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REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

BY HENRY G. FULMER

Saturday, April 6, was bright and sunny, dramatically different from the rain squalls that had punctuated the week just days before, and by midday, as some 132 members and friends gathered for the seventy-seventh annual meeting of the University South Caroliniana Society, the University of South Carolina’s historic Horseshoe was teeming with springtime picnickers, sun bathers, and those enjoying a pick-up game of frisbee.

“A FEW WORDS ABOUT ALLEN STOKES AS HE RETIRES AS DIRECTOR OF THE SOUTH CAROLINIANA LIBRARY”

BY ORVILLE VERNON BURTON

It’s bittersweet to say goodbye to Dr. Allen Stokes. He has worked with the collections of the South Caroliniana Library since 1967, when he must have been very advanced for a toddler!

Historian Allen Stokes has admirably served his state and its history extremely well. In 1972, Stokes succeeded the legendary Clara Mae Jacobs as Manuscripts Librarian and eleven years later became the Director of the South Caroliniana Library.

PLACE AND TIME

Historians of the American South are concerned with place and time, and Stokes helped make the South Caroliniana Library a very special place for historians of the American South; it is almost a holy or sacred place. And the retirement of Allen Stokes is monumental not only to the history of the South Caroliniana, but to the history of South Carolina, and to historians of the American South.
The staff of the South Caroliniana Library had been hard at work for days in advance, planning and arranging exhibits of new materials and making sure that the building had that spit polish look we try to guarantee when welcoming our guests.

ANNUAL MEETING

Those who attended the meeting received the 104-page annual report of gifts and acquisitions by purchases. The South Caroliniana Library, with the support of the University South Caroliniana Society, has had another productive year through the generosity of your direct gifts and dues contributions. Endowed funds, such as those listed in the report, make it possible for us to accomplish goals otherwise unattainable. Members who were unable to attend the annual meeting received a copy of the annual report by mail.

The South Caroliniana Library is pleased to provide support to three scholars who will be conducting research at the library during the year. The research opportunities for these scholars are made possible through the Lewis P. Jones Research Fellowship, the William Gilmore Simms Visiting Research Professorship, and the Ellison Durant Smith Research Award.

Following the reception at the South Caroliniana Library, staff members and guests assembled at the Capstone Campus Room for the luncheon and business session. Among the business items addressed by President Ken Childs was the election of Mr. David W. Dangerfield and Dr. William McAlhany Davis as Councilors, succeeding Mr. Tom Moore Craig, Jr., and Mr. William Cain, Jr. Mr. Dangerfield is a Ph.D. candidate in Southern history at the University of South Carolina. Dr. Davis is a retired Spartanburg physician.

“THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION AND ITS MEANING TO AFRICAN AMERICANS”

Dr. Edna Greene Medford, Professor of History and departmental chair at Howard University, delivered the address. Dr. Medford specializes in nineteenth-century African-American history and has published numerous articles and book chapters on African Americans, especially during the Civil War era. Among her publications are the co-authored The Emancipation Proclamation: Three Views and The Price of Freedom: Slavery and the Civil War, Volumes I and II. She serves on the boards of the Abraham Lincoln Institute, the Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation, and the Ulysses S. Grant Association, and in 2009 was a special bicentennial recipient of the Order of Lincoln, an award given by the state of Illinois, for her scholarship on the President. The year 2013 is the sesquicentennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the topic of Dr. Medford’s talk was “The Emancipation Proclamation and Its Meaning to African Americans.” The complete text of the address will appear in next year’s edition of the Society’s annual report.

JOHN ABBOT WATERCOLORS IN HONOR OF ALLEN STOKES

Longtime South Caroliniana Library director Allen Stokes was honored with a fitting tribute by distinguished American

Shown with the Library’s new Abbot watercolors are, left to right, Henry Fulmer, Tom McNally, Lynn Robertson, Allen Stokes and Ken Childs
Historian Dr. Orville Vernon Burton, whose remarks are reprinted elsewhere in this issue. On behalf of the University South Carolina Society, with generous support from Dean Tom McNally and University Libraries, a gift of two original ornithological watercolors by naturalist John Abbot was presented to the South Caroliniana Library in Dr. Stokes’ honor and in appreciation for his forty years of distinguished service to the library and to the University of South Carolina.

The Allen Stokes Manuscript Development Fund at the South Caroliniana Library is among those funds that provide additional support for the Library. This endowment recognizes the major role Dr. Stokes has played in collecting and promoting the history of South Carolina by providing for the Library’s Manuscripts Division. Acknowledging that there is no cause dearer to Allen’s heart, some members of the Society have inquired about honoring Allen as he retires with a contribution to the fund bearing his name. A fund brochure and pledge card are being made available to the Society membership for their convenience in contributing. Gifts will be designated solely for the purpose of acquisitions for and preservation of the manuscript collection.

Dean Tom McNally, Society President Ken Childs, and the staff of the South Caroliniana Library deeply appreciate the support that the membership of the University South Carolina Society has extended to the South Caroliniana Library for many years. The Society and its special relationship with the Library are virtually unique in the country, and the strength of that bond is reflected in the heartfelt appreciation of several generations of scholars whose research has been made possible by the depth of our collections. On behalf of those researchers, thank you for your stewardship and generosity.

**CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE**

Upon my appointment as Director of the South Caroliniana Library at the start of 2013, one of the challenges I set before myself and in turn have extended to the Society’s Executive Council is that of growing the membership of our support base. The current membership of the Society stands at 1,415. You, the members, are our most vital source of outreach for increasing and strengthening our membership. Your nominations of friends and associates who share our passion for collecting and preserving the records of our state’s history help us maintain our ability to collect and preserve important materials for scholarly research. Memberships do more than preserve the Society’s health for future generations. Your dues and contributions provide a critical resource that enables us to acquire vital materials of lasting South Carolina interest.

Please join me in helping to ensure the future vitality of this distinguished organization by acting today to pass along the names of those who share the common interests that bind us together in the joint mission of the South Caroliniana Library and the University South Carolina Society.

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**REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT**

**BY KENNETH L. CHILDS**

We are embarking on an exciting new era in the University South Carolina Society. As most of our members are aware, Allen H. Stokes, Jr., longtime Director of the South Carolina Library, announced his retirement last year, and Henry G. Fulmer was named Director of the Library, effective January 2, 2013. Mr. Fulmer, the fifth person to serve as Director of the South Carolina Library, established in 1940, has thirty years of experience with the Library and is very knowledgeable about the Library’s collections, as well as many of the people who support the Library.

The Caroliniana Society has a solid record of hosting outstanding historians at its annual luncheon meeting, which in the last five years have included Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust, President of Harvard University; Dr. John M. McCardell, Jr., President Emeritus of Middlebury College and Vice Chancellor of The University of the South; Harold Holzer, an internationally recognized Abraham Lincoln scholar who works with the Metropolitan Museum in New York City; Dr. William A. Link, noted American historian Arthur Link’s son, who is currently Richard J. Milbauer Professor of History at the University of Florida; and, in 2013, Dr. Edna Greene Medford, Chair of the History Department at Howard University. We are committed to maintaining this tradition of excellence and welcome suggestions or proposals for our speaker in 2014.

Our challenges for 2013-14 include increasing our membership and attendance at our annual meeting, along with making a focused effort to attract African-American members and increase their participation in the Society’s activities.

Our Executive Council for 2013-14 consists of Kenneth L. Childs, President; Dr. Robert N. Milling, Vice-President; Franklin Beattie, Vice-President; Henry G. Fulmer, Secretary-Treasurer; Dr. W. Eugene Atkinson; Dr. Hendrik Booraem; Dr. Vernon Burton; Beth Crawford; David W. Dangerfield; Dr. William McAlhany Davis; Dr. Bobby Donaldson; Dr. Janet Hudson; Lynn Robertson; and Robin Waites. This board includes four distinguished and accomplished historians: Dr. Hendrik Booraem, Dr. Vernon Burton, Dr. Bobby Donaldson, and Dr. Janet Hudson.

For me personally, it has been an honor to work with Allen Stokes, and I look forward to Mr. Fulmer’s administration with great anticipation. I also want to acknowledge and thank Tom McNally, Dean of Libraries at the University of South Carolina for his obvious interest in and support for the program of the University South Carolina Society.
A FEW WORDS ABOUT ALLEN STOKES  Continued from page 1

Among his many endeavors to collect, preserve, and promote the history of South Carolina, Dr. Stokes has been a leading force in the work of the University South Caroliniana Society. He served as secretary-treasurer of the Society for over twenty-five years. He has also served on the editorial board of the South Carolina Historical Magazine and co-edited Twilight on the South Carolina Rice Fields: Letters of the Heyward Family, 1862-1871. In 1982 he compiled the South Caroliniana Library’s first published guide to its manuscript holdings, A Guide to the Manuscript Collection of the South Caroliniana Library, a seminal work we scholars still regularly consult.

Honors and Awards

Dr. Stokes has been honored for his work with research collections, and very deservedly so. In 2007, the South Carolina State Historical Records Advisory Board awarded the Governor’s Archives Award to Allen Stokes “in recognition of his lifelong dedication and invaluable contributions to our state in promoting a knowledge of and appreciation for the state’s history.” His alma mater, Wofford College, awarded Dr. Allen Stokes an honorary Doctorate, stating that he “is recognized nationally as one of the best archivists and directors of research collections in the country.” Among his other many honors and awards, Allen Stokes was inducted into the prestigious Order of the Palmetto, and he received a Career Achievement Award from the South Carolina Archival Association.

