

## **The Arnold-Swan Mausoleum**



### **Local Lore and a Time Capsule of 1910 Thomasville**

Based on Research Conducted June 2020

## Introduction

The journey encompassing the story of a mausoleum in a local cemetery and the family it houses begins with a piece of local Thomasville, Georgia lore. While attending a funeral myself early June, 2020, I had the great fortune to spend time with a lovely woman who had spent over seven decades making Thomasville her home. During the quiet moments spent near the new grave site, Ruthie told me a story from her youth when she and her friends would play in Laurel Hill Cemetery near her home.

The story centered around a mausoleum where piano music could be heard and of the woman inside who played the instrument each day for a departed family member. Ruthie remembers hearing the music and said she believed was a widow who visited the mausoleum to play for her husband and afterwards would sit and read the daily newspaper to him.

Intrigued by this story I began a search for the site and quickly determined that there are extremely few mausoleums at Laurel Hill that are large enough to have held a piano and in fact, finding only two. Of these pair, only one lay in the older historical portion of Laurel Hill and on it was inscribed the words, **ARNOLD-SWAN**.

There was no other inscription on the building and so I sought out the sexton of the cemetery to see what information had been recorded for the plot. From her I heard a similar story but this time the person playing the piano was a mother who had lost her young daughter. Checking her records, the only two entries for the site showed a purchase of the plot by a gentleman named J. P. Arnold with one interment of a Mrs. Swan in 1910. The plot itself had been purchased in 1910 and turned over the care of the City of Thomasville in 1946.

From the folk tale and simple entry grew an entire story of the death of young wife, music and a challenge to understand and preserve the memory of a woman whose story had almost been forgotten. Here is the story behind the tale.

## Finding Mrs. Swan

From the simple notation given by the sexton at Laurel Hill, a quick search of the historic records of the local newspaper the Thomasville Times-Enterprise, revealed an obituary from November 25, 1910, shown on the right.

Here we found Mrs. Swan's maiden name of Arnold, information about her husband as well as a marriage date. Though her first name was shown here as **Maynite**, we later determined that the correct spelling was **Maynita**, a name shared with a child born to John H. Swan's second wife many years later.

Many pronouncements in this obituary indicated that her death might have been reported elsewhere and a quick search outside of the Thomasville area proved that guess correct. The obituary below appeared in an Atlanta newspaper called the Atlanta Georgian & News on December 3, 1910. Obviously taken from a earlier Thomasville report, the time frames in this obituary do not match those of the actual death date of November 23 or date of the funeral on the following Sunday, November 27, 1910.

### DEATH OF MRS SWAN.

**Lovely Young Woman Passed Away  
Wednesday Night at Her Home in  
This City.**

Mrs. **John H. Swan** died at her home in this city Wednesday evening at eleven o'clock, after an illness of many months. For some time, Mrs. **Swan** has been very low and her death, while a very sad one was not unexpected. Friends in this city and in other parts of the State will hear of her death with sincere regret. She was a very lovable woman, and made friends easily and ready.

She was Miss Maynite Arnold, coming with her mother to Thomasville for the winter three years ago. Here she met Mr. **Swan**, and the attraction quickly ripened into love. They were married in December, 1908, living since that time in this city.

**Former Atlanta Woman Passes Away.**  
Thomasville, Ga.—Mrs. **John H. Swan** died here yesterday. The funeral will be held Sunday morning. As Miss Maynita Arnold she moved with her mother to Thomasville from Atlanta several years ago and was married to **John Swan** in this city about two years ago. Besides her husband and mother, Mrs. **Swan** leaves relatives in Atlanta and Barnesville.



## Mrs. Swan Dead.

The people of Barnesville will learn with profound sorrow of the death of Mrs. John H. Swan, which occurred in Thomasville last Friday. She was Miss Maynita Arnold of Barnesville, and was one of the most popular girls that ever lived in the city.

For years she attended Gordon Institute and graduated as one of the brightest members of the class of 1896. During the years which followed she traveled considerably, her health having given way, spending much of her time in Colorado and at Thomasville, Ga.

A few years since she was married to Mr. Swan, a prominent business man of Thomasville, which has since been her home.

It has been known to friends here for some time that she was in bad health, and her untimely death was not a surprise. The news of her death, however, causes great sorrow among a wide circle of friends and relatives in Barnesville and Pike county.

A final obituary was found in the December 1, 1910 edition of the Barnesville News Gazette published in Barnesville, Georgia. This obituary was extremely helpful by showing where Maynita was educated, when she graduated, where she traveled and other details that allow us to get a glimpse into her life.

Her early education at Gordon Institute is written about here. This school was so named in 1872 and its first graduate in 1875 was a woman named Alice Wooten. It boasted of classes beginning at the elementary age level and seemed to have provided the young Maynita with the learning to later navigate a wide social circle that included friends in New York and from around the world.

The travels to Colorado and Thomasville mentioned in the article alongside references to her failing health tell us that she likely suffered from tuberculosis, a common ailment during this time period and a frequent reason for traveling to the areas mentioned in the obituary.

Maynita died at 33 years –of-age after only 23 months of marriage to her husband John.



**Maynita Arnold**

Maynita Arnold was born in April, 1877, during a time her father William was working as a brick mason in Denver, CO. We know that by 1892 the family was residing on a farm near Zebulon, GA and Maynita was enrolled in the Gordon Institute in a nearby community. This school offered classes beginning with the elementary grades and seems to have been a very good school as Maynita was enrolled in a music program and excelled later at a finishing school in Washington D.C. We begin to see traces of Maynita in the newspapers starting in 1894 when she is a sophomore at the Gordon Institute.

SOPHOMORE CLASS.  
Messrs Jesse Wright, Merritt Thurman, Willie Owen, Alfred Willingham, Orren Davis, Hugh Morgan and Parkwell Thompson; Misses Alice Myers, **Maynita** Arnold, Alice Simonton, Mary White, Lula Banks, May Taylor, Mattie DeVaughn Nannie Shel Willis and Marianne Hunt.

May 17, 1894, list of students in the Sophomore class at Gordon. Maynita was still on the farm in Zebulon during this year.

In 1895, Maynita's name appears in the Graduating Exercises of the that year's graduating class. She is only in her junior year at the Institute but performs musical selections for the graduating class including playing the "William Tell Overture" as an opening piece.

Miss **Maynita** Arnold read the class history, which was listened to with great interest. She is one of the brightest and best girls who ever graduated here, and she never disappoints an audience in giving them something good.

June 18, 1896,  
Maynita reads the class history for her own graduating class of that year.

Miss **Maynita** Arnold has been sick for some days, but her many friends wish for her a speedy recovery

July 9, 1896, hints at the illness that will haunt her life and end it early only 14 years later.

Miss **Maynita** Arnold has been visiting her friend, Miss Susie Watts-near Forsyth, for the past week. She will leave in a few weeks for Washington, D. C. where she goes to attend college.

September 3, 1896, after graduating, Maynita visits a friend in a Forsyth and prepares to attend college/finishing school in Washington D.C.

Miss **Maynita** Arnold left Monday morning for Washington, D. C., where she goes to enter the National Park Seminary. She graduated from Gordon Institute this year, making a fine record in her class. She is one of the brightest, best and most popular girls who ever attended Gordon Institute and her many friends regretted exceedingly to see her leave Barnesville.

October 1, 1896, in this clipping from the Barnesville Gazette we learn the name of the school Maynita will be attending, National Park Seminary. It is a very new school, just formed in 1894 and is an all-female institution. We will delve into the school a bit more on the next page.

### THE BEST RECORD.

The many friends and admirers of Miss **Maynita** Arnold will rejoice over the fine record she has made at the National Park Seminary at Forest Glen, Md. The evidence is in Barnesville over the signature of the president of the college, that her report is the best given by the faculty. This is no more than was expected by the people of Barnesville.

December 24, 1896, Maynita returns home to Elm Street in Barnesville for her Christmas vacation. She is obviously showing the ability to exceed at school, an indication that her education at Gordon Institute had been quite good as well.



## National Park Seminary

This school was formed in 1894 using the lands and buildings from a resort built in 1887 to entertain wealthy patrons of the Washington area and as a school would have attracted the young ladies of the most elite families of the United States. It was unique in many ways starting with the architect and architecture of the first buildings.

To set this institution into the changes occurring in the 1890's regarding the movement to recognize the intelligence and abilities of women one should look to the Chicago World's Exposition that took place the previous year of 1893. Known as the "White City" because of the large white stone buildings and electric lights used at the fair, this exposition featured a Woman's Pavilion that had been designed by a female architect. This pavilion and a large amount of the art in the World's Fair was created by female scientists and artists. In fact the founding members of the new school purchased a book of house plans at the Chicago World's Fair that would later serve as the plans for many of the new buildings they would erect around the great main hall.

Elizabeth Emily Holman



E. E. Holman, circa 1901

This is Elizabeth Emily Holman, an architect that practiced until 1914 and the designer behind the first structures specifically for the National Park Seminary school.

The main building on campus, converted from a hotel into classrooms and offices.





The Choipi Bungalow that served as student housing.



Inside the Choipi Bungalow during the time Maynita would have been attending school there.



	Students	Faculty
1894	48	10
1895	79	19
1897	129	24
1898	190	29
1900	184	30
1901	222	33
1909	279	42
1911	230	42

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Information about the student/teacher ratio for some of the early years of the school. During the time Maynita attended the total student population would have been under 130 students.



A May Day celebration at National Park Seminary in 1907.



Miss **Maynita** Arnold, who has been attending the National Park Seminary, of Washington, D. C., returned home Saturday. She made a fine record during the year and was one of the most popular students of the Seminary. She has hosts of friends in Barnesville who rejoice at her return home.

June 10, 1897, Maynita comes home for the summer from the National Park Seminary.

Miss **Maynita** Arnold left Monday for Washington, D. C. where she resumes her studies in the National Park Seminary. Her stay at home during her vacation has been a happy one and every body regretted to see her leave Barnesville again. She is deservedly one of the most popular girls who ever lived in Barnesville.

September 20, 1897, Maynita returns to college for the fall.

Miss Maynita **Arnold** returned **home** from Washington, D. C., Friday, after graduating among the first in her class at the National Park Seminary. She made a fine record in her classes and was greatly appreciated by the faculty and pupils. There are few more popular young ladies any where than she is among the people of Barnesville where she is best known.

June 9, 1898, Maynita graduates first in her class from the National Park Seminary. She returns to the home on Elm Street that we see in later pages when we discuss Maynita's mother, Ella.

Miss **Maynita** Arnold returned Friday from Stillmore where she has been teaching music. She is a very popular young lady and her return home is a source of much pleasure to her friends. She is a graduate of Gordon Institute and she is reflecting honor upon her alma mater.

December 22, 1898, Maynita comes home to her mother's place in Barnesville for the Christmas holiday.

## AT STILLMORE.

### Commencement Exercises Are Absorbing the Attention of the Community.

STILLMORE, Ga., June 28.—Commencement exercises opened at Stillmore College here by the delivery of a most appropriate and powerful sermon by Rev. J. C. Wray of Cuthbert, Ga., Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. He chose for his subject "Individual Responsibility," and a more able handling of the subject is hardly possible. Mr. Wray was reared in this county and has a large number of friends who were delighted to hear him. He left on the afternoon train via the Stillmore Air Line for Swainsboro, where he preached that night.

June 29, 1899, Maynita is the musical director at Stillmore and participates in the commencement exercises during this month.

The glowing success of the commencement has added new laurels for Professor Y. E. Barger, Mrs. Y. E. Barger and Miss **Maynita Arnold**. The musical feature of the commencement was a high compliment to the talent of Miss Arnold, who has control of the music department of the college.

The patrons and friends of the school compliment the entire faculty with transportation and expenses to their old homes and return during vacation as a mark of their popularity. Mrs. Barger was complimented by the primary department with a handsome present.

August 3, 1899, Maynita is returning home after teaching at Stillmore and spending time in South Carolina visiting relatives.

Miss **Maynita** Arnold returned to Barnesville Saturday after an absence of several months. The early part of the year she taught music in the school at Stillmore, after which she spent a month at Allendale, S. C. on a visit to relatives. She has many friends in Barnesville who heartily welcome her return home.

## BARNESVILLE, GA.

A reception was given Friday evening by Miss Maynita Arnold at her home in honor of her guest, Miss Rosa Burford, of Hampton. The house and spacious verandas were brilliantly lighted with electric lights and decorated with beautiful flowers and choice plants. Refreshments were served.

September 11, 1899, Maynita is entertaining friends at the home on Elm Street. The mention of electric lights is notable, the school Maynita attended in Washington D.C. did not have electric lights until 1911. For a home to have electric lights this early indicates a level of wealth above the norm.

Miss Maynita Arnold returned this week from a pleasant visit of six weeks with relatives in Allendale, S. C. While there she was shown much attention by the young people and had a delightful visit. She is cordially welcomed home.

February 26, 1903, returning from an extended stay in South Carolina.

## Gone to New York.

Mrs. W. W. Arnold, Miss Maynita Arnold left Sunday night for New York city, via Savannah, where they will remain sometime. It is possible that New York may be their future home, but their friends here hope that it may not be necessary for them to stay there. It is known to some that Mrs. Cruger, a wealthy aunt, recently gave to Miss Maynita Arnold a snug little fortune in valuable New York city property and this may require the removal of the family there.

They have hosts of friends who hope that they will continue to live in Barnesville.

July 16, 1903, Maynita's travel to New York and one of the articles that led us to finding her aunt Mary's story that we will explore much further in the section on her life to be found later on in this PDF. This 1903 article indicates income stream being provided to Maynita by her aunt, a dollar amount equal to approximately 6 million today.



Mrs. E. M. Arnold and Miss **Maynita** Arnold left last Friday for Cumberland Island where they will remain sometime enjoying the sea breezes.

Mrs. W. W. Arnold and Miss **Maynita** Arnold visited friends in Atlanta Wednesday.

