



TRUTH OR FICTION?

Colors of Truth

WHAT'S TRUTH?

WHAT'S FICTION?

Carnton as you likely know since you've read Colors of Truth—and if you haven't, please know that major spoilers are coming!—is a real antebellum home in Franklin, Tennessee and the setting for all of my Carnton novels. This image, taken ca. 1866, is one of the oldest known images of the home (looking toward the front of the house with the serpentine brick walkway as described in the novels).



This is also the only known image in which the original house/kitchen wing can be seen—on the far right side through the trees. This kitchen wing was destroyed in the early 1900s by a tornado and was never reconstructed.

When you visit Carnton you can still see the outline of the original walls of the kitchen wing on the brick walls of the main house as well as view parts of the foundation.

The image to the right is a view of Carnton from the back of the home. One can see the two-level gallery porches that extend beyond the full length of the house.



If you're familiar with the Battle of Franklin (that I've written about in my novel *With This Pledge*, you may remember that this lower porch is where the bodies of four Confederate generals who died in the Battle of Franklin were lain the night of the battle.

Several characters in this novel are based on real people who actually lived. Sadly, time has erased any image we might have had of one of the most beloved characters in the Carnton novels, Tempy (Sukey). But other images we do still have, and I'm thrilled to share them with you.



Colonel John McGavock



Carrie McGavock



Winder and Hattie McGavock



James Polk Cuppett



Marcellus Cuppett



Marcellus' grave at Carnton
(notice the index finger pointing to heaven;
that's what inspired Marcellus's habit of
pointing upward to heaven in the novel)



Thanks to the Battle of Franklin Trust (the organization that oversees Carnton—www.boft.org), here is a letter from George Cuppett in his own words:

"In the spring of 1866, I learned of an effort which was being led by a number of Franklin citizens to exhume the Confederate soldiers who had been killed at the Battle of Franklin. Their bodies were to be moved to a new cemetery. John McGavock was one of those involved in this project and he had donated a two acre tract near his home, Carnton, as the location for the cemetery.

Soon it was advertised that those wishing to conduct the exhumation were required to place a bid. After talking with my brothers, and another man we knew named Robert Sloan, we agreed to bid the project at \$5.00 per body. This price included the construction of small wooden boxes for the remains. In March 1866, I was notified that we had been chosen to exhume and rebury the dead. It was decided amongst the four of us that I would be in charge of the project.

Work began in late March. It was most unpleasant and incredibly difficult. We usually worked six days a week, and only stopped when there was heavy rain.

Tragedy struck barely a month into the project. My younger brother, Marcellus, became suddenly and desperately ill in mid-April. He developed a violent fever, fell into a delirium, and never recovered. There was really no way to provide Marcellus with a decent burial place, and so it was decided to lay him to rest in the cemetery right alongside some of the very soldiers we had already re-buried. Polk and I thought it appropriate that Marcellus rest next to the Texans.

The work then resumed. Polk, Robert, and I worked until mid-June to get the soldiers relocated. Altogether 1,481 soldiers were moved to the new cemetery at Carnton, and buried in state sections. We were able to identify over 900 of the men. As we worked those three months, I listed every soldier in a small leather bound journal. All were numbered and where names and units could be identified I wrote that information, too.



George Cuppett's grave
at Rest Haven Cemetery
in Franklin, TN

Upon completion of the project, I provided Mr. and Mrs. McGavock with the small book I had composed. I understand they kept the book for the rest of their lives and often used it when relatives of soldiers buried in the cemetery would visit.

Several years later I married a local girl, Malvena Collins, and eventually lived northeast of Nashville. I came back to Franklin occasionally and was present when the Confederate monument was unveiled on November 30, 1899."

In the "Burial Book" George Cuppett wrote, "My hole (sic) heart is with the brave & noble Confederate dead who fell whilst battling for their writes (sic) and Libertys (sic)." (Jacobson: McGavock, p. 25)

Greenbacks as depicted in the novel—



Image of one dollar "Greenback" first issued in 1862



One-third to one-half of the currency in circulation in the United States following the Civil War was counterfeit. America was a nation on the brink of bankruptcy, in so many ways. Hence, the United States Secret Service was founded. Ten men served as the first Secret Service agents, called "operatives" in that era.

Thomas Nast's EMANCIPATION poster as depicted in the novel (that Catriona finds among Wade's belongings in the novel)—



“Originally drawn for publication in *Harper’s Weekly*, “Emancipation” pictures Columbia (the female representation of America) presiding over a scene imagining the difference that Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation would have on slavery and former slaves in the South. The original 1863 illustration omitted Lincoln’s image at the bottom, instead featuring an abstract image of heavenly intervention breaking a slave’s chains. The inclusion of Lincoln’s visage [in later versions] highlights his ascension from sometimes-maligned president into a national martyr and revered Great Emancipator, and also begs the question of who (in the public imagination) freed the slaves.” (From the website: www.abolitionseminar.org)

[Read more about Thomas Nast and his “Emancipation”](#)

Peter McCartney's character in the book was based on the real Peter McCartney who lived in the 19th century—and who was an actual counterfeiter. And a very successful one!