Scholars and archivists have a symbiotic relationship, and Allen is able to work with a wide variety of researchers. I recently asked a group of historians how many archivists it takes to change a light bulb. They PANICKED! Change!!?? They did not want any change! But Dr. Stokes went about change in a productive way. Over the course of his career, as he worked to collect, preserve, and promote the history of South Carolina, he and his friend and colleague at the Library Tom Johnson also made sure that the collections address the history of civil rights, equal rights, and inclusiveness as the collections always had the history of the Old and New Souths, the Civil War, and, as I like to say with tongue in cheek as a reference to the Confederacy, those white men who turned the South prematurely gray. Now the South Caroliniana Library preserves other stories, those of women, Native Americans, Asians, and Hispanics, and especially the extraordinary contributions of African Americans as part of our state’s history. Allen Stokes understood that our history is not just a history of whites, or not just separate histories of African Americans, but that it has been the interaction of blacks and whites that makes South Carolina’s history exceptional.

Accolades and Tributes

When I informed friends of mine who are leading scholars of the American South, that Allen is retiring, here is a sample of the kinds of responses I received from award-winning distinguished historians.

The University of South Carolina’s own Lacy Ford, who was an undergraduate at USC and did his Ph.D. at USC, is now the kind of administrator that the academy so desperately needs: a Provost as well as great historian. Dr. Ford, a gifted historian who has creatively explored the political and intellectual culture of our state, had this to say about Allen:

“Allen’s selfless work as an archivist and manuscript librarian has helped make several generations of historians better scholars than they otherwise would have been. At least I know that was the case for me. His dedication, his knowledge of collections, his willingness to share, his eagerness to see others succeed made him a paragon of academic librarians. Allen made the SCL a ‘Must-visit’ stop for many of the nation’s finest historians. Personally, I am forever in Allen’s debt for his support,
encouragement and friendship since the day I first walked into the manuscripts room as an undergraduate looking for a senior thesis topic.”

Another historian, Peter Coclanis at the University of North Carolina, has written incisively on the economic and entrepreneurial history of South Carolina. He also raved about Allen Stokes:

“Allen was the most helpful, solicitous, researcher-friendly archivist I’ve ever encountered in all my years in the profession. He had uncanny knowledge regarding his collections, and always put his library patrons first. And his intellectual generosity was matched by his great good humor. The whole profession will miss him dearly. When one thinks of the legions of students and scholars he helped—and ‘helped’ is putting it mildly—it’s pretty amazing.”

Drew Gilpin Faust, president of Harvard University, is one of the most important interpreters of the intellectual, cultural, and social history of the South. Her biography of South Carolina’s James Henry Hammond inspired a generation of students just as C. Vann Woodward’s Tom Watson did for me. Although Faust normally no longer has the time to give presentations, she came and spoke just a few years ago to the University South Caroliniana Society because of her respect and affection for Allen Stokes. She said of Allen:

“Allen has done so much for so long to make our lives as historians possible. Since the time I was writing my dissertation, his wisdom, his meticulous knowledge of the collections, his sense of what matters in our connections to the past have inspired and supported me. I and thousands like me owe him an incalculable debt.”

**Past, Present, Future**

I echo these fine sentiments and could add much more, but if I continue the praise and all of the positive comments that Allen deserves, we will not have time for our featured speaker. We scholars depend on archivists like Allen Stokes who know the material. But some archivists belong in a special category; Allen has created community. The community at the South Caroliniana involves a tradition that connects Allen with R.L. Meriwether and Les Inabinett and in an equally strong way to Henry Fulmer and to those who will come after him. Allen Stokes had big shoes to fill, and he filled them. More than that, he significantly enlarged them and left an even bigger imprint for his successors. I am confident that Henry Fulmer, who has worked so closely with Allen and learned from Allen over the years, will fill those shoes, and in his turn will continue the tradition of Dr. Allen Stokes and leave again even larger shoes for the future.

Allen, you are the very best, and we all wish you our very best. We know that the South Caroliniana Library and the University South Caroliniana Society will still benefit from your wisdom, insight, and help. Thank you, my friend.

— Dr. Burton is Professor of History, Creativity Chair of Humanities, and Director of the Clemson Cyberinsitute at Clemson University as well as Emeritus University Distinguished Teacher/Scholar, and Professor of History, African-American History and Sociology at the University of Illinois.
University South Caroliniana Society Presentation to the South Caroliniana Library in Honor of Allen Stokes

BY LYNN ROBERTSON

It is quite an honor for me to be here today and to assist in making this presentation to the Caroliniana Library in honor of Allen Stokes.

In Allen’s honor two valuable John Abbot ornithological studies are being added to the Library’s outstanding holdings. These works are a fitting tribute to a man who has focused his career on collecting and making available to students and researchers a broad range of subjects and resources dealing with South Carolina and the American South. These beautiful and accurate watercolors depict the Blue Yellow-backed Warbler and the Tyrant Shrike.

What Is It Worth?

For many years I taught a course in museum administration and one of the questions students always asked was how to determine the value of objects. The first point is always the easy one, rarity, that is, how unique an item is. The second one is a little more complex but of more importance. That is the worth of the object in contributing to intellectual and cultural knowledge.

In the case of these Abbot works their rarity is without question. While Abbot is best known for his depictions of butterflies of the South, he also completed a study of the Southern birds he observed in Georgia. There are only three sets of his original ornithological works in the United States. They are located at the University of Georgia, the Smithsonian Institution and the Boston Society of Natural History.

But these Abbot works are far more important in the fact that they add significantly to the University’s outstanding holdings in early natural history works which include among others, those of Mark Catesby, Alexander Wilson, John James Audubon, in addition to Abbot’s studies of butterflies.

John Abbot

John Abbot was born in London in 1751. His family supported his early interest in art. He both owned works and was influenced by Mark Catesby. In 1773, Abbot immigrated to Virginia and then settled permanently in Georgia. Little is known of his personal life but one has to marvel at the determination that brought a well-off and educated Englishman to the rural South on the eve of the Revolution. He devoted the remainder of his life to studying and depicting the plants and animals of this region, rendering them in his own unique style, one that is more in keeping with their appearance in nature then that of other scientists and artists. While his Lepidoptera studies were published, his outstanding ornithological works were not, and therefore remained largely unknown and unappreciated until recently. There is now increased interest in him and his role in the history of the South and the evolution of natural history study.

These distinctive works are important historical, artistic and scientific documents. They add significantly to the collections of the Caroliniana Library. I can’t think of a more appropriate way to honor Allen Stokes for his many years of leadership at the Library as well as his historical scholarship.

— Lynn Robertson retired as Director of the McKissick Museum and now assists the staff of the South Caroliniana Library in the area of grants submissions and exhibitions.
The South Caroliniana Library and the USC College of Education collaborated to present the Lift Every Voice National Forum in May in Columbia, S.C.

The forum brought together experts and stakeholder communities to address the challenges of collecting, archiving, presenting, and teaching the history of the civil rights movement. The forum received support from The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) with the intention of creating a collaborative model and action agenda for libraries, museums, archives, and stakeholder communities.

The collaborative model and information about the South Carolina plan will be disseminated nationally to the civil rights and scholarly communities, including a national media release, a panel at a major national conference, and announcements through national e-networks for scholars, educators, and civil rights organizations.

According to the forum’s press release, “There is a pressing need to collect and preserve South Carolina’s untold civil rights stories before a generation passes into history. South Carolina played a significant but largely unknown role in the civil rights movement. Time is of the essence in documenting the stories of elderly participants. Moreover, it is critical to help the next generation appreciate the struggles and the triumphs of this extraordinary period in our nation’s history.”

The four-day forum brought together librarians, archivists, digital media specialists, members of the civil rights community, scholars, and educators to:

a. Develop a collaborative model for collecting, preserving, presenting, and teaching oral histories and artifacts related to the civil rights movement.
b. Develop a plan for utilizing the collaborative model to collect, preserve, present, and teach civil rights oral histories and artifacts in South Carolina.
c. Further develop the network of civil rights librarians, archivists, historians and other scholars, and educators in South Carolina to facilitate collection, preservation, presentation, and teaching of oral histories and artifacts.
GETTING TO KNOW YOU:
Learning More About my Paternal Great-grandfather,
William Henry Sinkler, Jr.

By Harriet Sinkler Little

For many years, I have known your name, birth and death dates, and what you looked like, although you died fifteen years before I was born. I know that you were called Henry, unlike your father and the subsequent three William Henrys. I have a copy of a portrait of you as a young boy with your mother Anna. The next picture is of you in Confederate uniform, probably about age eighteen. There is another photograph when you were a few years older.

Looking at genealogical records, I realized that you were not yet twelve years old when your father died in 1856, leaving you and four younger siblings—one an infant—to be reared by your mother. It has caused me to ponder how very strong she must have been to manage that large family and a working plantation.

Running Away to Be a Soldier

Until just a few years ago, I did not know the details of your running away from boarding school at seventeen to join the Confederate army. Nor did I know about your fighting in the battle of Battery Wagner on James Island, or marching to St. Stephen, S.C., then to Raleigh, N.C., a distance of over 300 miles.

Several years ago I started transcribing letters you wrote to Cleremonde Serrè Gaillard, whom you married in 1865, just after you returned from the war at the age of twenty-one. I also learned, from letters written to her, how well-respected you were. Even her father, Peter C. Gaillard, was quite happy when you approached him in 1863 for permission to propose to her.

“Desolation and Destruction”

From your brief memoir, I know your anguish at returning to Eutaw Plantation to deal with “desolation and destruction; not a horse, mule or cow, ox, wagon, or cart; my mother and little children without a thing to eat, no clothes left and no

William Henry Sinkler, Jr., as a young man

William Henry Sinkler, Jr., in his Confederate uniform
money to buy anything…..” According to an account written by your younger sister, Deas, Union General [probably Alfred S.] Hartwell and his men spent several days at the plantation, where they stole or destroyed much of what they could find.

Again from letters, I read a description of the wedding, hastily pulled together at the home of a relative in Eutawville, where the Gaillards were “refugeeing.” Cleremonde, who was called “Sissie,” wore a dress given by a friend, and the veil which her sister had worn two years earlier. Other friends and relatives helped her put together a trousseau.

