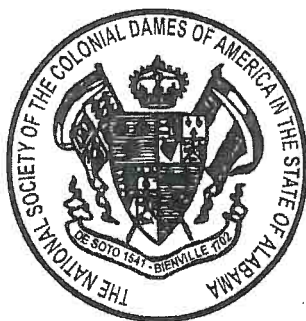


Our Founding Mothers



A Project of Historical Activities
NSCDA in the State of Alabama
2011

Our Founding Mothers

A PROJECT OF THE HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE 2009-2011

On March 13, 1899, the Certificate of Incorporation for the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Alabama was signed. Today it hangs on the wall of the Conde-Charlotte House in Mobile. By then, a group of 17 ladies, initiated by one Hortense Addison Batré, had come together to start a society that now numbers over 700 in the state. Mrs. Batré had been asked by Mrs. Howard Tounshend of New York to organize the Alabama society when the original states of the Colonial Dames Society decided to expand into a national society.

In 1948, during her address from *The 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the NSCDA in the State of Alabama*, Adele Marie Batré, daughter of Hortense Batré, said: "Having been a member of the Maryland society, my mother hesitated to accept the task of organizing the Alabama society because she was not from Alabama and because Mobile was so far from the other cities of the state. But she accepted the task, and her intimate friends, Mrs. Marion Wilmer Jones and Mrs. Benjamin Rhett, and later many others in Mobile, became her valuable assistants. She began receiving encouraging letters from ladies in other Alabama cities who were all ready for membership with the necessary proofs of descent, and general interest was aroused."

Over the past two years, the Historical Activities Committee has been working with Dames around the state, as well as with other contacts, to research the backgrounds of the first 17 ladies in order to share that information with all Alabama Dames. Among those who helped gather information are Elizabeth Gaines Crosby of Atlanta and John N. Furniss of Belville, North Carolina, both descendants of charter members; B. M. Miller Childers of Selma and Palmer Clarkson Hamilton of Mobile, who gave their time and talents to the project; and these Alabama Dames: Camille Maxwell Elebash, Curtis Parker Flowers, Bunny Soule Gamble, Amy St. John Hamilton, Grace Gould Hobbs, Carolyn Stephenson Jeffers, Carolyn Green Satterfield, Emily Amason Sparrow, Eleanor Gage Streit, Emmie King Stroh, and Julia Kenan Willcox.

From the information gathered, brief biographies of these early Dames have been compiled and are featured on the following pages. The backgrounds of some of the ladies were more easily found than others. Full versions of these biographies with sources are “housed” with the chairs of the five Centers and three Town Committees around the state.

These 17 founding mothers covered the state: six from Mobile, five from Selma, two from Tuscaloosa, two from Birmingham, and one each from Auburn and Demopolis. More than one Dame championed women’s rights in education. Some were schooled at home while others received more formal educations. Some had professions: an artist, a pioneer in parliamentary procedure, a newspaperwoman, and a couple of writers. Most were mothers; one remained unmarried. Their husbands’ professions varied. Four ladies married cotton brokers; three chose physicians, one of whom began a mental hospital which used groundbreaking humane treatment of individuals with mental illnesses; two selected attorneys, one of which became a Supreme Court justice; a few wed planters; and the others married a college professor who rose to a university presidency, a banker, an Episcopal clergyman, a music publisher, and a Confederate hero.

We share with these ladies the common bond of Colonial ancestry. As Emily Amason Sparrow opined, “They were passionate and enthusiastic about preservation and educating their fellow citizens and themselves about our country’s history.”

We think today’s Dames are equally as passionate and enthusiastic about education and the preservation of our country’s history for future generations.

Julia Kenan Willcox
Historical Activities Chair
July 2011

1. **Hortense Addison Batré (Mrs. Alfred A. Batré)** (1834-1932), Mobile. Admitted February 10, 1897. Ancestor: Colonel John Addison (1638-1706), Privy Councillor and a Colonel in the wars of 1640. Ancestral State: Maryland.



Hortense Addison Batré was born in Louisville, Kentucky, on September 12, 1834, to Lloyd Dulany Addison and Anne Maria Sands. Her grandfather was a prominent Episcopal priest, Walter Dulany Addison, who officiated at the funeral of President George Washington.

As a child, Hortense moved with her parents to New Orleans where her father was engaged in the cotton business. She was a pupil of Madame Des Rayonx's school in New Orleans, and later finished her education at the famous old French school of Madam Canda's in Lafayette Square, New York City.

Hortense married Alfred Batré (1822-1871) in February 1854 in New Orleans. Alfred was the son of Adolphe Batré, a successful Mobile businessman and former mayor of Mobile (1830). They had two children, Lloyd Dulany and Adele Marie.

