

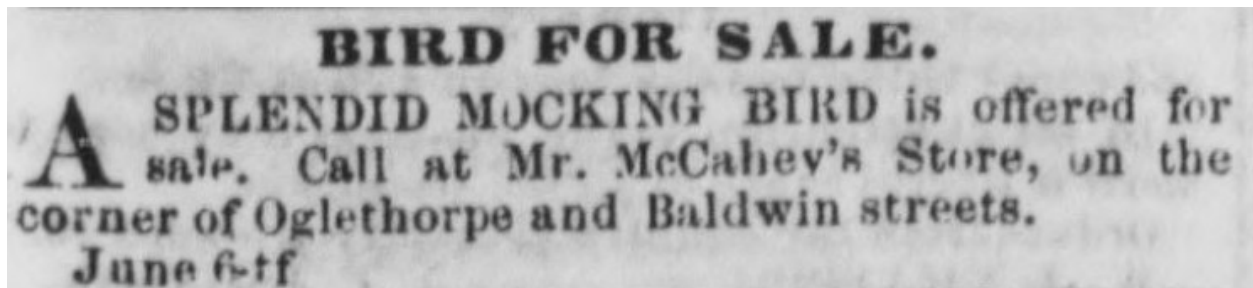
Today in Columbus History: On June 12, 1857, in the *Daily Sun*, Mr. McCahey was selling a bird: "a splendid mockingbird." Not a canary – not a parakeet – but a mockingbird! As it turns out mockingbirds were popular house pets in early America. Households both rich and poor kept songbirds to cheer up their homes. Boys trapped them in the wild, and merchants sold them in city markets. Did you know that Thomas Jefferson had mockingbirds as pets? His favorite was one named "Dick," who would serenade him, take food from his lips and follow him, hopping up the stairs, when he went to take a nap. By the way: Mr. McCahey was Michael McCahey, an Irish grocer, who lived in Columbus from the 1850s till his death in 1886. He was a member of the Catholic Church and is buried in Linwood Cemetery. Wonder who bought the bird? Maybe your g-g-g-grandmother? I've never thought about the pets our ancestors might have had...

Compiled by Callie McGinnis, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Our snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu>



BIRD FOR SALE.
A SPLENDID MOCKING BIRD is offered for
sale. Call at Mr. McCahey's Store, on the
corner of Oglethorpe and Baldwin streets.
June 6-1f

Native songbirds

The melodious songs and gentle chirps of many native songbirds made them extremely popular pets. Native wildlife most commonly kept in homes were the American goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*), often called “yellow bird” in early America, the Northern cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) or “red bird,” and the Northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*).^{5,6} Philip Hone, a New York City mayor in the early 1800s, described the mockingbird as “the great leader of the feathered orchestra,”⁸ and, in a letter to his daughter, Martha, Thomas Jefferson wrote “I sincerely congratulate you on the arrival of the mockingbird. Learn all the children to venerate it as a superior being in the form of a bird.”⁹

Chistal G. Pollock, “Companion Birds in Early America,” *Journal of Avian Medicine and Surgery*

Vol. 27, No. 2 (JUNE 2013), pp. 148-151 (4 pages)

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24623519?seq=1...>

READ FOR FREE ONLINE.



Jefferson and Dick. From the UVA Alumni Magazine.