

Newspaper article, "A Short Sketch of Mrs. Katharine Ladd"; *The News & Herald* (Winnsboro, South Carolina), October 24, 1940

A Short Sketch of Mrs. Katharine Ladd

Subject of Story Was Wife Of George Washington Ladd

And a Well-Known Woman Of Fairfield

Mrs. David de Verill Walker, Sr.

Mr. and Mrs. George Washington Ladd were natives of Virginia. Mrs. Ladd was the former Katharine Stanton. Her mother, Mrs. Stanton came with the Ladds to Winnsboro and spent the remainder of her life with them. The Ladds, by actual knowledge, arrived after the year 1842, which date is that of the building of the large town house of Osmond Woodward on the site of the stone church across the street from the Ketchin brick building on Congress street. This date may be 1842-43, but by all evidence it could hardly be after 1848. (My mother, Mrs. Robert Buchanan, went to school to Mrs. Ladd and my mother was married at the age of twenty-one years).

Mr. Ladd was a portrait painter by profession. He painted portraits of my grandfather and my grandfather, these being in my home at the present time.

Before coming to Winnsboro, Mrs. Ladd taught a school at Brattonsboro in York county. Mr. Osmond Woodward sent his two eldest daughters to Mrs. Ladd and they boarded in with Doctor and Mrs. William Bratton. My mother, Rebecca, was a frail child and at the tender age of five years, she was sent to York to be under the care of Doctor Bratton, who was the family physician and one of the most highly regarded men of his profession in this part of the state. His office was one of the nearest to Winnsboro for expert medical aid.

On a visit to his daughters one day, Mrs. Ladd when talking to Mr. Woodward expressed her wish to establish her school in Winnsborough, as it was then known. Being greatly pleased at the idea because he had five daughters and an adopted daughter, a niece, Esther, to educate, Mr. Woodward sent his wagons and carriage to York to bring the Ladd family to Fairfield and they were settled in the brick house of three stories opposite the Woodward residence, using this house close to the sidewalk for dormitory and home, and the four or five-room wooden structure that stood on the corner of Congress and Moultrie streets for dining room and recitation rooms. One of the instructors of the school was Mrs. Josiah Obear.

To augment the salary of the school, there were guests taken into the dormitory when there was available space for them. It was the place for strangers in the town to stay. Among them were Charlestonians, such as Mrs. James McCreight, mother of Mrs. Kate Smith and Mrs. McCreight's sister, Mrs. Doctor Newton. Perhaps some were parents of Mt. Zion young men or of the Ladd pupils or low-country folk enjoying the less enervating climate of the hills.

Mrs. Ladd was a social and artistic, as well as an educational leader of the town. She was highly cultured and possessed many talents. There were clubs organized by her and life in the town took a gayer trend. Among the most important of the organizations that grew under her inspiration and care, was the Thespain Corps, an amateur troupe of the socially prominent and gifted citizens who displayed their dramatic ability and gave artistic and musical expression in the form of theatricals, dances and tableaux of Victorian fame. The Thespain hall, a building north of the Town Hall and Town Clock, was the meeting place of the socially inclined and happy youth of the village. Winnsboro was the best known smaller town in this part of the state, or at least one of the best known in upper South Carolina. Light operas were successfully and well done. Pinafore by Gilbert and Sullivan belong to this type of entertainment. Given by a congenial cast, a program of this opera in which I took a part is in my scrapbook as one of the pleasurable memories of membership in the Thespain Corps. The scenery painted on the backdrop of the stage by Mrs. Ladd, was and may be now, is in part still in the hall as were some of her poems found in an old newspaper unearthed in a trunk.

Mr. and Mrs. Ladd had six children.

Dr. Charles Ladd and Miss Joe did not marry.

Mr. Washington Ladd married a Miss Owens of this county and his children are Mr. Washington Ladd of Strother, with children, Mrs. Berta Bradley and J.C. Ladd; George Preston Ladd of Columbia; Osmond Y. Ladd of Connecticut; Thomas Albert Ladd; Mrs. John Ragsdale of Blairs; Garris Ladd of Winnsboro, whose children are Mrs. Willie Hayne McMeekin and others.

Miss Kate married Dr. James Cureton, a Welshman, that practiced dentistry in Liberty Hill and later, in Ridgeway, returning to Liberty Hill. The daughter, Miss Josie, married Mr. James Wilkes. Her children are Martin Wilkes, Ernest, Robert, James, Mrs. T.W. Pope, Mrs. Carl Hill, Miss Louise Wilkes, and Mrs. Hennies Warmouth.

Miss Annie Ladd married Mr. John Neil (first wife).

Dr. George Ladd married.

Mr. Ladd having died about the time of the War between the States, Mrs. Ladd continued to teach school until some years later, when she gave musicals and moved in the social life around her. Always patriotic, a devout Southerner at heart, she took part in all public events.

She went to Peay's Ferry, where she lived two years before going to Beuna Vista plantation in the Buckhead section of the county. Here, her home was open to all social activities of the community, giving musical entertainment and instruction to pupils after the loss of her eyesight. A near neighbor to Beuna Vista was Mrs. John Feaster, who was Miss Sallie Lyles. On a visit to Mrs. Feaster, my cousin, I walked to the post office of Buckhead holding to Mrs. Ladd's arm to guide her steps.

At a peaceful hour she passed away and is buried with two sons and Miss Joe in the churchyard at Salem church.

in this part of the state