These two clippings are from 1904 and show that Maynita was primarily traveling during the year before visiting Thomasville in 1905. From her obituary we learn that from 1905 to 1908 she was a frequent visitor to our community, meeting and finally marrying John Hamilton Swan in December 1908.

**ARNOLD SWAN.**  
Mrs. Ella M. **Arnold** announces the engagement of her daughter, **Maynita**, and Mr. John Hamilton Swan, of Thomasville, the wedding to take place Wednesday, December 30.

The wedding announcement published in the Atlanta Constitution on November 22, 1908 is above.

Arnold—Swan.	
Invitations have been received by friends in the city to the marriage of Miss <b>Maynita</b> Arnold to Mr. John Hamilton Swan at the First Baptist church in Thomasville, Ga., on Wednesday afternoon, December 30th.	ville, where Miss Arnold is well known, having for years lived here and where she is quite a favorite among the people generally. She is a most excellent young lady and there will be scores of warm friends to extend hearty congratulations to her and the fortunate young man on their marriage.
This announcement is of much interest to the people of Barnes-	

The wedding announcement from the Barnesville Gazette published on December 24, 1908 showing their marriage date of December 30th of that year. There is no mention of the couple in newspapers after their marriage but they did reside in Thomasville. The little we know of their married life comes from a couple of sources in 1910 as seen on the next page.

John H. Swan	Head	M	W	28	M
Maynita	Wife	F	W	28	M
Ella	Mother-in-law	F	W	48	Wid

A portion of the page from the Thomasville 1910 Federal Census showing John, his wife Maynita and her mother Ella residing on Jefferson Street. This information was recorded in April of that year.

There are a couple of interesting things to note about this census recording of the Swan Family, first, they owned the home they were living in, and second, there is no occupation listed for John which might indicate the family was being supported by the inheritance Maynita received in 1903 or continuing funds from her aunt Mary Arnold Cruger, a person you will be introduced to later on in this PDF.

**Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Swan and Mrs. E. M. Arnold have returned after spending the past few months in New York State.**

September 22, 1910, the family returns from a trip to New York State where they had spent considerable time.

Maynita dies on November 23, 1910 at her home in Thomasville, GA. An obituary about her death appears earlier in this document and by the end of November, Maynita's casket lies in a mausoleum in Laurel Hill Cemetery alongside her favorite Knabe piano. Hanging on the walls are photographs of friends and family including a pair of portraits of her and her husband John in gold-gilt frames. Later her beloved pet dog will be laid to rest on top of her casket and over the years she will be joined by mother and aunt with the doors being closed for the last time in 1943. Dust and dirt have settled over the memorial items in the mausoleum now but with work we can bring her and her family's lives back to the world of the living.

## **Maynita's Family & Others**



## Maynita's Family

We will delve into Maynita's family quite deeply, both her own and that of her husband, John Hamilton Swan whom she married in 1908. I believe that the following pages should be organized with those being the most important to her and her life appearing first and for that reason I strangely wish to begin with Maynita's aunt, Mary Angeline Fambro Cruger.

The most obvious question would be, why start with her aunt instead of her parents or husband? The answer I would give is that I believe her aunt contributed the most to Maynita's world in culture, education and even financially. Our journey into discovering the role her aunt played in her life began with the articles below:

**LEFT HER A FORTUNE.**  
Mrs. M. W. Arnold and family of Barnesville have gone to New York, and may make that city their home. Miss **Maynita** Arnold was left a large fortune by her aunt, Mrs. Kruger, a wealthy lady of that city, recently, and they have gone up North to look after the property, which consists of New York real estate valued at \$200,000.

**Georgia Girl Given Fortune.**  
Barnesville, Ga., July 18.—Mrs. M. W. **Arnold** and family have gone to New York and may make that city their home in the future. Miss **Maynita Arnold** was left a large fortune by her aunt, Mrs. Kruger, a wealthy lady of that city, recently and they have gone up north to look after the property, which consists of New York real estate valued at \$200,000.

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The top article appeared in the July 20, 1903 Savannah Morning News from Savannah, Georgia, the middle article is from the July 24, 1903 edition of the Brevard News from Brevard, North Carolina and the bottom is from the July 19, 1903 edition of the Selma Times published in Selma, Alabama. Despite being filled with numerous misspelled names, each seemed to indicate that Maynita inherited a small fortune from her aunt in 1903. The dollar amount listed, \$200,000 would be the equivalent of approximately six million in today's dollars, a sizeable fortune in 1903.

When we began our search into her aunt's life and money we uncovered an interesting story and even more interesting life.

Note: For any "Gone with the Wind" fans it would be helpful to picture Mary as Scarlett O'Hara raising her voice and saying, "*As God is my witness, I'll never go hungry again!*" in the story of her life that follows.

## Mary Angeline Fambro (Fambrough) Cruger

### Maynita's Maternal Aunt

Name:	E M Fambro												
Age:	7												
Birth Year:	abt 1853												
Gender:	Female												
Birth Place:	Georgia												
Home in 1860:	Marietta, Cobb, Georgia												
Post Office:	Marietta												
Dwelling Number:	292												
Family Number:	278												
Household Members:													
	<table><thead><tr><th>Name</th><th>Age</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>David Dobbs</td><td>68</td></tr><tr><td>M A Fambro</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>E M Fambro</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>F W Fambro</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>M A Dobbs</td><td>17</td></tr></tbody></table>	Name	Age	David Dobbs	68	M A Fambro	10	E M Fambro	7	F W Fambro	4	M A Dobbs	17
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We begin the story with the 1860 Federal Census where we find Mary Angeline, her sister Ella M. and a brother F. W. Fambro. all three living with the maternal grandfather David Dobbs in Marietta, GA. Further research showed that the Mary's mother died in 1857 in Barnesville, GA, and her father in 1860-61 in Savannah, GA. At the age of ten, Mary and her siblings were orphans on a farm in rural Georgia entering into the Civil War period.

**Cobb Sheriff's Sales.**  
**W**ILL BE SOLD, before the Court House door, in the City of Marietta, Cobb county, Georgia, on the first Tuesday in December next, between the legal hours of sale, the following property, to wit:  
One vacant Lot known as part of the Howard House lot, in the city of Marietta, and on the north side of the public square, bounded as follows: on the west by Cassville street, on the north by a street or alley, on the east by a street or alley and property of John W. Hill, and south by property of J. B. Blackwell, J. W. Hill, et. al. and the public square, fronting on public square about 24 feet, containing in all one-fourth acre, more or less. Levied on as the property of **David J. Dobbs**, executor of **D. Dobbs**, deceased, to satisfy a fi fa from Cobb Superior Court in favor of Alfred M. Roberts.

The grandfather David Dobbs last appears in the newspaper in a Cobb County Sheriff's Sale of his estate in the November 13, 1877 Marietta newspaper Field & Stream. His death is recorded as occurring in 1872 and his gravesite can be found in the Marietta City Cemetery. With his death, the Fambro family once again found themselves orphaned. Mary would have been 22 years-old at the time of her father's death her sister Ella who was Maynita's mother was 18.

It appears the Fambro family lost their home and property with the sale of the lands in 1877 as Mary is in San Francisco soon afterwards.

The next portion of Mary's life is a blank and covers approximately 1875 to 1885. When she next appears in newspaper clippings it is surrounding the death of her husband, William Jauncey Cruger.

**GEORGIA WOMAN GETS \$2,000,000.**

The will of William C. Cruger, who left an estate of \$2,000,000 to his wife, Mary Fambrough Cruger, to the exclusion of his relatives, was admitted to probate to-day. The will was contested by James Pendleton Cruger, the surviving brother of the testator, and a number of nephews and nieces, who allege that Mr. Cruger was incompetent to make a will and that he was unduly influenced by his wife. Mr. Cruger met his wife in Australia fifteen years ago. He was very ill and she acted as his nurse until he was restored to his health. He then married her and they came to this country. After a short residence here they went abroad to live. Mr. Cruger brought an action for divorce in France, but it was never tried and the couple sometimes afterwards became reconciled. Mr. Cruger left \$10 to his brother, James Pendleton Cruger, to each of his brother's six children and to each of the children of his deceased brother, Eugene Guldo Cruger. As Mary Fambrough, Mrs. Cruger was well known to the people of Marietta, where she was born and reared and where she has relatives living at present.

As with many of the newspaper clippings we encountered in this research, this one packs a lot of information into a small space. This clipping appeared in the November 22, 1901 Savannah Morning News and shows that Mary inherited two million dollars from her deceased husband's estate. In today's dollars this estate would be valued at nearly sixty million dollars, a tidy sum in any age.

From this article we read that Mary was in Australia and marrying sometime around 1876 but this is inaccurate as she was involved with another gentleman until approximately 1878. Regardless, she would have been in her late twenties when she began acting as nurse for Cruger in Australia.

So who was William Cruger and what was the story behind his tremendous wealth and how did an orphan from rural Georgia end up inheriting his wealth?





Meet Mary Angeline Fambro Cruger in a photo taken from a copy of her 1917 application for a passport for travel to Nassau, Bahama. By this time Mary would have been 67 years old and very wealthy for her time. Digging into her life has been fascinating. At times I am unsure of whether I should admire her or whether to label her exploitative, after reading her story you decide.

To begin to understand her life let's begin with a gossip magazine called The San Francisco Daily Times, Volume 9, published in February 1902. I will put the entire article here on this and following pages as we explore the people and events mentioned. A word of caution, this article is borderline malicious. I will surround the portions of the San Francisco in red to distinguish it from other articles as we move forward

#### ***The "Star" Blythe Widow***

It is rather late in the day for a Blythe "widow" to be heard from but the star of them all has just come to the front in New York. She is highly interesting to us out here from the fact that she considered our four million Blythe estate such small potatoes that though she had the regulation rights of a "wife at common law," she scorned to have anything to do with the contest but devoted her time and acumen to a much larger estate in New York which she has just succeeded in having everything left her by will. The other heirs who were cut off with ten dollars each are rampant with indignation and have just filed a contest. The case can never out-romance our famous Blythe story but the fight promises to be far bigger and more bitter. The prominent and wealthy Van Rensselaer and Cruger families are both interested in it. By an odd coincidence the wills of the wealthy Cruger brothers are both being contested at the same time, both had unusual careers, rare matrimonial mixups and the evidence in the two cases is likely to overlap.

The "Star" Blythe Widow mentioned is Mary Fambro Cruger. The Blythe mentioned was a Thomas Henry Blythe who died in San Francisco in 1883 without a will. His estate was worth in excess of 4 million at his death and the fight over the estate lasted for a decade. Over 200 claimants were involved in the litigation including 3 women who claimed to have been his wife at various points during his life, one of which was our Mary.



Thomas H. Blythe

An initial search for a connection between Mary and the “Blythe Widows” brought up the article below from the March 14, 1890 San Francisco Examiner and with it a whole new chapter in Mary’s life. A portion of the article mentions Mary who appears under the name May Fambro.

Ex-Judge J. A. Wright, who was attorney for the late Philip A. Roach while the latter was administrator of the estate, identified an agreement signed by May Fambro, otherwise known as Nellie Firmin, releasing Thomas H. Blythe from all claims from the foundation of the world to the date of the instrument, which was acknowledged at Denver, Col., November 18, 1879.

Mr. Wright said when he went with Mr. Roach to take possession of Mr. Blythe's effects Mr. Jeffers, in the presence and hearing of the defendant, said: “I wish you to take notice that all the furniture in this house was given by Mr. Blythe to this lady, Miss Dickason.”

This isn’t the first time Mary uses May as her first name. The 1917 passport mentioned earlier was taken out under the name of May Fambro as can be seen below. The most interesting portion here however is another alias for Mary, Nellie Firmin.

May or Mary Fambro 1917 passport

So who was Nellie Firmin then? The most engaging and informative answer to that question can be found in articles that appeared all of the United States in November of 1877. Mary would have been about 27 years-old and embroiled in terrible divorce from her common-law husband Thomas H. Blythe.

In these articles she is described as a “pretty young woman, who has been both type-setter and actress in minor theatre.” and suing for alimony claiming to be Blythe’s wife. He states that she is only his mistress and...

that she is nothing more than his mistress, whom he had detected in robbing him, and finally in a cold-blooded plot upon his life. Leagued with her was a disreputable Italian actor, who tried to bribe an associate to murder the millionaire for a large sum of money, which

The article continues by describing her attempts upon his life in some detail:

check. This scheme failing, Nellie enterprisingly undertook the job herself. First she tried brandy and strychnine, previously hinting to folks of Blythe's apopleptic tendencies and his liability to sudden death. Thwarted again, a still more desperate role was assumed by this reckless woman, who intended by Blythe's murder to get possession of a large slice of his fortune. One day the latter was warned by an observant friend that Miss Firmin was carrying a pistol. Taking the hint, he purchased a revolver of the self-cocking English bulldog pattern, a deadly weapon, and a dagger, and carried both on his person. A day or so thereafter Miss Firmin was discovered by one of Blythe's tenants prowling about the latter's office, with a revolver in her hand, concealed by a handkerchief. She was heard by him to say she was going to kill his agent because he had wronged her. Blythe became more watchful, and on going home to dinner detected the woman several times looking at him alone. When the meal was about half finished, Nellie Firmin, with a wicked gleam in her eye, thrust her hand into her bosom and drew out a revolver, saying, "Harry, I'm going to kill you." Snatching his dagger from his breast, he sprang upon her, and, brandishing the knife aloft, said sternly, "Raise that pistol and I'll stab you to the heart!" The woman was foiled. For a moment they glared into each other's eyes; then the woman pushed the pistol across the table toward him, saying, "Harry, take the pistol; I wouldn't hurt you for the world." He

So we see a bit of the temper and motivations of the orphaned girl from rural Georgia.

"...a wicked gleam in her eye..." love the image.



### **The Case of Nellie Firmin.**

The examination of **Nellie Firmin**, alias Mrs. Thomas H. Blythe, on charges of embezzlement, obtaining goods by false pretences and petit larceny, which was to have taken place in the Police Court, was postponed on account of the inability of counsel for the accused to appear, he being engaged in another Court. The case went over until two o'clock next Monday afternoon.

