

From: [Patrick Parr](#)
To: [McVarish, Doug](#)
Subject: Re: Martin Luther King in Camden, NJ
Date: Saturday, May 2, 2015 5:11:03 PM

Hi again, Douglas:

Thank you for sending the initial write-up. It reads well. I just wanted to mention that in Volume 1 in The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr. Pgs 87-90, there is a chronology which lists King as an 'associate and assistant pastor at Ebenezer' Baptist during the summers of '48, '49 and '50, and also lists sermons he delivered there. That might help to eliminate some of the time he could have been in Camden. The speeding incident on June 16th, 1950, in Delaware, is recorded as well. June 12th - 19th, 1950 was an action-packed week for King, to say the least.

Thanks again, and yes, I hope you'll keep me in the loop if the report changes or something new pops up.

-Patrick

On Fri, May 1, 2015 at 4:32 AM, McVarish, Doug <xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx> wrote:

Patrick:

This evaluation was written fairly early in the process. Some conclusions may have changed. If I update it in coming weeks and months, I will send you a revised copy.

Douglas

Douglas C. McVarish

Architectural Historian

New Jersey Historic Preservation Office

P.O. Box 420

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420

[\(609\) 984-3856](tel:(609)984-3856)

xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx

From: Patrick Parr [mailto:patrick.parr@xxx.xx.xxx]
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2015 3:10 PM

To: McVarish, Doug
Subject: Re: Martin Luther King in Camden, NJ

Hi Douglas,

Yes, thank you. I'd be very interested in receiving a copy of the write-up. Glad I could help.

Thanks,

Patrick

On Thu, Apr 30, 2015 at 5:15 AM, McVarish, Doug <xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx> wrote:

Patrick:

Thank you so much for your response. It is very useful to us. Your conclusions are similar to our hypotheses, and is valuable to have the information gathered from your ongoing research. If it would be useful for you, I will send you a copy of the write-up I prepared on the house at 753 Walnut.

Again, thank you so much for the information.

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xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx

From: Patrick Parr [mailto:xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx]

Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2015 5:26 PM

To: McVarish, Doug

Subject: Re: Martin Luther King in Camden, NJ

Hello Douglas,

Great to hear from you. Yes, I'm aware of the local researcher's attempt to get the house in Camden registered. I've been gathering research for the last couple years regarding King's days at Crozer Seminary, and I have to agree with Dave. King and Walter McCall were best friends at Crozer, and they often went over to the Camden area, simply because McCall had family there. King's sister, Christine, was also at Teachers College in NYC at that time, 2 hours away. In Christine's memoir, *Through it All*, she describes a moment when she and 'Martin' are driving together 'down' to their brother A.D.'s wedding, which occurred on June 17th, 1950, 5 days after the Maple Shade incident was filed.

King lived in Crozer's main seminary building during his three years there. Now the building is the Crozer-Chester Medical Center. When I visited, many of the office workers there told me that King's dorm room is now an office, numbered 217 on the second floor.

Crozer classes typically finished in May, so he had plenty of time to stay, or 'crash' with McCall at the rowhouse. There is no evidence that I have found, however, that Camden was his primary residence. Did he stay there for perhaps 3-4 weeks at a time? Possibly. He had

reasons to. For starters, he could have preached at several nearby Baptist churches. He also frequently preached at Calvary Baptist church in Chester, and greatly admired J. Pius Barbour.

Unfortunately, the only person who could indeed give a definitive answer on this would have to be his sister, Christine, since she is on record as being with King five days after Maple Shade. She is very difficult to reach, however.

There is just too much evidence from old interviews by King's Crozer classmates, too many stories that are 'dorm-specific'. His primary residence was the dorm, but I have no doubt that he stayed for extended periods of time with Walter in the summer. They went everywhere together. It would have been difficult to commute daily from that Camden home to the Crozer campus in 1950. Even now, in 2015, it is a 35 minute trip by car.

