sun, and was the first female to hold the job of reporter in Columbus. I had already promised my father I would teach public school for at least one session and that career would begin in September. I had graduated at the University of S. C. in the spring. I came back to Columbus when that miserable year was over and despite some objections, was put on the payroll.

Working there, I had a thoroughly good time although life with my grandmother was not always happy. I was never her idea of a southern lady. In fact, I scorned all that tradition and the examples of the past, as probably has been the case of with all young people in all times. The fact was that I considered Society—with a capital S—and domestic life both uninteresting and boring. I remember talking to Cousin Gunby Jordan about the claims certain people made to family excellence and told him I had heard a lot about aristocrats in our family but I hadn't seen any worth picking up on the street. He looked at me solemnly, wiggled his great white eyebrows and mustache and observed, "We are like potatoes, all of us like potatoes - the best part of us is under the ground."

Two of the more interesting items on my beat as a reporter were the railroads and the Federal Court. I was accustomed to listing the names of visiting officials for the former and one morning the editor of the paper asked me who said Jack Daniels was visiting Columbus. I told him and he informed me that he expected Jack Daniels was there in full force, as Jack Daniels was a brand of liquor. I thought it was funny, but he called up the railroad office and objected.

Another incident concerned a visitation by officials of the Illinois Central which then owned the Central of Georgia. The Columbus station was in sad shape and I asked the visitors when they would repair it. They made no promises nor did they refuse. A few days later another delegation arrived and I asked the chief executive when the station would be repaired. He shrugged and replied that they had no time nor money for such frills. I put his answer in the paper and immediately the editor began receiving hot letters of criticism. The official responsible for the opinion heard about it and told the editor he had not said such a thing. Mr. Harris called me in and asked where I had gotten the story. I told him and in time the station was repaired.

At this point I should like to pay special tribute to Julian Harris and his wife, Julia Collier Harris. I visited in their home on numerous occasions and knew them both professionally and socially. Their support of the people who worked for them and their insistence on accuracy and value in the paper had a definite effect on me and my struggling with pencils and typewriters even until the present day. Having experienced that kind of discipline I am afraid I do not have the highest opinion of much modern journalism. As you know, he won two Pulitzer prizes, and always he gave great credit to his wife, for her encouragement and assistance.

While working there I met interesting visitors, wrote editorials, many special stories, and book reviews. It was probably the outstanding period in my many careers.

To go back to another of my assignments, there was my duty to report the Federal Court and this included the affairs of the bootlegging industry. Liquor was brought up from the gulf, sometimes

put in crocus sacks and tied below the waterline to the deck of the houseboat anchored in the middle of the river. Also, at other points, these sacks would be tied to limbs of willow trees that naturally hung into the current. Mr. DuBose and I were accustomed to go fishing on the river and usually we would start in a dreary pasture where one lone cow was attended by one old woman, wide-skirted and smelling like the cow. One day she told us that "they"—whoever they might be—had sent word for us not to do anymore fishing there along the river. I did not understand what she meant until I told one of the revenue agents about it and he described the bags full of booze that hung in the river.

During these years I had many compliments as well as much well-deserved criticism. One of the former which I have always remembered was passed on to me by Mr. Harris. He said a banker in town had liked my work and remarked that I never used my sex as a means to get a story. Of course, I was pleased. I did not tell him about the other side of the matter, however, when I would be propositioned by the male sex, when I had to dodge their roving hands, or when I slapped one prominent citizen—himself tottering with too much liquor and blasting forth about the young drunks at the Georgia-Auburn game. All that was a part of the job I decided and made no mention of it.

And here it may be interesting to remark that in all my years of working, of holding jobs rarely or never before held by a woman, I have never gotten into a situation I could not handle, I have never been refused either credit at stores when I wanted it, nor bank loans when I needed them. This makes me wonder about the thoroughness and accuracy of the research behind the modern woman's movement. Of course I learned early that a woman had to work twice as hard to make half the salary a man made, but I was always so interested in what I was doing that it made little difference.

In the early twenties it was suggested that I be nominated for a place in the Georgia House of Representatives. I hesitated but soon answered, "No," when I found that my name would be used by a certain faction to expose an attack on another faction. I was not interested in being "used" by anybody.

Those years in Columbus and later have inspired a lot of thought about women and their place in our western society. At one time I taught sociology at the University of South Carolina, one course dealing with marriage. Also, I have done social work in South Carolina and in Chicago. Among the questions I have asked is—what is the relation between the emergence of the modern woman, seeking what she calls equality with men -and the development of industrialism? I think that a thorough treatment of this subject, if put into circulation, would help remarkably in establishing the premise that the present situation is a matter of evolution and results neither from the biggityness of men nor the militantism of women.

To illustrate what I mean, I cite the farm and stock-raising household when woman's work was obviously a part of the livelihood of the family. Also, there was the family who lived in the same residence in which the father conducted his business. In neither case, was he absent from the home every day, thus forcing the mother to become the dominant homemaker. Another result was the constant association of mother and children which could become highly boring at times, especially when added to the dull household tasks that repeated themselves over and over again. In contrast I should like to draw attention to the double life the modern man lives and lack of relationship between his work and his homelife, an instance being the man whose days are spent with computers. Does his family have the same understanding of his significance as father and breadwinner as they had when they knew about farmlife, and such careers centered in the home? Hopefully, I believe that if both men and women realized this matter of evolution, there would be much less bitterness and conflict between the sexes. Evolution was not the fault of either.

And thus I come to the end of this talk. It has been most interesting for me to compile this information and I hope I have called attention to some significant items in the first hundred years of Columbus history. Thinking back on what I have said and, indeed, on much of what I have written from time to time, I am reminded of an old man I met in Portsmouth, N. H., while doing a publicity

story about U. S. 1 that stretched from the Canadian border to Key West, Florida. He was showing me a lightning rod, said to have been put up by Benjamin Franklin. We got to talking about history and such matters, and he told me that often he admired the past and revered what had gone before, "But let me tell you as I tell many people—tradition ought to be a rudder, and never an anchor."

Before I really conclude, however, I want to ask one or more of you interesting and wise people who are present, to finish up two projects I have begun, that affect Georgia, and which I shall not have time nor opportunity to complete. One is that I should like to see a biography written about Mary Musgrove Matthews Bosomworth, the Creek Indian princess who was very influential in colonial affairs. The story of such a female and an Indian would be most timely. Another subject is Mrs. Laura Beecher Comer. I am still convinced she was a cousin of Harriet Beecher Stowe, though such is denied in the Stowe shrine in Connecticut. I have given Dr. Lupold the material and correspondence I had, including a picture of this estimable lady.

And so—I thank you.