ATLANTA LEGACY MAKERS

A Tribute TO MAYORS ALLEN AND JACKSON

APPENDIX A: ATLANTA LEGACY MAKERS WEBSITE AND PODCAST

Podcasts: https://www.atllegacymakers.com/podcast

APPENDIX B: EXCERPT BOOK TALK

Ivan Allen Jr. was the human bridge from the old South to the new in Atlanta – and when he got to the distant shore, there stood Maynard Jackson waiting to take the city into modern times. In the stories of these two men and their families, I found a narrative of Atlanta and its historic rise from the ashes of the Civil War.

Atlanta is a city built on black hope and white pragmatism. It began on that course at the end of the Civil War when freed slaves and broken Confederates poured into the city to seek a fresh start… Maynard Jackson and Ivan Allen personified black hope and white pragmatism. They – and their families – personified Peachtree and Sweet Auburn, the yellow brick roads for dreamers in the South.

Ivan Allen and Maynard Jackson belong to history now. They represent a higher ideal – one Atlanta. They represent the possibility of harmony. As mayors, they did not achieve harmony in this town, but they certainly aspired to it. In death, they embody the soaring idealism of Peachtree Street and Sweet Auburn Avenue.

– Gary Pomerantz 5/31/18

APPENDIX C: SYNOPSIS *WHERE PEACHTREE MEETS SWEET AUBURN*

The Intersection of Peachtree Street, historically the residential and commercial street of Atlanta's white elite, and Sweet Auburn Avenue, the spiritual main street of Atlanta's community, mirrors the often separate but mutually dependent worlds of whites and blacks in this Southern city. In Where Peachtree Meets Sweet Auburn, Gary M. Pomerantz traces five generations of two families -- the Allens, descended from slave owners, and the Dobbses, from slaves. These families produced the two most influential mayors of the modern South, Ivan Allen Jr., and Maynard Jackson Jr. Through hundreds of interviews and five years of painstaking research, Pomerantz shows how the families rose to social, economic, and political prominence. But he also demonstrates how their interesting lives paralleled the shifting relations between Atlanta's blacks and whites as the city grew to become the capital of the New South. It is a representative story of the transformation of a city and the entire south.

APPENDIX D: EXCERPT DOBBS FAMILY

In the summer of 1960, John Wesley Dobbs took the train to Boston where he was scheduled to deliver a speech about Crispus Attucks, the freed slave who was the first to fall in the American Revolution.

Maynard Jackson, Jr., his twenty-two-year-old grandson, visited his hotel room on the eve of the speech to ask him to co-sign a loan for a two-door Chevrolet Bel-Air. He told his grandfather he needed the car for his work as an encyclopedia salesman for P.F. Collier in the company's district office in Boston. He said he expected to earn more than $20,000 a year.

"Look," Dobbs said, finally, "I'm going to sign this for you but not because I believe you can earn that much money – because I don't believe you'll earn that much – but because I believe you can sell somebody on the idea that you can earn that much money."

The grandson inquired about his speech. "Are you going to use 'Will?'" a reference to the Ella Wheeler Wilcox poem.

Sitting on the edge of the bed in his hotel room, the old man seemed surprised. "And what do you know about that?" John Wesley Dobbs asked.

"You told me it was your favorite poem and told me to learn it."
"Well," Dobbs said, "did you?"
"Yes, sir. I did."
"Say it for me."

"You mean right here? In this hotel room?"
"Right here. This is as good a place as any."
"Maynard Jackson felt his body tighten.
In a moment, his hands moved in sweeping motions and his words carried force. "Gifts count for nothing; will alone is great / All things give way before it, soon or late." This was a rite of passage for a Dobbs, any Dobbs, but particularly this one. Maynard Jr. was the closest thing John Wesley Dobbs had to a son. He wanted the boy to know how to transform words into an arsenal, to learn which words needed to be caressed and which crushed. "What obstacle can stay the mighty force / Of the sea-seeking river in its course."

The next day, August 16, 1960, Dobbs, a fiery orator and Grand Master of Georgia's Prince Hall Negro Masons known as "The Grand," delivered his address about Attucks and heroism. It was the final impassioned public speech of his life.

"[Attucks] made the down payment on Liberty and Freedom for all members of his racial group who were to live after him in the United States of America," the Grand said. "Crispus Attucks made the down payment for you and me, when he died in Boston, March 5, 1770, with a stick in his hand."

