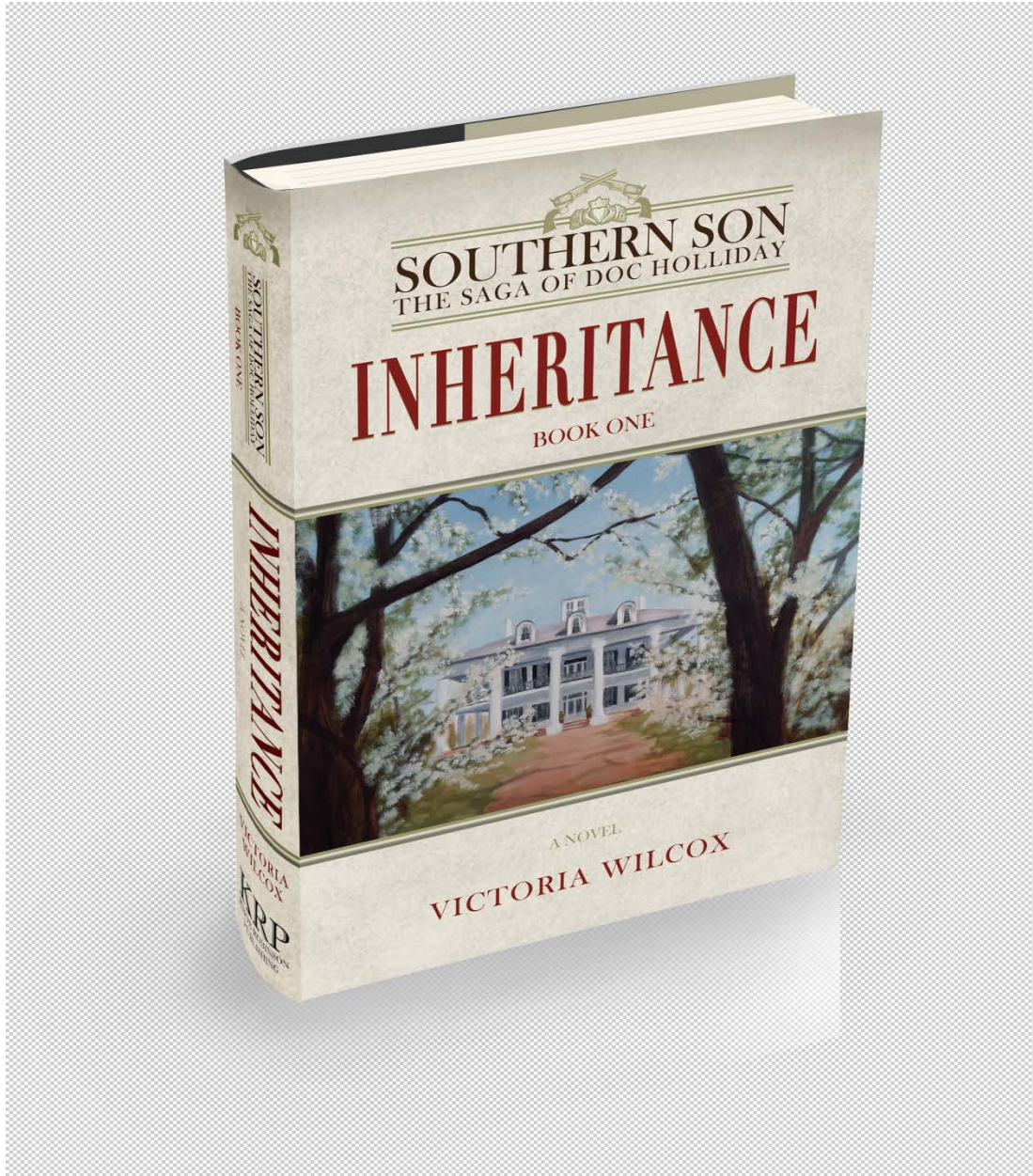


INHERITANCE

Book One of Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday

Victoria Wilcox

2 May 2013



PRESS PACK

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

The Victoria Wilcox Story

Victoria Wilcox was born in California to a pioneer Hollywood film industry family and grew up loving dramatic stories of all kinds, especially those with a sense of history. As a young woman she developed a passion for the stories of royal families found in English historical fiction, and felt certain she was descended from King Arthur himself and destined to discover the historic Camelot. So she began her college career as a Medieval English History major – admittedly a narrow field in American academia – before receiving a degree in English Literature and doing graduate work in Playwriting. In her professional life she has been a teacher of English and composition on the college level and worked as a technical writer and instructional designer for industry and universities.

A move to Atlanta, Georgia inspired a love of all things Southern and introduced her to a project that would fill the next few years of her life: the white-columned Greek Revival home built by the uncle of the legendary Doc Holliday in the last days before the Civil War. Although the Holliday House was one of Georgia's only remaining unrestored antebellum homes it was slated to be torn down and replaced by a parking lot, so Wilcox founded a non-profit organization to save it and turn it into a museum site. It was while researching the history of the house and its former owners that she discovered the untold story that led to *Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday*.