Alfred purchased one of Mobile's historic landmarks, Georgia Cottage on Springhill Avenue, as a home for his young bride. They resided in the cottage for several years prior to its purchase in 1857 by the noted Southern author Augusta Jane Evans. Augusta bought the home for her father, Matthew R. Evans, using the proceeds from her first book, *Inez, A Tale of the Alamo*.

Early in the Civil War, Alfred Batré and two other men were captured on a yacht off Pensacola and held by the Union Navy. They were apparently believed to be either spies or blockade runners. Once the war ended, Alfred began rebuilding his fortunes in cotton factoring. He died at the age of 49 in 1871, making Hortense a widow at the age of 39.

In 1898, when she was 64, Hortense helped found the Colonial Dames in Alabama. She served as its president until she was 80. Hortense died in 1932 at age 98 in her residence in Mobile at 110 S. Franklin Street.

2. **Mary Jane Welles Peabody (Mrs. Douglas Cairns Peabody)** (1851-1932), Mobile. Admitted: March 8, 1897. Ancestor: Thomas Welles (1598-1660), Governor of the Connecticut Colony (1665-1668). Ancestral State: Connecticut

Mary Jane Welles Peabody was born in Glastonbury, Connecticut, on April 16, 1851, to Thaddeus Welles (a prominent lawyer, town clerk, and politician; born 1806) and Emily Maria Kellogg (born 1813). Her great-great-great-great grandfather was Thomas Welles, the only man in Connecticut's history to hold all four top offices: Governor of the Colony (1665-1668), Deputy Governor (1654, 1656, 1657, 1659), Treasurer (1639, 1641, 1648-1651), and Secretary (1641, 1643-1647).

Mary Jane's uncle was Gideon Welles. He served in numerous governmental capacities, but the one he is most remembered for was serving as Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, 1861-1869. Gideon was also a contributing columnist for several newspapers for over 40 years. In 1827, he was the editor of *The Hartford Times*. In 1915, Mary Jane donated Gideon's collection of newspapers dating from 1807 to 1839 to the Connecticut State Library.

Mary Jane was the first Corresponding Secretary of the NSCDA of Alabama. She later transferred her membership to Connecticut. She married Rev. Douglas Cairns Peabody (born 1848) on June 23, 1880, in St. James Church in Glastonbury, Connecticut. He was a graduate of The University of Georgia and Berkeley Divinity School. Rev. Peabody was a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church and served in various churches in Glastonbury, Connecticut; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Mobile, Alabama. The Peabodys had two children, Emily Maria Welles Peabody (born 1881) and Douglas Welles Peabody (born 1882). Douglas was largely responsible for the introduction of the individual motor drive in the cotton mills of the U.S.

Rev. Peabody died in 1902. His funeral was held at St. James Church in Glastonbury, Connecticut, where he had served as rector 20 years earlier and where he and Mary Jane were married. Mary Jane died in 1932 and was buried next to her husband in St. James Cemetery in Glastonbury, Connecticut.

3. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Mathews Dawson Furniss (Mrs. John Perkins Furniss) (1853-1902), Selma. Admitted: May 15, 1897. Ancestor: Nathaniel Johnson (1644-1713), Proprietary Governor of the Carolinas from 1703-1709. Ancestral State: South Carolina.



Elizabeth "Lizzie" Mathews Dawson Furniss was born January 7, 1853, at Evergreen Grove plantation near the town of Cahaba in Dallas County, Alabama. She was the daughter of Nathaniel Henry Rhodes Dawson (a lawyer then in practice at Cahaba; born 1829) and his first wife, Anne Eliza Mathews (born 1833), who died in October 1854 at age 21.

Nathaniel Dawson was a great-great-great-great-grandson of Nathaniel Johnson, Proprietary Governor of the Carolinas from 1703-1709. Born in Charleston, Nathaniel Dawson studied law in Mobile before coming to Dallas County in the late 1840s. It is frequently cited as a point of interest that Dawson's third wife, Elodie Todd Dawson, was a half-sister of Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of Abraham Lincoln.

Lizzie was raised primarily by her grandparents, Joel Early Mathews and Elizabeth Wood Poage Mathews, at their plantation called Evergreen Grove, which extended along the west bluff of the Alabama River from the south town limits of Cahaba. Joel was a planter of some wealth who had been educated at The University of Virginia. He had an extensive library and made certain his granddaughter was well versed in the classics.

