

The
SCANDALOUS LIVES
of
CAROLINA
BELLES
Marie Boozer
and
Amelia Feaster

• FLIRTING WITH THE ENEMY •

TOM ELMORE

Or Fifty
Shades of
Blue and Gray

Part One:

The Truth:

**Amelia Sees was born in Philadelphia January 30,
1819.**



**She was the 7th of 9 children and was of French
Huguenot descent.**

Not much is known about her early life.

- **Married her first husband at 15, Henry or Thomas Harned.**
- **He died the day after their wedding.**

**In 1841 Amelia married Peter Burton of Columbia,
she moves to S.C. with him.**

- In 1846 or 1847 they have a daughter,
Mary Adele Peter Burton.**
- Burton died around 1847,
allegedly murdered.**

On a vacation to Newberry, Amelia meets husband number three.



“Big Dave” Boozer was a wealthy planter and a widower, known for his energy and high spirits.

- They married in 1847**
- Boozer adopted Mary, renaming her Mary Sarah Amelia Boozer, after his first and second wives.**
- Things went bad for Boozer both financially and personally.**

On February 10, 1850, “Big Dave” blew the left side of his head off with a double barrel shotgun.

- Though never formally charged, Amelia was suspected of killing her husband.**
- There were also allegations that Amelia attempted to poison her mother-in-law.**
- In his will Dave left very detailed and explicated instructions on how he wanted his grave done, setting aside \$1500 for it.**
- Amelia Challenged it in court and got a partial victory**

This is the original site today.



The body was moved to another non-descript location. He is buried with his first wife.

**Amelia was also accused of having an affair with Dr.
Hugh Huger Toland of Columbia.**



**Toland moved to California to escape malicious
gossip.**

Eventually the members of Aveleigh Presbyterian expelled Amelia from their congregation for dressing unbecoming a widow, her alleged affair and “conduct in general.”

She was also forced out of town.

Amelia moved to Columbia and married husband number four, Jacob Jefferson Norris Feaster in 1852.



Amelia and Jacob had three children together.



Julia C. Fester circa 1854

**From her house in Columbia, Mary Chesnut wrote
about Marie in her diary.**



**Marie was also known to flirt with the students of
South Carolina College**



Brig. Gen. John Preston Called Marie “the most beautiful piece of flesh and blood [he] had ever beheld.”



**Marie was allegedly engaged to the general's son
William**



**Marie's only known contribution to the war was as a
volunteer nurse at Columbia's
Wayside Hospital**



In the fall of 1864 the Confederate Army opened Camp Sorghum, a P.O.W. camp that housed 1300-1400 captured Federal Officers in modern day West Columbia SC.



Amelia was a frequent visitor to the camp

By December 1864 the prisoners were removed to Camp Asylum on the grounds of the state mental hospital in Columbia.



ASYLUM CAMP, COLUMBIA, S. C.



It was felt that the brick wall around the site would make for a more secure site, but at least 200 escaped.



Amelia helped several of them to escape.