Dobbs spoke of blacks' devotion to America and to democracy. The current struggle for civil rights represented the continuation of a historic battle. "Our Negro college students, often assisted by white fellow students, are walking picket lines, and staging 'sit-in' demonstrations for the recognition of these rights, today," he said. "Again, a moral issue is at stake! Our college students will not be willing to wait another hundred years, like their fathers did. They are protesting to High Heaven, and in God's name, for Justice – right now – if not sooner! They know that the world rises on protest."

Passing businessmen, white and black, hearing the emotion in Dobbs's voice, gathered in Boston Common. Soon, the crown numbered in the hundreds. The Grand's speech was so powerful, Maynard Jackson recalls, applause at the close was sustained.

But one moment during this address, so small as to be undetected by anyone but a Dobbs, signaled a larger, more frightening prospect to the grandson.

John Wesley Dobbs had referred to his notes. It was the first time Maynard Jackson had ever seen him do it. The realization settled in: "Grandpa was beginning to lose some of his powers."

The voice on the telephone was old and heavy. It was the voice of a weary old general still longing to fight. "When you get ready to march at Rich's tomorrow," John Wesley Dobbs told the Rev. Otis Moss, Jr., "let me know."

As the civil rights movement in Atlanta gained momentum, the Grand lost his own. His mind

retained its clarity and sharpness, but pain crippled his shoulders, hands and knees. He spent days on the couch at 540, too stiff to move. Sometimes, his grandsons Bill Clement, Jr. and Bobby Jordan, both students at Morehouse, lifted him from the sofa for a conversation. The Grand had good days when the cortisone injections restored the old fires and bad days when he seemed nearly inanimate except for the groaning. "It was depressing for us," Bill Clement, Jr., recalls, "and traumatic for him."

The Grand's views had changed since 1956 when he believed that Atlanta need not duplicate the bus boycott in Montgomery. He believed Atlanta a superior and more reasonable place than any other in the South. But now, four years later, the younger generation, and especially M.L. King, Jr., had convinced him that direct action was needed to break through the intransigence of white Atlanta.

The South had become a lead actor on the American stage. It stood alone in a spotlight, forced to justify its social customs. In Atlanta, white leaders struggled to maintain the appearance of racial moderation, but black college students made that increasingly difficult.
John Wesley Dobbs made his final public stand in Atlanta by marching in support of students in front of Rich's on October 19, 1960, as part of the same protest for which the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was jailed, then sent to Reidsville. One month earlier Dobbs had returned his charge card and closed out his account, paying $159.88. In a letter to Rich's officials, he said his family had spent more than $3,700 at the store in 1959 and 1960 and that "my Conscience and Self-Respect will no longer allow me to support a business that shows so much unfairness to its Colored Patrons." He noted that dialogue between Rich's and black leaders, including one conference in which he and Daddy King met Richard Rich, had produced no results. The store's discriminatory policy, Dobbs wrote, would subject esteemed blacks such as Dr. Ralph Bunche of the United Nations and his own daughter, opera star Mattiwilda Dobbs, to Jim Crow humiliation if they so much as ordered a sandwich at Rich's lunch counter. "You are caught on the wrong side of a MORAL ISSUE," he wrote. "Already cities like St. Louis, Mo., Louisville, Ky., Nashville, Tenn., Durham, N.C. and Tampa, Fla., have done something about this condition. You continue to do NOTHING about it."

As Dobbs stood outside Rich's in the autumn chill, Reverend Moss watched with awe. The young pastor of the Providence Baptist Church in south Atlanta had heard the Grand speak years earlier in the Morehouse Chapel. That discourse ranged from the glory of the ballot to the fiery destruction caused by John Brown at Harper's Ferry. Once, in a visit to 540 Houston Street, Moss heard the old man speak in admiration about New York congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., an occasional visitor in the Dobbs house. "He preached the gospel on Sunday and walked the picket lines on Monday," the Grand said. Moss accepted that description as a blueprint for his own career.

In his final hour of protest in Atlanta, the Grand wore a fine three-piece suit and a gray trench coat. His wing-tipped shoes shone and his Dobbs-brand hat set low on his head. An oversized sign was draped from his shoulders. "Wear Old Clothes With New Dignity," it read. "Don't Buy

Here." He stood straight-backed and his countenance held supreme resolve. To those who knew him well, he looked unmistakably old. The flesh on his face sagged from his high cheekbones and somehow made his Indian features stand out. He walked with a group of elder black leaders, including realtor John Calhoun and ministers such as Sam Williams, Daddy King and William Holmes Borders As chairman of the Adult-Student Liaison, Borders had called for the old guard to demonstrate at Rich's after learning that dozens of black students and M.L. King, Jr., had been arrested. Like the students, the adults protested at Rich's in shifts, some arriving as others departed.