Joel died in 1874, leaving plantation property to Lizzie. Several years later, she was also awarded possession of the Mathews home plantation at Cahaba after the death of her uncle, Joel E. Mathews, Jr. In 1869, following the death of his wife, Elizabeth Poage Mathews, Joel E. Mathews had purchased the house and lot in Selma, between Lauderdale and Broad Streets and what is now Furniss Avenue. He had business interests in Selma, but there is also a family tradition that he felt his granddaughter would have more social life in the town than in the rural environment of the plantation home. They relocated permanently to this residence the next year, and Elizabeth Dawson lived there the rest of her life.

Lizzie married physician John Perkins Furniss (1841-1909) on December 21, 1876, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Selma, Alabama.

They had five children, three of whom died in infancy. The two surviving sons both studied medicine at The University of Virginia and, following in their father's footsteps, became outstanding physicians. The older son, Dr. Henry Dawson Furniss (1878-1942), was a noted gynecologist in New York City. The other son, Dr. John Neilson Furniss (1879-1928), had a distinguished medical career in Selma. In addition to running a medical practice, he served as chief of staff of the Union Street Hospital and later of the Baptist Hospital – a position he held until his death.

Lizzie died January 24, 1902, at age 49. A death notice characterized her as “one of those women whose loss to a community cannot be measured or told with words.” Her presumed civic activities are not mentioned specifically in any of the obituaries appearing in Selma, Montgomery, and Atlanta newspapers at the time. However, she appears to have been active in St. Paul's Church in Selma, and the Montgomery notice refers to “her good works.” The article also says “she had a strong intellect, an easy flow of language and was well informed on all of the topics of the day.” Of course, in 1897 she became one of the founding members of the Colonial Dames in Alabama.

4. **Annie Rebecca White Mell (Mrs. Patrick Hues Mell, Jr.)** (1849-1920), Auburn. Admitted: May 15, 1897. Ancestor: Thomas Benedict (circa 1617-1690), Commissioner in the Town of New Haven, Connecticut, and Deputy of the General Court of Connecticut. Ancestral State: Connecticut.



Annie Rebecca White Mell was born August 28, 1849, in Athens, Georgia. Her parents were William Nathaniel White (born 1819) and Rebecca North Benedict (born 1820). She was one of nine children. Her father was a well-known horticulturist who became a successful writer and bookseller. He edited an agricultural paper, “The Southern Cultivator,” which was the only such publication to survive the Civil War years.

Annie was admitted to the National Society of Colonial Dames in Georgia on May 15, 1897. She later transferred her membership to Alabama, and in 1902, she transferred her membership to South Carolina.

Annie married Dr. Patrick Hues Mell, Jr., on June 15, 1875. Patrick was a professor of geology and botany and director of the Weather Service at the Agricultural and Mechanical College in Auburn, Alabama (which became Alabama Polytechnic Institute in 1899 and Auburn University in 1960). Annie and Patrick shared an interest in family history, and they co-authored *The Genealogy of the Mell Family in the Southern States*.

Annie also wrote numerous articles including "Co-Education in Alabama," which she presented at the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs held in Selma, Alabama, May 4-6, 1898. In this article, she wrote about the South's "tenacious conservatism" which fostered a concern that "culture of the intellect would interfere with the domestic and social duties of a woman." She argued to the contrary that "intellectual training fits a girl as successfully as a boy" and "co-education makes a girl calm, cool, sensible, and independent." Annie also wrote "Obstacles to DAR: Work in the South," which was published in the DAR's national magazine, *The American Monthly*, in July 1897. And she authored a book entitled *Revolutionary Soldiers Buried in Alabama*, which includes the location of each Revolutionary soldier's place of burial, as well as a brief biographical sketch of each soldier.

During her time in Auburn, Annie was a leader in many groups including the Ladies Auxiliary of the YMCA, Auburn Woman's Club, Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. She also was the founding regent of Auburn's Light Horse Harry Lee Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In addition, Annie served as the State Historian of the DAR.

The Mells moved from Auburn in 1902 when Patrick became president of Clemson Agricultural College in Clemson, South Carolina. Upon their departure, it was written, "Dr. and Mrs. Mell, being cultivated and accomplished and kind and generous besides, have been amongst the most important factors in social and religious life and educational and patriotic work in Auburn and indeed in the state. They will be sadly missed."

Patrick resigned as president of Clemson on January 1, 1910, and the couple moved to Atlanta where, until the time of his death in 1918, he served as treasurer of the Board of Missions of the Southern Baptist Convention. After Patrick's death, Annie settled back in her hometown of Athens, Georgia, but she often traveled to Auburn to visit her many friends. On a visit in 1920, as she was talking to the Auburn Woman's Club on October 13, 1920, she suddenly became ill and died. The Mells are both buried in Athens, Georgia.