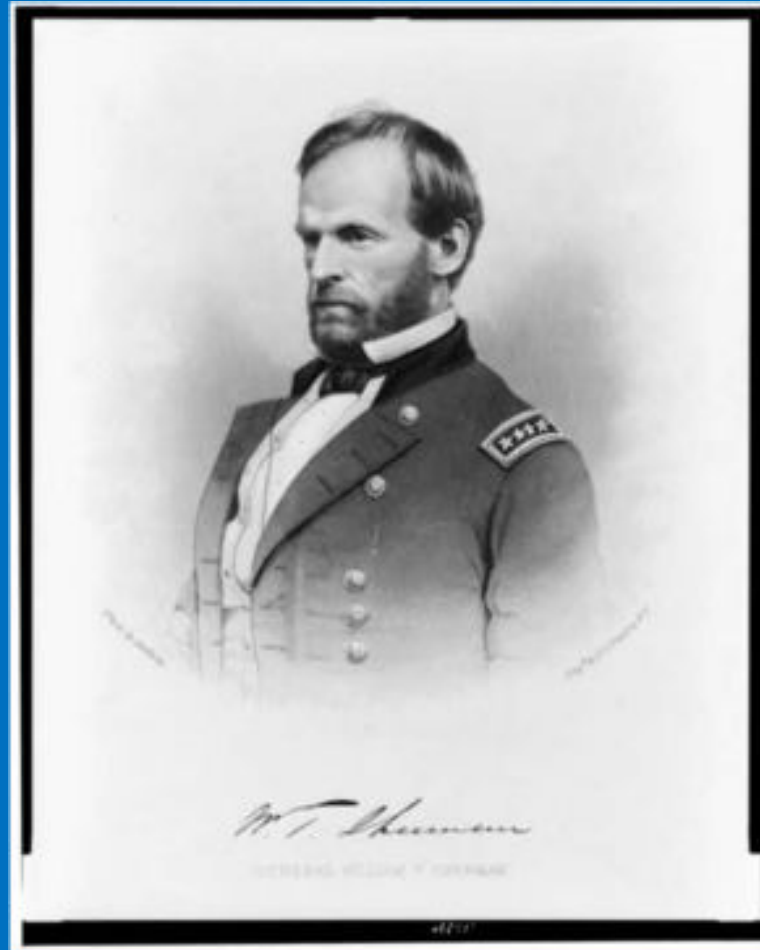
Col. Marshall *Bobboy* *Jack* *Mr. Hiffman* *Tom Farley* *4 men*



Dr. H. Smith

Dr. H. Smith

Dr. H. Smith *Mr. Adams* *24. 1/2* *Page*



During the fire that swept Columbia on February 17, 1865, the Feaster's house and store was destroyed





**The Family went from Columbia, to Fayetteville
N.C. From there they went to Philadelphia**



By December 1865, they were in New York City, staying at the posh Astor House Hotel.

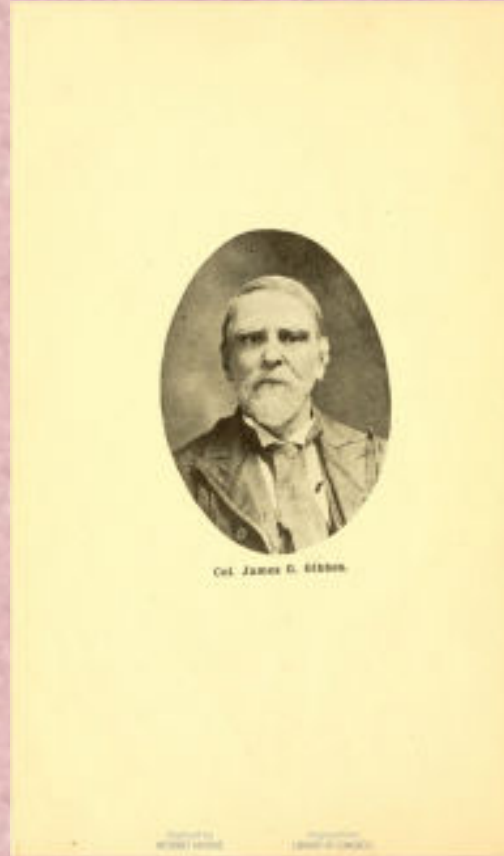


**In New York, Marie had her photo taken by
Matthew Brady's studio**



Mary "Marie" Boozer

Col. James Gibbes visited Amelia in New York and was asked to sign a statement that Jacob Feaster was dead.



Gibbes refused. He had seen Feaster just 3 days earlier.

In 1866 U.S. Senator John Sherman introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate to compensate Amelia \$10,000 for her contributions to the Northern war effort.



**It was passed unanimously by the Senate but was
tabled in the U.S. House.**



Amelia died broke in New York in 1870 from edema and was buried in Philadelphia



Her “dead” husband Jacob, outlived her by 25 years.

In the winter of 1865-1866 Marie married John S. Beecher.

