



Smithsonian Institution

Archives of American Art

Biographical Accounts on Alma Thomas, circa 1950s-circa 1970s

Extracted on Mar-18-2024 09:54:54

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Archives of American Art as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Archives of American Art website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Archives of American Art or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the Archives of American Art. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

^[[margin]] [[circled]] 1 [[/circled]] [[/margin]]

I was born in Columbus, Georgia some seventy years ago. I have lovely memories of a Tudor type of house, which my father built, situated in a section of the city called Rose Hill. It was rightly named for it was on a hill. Still fresh in my memory are the beautiful flower gardens that we had. There were two unusual circular flower beds, now deeply preserved in my subconscious, which find expression in my paintings.

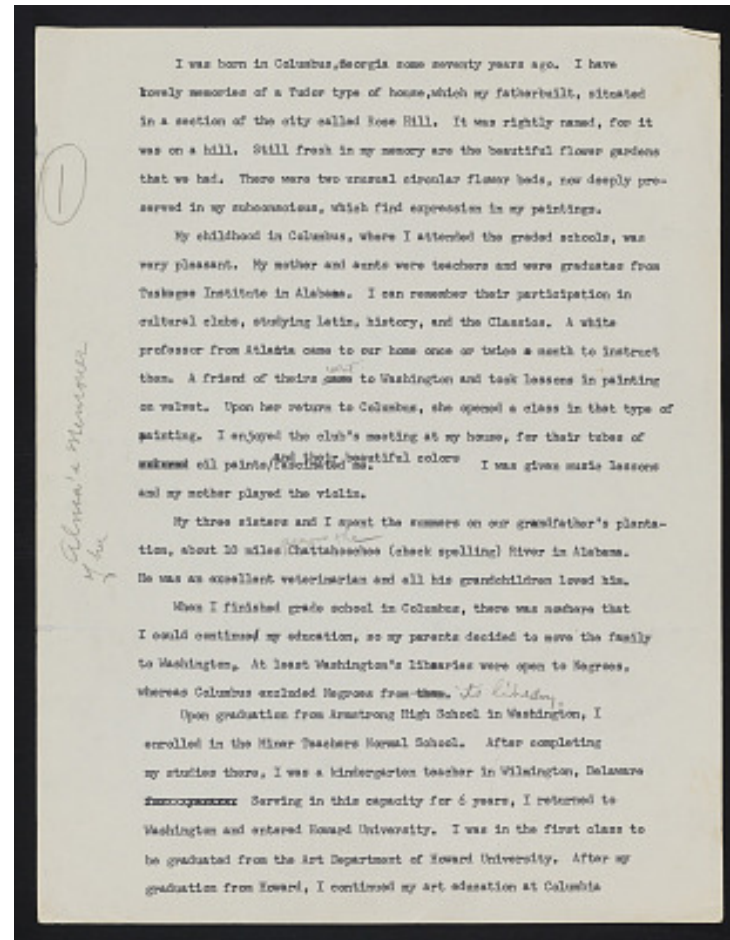
My childhood in Columbus, where I attended the graded schools, was very pleasant. My mother and aunts were teachers and were graduates of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. I can remember their participation in cultural clubs, studying Latin, history, and the Classics. A white professor from Atlanta came to our home once or twice a month to instruct them. A friend of theirs ^{and} ~~came~~ to Washington and took lessons in painting on velvet. Upon her return to Columbus, she opened a class in that type of painting. I enjoyed the club's meeting at my house, for their tubes of ~~colored~~ ^{and their beautiful colors} oil paints ^{fascinated me}. I was given music lessons and my mother played the violin.

^[[margin]] Alma's memories of her [[/margin]]

My three sisters and I spent the summers on our grandfather's plantation, about 10 miles ^{across the} Chattahoochee (check spelling) River in Alabama. He was an excellent veterinarian and all his grandchildren loved him.

When I finished grade school in Columbus, there was nowhere that I could continue ~~my education~~ ^{my education}, so my parents decided to move the family to Washington. At least Washington's libraries were open to Negroes, whereas Columbus excluded Negroes from ~~them~~ ^{the library}.

Upon graduation from Armstrong High School in Washington, I enrolled in the Miner Teachers Normal School. After completing my studies there, I was a kindergarten teacher in Wilmington, Delaware ~~for years~~ ^{Serving in this capacity for 6 years}. I returned to Washington and entered Howard University. I was in the first class to be graduated from the Art Department of Howard University. After my graduation from Howard, I continued my art education at Columbia



Biographical Accounts on Alma Thomas, circa 1950s-circa 1970s
Transcribed and Reviewed by Digital Volunteers
Extracted Mar-18-2024 09:54:54



Smithsonian Institution

Archives of American Art

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)