Apparently attempting to kill former lovers was not the only mischief Mary got into while living in San Francisco.

The clipping above appears in the February 13, 1878 edition of San Francisco Examiner and shows that Blythe was probably pursuing her for actions taken while with him. I can find no resolution to the claims filed in the article and it is my guess that they were quietly dismissed after Mary/May/Nellie left the community. In later court records surrounding the estate of Blythe there are mentions of her having signed a document in 1879 renouncing any claim to his estate or for any support.

Continuing with the San Francisco Daily Times article that began this detour, we read about what she did after leaving the San Francisco area.

**William Jauncey Cruger** died nearly a year ago leaving his big estate to his wife, Mary Fambrough Cruger, the woman who claims she was once a widow of our Tom Blythe. The story of her life is as adventurous as that told of Alice Edith Dickason, Grandpa Perry or any of the strange characters that came to light in the hearing of the great will contest. Cruger met her somewhere in Australia fifteen years ago. At the time he was very ill and she acted as his nurse. After he recovered she traveled with him. Later, it is alleged, she married him, and they came to this country. At that time the clans were gathering for the great foray on Blythe's Market street block and his ten thousand acres of Mexican lands, but Mary Fambrough Cruger tossed her nose in the air and passed them by. She had a richer prize at hand, though she did not realize that she was going to inherit with it a lot of litigation that would outrival anything in the Blythe estate.

We have found evidence of a marriage taking place in Australia between Mary and William and her full inheritance of his fortune indicates that there was no question about regarding it. This gossip-laden piece from the Times was incorrect as the litigation for the Cruger estate ended up lasting less than a year.

The article continues on the next page...

### ***Why She Kept Out of the Case***

Subsequently she and Cruger went to France to live. It is said that they quarreled there and separated in 1897. At this time negotiations were had by which they were to be divorced and he was to settle one-third of his property on her. After the agreement was drawn up she claims she refused to sign it. He brought an action for divorce in France but it was never tried. Afterwards they were reconciled, at least so goes the story. One of her bitterest enemies in the fight over the estate is Meta Mourichon, the second wife of her husband's brother. Mrs. Mourichon has troubles of her own but she seems to be able to find time to tell all she knows and ever heard of the private life and character of the alleged Blythe "widow." In a late deposition she says: "My brother-in-law told me that soon after his marriage to this woman in Australia she told him that she thought it would be a good idea for her to go to San Francisco and take part in the contest over the four million dollar estate of Thomas Henry Blythe. She told him that she had formerly been the common law wife of Blythe and that she was traveling on an arrangement by which he gave her a large sum of money; that her claims to the estate were far better than any of those she had read about and that she felt certain she could get a widow's share of the property if she entered the contest. My brother-in-law,"

continues the witness, "urged her to keep out of the fight and the notoriety as he had plenty of money, and on his making certain promises of the way he would bequeath it she decided to make no appearance in the Blythe will contest."

### ***A Typical Blythe Widow***

"Mr. Cruger often told me," said the witness, that his wife was a woman of violent temper, extremely jealous, and was a great smoker and drinker. He said he was leading a dog's life with her and used to lament, 'Oh, if I could only get some peace before I die!' Here are a few scenes that read like the famous ones recited of Alice Edith in the O'Farrell street annex of Blythe's apartments:

"One night, in Paris," continues Mrs. Mourichon, "Mr. Cruger came to my rooms, his clothes were half torn off and he said that his wife was having a gay time, that she had smashed the decanters, thrown the candelabra out the windows and was dancing in even-

Governor Gage had a bottle of Chapin and Gore's Old Reserve Whisky at his elbow while writing his message.

The Blythe estate issues continued to have nationwide and even worldwide attention for a considerable time. From the many articles written about it we know that Mary did choose to become involved though her claims were dismissed quite early on.

Mary sounds like the perfect eccentric, rich aunt from every story ever written.



ing dress all over the place. He declared it was shocking. He told me that at Narragansett Pier the same scenes had occurred; that she had smoked and drunk, flung furniture out of the window, danced shocking dances, and had wound up by firing a fusillade from revolvers.”

—

To any of the audience who listened to the stories recited of the “doings” of Blythe’s alleged wives that woman wouldn’t have to submit any more evidence that she was one of the number. Barring the name it reads like one of Blythe’s nights at home with one of his wives in his Market street rooms. The finish of these two “domesticated” millionaires, though so similar, was different in a few slight details. Cruger resorted to morphine to quiet his nerves and threatened to leave his millions where nobody could get them, but he ended by leaving them to his wife and cutting off all his other rich relatives with ten dollars each. Now they are making all sorts of charges against her outside of the statutory undue influence. However, such charges won’t bother a woman who passed by without regret a chance to get a share of Blythe’s big estate.

This draws the San Francisco Daily Times article to a close but does lay the perfect groundwork to appreciate the other events that occurred in Mary’s life.

To glimpse both the source and trappings of the Cruger wealth let’s detour yet again into a story about William’s father’s estate known as Cruger’s Island in New York City. The land today is a national conservancy wildlife sanctuary with nesting bald eagles but during Mary’s marriage it was something far different.



This picture is from 1910 and shows some the “ruins” on Cruger’s Island placed there and decoration or curiosity by William’s father John Church Cruger. The “ruins” were actual Mayan sculptures looted from Central America and placed for effect around the property.





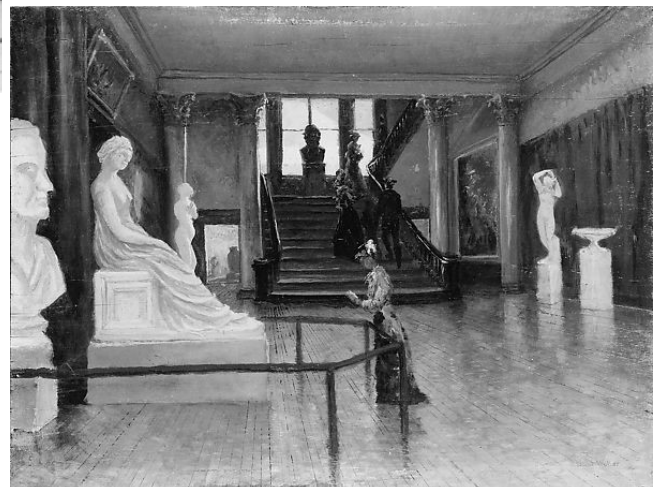
This is one of the Mayan totems located on the island through the 1920's. All of the original looted artifacts have been returned to their native countries or placed in museums.

All of the Cruger wealth came from real estate holdings. They owned blocks of downtown New York and collected rents on the property allowing their unusual lifestyle. One of his relatives lived in the mansion that would one day become the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Some views of her home are below.



Here is the Douglas Cruger mansion that would become the first Met Art Building.

A view of the interior from 1881.

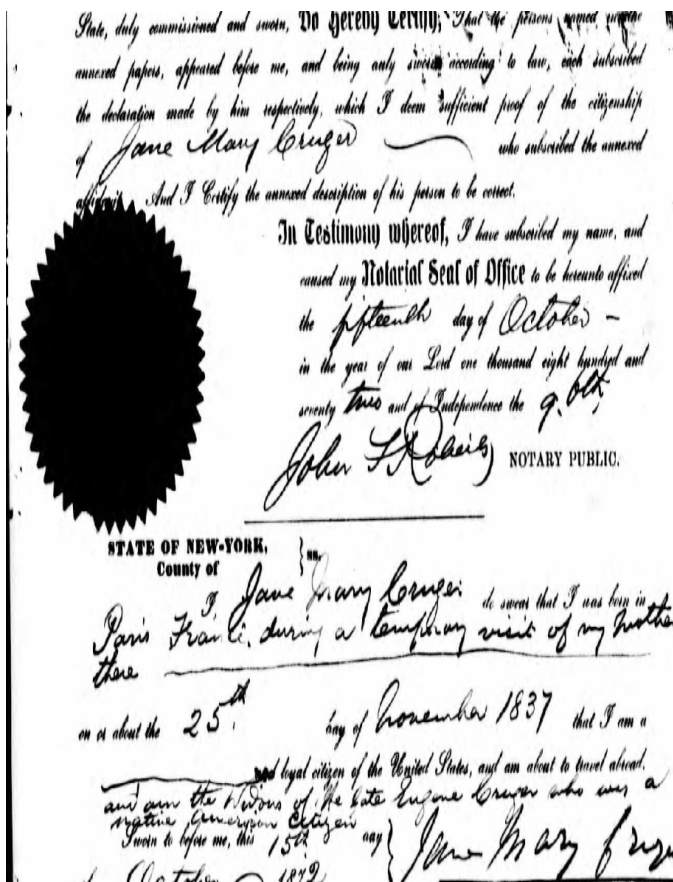


We can trace a bit of William's journeys around the world and glean a bit about when and where he met and married Mary. From all appearances the statement after his death of the couple being together for 15 years is exaggerated. I place their marriage as taking place in Australia sometime after 1880 and it is likely it took place that year.

20	f	Servants	France
17	m	—	U.S.
34	f	—	—
20	f	Servants	France

This is excerpt from a passenger manifest of the ship St. Laurent traveling from France to New York and arriving in July of that year. William is 17 years-old and traveling with 2 female companions, an older female relative and her servant born in France.

A view of the ship, St. Laurent from 1927, a combination of steam and sail power can be seen onboard.



This is a copy of Jeanne or Jane Marie Cruger's 1872 passport showing that she had been born in France. It is likely the servant mentioned in the passage was her servant.

William, Jeanne and Martine were all booked into the first class accommodations aboard the St. Laurent

Leura (s.), 1188 tons, Captain John Pain, for Melbourne. Passengers—Mrs. E. W. Andrews, Mrs. J. E. Byrne, Mrs. F. Solomon, Mrs. M. J. Demsey, Mrs. Worledge, Miss Worledge, Miss Peters, Miss Yates, Messrs. A. M. Whiting, W. L. Ross, F. W. Harwood, W. J. Harmer, Alfred E. Wright, J. W. Smith, R. Aspinall, Charles H. Scott, P. Vert, H. Williams, A. Hall. W. J. Cruger, D. Minnie, J. A. Nicoll, D. Brown, W. Watkins, M. J. Demsey, F. Paul, J. Sinclair, and 30 in the steerage.



This excerpt appeared in a Sydney, Australia newspaper on July 14, 1880. It shows that William was traveling alone aboard the S.S. Leura shown to the right. Since we know that Mary and William met and married in Australia, this clipping would indicate it occurred after 1880. There is an entry on Ancestry.com for an Australian marriage between the two but no date is connected with it.

15	Mr	Cruger	William	41
16	Mrs	d <sup>o</sup>	Mary	38

No.	"
F.	"

The passenger manifest clipping above is from June 29, 1896 and shows that William and Mary are traveling together from France to New York and appear to be married. The ship they were traveling on, the *La Bourgogne*, later sank in 1898 with a large loss of life among the passengers. It is interesting to note the ages on this manifest. Mary was born in 1850 and William in 1854. Mary's age here should be at least 4 years **older** than William's and instead she is lying about her age by seven years at least.



S. S. La Bourgogne in 1895



# MRS. W. J. CRUGER GETS HUSBAND'S ESTATE

Surrogate Thomas Admits the Will  
to Probate.

Says that the Letters of the Decedent to  
His Wife Show His Tender  
Affection for Her.

The will of William Jauncey Cruger, nephew of the late S. Van Rensselaer Cruger, who died in France, by which he left a large estate to his wife, Mary Fambrough Cruger, with the exception of a number of ten-dollar bequests to his brother, James Pendleton Cruger, and to a num-

Mary's husband, William Jauncey Cruger dies on April 7, 1900 and the estate is settled by the publication of this article in the New York Times dated November 13, 1900.

## FAMILY ROW IN HIGH LIFE

Stephen Van Rensselaer Cruger Sued by His Aunt for \$77,000 Invested in Florida.

New York, August 23.—Mrs. Mary Cruger today by her attorneys entered suit against her late husband's nephew, Stephen Van Rensselaer Cruger the well known financier and capitalist for the recovery of \$77,000.

Mrs. Cruger alleges that this sum was invested for her by her nephew in 1889, the money being put into the Florida West Coast Improvement Co. chartered for the purpose of developing and improving the gulf coast of Florida. The company became insolvent, and Mrs. Cruger alleges further that the defendant knew the company to be in an insolvent condition when he invested in it the money entrusted to him.

Not one to let bygones be bygones, Mary ends up suing her late husband's nephew for bad investments in 1904.

that I am domiciled in the United States, my permanent residence being at New York,  
in the State of New York, where I follow the occupation of nothing;  
that I am about to go abroad temporarily; and I intend to return to the United States within 1  
----- years with the purpose of residing and performing the duties of citizenship therein; and that I desire  
a passport for use in visiting the countries hereinafter named for the following purpose:

<u>Nassau &amp; Cuba,</u> (Name of country.)	<u>on account of my health.</u> (Object of visit.)
<u>-----</u> (Name of country.)	<u>-----</u> (Object of visit.)
<u>-----</u> (Name of country.)	<u>-----</u> (Object of visit.)

I intend to leave the United States from the port of Miami, or Key West, Florida  
(Port of departure.)  
sailing on board the first vessel leaving port, as soon as possible, 1917  
(Name of vessel.) (Date of departure.)

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.**  
Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States  
against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and  
that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion: So help me God.

May A. Cruger  
(Signature of Applicant)

Sworn to before me this 13th. day  
of November, 1917

Mary seems to have traveled quite a bit after the death of her niece, Maynita, in 1910. Here is the second page of her passport application from 1917 showing she is traveling to the Bahamas.

**AFFIDAVIT.**  
\*\*\*\*\*

I, James M. Jackson, a native born citizen of the United States, do declare upon oath, that I am a practicing physician in the city of Miami, Florida, that I have known Mrs. May A. Cruger, for two years, that she is a semi-invalid and I advise that she spend the winter as is her custom, in the Bahama Islands, in Nassau, for the benefit of her health.