- **Beecher was a successful New York importer, probably twenty years older than Marie.**
- **Marriage produced one child, William Preston Beecher born in 1867.**
- **By 1868, they were divorced, allegedly due to adultery by Beecher.**

**Marie went to Europe where she passed herself off
as Marie Beauvar Boosier of New Orleans**



**She returned to the U.S. in the mid
1870s and moved to Baltimore.**



**There she met Count Arthur de Pourtales-
Gorgier, a French Diplomat.**

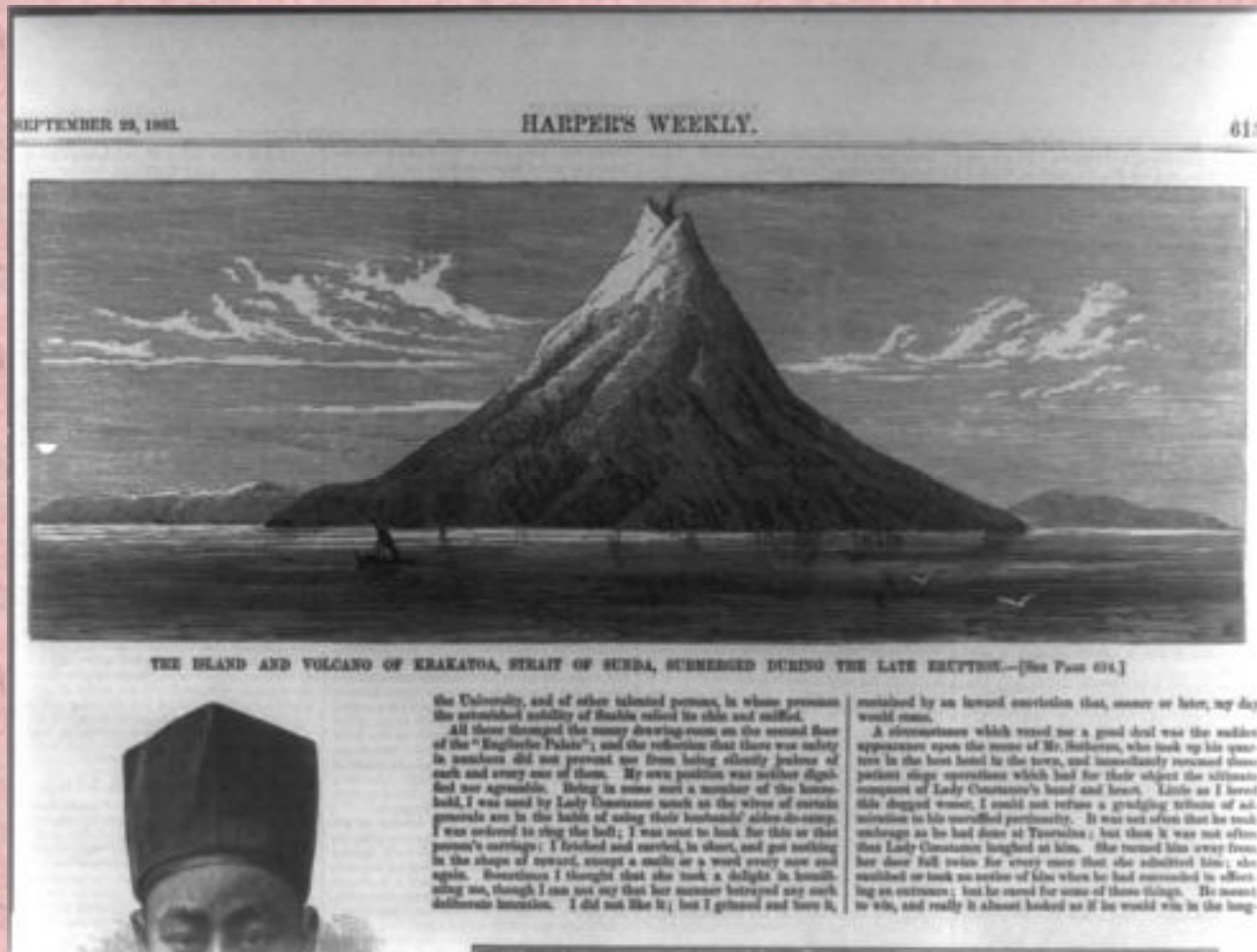
- **The count was a widower with one daughter, Jenny, whom Marie loved as if her own.**
- **They married in Baltimore in 1876**
- **His postings took them to Japan, Guatemala, and Italy.**

It also took them to the Dutch West Indies.



It was an idyllic life until...

