

# Thomas Wolfe, “Return,” and the *Asheville Citizen*

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Seven years is a long time to be away from home. For Thomas Wolfe, it must not have seemed long enough. He had last visited Asheville in September 1929, some six weeks before the publication of *Look Homeward, Angel*. During the intervening years, he had not set foot in his hometown, but he had brooded occasionally in writing and untold times in thought over the anger and consternation his novel had caused—or even would cause—in Asheville. Now, in the spring of 1937, he was finally heading home, where he might face the neighbors who were feeling this anger and experiencing this consternation. While he was in town, his old friend George McCoy asked him to write a piece for the *Asheville Citizen-Times*. The result was “Return,” a poetic, enigmatic, and remarkably unjournalistic piece of journalism that appeared on May 16, the day after Wolfe left town. A close examination of this essay and its context, along with a consideration of Wolfe’s relationship with the *Asheville Citizen*, provides some useful insights into the author’s perspectives on journalism, Asheville, and himself. For Wolfe, the imaginative artist, newspapers such as the *Citizen* were an alternative, more direct means of reaching his audience, a means he felt he needed to maintain his human relationships and contentment even while his fiction was creating enemies in his hometown and generating angst in himself. For most of his readers, however, one can safely assume that this medium failed to serve its intended purpose, as Wolfe, whatever his earlier journalistic experience, was a novelist, not a journalist. Even when he wrote for a newspaper, literature was his medium.<sup>1</sup>

## **The *Asheville Citizen* in Wolfe’s Early Life and Imagination**

Unlike many of his predecessors and contemporaries, Wolfe had no prominent connections with professional journalism. He did not work as a reporter, as Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway had done, or edit a major publication, as William Cullen Bryant had. Unlike Edgar Allan Poe and Theodore Dreiser, he had not famously adapted newspaper material for his fiction. Thanks to some personal encounters and one significant friendship,

however, Wolfe was intimately familiar with journalism and with the *Asheville Citizen* in particular. This background helps to explain his conception and use of journalism from a distance.

The *Citizen* was already a daily newspaper when Wolfe was born in 1900. As a young boy growing up in Asheville, he may have viewed the comics in its pages (Kennedy 32). Later, as a teenager, he was a paperboy for the *Citizen* (Nowell 31). If his account in *Look Homeward, Angel* is any indication, the experience clearly had an impact on him. He wrote of the newspapers emerging marvelously from “a mangling chaos of machinery” and of Eugene’s early-morning odyssey through the city as “the only man alive” (297, 300). The scene, repeated in part or in full day after day for years, may have even presaged his career as a novelist, dramatizing as it did the incarnation of language and the conveyance of the tangible product—by his own hand, no less—to an audience (Canada 71).

Over the next two decades, both journalism in general and the *Asheville Citizen* in particular continued to figure in Wolfe’s psychological and professional lives. While he was at college in Chapel Hill, he worked for a student newspaper, the *Tar Heel*, identified in its masthead as the “Official Organ of the Athletic Association of the University of North Carolina.” If Wolfe’s experience was anything like that of his alter ego, Eugene Gant, in *Look Homeward, Angel*, he would have come away from the experience with an intimate acquaintance with journalism. Of Eugene, Wolfe writes: “He was editor, reporter, censor, factotum of the paper. He wrote the news. He wrote the editorials. He seared them with flaming words. He extolled the crusade” (535).

During his years at Chapel Hill, Wolfe also met a fellow student named George McCoy, who would later go to work for the *Citizen*. Over the ensuing years, he wrote to McCoy on occasion and, while in Asheville, sometimes visited his friend at the *Citizen* office. “Do you still work until half past three in the morning?” he asked McCoy in one letter. “If you do, we’ll probably talk until the milk wagons come by—it’s the time of day I like best for work or conversation. I used to carry *Citizens*, you know, and probably got the habit then. I’ve chewed many a doughnut at the Greasy Spoon at four A.M.” (201). In 1929, the same year he wrote this letter, he made this entry in his notebook: “Went up-town to *Citizen*—reporters playing cards—Geo. McCoy away—went for coffee to Vick’s and back home. . . .” The end of the entry reads, “This written past 3 A. M.—vast brooding star-lit night—vast even night sound—far off a car—and thunder on the rails” (*Notebooks* 1: 367).