Below is a newspaper article from the New York Times (December 1876) about McCartney's sentencing.

Read more about Peter McCartney jumping from a train (in real life) [here](#).

COUNTERFEITERS SENTENCED.

PETER M' CARTNEY IMPRISONED FOR FIFTEEN YEARS AT HARD LABOR, AND HIS ACCOMPLICE FOR TEN.

From the Indianapolis News, Nov. 28.

The United States District Court room was crowded this forenoon, it being generally known that the noted counterfeiter Peter McCartney, under the aliases of Charles Long and Andrew Long, together with his associate, Walters, alias Henry Boland, alias Walter Scott, would be sentenced to the Prison North upon a plea of guilty of uttering counterfeit money, the offence being committed at Richmond, this State. The District Attorney, when the prisoners were presented to the court, stated there were four indictments, but sentence would only be asked upon one, and he read the count charging the defendants with having passed a \$20 counterfeit United States Treasury note upon John Egremeyer, of Richmond. He also called the attention of the court to the quantity of counterfeit money found in their possession at the time of the arrest, and to the fact that Long, one of the accused, was no less than Peter McCartney, a notorious counterfeiter, and that so far, by some means, he had been successful in escaping punishment. To show his character, the District Attorney proposed to introduce two witnesses in proof of his identification and bad repute, but to this Major Gordon, counsel for the accused, excepted upon, the general rule of law that the prosecution could not go beyond the offence charged in the indictment, and as the defendant did not open the question of character neither could they. The Major made a strong appeal for mercy from the court in behalf of the accused, especially for McCartney; and he argued that it was not the purpose of a court to shut the door of reformation against a fallen man, and now at his age, forty-eight, it were better to give him a chance to better his life, instead of imposing the most rigorous penalty known to law. After the attorneys had

concluded, Judge Gresham asked the accused if they wished to say anything before sentence was passed, and McCartney replied: "Not for myself, may it please your Honor, but for this young man"—pointing to his associate, who was shackled to his wrist. The court ordered the irons to be removed and that the prisoners stand before the bar, and he then addressed McCartney: "There is little hope for reformation, for a man who has run your course does not often reform. You are a man of talent and courage and of years, and therefore I repeat there is little hope of reform. It is my duty to sentence you to fifteen years at hard labor in the State Prison North, and to enter a fine of \$500." During this time McCartney stood the ordeal without flinching, and only by a slight drooping of the eye when the term of imprisonment was announced did he show that the severity of the punishment had struck home.

The court then turned to the younger prisoner, and proceeded to pass sentence, when McCartney interrupted by saying, "All the stories against him are false, for he is the victim of circumstances, not intent. When handed over to me he didn't know me. He isn't to blame." And McCartney proceeded to say that adverse times, destitution, and the wants of a family, had driven Walters into the business, and he hoped the court would be merciful. Judge Gresham interrupted him by saying: "The prisoner has more than ordinary capacity for crime, as shown by his association. The court, therefore, enters a fine of \$100, and sentences him to ten years' hard labor in the Prison North."

Walters accepted the punishment with the nervy look shown by his superior, and the two were then removed to close confinement, preparatory to transfer to the Penitentiary. This removal will be had at an early date, and until it is accomplished the United States Marshal and his deputies will rest upon nettles. The opinion found free expression this forenoon that McCartney would not remain in custody ninety days, and to a prisoner so fertile in resources an escape is not improbable.

The New York Times

AVAILABLE WHEREVER
BOOKS ARE SOLD



If you haven't read *Christmas at Carnton* yet, you might want to! *Christmas at Carnton* is the bestselling novella that launched the Carnton series. More about *Christmas at Carnton* [here](#).

With This Pledge, book 1, is a story torn from the pages of history and also the personal accounts of those who endured the Battle of Franklin. Tamera weaves the real-life love letters between Captain Roland Ward Jones and Miss Elizabeth Clouston into a story of unlikely romance first kindled amid the shadows of war. Learn more about *With This Pledge*.

When you're next in Nashville, I hope you'll make time to visit Carnton. Click [here](#) to plan your visit. And be sure to tell them you've read the novels.

If you're part of a book club reading one of my books, I'd love to join your meeting via Skype for a twenty- to thirty-minute call. [VISIT THE BONUS FEATURES PAGE ON MY WEBSITE AND CLICK "FOR BOOK CLUBS" FOR MORE DETAILS.](#)

Finally, each month I offer [EXCLUSIVE GIVEAWAYS](#) to my eUpdate friends. So be sure to sign up for that when you're visiting my website. I love staying connected with you!