I know from Charleston City Directories that at one point you lived with Cleremonde’s family and you were a conductor on the City Railroad. When you inherited Eutaw Plantation after your mother died in 1873, you returned there to live for the rest of your life.

An Episcopalian and a Mason
A memoir written by your younger daughter, Anna, many years later, expresses her pride in your accomplishments and your sense of humor. She says that you managed to make a living for your mother and sisters and were a good farmer, an avid reader, and the Senior Warden of Epiphany Episcopal Church. Your sense of humor showed through in an incident noted in church records. When you showed up for a Vestry meeting and nobody else was there, you left a note on the church door, stating that they were all “unelected.”

Just in recent months, I learned that you had become a Mason, joining the Strict Observance Lodge in Charleston in 1868. Further research showed that you were demitted in 1881 and subsequently joined the Vance Lodge, closer to home, where you served an unprecedented twelve terms as Worshipful Master. The Lodge has a large portrait of you, a copy of which they shared with our family; it was done when you were older and wore a beard. We had never seen it before.

Remembering
I have visited your grave on Church Island in Lake Marion numerous times; our family has worked to keep your grave, and that of our great-grandmother “Sissie,” in good repair. My brother, William Henry Sinkler V, assisted in placing the Confederate iron cross on your grave several years ago.

Knowing what I do, I think I would have enjoyed knowing you personally. As that was not an option, I am grateful that I have been able to learn as much as I have. I, too, am very proud of you. Perhaps, if I am lucky--and diligent--there is more to be learned.

— Harriet Sinkler Little is a freelance writer/researcher and "pine-straw" farmer living in Summerville, S.C. She spent her early years at Eutaw Plantation and has been a social worker, counselor, teacher, and businesswoman.
Death claimed the life of one of the South Caroliniana Library’s most distinguished benefactors, Mary Simms Oliphant Furman, on January 22, 2013, at her home in Greenville, S.C.

Mrs. Furman’s generous support of current and past scholarly endeavors focusing upon the life, letters, writings, and literary remains of her famed ancestor, William Gilmore Simms, continued into a second generation the work begun by her mother, Mary C. Simms Oliphant. Widely recognized for her embodiment of graciousness, courtesy, hospitality, beauty, and innate intellect, Mrs. Furman was a life-long friend to the South Caroliniana Library. Her legacy lives on through the work she continued, began anew, and passed along to a new generation.

In tribute to Mrs. Furman, Allen Stokes, Director Emeritus of the South Caroliniana Library, said, “Mrs. Mary Simms Furman was devoted to family, community, church, and Furman University. She shared her mother’s lifelong interest in their mutual ancestor, W. Gilmore Simms. She worked with Mrs. Oliphant in the publication of *South Carolina from the Mountains to the Sea, Gateway to South Carolina*, and the 1970 edition of *The History of South Carolina*.

Along with other family members, she was instrumental in the organization of the Simms Society and the William Gilmore Simms Visiting Research Professorship at the South Caroliniana Library. The staff members of the Caroliniana Library are grateful to Mrs. Furman for her friendship and commitment to fulfilling her family’s legacy.”

**A LIFE WELL-LIVED**

Mrs. Furman, the daughter of Mary C. Simms Oliphant and Albert Drane Oliphant and widow of Alester G. Furman III, was born on February 14, 1918, in Columbia, S.C. She was the great-granddaughter of William Gilmore Simms, the South’s most prominent antebellum poet, novelist, and historian. She graduated from Greenville High School and attended The Greenville Women’s College. She spent a year at the Sorbonne in Paris before earning a bachelor’s degree from the University of South Carolina. She was conferred a master’s degree in French literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While there, she performed with the internationally-acclaimed Martha Graham Dance Company.

Mrs. Furman was also a leader in civic and cultural affairs in Greenville. She was influential in the creation and preservation of the Reedy River Historic District and in the restoration of the Reedy River Park and the Huguenot Mill and office. She was a member of the Junior League of Greenville and served as its president from 1955 to 1957. She was an active member of the Carolina Foothills Garden Club and was its president from 1978 to 1980.

Along with her husband, she was also a supporter of Furman University, the South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities, the Upcountry History Museum at Heritage Green, the South Carolina Nature Conservancy, and the Peace Center for the Performing Arts. She was a member of the Tuesday Study Club, the Cercle Franco Américain, the Debutante Club of Greenville, the Assembly, and the Quadrille. Mrs. Furman was a lifelong communicant of Christ Church Episcopal.

On April 4, 1942, she married Alester G. Furman III, a descendant of Richard Furman, for whom Furman University was named. Through their sixty-five years together, they directed their time, talents, and resources toward the advancement of Furman University. In recognition of her many contributions, Mrs. Furman was conferred an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree by Furman University in 2007.

— Henry Fulmer is Director of the South Caroliniana Library
Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr.,
One of “The Immortal Six Hundred”

BY HARVEY S. TEAL

Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr. (1827-1897), of Liberty Hill, S.C., was one of six hundred officer prisoners of war selected from all fourteen Confederates states who were shipped from Fort Delaware to Morris Island, S.C., in 1864. Their bravery and heroism while prisoners of war earned them the title “The Immortal Six Hundred.”

When the captured Confederates arrived at Morris Island, they were placed in a stockade just in front of the Union batteries shelling Fort Sumter and Charleston. This retaliatory action was taken under the assumption that Confederate forces had placed captured Union officers in Charleston under the fire of Union batteries shelling the city.

Johnson’s Life Before the War

Johnson’s father had been a successful merchant in Camden, S.C., for a number of years before he moved his family to the Camden suburb of Kirkwood in 1827. He became the president of the Bank of Camden in 1845, a position he held until his death in 1871. He purchased a tract of land in Kirkwood, which was a part of the Revolutionary War battlefield of Hobkirk Hill. On this tract he completed a large home by 1842, to which he had added landscaped gardens with a pond. In later years it became known as Holly Hedge and today it is one of the finer antebellum homes in Camden.

William E. Johnson, Jr., spent his youth in this Kirkwood home. He attended the University of Virginia (1845) and at about the age of twenty-three, he married Ann Cunningham, daughter of prosperous Liberty Hill planter Robert Cunningham.

War – Enlisting and Capture

William was a planter at Liberty Hill when the Civil War began. He enlisted in Company A of the Boykin Mounted Rifles but after some reorganization of troops, he joined Company K, South Carolina Cavalry. He was appointed a lieutenant on May 18, 1864, and twelve days later was captured at Old Church outside of Richmond, Va.

Shown is a 1960 view of Holly Hedge taken by master photographer Jack Boucher, who for half a century photographed America for the National Park Service’s Historic American Buildings Survey, the first federal preservation program. Ben and Pam Schreiner who presently reside at Holly Hedge, supplied this image from the Holly Hedge files.
By August 1864 he was imprisoned at Fort Delaware. On the twentieth of that month, he and five hundred ninety-nine other Confederate officers were crowded into the small schooner Crescent City for an eighteen-day trip to Morris Island, with an intermediate stop in Beaufort, S.C., to unload sick and wounded at the military hospital there.

On board the Crescent City the prisoners of war suffered intense heat and a lack of water and food. On one occasion they went for forty hours without any water. For seven days they suffered on board the Crescent City in Charleston harbor while prisoners were exchanged and the stockade made ready for their occupation. During this period they were “treated” to a daily diet of shelling by both sides. Finally, on September 7, 1864, they left the Crescent City and marched into the stockade on Morris Island.

**Morris Island**

Their guards at Morris Island were from the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, a military unit created from African Americans and including some former slaves. During the prisoners’ forty-five days on Morris Island, these guards reputedly were quick to fire among their prisoners for the most minor of reasons.

At the same time, the Immortal Six Hundred daily faced “friendly” fire from Confederate batteries which continued to shell Battery Wagner and the other batteries firing on Charleston. Miraculously, none of the prisoners was killed by friendly fire or by their guards.

The prisoners occupied themselves as best they could by playing cards, checkers, and chess, as well as writing in their diaries, writing letters home, making escape plans, thinking of home, and thinking of being exchanged. They also created lists of the six hundred which included the name, rank, unit, place and date of capture, and home address of each prisoner. Until a few months ago, historians did not know that Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr., compiled had survived.

**“Travels” of Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr.’s Roster of the Immortal Six Hundred**

*By Harvey S. Teal*

In the accompanying article I stated that the Immortal Six Hundred prisoners had created a roster of themselves arranged by states which included the name, rank, unit, place and date of capture, and home address of each prisoner. Until a few months ago, historians did not know that the list Lieutenant William E. Johnson Jr., compiled had survived.

**Where Has This List Been All These Years and Where Is It Now?**

On June 9, 2012, at a Civil War show in Columbia, S.C., I browsed along from one dealer table to the next searching for Civil War relics in my fields of interest. As I examined the items on the table of Broadfoot Publishing Company, with much excitement and anticipation I opened a folder labeled “Immortal Six Hundred—original manuscript.” When I realized I was examining a Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr., manuscript list of the Immortal Six Hundred, goose bumps arose on my arms.

I had become familiar with the Johnson family and the overall history of the Immortal Six Hundred many years earlier, and in a July 30, 2012, *Camden Chronicle-Independent* column I described how the Union Army placed six hundred captured Confederate officers on Morris Island in front of the Union batteries firing on Fort Sumter and Charleston, and that Johnson and other officers created a list of the prisoners at that time.

In 1961 I purchased from Mrs. Dan M. Jones on Mill Street in Camden about three hundred manuscripts of William E. Johnson, Sr., her ancestor. Here I was, more than fifty years later, examining an extremely important Civil War historical document of the senior Johnson’s son, Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr. I could feel the “Hand of Providence” guiding me as I quickly negotiated a price with the dealer and walked out of the show, the excited new owner of this Johnson family document.