**August 26, 1883 when the Krakatoa Volcano erupted
less than 100 miles from where they lived.**



The de Poujrtales were spared the worse of the explosion. Marie wrote that tales of the disaster were “much exaggerated” but “to me it was bad and horrible enough, but we escaped everything!” She wrote “of course there was the fearful noise like the firing of many and great cannons at intervals of every 8 minutes. Then the sky was obscured by a thick yellowish cloud and one could hear the falling of something like very fine soft rain. And by and by one perceived the ground and leaves covered with grey dust which proved to be the rain of ashes.”

The only effect felt here and at Batavia was the noise and vibration but I assure you although I was not at all alarmed it was not ‘gay.’ Thousands of people were destroyed, but they were Chinese and Malays-only about 10 Europeans-fortunately. The sea swept over the town with tremendous force and receded carrying all with it into the main ocean. It was terrible!”

Soon afterwards Marie's husband was assigned to Switzerland.

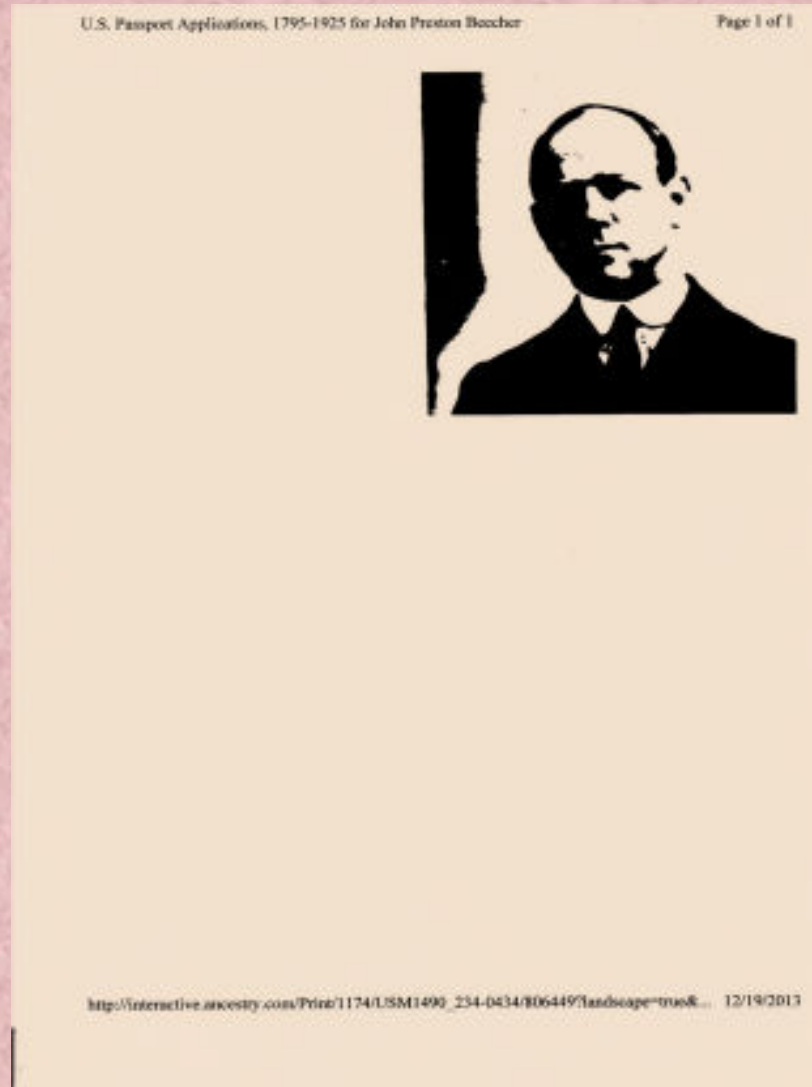
They eventually settled in Italy in a family villa.

She died there on January 28, 1908 after years of suffering from ill health and depression and was buried in an undisclosed location in Italy.

Jenny died in 1898 at the age of 41.

Count Arthur Pourtales-Georgier died in 1928

Preston Beecher enjoyed a successful career as a diplomat, journalist and historian. He died in 1939.