5. **Marion Wilmer Jones (Mrs. Harvey Ellis Jones)** (1852-1916), Mobile. Admitted: May 27, 1897. Ancestor: Colonel William Cabell, Member of the House of Burgesses (1757-1775). Ancestral State: Virginia.

Marion Wilmer Jones was born in Berryville, Virginia, in 1852. She was the daughter of Rt. Rev. Richard Hooker Wilmer, who was one of Alabama's most revered Episcopal bishops, and Margaret Brown Wilmer. Rev. Wilmer was the godson of Nellie Custis, granddaughter of Martha Washington.

Known as "Miss Ginnie," Marion was active in numerous organizations. She was a charter member of the Mobile Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and she also was the driving force in the placement of a historic monument at Fort Toulouse in Elmore County.

Marion was an active member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the YWCA, and, of course, the Colonial Dames, of which she was a charter member in Alabama. She was the first vice president of the Alabama Colonial Dames when the group was formed in 1898.

Marion married General Harvey Ellis Jones, a Confederate hero, in Spring Hill in 1869. They resided in the family's home in Spring Hill until 1908, when the couple moved to Montgomery. The couple had two children, Mrs. Harvey E. Jones, Jr., and Mrs. James Maury.

After a brief illness, Marion died in Montgomery in 1916 at age 64. She is buried in Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile.

6. **Mary Pringle Rhett (Mrs. Benjamin Rhett)** (1853-1927), Mobile. Admitted: June 10, 1897. Ancestor: Robert Pringle, Colonial Judge (1760-1769). Ancestral State: South Carolina.

Mary Pringle Rhett was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1853. She was the daughter of William Alston Pringle and Emma Pringle Smith. The Pringle family owned the Miles Brewton House in Charleston for many years. Descendants of the Pringle family still reside in that famous Charleston landmark.

Mary was a descendant of Robert Pringle, Colonial Judge (1760-1769). Robert was a very successful merchant in Charleston, engaged in the trade of tobacco, rum, brandy, wine, sugar and cloth. Later in life, he was a moving force in the construction of St. Michael's Church in Charleston.

Mary was the wife of Benjamin Rhett of South Carolina. The couple moved to Mobile in the late 1890s, where Benjamin was a prominent cotton buyer and served as president of the Mobile Cotton Exchange. The couple resided on Dauphin Street. Benjamin died in 1915, and Mrs. Rhett continued to live in the family residence until she died in 1927 at age 74. She is buried in Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile.

7. **Mary Rosaline "Minnie" Kent Fowlkes (Mrs. Edward Taylor Fowlkes)** (1856-1944), Selma. Admitted: June 1897. Ancestor: Major Alexander Lillington, Deputy Governor of North Carolina (1693-1705). Ancestral State: North Carolina.

Mary Rosaline (Minnie) Kent was born March 1, 1856, in Linden, Alabama. She was the daughter of Dr. James Kent and Mary Grey Alston, and she moved with her family to Selma around 1857. She was educated at Augusta Female Seminary (now Mary Baldwin College) in Staunton, Virginia. On September 8, 1875, in Blount Springs, Alabama, Minnie married Edward Taylor Fowlkes, a cotton broker and commercial merchant in the firm of E. T. Fowlkes and W. T. Brooks.

Minnie and Edward lived at 402 Union Street where she taught art in a building behind her home. Using her background as an artist, Minnie designed the seal for the NCDSA of Alabama that bears the shield and quartered arms of England and France.

One of her art students was Crawford Gillis, a well-known Selma artist who mentioned in his biography that he studied under Minnie prior to going to New York to study at the National Academy of Design. It is also known that Minnie secured a patent on a type of artist's easel.

Minnie and Edward had two children: Grace Byrd Fowlkes was born in 1876 and lived only five days, and Ethel Edward Fowlkes was born Nov. 2, 1880. Ethel married Henry J. Toner and lived on Abbott Avenue across the street from her cousin, Edna Fowlkes Clay. Ethel died in 1958 leaving no heirs.

Minnie's husband, Edward, died on June 2, 1886, at the age of 38 after being married to Minnie for only 11 years. Minnie outlived him for another 58 years. Following her husband's death, she became active in many organizations. She joined the NSCDA in North Carolina in 1897 and was likely invited to do so by friends she had known at the Augusta Female Seminary. The following year, Minnie was asked to be one of the Charter

Members of the Colonial Dames. She was also the Treasurer (1911-1912), Vice-President (1924-1932), and Honorary Vice- President (1932-1944).

Prominent in both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Minnie was the subject of an article in the *UDC* magazine of April 1947 that told about her efforts to get the arsenal in Selma recognized as a Civil War landmark.

