

Today in Columbus History: Exactly one hundred years ago, on August 5, 1920, the *Post-Search Light* (Bainbridge, GA) carried a short article about a Columbus scandal: the arrest and trial of Helen Augusta Howard, who had shot an 8-year-old boy the previous summer and almost killed him. Augusta Howard is an interesting Columbus person that everyone should know about. The daughter of Augustus and Ann Jane Lindsay Howard, Augusta was born in Columbus in 1865. The Howards were a very prominent Columbus family: Augusta's grandfather John H. Howard had been an early textile businessman. Thanks to him and his partner Josephus Echols, Georgia was awarded riparian rights to the Chattahoochee River – all the way up to the high watermark on the Alabama side. Augusta's uncle was Seaborn Jones, builder of St. Elmo, and one of her cousins was the author Augusta Jane Evans! Augusta Howard's major achievement was the founding the Georgia Woman Suffrage Association in 1890. However, over the years, things did not go well for Augusta; she later became a bit of a hermit. One day in 1919, some young boys were climbing a tree outside her window – taunting her, no doubt. She shot and wounded one of them! Augusta was tried and convicted, but almost immediately pardoned – due to her "mental state." Her family sent her to NYC, where she died in 1934. She is buried in Linwood – with the word "MARTYRED" on her tombstone.

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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>

Columbus Woman To Be Put on Trial For Shooting Boy

Columbus, Ga., Aug. 4.—Miss Augusta Howard, charged with shooting 8-year-old Willie Lee in her yard here last spring and seriously injuring him will be tried in the Superior Court Thursday, it is announced by Solicitor General Frang McLaughlin.

Miss Evans has an old and large estate on the outskirts of the city, and Willie Lee was in one of her magnolia trees plucking magnolias when he was shot twice. For a number of weeks the child's life hung by a thread, but finally recovered. Miss Howard was released on a \$2,000 bond.

Miss Howard is a member of one of the oldest and most aristocratic families of Columbus.

Note mistake in 2nd paragraph: "Miss Evans." Reporter was getting Augusta Howard confused with her famous cousin, the author Augusta Jane Evans...



Portrait from [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) Howard Family Tree. For a good intro to Augusta Howard, read Virginia Causey's newspaper article from 2015: <https://www.ledger-enquirer.com/.../article29462377.html>



From [Findagrave.com](https://www.findagrave.com).



"This dress was worn by Augusta Howard in 1895 at a meeting of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Atlanta. This style of dress is known as a tea gown, which became popular in the mid-19th century for informal entertaining at home. Characterized by light fabrics and unstructured lines, it was meant to be worn without a corset. This type of dress was not acceptable to wear in public, but it was appropriate for midday activities and dinner with close family and friends. The pleats in the back are known as Watteau pleats, named for their frequent appearance in the paintings of Antoine Watteau. Originally an 18th-century fashion, Watteau pleats became popular again in the mid-to-late 19th century as a decorative element." -- Columbus Museum. Note: I have seen this dress in person; the waist is a lot narrower than it appears in this picture.