Until next time,

Tamera



Belmont Mansion
Nashville, TN



Belle Meade Plantation
Nashville, TN



Carnton
Nashville, TN

[Read more about Tamera's Southern series set at other Nashville antebellum mansions](#)

A Conversation with TAMERA ALEXANDER



photo credit Mandy Whitley Photography, Nashville

What compelled you to write Colors of Truth?

Ideas for my novels typically stem from a question I'm wrestling with, a spiritual struggle perhaps—and real history. Real history is always involved. All of that is true for *Colors of Truth*.

The theme of truth runs throughout this story. And also lies. Lies told to us. Lies we tell ourselves. Lies we tell others. We live in a time when integrity and truth seem hard to come by. God met me on the pages of *Colors of Truth* and drew me closer to him through the characters' struggles. I hope readers experience the same.

What was the most difficult part of writing this book? How did you overcome this difficulty?

I wrote this book during the last year of my father's life here on earth. Dad had a ten year journey with dementia and passed in August 2019. So much of what we experienced together, of what

Dad (and also my Heavenly Father) taught me during those last days, weeks, and months made it onto the pages of *Colors of Truth*. The never-failing love of both my earthly father and Heavenly Father got me through.

Who is your favorite character from the novel? What about them makes them your favorite?

I love them all yet feel a special closeness to Wade and Catriona because I wrote the story from their points of view. But I have to say that Tempy's character first captured my heart when I wrote *Christmas at Carnton* (the novella that launched the series) and *With This Pledge* (Carnton book 1). Tempy's character is based on the real African American woman who served as the cook at Carnton for the McGavock family for the majority of her life. Before the Civil War as a slave, after as a freedwoman. I also love Nora's character.

I've always wanted to write a story with sisters, and that Catriona and Nora are Irish made writing it especially enjoyable. I'm currently writing the third and final Carnton novel which will release Summer 2021, and the heroine? Nora, all grown up!

Do your characters ever seem to have a life of their own?

Oh gracious, yes. I'm often surprised when something happens in the story I'm writing. My husband always shakes his head (when I tell him this) and counters, "But you're the author. You know what's coming!" But as I tell him, these characters are "living, breathing people" who just happen to live inside me. They have minds and wills of their own.

As far as the message of the novel, I rarely know that until I'm well into writing the book. Sometimes not until the first draft is completely written. Then in rewrite, I go back and strengthen the story and character motivations in that regard.

How has writing this book impacted you personally?

God met me at so many turns in this story. But the ultimate truth that he engraved on my heart as I wrote *Colors of Truth* is to tell the truth. Always. No matter the cost. That means telling the truth to myself, to others, and to him. Because he IS truth.

How many books have you written to date with Colors of Truth's publication?

Seventeen. All historical fiction/romance. Seven are written against the backdrop of Colorado history, ten about real Southern history. The ten Southern novels are set against the authentic history of three antebellum mansions in Nashville — Carnton, Belle Meade Plantation, and Belmont Mansion—and the people who lived and worked there.

What is your favorite thing about writing? And also your least favorite?

Favorite thing? Readers. Hands down.

Second favorite? Having written.

Least favorite? Writing the first draft. I'm a writer who *lives* for rewrites!

What would you tell a beginning writer who wants to publish but doesn't believe he/she has enough talent?

Every "no" along the way is really part of God's final "Yes!" when his perfect timing is reached. It's true in writing and it's true in life. God will never lead you to something but what he will not also equip you to do it. His faithfulness never ends!

[ENTER TAMERA'S CURRENT GIVEAWAY](#)

[RECIPES](#) from *Colors of Truth* and Tamera's other novels are available for your book club meeting

[BEHIND THE SCENES VIDEOS](#) filmed on location at Carnton will take you directly to the setting of the Carnton novels

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www.TameraAlexander.com

Readers' Favorite Quotes from the Novel

"... as hard as it is to face the truth, it's even harder to live with a lie."

He only hoped the deep rifts in this country could soon be healed and that the chasms present for so many years would finally be bridged.

"How could someone who inflicted so deep a wound on your heart still manage to possess a piece of it?"

Do you have a favorite quote? Tamera would love to know. Or do you have other questions regarding what's Truth or Fiction in *Colors of Truth*?

Email Tamera at TameraAlexander@gmail.com

"Way I figure it, one way or the other, give it enough time, and the truth always has its say."

"I ain't one to question the Lord's goodness. But sometimes it sure feels like he can give a body too much to bear, don't it?"



CARNTON IN FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE
THE SETTING OF ALL TAMERA'S CARNTON NOVELS
[PLAN YOUR TRIP TO CARNTON](#)