Minnie died on Christmas Day in 1944 at the age of 88. The funeral service was held at the home of her daughter, Ethel, on Abbot Avenue where Minnie had been living. Her obituary in the *Selma Times Journal* stated that "a large concourse of friends attended...and emphasis on the worth and beauty of the life of Mrs. Fowlkes was given in the prayer uttered by Dr. W. F. Calhoun, pastor of the Church Street Methodist Church of which Mrs. Fowlkes has been a life-long member." Minnie is buried in Live Oak Cemetery next to her husband.

8. Maria Ellen Clarkson Bryce (Mrs. Peter Bryce) (1841-1929), Tuscaloosa. Admitted: January 1, 1898. Ancestor: John Ouldfeld, Commissioner of Land and Boundaries, 1735. Ancestral State: South Carolina.

Maria Ellen Clarkson Bryce was born in Charleston, South Carolina, on May 22, 1841, to Thomas Boston Clarkson and Sarah Caroline Heriot Clarkson.

The Clarkson family had two homes – one in Charleston and one in Columbia, South Carolina – and it was in the plantation home in Columbia on November 28, 1860, that the wedding of Ellen Clarkson to Dr. Peter Bryce took place. Dr. Bryce himself was a member of a distinguished Scottish family and was a well-known psychiatrist who had been appointed superintendent of the Alabama Insane Hospital being erected in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The couple moved immediately to Tuscaloosa, where he helped supervise the building of the hospital.

When the hospital opened in 1861, Dr. Bryce put in place the latest methods of therapy fostered by the "moral treatment movement." Early intervention without the use of restraints and social support were the hallmarks of this methodology. He and Ellen moved into an apartment in



the main hospital building where they became cornerstones of Tuscaloosa society. They both became tenacious advocates for people who experience mental illness. He insisted that outdoor gardening be part of therapy for the men and that simple indoor chores be for the women. Ellen was credited with exerting a profound influence on patients through her musical programs and classes. She believed in surrounding patients with beauty and supervised the planting of trees on the spacious grounds of the hospital, which was later named for Dr. Bryce.

Ellen was a woman of untiring energy. During the Civil War, the cadets of the University of Alabama, then a military school, enjoyed her hospitality. She also was a loving caregiver to wounded Confederate soldiers who were brought to the hospital for treatment.

In addition, Ellen was a woman of patriotic spirit. Not only was she a founding mother of the NSCDA in Alabama, she also organized a Daughters of the American Revolution chapter in Alabama and was a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which she served as chaplain until her death. She was president of the Alabama Women's Christian Temperance Union and vice president of the national organization.

After her husband's death, Ellen Bryce became affectionately known as Ellen Peter Bryce, and Christ Episcopal Church in Tuscaloosa established the Ellen Peter Bryce Branch of the Women's Auxiliary. Ellen also was a charter member of the Kettledrum, which today is the oldest women's club in Alabama. Her cultural interests led her to become a leader in several literary clubs in Tuscaloosa.

Ellen had no children, but when her sister-in-law died, she took charge of three of the children belonging to her brother, Edgar L. Clarkson, and reared them to adulthood.

It was noted in her obituary in *The Tuscaloosa News* (April 9, 1929) that on her 81st birthday, Ellen was presented with a silver loving cup engraved to "Alabama's Greatest Woman." It was given to her by the 18 women's clubs in the city at a joint meeting in her garden.

9. **Elizabeth Richardson Benagh** (1862-1924), Birmingham. Admitted: January 10, 1898. Ancestor: Thomas Bouldin, Captain in the Colonial wars, 1736. Ancestral State: Virginia.

Elizabeth Richardson Benagh was born on September 23, 1862, at The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. She was the third child of Professor George William Benagh (born 1824) and Mary Williams Collier Benagh (born 1824).

Elizabeth was also a charter member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, General Sumter Chapter, in Birmingham. She was admitted to the DAR on December 2, 1897, through her ancestors James Collier and Cornelius Collier, both who served in the Revolutionary War.

Elizabeth planned a pleasure cruise to Peru, Chili, Argentina, Uruguay, Trinidad, Monique, and other countries at the age of 52. She applied for a passport, which was issued on January 15, 1915. Her passport description reads: 5'6" tall; forehead high and broad; grey eyes; straight nose; straight and normal mouth; double chin; brown hair; fair complexion; round face. The passport photo shows her wearing her Colonial Dames or DAR insignia.

While living in Birmingham, she resided at 2924 13th Avenue, North. It is believed that in addition to residing in Birmingham, Elizabeth, who never married, also lived for awhile in Nashville, Tennessee, with her brother and his family, and in Columbus, Georgia, with her sister and her family. She died in 1924 at age 62.

