ARMSTRONG STATE COLLEGE

MARY SAVAGE JONES ANDERSON

FAMILY INFLUENCES

A RESEARCH PERFORMED
FOR
HISTORICAL METHODS
HISTORY 650

BY
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ABSTRACT

Mary Savage Anderson was raised in the household of her maternal grandfather, William Neyle Habersham, where she was exposed to many of the finest things in life such as good music, excellent wine, and Savannah's most elite society. Her grandmother, Josephine Clay, was a tireless and enthusiastic task master who saw to the education of her three half-orphaned grandchildren. Both Josephine Clay and Anna Wylly, Mary's mother, kept journals during the Civil War which were later published. Growing up in such an environment prepared Mary for a life of leadership and writing. In 1905 she married Clarence Gordon Anderson, an up and coming bank executive. As an adult she was involved in several societies and garden clubs. Several of her historical writings were published, although perhaps the best of them was not. Childless, she doted on her nieces and nephews and is remembered fondly by all.
Mary Savage Jones Anderson, born in 1873, was an individual who, perhaps somewhat unconsciously, continued the traditions of her old and well documented family. It came from being raised in the household of her grandparents along with her widowed mother, rather than growing up with parents who were attempting to develop separate identities in their own home. Her grandparents’ home was a center of culture in Savannah, where musicians and other artists came to socialize with political and business figures of the time.\(^1\) This had a tremendous influence on a young life such as Mary’s. Both her grandmother and mother kept journals during significant periods of their lives. These were probably available to her from an early age, so it was likely that this family lore and much more which has now disappeared shaped her life in a different manner than other more short memoried families.

Prior to the civil war, Mary’s grandfather, William Neyle Habersham, was a successful cotton broker. Habersham’s business was called Robert Habersham’s Son and Company. They were commission merchants, rice and cotton factors, and agents.\(^2\) According to later sources, the family business collapsed after the war so Habersham devoted himself to the sale of Madeira and other fine wine. It seems that Habersham was slightly eccentric in his wine management technique. He is said to have kept the casks of wine on the second and third floors of their Harris St.

\(^1\) Hartridge Collection, MS# 1349: box 52, folder 806: “William Neyle Habersham House to be Razed,” Savannah Press, April 5, 1930.

J. F. WHEATON,
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AND
General INSURANCE Agent,
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Williamsburg City Insurance Co., of N.Y., Assets, $1,012,658

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1880 Savannah, City
Direct. :
home and rotated it into sunny areas near the windows so that it might be warmed. He felt that keeping it in the cool, damp basement did not permit it to develop its fullest flavor. Habersham Madeira was well known among connoisseurs in New York, and nearly fifty years after his death it was still a highly sought wine which received recognition at auction.

Habersham was educated at Harvard during the 1830's and lived in a boarding house with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who was a professor at Harvard at that time. Longfellow mentioned Habersham in a journal,

Young Habersham, of Savannah, a friend of Mrs. Craigie's occupied at that time the other front chamber. He was a skillful performer on the flute. Like other piping birds, he took wing for the rice-fields of the South when the cold weather came, and I remained alone with the widow in her castle.

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Habersham had his properties confiscated at the close of the civil war which is
mentioned in a letter from the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned
Lands. Only after he had received a presidential pardon for his rebel activities did
he get them back, Jan. 24, 1866. The pardon was signed by Secretary of State Seward. He
had probably taken his family and left his home in town on W. Harris St. to live
in relative safety at White Bluff where access to the sea and inland waterways meant
an easier escape and better source of supplies during the war.

William Neyle was married to his third cousin, Josephine Clay Habersham. Marriage
was much more of a legal entity then, perhaps than now, owing to the presence
of a marriage contract which was included in some of his personal letters
on file at Georgia Historical Society. This provided for the matters pertaining to
his and Josephine’s estates. It is clear, though, from reading excerpts from her diary
that she was very much in love with him as she was constantly concerned with his
well being. She is perhaps best known for this civil war diary which was later
published under the title Ebb Tide. It is not only a description of her life during the
War but with the author/editor, Dr. King’s added research it is also a fuller account

6 Chatham County Superior Court records room: County records book EEE folios 568-569. This is the deed to Lot 4, Pulaski Ward, Savannah, Ga.


8 Jones Family Collection, MS# 440: box 4, folder 59, William Neyle Habersham Papers, marriage contract. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga.