The scene at the *Citizen* office seems to have made an impact on Wolfe, just as the images of the newspaper machinery had some years earlier. During one visit to the office, he apparently spent a long time soaking up the atmosphere. One of McCoy's colleagues, Dix Sarsfield, recalled that Wolfe visited the composing, stereotyping, mailing, and press rooms and spent perhaps two or three hours with the workers. As late as 1938, in a notebook entry, Wolfe jotted some ideas for an "article on sports," imagining "the Associated Press tickers clattering in the offices of The Asheville Citizen—'Walter Johnson was invincible today and held the Athletics to four scattered hits' . . ." (*Notebooks* 2: 924).

Wolfe even conceived of the *Citizen* as a possible venue for some of his writing, but his remarks regarding this possibility reveal something about his conceptions of journalism and literature. In a letter dated 8 November 1924, a few days after he landed in England at the beginning of a European tour, he offers McCoy a letter for publication in his newspaper, adding:

If it is suitable for publication in the *Citizen*—I don't know that it is—take it to Mrs. Roberts at once, read it to her, and ask her to censor it, if necessary. Much of it is so personal, written so rapidly, and I am so *close* to it—not enough detachment—that I don't know whether I work myself an injury (in the eyes of the burghers, you know) at times. (72)

Wolfe's language here is revealing. He fears that "the burghers" who read the newspaper may react negatively. In this brief note, he does not say why, but he may have been thinking of their prudishness or lack of literary sophistication. Here, too, we see Wolfe's desire for an editor, a mediator, someone who can help "censor" his own work to make it suitable for mass consumption. Later, Maxwell Perkins would play such a role in the preparation of *Look Homeward, Angel*. The rest of Wolfe's letter makes a case for the value of literature, particularly in contrast to more traditional newspaper material. Later in the letter, he explains that he is observing people's manners, adding, "I have learned more of England on that boat by watching a Cockney at mortal sword-play with an English aristocrat . . . than I ever did in reading the articles on political opinion and elections of all the Philip Gibbises and David Lawrences in the world" (72). In short, Wolfe concedes that his writing does not amount to journalism, but adroitly characterizes it as something even better, noting that customs—"manners of eating, drinking, sleeping, acting"—are

“the things that count” (72). In making this case, Wolfe joined the literary side of a sibling rivalry that had stretched back to the nineteenth century, when Thoreau, Poe, Rebecca Harding Davis, and others had argued for literature’s superiority to journalism.<sup>2</sup>

Wolfe’s real motivation for offering the material to the *Citizen* was something other than a magnanimous attempt to enlighten his former neighbors. Amid all of this indirect discussion of the values of the competing genres, he refers to some “brass tacks”—namely, the matter of whether the *Citizen* might be willing to pay him for this material. The topic arose again some seven months later when Wolfe wrote to Margaret Roberts of “an enormous manuscript of my voyage—enormous notes,” adding that he did not “know where to peddle it” (94–95), but that she might pass it along to McCoy. Wolfe apparently was still hopeful that the *Citizen* might pay him for this material. Such was—and is—the position of the creative writer, who has some insightful, valuable truths to impart but, unlike the journalist, no regular, reliable way of turning it into income. Like so many writers before and after him, Wolfe offered up his gems to the papers. Maybe they couldn’t pay him what they were worth, but they could pay him something. Although one of Wolfe’s letters did make it into the *Citizen*, the recollection of one staff member suggests that Wolfe and the paper’s managing editor had different notions about “the things that count.” Sarsfield recalled, “We printed one, maybe two, and I recall that the managing editor told me to throw one of them away; he felt that it was too long and told little.”

### **The *Citizen* as Means to the Citizens**

After he published *Look Homeward, Angel*, the *Citizen* became something else to Wolfe: a direct line to his neighbors, many of whom had turned against their native son. “For days and weeks and months the book was a lively topic on the street, at club gatherings, bridge games, parties and teas,” McCoy recalled, quoting comments such as “Isn’t it awful?” and “Such a terrible thing to write about his own people!” (203–04). Such discussion very well may have made its way back to Wolfe through McCoy. Furthermore, Wolfe wrote in a letter to Albert Coates that he had received “several bitter letters and one or two pretty ugly anonymous ones (one of them beginning in a proud dignified manner as follows: ‘Sir: You are a son-of-a-bitch, etc.’)” (209). Floyd Watkins writes that “Wolfe knew all too well that the book caused ‘hate and rancor,’ and it affected him emotionally” (37). In a letter to his brother Fred, Wolfe says, “My experience with the first



book was so depressing, so far as Asheville is concerned, that I was almost sorry anyone there had ever read a line I had written" (302). Although Wolfe sometimes could be defiant about the impact of his novel, this reflection points to the pain that the negative reaction brought him. He doesn't seem to regret writing the book, but he does apparently wish that his neighbors had not read it. Since he couldn't have them un-read it, he sought to devise another means of reconciling himself to his people.

