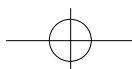
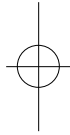
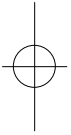
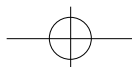
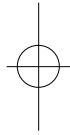
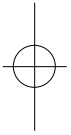




*My Dearest Friend*





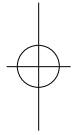
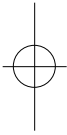


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The Civil War Correspondence of  
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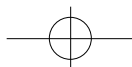
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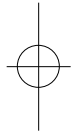
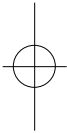




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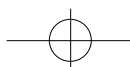
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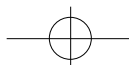
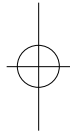
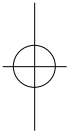
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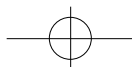
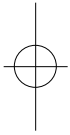
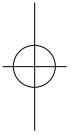




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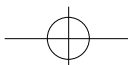


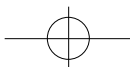
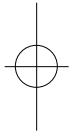
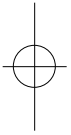


## Acknowledgments

A special thanks to:

- Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Furr (Mary Lou Avery Furr) for providing the hospitality of their home and a visit to Canoe Hill. Mrs. Furr generously shared two photographs of Laura Cornelia McGimsey, photocopies of three letters, which were not part of the McGimsey Papers, and a copy of the proclamation of Governor Ellis.
- Mr. Roy Avery who owns and maintains the old house and cemetery at Canoe Hill. “Cousin Roy” provided the tractor and his personal guided tour down the muddy road to Canoe Hill.
- The Burke County Genealogical Society and Mrs. Mary Jane Simmons in particular for publishing some of these letters in the *Journal*.
- Dr. Richard Shrader at the Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
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- Ms. Linda Garibaldi, Curator, N.C. Room, Burke County Public Library.
- Mrs. Martha McGimsey Lawing, my mother, who provided many wonderful visits to her brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins and allowed me to listen to their stories of “Old Burke.”





## Introduction

Laura Cornelia McGimsey was the older of two daughters born to Joseph Lewis McGimsey and his second wife, Elizabeth Alexander McGimsey. By the time she came along on November 1, 1840, her father was a 65-year-old farmer who had already raised five children and five stepchildren with his first wife, Allie Moore Wakefield McGimsey. Both of Cornelia's parents died in the 1850s, her father in 1852 and her mother in 1859. When these letters were written, she and her younger sister Celeste were living at Pleasant Hill, the home place. They shared the home with an older half brother, Alpheus McGimsey and his family, and a much older stepbrother, John Wakefield, whom she always referred to as "Uncle John."

Cornelia's best beau was John Lewis Warlick, son of John and Elizabeth Baker Warlick of Table Rock, N.C. Although their courtship had some rough spots, and Cornelia did correspond with at least one other beau, Lewis prevailed and their courtship became a marriage. Their courtship had begun at least a year before the war. Lewis wrote one letter to her in 1860 while he was on a trip through western North Carolina and north Georgia.

Abraham Lincoln's election to the presidency in 1860 ignited secession in South Carolina. Both pro union and pro-secession meetings were held in Burke County and thirty other counties across North Carolina. Pro-unionists correctly argued that a Democratically controlled House and Senate would keep the President from enacting any anti-southern legislation. By the end of January that majority vanished when six additional southern states seceded. North Carolina was not anxious for secession or war. In February 1861 the voters defeated a proposal to call a convention to consider secession. The western part of the state was more pro-union than any other section. When war did come, North Carolina was the tenth of eleven southern states to secede.

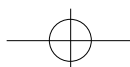
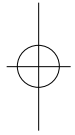
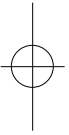
The first Civil War military company organized from Burke County was the "Burke Rifles." J. Lewis Warlick mustered in as a corporal. The company was enrolled for active service at Morganton, N.C. on April 18, 1861.