James M. Jackson

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of November, 1917.

Carl R. [Signature] Notary Public.  
my Commission Expires May 11 1918

This is the physician's statement that accompanied her passport application. At various times it appears that Mary resides in Tampa, St. Augustine and Miami so she either kept a home in each or stayed in luxury hotels during the various tays, something her sister Ella did in Atlanta.

This clipping is from the May 7, 1929 Miami Herald and indicates she files a suit against the city for injuries suffered in a fall. It is interesting to note that she identifies as a musician, a trait that seems to have run in the family.

**MUSICIAN ASKS \$15,000  
FOR INJURY TO HAND**

Personal injuries received January 21 when she fell to the sidewalk in front of 410 S. W. Twelfth avenue are the basis for a damage suit of \$15,000, declaration of which was filed in Circuit court yesterday by **Mary A. Cruger** against the city of Miami. Miss **Cruger** alleges that the city negligently had allowed the sidewalk to be left in a dangerous condition when Twelfth street was widened in August, 1926, and new sidewalk laid. She said that she was a musician and that breaking

## CITY GETS VERDICT IN DAMAGE ACTION

Winter Visitor Asked \$25,000 for  
Sidewalk Fall  
Hurts

Verdict for the city was granted in circuit court late yesterday by Judge Uly O. Thompson in the \$25,000 damage suit filed by Mrs. **Mary A. Cruger**, 83, wealthy winter visitor, for injuries received when she tripped and fell in front of 410 S. W. 12th ave., Jan. 21, 1929.

Mrs. **Cruger**, who was represented by Van C. Swearingen, attorney, testified she had fallen over an obstruction on a city sidewalk which was in an unsafe condition. City witnesses contended the street at that point has no sidewalk.

Motion for the verdict was made by Mitchell D. Price for the city. Mrs. **Cruger**, it is understood, will take an appeal.

## Employer Hits Secretary Who Crosses Knees

MIAMI, May 20. (AP)—Claiming her employer struck her with a yardstick because she crossed her knees as she sat in a chair, Mrs. Myrtle Stubble filed suit here for \$10,000 damages against Mrs. **Mary A. Cruger** of Miami.

Mrs. Stubble said she formerly was employed as secretary and companion to Mrs. **Cruger**.

She charges that Mrs. **Cruger** struck her across the knees with a yardstick and told her that "women in my day didn't act that way."

Mrs. Stubble charges in her suit for damages that she had to be treated at a hospital for nervousness after the incident.

The suit filed in 1929 takes a long time to resolve. Mary loses but files an appeal that will actually still be in the courts for a year after her death. The city is found to not be liable in every case heard. This article helps us verify the person in the last article by giving us her age etc.

Before Mary's death in 1937, we get one more glimpse into her personality with this article that appeared in the May 20, 1933, Miami Fort Lauderdale News paper. One of her companions towards the end of her life sues her for mental anguish after getting swatted by a yardstick for crossing her legs.

I am struck by the difference in perspective from when she was much younger and a bit more wild. The antics of her youth and middle age would have paled in comparison to the freedoms experienced by women in the 1920's.



Telegraph Pine  
Cruger Mary A (wid Wm J) h2 Charlotte  
Crumley C Locke (Clarissa T) mgr Jefferson

Mary Cruger appears in the 1934 City Directory for St. Augustine, Florida. There are references to her time in St. Augustine where she is mentioned in social circles as being related the Flaglers. Of course this isn't true but it does sound like something she would have claimed while circulating in the wealthy society of Florida.

**MRS. MARY A. CRUGER**  
Mrs. Mary A. Cruger, 87, a winter visitor from Thomasville, Ga., residing at 469 S. W. Fifth street, died yesterday in a Miami hospital following a short illness. She had been here for two months. She leaves a sister, Mrs. Ella M. Arnold of Atlanta, Ga. The body will be sent today by the Joseph P. McGhan Funeral Home to Thomasville for burial.

On April 6, 1937, Mary dies in Miami. Her body is brought to Thomasville, GA for interment and likely the casket on the left inside the mausoleum. She did provide a lot of support to both her sister and her niece as we will see as we explore their lives in other pages here, so her impact on her family was profound.

In the end it is hard not to have an extreme amount of respect for Mary. Growing up an orphan in South Georgia and transforming herself into a budding actress and consort for men of extreme wealth for her time, capturing that wealth and using it to shelter and support her younger sister, nieces and nephews, all accomplishments worth noting.

**John Hamilton Swan**

**Maynita's Father**

## John Hamilton Swan

### Maynita's Husband

There are at least 3 times prior to her wedding that we see Maynita playing a wedding march for events or other weddings. During her time a woman getting married for the first time at 31 years of age would have placed her into a spinster type of category and everything about the pictures and information in her obituary leads me to believe that she was in love and looking forward to family and home. We know little about John Hamilton Swan. He is described as successful businessman here in Thomasville area but I have not been able to locate his occupation or business. In fact the first mention of him in a newspaper dates to 1907, a year before his marriage, and relates to his contribution to the Vashti Center here locally.

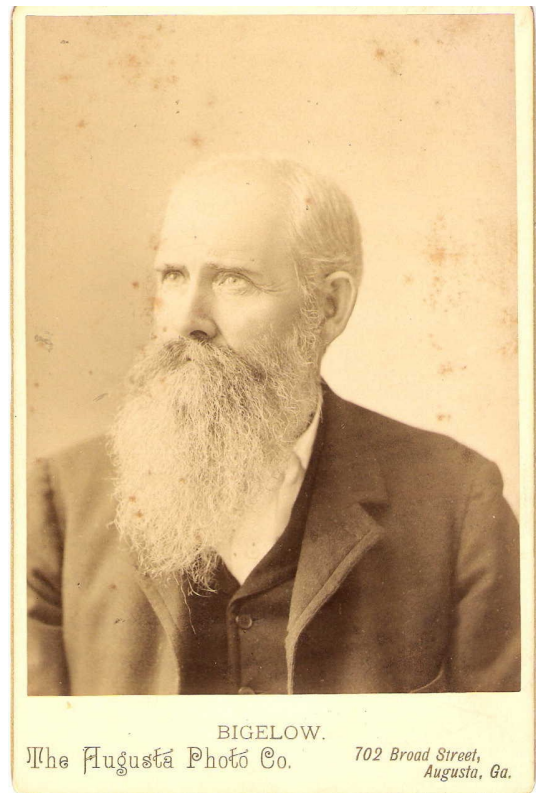
He does appear in the 1900 Federal Census living in Jefferson County, GA with his mother

Alice. In it she is al-

3	Alice	Head	W	30 yrs	1842	58	Wd
	John	Son	W	M	May 1880	20	S

ready a widow and living alone with her 20 year-old son. We were able to find picture of John's father Thomas on Ancestry. Thomas Edward Swan was born in 1834 and died in 1899, a year before the census record above. He was a farmer in Jefferson County, GA near the town of Milledgeville, GA.

There are some notes that his son, John Hamilton, followed in his father's footsteps though his interest seems to have been primarily poultry.





John appears in wedding announcements in the latter part of 1908 and again in 1910 in a trip to New York City with his wife and then in her obituary. By 1912 it appears he has left Thomasville, there is a record of Swan Cottage being sold in 1912 located on Love Street, and he is definitely in Atlanta by 1914.

FOR SALE—The six room **Swan** cottage, on Love St. Best material and every convenience. Flowers-Parker Realty Co. 9-5t.

Here is the World War 1 Draft Registration Card for John Hamilton Swan from September 1918. A couple of things to note, one it gives us his birthdate and second wife's name, and secondly we see that he resides in Jefferson County, GA. This is the same community where father farmed and as he is listed as a farmer himself, it is likely he is back on family property by 1918.

"Class September 1918"

### REGISTRATION CARD

SERIAL NUMBER	1573	ORDER NUMBER	A-1480
1	John	Hamilton	Swan
(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)			
2 PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS: Stillanville Jefferson Co. Ga.			
(No.) (Street or R. F. D. No.) (City or town) (County) (State)			
3	Age in Years	4	Date of Birth
38		May - 1	1880
(Month) (Day) (Year)			
RACE			
5	White	6	Negro
7	Oriental	8	Indian
9	Citizen	10	Non-citizen
U. S. CITIZEN			
11	Native Born	12	Naturalized
13	Citizen by Father's Naturalization Before Registrant's Majority	14	Declarant
15	Non-declarant		
15 If not a citizen of the U. S., of what nation are you a citizen or subject?			
16 PRESENT OCCUPATION		17 EMPLOYER'S NAME	
Farmer			
18 PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS:			
(No.) (Street or R. F. D. No.) (City or town) (County) (State)			
NEAREST RELATIVE	19	Name	
	20	Address	
Agnes Swan			
Stillanville Ga.			
(No.) (Street or R. F. D. No.) (City or town) (County) (State)			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE			
P. M. G. O. Form No. 1 (Rev. 1917)			
John Hamilton Swan			
(Registrant's signature or mark) (OVER)			

An early picture of Agnes Ramsey before her marriage to John Hamilton Swan.





This is John's family in 1920's. John Hamilton Swan is on the left, his second wife Agnes is on the far right. His two children by Agnes are in the middle, John Thomas Swan, middle left and his daughter Mary Maynita Swan. His daughter appears to be named for his first wife and her aunt whom we have written about here.

The family continues to reside in Jefferson County until sometime in the late 1920's when they move to Atlanta, GA. They appear on the 1930 census there and where on January 5, 1935, John dies at his home there.

**SWAN**—Mr. John Hamilton Swan died at the residence, 514 East Cambridge avenue, College Park, Saturday, January 5, 1935. Besides his wife he is survived by a daughter, Miss Maynita Swan; three sons, Mr. John Thomas Swan, Mr. Irvine Swan and Mr. Robert Lee Swan; a sister, Mrs. Carter Parish; sister-in-law, Mrs. R. L. Swan. The remains will be carried to Augusta, Ga., this (Sunday) evening at 9 o'clock via Georgia railway. Services will be held from R. E. Elliott & Sons' chapel Monday, January 7. Interment Magnolia cemetery. Brandon-Bond-Condon, 860 Peachtree street, N. E.



WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. Cause of death should be stated in plain terms, so that it may be properly classified. Exact statement of occupation is very important. Was disease or injury caused by dangerous or insanitary conditions or occupation? Where was disease contracted if not at place of death?

V.S.—2

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		1068	
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH			
Bureau of Vital Statistics			
1. PLACE OF DEATH		Registered No. 375	
County <u>Tulton</u> Militia District (Number and Name) _____ State of Georgia			
City or Town <u>College Park</u> Length of residence in this city or town: Yrs. _____ Mos. _____ Ds. _____ NON-RESIDENT (Yes or No) _____			
Street and Number (No.) <u>514</u> (Street) <u>E. Cambridge Dr</u> (If death occurred in a hospital, give its name instead of street and number)			
2. FULL NAME <u>John Hamilton Swan</u> 500			
Residence (City or Town) <u>College Park</u> (Street and Number) <u>514 E Cambridge</u> (State) <u>Ga</u>			
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS			
3. SEX <u>Male</u>	4. COLOR or RACE <u>White</u>	5. Single, Married, Widowed, Divorced (write the word) <u>Married</u>	
6. DATE OF BIRTH (month, day, year) <u>May 1, 1880</u>			
7. AGE	Years <u>54</u> Months <u>8</u> Days <u>4</u>	If less than one day Hours _____ Minutes _____	
8. OCCUPATION			
(a) Trade, profession or particular kind of work done, as spinner, sawyer, bookkeeper, etc. _____			
(b) Industry or business in which work was done, as cotton mill, sawmill, bank, etc. _____			
(c) Date deceased last worked at this occupation (month and year) _____ (d) Total years spent in this occupation _____			
9. BIRTHPLACE <u>Ga</u> (P. O. Address) _____			
10. NAME <u>Thomas Swan</u>			
11. BIRTHPLACE <u>Ga</u> (P. O. Address) _____			
12. MAIDEN NAME <u>Betty Bingham</u>			
13. BIRTHPLACE <u>Ga</u> (P. O. Address) _____			
14. INFORMANT (Signed) <u>Mrs. Agnes R. Swan</u> (Address) <u>College Park Ga</u>			
19. BURIAL PLACE <u>Magnolia Cemetery</u> (Cemetery) <u>Augusta Ga</u> (Postoffice) <u>Augusta Ga</u> Date <u>1/7/1935</u>			
20. UNDERTAKER (Signed) <u>Walden Bond</u> (Address) <u>Atlanta Ga</u>			
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH			
16. DATE OF DEATH <u>JAN 5</u> 19 <u>35</u> , at <u>8</u> P.M. (Month, Day, Year) (Hour)			
17. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended the deceased from <u>Dec 29</u> 19 <u>34</u> to <u>JAN 5</u> 19 <u>35</u>			
I last saw him alive on <u>JAN 5</u> 19 <u>35</u> , death is said to have occurred on the date and hour stated above.			
The principal cause of death and related causes of importance in the order of onset and duration of each: <u>TUBERCULOSIS (BILATERAL) PULMONARY</u>			
Other contributory causes of importance: <u>CARDIAC DECOMPENSATION.</u>			
What test confirmed diagnosis? <u>CLINICAL EVIDENCE</u> (Specify whether autopsy, operation, laboratory, or clinical)			
If death was due to external causes (violence) fill in also the following:			
Was injury an accident, suicide, or homicide? <u>✓</u>			
Where did injury occur _____ (Specify city or town, if outside of limits, the county, and also the state)			
Did injury occur in a home, public place or industry? <u>✓</u>			
Manner of injury <u>✓</u>			
Nature of injury <u>✓</u>			
(Signed) <u>Charles H. Daniel</u> M.D. (Address) <u>College Park, Ga</u>			
15. FILED <u>JAN 7 1935</u>			
(Signed) <u>W. S. L. Gilbert</u> (Local Registrar)			

This is the death certificate for John Hamilton Swan and shows his death was due to tuberculosis, most likely the same condition that ended his first wife's life in 1910.