Enter the *Citizen*, where McCoy already was working on his behalf. An article McCoy had written for a July number of the paper, "Asheville Man Is New Author," caused Wolfe to write in August 1929:

What you said about my Asheville friends being "numbered by the score" touched me most of all. I think you will believe me when I tell you I value the respect and friendship of no group of people more than that of the people in the town where I was born, and where a large part of my life has been passed. (199)

On some level, perhaps, Wolfe realized that a local newspaper could allow him to reach out to these people, and the *Citizen* was the logical choice, not just because McCoy was there, but also because the other major paper in town, the *Times*, had skewered his novel, whereas the *Citizen* had run a glowing review by McCoy's fiancée, Lola Love, who praised Wolfe's "excellent" characterizations and "vibrant language" (8C). Indeed, it may be that Wolfe's experience with this review helped shape his notion of the newspaper as a friendly venue he could exploit for damage control. Before the review ran, Wolfe wrote to McCoy in October 1929:

I am sincerely grateful for all that you have said and done. I know you understand my deep sense of obligation to you all. It is splendid to know that you and Lola will review my book, and that Rodney Crowther will talk about it over the radio. I can add nothing to what I have already told you, except to repeat that you have all been fine and generous, and that I know you understand and believe in the author, no matter what effect the book may have. (203)

Reviews, in principle anyway, are supposed to be impartial, but the chumminess of these remarks, together with the expression of gratitude and praise for his friend's character, point to Wolfe's expectation of a puff piece. If there aren't exactly winks between

the sentences, it is clear that Wolfe feels confident about the warmth and good feeling that the local news outlet is going to spread in town on his behalf.

Perhaps it is only natural, then, that Wolfe would think of laying his own gigantic hands on the lever. In fact, a look at his notebooks reveals that he had considered the role a newspaper might play before his novel had appeared in print. In an apparent letter to "The Editor," Wolfe thanks the recipient for his "generous interest" but says, ". . . I must respectfully decline your friendly invitation to write about my book," noting that pre-publication publicity would be "unwise" and that a novel should speak for itself (*Notebooks* 1: 358). Kennedy and Reeves note that this entry may constitute the draft of a real letter to an editor. "But since Wolfe was given to making up occasions for letters to the press," they add, "it is probably only a projection of the imagination" (*Notebooks* 1: 358). Another manuscript seems to belong in this same category. It begins:

Thank you very much for your friendly and courteous invitation to contribute an article to your columns answering critics of my book, "O, Lost." I must decline to do so for several reasons, the most important of which are as follows: at the beginning of my career as a novelist I have determined, so far as possible, to let my books speak for me. ("To the Editor" 176)

That Wolfe was not entirely satisfied with this proposition, however, is clear in what follows in this letter, for he goes on to defend his novel, saying that critics in Asheville are "certainly wrong" if they believe that his work was "a 'bitter attack' against the town, the state, the South." Wolfe adds, "That there is bitterness in my book as well as pain and ugliness, I can not deny. But I believe there is beauty in it as well, and I leave its defense to those of my readers who found it there" (176). As Elizabeth Nowell explains, Wolfe apparently wrote this letter before the publication of his novel and never mailed it. "Evidently," Nowell adds, "in his anxiety about the reception that his book would have in Asheville, Wolfe imagined that he might be asked to write a defense of it for the *Citizen*, and began composing the various versions of this letter for the sake of his own peace of mind" (Wolfe, *Letters* 176). Simply putting the words on paper might have served Wolfe's psychological needs, but it is also possible that he conceived of his letter as a kind of statement in its own right. If he intended not merely a private letter to an editor, but a public "letter to the editor," then his defense of the



novel would have reached an audience of newspaper readers, allowing him to speak for a book that was supposed to speak for itself. In any case, the existence of these letters shows that Wolfe had at least considered a newspaper as a possible venue for reaching the people of Asheville.