10. **Anne "Nannie" Randolph Tayloe Henley (Mrs. Albert Thomas Henley)** (1855-1947), Birmingham. Admitted: February 10, 1898. Ancestor: John Rolfe, Member of the Council of the Colony of Virginia, 1914. Ancestral State: Virginia.

Anne, "Nannie" Randolph Tayloe Henley was born in Hale County, Alabama, on April 28, 1855, to John William Tayloe (born 1831) and Lucy Beverly Randolph (born 1834). She was a descendant of John Rolfe, who was known, among other things, for marrying Pocahontas.

Nannie married Dr. Albert Thomas Henley, a physician, on November 27, 1872, in Hale County, Alabama. Albert entered medical school at The University of Virginia in 1867. In July 1868, he transferred to the medical

school of The University of New York, from which he graduated in March 1869.

The Henleys moved to Birmingham in 1881, where Albert built a large practice and was elected city physician. In 1883, Governor Edward O'Neal appointed him inspector of the penitentiary. Two years later when that office was abolished, he was appointed inspector of convicts. His brother, Robert Harwell Henley, was the first mayor of Birmingham.

Nannie, a pioneer resident of Birmingham, was the oldest member of the Church of the Advent. Involved in several lineage organizations, she served as the first registrar of the NSCDA of Alabama, Birmingham Center. She was also a charter member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, General Sumter Chapter in Birmingham, admitted May 2, 1895. In addition, she was a member of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Annie and Albert had one son, John Woodson Henley (born 1876). John graduated from The University of Alabama and became a special agent with New York Life Insurance Company in Birmingham.

Annie died February 17, 1947, at age 92 and is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Birmingham.

11. **Thomasene Harper Rigby Woolsey (Mrs. Minthorne Woolsey)** (1859-1947), Selma. Admitted: February 10, 1898. Ancestor: Thomas Dudley, Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1634-1650. Ancestral State: Massachusetts.

Thomasene Harper Rigby Woolsey was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, on February 12, 1859, to Thomas Rigby and Mary Jewell Rigby. She grew up in Vicksburg and was educated at home. Thomasene was a descendant of Thomas Dudley, Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony from 1634-1650. While governor, Thomas signed the charter of Harvard College and was a founder of the First Church of Boston.

In 1878, Thomasene married Minthorne Woolsey, a banker from Selma, Alabama. The couple resided in Selma and had two daughters, Mary Ella (Mrs. James W. Reed) and Thomasene (Mrs. Alden Howell, Jr.). It was while she was living in Selma that Thomasene Rigby Woolsey became a founding member of the NSCDA of Alabama.

In 1904, the Woolsey family moved to New York, where Minthorne became a banker and stockbroker. Thomasene was an active member of many organizations in New York. In addition to the NSCDA, she was a

member of DAR, Colonial Governors, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Minerva Club, Eclectic Club, and the Rubinstein Club. She also was an active supporter of women's suffrage.

On August 31, 1934, Thomasene died in Waynesville, North Carolina, where her daughters lived. She was 75 years old.

12. **Cornelia "Nellie" Fitts Gaines (Mrs. Frank Wharton Gaines)** (1854-1924), Selma. Admitted: February 15, 1898. Ancestor: John Alston, Associate Justice of the Colony of North Carolina, 1724-1739. Ancestral State: North Carolina.

Cornelia "Nellie" Fitts Gaines was born December 24, 1854, at Roseland Plantation in Faunsdale, Marengo County, Alabama. She was the seventh child of Samuel Alston Fitts (born 1815) and Sarah Elizabeth Alston.

Nellie was educated in the manner of the times at a female seminary, known as Hamner Hall, in Montgomery. The seminary was founded by Episcopal Bishop Nicolas Hamner Cobbs. In 1871, at the age of 17, Nellie received a gold pin for scholarship. The pin has descended through the family and was presented to Nellie's great granddaughter, Elizabeth Bowen Gaines Crosby, upon her graduation from Yale University in 1978, and subsequently to her great-great granddaughter, Katherine Bowen Crosby, upon her graduation from The University of Pennsylvania in 2007.

Ironically, Nellie was the only child of Samuel and Sarah Fitts to marry. On December 29, 1885, at the age of 31, she married 40-year-old Frank Wharton Gaines at Roseland. Frank, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, had served in the Engineer Corps as a mapmaker during the Civil War under C.S.A. Captain Wilbur F. Foster and had achieved the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. Following their marriage, Nellie and Frank settled in Selma and lived at 309 Lapsley Street. Nellie joined St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and in 1898 she became a founding member of the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Alabama. Frank was a partner in Gaines & Ross, a prosperous brokerage firm in Selma. Their only child, Frank Wharton Gaines, II, was born in 1887. He attended The University of the South (Sewanee) and became a civil engineer.