Part Two:

- **The Lies, Legends and Myths**

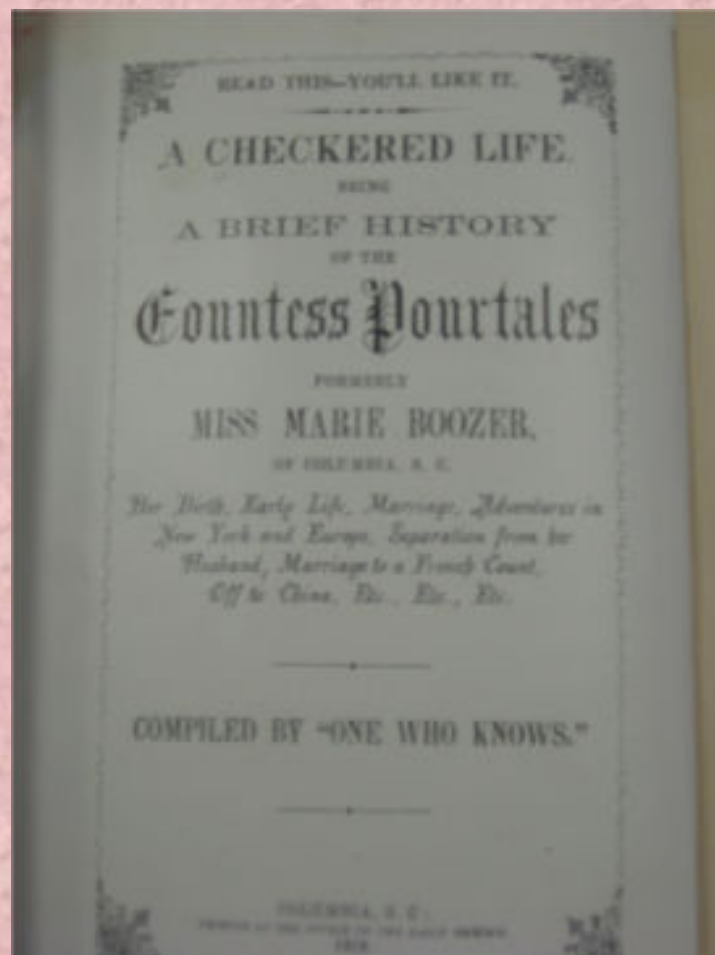
When the Legend Becomes Fact, Print
the Legend-

- The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance



FAKE NEWS

In 1878 the first biography of Marie was published.



**“One Who Knows” was Columbia journalist/author
Julian Selby.**



Selby's book is considered by some accurate up to the Civil War Years but then he claims:

- **Marie was Kidnapped by the son of Brigham Young**
- **That she was involved with a scandal involving the theft of the crown jewels of the Czar of Russia.**

He also linked her with Cora Pearl, one of the most notorious European Courtesans of her day.



Some say she was the inspiration for Sherlock Holmes' nemesis Irene Adler.

***A Checkered Life* was republished in 1915 with additional material as *The Countess Pourtales*.**



**The author, credited as “Felix Old Boy” was Yates
Snowden, Head of the
University of South Carolina’s
History Department**

**Snowden added a new preface and other new
“information.”**

**When asked why he did it, he admitted it was for
monetary gain.**

**“Colonel” David A. Dickert wrote numerous
slandorous pieces about Marie**



**His motivation:
She had spurned his affections**

In 1905 the first edition of Mary Chesnut's *A Diary From Dixie* was published.



No references to Amelia or Marie were made in this edition

- **The re-edited 1949 edition referred to them only as “Boozer” and “Mrs. F.”**
- **The 1981 edition, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War* used their full names.**

Over the next several decades various legends and myths about Marie have been presented as “facts” in various books about Sherman in SC, among them the *WPA Guide to SC*.