**Questions**

On the cover of the document was the following note: “Return to W.E. Johnson (son of Lieut. W.E. Johnson by whom this record was kept), Fair St., Camden, So. Carolina. June 12, 1911.” Who had borrowed the list? Who wrote the mysterious, cryptic initials “B M E” on one corner of the document’s cover?
The Plight of Prisoners of War

Although Confederate and Union forces reached an agreement about exchanging prisoners on July 12, 1862, few exchanges occurred during the war. Union authorities all the way up the chain of command to President Lincoln opposed exchanges due to their fear that such exchanges would recognize the Confederacy as a nation.

By 1864 their military successes convinced the Union to think victory could be achieved more quickly by not exchanging Confederate officers who then would soon be back at the front lines. The Union's decision not to participate in such exchanges sacrificed many Union prisoners to an untimely death from lack of food, shelter, and medical attention.

At this time the weakened Confederacy could not adequately and consistently provide for prisoners. Nor could they do so for their own troops. The Union forces even rejected a Confederate offer to turn Union prisoners over without any exchange of Confederates. This no-

When and how did the list get out of family hands? Where had the list been for over a hundred years?

Answers

A few weeks later Ben Schreiner, present-day owner of Holley Hedge, gave me the answer to the question of who had borrowed Lieutenant Johnson’s list. In the July 1911 Confederate Veteran, the editor reported receiving Johnson’s list and added, “…which has been published in The Veteran.” However, a search of the publication failed to verify this claim.

Apparently the list was returned from The Confederate Veteran in Nashville, Tennessee, to the Fair Street address indicated on the cover. This was the home of the Lieutenant’s son, W.E. Johnson III, and his family. The Lieutenant’s granddaughter Henrietta would have been about thirty-four years old at the time.

In the 1950s-60s, I visited Henrietta a few times and got to know her casually. She loaned me a photograph of William M. Shannon to copy for use in Old Times in Camden, Pen Pictures of the Past, a pamphlet I edited. During this period Joan Inabinet knew Henrietta possessed the Civil War prisoner of war letters of Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr., since Henrietta gave her a copy of one of them. Henrietta likely also had her Confederate ancestor’s diary and Immortal Six Hundred list at the time.

More Questions

As is mentioned in the Editor’s Note, the family of Dick Littlejohn gave the twenty-three Lieutenant W.E. Johnson, Jr., prisoner of war letters and his diary to Wofford College in 2010. How did they get into Littlejohn’s hands?

More Answers

While the answer to that question is not known for sure, here is the likely scenario. In the 1950s-60s, one B.M. Ellison of Lancaster frequently visited Henrietta McWillie Johnson, seeking to buy from her pieces of Alexander Young silver and other items such as manuscripts. Mrs. Dan. M. Jones, Henrietta’s cousin, and antique dealer Norman Fohl both related this to me on several occasions.

In a combined purchase/donation to the South Caroliniana Library in 1981, Ellison turned over to the Library a scrapbook and about forty-eight manuscripts written to or from William E. Johnson, Jr., or to William M. Shannon which Johnson had collected when the famous Cash-Shannon duel
“The Immortal Six Hundred”

Exchange policy also doomed forty-four of the Immortal Six Hundred to die as prisoners or shortly after their release.

Transfer from Morris Island
On October 21, 1864, the prisoners on Morris Island were transferred by ship to Fort Pulaski, near Savannah, Ga. As winter approached, their health worsened due to lack of warm clothing, blankets, and fuel for fires. On November 19, 1864, one hundred ninety-eight of these prisoners were transferred to Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Under a retaliation policy in effect at the time, reputedly based on Confederate mistreatment of Union prisoners at Andersonville, Ga., rations were cut to a small amount of worm-infested corn meal and a few pickles per day. Scurvy set in and dysentery was rampant. Prisoners resorted to killing and eating any cats and rats around the prisons.

All of this transpired as Sherman burned Atlanta, marched across Georgia, captured Savannah, and began his march through the Carolinas. Meanwhile, Grant laid siege to Peters burg, Va., captured it, and was poised to capture Richmond.

On March 4 and 5, 1865, the Confederate prisoners at Fort Pulaski and Hilton Head were loaded on ships and sent back to Fort Delaware, arriving there on the tenth. Most of the Immortal Six Hundred still held out some hope for the Confederacy and continued to refuse to sign the oath of allegiance to the United States.

End of the War
After General Robert E. Lee surrendered on April 9 and General Joseph E. Johnston on April 26, 1865, the long struggle was over. On June 16, 1865, Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr., and most of his fellow Confederate officers signed the oath of allegiance. Johnson returned home to a broken and defeated South to begin picking up the pieces of his personal life. Six years later, upon his father’s death, he inherited Holly Hedge and lived there until the end of his own life in 1897.

—Harvey S. Teal is a retired educator, former president of the University South Caroliniana Society, and longtime benefactor of the South Caroliniana Library.

Editor’s Note:
In 2010, Broadus R. Littlejohn, a Spartanburg, S.C., collector, gave Wofford College a large collection of books, pamphlets, documents and manuscripts. Among his gift were twenty-three Civil War letters and a diary which Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr., kept from May 1864 until June 1865. The college has now placed these letters and the diary online. Lieutenant Johnson’s papers have provided historians new insight into the story of the Immortal Six Hundred.

occurred on July 5, 1880. (Today William E. Johnson, Jr., is perhaps better known for his role in this duel than his role in the Immortal Six Hundred.)

Johnson came into possession of these items due to being Shannon’s second in the duel. Johnson’s son had married William M. Shannon’s daughter, Catherine McWillie Shannon. Ellison acquired these materials from Henrietta McWillie Johnson.

In 2005, a member of the B.M. Ellison family gave the South Caroliniana Library nineteen W.E. Johnson, Jr., manuscripts from the Ellison estate, another example of Johnson materials Ellison acquired from Henrietta McWillie Johnson.

Ellison likely also purchased Johnson’s Civil War letters and diary from Henrietta and later sold them to collector Dick Littlejohn. This purchase also likely included Johnson’s Immortal Six Hundred list since the initials “B M E” appear on the cover. The list, however, never went to Wofford College but wound up in the hands of Broadfoot Publishing Company.

Wofford College has since sold the envelopes from the twenty-three Lieutenant Johnson prisoner of war letters to a dealer who sold them to about a dozen collectors prisoner of war letters to a dealer who sold them to about a dozen collectors scattered across the United States.

In any event, it is clear the roster traveled to and from many places: Morris Island, Fort Pulaski, Hilton Head, Fort Delaware, Liberty Hill, Holly Hedge, Fair Street in Camden, Nashville, Tenn., and wherever Broadfoot Publishing Company carried it. It is also clear it had multiple owners, Lieutenant W.E. Johnson, Jr., his son W.E. Johnson III, granddaughter Henrietta McWillie Johnson, B.M. Ellison, Broadfoot Publishing Company, and myself.

Lieutenant W.E. Johnson, Jr.’s Immortal Six Hundred roster has survived all of these travels to at least nine cities, through multiplexes states from Georgia to Delaware then back to South Carolina and from South Carolina to Tennessee, sea voyages to Fort Pulaski, Hilton Head, and Fort Delaware and through the hands of at least six different owners.

The Roster’s Final Journey
Lieutenant Johnson’s roster and the story of the Immortal Six Hundred was the subject of a Kershaw County Historical Society program on March 24, 2013, at Holly Hedge, during which Johnson family manuscripts from the South Caroliniana Library were on display.

At this event, I transferred ownership of Lieutenant William E. Johnson, Jr.’s roster of the Immortal Six Hundred to the South Caroliniana Library and the State of South Carolina. On that day it made its last journey to its final home at this beautiful library on the University of South Carolina campus.
South Carolina’s Everyman Artist:
The Oscar Jackson “Jak” Smyrl, Jr., Papers

BY EDWARD BLESSING

Jak Smyrl is best known for his work as the staff artist for The State newspaper from 1955 until 1986. The South Caroliniana Library’s Oscar Jackson “Jak” Smyrl, Jr., Papers represent the majority of Jak’s oeuvre, bringing together a vast array of materials that provide a unique insight into the life of this prolific artist. Containing his countless newspaper illustrations in draft, complete, and published form, the collection also includes homemade audio recordings, photographs, freelance artwork, World War II and post-war correspondence, personal diaries, childhood sketches, and hundreds of drawings and doodles. Pen and paper may have been the tools of the trade, but for Jak they were also lifelong companions.
The Early Years

Born in Camden, S.C., on May 5, 1923, to Oscar Jackson Smyrl and Mary Ann Davis, Jak was a precocious child whose first drawings were made while sick abed when he was given a pencil and notepad to keep him entertained. He was soon filling notebooks, textbooks and any scrap paper he could find with drawings of cowboys and Indians, pirates and ships, animals, daring aviators, cops and robbers, and other images that filled his young mind. These early drawings provide a keen insight into the foundations of an artistic career; movement, shadow, and expression are all present. By the age of thirteen Jak was taking a correspondence art class which he continued for the next several years.

As a freshman at Camden High School in 1937, Jak immediately began working on the school newspaper, The Bulldog, and was the staff artist of this publication for the next two years. He also worked on the school yearbook, Gold and Black, in 1940. In the fall of 1939, Jak decided to learn to play the trumpet, a decision that was to have lasting effects on his life. In a few months he was playing in the school marching band and by November 1940 he and a few friends had formed a jive band called the “Sentimental Southerners.” It was a popular local group, playing for dances at the Court Inn in Camden and even winning a local amateur contest. Music had become another form of artistic expression for Jak and he was to have a horn near him for the rest of his life.

