

## **Webb, Mena** <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Mena Webb**

by Mena Webb

**April 26, 1915-May 23, 2012**

Writer Wilhelmena Katherine Fuller "Mena" Webb was born on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1915 in Atlanta, Georgia, the 4<sup>th</sup> child and 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter of Ralph Bell Fuller and Caro Bacon Fuller. When she was 6 weeks old, she was brought to Durham <sup>[2]</sup> by her mother along with her three siblings, Ralph, Bacon and Carolyn. They moved into a house on Cleveland Street across from the Fuller School, named for Mena's grandfather, Bartholomew Fuller <sup>[3]</sup>, one of three members of Durham's first Board of Education.

Mena graduated from the Durham city schools and attended Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Croft Business School.

In 1936, she married Henry Bond "Mack" Webb, long time editor of the Durham Morning Herald <sup>[4]</sup> and the *Durham Sun*. Webb began as a court reporter, and ended his career as the executive editor of both the *Herald* and the *Sun*. The Webbs had two daughters, Carol and Marion.

Mena worked at the *Durham Sun* as the society editor. She began to write on her own stories/pieces after taking courses at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill <sup>[5]</sup>. Her first published story, "Childish Things," was included in the University of North Carolina's periodical *Writers by Moonlight*.

She taught writing at the Evening College at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She published her first novel, *The Curious Wine*, in 1969. She subsequently wrote a biography of the life of Julian S. Carr <sup>[6]</sup> who made Bull Durham Tobacco <sup>[7]</sup> famous, called *Jule Carr: General Without an Army* <sup>[8]</sup> (1987). Later writings included a historical column for the *Durham Sun* and *Durham Morning Herald* (1989-1992), *The Way We Were: Remembering Durham* (2003) and *Out of My Mind* (2008), a memoir including short stories formerly published in the Junior League magazine.

She was a member of the Friends of the Durham Public Library <sup>[9]</sup>, the Junior League of Durham <sup>[10]</sup>, the Hope Valley Country Club <sup>[11]</sup>, the Tourist Club, the North Caroliniana Society <sup>[12]</sup>, the North Carolina Writers Conference <sup>[13]</sup>, and the Three Arts Club, as well as a being long-time member of both St. Philip's <sup>[14]</sup> and St. Stephen's <sup>[15]</sup> Church.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012, Mena Webb died in Durham at the Hillcrest Convalescent Center. Her papers are housed at the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

*Mena Webb wrote her own obituary, on which this article is based.*

#### **Additional Resources:**

Richardson, Lynn. "A memorable woman: An appreciation of Mena Webb." *The Herald-Sun* (Durham, N.C.). May 29, 2012.

Upchurch, Keith. "Durham author Mena Webb dies." *The Herald-Sun* (Durham, N.C.). May 24, 2012.

"The legacy of Mena Webb." *The Herald-Sun* (Durham, N.C.). May 29, 2012.

"Mena Webb Papers #4507," Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <https://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/w/Webb,Mena.html> <sup>[16]</sup> (accessed June 12, 2012).

Hodges, Betty. "Jule Carr Biography Is Classic Case of Writer Possessed By A Character." *Durham Morning Herald*. February 22, 1987.

Bell, Mae Woods. "Progressive North Carolinian is profiled in Webb's latest" *North Carolina Telegram* (Rocky Mount) March 29, 1987.

Trotsky, Susan M., editor. "Webb, Mena." *Contemporary Authors* 127. Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research Inc. 1989. p. 474.

Interviews with Mena Webb by Cathy Abernathy, March 26, April 2, May 21, 2007 C-0337 <sup>[17]</sup>, C-0338 <sup>[18]</sup>, C-0339 <sup>[19]</sup>, in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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