**Many accounts wrongly link Marie with
Maj. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick**



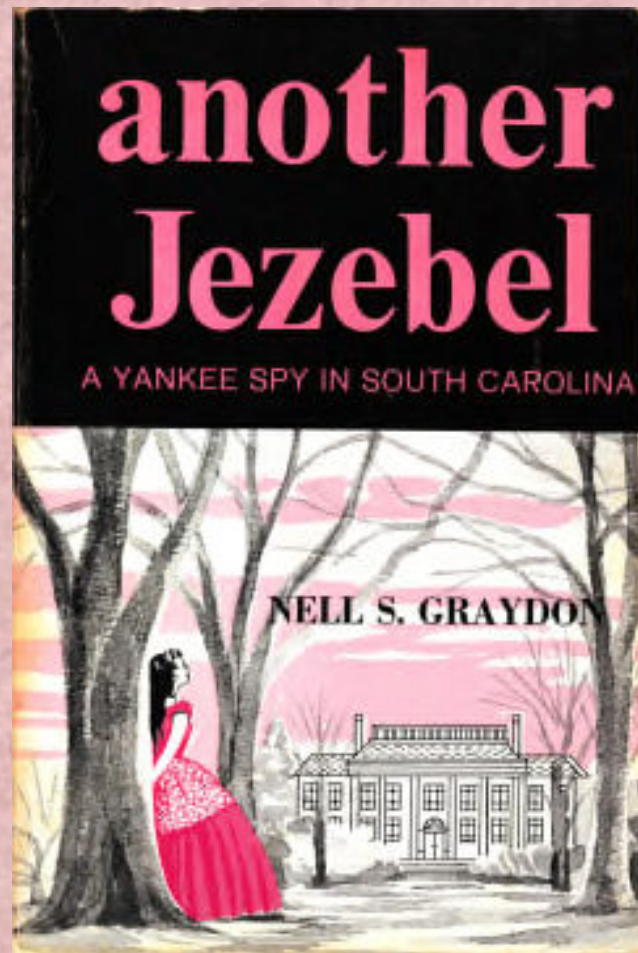
**Sherman's Chief of Cavalry
And one of the worse (or best) womanizers in the
whole Union army.**