9 Dr. Spencer Bidwell King, Jr., Ebb Tide: As seen through the diary of Josephine Clay Habersham. (University of Georgia Press, 1958).
of the lives of the members of the Habersham family. He provides, for example, an analysis of the status of the Habersham family in reference to their daughter Anna Wylly’s courtships:

... Anna Wylly, born Feb. 4, 1849; she was fourteen in the summer of 1863. Anna rejected the suit of Johnny Scharf, of Baltimore, the following summer. Johnnie was in the Confederate Navy and stationed at that time on the Water Witch. After the war Scharf became the historian of the confederate Navy. Anna later married George Fenwick Jones. He was the son of Mary Savage Nuttall and George Noble Jones. George Noble was son of Noble Wimberly Jones and Sarah Campell. Thus in Anna’s marriage were united two of Georgia’s most illustrious families.10

Anna also kept a diary during the War.11 As a young teen who was beginning to be courted by young men, her thoughts are full of concerns about relationships. She was a striking beauty when she was young and many photos of her remain.12 Her time was spent her friends who lived along the rivers and islands, watching the

10 Ibid. p. 17.

11 Jones Family Papers, MS# 440: box 4, folder 61. “The diary of Anna Wylly Habersham, August 20, 1864,” original manuscript with typed transcript, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, GA.

12 Jones Family Collection, MS# 440: box, folder, photographs of Anna Wylly Habersham. GHS, Savannah.
boats on the river at White Bluff. Among her list of girlfriends and boyfriends is John Scharf. She tells of his proposal to her and of her solution to it, and of her mother's later offer of anonymous assistance to problems of a similar nature.\(^\text{13}\) She only kept this particular diary for three months and towards the end of her diary keeping she began to compile a scrapbook called "Everything I Think Pretty."\(^\text{14}\)

She was rather clever in her reuse of an old pamphlet which had been intended to be studied by the city council. She wrote on the back pages and in the margins. Inside were clipped-out poems, pressed cedar twigs and written descriptions of things she liked. Crumbling but still legible, the original copy is still in existence.\(^\text{15}\)

Anna Wylly was forced to raise her three children, Josephine, Mary Savage, and George Noble in the home of her parents after the early death of her husband. Neither Mary Savage nor her siblings ever really knew their father. He died suddenly when Mary was three years old. It is not clear what made him ill. The paper states:

> The community were surprised today at the announcement
> of the death of Mr. George Fenwick Jones, which event
> occurred in the morning at ten o'clock, at his residence corner

\(^{13}\) *Journal of Anna Wylly Habersham: 1864*, (George Noble Jones, Savannah, Ga., 1926, # 76 of 100), 18-19.

\(^{14}\) Jones Family Collection, MS# 440: box 4, folder 62, Anna Wylly Habersham scrapbook, August 27, 1864. GHS, Savannah.

of Gordon and Whitaker Streets. Mr. Jones had been indisposed for the past three days but on Saturday was up and out for a while. About three o’clock yesterday morning he was taken with a very serious attack of apoplexy,\textsuperscript{16} and died a few hours afterwards, as stated. The deceased was a native of Savannah, and a son of G. Noble Jones, Esq., and was in his 35th year.\textsuperscript{17}

Jones had been a well respected lawyer. His colleagues presented a tribute of regard in memory of him shortly after his death. It stated that he was of ancient and honorable ancestry and that his training and education were “consonant with his lineage;” and “To the grace and dignity of a courteous and polite demeanor, and there was added the charm of agreeable and entertaining conversational powers.” He had served the Confederate Army as the Commissioner of the Confederate States to the Court of St. James, and bore several dispatches to Richmond, Va. the headquarters of the Confederate Government.\textsuperscript{18}

Mary and her siblings were fortunate to have had wealthy and supportive grandparents to help raise them. Both George Fenwick and his father died in the

\textsuperscript{16} “Apoplexy” is a stroke, according to\textit{Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary}, (Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, MA., 1988).

\textsuperscript{17} “Death of Mr. G. Fenwick Jones,” \textit{Savannah Morning News}, March 27, 1876, page 3 column 4.