After her husband died in 1915, Nellie returned to live at Roseland, which still operated as a farm under the care of her younger brothers. She

died there on April 4, 1924, and was buried in Uniontown, Alabama, in the cemetery donated to the town by her family.

13. Sarah "Sadie" Elizabeth Henley Lyon Woolf (Mrs. Samuel Gholson Woolf) (1850-1913), Demopolis. Admitted: February 15, 1898. Ancestor: John Alston, Associate Justice of the Colony of North Carolina, 1724-1730. Ancestral State: North Carolina.



Sarah "Sadie" Elizabeth Henley Lyon Woolf was born in Demopolis, Marengo County, Alabama, on April 20, 1850, to John Woodson Henley (born 1811) and Evelina Thomas Harwell (born 1817). Sadie's father, who moved to Alabama with his parents from his native state of Georgia in 1816, became a lawyer and wealthy planter. He was educated at Emory College in Georgia and at Union College in New York, and he also served in the Alabama legislature in the early 1840s. When he died at the age of 42, he left his wife with substantial land and slave holdings in Hale, Sumter, and Marengo counties, as well as the responsibility for the upbringing of seven young children.

Sadie was first married in 1870 to Frank Glover Lyon (1845-1893), a planter in Hale County, Alabama. After Frank's death, Sadie married Samuel Gholson Woolf (a lawyer, probate judge, and planter from a prominent West Alabama family) on August 26, 1896. Samuel's first wife, Fanny Pickering, had died in 1891. Samuel and Fanny had three children, but Samuel and Sadie did not have children.

For most of Sadie Woolf's life, she was a member of the Methodist Church in Demopolis. She was from what was considered the "quintessential Methodist family" and remained so even during her 23 years of marriage to Frank Lyon, whose family members were equally committed congregational leaders in the Episcopal Church. After she married Judge Samuel Woolf, she became an active member of Trinity Episcopal Church. One Methodist historian wrote, "Such shifting about of 'cross-overs' makes trouble for church historians."

At Trinity, Sadie taught a children's Sunday school class, always took responsibility for training the children for the Easter Festival, served as treasurer of the building guild, and sang in the choir. There is a stained-glass window in Trinity that reads, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth, Peace Goodwill – In Loving Memory of Sarah Henley Woolf, 1850-1913, and Thyrza Woolf Woodruff, 1880-1914."

Sadie died on May 15, 1913, and is buried near her parents and near Samuel Woolf's children in Riverside Cemetery, Marengo County, Alabama.

There are no anecdotal records to tell the story of Sadie's life. However, from the public records available, it is obvious she was proud of her lineage and was extremely active in several lineage organizations. She served on the original Board of Managers of NSCDA in Alabama. Anne "Nannie" Randolph Tayloe Henley, the wife of one of Sadie's brothers, Albert Thomas Henley, was also a Founding Mother of the NSCDA of Alabama.

14. Susie Fitts Martin Mayfield (Mrs. James Jefferson Mayfield) (1876-1958), Tuscaloosa. Admitted: February 15, 1898. Ancestor: Nicholas Faulcon, Member of the House of Burgesses, 1775. Ancestral State: Virginia.

Susie Fitts Martin Mayfield was born January 16, 1876, in Memphis, Tennessee, to Gideon Frederick Martin and Sally Bell. She was also a descendant of three men who served in the Continental Army: Gideon Johnston, John Pillow, and Josiah Payne.



On June 30, 1897, in Little Rock, Arkansas, Susie married James Jefferson Mayfield of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. James was a prominent attorney in Tuscaloosa who served on the Alabama Supreme Court from 1908 until 1920. Their son, James Jefferson Mayfield, Jr., was elected in 1954 to the Alabama Supreme Court and served until his death in 1956.

During James's tenure on the state court, the Mayfields lived in Montgomery. Their daughter, Sara Mayfield, became close friends with Zelda Sayre, whose marriage to F. Scott Fitzgerald catapulted her to international fame in the Roaring Twenties. The two girls were inseparable, and Susie recounted years later the trials and tribulations of her household

in Montgomery as the mother and mentor of two tomboys. Sara later wrote *Exiles from Paradise*, a personal account of the infamous Fitzgerald marriage.