Dobbs's first steps were slow and small. A few of his fellow protesters expressed concern about his stamina. But as he turned from the south end of Rich's and marched around the block his strength surged. He walked faster and longer than anyone had expected. "He walked that day just like he did the first time I had ever seen him," Moss recalls. Across the street, members of the Ku Klux Klan in their white robes shouted threats and obscenities. The Grand seemed not to hear them.

"How do you feel?" Calhoun asked him, after he had marched for some time.
"I feel good," the Grand said, "on the inside. This is one of the best experiences of my life."

The Grand demonstrated in front of Rich's for nearly two hours. Organizers of the demonstration finally told him to stop. He smiled. "If you think so, I will," he said. His old brown eyes sparkled. "But I could go on."
Thirty years later Maynard Jackson, Jr., saw, for the first time, a photograph of his grandfather as he marched in front of Rich's. "Look at that jaw set. He would've walked through hell – bare feet, if he had to!" Tears streamed down Maynard Jackson's cheek. "What a man!" he said.

APPENDIX E: EXCERPT ALLEN FAMILY

Near dusk on April 4, 1968, as rain fell on the Allen meadow in Atlanta, swelling the banks of Nancy Creek, Ivan and Louise Allen saw the news bulletin flash on their bedroom television: "Martin Luther King, Jr. shot in Memphis."

The mayor rose from his chair in disbelief. "First Kennedy," he said, "now King."

A sketchy first report said King was in Memphis to lend aid to striking sanitation workers. He had been standing on a balcony at the Lorraine Motel when a single shot rang out. A bullet struck him in the shoulder or neck. The severity of his injury was unknown.

As the mayor paced in his bedroom, decrying the senselessness of violence, he said to his wife, "I must go to Mrs. King."

First he made a phone call to her. Only minutes before Coretta King had received a panicked

call from Jesse Jackson, one of her husband's aides. From Memphis, Jackson had said, "Coretta, Doc just got shot. I would advise you to take the next thing smoking."
The mayor asked if she had heard the news. Coretta King said she had and wanted to get on the 8:25 P.M. Eastern Air Lines flight to Memphis. The plane would leave in an hour.
"I'm coming over myself," he said, "and I'll try to get there before you leave. I'll send an officer to go with you." He phoned ahead to the Atlanta police department and asked that a patrol car be dispatched to the King home in Vine City.

"What are you going to do?" Louise asked.
"I'm going to Mrs. King," he said.
"I'll get a coat. I'm going with you," she said.

For years, Louise had been her family's strong emotional foundation. She had raised three sons while her husband pursued his business and political objectives. A newspaper story years later would liken her to a "tall ship on a fine day" and the image was appropriate; with her wealth and lifestyle, she had a ladylike grandeur. She revealed her inner thoughts to few people. She was a hard person to get to know; even her daughter-in-law called her "Mrs. Allen." Some of her friends described her as a "steel magnolia," southern grace masking a harder edge; one friend suggested, "You may think the mayor is strong but Louise is even stronger." Accompanying her husband to Coretta King's seemed only proper to Louise: "A lot of times a woman can do better with another woman. It was perfectly natural on my part." Initially, Ivan Jr. was reluctant to bring her with him, fearing an outbreak of violence. Louise had made up her mind. She was going.

In the rain, the Allens sped down Northside Drive, toward the King home. As he drove into the darkness of the Vine City slum, the mayor thought about the thirty-nine-year-old preacher. He has seen King mostly in times of stress, but he had begun to grasp the depth of the man, his humor and his sincerity. In 1965, he had attended a dinner for King in New York City, an affair sponsored by the American Jewish Committee. Before nearly two thousand guests, King had expressed his gratitude for the testimonial, then said, "But adding to the honor is the fact that I have been accompanied here by the mayor of Atlanta, Georgia: my good and close friend, Ivan Allen, Jr." His kind words had surprised the mayor. The applause that night for Ivan Jr. was loud and sustained. Finally, someone tapped him on the shoulder and told him to stand. That night Ivan Allen, Jr., learned what King undoubtedly already had known – that there was a world, and a viewpoint, beyond that of Atlanta.