Victoria Wilcox is a member of the Western Writers of America, with her writing on the history of the Old South and the Wild West featured in such publications as *TrueWest Magazine*, *North Georgia Journal*, and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. As Founding Director of the Holliday-Dorsey-Fife House Museum she has lectured extensively and been a guest on various television programs. Drawing on her lifelong love of music and theater, she has written songs for Nashville recording artists and authored the musical *Goin' to Zion!* along with numerous smaller theatrical works. To celebrate the upcoming release of the first book of *Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday*, she begins a national speaking tour this fall with a return to Tombstone, Arizona, site of Doc Holliday's legendary gunfight at the OK Corral.

AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Doc Holliday, Margaret Mitchell, and Me

by Victoria Wilcox

“Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday is a family story that sweeps from the Old South to the Wild West – territory I know well. My own family heritage includes Civil War soldiers and a Confederate general, ancestors who crossed the Great Plains in covered wagons, and an actress who starred in early Hollywood Westerns.

“But it was a move from California to Atlanta, Georgia, that inspired my love of all things Southern and introduced me to the white-columned house built by the uncle of the legendary Doc Holliday in the last days before the Civil War. Although the Holliday House was one of Georgia’s only remaining unrestored antebellum homes it was slated to be torn down and replaced by a parking lot, so I organized a community group to save the house and founded a non-profit organization to turn it into a museum site. It’s now the Holliday-Dorsey-Fife House Museum, the centerpiece of a beautiful historic district.

“It was while researching the house and its former owners that I uncovered a story almost too good to be true: the infamous Doc Holliday was kin to *Gone with the Wind* author Margaret Mitchell who modeled her saintly Melanie on Doc’s real-life sweetheart, his cousin Mattie Holliday. As a writer, I couldn’t resist retelling such an amazing melding of literature and legend. But what began as a Southern love story soon became something larger, as I discovered what Mattie Holliday meant when she reminisced that Doc was ‘*a much different man than the one of western legend.*’ Most of the books written about him were wrong; much of the truth had been hidden for generations by a family ashamed of their prodigal son. The real Doc Holliday was more mystery than history.

“Thus began eighteen years of original research and writing to find the life behind the legend, as I followed Holliday’s trail from Georgia to Texas, from the cowboy capital of Dodge City to the silver boomtown of Tombstone, from Leadville at the top of the Rocky Mountains to New Orleans on the Mississippi River. Along the way I interviewed family members, had access to private files and photographs, searched deeds and wills and legal records that had been long misplaced, reenacted shootings and stage robberies and court trials, traveled by steam engine over the rocky mountains and explored ghost towns, silver mines and sulfur caves, all to understand the man that Mattie Holliday loved.

“Although I originally set out to write a traditional biography of Doc Holliday’s life, there were so many things history couldn’t prove that were likely true and seemed essential to telling his story that I chose the novel format instead. As Mattie had said, Doc wasn’t a legend, just an ordinary man in extraordinary circumstances. That’s a great start for historical fiction. But I never let the fiction overwhelm the history, being faithful to true events while exploring literary themes and finding universal truths. *Southern Son* is both a real-life family saga and a story of sin and recompense and the redeeming power of love. As best-selling author Pat Conroy told me when we were both guest speakers at the Margaret Mitchell House in Atlanta, ‘*I wish I’d thought of it!*’

“I had also originally planned to tell the story in one long novel, something like a companion to *Gone with the Wind* as the two works shared some major characters – mine the real life models for the people Margaret Mitchell invented. But Doc’s life story spread so far beyond his Southern roots and had such a defined early, middle, and late period that a trilogy seemed a better fit. Now *Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday* is complete in three novels. The story begins with *Inheritance*, as young John Henry Holliday grows up in Georgia during the turbulent times of Civil War and Reconstruction, and continues in *Gone West* and *The Last Decision*. Together, they are an epic tale of the Old South and the Wild West told on a very personal level, true history dramatized and a good story as well.

“There was another intriguing fact that my research turned up, and that gave me a surprisingly personnel connection to the story: Doc Holliday died on November 8th, and Margaret Mitchell and I were both born on November 8th. Now I’m working on novel about a real-life Caribbean pirate and have discovered that his crew was hung for piracy on November 8th. If I were writing my own story, I’d have to do something with such an interesting coincidence!”

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

When writer Victoria Wilcox set out to save a Georgia landmark and bring history back to life, she didn't know that her own life would be forever changed. But something about the plantation style white-columned house on a sleepy town square spoke to her.

"I didn't even know it was historic," she says of her introduction to what turned out to be the home of the uncle of the legendary Doc Holliday. "But I knew from first glance that I would have something to do with it."

The 1851 Holliday House was one of a handful of unrestored antebellum homes remaining in Georgia, but was being considered for demolition to make way for a parking lot when Wilcox formed a community action group, and later a non-profit corporation, to save it. Her only goal was to turn the Greek Revival beauty into a museum of local history -- until she discovered a bit of history she had never heard before.

"Doc Holliday was kin to Margaret Mitchell, author of *Gone with the Wind*, who modeled her heroine Melanie on Doc's cousin and first love, Mattie Holliday. It was an amazing meeting of history, legend, and literature. I knew I had to tell the story, one way or another. I started out to write a traditional biography, but decided that a tale that sweeps from the Old South to the Wild West was better suited to historical fiction."

The story is now complete in a trilogy of historical novels entitled *Southern Son: The Saga of Doc Holliday*. The first book is *Inheritance*, coming May of 2013 from Knox Robinson Publishing, London.

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