Here is the hanging picture in the mausoleum on the left and the 1920's picture of John Swan on the right, are these photographs of the same person?





## Mary Maynita Swan

### John Hamilton Swan's daughter from his second marriage

In case you have noticed this document and its story are full of detours. I didn't delve too deeply into John Swan's second family since none are interred in Thomasville and after 1910, the don't seem to be involved in the story of the mausoleum. One exception to this is a daughter from John's second marriage named Mary Maynita Swan. It appears that her name was drawn from John's first wife and perhaps her aunt Mary as well. Her name does seem to indicate that there was a lifelong affection and loss associated with Maynita Arnold in John's life, a part of the romance that surrounds the lore of the mausoleum.



This is a picture of Mary Maynita from the 1920's when still a teenager living with her family. Mary was born in 1915 and eventually married in 1943.

Her marriage certificate appears to the right. As with many young women during the war years, Mary was a G.I. bride, getting married in Virginia to a member of the U.S. Army.

CITY OF RICHMOND COUNTY OF RICHMOND								COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA				9093	
FULL NAME OF GROOM								Gerakitis, George Theodosius Gerakitis				CLERK'S No. A-COPY	
PRESENT NAME OF BRIDE								Mary Maynita Swan				MAIDEN NAME	
GROOM				BRIDE									
AGE	RACE	SINGLE, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED	NO. TIMES PREV. MARRIED	AGE	RACE	SINGLE, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED	NO. TIMES PREV. MARRIED						
27	W	Single		27	W	single							
OCCUPATION				INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS									
U S Army				Atlanta, Ga									
BIRTHPLACE				Columbia, S C									
FATHER'S FULL NAME				John H Swan									
Theodosius Gerakitis				Agnes Ramsey									
MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME				Theodosia Protopappas									
RESIDENCE: CITY OR COUNTY MAILING ADDRESS				Camp Lee, Va 0740				Atlanta, Ga 11					
Date of Proposed Marriage				April 24, 1943				Place of Proposed Marriage					
Given under my hand this				APR 24 1943				Richmond, Va					
Blanche E. Harman acting				Clerk of				Hastings Court.					
CERTIFICATE OF DATE AND PLACE OF MARRIAGE													
I, Robert E. Davis, a Minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church, or													
religious order of that name, do certify that on the 24 day of April, 1943								City of Richmond					
Virginia, under authority of this license, I joined together in the Holy State of Matrimony the persons named and described therein. I qualified and gave bond according to law authorizing me to celebrate the rites of marriage in the county (or city) of Richmond Commonwealth of Virginia.													
Given under my hand this 24 day of April, 1943													
Address of celebrant 815 E. Grace St.								Robert E. Davis					
								(Person who performs ceremony sign here.)					

# Miss Swan Weds Mr. Gerakitis At Ceremony in Richmond

The marriage of Miss Mary Maynita Swan, daughter of Mrs. John Hamilton Swan and the late Mr. Swan, to George T. Gerakitis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Theodosius Gerakitis, was quietly solemnized at high noon yesterday in the chapel of St. Paul's Episcopal church in Richmond, Va.

Easter lilies adorned the chancel of the chapel, the rear of which was massed with palms. Tall white candles burned in branched candelabra.

Mrs. Don L. Shannon Jr. was the bride's matron of honor and only attendant. She wore an ensemble of brown and white checked crepe and brown accessories. Her flowers were gardenias. Don L. Shannon attended the bridegroom as best man.

The attractive titian-haired bride chose for her wedding a smart brown suit, with which she wore a white organdy blouse trimmed in a jabot of lace and organdy. Her accessories were brown alligator, and her gloves were white. A cluster of white orchids completed her costume. The bride carried the linen and lace handkerchief which was carried by Mrs. Milner LaHatte, the former Miss Patricia Noot, at her wedding.

Following the ceremony Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Chamberlaine entertained for the couple at a wedding breakfast at their home in Richmond. Guests included the bridal party and a few friends.

Mr. Gerakitis and his bride are honeymooning in Petersburg, Va.

The bride graduated from Russell High school, after which she became connected with the Atlanta Georgian. She is now associated with the Atlanta Journal.



MRS. GEORGE T. GERAKITIS

Mrs. Swan, mother of the bride, is the former Miss Agnes Ramsey, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Emmett Ramsey, of Augusta. The bride's father was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Swan. She has three brothers, John T. Swan, of Birmingham; Robert L. Swan, of Augusta, and William Irvin Swan, who is with the U. S. Army in Africa.

The bridegroom graduated from Boys' High school, and later attended Alabama Polytechnic Institute, where he was a Sigma Nu pledge and a member of the football team. He is now with the U. S. Army, stationed at Camp Lee, Va. Mrs. Charles Vocalis, of Atlanta, is his only sister.

This is my favorite article about Mary, it is from April 26, 1943 and describes the marriage between Mary and her husband George. The picture is a perfect representation of the strength of women during the war years. Among the comments in the article is description of Mary being "titian-haired", a tint of red to her hair.



# Beauty News

By **MAYNITA GERRY**

Do you know that YOU and YOU and YOU bought 8,000 miles of lipsticks in 1946? That is equal to a trip to China, if you went the hard way . . . straight down.

The latest trick in lipsticks, aside from the trick of turning a sophisticated girl back into an innocent with a pale, pastel lip-color, is to use two shades of lipstick for one mouth. If the upper lip is thin, or vice versa, try highlighting it with a lighter, blending lip tone, using the deeper shade on the full lip.

This is a sample opening paragraph penned by Mary Maynita on December 26, 1947, for the fashion and home column she wrote for various newspapers in the Atlanta, GA metro area.

## **Maynita Gerry** Appointed Constitution Fashion Editor

**Maynita Gerry**, who has served on the staff of The Constitution's Woman's Department as fashion and interior decorating assistant, has been appointed Constitution Fashion Editor. She will direct news coverage on fashions, cosmetics and beauty and home furnishings.

Miss **Gerry**, who is Mrs. George Gerakitis in private life, was the former **Maynita Swan**. She was previously associated with both the Atlanta Georgian-American and the Atlanta Journal and has been connected with The Constitution since last Summer.

She assumed a new role as noted in this May 7, 1948 article.

## *The Glass of Fashion*

By **MAYNITA GERRY**  
Constitution Fashion Editor

NEW YORK—Your chances of striding confidently into Spring this year are exceedingly slim. So slim, in fact, that you'll be lucky to find "standing room only" in some of the new skirts.

As for running for the bus or stepping briskly into a taxi—these are out unless you look well in bandages from the hips down. In case of fire, break out of your skirt first.

What was the exception yesterday has become the rule today among the Spring and Summer fashion collections of Christian Dior, Montesano and Pruzen, Maurice Rentner and Hattie Carnegie being shown by the New York Dress Institute.

Slim skirts take various and often devious forms, but that they have now taken form is definite. Many of Dior's new slim skirts are little more than tubes, opened at both ends. With these last

January 11, 1950 talking to the latest fashion of slim skirts.



## **Mrs. Maynita Gerakitis, former fashion editor**

Mrs. Maynita Swan Gerakitis of Atlanta, a former fashion and home furnishings editor of The Atlanta Constitution, died of cancer Wednesday at Piedmont Hospital. She was 72.

A memorial service will be at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The body was cremated.

Mrs. Gerakitis was the paper's fashion and home furnishings editor from 1942 to 1951, writing as "Maynita Gerry."

Maynita Swan was born Aug. 28, 1915, in Columbia, S.C. Her family later moved to Atlanta. She worked for a year for the Atlanta Georgian until its demise in 1939; for The Atlanta Journal as secretary to managing editor Wright Bryan from 1939 to 1942; and for the Constitution.

She was a member of St. Luke's Episcopal Church.

Surviving are her husband, George T. Gerakitis Sr.; three sons, George T. Gerakitis Jr., Charles H. Gerakitis and Richard Gerakitis, all of Atlanta; a brother, Robert Swan of Atlanta; and two grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to St. Luke's Episcopal, 435 Peachtree Street N.E., Atlanta 30308.

Mary died June 8, 1988 at the age of 72 in the town she loved, Atlanta, GA. The obituary telling a bit of her story appears to the left

**Ella Milton Fambro Arnold**

**Maynita's mother**

## Ella M. Fambro Arnold

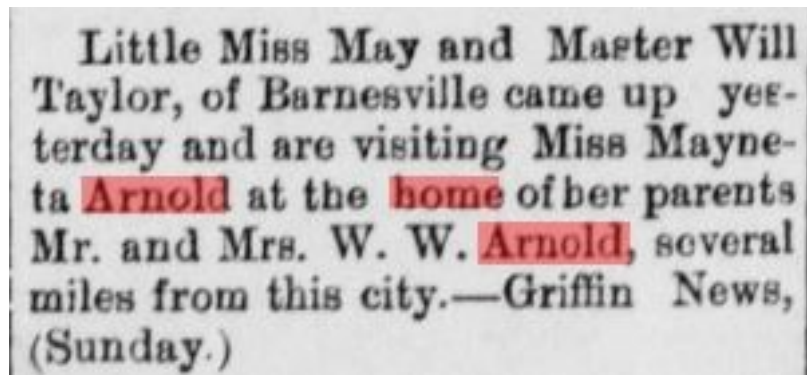
### Maynita's mother

Maynita's mother, Ella Milton Fambro Arnold was born on April 26, 1855, and like her siblings grew up with her grandfather on a rural Georgia farm after losing her parents by the start of the Civil War. She was almost 5 years younger than her sister Mary whom we have explored earlier, and spent almost her entire life in Georgia.

She married William Wynn Arnold on August 24, 1873 when she was 18 years-old. She had lost her grandfather a year earlier and the family's property would be sold at sale a few years later as she embarked on her life with William. The young couple spent 4 years in Colorado before returning home to Georgia and settling near Barnesville, GA by 1892.

Every mention in any newspaper article after their return to Georgia mentions Mrs. W. W. Arnold and various other family members for friends but on only two occasions is Mr. Arnold mentioned, once in 1894 and another in 1899. The overwhelming impression I get from reading newspaper accounts is that Mary Arnold Cruger shared her good fortune with her younger sister and this money allowed Ella to live independently and quite well.

We know that Mary Cruger and William Cruger married sometime after 1880 so Mary must have had some access to his fortune. The clipping below is from the July 19, 1894 edition of the Barnesville Gazette:



Little Miss May and Master Will Taylor, of Barnesville came up yesterday and are visiting Miss Maynita **Arnold** at the **home** of her parents Mr. and Mrs. W. W. **Arnold**, several miles from this city.—Griffin News, (Sunday.)

This article matches a lot of other sources we have and shows that the Arnold family, with both parents, are living on a homestead outside Barnesville, GA. The community was Zebulon and the family settled there in about 1892.



Miss Lena **Arnold**, of Allendale, S. C., is in the city the guest of her sister, Mrs. W. W. **Arnold** on Elm **street**.

This clip from the July 29, 1897 newspaper shows the implied breakup of the family or perhaps even the death of William Wynn. Here Mrs. Arnold is entertaining her sister at a home on Elm Street in Barnesville, GA. She will be in this home for quite some time and appears to own it by this date.

#### **Quite an Addition.**

The plans for the addition to the home of Mrs. W. W. **Arnold** on Elm **street** have been received and they show that the addition will be a very important one and will add much to the already handsome home. It will be a wing to the house, extending east on Elm **street**. The new portion will be elegantly finished up. The roof will be arranged for flowers, and Mrs. **Arnold** has already ordered some fine flowers for it. This improvement will begin as early as possible now. Mr. A. O. Bennett has the contract for the work.

April 13, 1899, Ella is putting an addition onto the house she owns on Elm Street in Barnesville. As we see in this and all articles that follow, there is no mention of her husband. The implied money necessary to complete additions and purchase homes is most likely from the Cruger fortune.

#### **Mrs. Arnold Buys.**

**Mrs.** W. W. **Arnold** has bought the Bush place on Elm street, which includes the house and lot which joins her present home. The location is a splendid one and the house is now occupied by Dr. J. M. Brittain. **Mrs. Arnold** has recently made very important additions to her home and she now owns two of the most valuable lots on the street.

August 17, 1899, Ella purchases the home on the same street as her own. It seems likely that she intended this home for one of her children. Ella, Maynita and two of Ellas's sons are on Elm Street in the 1910 Federal Census.



This is the home owned by Ella in Barnesville, GA. You can see the one-story addition to the right side which is the Eastern side of the home. This photograph is taken from Elm Street.

The Arnold House at the corner of Elm and Arnold Streets.



A view of the home from Arnold Street. This is the West side of the home. The address of the home is 423 Elm Street, Barnesville, GA.



**Mrs. Arnold at Cumberland.**

Mrs. W. W. Arnold, Miss Maynita and Mr. Julian Arnold are spending the summer at Cumberland island. Mrs. Arnold entertained at a tally-ho ride Tuesday and the Augusta Chronicle has the following mention:

Mrs. W. W. Arnold of Barnesville, Ga., who enjoys a reputation for royal hospitality, complimented a congenial party of friends with a tally-ho ride to Dungeness, on Tuesday last.

The affair was ideal in every way and was voted by all as the merriest entertainment given on the island this season.

Those who participated in this pleasure were: Mrs. Skellie, of Macon; Mrs. A. B. Robinson, of Atlanta; Mrs. Arnold, of Barnesville; Miss Essie Skellie, of Macon; Miss Essie Bentschner, of Savannah; Miss Maynita Arnold, of Barnesville; Mr. Julian Arnold, of Barnesville; Mr. E. A. Alston, Jr., of Macon; Mr. R. M. Bisell, of Augusta, and Mr. Russell, of

July 13, 1902, Maynita her brother and mother Ella are visiting a resort on Cumberland Island and lavishly entertaining friends.

June 18, 1903, Ella entertains friends at her home in Barnesville. She continues to have company visit according to the newspapers through the end of 1904 but visitation seem to stop after that.