\textsuperscript{18} Jones Family Collection, MS# 440: box 3, folder 41: George Fenwick Jones papers, “Tribute of Regard.”GHS, Savannah.
same year, 1876, so the paternal grandfather was not available to help.\textsuperscript{19} As it was, the subject of money was never considered. The topic was thought to be vulgar, and the children never heard any discussion of it. It was just manna from heaven. When reference to it was necessary - it was to say that people were either wealthy or in reduced circumstances.\textsuperscript{20} If the Habershams had not been able to help her, Anna Wylly would have had to do what other women of diminished fortunes had to do and take up teaching for a living. In the community in which they lived, any of their group who had to take in pupils was immediately supported with the enrollment of friends' children. This in Mary's opinion, did not contribute to her learning good discipline in school, but rather contributed to the added unhappiness of the teacher. She and her sister went from teacher to teacher in this manner. Those women whom teaching did not suit often took up embroidery or some such art in order to support themselves.\textsuperscript{21}

The Habersham household was a large one. Mary lived on W. Harris St. with her grandparents, her mother, an uncle, Edward who is twenty one years old and an aunt, Mary B. who is twenty three; as well as several servants, Nora the Irish

\textsuperscript{19} At this point in the research it is not clear exactly when or why George Noble died or if it was related to the early demise of his son.

\textsuperscript{20} Hartridge Collection, MS# 1349: box 106, folder 1976, Mary Savage Jones Anderson, “Days Beyond Recall” p. 10.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. p. 12-13.
housekeeper, her husband Michael, and their child Mary, who is eight years old.\textsuperscript{22} Dinah, the children's nanny, had also been their mother's nanny and was possibly once a slave.\textsuperscript{23}

Considered to be a mansion by those who documented its demolition in the 1930's, the William Neyle Habersham house was a wooden frame house, three and a half storeys tall.\textsuperscript{24} It was located at the corner of W. Harris and Barnard St. where in 1992 a shop that had been built on the site was razed and replaced with a reproduction 19th century house.\textsuperscript{25} This new house in no way resembles the Habersham home which had side porches on each floor of the east side, in the Charleston manner, overlooking a walled garden planted with camellias, palms, and other beautiful flora. In the ruins of the William Neyle house a large rice mortar was discovered. Neighbors wondered where it had come from and whether or not it had been used there. According to the newspaper account, it was most likely destroyed when the lot was finally cleared.\textsuperscript{26} Frequently, in conversation, the William Neyle home is mistaken for the Habersham-Bullock house, which was

\textsuperscript{22} 1880 U.S. Census, Enumeration District 20, Sheet 10, Line 43, s.v. Habersham, William Neyle.

\textsuperscript{23} King, \textit{Ebb Tide}, p. 53.

\textsuperscript{24} Hartridge Collection, MS\# 1349: box 52, folder 806. "William Neyle Habersham House to be Razed," \textit{Savannah Press}, April 5, 1930.

\textsuperscript{25} The author watched the new house being built.

\textsuperscript{26} Hartridge Collection, MS\# 1349: box 52, folder 806, unlabeled newspaper clipping. GHS, Savannah.
destroyed in 1914 to make way for the Civic Auditorium, but they are not the same.27

After Mary was already a grown woman, she wrote a wonderful description of her grandparents and her childhood at White Bluff called "Days Beyond Recall." It was written in fairly simple English for the benefit of her great nieces, Bessie and Josie Dixon, and is perhaps the most valuable document that she ever wrote. The clarity and humor combined with careful reminiscence creates a sense of the world that she inhabited as a child which is similar in feeling to many our own childhoods but which is very different in detail.

Life at White Bluff during the late 1870's through the 1890's must have been an influential time for her. It was the custom of her family to spend long summers at their family retreat, named Avon Hall because of her grandmother Josephine's great love of Shakespeare. Avon had been owned prior to Habersham's purchase by Rev. Benjamin Burroughs, who had used it as a boarding school for boys.28 Mary remembers finding fragments of china which she and her sister blame on the antics of these boys.29 It is not clear when the house was constructed but it was sold to Habersham in 1848. Soon after Habersham bought the house he sent to France for

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29 Anderson, "Days..." p. 7.
camellias. He planted twenty one varieties, some which may still survive.  

Grandmother Josephine was responsible for educating her older sister Josephine, her younger brother George Noble, as well as herself, in literature, French and music. She and her sister were often required to sing duets accompanied by her grandmother at the piano. They didn’t have good voices but as grandmother Josephine was growing deaf, it didn’t matter. Young Josephine later found the music lessons useful when she began entertaining beaux with her piano playing. Mary doesn’t mention finding it useful. George Noble was raised to be a young gentleman. Once when he was knocked off the dock into the river he cried because his new cravat had been ruined.

