

Linda Beatty -GFWC Virginia Historian – 2024-26 – Alice Kyle District

(Tidbits of information gleaned from annual reports, Virginia Clubwoman Magazines at GFWC Virginia Headquarters and 50th & 100th Anniversary books.)

Alice Kyle District – where it all began. **Lynchburg Woman's Club** was one of the charter clubs for the organizational meeting in the Lynchburg YMCA in 1907. Remember when we met in Lynchburg during the 2022-2024 administration, we were just blocks away from that very site. Sadly in 2004 the Lynchburg club which had over 400 members, defederated – one of the greatest single losses of members of the state federation.

This District is the only one named for a person and rightly so because she is the Mother of Federation and its first president, but they also have bragging rights that in 1940 one of their members was the first Virginia woman to sit on a school board AND another was the first woman judge in Virginia. Alice Kyle District has provided 5 State Presidents and two Director of Juniors; the district currently has 4 General and 3 Junior clubs with a total membership of 64 in 2026.

This district was recognized as having contributed \$229,197.95 to the “Buy-a-Bomber” campaign during the war years

The **Blackstone WC** was chartered in 1939 and was an important part of their community but became inactive in the 60s. With the help of the **Crewe WC** the club was reactivated with 40 charter members in May 1983 and proudly celebrated their 25th anniversary in 2008.

In 1948 with the help of “Mother Kyle and co-founders Mrs. Lucy Williams and Mrs. Milton Booth, the **Brookneal WC** was organized with 20 charter members, most of whom were previously members of Brookneal Study and Recreation club.

Farmville is fortunate to have TWO clubs – **WC of Farmville, VA** and **Farmville JWC**. The **Farmville JWC** is one of the oldest Junior clubs in the Virginia Federation and they held their first meetings at Longwood College in the Faculty Room. From the beginning they were interested in supporting a library – first in the club and later the community and they donated \$10,000 from their portion of the sale of the clubhouse in 1978 to the community library. They had jointly owned the clubhouse with the **WC of Farmville** for many years. This general club evolved from the Fortnightly Music Club and became a part of the Federation in 1924. Part of their proceeds from the sale of the clubhouse also went to the library and the Southside Hospital, and rescue and fire department.

Virgilina WC was organized in 1913 with 12 charter members and is one of the oldest clubs in the state. Originally it had a literary focus but expanded to one with a civic nature in 1922. It currently has 7 members, who still support projects that have a big impact on their community.

In 1950 the **South Boston WC** voted to support the creation of **South Boston-Halifax JWC** which became a part of the Federation in 1952. From its inception thru the celebration of their 50th

anniversary in 2002 their club has focused on community service. In 2000 they were recognized as the VFWC Junior Club of the year and also won the GFWC Media Book award for outstanding publicity.

A framed oil painting of Mother Kyle (painted by Rosalie Dillard Baston) was donated to VFWC headquarters in 1955 by the district and the **WC of Lynchburg** donated a needlepoint of the Federation emblem, and a 3-drawer table given in honor of Shirley Moorman, past president of VFWC. One of the most valuable items at headquarters was donated in 1974. This loose-leaf book entitled “The Founding of a Federation” – a collection of papers from the files of Mrs. James R. Kyle. So, if you want to start a federation of your own, here are the instructions. The GFWC Lynchburg JWC in 1973 added new features to their continuing project “Miller Park Animal Farm” – a duck pond, fencing, 56 trees and shrubs and a skunk. Their expenses for that year were reported to be \$2,805.45 and 349 member hours expended on that project.

Ladies, we are still making history today. Just think of the hundreds of thousands of women who have claimed membership in this organization and the impact they have had not only on the communities they lived in but throughout our nation and the world. And, you can proudly boast of being a member, too. I found this quote in the frontpiece of one of the books I researched and think it is still applicable:

There's not a place in earth or heaven,
There's not a task to mankind given,
There's not a blessing or a woe
There's not a whispered yes or no
There's not a life or birth
That has a feather's weight of worth
Without a woman in it.