College, Take One

In September 1942, Jak began college studies at Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn, Ala., where he focused on art and Army ROTC. Almost before he unpacked, Jak wrote to his family describing the rush he felt at the beginning of the first semester of college – a series of fees, tests, and orientation still encountered by today’s students. This letter opened a floodgate of correspondence that would continue until well after Jak’s experiences in World War II. Jak kept all the letters sent to him by friends and family, and Mary Smyrl faithfully collected her son’s letters after they had circulated among his siblings. The result is a circumspect collection that reveals the conversations that took place between a boy and his family. The Smyrls were close-knit, and each letter conveys the distinctive tone of its author: his sisters who were sassy, yet fun; his mother, a woman who missed and worried about her son, soon to be caught up in the global conflict; and his father who sagely admonished his boy to “keep everything in moderation” when faced with the work – and play – offered at college. Jak endeavored to make his family proud, and soon his artwork appeared in The Auburn Plainsman, the school’s student-run newspaper.

In March 1943, Jak received word that he would be ineligible for the Army Officer Candidate School due to poor eyesight. This was a blow, for Jak wanted every possible opportunity to advance through the ranks. Taking stock of his situation, he made a bold decision. His next letter home
to Camden begins, “It now becomes my pleasant duty to inform you that you now have a son and brother in the Marine Corps—I joined up this morning.” Although starting out as a private, Jak was told that after four months of duty he would be able to apply to the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School, and he decided that it was better to have a slim chance at promotion than none at all. In addition, he would be allowed to finish his first year of college and spend the month of June with his family before reporting to Parris Island, S.C., for Basic Training.

Life as a Leatherneck

Although life as a “boot” at Parris Island was tough, Jak’s letters home show a burgeoning admiration for the Marine Corps. “They are tough on us,” he penned in a spare few minutes, “but they keep us clean as [a] whistle, stuffed with plenty [of] good food – they watch us better than we watch ourselves.” Emerging from Basic Training in September 1943, Jak stayed on at Parris Island for another year, first as a Drill Instructor and then as coach on the rifle range. Although glad to be near his family, at times Jak grew anxious to join the fight. In September 1944, he was transferred to Camp Pendleton in California, to prepare for active duty in the Pacific. Enjoying Los Angeles on the weekends, he remembered meeting Gary Cooper (who was attending a fair incognito) and hearing Tommy Dorsey. Jak finally shipped out in December 1944, headed for the Pacific islands. First stopping at Pavuvu, located in the Russell Islands, Jak eventually participated in the Battle of Okinawa. In a letter dated April 14, 1945, just days after the battle began, Jak wrote of this time as “the greatest adventure of my life.” The descriptions of bombs, strafing, and death seem somewhat cavalier even for a young man of 22. Only later, after the surrender was finalized and military correspondence censorship completely lifted was he able to reveal the true horrors of war.

Once the fighting on Okinawa had stopped, Jak turned his mind back to art and considered future possibilities that the Marine Corps might offer. Artwork he submitted to Leatherneck Magazine of the Marines, as well as sketches and drawings he had done for fellow soldiers had caught the attention of his officers and his post-war duties shifted. In September 1945, Jak was stationed in Tientsin, North China, where he worked on the publications The North China Marine and the Marine Tiger. With these assignments Jak had his first close interactions with professional journalists. The skills he acquired during this time in China along with the camaraderie he found in the newsroom combined to whet his appetite for newspaper work.

College, Take Two

Returning home to Camden in March 1946, Jak attended the University of South Carolina from that fall until the next May. Although his studies focused on fine art and one of his paintings was displayed in New York, Jak’s heart was still in the newsroom and he devoted time to The Gamecock,
South Carolina’s Everyman Artist

the University’s student-run newspaper. Due to his artistic success and at the urging of his professors, Jak transferred to the Art Institute of Pittsburgh the next year, where he felt lonely, isolated and cold. His letters from this time lack their usual sunny outlook, and Jak returned home in the spring of 1948 to finish his degree at USC. Only two months into the fall semester, however, Jak was encouraged to apply for a position with the State-Record Company. At first hesitant about foregoing his bachelor’s degree, Jak finally decided to accept the job he was offered and thus began his career as a commercial artist.

The State

Jak’s early years with the State-Record Company were spent working on The State Magazine, a Sunday supplement over which he and colleague Eugene B. Sloan held free reign. This period completed Jak’s education in the steps needed to produce a newspaper since he and Sloan were responsible for weekly design, development, and layout. Jak often produced a piece that occupied the front cover of the magazine. Some of the most-well-loved of these illustrations were those he drew for the annual Carolina-Clemson football game played on “Big Thursday.” Jak worked on The State Magazine until it was discontinued and then transferred to The State news department in 1955. Here he remained for the next thirty-one
years, producing the humorous artwork that the newspaper’s readers came to love.

Jak’s official title at the paper was “Staff Artist,” and his responsibilities covered every conceivable meaning of that phrase. Not only was he the artist on the staff, he was the artist for the staff. A reporter working on a big story would tell Jak a little about the piece, and Jak would use his imagination to fill in any gaps. He often took days or weeks to produce a single drawing, such as his illustration of the 1964 Democratic National Convention, but, more often than not, requests came at the last minute and Jak would hurriedly sketch something off. Fortunately, a spirit of office camaraderie pervaded and Jak enjoyed working on a deadline. Although happiest when drawing, Jak also retouched photographs – a delicate art in the age before personal computers and powerful software – and he worked with the color separations used by the paper when not producing black and white images. In this process the original artwork was separated into cyan, magenta, and yellow components. These colors were then inverted and a black key was produced from the image to improve shadow and contrast. This was a time-consuming and often difficult procedure, requiring a delicate and artistic touch to achieve good results. Jak was a master at this process.
BETTY THE JET SETTER READY FOR TAKEOFF
WISELY EMPLOYS THE "TRAVEL LIGHT" THEME

SUGGESTION: IF HUSBAND AVAILABLE, BRING ALONG TO CARRY LUGGAGE,
FIGURE EXCHANGE RATES, CONFIRM FLIGHTS, PAY CABS, DO GUARD DUTY, ETC.
JAK'S RECOMMENDED OUTFIT FOR THE WELL-EQUIPPED MALE GLOBE TROTTER

SUGGESTION: HAVE WIFE CARRY HEAVY LUGGAGE TO CONSERVE ENERGY.
Freelance Work
In addition to his work at the State-Record Company, Jak also did freelance commercial artwork for a number of companies and groups including the South Carolina Savings and Loan League, the South Carolina Beer Association and the Connie Maxwell Children’s Home. His most iconic freelance piece is the original University of South Carolina “Fighting Gamecock” that was, for many years, featured on the floor of the Carolina Coliseum. Lovers of jazz music may recognize the album covers he designed and drew for the Larry Conger’s Two Rivers Jazz Band. These covers reflect the smooth sounds contained within and one imagines that during sessions (the musicians playing while Jak drew sketch-notes) Jak had to resist the temptation to jump in with his trumpet.

Around the World with Smyrl
In the winter of 1969, Jak and his wife, Betty, made a spontaneous decision to travel around the world. Several weeks later they were on a plane bound for Tahiti, the first stop on a whirlwind tour that would take them through the Pacific islands (including Okinawa, nearly thirty years after Jak had last been there under entirely different circumstances); across Australia; to Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore; on a photo-safari through Kenya; and through Egypt, Greece and Europe before hopping the Atlantic and returning to Columbia ninety-odd days later. With paper, pencil, camera, and Betty by his side Jak documented the entire trip. Then he and Betty worked together on a fifteen-part series which was published in The State the following spring. In 1972, the couple completed their goal to visit every continent when they toured South America, producing a corresponding series of stories. Filled with alliterations, illustrations, and humorous anecdotes, the stories were educational, too, as they often included the historical background of the locations visited.

Retirement
After thirty-one years of working in the newsroom, Jak decided to retire in 1986. The paper threw a party; Jak played
his trumpet; and candid pictures reveal that a good time was had by all. He and Betty moved to Camden, and Jak devoted his days to music, poetry, wood carving, and, of course, drawing. Jak often revisited old pieces, retouching and updating some drawings while personalizing others for friends. Near the end of his life, one final project remained: to combine his love of poetry and drawing. He was able to realize the dream of completing a book of illustrated ballads, Random Rimes, before he died in August 2007. Random Rimes was published by Betty after his death. It is filled with Jak’s folksy humor and creative imagination.

**Legacy**

By the time he retired, Jak’s artwork, instantly recognizable for its distinctive style, was being seen by more than 100,000 people daily and its passing from the pages of *The State* was universally mourned by readers and staff alike. Columnist Bill McDonald memorialized the event by writing, “he rode off into the sunset with his pen, ink, sketchpad and erasure...leaving behind a trail of warm memories of a zany talent. To call Smyrl creative would be to call one of those Internal Revenue forms slightly taxing.”

In June 2007, the South Carolina General Assembly honored Jak’s creativity by passing a concurrent resolution thanking him for “lightening the hearts” of newspaper readers while giving them “insight into important issues,” highlighting the fact that Jak not only entertained, but in fact illustrated the history of South Carolina as it was happening. Researchers at the South Caroliniana Library will find that within the Smyrl collection personal and professional intertwine because its materials contain not only the artwork but also the memories and vibrant creativity of South Carolina’s everyman artist.

— Edward Blessing is an archivist at the South Caroliniana Library.
Editor’s Notes:
Edward Blessing is working with Betty Smyrl to produce a book entitled Jak Smyrl: His Art. Joan A. Inabinet and L. Glen Inabinet are writing a biography of Smyrl called Jak Smyrl: His World. Both books will be published by the University of South Carolina Press.

An exhibition of Jak Smyrl’s work is currently on display in the Olin D. Johnston Room at the South Caroliniana Library.

On July 13, the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections will feature materials about Jak Smyrl in an Open Gallery exhibit at the Ernest F. Hollings Library.