On another occasion, the tenth-anniversary dinner of the SCLC at the new Hyatt Regency Hotel on Peachtree Street in August 1967, King had arrived late. He explained that he was caught between different time zones: "Central Time, Eastern Standard Time and CPT." The mayor, sitting with Ralph and Mary Lynn McGill, feel into King's trap. "CPT?" he asked. "Colored People's Time. We're always late," King said, before breaking into a disarming laughter.

Ivan Jr. also recalled his discussions with King in his office on the first floor of the Prince Hall

Masonic Lodge on Auburn Avenue, Dobbs's building. The mayor and King had spoken freely about race, as it affected the nation and Atlanta. After one such talk, King had driven the mayor back to City Hall and handed him an autographed copy of his book Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community. He had signed it: "To my good friend, Ivan Allen Jr., for whom I have great respect and admiration. Martin."

Ivan and Louise arrived at the red-brick King home at 234 Sunset Avenue, next door to the four-unit apartment house built nearly two decades earlier by the Rev. Maynard Jackson, Sr. Coretta King was being escorted to a police car. The mayor joined her, though she sat in the back seat. When Capt. George Royal suddenly appeared in another police car, the mayor moved in with him so he could radio ahead to hold Mrs. King's plane. The convoy began for the airport, with Louise Allen and Billye Williams, wife of the Rev. Sam Williams, trailing behind in the Allen family Chevrolet.

Ivan Jr. knew he needed to show the black community that he understood and was responding with all due speed and sympathy. He knew the media monitored police radio and hoped they would spread the word of his response to the black districts where the despair over the shooting was beginning to deepen. As far as Ivan Jr. knew, Martin Luther King, Jr. was still alive, but the mayor feared that the deep-seated fury in Atlanta's black ghettos was about to be unleashed. Crime in Atlanta was rising, and a record 142 murders had been committed the previous year. During the summer of 1967 riots in America's black ghettos had seemed to mirror the Vietnam War. Cleveland, Washington, Louisville, Omaha and Montgomery erupted. Twenty-six were left dead on the streets of Newark, forty-three in Detroit. Stokley Carmichael had fomented a rock-and-bottle throwing disturbance in Atlanta's Dixie Hills section in June after a black policeman had shot and wounded a black youth. Ivan Jr. testified later that summer before a Senate committee that Congress no longer could delay funding to cities trying to cope with the black migration from rural areas. In a speech at Harvard on July 10, 1967, Ivan, Jr. also had made the point that Carmichael was jeopardizing the civil rights movement. Lyndon Johnson had responded by forming a commission, led by Illinois governor Otto Kerner, to study the root causes of black unrest in America. Known as the Kerner Commission, its report in March 1968 suggested that America was fast becoming two nations, one black and the other white, separate and unequal. "What white Americans have never fully understood – but what the Negro can never forget – is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto," the commission reported. "White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it."

The convoy arrived at the Atlanta airport and the mayor handed $200 to Capt. Morris Redding. "Morris, for God's sake, get two tickets for Memphis," he said. With Coretta King, he rushed through the Eastern Air Lines terminal toward the gate, where the 8:25 for Memphis was being held. A few newsmen accompanied them.

"It is such a senseless thing," the mayor told her. "When will people ever learn?" Suddenly a page for Coretta King sounded over the public address system. Dora McDonald, secretary to

King, rushed over to the group, her expression grave. “Come on!” she said, grabbing Mrs. King’s arm. “We need a room where we can sit down.” They went into the outer area of the ladies’ rest room.

An Eastern Air Lines official told Ivan Jr. that someone was trying to reach him by telephone. At a nearby phone, he listened to a voice, identified as an Eastern Air Lines official in Memphis, say, “I’ve been asked to inform you that Dr. King is dead.” The mayor’s response was deliberate. “I want you to go back and reaffirm your statement and be positive that this is right.”

The voice had not a particle of doubt. “Mayor Allen, I have been instructed to affirm and reaffirm to you that Dr. King is dead. We’re trying to furnish you the information as quickly as possible.”

The mayor put down the phone and, when he turned, Louise knew at once what had happened.

Together, the Allens walked to the ladies rest room. When the door opened, they saw Coretta King and Dora McDonald embracing, and quietly weeping. Mrs. King had not been told officially. That duty fell to the mayor. He performed it formally, with the words he had just heard: “Mrs. King, I have to inform you that Dr. King is dead.” Coretta King could not restrain her tears. Seeking to be helpful, Louise instinctively reached for a paper towel and handed it to her. The mayor snatched the paper towel then gave her the silk handkerchief from his breast pocket.