After her husband's death, Susie moved back to Tuscaloosa. There, she became widely known throughout the state for her activities in federated club work, in patriotic societies, and in the political field. She was a member of the DAR, the UDC, and the League of Women Voters. Susie also served as vice-president of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs and took an active part in a campaign to erect Tutwiler Hall at The University of Alabama, the first dormitory for women students on campus. During the administration of Gov. W. W. Brandon, she was appointed a delegate from Alabama to the International Prison Congress in London. In 1936, just 17 years after women were able to vote, Susie was elected Democratic National Committeewoman, stressing the importance of "women to go out and preach the gospel of peace on earth and good will to men."

In addition to her active public life, Susie was noted as an accomplished hostess in her beautiful antebellum home in Tuscaloosa. For a short time, she contributed a column to *The Tuscaloosa News*, featuring tips and recipes for entertaining. In an introductory story, the newspaper pointed out that in her kitchen there was an old tombstone on which she rolled out her biscuits.

In April of 1948, Susie was honored at a state NSCDA as the last surviving member of the founding group. She died in 1958.

15. **Martha "Mattie" Goodenow Snow (Mrs. Joel H. Snow)**(1839-1908), Mobile. Admitted: February 17, 1898. Ancestor: Captain Edmund Goodenow, Deputy to the General Court of Massachusetts, 1645-1680. Ancestral State: Massachusetts.

Martha "Mattie" J. Goodenow Snow was born in Massachusetts in 1839. In the 1860s, probably soon after the end of hostilities, Mattie married widower Joel H. Snow (born 1816), a native of Gardiner, Maine, who had been living for some years in Mobile. He was an established publisher of music. Joel, who had lost his first wife in 1862, was the father of several children, and Mattie raised the children as her own.

Joel's publishing company, J. H. Snow Company, was located at 29 Dauphin Street in Mobile. The company published such well-received

pieces as *Alabama Waltz*, *Minnie Lee*, and *Southern Battle Song*.

Joel died before 1900, but Mattie lived until 1908. In Mobile, she became acquainted with a circle of friends with whom she became an organizer and Charter Member of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Alabama.

16. Narcissa Tayloe Maupin Shawhan (Mrs. Charles Shrader Shawhan) (1866-1947), Mobile. Admitted: February 19, 1898. Ancestor: Samuel Ogle, Governor of Maryland, 1731-1742. Ancestral State: Maryland.



Narcissa Tayloe Maupin Shawhan was born October 31, 1866, to Robert Lemon Maupin (born 1836) and Anne Ogle Tayloe. She was admitted on February 19, 1898, and resigned her membership in 1918.

Among Narcissa's many accomplishments, she was the first president of the Alabama Branch League of American Pen Women, which was a group of women artists, musicians, and writers. The *Narcissus Poeticus* was adopted as the organization's flower in honor of Narcissa. She also was a member of the Federated Garden Clubs of Mobile.

Narcissa was a journalist who became a nationally known author and lecturer on parliamentary law. She held the copyrights for at least two publications, a parliamentary law textbook and a book regarding the procedure for presiding over an election. She was also an active member of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Narcissa married Charles Shrader Shawhan (born 1869), a lifetime resident of Mobile who was prominent in business and fraternal circles. At the time of his death on October 18, 1929, Charles was the commercial agent for the Southern railroad. He was also a member of the Alabama Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Narcissa died on November 14, 1947, in Mobile. She and Charles are buried in Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile. The Shawhans' home still exists at 254 North Conception Street.

17. **Martha “Mattie” Rodman Ruan Tinsley (Mrs. Fleming Tinsley)**
(circa 1855-death not recorded), Selma. Admitted: February 22, 1898.
Ancestor: Richard Gibbs, Sheriff of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 1771-
1772. Ancestral State: Pennsylvania.

Martha “Mattie” Rodman Ruan Tinsley was born in Apalachicola, Florida, around 1855. She was the sixth child of John G. Ruan (a merchant; born around 1800) and Amanda Clark Ruan (born around 1820). John was a native of Pennsylvania, and Amanda was a native of Georgia. By 1880, the family had moved to Jasper County, Georgia.

In 1883, Mattie married Fleming Davies Tinsley (born around 1841), of Milledgeville, Georgia. The couple settled in Selma, Alabama, where Fleming was in business as a cotton broker. It was here that Mattie became a founding mother of the NSCDA of Alabama.

In 1902, Fleming’s business interests took him and his wife back to Savannah, Georgia, and Mattie transferred her NSCDA membership to the Georgia chapter. Fleming became a partner in the cotton brokerage of Tinsley Hull, which operated in Savannah until about 1917.

It is not known if the Tinsleys had children since Alabama Census records for the pertinent decades were destroyed by fire. The 1910 Georgia Census record shows a nephew living with the Tinsleys in Savannah. The 1920 Georgia record shows another nephew in residence. No date has been found for the death of Mrs. Tinsley.