Mary’s affinity for writing probably came from her mother and grandmother in turn. She writes in “Days...” “Grandma’s diary, written in the summer of 1863, described the family life at White Bluff during the war when, although her heart was torn with anguish concerning her two sons who were in the Confederate Army...”. During the Civil War, Josephine kept a diary of her thoughts and activities, hoping that her two sons who were fighting for the Confederate Army would return home safely. Unfortunately, they were both killed on the same day in the Battle of Atlanta shortly before the end of the war. Anna Wyllie remembers them in her journal, mentioning the activities they enjoyed together, boating, and

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32 Ibid. p. 4-5.
moonlit rides on their horses. She recalls sadly that Willie and Joe Clay died so young, at ages twenty and twenty-three, respectively.\textsuperscript{33} In \textit{Ebb Tide}, a description of each of the young men's deaths. Joe Clay and Willie Habersham died separately but bravely. Their bodies were laid to rest side by side in the Habersham family plot in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah with a single stone obelisk over their graves inscribed, "In Their Death They Were Not Divided." The shadow of this tragedy colored their lives for many years after. As children they would be taken to the solemn Memorial Day ceremony to commemorate their uncles. The families kept the tradition of honoring fallen Confederate soldiers on Memorial Day even after they had become adults. It seems that the stories of these three women are the story of the same woman; so similar in tone and feeling are they.

William Neyle Habersham, after the war, received a pardon for his rebel activities. He was required to swear an oath of loyalty in order to gain his pardon from the President of the United States. Perhaps one of the reasons that he did this was to regain his confiscated property, the home on West Harris St. His house was one of the last to be returned to its owner in Savannah. The procedure to regain property was an interesting one. It required an application sent to the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands along with the copy of his presidential pardon. The final reinstatement was signed by Secretary of State Seward on January 24, 1866.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Journal of Anna Wyly Habersham}, p. 14.

\textsuperscript{34} Jones Family Collection, MS# 440: box 4, folder 59: William Neyle Habersham Papers. GHS, Savannah.
In another odd turn of genealogy, Mary was wed to a distant cousin Clarence Gordon Anderson in 1905. Their kinship was not as close as that of her grandparents. Their nearest common ancestors, George Anderson and Deborah Grant, moved to Savannah in the 1760's. Mary was descended from one of their children, Mary Anderson who married John Wallace; and Clarence is descended from another, George Anderson II, who is his great grandfather. Therefore, their great grandparents were siblings.

Much of what we know of Clarence comes from the Savannah City Directory. When they were married, he was working as treasurer of Georgia State Banking and Loan Association and living at 224 Charlton. They moved twice soon afterwards from 114 W. Waldburg to 121 E. 36th St. in 1912. He is listed here as president of Lawton-Anderson Company, cotton factors and fertilizer dealers with J.M. Lawton, vice-president, and George Noble Jones, secretary. It appears that Clarence was set up in business by his wife or her remaining family. By 1917 Mary and Clarence were living at White Bluff where they stayed for a short time at Avon Hall before building their own home on an adjacent lot. Clarence was now president of

35 Marriage license issued November 4, 1905. Mary Savage Jones and Clarence Gordon Anderson were married on Nov. 7, 1905. Probate Court Records Room, Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Georgia.

36 Wayne Stites Anderson Collection, MS# 846, box 29, folder 581: Anderson genealogy. GHS, Savannah, Ga.


38 "Tour..." Savannah Morning News.
Anderson Cotton Co. with T.B. Kreeger, vice-president. 39 George Noble continued on as a lawyer and served as attorney general until 1931. 40

Mary joined the colonial dames soon after she was married. She served six years as corresponding secretary and six years later served as president of the Georgia Society of Colonial Dames. She was an active president. During her term, the Andrew Lowe House was purchased as the Headquarter or the Colonial dames. She also wrote a history of the colonial Dames Society in Georgia through 1950 41 as well as a biography of Eleanor Kinzey Gordon, founder of colonial Dames in GA. 42 Eleanor Gordon is the mother of Juliette Gordon Low and it is Eleanor who in her eighties after recovering from a heart attack slid down the bannister of the Gordon mansion. 43 It is possible that Gordon was a relative of Mary’s husband, Clarence Gordon Anderson, Jr., although there is little concrete evidence at this point to

39 Savannah City Directory, 1912, 1917, and 1921, s.v. Anderson, Clarence; Jones, G.N.; Lawton, J.M.


43 The story of Mrs. Gordon sliding down the bannister is also heavily featured in the tour of the Juliette Gordon Low birthplace.
prove it.\textsuperscript{44} It was a common habit during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Savannah, and elsewhere\textsuperscript{45}, to receive as a middle name the maiden name of one's mother, grandmother, or other close female relative. Therefore, certain hereditary middle names such as Fenwick, Clay, or Wylly, are frequently indicators of relationships to maternal family lines. These names appear in several generations of overlapping genealogies that only with some algebraic perseverance can be traced. In the case of the Fenwick, they are connections with the Jones family through the third marriage of George Jones in the early 19th century. It is through his first marriage to Mary Gibbons in 1785 that the Jones line connects with Telfair family.\textsuperscript{46}

The "Wallace Papers," which she edited, is an example of one of Mary Savage Anderson's professional works (she varies her name according to its relationship to the subject of the writing) which was published in New York in 1956 before her

\textsuperscript{44} There is no mention of the Anderson/Gordon connection in either of the genealogical files for these two families at Georgia Historical Society in Savannah.