“Mrs. King,” the mayor said, “is it your wish to go to Memphis?”

“I should go back home and see about the children,” she said. “And then decide about going to Memphis.”

The mayor escorted her through the terminal, back to the car. Television cameras captured their grim expressions. Rain was falling across Atlanta. The mayor held an umbrella over Coretta King. Together, they drove back to the King home, along with her sister-in-law, Christine King Farris, and Christine’s husband, Isaac. They drove in silence.

At the King home, policemen and family friends were waiting. In the confusion, seven-year-old Dexter King asked, “Mommy, when is Daddy coming home?” Coretta King spoke with her children privately and then retired to her bedroom.

By the time President Johnson called the King home that night, riots had erupted in dozens of American cities. According to the police reports received by the mayor, Atlanta remained mostly quiet, with only a few flare-ups.

Later, Lyndon Johnson appeared on television to urge Americans to search their hearts. “I ask every citizen to reject the blind violence that has struck Dr. King, who lived by nonviolence,” the president said. Ivan Jr. watched the address from the living room of the Rev. Martin Luther King,

Jr.

APPENDIX F: AUTHOR Q AND A

Q: What were the most important moments for you during your years of interviews with the two mayors Ivan Allen Jr. and Maynard Jackson?

A: Without question, two moments stand out above the rest. The first occurred during the spring of 1994 when I escorted Maynard Jackson to a graveyard not far from Kennesaw Mountain, Ga., where a famous Civil War battle was fought.

Maynard Jackson is a large man, about six-foot-three, three hundred pounds and always dressed immaculately. On this day, he wore a starched white shirt, a tie knotted small at the throat, a gold pen clipped to his breast pocket. Together, we walked into this century-old Negro graveyard; poorly kept, it had become almost a forest. Buried there are the freed slaves who in 1864 had watched General Sherman on his march towards Atlanta. Every ten yards deeper into the graveyard we walked took us another decade back in time. Finally we came upon the tombstones of Mayor Jackson's slave ancestors.

Mayor Jackson and his family didn't know the location of the graves. I'll never forget his reaction: it was remarkable. When he saw the tombstones, he gasped and put his hand over his mouth, holding it there. His eyes were as big as saucers.

It was a peaceful place. The trees were full, the sun cut through them like arrows. Maynard Jackson walked to the stone and started to read the engraved words aloud. One tombstone marked the grave of his great-great grandfather, a freed slave Wesley Dobbs, who died in 1897; the other was for Judie Dobbs, Wesley's wife.

Jackson reached out to touch his great-great grandfather's stone. But he pulled back his hand at first. Finally he touched it and ran his finger across the etchings. Then he laid both hands atop the stone.

The image was incredible: there stood the South's first black mayor in the shade of a dogwood tree grown from the grave of his slave ancestor. It was an Atlanta tale, too, for here was Kennesaw – in Civil War times about four hours by horseback from Atlanta– but now an integral part of metro Atlanta. (With traffic today, some might say that driving from Kennesaw to Atlanta still takes four hours)

The second moment that will forever be etched in my mind occurred during an interview in the summer of 1992 with former Mayor Ivan Allen Jr., only two months after the suicide of his son, Ivan III. The suicide had shocked Atlanta. Ivan Allen III was 53, a civic pillar in Atlanta, a former Chamber of Commerce president. He shot himself with a handgun while at the family farm, west

of Atlanta. The city was left to wonder what had happened; so was the Allen family. On the day of the funeral, Old Atlanta wrapped a protective glove around the Allens. About a thousand people showed up at the funeral. Maynard Jackson was there as were many other black Atlantans, which was a testament to the way Ivan III – and his father – had reached out to the African-American community. Mayor Ivan Allen looked old and fragile at the funeral.

Two months later we had our interview. Mayor Ivan Allen wondered how he had missed his son's inner turmoil. He internalized his son's pain and had a difficult time sorting things out. I related to him my interview with Ivan III from about six months before his death. I had asked Ivan III about his locally famous name. He had replied, "I'm not going to talk about that." I asked, "Why?" And Ivan Allen III said, "Because I never have." He said it in a definitive way. I could almost hear a door slamming. He didn't want to talk about the burden of carrying the name of a local legend. In fact, many people would wonder if the burden of matching his father's achievements finally had come crashing down upon him.