**Kilpatrick is the Great-Great-Grandfather of CNN's
Anderson Cooper**

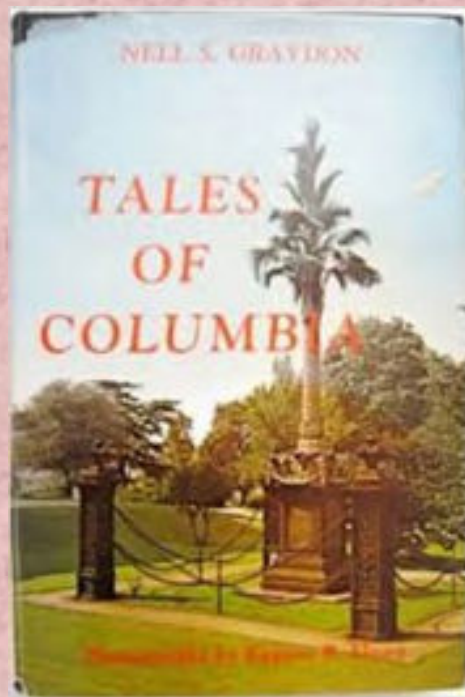


Cooper is not a womanizer

The first novel of Marie's life came out in 1958



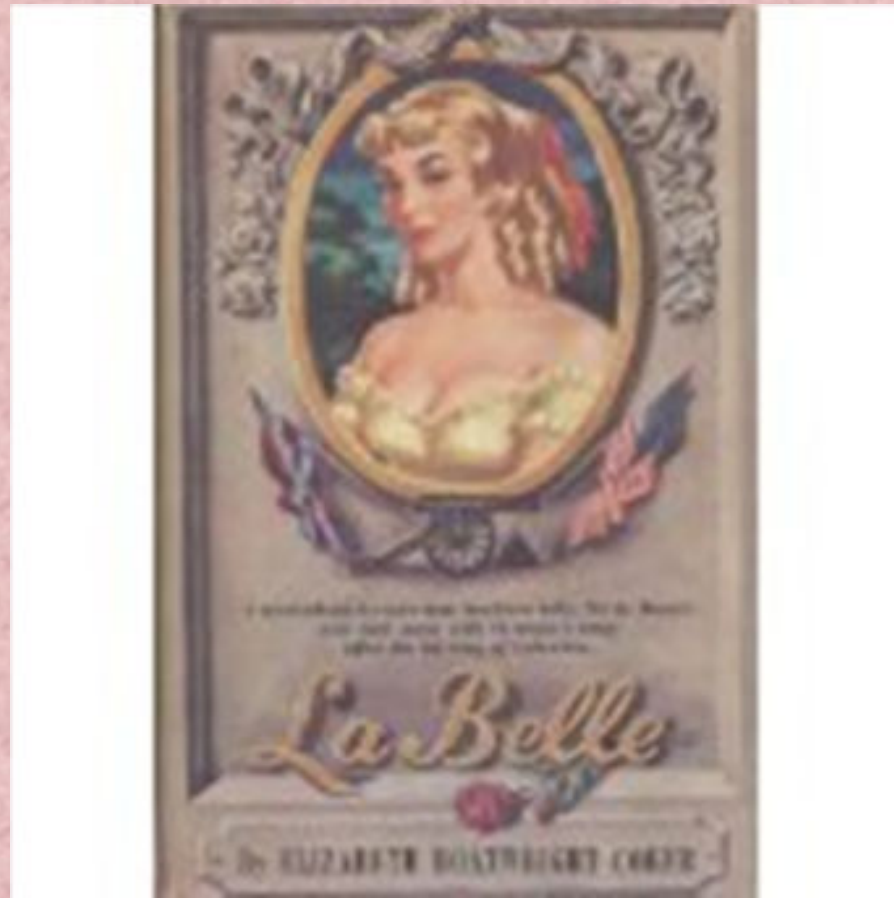
**Graydon added some more true facts in her 1964
book about Columbia's history**



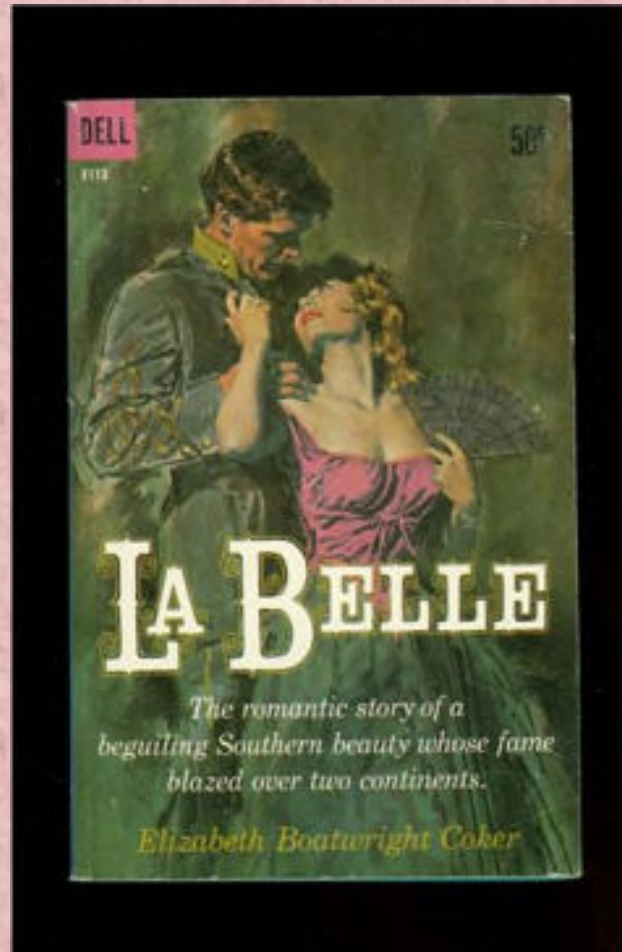
Elizabeth Boatwright Coker



The original 1959 edition of *La Belle* was a critical and commercial success.



The cover of the 1960 Dell Paperback edition showed a scene that is not in the book.



The cover of the 1976 edition shows a very modern looking woman.



The cover of the 1978 edition of *La Belle* came the closest of all of the to capturing the spirit of the novel.



Coker had planned on writing a fact based book in on Marie in 1974 called *Sandal or Scandal* but it never got past the treatment stage.

She did write a fact based article in 1976 for *Sandlapper Magazine* that reputed some of the things she wrote in *La Belle*.

Both Graydon's and Coker's novels upset Elizabeth Battle, a niece of Marie who was living in Florida.

Hopefully now the rumors can be put to rest