\textsuperscript{45} According to Dr. Anne Yentsch, a professor of historical archaeology, who has done numerous 18th and 19th century family reconstitutions in New England, this is the case.--from personal interview Nov. 10, 1993.

death and posthumously in 1958. Mary Wallace Savage married George Noble Jones and it is their child George Fenwick Jones who is Mary Savage Jones Anderson’s father.

She also wrote, along with three other of the Georgia Society Colonial Dames, a history of Georgia called *Pageant of Years*. At least one of the other authors, Martha Gallaudet Waring, was also an active writer and editor of local history who had been published several times in the *Georgia Historical Quarterly*. The other women involved in this project, Elfida DeRenne Barrow and Elizabeth Mackay Screven, both have old Georgia names which makes sense; seeing how they were both Colonial Dames. Elfrida Derenne was probably a distant cousin of Mary’s because of the Jones/DeRenne kinship.

Mary Savage Jones Anderson died on March 30, 1958 in Telfair Hospital, at age eighty-four. Her cause of death was listed as pulmonary edema due to cardiovascular disease. Her obituary listed her accomplishments. She was a

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former state president of the Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames, a charter member of the Trustees Garden Club and an officer of the Georgia Garden Clubs. She was a member of Christ Church and an original member of the Froebel Society.\textsuperscript{52} Certainly she had a full and productive life.

In an interview with one of Mary Anderson's descendants, Mrs. Carolyn Jones Wright, who lives in downtown Savannah, I learned several interesting things. On our initial conversation on a Sunday afternoon, she was preparing to go out to White Bluff to their old family home, Avon Hall, for a family gathering to christen a small boat in honor of one of Mary Anderson's nieces, Josephine Connerat. Mrs. Wright said that after Mary and Clarence sold their modern home next to Avon in 1941 that they moved into Avon with Mary's sister, Josephine, who had lived there for many years. This answers the question of where Mary went after she had sold and given as gifts much of her property.\textsuperscript{53} It had appeared from the little handwritten correspondence on file at Georgia Historical that she had remained at White Bluff but from the documents it was unclear where. She was also an enthusiastic gardener; and I was told that the gardens at Avon Hall are still lovely. In the personal will that Mary left, which is not on file at the courthouse\textsuperscript{54} but is in


\textsuperscript{54} Last Will and Testament of Mary Jones Anderson: file # 755. Probate Court Records Room, Chatham County Court House, Savannah, Georgia.
the keeping of family members, she gave several portraits to Carolyn Wright. The portrait of Thomas Savage, an early Georgia ancestor, has now been given to Mrs. Wright’s son Peter who lives in Atlanta. Mary never had any children and devoted much of her attention to her nieces and nephews. She remembers that they all thought a lot of her. Mrs. Wright said that her older sister who lives in New Hampshire, and is eight years older, probably knows more; or possibly her brother Fenwick, who is the family historian, would be another source. Laura Lawton, wife of Spencer Lawton, now resides at Avon Hall and carries on the traditions of life there.
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"Death of Mr. G. Fenwick Jones," Savannah Morning News, March 27, 1876.

"George Noble Jones Resigns as U.S. District Attorney," Savannah Morning News, Nov. 3, 1931


INTERVIEWS


Dr. Anne Yentsch, Armstrong State College, November 10, 1993.

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APPENDIX 1

Dates from Bonaventure cemetery plot A-150, Anderson family:

Mary Savage Jones Anderson    July 23, 1873 - March 30, 1958
Clarence Gordon Anderson       February 8, 1873 - April 17, 1961
Florida Lamar Anderson        March 12, 1849 - February 20, 1935
Clarence Gordon Anderson      June 13, 1846 - July 21, 1925
DIARY CHARACTERS SPINSTED BY RICHARDS © SUSY © WALK © JAMIE © LILL © MARY BAX © CHERRY CHANTS

THE HABERSHAM FAMILY AS RELATED TO THE DIARY OF JOSEPHINE CLAY HABERSHAM 1863

From Ebb Tide, by Dr. Spencer B. Adair King