I related his son's response to the old mayor. "What do you think Ivan meant by that?" the mayor asked me. I said, "Mayor Allen, that's what I was going to ask you?" He didn't know what to think or say. He just shook his head, sadly.

Q: What impact did John Wesley Dobbs have on his grandson, Maynard Jackson?

A: Sad to say, children today are led to believe that the civil rights movement began and ended with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. In fact, it began long before King. Among the forgotten black civil rights leaders of an earlier generation was John Wesley Dobbs. Dobbs was an outsized figure in black Atlanta, a political powder keg, a great orator made for the stage. His public mission was voter registration. He believed the ballot was the vehicle to true freedom for blacks in the South. His private crusade was his family. In both missions his impact on Maynard Jackson was enormous.

Dobbs was born in the shadow of Reconstruction and as a boy had run barefoot through the fields of Kennesaw. As an arthritic old man he marched with Dr. King in front of Rich's department store in downtown Atlanta in 1960. On the family tree, John Wesley Dobbs stands halfway between an $800 field-hand slave and the South's first black mayor. That was a dramatic transformation that he, as patriarch, forged.

Q: As mayor of Atlanta during the tumultuous 1960's, what does Ivan Allen Jr. represent in Atlanta's history?

A: In Atlanta, he is the human bridge from the Old South to the New. Allen was raised in elite White Atlanta to believe firmly in segregation. In 1957, when civil rights protests accelerated and when he still had hopes to one day become Georgia's governor, Allen had privately suggested a state-funded colonization program that would transport blacks in Georgia back to Africa. Today, he is deeply embarrassed by that suggestion – though he is candid enough and secure enough

with his legacy to admit to it.

Six years later, as Atlanta's mayor, Allen was the only elected official in the South to testify for President Kennedy's 1963 Public Accommodations bill, which gave African-Americans equal access in hotels and restaurants. He had traveled full circle on the race issue in six years.
To say that his private reconstruction on the race issue was entirely the result of political expedience and pragmatism would be a narrow view. Unquestionably, politics played a part in it. But from 1961-63, Mayor Allen experienced African-Americans for the first time in his privileged life as something other than butlers, chauffeurs, maids and yardmen. Suddenly, they were his civic peers. He began to change his racial views at a more human level. To deny even the possibility that Mayor Allen had transformed himself on that human level is, I think, to deny the human capacity to change.

Q: Atlanta promotes itself as the "City Too Busy to Hate." Is it?

A: Well, it certainly is too busy. Its growth since World War II leads all Sunbelt cities; since 1980, Atlanta has boomed from 2.2 million residents to 3.5 million. That's like picking up the entire New Orleans metro area and moving it to Atlanta.

As for the hate, of course Atlanta possesses anger and prejudice. Remember, the modern Ku Klux Klan was founded in 1915 near Atlanta and was headquartered in downtown Atlanta during the 1920s. In recent years, the FBI has fingered Atlanta as the nation's most violent city. The poverty rate is high, too.

Atlanta is built on the old families and, sad to say, many of the old prejudices, too. W.E.B. Du Bois in 1903 described Atlanta as "South of the north, yet north of the South." It is a wonderful and enduring description; Atlanta yet remains different than other southern places. Yet to put Atlanta into proper context, it must be viewed as Southern. Race, of course, has been the South's cross to bear since the days of slavery. Atlanta has been constructed on black hope and white pragmatism. The way city leaders have managed and manipulated the race issue over the past fifty years has fueled Atlanta's remarkable rise.

Q: During five years of research did any single moment serve as a grand sort of epiphany?

A: Yes, but in an unusual way. I had traced the Allen family genealogy back to Buncombe County, North Carolina in 1815. Then, having traced the Dobbs family to a white slavemaster named McAfee – McAfee fathered a child with one of his slaves, who later married into the black Dobbses – I began tracing the McAfee family. In 1815, I found the white McAfees and the white Allens in that same Buncombe County.

I had this image in my mind of trying to connect those two families. The mere possibility of a blood relationship between the Allens and the Dobbses was stirring to me. At that point in the

research, it wasn't much of a stretch either. I envisioned seating both mayors before me, and then saying, "Ivan? Maynard? . . . Cousins!"

A blood connection between them would have proven, in a graphic way, how frivolous and ridiculous racial distinctions are. I never found that blood relationship. But I did find the deeper truth.