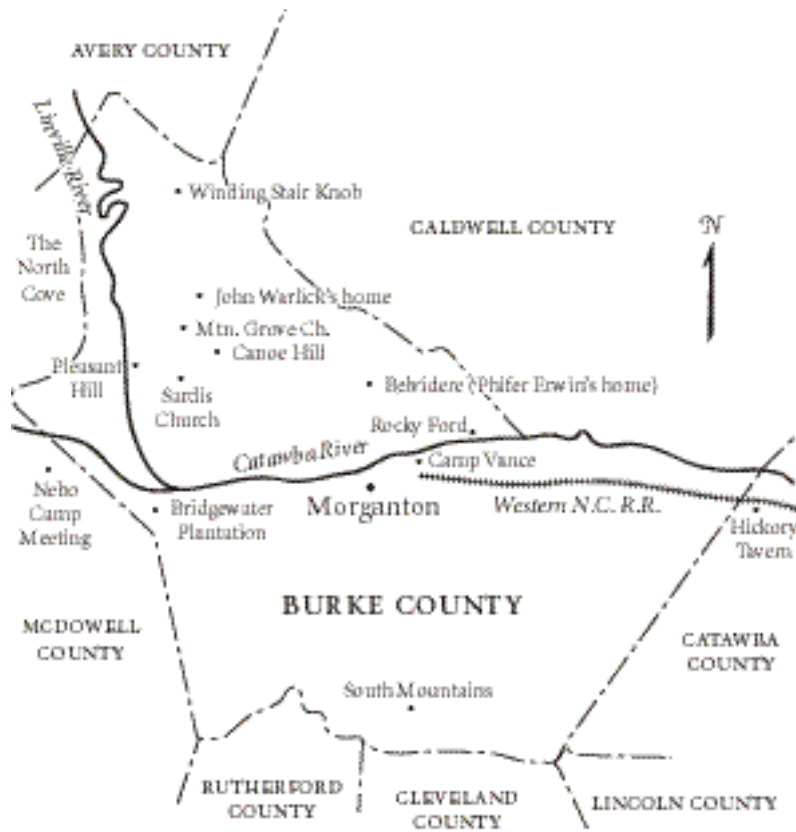


It arrived in Raleigh, N.C. April 25th and was mustered into State service on May 13th as Company G, in the First Regiment North Carolina Volunteers, “for the term of six months...” The 11th Regiment N.C. Troops became the successor of the First Regiment. Many of the men from Company G re-enlisted in Companies B and D of the new regiment.

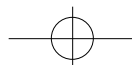
This correspondence in the Southern Historical Collection is generally between Lewis Warlick while in the Confederate Infantry and Laura Cornelia McGimsey back home at Pleasant Hill, on the Linville River. The conversation between a man and a woman is all there, as though it has been waiting for someone to listen. Letters from others occasionally offer other perspectives.

The men and women of North Carolina who penned these letters and passed these stories from generation to generation wrote this book. These letters open a window to the lives of several families living in Burke County, North Carolina during the Civil War. The original grammar and spelling of the letters have been retained.





Map of Burke County, North Carolina





STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.  
**A PROCLAMATION,**  
BY JOHN W. ELLIS,  
**GOVERNOR OF NORTH CAROLINA**

WHEREAS: By Proclamation of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, followed by a requisition of Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, I am informed that the said Abraham Lincoln has made a call for 75,000 men to be employed for the invasion of the peaceful homes of the South, and for the violent subversion of the liberties of a free people, constituting a large part of the whole population of the late United States: And, whereas, this high-handed act of tyrannical outrage is not only in violation of all constitutional law, in utter disregard of every sentiment of humanity and Christian civilization, and conceived in a spirit of aggression unparalleled by any act of recorded history, but is a direct step towards the subjugation of the whole South, and the conversion of a free Republic, inherited from our fathers, into a military despotism, to be established by worse than foreign enemies on the ruins of our once glorious Constitution of Equal Rights.

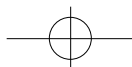
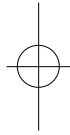
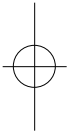
Now, therefore, I, JOHN W. ELLIS, Governor of the State of North-Carolina, for these extraordinary causes, do hereby issue this, my Proclamation, notifying and requesting the Senators and Members of the House of Commons of the General Assembly of North-Carolina, to meet in Special Session at the Capitol, in the City of Raleigh, on Wednesday the first day of May next. And I furthermore exhort all good citizens throughout the State to be mindful that their first allegiance is due to the Sovereignty which protects their homes and dearest interests, as their first service is due for the sacred defence of their hearths, and of the soil which holds the graves of our glorious dead.

United action in defence of the sovereignty of North-Carolina, and of the rights of the South, becomes now the duty of all.

Given under my hand, and attested by the Great Seal of the State. Done at the City of Raleigh, the 17th day of April; A. D., 1861, and in the eighty-fifth year of our Independence,

JOHN. W. ELLIS.

By the Governor,  
GRAHAM DAVES, *Private Secretary.*





*My Dearest Friend*