Years later, a real opportunity to use the *Citizen* fell into Wolfe's lap. In 1932, presumably after some of the hot feelings generated by *Look Homeward, Angel* had cooled somewhat, he wrote to McCoy:

I am going to try to answer the questions you asked me in your letter, and I will try to give you the information you ask for. I don't know what kind of news is of the greatest interest to the readers, so I am just going to write you this letter, and while dictation is a new and rather awkward experience for me, I know I can trust you to weed out anything that may sound too foolish. Just use your own discretion about it, George: it will be all right. (327)

If Nowell is correct, Wolfe was responding to an invitation from McCoy and Robert McKee, who had asked him to send them some information for an article to run in the *Citizen*. Whether he was feeling more cocksure or simply more desperate, Wolfe has become more explicit in his expectations than he had been when anticipating a favorable review of *Look Homeward, Angel* three years earlier, this time openly counting on McCoy to do some friendly editing to keep him from sounding "foolish." Later in the letter, he even maps out a route for his friend to take: "I would be most grateful to you, George, if you could convey to your readers the fact that I am simply a very hard worker and, I think, a very honest man, who is trying to master a very difficult and painful art and who wants to do the best work that is in him" (327). If not an apology, this self-portrait of an honest, hard-working artist wrestling with his muse amounts to a kind of defense. In the end, it seems, the article never materialized. When Wolfe returned home some five years later, he still felt he had something to say to the people of Asheville.<sup>3</sup>

### Wolfe's "Return"

All of this history lay behind Wolfe's appearances in the *Citizen* during his return visit in the spring of 1937. He was in the area for a period of a few weeks, spent in nearby Burnsville and then in Asheville itself. During this short span, he was featured twice in the *Citizen*. On the first occasion, a news article written in

journalistic style appeared on the front page of the 4 May issue. The second was the 16 May publication of "Return," Wolfe's own distinctively literary composition.

Appearing under the headline "Thos. Wolfe Comes Home For First Time Since Writing Novel," the front-page article consists largely of quotations from Wolfe and paraphrases of his remarks; thus, although apparently written by a reporter, it amounts to Wolfe's statement to the people of Asheville. This statement is direct, plain, even homespun. Wolfe calls the trip home "exciting" and adds, "I was coming home. I was renewing my connection with my own neck of the woods" (1). The language—so prosaic, so mealy-mouthed—seems odd coming from the author of *Look Homeward, Angel*. It is as if he was following an internal script, reciting the trite phrases that one is supposed to say to an interviewer in such a situation. Even when he touches on the tender subject of his first novel, the language is stiff, formulaic: "If anything I have ever written has displeased anyone in Asheville, I hope that I will be able to write another book which will please them" (1). Elsewhere the article notes that the author "made no apology for his book 'Look Homeward Angel,'" but "did say . . . that he was sorry if he had displeased anyone and blamed his youth for drawing perhaps too much on the only raw material with which he had to work" (1). It quotes Wolfe as saying that a young writer frequently "turns too directly to the raw material he has before him," only later learning to "transform this raw material" (1). Still straightforward, these remarks move beyond the conventional and vacuous, echoing his earlier attempt, in his 1932 letter to McCoy, to portray himself as a man intent on remaining loyal to his muse but distraught over the damage done to his ties with the people of Asheville. The latter seems evident in his behavior during the interview, as the reporter writes, "As he answered questions for The Citizen interviewer, he paced the floor, not nervously, but restlessly. He appeared to be greatly affected by his return to Asheville and gave the impression that he was deeply sincere and earnest about what he was saying" (2).

If this article provides a glimpse of Wolfe's beliefs about his work and feelings about its impact on the people of Asheville, we can find a much more revealing picture in "Return," which he wrote during his stay in response to an invitation from the *Citizen* but which did not appear in the paper until he had left for New York. Here we see a more literary, authentic Wolfe. The language is much less direct than the conventional language of his quotations in the news article, but, when read closely with



an appreciation for Wolfe's intentions, it ultimately conveys more than the journalistic piece does.

The revealing nature of "Return" is not readily apparent in the first few paragraphs, which seem to argue against the possibility of revelation. Wolfe writes:

There is too much to say; there is so much to say that must be spoken; there is so much to say that never can be told:—we say it in the impassioned solitudes of youth, and of ten thousand nights and days of absence and return. But in the end, the answer to it all is time and silence: this answers all; and after this, there is no more to say. (B1)

In claiming that "there is so much to say that never can be told," Wolfe points to both the need for and the impossibility of expression, though he does not explain why the truth "never can be told." It is not clear whether he is thinking of the inadequacy of language, the impact of social pressures, or some other factor. In any case, silence is the ultimate result—or so Wolfe says. In fact, after this resignation to silence come hundreds more words, turned loose on what must have been some perplexed newspaper readers, in Wolfe's characteristically volcanic style. In the next paragraph, Wolfe recollects his days as a paperboy for the *Citizen*, implicitly drawing a connection with his current detachment from and connection with his hometown:

So has it been with me. For there has been a time when I would wake just at the first blue-grey of dawn to feel the shoulder strap again upon my arm, the canvas bag, the blocked sheet and the final shot beneath the oak tree on the lawn before the lawyer's great white house—to know my route was ended and that work was done, and that morning had come back again—so thinking, feeling, and remembering, then that I was far away, and that I had been long from home.