At a gathering to celebrate the acquisition of Jak Smyrl’s papers by the South Caroliniana Library are, left to right, Bill McDonald, Betty Smyrl, Henry Fulmer, and Edward Blessing. They are shown with one of Smyrl’s best-loved drawings called Jazz Combo which was created about 1947.
The facts of the event are not in dispute. Early in the afternoon of May 22, 1856, the ardently pro-slavery South Carolina Congressman, Preston Brooks, strode into the United States Senate chamber in Washington, D.C., and—after the only lady present had left the chamber—began beating renowned anti-slavery Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts with his walking cane. Brooks struck again and again—more than thirty times across Sumner’s head, face, and shoulders—until his cane splintered into pieces and the helpless Massachusetts senator lay unconscious, covered in blood.

It was a retaliatory attack by Brooks. Forty-eight hours earlier, Sumner had concluded a speech on the Senate floor that spanned five hours over two days, during which he vilified Southern slave-owners for violence occurring in Kansas, and hurled personal slurs against Brooks’s second cousin, South Carolina Senator Andrew Butler. Sumner also caustically insulted South Carolina and the entire South for its support of and reliance on slavery.

“Statement of Mr. Brooks on the Sumner Assault”
In a remarkable eight-page hand-written document dated May 28, 1856, and titled “Statement of Mr. Brooks on the Sumner Assault,” Brooks presented a candid and comprehensive account of his motives and actions in the shocking episode that would become known simply as “the caning.”

Brooks not only shattered his cane during the beating, but also destroyed any pretense of civility between North and South. One of the most stunning and provocative events in American history, the caning hardened positions on both sides and convinced each that the gulf between them was
unbridgeable and that they could no longer rationally discuss their sharp differences of opinion on the epic issue of the day, slavery. While Sumner eventually recovered after a lengthy convalescence, compromise had suffered a mortal blow, and the polar opposite reactions to the caning from the North and the South were clear omens about the nation’s future. Moderate voices were drowned out completely; extremist views accelerated, becoming intractable; and both sides were locked onto a tragic collision course.

The caning had an enormous impact on the events that followed over the next four years: the meteoric rise of the Republican Party and Abraham Lincoln; the Dred Scott decision; the increasing militancy of abolitionists, most notably John Brown’s actions; the secession of the Southern states; and the founding of the Confederacy. As a result of the caning, the country was pushed, inexorably and unstoppably, toward war. Many factors conspired to cause the Civil War, but it was the caning that made conflict and disunion unavoidable.

“The Crime Against Kansas”
Charles Sumner’s uncompromising and outspoken anti-slavery positions had long infuriated the South. His May 19 and 20, 1856, speech, “The Crime Against Kansas,” and his personal attacks on Butler had inflamed passions even further. Southern slave-owners had battled since the Missouri Compromise of 1820 to preserve a slave system that supported their region’s economy and, as Brooks eloquently argued in the midst of the caning debate, fueled much of the North’s economy as well. Brooks and his allies feared that elitists such as Sumner, whose anti-slavery views were among the most radical in the country and who expressed dangerous ideas about freeing the slaves, would, if not directly confronted, destroy the Southern way of life.

Indeed, since the passage in 1854 of the Kansas-Nebraska Act (which deemed that local territories should determine whether they would enter the union as slave states or free states) had injected the notion of “popular sovereignty” into the slavery debate, Northern abolitionists had grown bolder and more radical in the eyes of the South. Abolitionists denigrated the South at every turn, preached emancipation without compensation, portrayed Southern planters as brutes and criminals, encouraged insurrection by slaves, and now, with Sumner as their vocal spokesman, they assailed efforts by Southerners to admit Kansas to the Union as a slave state. Northerners were appalled that pro-slavery “border ruffians” crossed into Kansas from Missouri and elsewhere in an attempt to influence elections, often violently. Brooks and most Southern slave-owners believed the situation was perilous and that the South’s right to exist as a slave society was in jeopardy. “If abolitionism be successful in Kansas,” warned one Southern newspaper, “we believe that battlefield of Southern rights will be brought to our own doors in less years than the life of man.”

In addition, Sumner’s use of inflammatory language, his superior attitude, and his personal attack on Butler cried out for revenge according to the Southern code of honor by which Preston Brooks was bound. Since these precepts prized, even demanded, physical confrontation when insults were hurled at a man’s family or state, Sumner’s words served as the perfect provocation for Brooks to defend both his family and his region.

Later, Brooks would say that he would have “forfeited my own self-respect, and perhaps the good opinion of my countrymen,” if he had not “resented the injury enough” to call Sumner to account.

“A Hive of Disturbed Bees”
News of Brooks’s violent attack on Sumner consumed Washington and raced across the nation like a giant brush fire. Both antislavery Northerners and proslavery Southerners pounced on the caning to support their own views. The North argued that the South could no longer be reasoned with on the most important issue facing the country, while the South declared that Sumner’s reckless Kansas speech had unmasked the North’s true goal: to destroy slavery and with it the South’s economic system and its way of life. “Every Southern man is delighted and the Abolitionists are like a hive of disturbed bees,” wrote Preston Brooks to his brother Ham the day after
the caning. “I expected to be attacked this morning but no one came near me.”

The responses of Southern newspapers were indicative of the regional strife that divided the country. “Hit him again,” crowed the Edgefield [S.C.] Advertiser in its editorial saluting Preston Brooks for his drubbing of Sumner. “We feel that our Representative did exactly right; and we are sure his people will commend him highly for it.”

Ordinary Southerners also rallied quickly and passionately to Brooks’s side. At a pro-Brooks rally in Washington, D.C., one banner carried the inscription: “Sumner and Kansas: Let Them Bleed.” Celebrations were held across the South and South Carolina Governor James H. Adams announced a fundraising effort to present Brooks a silver pitcher, goblet, and cane. Brooks received hundreds of canes as gifts from well-wishers and Charleston merchants contributed to buying him a cane inscribed “Hit him again.” A group of businessmen set out from North Carolina to Washington, D.C., with a new gold-headed cane for Brooks. One member of the group said he would be “sorry for the abolitionist’s head that shall come in contact with this cane. It will be very likely to crack.”

Others sought to inform Brooks of how much the news of the caning had excited the South. “The cry of ‘well done’ has already echoed from the seaboard to the mountains,” wrote a Georgetown, S.C., admirer. Letter-writer Seaborn Jones added: “You have the good wishes of everyone I have heard speak on the subject—and everyone is full of it. Nothing else is talked of.”

“Indignation … Fills Every Heart”

As Southerners gathered in their fields, their parlors, and their town squares to discuss and celebrate Preston Brooks’s attack on Charles Sumner, Northerners clustered on city street corners, in factories, and in offices, abuzz with disbelief and outrage about the events in Washington, D.C.

Whereas jubilation was the prevalent emotion in the South, Northerners were horrified and angry, their reaction almost universally in stark contrast to their fellow Americans who lived below the Mason-Dixon Line. Indeed, as in the South, the catalysts for the enormous uproar in the North initially were press accounts and editorials about the event, but the true measure of the caning’s almost immediate impact in Northern states was best reflected by the groundswell of rage that poured forth from prominent officials and ordinary citizens.

Preston Brooks’s attack had pushed most Northern citizens to the edge. Anger pulsed across the North, from the East Coast cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, to the mining towns of western Pennsylvania and the Ohio valley, to the fertile farmland that carpeted Indiana and Illinois, and even to more remote settlements in places like Wisconsin. Charles Sumner’s vicious beating unleashed a fury in the North that had been brewing through years of increasing Southern brutality designed to perpetuate slavery. The situation had been going on for far too long. Beginning in earnest with debates over the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, intensifying during the Kansas-Nebraska debate in 1854, and becoming intolerable to Northern sensibilities in the latest struggle for Kansas’ future. Brooks’s attack convinced thousands of moderate Northerners almost overnight to embrace the opinion that abolitionists had held steadfastly for years: proslavery Southerners—stripped of their gentlemanly finery and veneer of cloying politeness—were little more than savages.

Hundreds of Northerners from across the political spectrum wrote Charles Sumner to convey their sympathy, anger, shock, and indignation. Even those who disparaged Sumner’s fanaticism and provocative political style, and even those who protested the acerbic tone of “The Crime Against Kansas” speech, voiced their condemnation of Brooks’s attack and their genuine concern for the senator who had suffered physical pain, cruelty, and distress at the hands of the slave powers’ representative.

Residents of most Northern states expressed their stunned outrage. “I feel as though no other provocation was needed to justify the North in shouldering the musket and fighting the battles of the revolution over again,” wrote one Illinois man. Boston resident James Stone assured Sumner: “Indignation at the brutal attack upon you is on every lip, and fills every heart.”

Charles Sumner
However, Stone also found some positive news in Sumner's beating, pointing out that Northern slavery supporters had their beliefs shaken by the attack: “It seems to be the last feather that breaks the camel's back of their sympathy with slavery.” This was God's way of turning the “wickedness of our opponents” into “food [for] our great cause.”

Sumner's dear friend Henry Wadsworth Longfellow agreed with this general sentiment. Sumner's wounds and his bleeding had “torn the mask off the faces of traitors, and at last the spirit of the North is aroused.”

“… Get Rid of Slavery, or … Get Rid of Freedom”

In the months that followed, the caning's repercussions gripped the nation. Preston Brooks resigned from Congress after a majority of his House colleagues voted to expel him, even though they failed to get the two-thirds necessary to remove the congressman. Brooks stood for re-election and won unanimously as South Carolinians expressed their full-throated approval for his actions and the regional pride it engendered. Charles Sumner, in severe pain and mostly bedridden, remained absent from the Senate and became a tragically sympathetic figure, his “vacant chair” serving as a powerful symbol for Northerners who cast Southerners as barbarians. When it came to the caning, the two sides spoke entirely different languages and stood on opposite sides of a fault line. As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in June of 1856, “I do not see how a barbarous community and a civilized community can constitute one state. I think we must get rid of slavery, or we must get rid of freedom.”