King did take classes at the University of Pennsylvania his 3rd year at Crozer, which as you may know is much closer to Walnut Street... (six miles?). So perhaps King could have stayed in Camden during a portion of that time as well, but that is purely speculative at this point.

I am still gathering information from the Barbours, and if I'm able to uncover anything more definitive, I will let you know immediately. Of course if you have any other questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

Thanks,

Patrick

On Wed, Apr 29, 2015 at 8:04 AM, McVarish, Doug <xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx> wrote:

Patrick:

I am contacting you at the suggestion of Dave Garrow. A local researcher is attempting to get a house in Camden, NJ listed in the National Register of Historic Places because there is evidence that Martin Luther King lived there during a portion of his time at Crozer Seminary. The house was owned by Walter McColl's uncle and was located at 753 Walnut Street. Dave indicated that he had no doubt that MLK visited Walter McColl at the Camden house during his time at Crozer and may have stayed over from time to time but that his primary residence was close to the Crozer campus.

Have you come across any information about MLK's possible residency in Camden?

Thank you for your help.

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xxxx.xxxxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx

From: [Patrick Parr](#)
To: [McVarish, Doug](#)
Subject: Re: Martin Luther King in Camden, NJ
Date: Thursday, April 30, 2015 3:09:45 PM

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From: [Patrick Parr](#)
To: [McVarish, Doug](#)
Subject: Re: Martin Luther King in Camden, NJ
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2015 5:26:22 PM

Hello Douglas,

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From: [David J. Garrow](#)
To: [McVarish, Doug](#)
Subject: RE: Martin Luther King, Jr. in Camden
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2015 11:12:09 AM

Hi--All good. *If* you need to hear from Patrick Parr as well, I think he would be happy to chime in, but I sense that he doesn't want to in any way antagonize Patrick Duff by saying essentially 'Sorry, Charlie.' Parr's instinct, very much like my own, is that Walter McCall's role as Doc's best friend throughout those years has been very much forgotten by history, in large part because McCall died so young--he was gone even before I first started seeing people in 1979. I think memorializing it as the home of MLK's best friend, whom he often visited & where he enjoyed being, would be the way to go, & in the process stressing how at home in black churches and black communities Doc was. The fact that he was always in his own mind 1st & foremost a pastor & preacher, not a 'civil rights leader,' almost always gets ignored or forgotten.... Best, Dave

On Apr 29 2015, McVarish, Doug wrote:

>Professor Garrow:

>

> Thanks for your response. It is fine for our purposes. We continue to be
> impressed with Patrick Duff's devotion to this project, and that is a
> major reason why our office is devoting our efforts to trying to
> determine whether the house is NR-eligible.

>

>Douglas

>

> -----Original Message----- From: David J. Garrow

> [<mailto:xxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx.xx.xx>] On Behalf Of David J. Garrow Sent:

> Wednesday, April 29, 2015 7:47 AM To: McVarish, Doug Subject: Re: Martin

> Luther King, Jr. in Camden

>

> Hi--Sorry for my tardiness: yesterday I was following the S.Ct. arguments
> & getting press calls about Baltimore as well as being in book-writing
> mode. Do you need a formal letter from me, or can we have a phone
> conversation? While I'm *very* impressed with Patrick Duff's energy &
> dedication on this, I think the bottom line is quite clear & certain:
> Doc's best friend, Walter McCall, was related to the people at that home
> in Camden, and Doc certainly *stayed* there as a guest of McCall on
> however many nights, but all the interviewing of King classmates at
> Crozer that took place when they were still alive indicates pretty
> dispositively that during academic semesters Doc was living at Crozer,
> not in Camden. As the Maple Shade incident indicates, outside of the
> academic year calendar Doc may indeed have been in Camden some. There's a
> younger scholar in Washington state, Patrick Parr, who is more on top of
> all this than anyone else alive! Best wishes, Dave Garrow (I use my
> Cambridge email almost exclusively rather than my Pitt Law one)

>

>>

>>From: McVarish, Doug <xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx>

>>Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2015 10:55 AM

>>To: Garrow, David J.