Then all old things would come again—both brick and wall, and step and hedge, the way a street sloped or a tree was standing, the way a gate hung or a house was set, the very cinders of a rutted alley way—such things as these would come again, leaf, blade, and stone, and door. . . . And I could taste it, feel it, smell it, live it through again, hard to the hilt of exile, as I was born perhaps to live all things and moments, hard to the hilt, and carrying on that furious and impassioned argument of youth and solitude, contending fiercely with a

thousand disputants, would think: "I have a thing that I must tell them; I'll go home again, I'll meet them and I'll say my piece: I will lay bare my purposes, strip down the vision of my life until its bare soul's nakedness, tell my people what it is to try to shape and spin a living thing out of the entrails of man's life, and what he visions, why he does it—oh, some day I will go back and reveal my plan until no man living in the world can doubt it—I will show them utterly:—" (B1)

Like the paperboy he had been—just arrived from the mysterious world of sleep, perhaps not yet totally awakened, feeling mystical as he moved through the darkness alone—Wolfe feels separate from his surroundings until something tangible and familiar brings him back. The evocative image of the door—an image that, with a stone and a leaf, appears in the memorable refrain from *Look Homeward, Angel*—is the perfect one here, for it is both a physical object and a metaphor for a means to something beyond the physical. It was this door, perhaps, in Wolfe's restless, irrepressible imagination, that led him out of Asheville to the world beyond, and now he was returning back through it, bent on explaining himself: Thomas Wolfe, the prototypical romantic artist, was back from the great beyond, where he had drunk the milk of paradise. A prophet returned to his own country, he wants to "lay bare" his "purposes," but he wants something more. He wants his countrymen to know what he has had to endure—in short, "what it is to try to shape and spin a living thing out of the entrails of man's life." Again, the words echo Wolfe's request of McCoy, but now he is speaking for himself, hands on the lever, making a passionate plea for understanding and sympathy.

Did they come? It seems unlikely. Even in the newsroom, where Wolfe had fraternized with the *Citizen* staff, a disconnect was apparent, at least to one newsman. "He talked considerably about his forthcoming book but I can't recall the things he said," Sarsfield wrote of one of Wolfe's visits to the *Citizen* office. "I have since felt that Wolfe, with all his abilities, was not very adept at explaining to our news staff what he was trying to say." The same problem surely occurred when Wolfe tried to speak to the public through the newspaper. After all, although his venue was a newspaper—one called the *Citizen*, no less—a medium intended and designed to reach the masses, Wolfe was, at heart, not a journalist but a poet, and he was once again writing like one. "Return"—with its metaphorical door, its lyrical parallels,



its paradoxes of expression and silence—is only a strange poetic island in a sea of conventional, quotidian journalism. On the same page where Wolfe was declaiming, “All arguments are ended: saying nothing, all is said then; all is known: I am home,” were some decidedly more straightforward sentences such as “E. C. Macon, convicted in police court yesterday of aiding and abetting in the operation of a lottery, was fined \$15 and costs” and “Police captured 96 gallons of corn whiskey in an automobile on Westwood place in West Asheville about 5 o’clock yesterday morning but the driver of the car escaped.”<sup>4</sup> If Wolfe ever saw the page, he perhaps recognized the obvious, even comical discrepancy, as at least some readers of the *Citizen* surely did. In any case, there can be no doubt he was aware of another disconnect. The discrepancy between Wolfe and the *Asheville Citizen* merely reflects the one between Wolfe and the Asheville citizens.