The caning had dramatically changed Charles Sumner's life, but it had also transformed the once moderate Preston Brooks into the South's chief symbol of defiance and even secession. Without question, Brooks had become the most popular and admired man in South Carolina, and probably across the South as well. Some suggested he run for governor and others wanted him as “the first President of the Southern Republic.” Notorious villain or honorable knight, Preston Brooks had become a national figure, and his name was synonymous with a remarkable attack that resonated with symbolism across a divided nation. One contemporaneous Southern journal jubilantly and accurately proclaimed: “His name [has] now reached nearly every fireside in the land.”

“Bleeding Kansas” and “Bleeding Sumner”

Throughout the summer and fall of 1856, Charles Sumner’s continued struggles to regain his health, combined with Preston Brook's overwhelming celebrity in the South, provided antislavery Republicans with a perfect scenario as the November election approached.

From the beginning, Republicans linked the caning with the crisis in Kansas. When word reached the North and East about the pillaging of Lawrence, Kans., Northern Republicans and other antislavery factions quickly began linking “Bleeding Kansas” and “Bleeding Sumner” in the public's mind. In both instances, harm had been inflicted upon those whose voices opposed slavery and all its evils. Yet, for more than a year, antislavery advocates, including Republicans, had tried to grab the attention of Northerners about the outrages in Kansas, without success. News from Kansas was sporadic, fragmented, confusing, and often contradictory. Who could say exactly what was true and what was exaggeration? Who could say which side engaged in excesses and why? But the caning of Charles Sumner, the deliberate attack upon a United States senator, was concrete, shocking, unprecedented, and easily understood.

Even among Southerners, there was little dispute about the facts of the incident. “[The caning] was much more ominous and threatening than events in a distant, sparsely settled territory,” historian William E. Gienapp wrote. For the North to witness “one of its best men butchered in Congress,” one supporter wrote to Sumner, offered an opportunity to see the aggression of the slave powers in action. “Had it not been for your poor head, the Kansas outrage would not have been felt at the North.”

Republican strategists took full advantage of popular indignation across the North, distributing more than one million copies of Sumner's The Crime Against Kansas as a thirty-two-page pamphlet. They delivered speeches deploring the fact that Southern Democrats were using the caning as a rallying cry,

One of the many “replacement” canes Brooks received from admirers
even as Republicans adopted the exact same strategy. They condemned celebrations across the South that lionized Brooks. Brooks’s attack and the Southern response to it were also seen by Northerners as a frontal assault on their section after years of the South’s back-room political machinations and manipulation in its efforts to protect and perpetuate slavery. “We all or nearly all felt that we had been personally maltreated and insulted,” one Boston man wrote to Sumner.

The Shrinking Middle Ground
This perceived attack on the entire North provided the momentum behind the biggest benefit Republicans enjoyed from the caning — the flood of moderate and even conservative Northerners who joined the party. Most of these people had no great sympathy for the abolitionist cause and even objected to the outright abolition of slavery. Many Northern businessmen worried about severe economic repercussions if the flow of cotton and other products from the South was disrupted. Yet, no reasonable Northerner could condone either Brooks’s action or Southern support of it. Indeed, most Northerners, regardless of their political persuasion, viewed the caning as a violent trampling of free-speech rights. One Boston businessman said that Brooks’s assault “proves to me a lower civilization [in the South] than I would ever before believe,” adding that he had previously and unwisely ignored abolitionists’ insistence that this was the case.

The caning offered Republicans the opportunity to attack the South without attacking slavery, thereby making an argument that was far more palatable to moderates. In essence, the Republican argument became: if the caning has unified the South, must not the North also unify to protect its interests and its constitutional rights?

The South’s reaction to the caning, almost as much as the episode itself, fueled the rancor and played right into Republican hands. Had Southerners repudiated Brooks’s actions, or even remained silent, Northern Republicans would have been left with a single isolated incident that could have been attributable to one congressman who lost his temper. But the South’s overwhelming approval fundamentally altered the dynamic—the congressional debate over the caning, the Brooks expulsion vote along sectional and party lines, the multitude of pro-Brooks celebrations across the South, and Brooks’s overwhelming reelection all stunned Northerners. These events provided demonstrable and indisputable evidence that the South endorsed this brutality, and thus the entire South was tarred by Brooks’s action.

The caning so altered the landscape that the middle ground was shrinking rapidly. Referring to the Republican 1856 presidential nominee, Millard Fillmore observed: “Brooks’s attack upon Sumner has done more for [John C.] Frémont than any 20 of his warmest friends [in the] North have been able to accomplish. If Frémont is elected, he will owe his election entirely to the troubles in Kansas, and the martyrdom of Sumner.” He added grumpily: “The Republicans ought to pension Brooks for life.”

The New Republican Party
For North and South alike, the most shocking, significant, and prophetic outcome of the 1856 election was not that Republican John Frémont was defeated in his bid for the presidency, but that he received as many votes as he did. The new Republican Party, which had not even existed in several Northern states only a year earlier, made a resounding statement in its first bid for the nation’s highest office, and in the process, threw a scare into Southerners and Northern Democrats alike.

The message of the 1856 election was clear. Bolstered by the caning and its aftershocks, the new antislavery party had made an astounding showing across the North, and while it had
fallen short of its ultimate goal, voting trends clearly infused Republicans with momentum for Lincoln's eventual election in 1860. Almost overnight, the tremors from the caning had begun shifting national power in profound ways.

Pennsylvania Republican Alexander K. McClure, who visited Sumner while he was recuperating, wrote nearly fifty years after the caning that Brooks's attack caused thousands of Democrats with natural “anti-slavery proclivities” to sever their ties with the Democratic party and join the Republicans. McClure stated: “The most effective deliverance made by any man to advance the Republican Party was made by the bludgeon of Preston S. Brooks.”

In one way or another, the specter of Brooks's attack and the reactions that it provoked also loomed over and affected virtually every major subsequent event leading up the Civil War—the Dred Scott decision, the Lincoln-Douglas debates, John Brown's raid, Lincoln's election and subsequent Southern secession.

Death Comes to Every Man
Just eight months after the caning, on a blizzard-choked, bone-chilling night in January of 1857, Preston Brooks died suddenly from a throat infection in Washington, D.C. After a funeral at the Capitol, a contingent from Edgefield traveled to Washington to transport his body back to South Carolina. Along the way, thousands of Southerners paid homage. Suddenly it was Brooks—not Sumner—the attacker, not the victim—who elicited deep and powerful sympathy. Suddenly, it was the South that felt victimized and deprived of one of its strongest, unwavering voices, just as the North had during the previous eight months, when Sumner's injuries prevented him from taking his seat in the Senate.

Charles Sumner died in a much different time, on the Senate. when Sumner's injuries prevented him from taking his seat in voices, just as the North had during the previous eight months, victimized and deprived of one of its strongest, unwavering and powerful sympathy. Suddenly, it was the South that felt victimized and deprived of one of its strongest, unwavering voices, just as the North had during the previous eight months, when Sumner's injuries prevented him from taking his seat in the Senate.

Charles Sumner died in a much different time, on March 16, 1874. Those who filed by Sumner's coffin at the Massachusetts State House knew all that the country had endured in order to right the great wrong that Charles Sumner had fought against for most of his political life: a bloody civil war, the assassination of a president, a contentious and violent Reconstruction era, and the passage of three constitutional amendments—the Thirteenth (in 1865, abolishing slavery), the Fourteenth (in 1868, making all persons born in the United States citizens), and the Fifteenth (in 1870, giving black males and former male slaves the right to vote).

The ideas that Charles Sumner had promulgated for so long were now more than part of mainstream opinion—they had been codified into law and written into the United States Constitution. Once derided, scoffed at, widely denounced, and beaten nearly to death, Charles Sumner could rest in peace knowing his ideas and ideals had triumphed. Although he was a deeply flawed man, Sumner's courage and leadership on the antislavery issue were indisputable and unrivaled, and after his death, virtually universally acknowledged. In the tempestuous nineteenth century, especially in the pivotal 1850s, Charles Sumner was liked by few, but respected by many. No man did more to influence the slavery debate on a national scale. Southerners detested and sometimes feared him; Northerners first resisted and eventually came to revere him; but when Charles Sumner spoke, everyone listened.

Perhaps no tribute offered a more profound testament of how far the country's attitudes had changed in the decade following the terrible Civil War than one that occurred upon Sumner's death, eighteen years after the caning—the South Carolina flag was lowered to half-staff in his honor.

Legacies
The manner in which their two regions remember Sumner and Brooks is most intriguing. Sumner, a member of Boston's intellectual and social elite, a Harvard graduate and lawyer who traveled to most of the great cities in the United States and Europe, a Senatorial giant above and apart from the caning episode, became a living martyr to the rightness of the antislavery cause. Brooks, a respected planter and slave-owner, a son of Edgefield and of South Carolina, and a backbench legislator before May 1856 who ever afterward was defined by the caning became the defender of the Southern way of life and of the states' rights supporters who argued that they had the framers of the U.S. Constitution on their side.

Today, while Brooks's home state acknowledges the fame and heroic status he attained in the years prior to the Civil War, South Carolina still seems to wrestle with exactly where to place his controversial legacy in the context of its rich historical pantheon. Within the state, certainly, Brooks's legacy is recognized and memorialized, if not honored.