Miss May Taylor, of Atlanta, arrived in the city last Thursday and is the guest of the family of Mrs. W. W. **Arnold** on **Elm street**. She is a former resident of this city and has a large number of friends who are glad to welcome her among them again.



**FOR RENT—Furnished and unfurnished rooms and Boarders wanted. Apply Mrs. Cora Dar-  
ragh, Arnold house, Elm street.**

September 26, 1907,  
Ella's home is referred to  
as the Arnold House and it  
is for rent. The timeline  
for visits to cease and the  
house to become a rental

corresponds perfectly with the timeline we have of Ella's daughter Maynita, and her future husband John Swan meeting sometime in 1905 during the family's visit to Thomasville, GA.

« Daniel S shoe maker 829 Marieta, r sam  
« Ella M, widow William W, r 196 Juniper  
« Emma Miss, r 147 Peeples  
« Joseph E (Florence), conductor Sou Ry, r 390 Luckie  
« Julian E, clerk Western Union Tel Co, r 196 Juniper  
« Lawrence W, v-pres Sou S & B University, r 136 W Pea  
« Maynita Miss, r 196 Juniper

The clips above are from the 1908 Atlanta City Directory and show that Ella was living with her daughter and son there. Julian is listed as working for Western Union and Ella is indicating that she is a widow by this point in time. This living arrangement must have been just before the marriage of Maynita and John later on in December, 1908.

Ella travels with her daughter in 1910 and in the Federal Census that year is shown living with them in Thomasville, GA. This last census that they would all appear in was taken 7 months before Maynita's death and shows the family residing on Jefferson Street. I can assume that Ella is now in Thomasville caring for ill daughter.

There is a reference to a Swan Cottage on Love Street being sold in 1912, about a year -and-a-half after Maynita's death and I am unable to determine now whether that cottage was purchased just before or just after Maynita's death. The location of the cottage of Love Street would have made the mausoleum very accessible, facilitating El-  
las's visits and piano playing during 1911.

We have a gap in Ella's life between 1912 and 1926 where we find her again in Atlanta and likely residing at the Imperial Hotel there. 1926 was a busy year for Ella as the clip-  
pings on the next page will show.

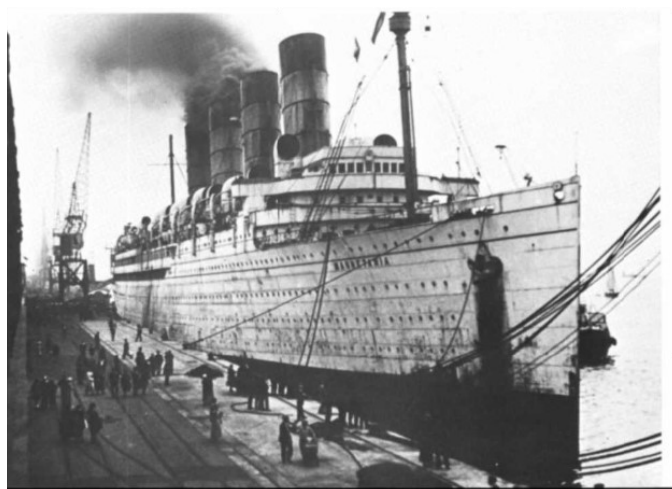
## **Mrs. North Honors Mrs. R. P. Brooks.**

Mrs. John T. North entertained at an informal tea Wednesday afternoon at the Atlanta Biltmore hotel in honor of Mrs. Richard P. Brooks, of Forsyth, who leaves the 20th of January with Mrs. North for a tour around the world.

Among the guests were Mrs. Mary Hines Gunsaulus, Mrs. **Ella M. Arnold**, Miss Frances Brown and Miss Theodosia Beckham, who will be members of the same party on the world tour, and Mrs. Eva Goddard, of Griffin, who will accompany them to Honolulu.

January 7, 1926, Ella is having tea with a couple who are planning on traveling around the world. Ella herself would be traveling this same year as can be seen below.

2    **ARNOLD**    Ella    71 - F W



Here Ella's name appears on the passenger list of a ship of Cunard Line called The Mauratania. She arrived in New York harbor on June 4, 1926 making the crossing from England. The Mauratania was a sister ship to the more famous Queen Elizabeth which is on display in England. She traveled as a first-class passenger on this voyage.

Arnold, Ella M.    Lodger

The entry for Ella on the 1930 Federal Census. She is lodged at the Imperial Hotel in Atlanta, the same place she will appear on the 1940 Census.

20	Arnold	Julian	21	M S	October 27th, 1910	- Atlanta, Ga.
21	Arnold	Ella M.	76	F W	April 26th, 1866	- Cartersville, Ga.

Ella's last adventure seems to take place in 1932. She, and her grandson Julian, appear on a passenger list for a ship called S. S. Exeter sailing from Naples, Italy to Boston in the United States.



S.S. Exeter

**MRS. ELLA M. ARNOLD.**  
 Mrs. Ella M. Arnold, of 355 Peachtree street, N. E., died late Sunday at the residence. Funeral services will be held at 4:30 p. m. tomorrow at Spring Hill, with Dr. Robert W. Burns officiating. Burial will be in Thomasville, Ga. Mrs. Arnold is survived by her son, Julian E. Arnold, and two grandchildren, Miss Louise Arnold and Private Harry F. Arnold Jr.

Ella will die on Sunday, December 5, 1943 in Atlanta. The address given in her obituary above from the Atlanta Constitution is for the Imperial Hotel where she had resided for at least 13 years. Her body is returned to Thomasville for internment which lends credence to one of the three caskets belonging to Ella. As the last likely internment I believe her casket lies on the far left side of the mausoleum and most likely the ghostly piano was removed at this time.

*Note: Ella spent at least 13 years living in the Imperial Hotel in Atlanta. This hotel still stands though it has now been converted into subsidized housing for senior citizens.*



**William Wynn Arnold**

**Maynita's father**

## William Wynn Arnold

### Maynita's father

Research into William Wynn Arnold only bolstered my belief that the story surrounding Maynita is one of a strong matriarch borne of the orphaned sisters of Ella and Mary bonding over a lifetime of hardship and privilege. We have completed extensive research into the life of all of the members of Maynita's family and at the end of it we know the absolute least about her father William. We have not yet found his date of death, where he is buried and many other things about his life. He mysteriously disappears sometime around 1899 from newspaper accounts and may have been absent from the family's life as early as 1897. Our last knowledge of him dates from around 1892 and comes from a Yale publication from 1892 that gave a bio of various graduates from the 1841 Yale University class.

William's father and grandfather were also named William Wynn, just to make things interesting when doing historical research. William's father was a lawyer, his grandfather's occupation is unknown.

The excerpt from the 1892 Semi-Centennial Historical & Biographical Record of the Class of 1841, Yale University that speaks about Maynita's father is shown below:

*William Wynn*, born June 7, 1851, married near Leesburg, Lee Co., Ga., August 24, 1873, Miss Ella M. Fambro; was in the lumber business in Allendale till 1879, after which he resided in Denver for four years; in 1883 returned to his native State, and purchased a house near Griffin, Ga., where he now resides as a farmer. Like his sisters, he is a member of the Baptist Church. He has had five children: Harry Fambro, born July 28, 1875; William Wynn, born March 31, 1877, and died May 16, 1878; Mary Neta, born April 7, 1879; Lucius Cicero, born July 22, 1881, and died February 16, 1884; Julian Eppinger, born February 18, 1885.

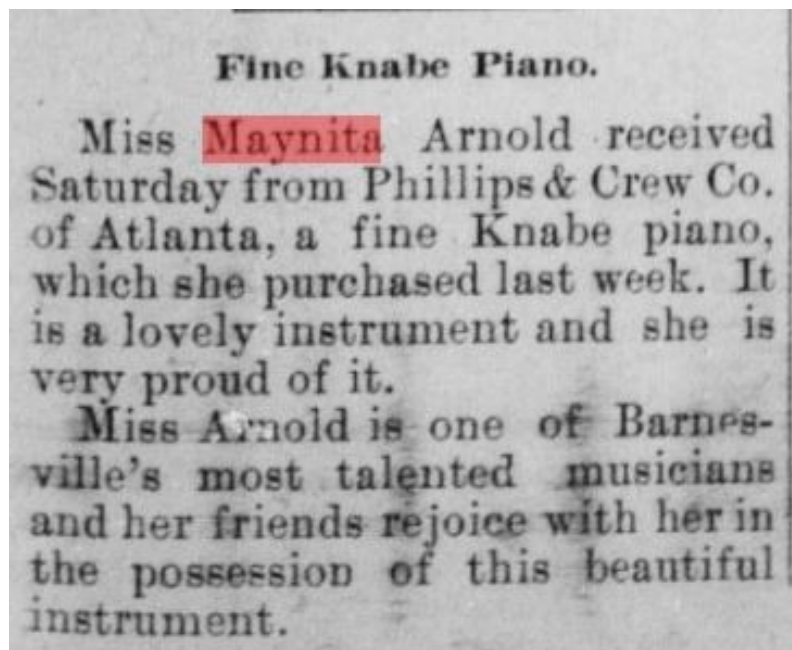




## **Maynita's Piano and Music**

## Maynita's Piano

In the serendipitous way of things once one begins resurrecting the legacy of people like Maynita, we actually know quite a bit about the ghostly piano that once sat inside the mausoleum. Though the actual piano is long gone, probably removed during the last interment in 1943, we have some historical resources to call upon. The clipping below is from the September 11, 1902 Barnesville Gazette and informs us as to the brand, time and place Maynita's beloved piano was purchased.



I spoke to Mr. Craig Bloch with the piano store here in Thomasville and he said the Knabe piano of this time rivalled the Steinway instruments and was probably the best American-made piano ever. The ads for this piano from the early part of the 20th Century would fit the view Maynita probably had of herself and that of the people around her. The ad to the left is from a 1908 edition of Collier's Mag-

# THE PHILLIPS & CREW PIANO

## Only One Grade Made.

Unexcelled in tone, touch, action and workmanship. Sold at a moderate price, on easy payments. Any industrious man can secure right now the **Artistic Phillips & Crew Piano** without missing the money. Write for prices and terms.

**WE ARE SOUTHERN AGENTS FOR**


STEINWAY PIANOS,  
KNABE PIANOS,  
WEBER PIANOS,  
WEBER PIANOLA PIANOS,  
STECK PIANOLA PIANOS,  
WHEELOCK PIANOLA PIANOS,  
STUYVESANT PIANOLA PIANOS,  
FISCHEE PIANOS,  
HARDMAN PIANOS,  
CROWN PIANOS,  
PRICE & TEEPLE PIANOS,  
WHEELOCK PIANOS,  
RADLE PIANOS,  
STORY & CLARK PIANOS,  
STERLING PIANOS,  
BIDDLE PIANOS,  
VOCALIONS,  
FARRAND ORGANS,  
PHILLIPS & CREW ORGANS,  
**ALL SOLD ON EASY PAYMENTS.**

Write for Catalogues.

# PHILLIPS & CREW CO.

37 and 39 Peachtree Street, ATLANTA

# VICTOR TALKING MACHINES



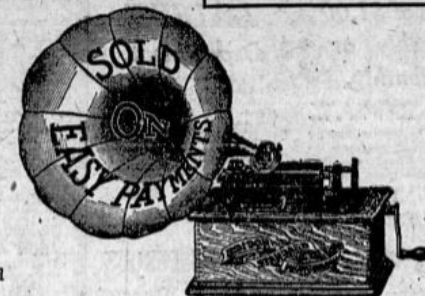
THEY SING,  
PLAY, TALK,  
EVERYTHING JUST  
LIKE REAL LIFE!  
EASY TERMS BY WEEK  
OR MONTH.

**Prices**  
**\$10**  
**Upward.**  
EASY TERMS BY WEEK  
OR MONTH.

## Edison Phonographs

No Needle to Change,  
Natural, Smooth,  
Sweet-toned rendition of  
Vocal Music,  
Band Music,  
Orchestra Music,  
Every Kind of Music!

**Prices**  
**\$10**  
**Upward.**  
Write for Catalogues and  
Prices of Both Machines.



# PHILLIPS & CREW CO.

Wholesale and Retail Distributors, ATLANTA

The above ad appeared in the newspaper Atlanta Georgian in 1906 and give you an idea of the products and brands the Phillips & Crew store would have carried. The building housing this store no longer exists and it would have been located near the section of Atlanta known as "Little 5 Points" which is an art district now.

Below is a Knabe upright piano from 1901, an example of how Maynita's piano may have appeared.



I believe strongly that Maynita's piano was an upright or vertical model for two compelling reasons. First, the piano would have had to be transported from Atlanta to Barnesville and ultimately to Thomasville and an upright would be far easier to transport than the grand pianos sold by Knabe during this time.



The second reason also allowed us to solve the mystery surrounding one of the textiles in the mausoleum and dawned on me when I read an ad in the Barnesville Gazette for a piano store in Augusta from 1896, the ad appears below:

**THOMAS & BARTON'S MAMMOTH STORE.**  
**A CHANCE OF YOUR LIFE TO BUY A**  
**FINE PIANO FOR \$165. FINE ORGAN FOR \$35.**  
**CASH ONLY.**

Stool and Embroidered Scarf with each Piano. Stool and Instruction Book—"Full of beautiful music," with each Organ.

Sebastian Sommer. All Delivered at your Depot Freight Prepaid For The Above Named Price.

**This Is For Our Special Summer Slaughter Sale. And It Will Only Last A Short Time. Do you see the importance of sending your order without delay?**

**Now is the time for you to buy!**

General Agents for the following celebrated PIANOS AND ORGANS.  
 EVERETT, WHESTOCK, WEBER, STUYVESANT, KNABE, STULTZ & BAUER, HARVARD, PANIOS, FARRAUD and VOTY ORGANS.

The largest and most complete line of Pianos, Organs and Musical Instruments, Ever exhibited in the South, and at prices and terms that defy competition.