This disconnect, in fact, is one of the key themes of “Return.” After Wolfe expresses his wish to be understood, he dramatizes some scenes he apparently witnessed—or at least imagined—during his return to Asheville, scenes that show why he will not be understood, at least by some of the town’s citizens. One person is quoted as saying:

“Why, hell, I only said she wasn’t forty-four, the way HE said, but forty-eight, and that instead of two gold teeth the way HE had it, she had three. And two of them were on the side, with a great big bright one in the middle—not one above and one below the way HE told about it. And it wasn’t popcorn that I bought ‘her,’ but ‘a bag of peanuts.[’] I just wanted him to get it straight, that’s all!”  
(B1)

After spending a lifetime brooding over truths, Wolfe returns home only to hear people quibbling over facts. It’s no wonder, “Return” seems to say, that Wolfe felt alone here, that his book of truths aroused so much anger, that his return visit stirred up memories of delivering the *Citizen* to the people of Asheville. Now, as then, he must have felt the same apartness, the same desperation. Now, as then, he was delivering words to his fellow human beings, but his messages—like Emily Dickinson’s letters to the world or countless other doomed missives in the works of Poe and other predecessors—were not reaching an audience.

Still, Wolfe held out hope, and the hope is found here in the conclusion of “Return,” where he says, seemingly with sad resignation, that some things “will never change” but adds, “the leaf, the bud, the wheel, the blade, and April will come back

again." He himself has "come back again," but Wolfe seems to have another kind of cycle in mind:

The wheel will turn, the immortal wheel of life will turn, but it will never change. Here, from this little universe of time and place, from this small core and adyt of my being where once, hill-born and bound, a child, I lay at night, and heard the whistles wailing to the west, the thunder of great wheels along the river's edge, and wrought my vision from these hills of the great undiscovered earth and my America—here, now, forevermore, shaped here in this small world, and in the proud and flaming spirit of a boy, new children have come after us, as we: as we, the boy's face in the morning yet, and mountain night, and starlight, darkness, and the month of April, and the boy's straight eye: again, again, the thudding press, the aching shoulder, and the canvas bag; the lean arm and the rifled throw again, that whacked the blocked and folded sheet against the shacks of Niggertown. (B1)

Wolfe's reference to "new children" is a cause for hope—for all of humanity perhaps, but also for him, since the next boy, traveling in Wolfe's tracks on his own route, will know "the thudding press, the aching shoulder, and the canvas bag"—and more:

These things, or such as these, will come again; so too, the high heart and the proud and flaming vision of a child—to do the best that may be in him, shaped from this earth, as we, and patterned by this scheme, to wreak with all his might, with humbleness and pride, to strike here from his native rock, I pray, the waters of our thirst, to get here from his native earth, his vision of this earth and this America, to hear again, as we, the wheel, the whistle, and the trolley bell; so too, as we, to go out from these hills and find and shape the great America of our discovery; so, too, as we, who writes these words, to know again the everlasting legend of man's youth—flight, quest, and wandering—exile and return. (B1)

So ends "Return," with the image of another boy who will burn with the same artistic sensibility, will have the same "flaming vision," and will experience the same "flight, quest, and wandering—exile and return." Like Whitman's persona in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," Wolfe hopes for sympathy from a kindred spirit, perhaps a paperboy who, knowing that his "route was ended



and that work was done, and that morning had come back again,” sat down to read from the paper he had just delivered, only to find there a former paperboy, back from his own lonesome odyssey in the dark, talking back to him.

### Notes

1. “Return” appeared under the headline “Thomas Wolfe Describes His Feelings At Being Home Again.” The *Asheville Citizen* was a daily morning newspaper; the *Times* was a daily evening paper; the *Citizen-Times* was a Sunday edition.
2. For a discussion of the responses of Thoreau, Stowe, and others to the rise of the newspaper, see Canada, *Literature*.
3. Nowell explains that this draft “was evidently written in reply to letters from George McCoy and Robert McKee of *The Asheville Citizen*, asking Wolfe for news about himself to be used in a piece about him in that paper.” Nowell adds, “. . . efforts to find such a piece have met with no success. Probably Wolfe never mailed the letter, since it was found in his own files and McCoy could find no copy of it in his” (Wolfe, *Letters* 326).
4. See Wolfe, “Return”; “E. C. Macon”; and “96 Gallons.”

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**Editors' Note:** For more information on Thomas Wolfe's writings for the *Tar Heel*, see *The Magical Campus: University of North Carolina Writings 1917–1920*, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli and Aldo P. Magi (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2008). Dix Sarsfield's reminiscence is available in Magi, Aldo P., "Remembering Thomas Wolfe: The Letters of Andrew Turnbull and Dix Sarsfield," *Thomas Wolfe Review* 17.1 (1993): 56–68.