

Rev. A. Letter to Charles A. Bird

February 9, 1909

Hunter Library MSS 80-33-1

**Transcribed and Edited by
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**For ENGL 618: Research Methods in English
Western Carolina University
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Series statement

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English at Western Carolina University. The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship
 - a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 - b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
 - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
 - c. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations. • Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.
2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available. • Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the students. While these students take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are always possible. As these students learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires checking of sources and corroboration by authoritative sources.

It is hoped that the transcription and annotation of WCU Special Collections materials will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, and other patrons and users of WCU's Special Collections materials.

INTRODUCTION

Charles Asbury Bird is the recipient of this letter from an unknown sender. Charles Bird worked as a farmer in Western North Carolina, became a Qualla Township political figure, and served at one point as chairman of the Jackson County, NC, Board of Commissioners.

Within the letter, Charles Bird is inquiring about the federal judgement about Captain James Wharey Terrell against the Thomas estate. Captain Terrell is Charles Bird's father-in-law, Sally Bird's father. Captain Terrell died on December 26, 1908, not two months before this letter was received by Charles Bird (*Jackson County Heritage* 455). This letter addresses settling debts that Captain Terrell owed to the person who sent this letter and possibly to Captain Johnston.

Captain Terrell managed all business ventures of Colonel William Holland Thomas. In 1852, he became partners with Col. Thomas in a tanning business and after a year, sold his interest to Col. Thomas. Captain Terrell became a manager of Col. Thomas' businesses including a store, tan yard, blacksmithy, wagon-making shop, and a boot and shoe shop, all located in Quallatown. Captain Terrell served as a Disbursing Agent to the Cherokee and as a Director of the Western Division of the WNC Railroad Company in 1871. He was elected in 1880 to the North Carolina Legislature from Jackson County (*Jackson County Heritage* 455).

Colonel Thomas began working as a trader to both the Cherokee and white settlers. After the Cherokee removal of 1838, Col. Thomas secured money due to the Cherokee under the Treaty of New Echota terms in 1846. In April of 1862, Colonel Thomas joined "Thomas' Confederate Legion," which was made up of white settlers and Cherokee located within North Carolina and Tennessee. Colonel Thomas led this confederate legion to defend the mountain passes from East Tennessee to Western North Carolina. This unit was the last to surrender in North Carolina after the Civil War. In 1880, Colonel Thomas was elected to North Carolina's Legislature from Jackson County and in 1885, he was elected Chairman of the Jackson County Board of Education. He died on May 10, 1893 (*Jackson County Heritage* 455-456).

Editorial Statement

The person who sent this letter to Charles A. Bird is unknown. In the title, the part of the name and title that are legible are included, but the brackets with unknown enclosed showcases

as an omitted name simply because the signature is illegible. Whoever did send the letter likely built the house that is addressed in the letter: 166 De Kalb Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y.

To preserve the dignity and authenticity of the letter, the transcription follows a diplomatic format, meaning there are no corrections of spelling errors, punctuation errors, or any other errors. A random name, Perrell, appears within the document which seems to be a mistype of the name Terrell, but the original spelling remains within the transcription in order to adhere to a diplomatic format. Within the document, the carrots (^) signal that within the document, the word following was added, for example: ^court means that within the original letter, the word “court” is written in the document slightly above the other words around it. To further showcase the diplomatic edition of the transcription, the pages of the transcription attempt to follow the original pages of the letter. While the first page extends within the transcription to the second page, the original letter page number is marked above the transcription to help the reader. Footnotes are provided to the reader for additional information. There are some names within the document that are not annotated and remain unknown.

166 De Kalb Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Feb. 9, 1909.

Mr. C. A. Bird,¹

Whittier, N. C.

Dear Sir:

Mr. A. D. Monteath, who is in my office at Asheville, N. C., has written me, that he has received a letter from you asking information in regard to a judgement rendered in the Federal court in favor of Capt. Terrell² against the Thomas³ estate, and also in regard to a note given by Capt. Terrell to Capt. Johnston. In reply I beg to say, that I obtained a small judgement in Capt. Terrell's favor during the special term of the Federal court at Asheville last summer. I do not remember the exact amount, but at the time I let home the judgement had not been paid, and I presume it is still unpaid. There was an agreement between Capt. Perrell⁴ and myself that I should receive ten percent of the entire amount recovered by him both in the Jackson county Superior court and also in the Federal court. He collected the judgement obtained in the State court in Jackson county and used it, and I was to be paid out of the money collected on the federal ^court judgement. Shortly before Capt. Terrell's death he wrote me a letter stating that his understanding of the contract, and I replied to him that he was exactly correct in his understanding, so there can be no difference or difficulty between you and myself about it. The agreement is fully set out in Capt. Terrell's letter, which I have on file at home.

¹ Charles Asbury Bird was born in Macon County on September 30, 1853, and died on January 25, 1938. His wife, Sarah Ermina "Sally" Terrell was the daughter of Captain James W. Terrell. Both he and Sally are buried at the Thomas Cemetery at Qualla. See *Jackson County Heritage North Carolina Vol. 1*, p. 70-71 for more information.

² According to Jo Foreman Clark, Captain James Wharey Terrell was born December 31, 1829 and died December 26, 1908. Captain Terrell came to Qualla in 1852 and became manager of all business ventures owned by Mr. Thomas. He served as a Disbursing Agent for the Cherokee Indians, a Director of the Western Division of the WNC Railroad Company in 1871, and was elected to the NC Legislature from Jackson County in 1880. See *Jackson County Heritage North Carolina Vol. 1*, p. 455, entry 1294 for more information.

³ Colonel William Holland Thomas was born near Bethel NC on February 5, 1805, and died on May 10, 1893. His grave is located in Green Hill Cemetery at Waynesville NC. He traded tobacco and other items to the Cherokee; his trustworthiness earned him respect among both Cherokee and white settlers. After the removal of 1838, Colonel Thomas secured the money due to the Cherokee under the Treaty of New Echota terms in 1846 and 1841 when two treaties were signed allowing the remaining Cherokee to stay in Western NC. In 1848 he was elected to the NC senate as a Democrat and served as chairman on Internal Improvements. He helped create Jackson County in 1851. See *Jackson County Heritage North Carolina Vol. 1*, p. 455-456, entry 1295 for more information.

⁴ Probably a typo that should read Capt. Terrell.

He even made the calculation showing the amount that would be coming to me and also the balance that would be left for him. My recollection is that he instructed me to place that balance on a note which he owed Capt. Johnston, but I am not positive in regard to that matter. His letter will show. I remember that he wrote me in regard to the Johnston note and perhaps stated that he was entitled to some credits or discounts on it. I know that Capt. Johnston's estate holds such a note, but do not remember its date nor the amount. I will write to

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judge Avery at once in regard to the payment of Federal ^court judgement.

My address until April first or about that time will be as stated at the beginning of this letter.

Very truly yours,

Rev. A. [Unknown]

Works Cited

Jackson County Heritage North Carolina. Vol. 1, The Jackson County Genealogical Society,

Walsworth Publishing Company, 1992, 2 vols.

Letter to Mr. C. A. Bird, 9 Feb. 1909. Western Carolina University Special and Digital

Collections, Hunter Library MSS 80-33-1. <https://www.wcu.edu/hunter->

[library/find/special-and-digital-collections.aspx](https://www.wcu.edu/hunter-library/find/special-and-digital-collections.aspx).