**THOMAS & BARTON, 708 and 710 Broad Street, AUGUSTA, Ga.**

Catalogue on Application. Mention this paper.

Here is the part of the ad that caught my attention.



Not being a musician I had not encountered a "piano scarf" before but realized that this perfectly fit one of the textiles in the mausoleum shown on the left.

Maynita's Piano Scarf

To give you some idea of the popularity and quality of the Knabe pianos there were several 20th Century personalities who owned one.



Albert Einstein owned a beloved Knabe Baby Grand piano.

As did Elvis Presley, seen here with white baby grand piano. This model was built in 1912 and is on display at Graceland.



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

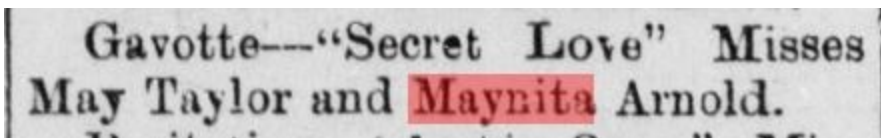


On the left is an 1838 Knabe piano owned by Francis Scott Key, a composer and lyricist Maynita would have known of through her education. This piano is at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, TN on display in their lobby.

## Maynita's Music

We have a surprising legacy of music that Maynita is known to have listened to. Garnered from numerous newspaper articles and a program from a commencement exercise, we have a list of works she performed or chose. I am in the process of creating a link to the sound files of each piece of music I can find and will be sharing it on our website in the near future.

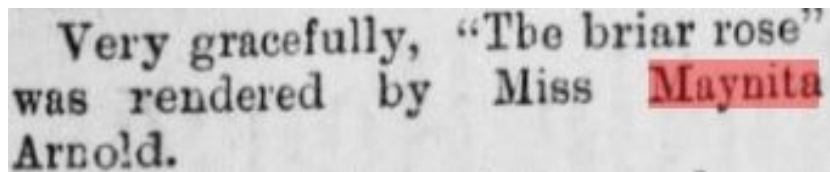
The first mention of music in Maynita's world occurs on March 3, 1894 when the following mention appears in the Barnesville Gazette.



Note, an audio version of this music appears on our site if you would like to listen to it

Maynita would have been 16 years old and a student at the Gordon Institute when she performed this piece. Entitled "Secret Love" and also known by the title "True Love", this selection was in the form of a "gavotte" which after research was revealed to be a French dance and accompanying music popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. This particular piece was composed by Johann Resch in 1876 and was his most popular composition. As with many of the pieces associated with Maynita, there is some meaning or personality attached to the selections she made. Here we have a teenager expressing all the longings of her age in the music she played for her classmates.

The next selection we find just a short time later in the June 19, 1894 edition of the Barnesville paper.



I have been unable to find a recording of this piece. I was able find the sheet music for it and a portion of the first sheet can be seen on the next page.



**BRIAR ROSE.**  
P. HEYSE.

English Words by ELLIS GRAY.      GEORGE VIERLING. Op. 37.

*Allegretto animato.*

1st & 2d. SOPRANOS.

*f*      *p dolce.*      *p dolce.*  
Sweet bri-ar rose, Sweet bri - ar rose.

1st & 2d. ALTOS.

She met the fai - ry spin ner,      Her

*Allegretto animato.*

PIANO.  
ad libitum.

*f*      *p dolce.*

This choral/piano piece was published in Boston, MA in 1880 and was written for four women's voices and an accompanying piano. It is a fairytale piece and laden with foreshadowing of Maynita's own life. Briar Rose is the title of a Grimm Brothers story that we know by a different name from our Disney youth. Today we know the story as **Sleeping Beauty** a perfect description of Maynita's fate.

When this had died away the familiar and ever delightful music of Mendelssohn's wedding march filled the hall and many were reminded of events in the past, while many no doubt hoped for events in the future. Under the instruction of Miss Sophia Jones, the following young ladies made the old march send forth its sweetest music:

Misses Mattie DeVaughn, **Maynita** Arnold, Wille Hightower, Alice Myers, Mary Rice, Clyde Ellis, Lillie Mitchel, Louie Summers, May Mabbitt.

This next excerpt is from May 2, 1895 and shows Maynita performing the "Mendelssohn Wedding March", a famous piece taken from music composed for Shakespeare's play, "A MidSommer's Night Dream" in 1847. Made famous by Queen Victoria who used the piece as music for her wedding in 1858, it again has echoes for Maynita's future marriage and was likely used during her ceremony in 1908.

*Note: This piece is so common I have chosen not to offer an audio version of it on our website archive.*

# Graduating Exercises.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1895.

1. Overture to William Tell; Rossini; Misses **Maynita** Arnold, May Taylor, Mattie DeV Vaughn, Ethel Fincher, Minnie Kendrick, Maggie Slocum.

At the graduation exercises for Maynita's class in June, 1895, Maynita played several pieces of music. The first is shown above and acted as the opening music to the event.

## ALL OVER AT BARNESVILLE.

### A Literary Entertainment Closes Commencement at Gordon Institute.

Barnesville, Ga., June 20.—(Special.)—Last night was the final entertainment of the Gordon institute commencement and a most brilliant affair it was.

The literary feature of the entertainment was under the direction of Miss Sallie Candler, who made a most happy hit in the selection of both play and characters, and the music was never better, the orchestra playing perfectly. The following is the programme:

## PART SECOND.

"Malla Waltzes," Debbs, Misses Carrie Cook, **Maynita Arnold**, Alice Simonton, Willie Hightower, Belle Rose, Mrs. H. W. Battle.

"March of the Videttes"—Muhler—Mary Minninnett, Fannie Smith, Belle Rose, Fannie Jenkins, Minnie Kendrick, Leila Stewart, Maynita Arnold, Ethel Fincher and May Taylor.

"Popular Fallacies" (Original)—Miss Maynita Arnold.

Music, "Germania"—Moszkowski—Misses

Music, "Germania"—Moszkowski—Misses Maynita Arnold, Carrie Cook, Willie Hightower, Alice Simonton, Belle Rose and Mrs. H. W. Battle.

Maynita performed several times during the Gordon Exercises. There are five selections attached to her name including one original entitled "**Popular Fallacies**". We have located audio copies of the "**Manila Waltz**" and "**March of the Videttes**" for future presentation.

Note: the word **Vidette** is generally spelled **Vedette** and refers to a type of military scout positioned ahead of the main army group.



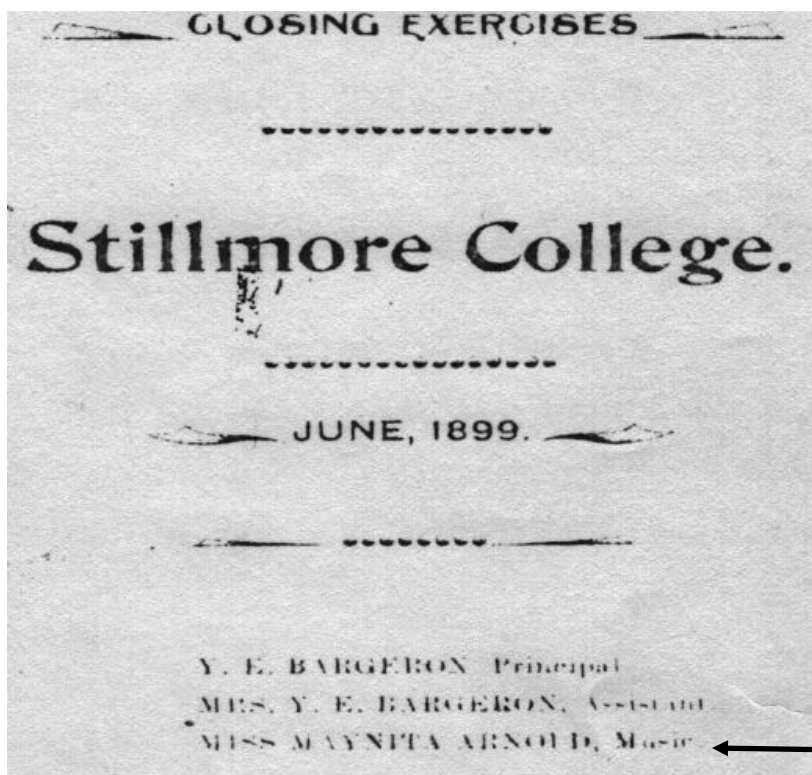
**To Teach Music at Hampton.**

Miss **Maynita Arnold** left a few days ago for Hampton, where she takes charge of the music department of the school at that place. She is an accomplished and talented young lady and is admirably qualified for this work. She will no doubt give great satisfaction to her pupils and patrons. Her Barnesville friends regretted to see her go away — Barnesville Gazette.

The clipping to the left is from the newspaper, Henry County Weekly edition September 16, 1898 and shows that Maynita began teaching music soon after graduating from the National Park Seminary that same year. The Hampton location mentioned differs from the Stillmore one below so she must have received a better offer .

The clipping below is from December 22, 1898 and shows that Maynita began teaching music at Stillmore College after her graduation from the National Park Seminary in mid-1898. Stillmore was a growing community during the late 1890's and boasted a new college established in 1888. A view of the college building can be seen below.

Miss **Maynita Arnold** returned Friday from **Stillmore** where she has been teaching music. She is a very popular young lady and her return home is a source of much pleasure to her friends. She is a graduate of Gordon Institute and she is reflecting honor upon her alma mater.

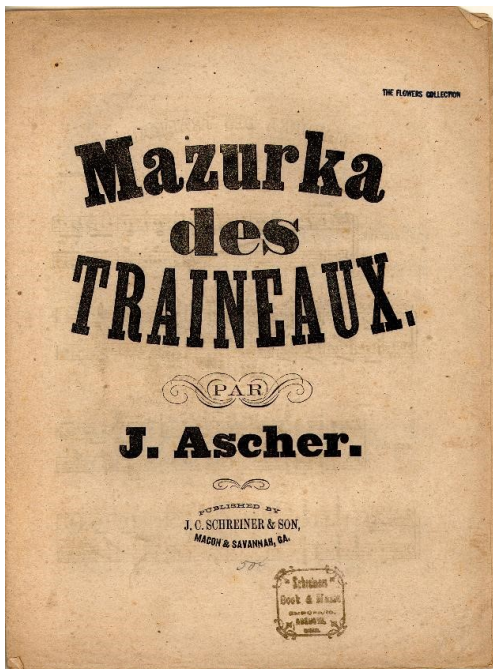
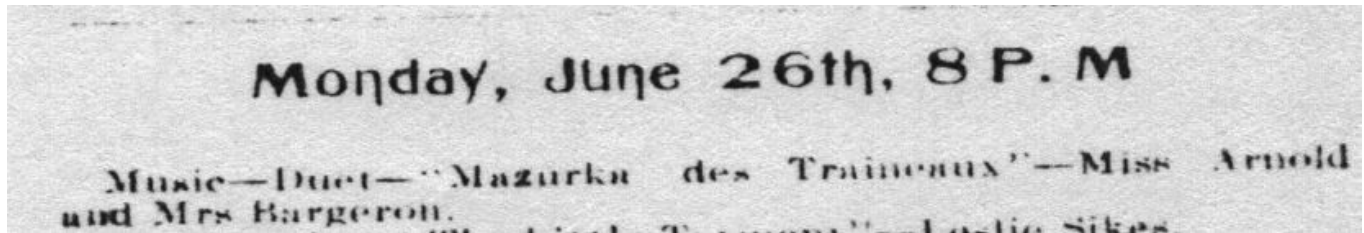


Researching the time frame around Maynita's time as a teacher at Stillmore we were able to find a document at Emanuel County Junior College near Swainsboro , GA. The faded 3 page file is labelled Closing Exercises, Stillmore College, June 1899 and on the front page we find Miss Maynita Arnold listed for Music.

Miss Maynita Arnold

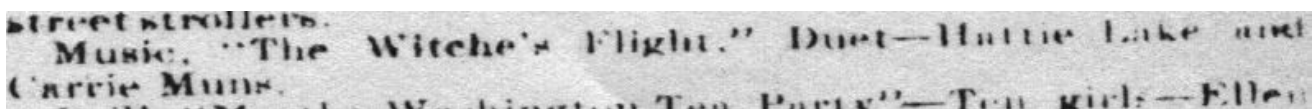


There are many musical pieces listed in this 3 page flyer from a college ceremony more than a century ago that were either performed by Maynita or directed/selected by her. The first appears below:



Originally written by Joseph Ascher in about 1854, this piece translates as “Music for the Sleigh or Sled Music”. It was a popular piece in many countries and the front piece to the score on the left is from 1873, the most likely version used by Maynita in her performance. An audio file of this music appears on our website.

The next selection from the event was performed by the students at the college under the direction of Maynita.



This music first appeared in 1875 and was widely available. An audio file of this selection will be available on our website.

Music, Duet, "La Preferencia"—Miss Arnold and Mrs. Bargeron.

This is the next selection performed by Maynita at the Stillmore event. I have been unable to identify this piece of music to date.

Music, Duet, "Gialop Brilliant"—Hattie Lake and Miss Arnold.

This selection is generally considered a piece performed by students to show their mastery of scale and of an instrument. It is often featured at student recitals and an audio file of this music will be available on our website in the near future.

Music, Trio Overture, "Oberon"—Miss Arnold Mrs. Bargeron, Miss Hattie Lake.

This is the last selection from the Stillmore paper is probably one of my favorite pieces of music associated with Maynita. It is entitled "Oberon" and is drawn from an opera completed in 1826 about an Elven King's search for two humans who are wholly in love as a way for him to reconcile with Fairy wife. An audio file of this piece will be available on our site and will be one of six pieces of music we have been able to capture that Maynita would have performed or selected for performance by others.

Maynita continues to be involved in music from 1902 to 1904 in the Barnesville community. She serves as a choir director for the First Baptist Church which lies about 2 blocks from the home she shares with her mother on Elm Street there and plays for at least two weddings, both times using the Mendelsohn Wedding March she learned earlier at school.