At McKissick Museum on the University of South Carolina campus is a gleaming five-inch-tall silver goblet. It is truly a work of art, elegantly designed and crafted. It has a hexagonal body graced with ornamental chasing, a bedded molding at the lip and lead banding around the foot. The stem is adorned with sculpted leaves and acorns. But the true significance of the goblet and the source of its irreplaceable value are derived from the flowery inscription engraved on one of its panels: “To Hon. P.S. Brooks From Citizens of Columbia, May 22, 1856.”
Memorial Plaque in the Lumpkin Foyer of the South Caroliniana Library

This elaborately carved white marble tribute to Preston S. Brooks graces the walls of the Lumpkin Foyer in the South Caroliniana Library. The imposing memorial was first housed in a chapel on the Brooks family plantation in old Edgefield District, S.C., but later was removed to the Episcopal church at Trenton, S.C. When that edifice fell into disrepair, it was feared that the memorial tablet would disappear into obscurity and it was offered to the University of South Carolina. Brooks had been a student on campus during the time the institution was known as South Carolina College. Davison McDowell Douglas, president of the University of South Carolina from 1927 to 1931, accepted the memorial tablet on behalf of the University, and it was determined that the foyer of the antebellum library building, the main library on campus at that time, was the most appropriate location for it.
“The Caning”

The date, of course, is most revealing. It is not the date Columbia residents presented the goblet to Brooks for the presentation ceremony actually occurred three months later at an enormous rally celebrating Brooks’s triumphant return to the South from Washington. Rather, the inscription on the silver chalice immortalized the date Preston Brooks took it upon himself to avenge his family’s and his region’s honor against a man whom Southerners hated above all others and viewed as most dangerous to their way of life.

In addition to the goblet and several of the hundreds of canes that well-wishers sent to Brooks (now housed at McKissick Museum), the South Carolina State Museum maintains in its collection several gold-lined rings fashioned from pieces of Brooks’ cane that splintered during the Sumner beating. (In the days and weeks after the caning, in a display of solidarity with Brooks, Southern congressmen wore the rings on chains or ropes draped around their necks.)

The Preston S. Brooks papers at the South Caroliniana Library contain not only his eight-page statement on the caning, but also Southerners’ letters to Brooks about the event, a collection of letters about his Mexican War experience, a Brooks diary recopied by his wife Martha, a lengthy diary kept by Brooks’s father, and a scrapbook collected by his great-granddaughter.

A remarkable plaque honoring Brooks adorns the Library’s foyer across from the manuscripts room in which his papers are located. (See p. 33.)

In Edgefield, Brooks’s presence is part and parcel of the community. His burial site is marked with a Washington Monument-like obelisk and inscribed with a lengthy epitaph summarizing his virtues. Brooks’s two homes are now privately owned, but are meticulously maintained and are part of the historic fabric of his home town. At the Edgefield County Archives, the documents detailing the disposition of his estate include the names and dollar value of each of the more than eighty slaves he owned at the time of his death.

Other areas of the South also pay tribute to Brooks: Brooksville, Fla., and Brooks County, Ga., are just two places named in his honor.

In Massachusetts, Sumner’s presence and legacy are stunningly understated. In Boston and Cambridge, statues honor the former United States senator, each inscribed simply with his name. Sumner’s home on the back side of Boston’s Beacon Hill is similarly easy to pass by without notice: it bears a plaque that merely lists the years (1830–1857) Sumner lived there. His monument stone in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge also lists only his name and years of birth and death. Neither his home nor grave-site bears any further inscription of honor.

While there was a period when little else needed to be said about Charles Sumner in Boston because virtually everyone knew of his reputation and accomplishments, that is not the case today. Aside from historians and academics, few in Boston recognize the full extent of Sumner’s achievements and influence, if they recognize him at all. In 2011, the bicentennial of Charles Sumner’s birth, several Boston academic and historical institutions sponsored readings, seminars, and workshops designed to rekindle interest in Sumner, but few of these events excited the imagination of the general public.

This situation is regrettable and understandable at the same time. Boston prides itself on its history, but its popular history focuses mainly on the American Revolution and the emergence of an Irish politician more than one hundred years later. Eighteenth-century founders John Hancock, John Adams, and Paul Revere, as well as twentieth-century favorite son John F. Kennedy are far better known than Sumner, though Sumner’s contributions to the nation’s history are in many ways comparable to theirs.

What If?

A tantalizing question lurks when we consider the nation at this point in its history. Without the caning, would civil war have broken out in America?

The answer is: eventually, perhaps, but certainly not as soon as it did, and with delay could have come the possibility of compromise, however remote it may seem in hindsight. Tensions had simmered and tempers had flared between North and South on the issue of slavery since the nation’s founding, but until May 22, 1856, cooler heads and determined statesmen from both regions—Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and others—had prevailed.

However, Brooks’s assault on Sumner in the halls of Congress crossed the line from debate to outright violence and sent a signal to both sides that they had few options to resolve their differences through political discourse. In June of 1861, after the war began, Mary Chesnut was caring for Mississippi’s Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar (L.Q.C. Lamar) outside of Richmond. Lamar suffered from apoplexy and had been brought from his camp to a makeshift hospital where Chesnut and other women were nursing Confederate soldiers. As Chesnut fanned and brushed flies away from the prostrate Lamar, the two talked of war between North and South. Lamar told his care-giver that he could trace the inevitability of the war back to one event that occurred on May 22, 1856: “If the athlete Sumner had stood on his manhood and training when Preston Brooks assailed him, Preston Brooks’s blow need not have been the opening skirmish of the war,” Lamar lamented. “Sumner’s country took up the fight because he did not. Sumner chose his own battlefield and he carried the war between North and South. Lamar then succinctly summed up the impact of the caning upon the South: “What an awful blunder that Preston Brooks business was!” (Years later, Lamar would deliver a stirring eulogy honoring Charles Sumner and calling for amicable relations between North and South.)
Many historians since have agreed with Lamar’s assessment. Bruce Catton, who called the caning the first battle of the Civil War, wrote that Brooks undeniably had done what he set out to do when he assaulted Sumner, “but the final effect was wholly disastrous.” William Gienapp said simply: “The caning of Charles Sumner was a major landmark on the road to civil war.” Robert Neil Mathis concurred, saying that, after Brooks’s attack, “many previously uncommitted Northerners and Southerners were provoked, persuaded, or cajoled into becoming avowed abolitionists or slaveryites, therefore dangerously weakening the bonds of the Union.”

More than fifty years ago, Sumner’s most noted biographer, David Donald, wrote of the caning: “When the two sections no longer spoke the same language, shared the same moral code, or obeyed the same law, when their representatives clashed in bloody conflict in the halls of Congress, thinking men North and South began to wonder how the Union could longer endure.”

Finally, many beliefs and stereotypes that North and South held in 1856—indeed, many that prompted the caning and were exacerbated by it—continue to exist today. Sumner’s contention that Brooks and his slaveholding colleagues were barbaric and unrefined is little different from the stereotype of the Southern redneck that many elite Northerners hold today. Brooks’s feeling that Sumner was arrogant, rude, and ungentlemanly is close enough to the way many Southerners feel about people from Massachusetts and the rest of the Northeast.

The political parties have changed sides (the South is far more Republican and the Northeast heavily Democrat, though even those distinctions are in flux), but the depictions of the people have remained largely the same. Despite the ease of travel and mobility, residents of each region continue to believe the other does not understand their values. “The outgrowth of these kinds of divisions,” wrote journalist Peter Cannellos a few years ago, “is, inevitably, the types of misunderstandings that lead to the depiction of Southern rednecks and prissy Northeast snobs.” Perhaps, by recognizing that the roots of their differences date as far back as nineteenth-century slavery discussions, Americans today can better learn to live with these differences and perhaps one day to overcome them.

The caning, Preston Brooks’s one-minute act of aggression against Charles Sumner on the floor of the United States Senate chamber on May 22, 1856, dramatically altered the course of American history and continues to shape it today.

**Author’s Note:**

The Caning: The Assault That Drove America to Civil War

I tell the story of this transformative event in my book, *The Caning: The Assault That Drove America to Civil War* (Westholme Publishing, 2012), which looks at the causes of the attack, the incident itself, and its explosive aftermath through the eyes of its two main participants, Charles Sumner and Preston Brooks.

As a Bostonian, I was familiar with Sumner’s strong anti-slavery views, but my research enabled me to get to know the man on many levels. I read hundreds of his letters—those he wrote and those that others wrote to him—as well as his speeches and his essays.

Preston Brooks, on the other hand, was largely a mystery to me. Like most people, if I thought about him at all, I associated him, infamously and exclusively, with his beating of Sumner. To learn what I needed to know about Brooks and to make him as three-dimensional as possible as I structured the book and the story, I pursued my research in South Carolina. More specifically, I was grateful to visit Columbia and the University of South Carolina (whose predecessor, South Carolina College, Brooks attended but from which he did not graduate).

I also traveled to Edgefield, S.C., Brooks’s home town and home county. It is a place where plantations once thrived and where South Carolina’s most ardent pro-slavery supporters resided. Here I had the honor of being escorted by Bettis Rainsford, historian for the Edgefield County Historical Society and a Brooks scholar who knows more about Preston Brooks than any other man alive.

**About the author:**

Stephen Puleo is author of five books, including *The Caning: The Assault that Drove America to Civil War*; the bestselling *Dark Tide: The Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919*, and *Due to Enemy Action: The True World War II Story of the USS Eagle 56*. A former award-winning newspaper reporter and contributor to *American History* and other publications, Puleo teaches at Suffolk University in Boston.
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"Hurrah! Baseball ... is here"—America's Pastime in South Carolina

AUGUST 15 - DECEMBER 21, 2013
Fiftieth Anniversary of Integration at USC

NOVEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 21, 2013
The Assassination of JFK — South Carolina Reactions

Fiftieth Anniversary of Integration at USC
The University of South Carolina will host several events in the fall of 2013 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of racial integration at the school, which occurred on September 11, 1963.

The major commemorative event will take place on September 11, 2013. The South Caroliniana Library will produce an exhibition covering the history of African Americans on campus, from their presence as antebellum slaves, to the first attempt at desegregation during Reconstruction, and finally to the 1963 integration of the institution.

The planning committee, co-chaired by Valinda Littlefield and Lacy Ford, also includes University Archivist Elizabeth West. This committee will launch a Website with information about the upcoming events, as well as links to an online version of the Library’s exhibition, and other videos and historical information.

“Integration Day” at USC was effected with the enrollment of, left to right, Robert Anderson, Henri Montieth, and James Solomon.