>>Subject: Martin Luther King, Jr. in Camden

>>

>>Professor Garrow:

>>

>> The New Jersey Historic Preservation Office has been approached by an
>> individual who is seeking National Register listing for a house at 753
>> Walnut Street in Camden, New Jersey, which according to that
>> individual's research and several newspaper accounts was Martin Luther
>> King's part-time residence for a portion of his time at Crozer Seminary.

>>

>> During your research on Dr. King's time at the seminary, did you find
>> any sources that definitively associate Dr. King with residence in the
>> house at 753 Walnut Street?

>>

>>Thank you very much for your assistance.

>>

>>Douglas McVarish

>>

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>--

>Prof. David J. Garrow

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>University of Cambridge

>Professor of Law & History and

>Distinguished Faculty Scholar

>University of Pittsburgh School of Law

>3900 Forbes Avenue

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From: [David J. Garrow](#)
To: [McVarish, Doug](#)
Subject: Re: Martin Luther King, Jr. in Camden
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2015 7:46:49 AM

Hi--Sorry for my tardiness: yesterday I was following the S.Ct. arguments & getting press calls about Baltimore as well as being in book-writing mode. Do you need a formal letter from me, or can we have a phone conversation? While I'm *very* impressed with Patrick Duff's energy & dedication on this, I think the bottom line is quite clear & certain: Doc's best friend, Walter McCall, was related to the people at that home in Camden, and Doc certainly *stayed* there as a guest of McCall on however many nights, but all the interviewing of King classmates at Crozer that took place when they were still alive indicates pretty dispositively that during academic semesters Doc was living at Crozer, not in Camden. As the Maple Shade incident indicates, outside of the academic year calendar Doc may indeed have been in Camden some. There's a younger scholar in Washington state, Patrick Parr, who is more on top of all this than anyone else alive! Best wishes, Dave Garrow (I use my Cambridge email almost exclusively rather than my Pitt Law one)

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>From: McVarish, Doug <xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx>
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>To: Garrow, David J.
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From: [Taylor Branch](#)
To: [Doug McVarish](#)
Subject: Re: Martin Luther King, Jr. and Camden
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2015 6:30:37 PM

Thanks for your inquiry.

Dr. King did know Walter McCall from boyhood in Atlanta, and they were seminary students together starting in 1948. (My mother actually knew McCall in Atlanta during the early 1960s.) Stories of the King-McCall relationship appear in my book, *Parting the Waters*.

I am not aware of any historical evidence that Dr. King visited or stayed at any particular address outside Chester, PA while in seminary.

My books reflect details that I judged to be important. I do not maintain, however, that I discovered or carefully weighed the whole universe of details that might have been included.

Best,
Taylor Branch

On Thu, Feb 19, 2015 at 10:25 AM, Doug McVarish <xxxx.xxxxxxxx@xxx.xx.xxx> wrote:

Mr. Branch:

We recently received a preliminary application for a house at 753 Walnut Street in Camden, New Jersey. According to information prepared by the applicant, Martin Luther King, Jr. shared a room in the house with Howard McCall during a portion of his attendance at Crozer Seminary. The house was owned by McCall's cousin. The applicant argues that the significance of the house is increased because it was King's place of residence at the time of the incident at Mary's, a tavern in Maple Shade, Burlington County, in which King and several others were refused service. He also argues that this incident may have been the genesis of King's efforts for social and racial justice. Our office is presently evaluating whether the house meets any of the criteria for National Register eligibility.

I know that the incident at Mary's was not included in your three-volume biography of Dr. King. Are we correct in inferring that omission is due to your carefully considered opinion that the incident was not important in King's later life?

Thank you for your outstanding books. I look forward to hearing from you.

Douglas McVarish

Douglas C. McVarish

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