I can find no mention of her performing any music after her arrival in Thomasville, 1905-1910 and wonder if her health had diminished enough by then she was not as active as when she was younger.

## Contents of the Mausoleum



A fisheye view of the inside with emphasis on the near wall and door



## Inside the Mausoleum

There are many items of interest within the Arnold-Swan Mausoleum. As we identify what they are I will add to this growing section so we can see how the family worked to preserve the memory of their loved ones, what was important to the family and would serve as a memorial and how the various items help reinforce what we know about the tale that grew up around this portion of Laurel Hill.

### Saint Cecilia Painting

On the left wall of the mausoleum hangs a painting. Looking closely it turns out to be a painting of Saint Cecilia, a Catholic patron saint of musicians. As one of the saints mentioned in a Mass during the Catholic liturgy, she is well-known by broad number of those within the Christian faith.

The painting here was a popular painting completed by Gustav Naujok in 1891 and widely reproduced. A picture of the painting within the mausoleum appears to the right.



Front right wall near the door, there appears to be small table with several items on it including a vase, a framed picture, a large mirror and piece of cloth draped over the corner of the framed mirror.





## Framed Wedding Pictures?

Inside, back wall



Inside, left wall



There are numerous photos scattered throughout the mausoleum. The two sets above are of I believe Maynita and her husband John H. Swan and of the wedding party from 1908 when they were married in Thomasville, GA. The reasoning behind this statement is bolstered by the twin frames of the pictures on the right wall, they are obviously meant to be paired therefore likely represent a husband and wife.



The picture to the left is a bride & groom from 1908 and shows us the common style of the wedding dress from that year. Notice the high white collar, lace on the front etc. Though the pictures from inside the mausoleum are not as clear as we would like them to be, the style of the dresses shown are very similar.

The fact that each woman in the framed photographs on the back wall are wearing the same style and color of dress would indicate dressing for a single event, the style and color lends credence to it being a wedding and the timeframe would make it Maynita's. Also if you look closely there are at least 2 older women among the photos, making it less likely to be a group from her college days



## Unusual Items

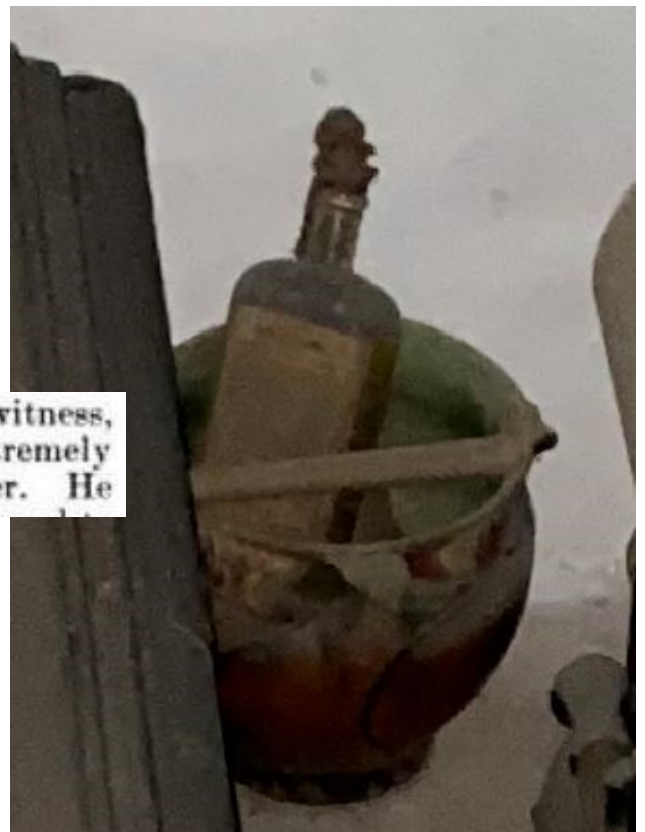
There are several items within the mausoleum that we are rather unique. The first of these is a stuffed toy rabbit lying on the floor. It appears to be rather large for a dog's toy so perhaps it was Maynita's childhood toy or perhaps a gift given in the hopes that she and her husband John would soon have children themselves. A picture of the rabbit can be seen in the close-up below. This also just might an optical illusion from water & dirt on the floor.



The next one is a bucket and bottle in the back on the floor. A close-up of the two items is on the right. After reading about Mary Cruger's description in the San Francisco Daily Times,

*"Mr. Cruger often told me," said the witness, that his wife was a woman of violent temper, extremely jealous, and was a great smoker and drinker. He*

I would guess that this bottle represents Mary's favorite brand of alcohol. I am hoping one day to identify the bottle. I am unsure of the purpose of the bucket, perhaps to hold flowers or something else?





Another unknown item lies on the left side and at the back, its shape and coloration are odd but it appears to be some sort of ash bucket or copper pail.

Another framed object on the floor, far right front wall area. Possibly another framed photograph with some obstruction lying in front of it.



Missing spindle

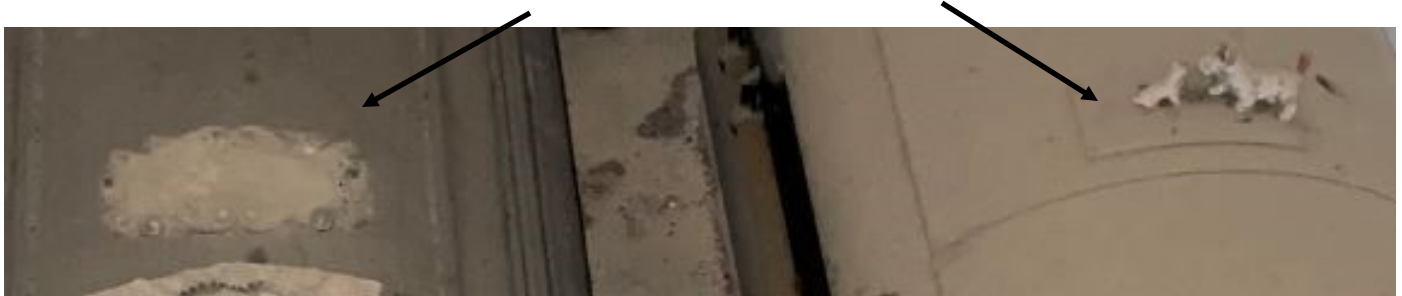


An unusual Windsor chair in the front left corner. I haven't been able to find a match online so the maker or date of manufacture is unknown. I notice the chair is somewhat broken, missing a piece in the backrest which may be the reason the family discarded it by leaving it here.



What appears to be a folded paper object on Maynita's casket

There appear to be two plaques attached to the what is likely Maynita and Ella's caskets. These would allow for identification of the members interred here.



The rug at the entrance is shown below. There appear to be two rugs in the mausoleum, a large one at the doorway and another smaller one beneath Maynita's casket. There seems to be design on the rug in the upper left corner.





## Dogs in the Mausoleum

One of the most noticeable things within the mausoleum is the presence of items associated with what was most likely Maynita's pet.

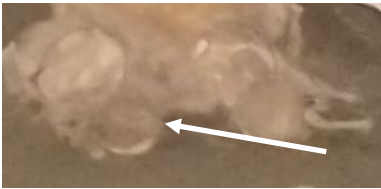
The first item we will examine is the obvious mummified pet on Maynita's casket in the center.



We can draw several conclusions from the 2 photos above. First it is a preserved/ mummified animal and not a stuffed toy. The presence of the yellow dried skin in the center of the object and the way the fur lies indicates this. If you look at the upper portion of the picture on the left you will see an oval object, likely a stand for the animal when it was first placed in the mausoleum. The photo on the right shows the texture and color of the fur. This gives us a clue as to the breed and we will explore that a bit more on the next page.



This is most likely the breed of dog represented inside the mausoleum, a West Highland White Terrier. The picture to the left shows the breed in 1915. There have been changes to the breed since then and today you would recognize them as looking like this:



Notice the white slightly wavy fur, it looks much like the fur on the dog in the mausoleum...



These are the dog figurines on the right casket, notice the upright tail, shorter stubby legs, snout and upright ears, all traits of the Westie.

The figurines on the left side, again the same physical characteristics of the Westie.





Another possible dog-related item is a brush seen here lying on the piano scarf.

A beautiful pillow lies in the back, perhaps formerly belonging to Maynita's pet.



In the center lies a glass bowl with a picture frame and another unusual object that almost looks like clippers or perhaps a folding knife. I suspect the pictures here are of the dog Maynita owned.





Here is a close-up of the object in the bowl from the previous page, below are some examples of early 1900's nail clippers that appear similar.



A close-up of the glass bowl. It is likely a pressed glass bowl manufactured by the J. B. Highbee company operating out of Pennsylvania between 1907 and 1918. The company's glassware was sold extensively in New York City, a place Maynita traveled to frequently. The bowl on the far left is from their 1910 collection, the one below from 1908



**1908 Higbee  
"Laurel" Bowl**



Should we ever be able to examine the bowl it will be easy to identify, Highbee bowls have a bee design on the bottom somewhere in the pattern.

The West Highland White Terrier in the early 1900's.

This breed was first imported into the New York City area of the United States during the 1907-1908 dog show season. It was a very expensive breed to own and became popular quickly as noted in the March 14, 1909 clipping below from a Chicago newspaper called The Inter Ocean:

The greatest increase in any class was in the comparatively new white **West Highland terriers**, which have doubled in number. The vogue is extraordinary and the oddest of many things about them is that the almost irrepressible tendency of the **West Highland terriers** to bark seems to have been bred out of them. Another odd and baffling point is that only about a third come white and they seem to answer what is called the Mendelian theory of heredity.

By September of the same year, (1909), the breed was winning awards at dog shows in New York. The clipping below is from the September 26, 1909 edition of the New York Tribune.

The Walecott Kennels, of Bernardsville, made a sweep in Scottish **terriers** with Walecott Invader and Walecott Won't. From the same bailiwick came George W. Post's winning beagles of the Somerset Kennels and the best showing of **West Highland Terriers** the white Scottish—ever benched in this country. Archibald S. Alexander had the greatest number, but the highest honors fell to Mrs. G. Owen Winston, wife of the former Harvard golfer, with her single entry of Walecott Whatever, very typical and as white as pulled taffy.

By 1912, a breeder in Virginia was placing one of the first ads mentioning the sale of the breed in the Pittsburgh Press newspaper.

**WEST HIGHLAND** white **terriers** for sale, also Airedale **terrier** pups. I please my customers and my prices are right. Hopkinson, Ivy depot, Virginia. 98wp

One last note about this breed of dog, it is hypoallergenic, something that would have been important to someone like Maynita who suffered from lung damage and breathing problems.

It is likely that Maynita received her pet Westie as a wedding present in December 1908. The breed was a new arrival to the American shores, very expensive to own, popular among the wealthy and healthier for someone with her disease. If this is the case and knowing the longevity of the breed, (generally in the 12 year time frame), it might mean the pet was brought back to Thomasville perhaps after World War 1 and interred with its first owner. I would enjoy figuring this mystery out and hope to do so one day.



## Faces in the Glass



Since it is likely the frame in the rear of the mausoleum contains images from the bridal party, I have begun collecting the names and information of people whom Maynita visited in the years preceding her death. If she chose bridesmaids or something similar for her only wedding in 1908, it would make sense they were the people she had known for quite some time both here in Thomasville and elsewhere.

Some of the names I have encountered so far include the following:

1897	Maude Howell	1896	Susie Watts
1898	Corine Searson	1899	Rosa Burford
1908	Mrs. Floyd Murphey		
1908	Mrs. Rumble		

Another mystery face in the glass lies on the probable casket belonging to Ella Arnold on the far left side of the mausoleum. It is a single framed photo of a male dressed in clothes that appear to be of a style prior to 1918. Unfortunately it is dust-covered and I am unable at this time to identify who the person is.

We have discussed whether the presence of the picture on the casket indicates that it is to represent the person inside the casket or whether the picture was placed here when the piano was moved out in 1943.

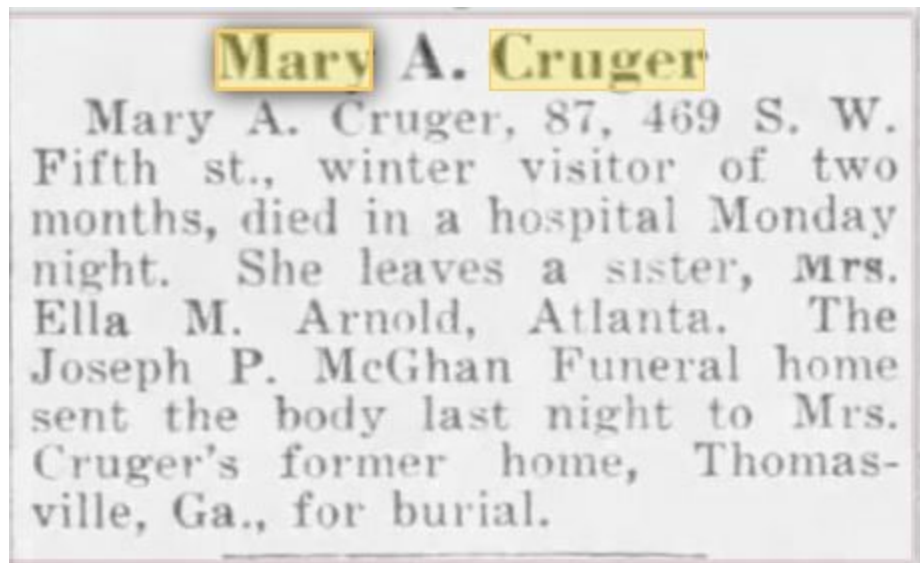


## Conclusion

## Probable Timeline of Internments and Identities

At the end of this research we believe we have established the most likely timeline for events and identities of the people interred in the Arnold-Swan Mausoleum. The initial sexton entry showing an interment of a Mrs. Swan in 1910 corresponds exactly with Maynita Arnold Swan's death in November of that year. From all appearances the casket in the center appears to be the oldest and is therefore Maynita's. For a piano to have been present the casket must have originally been in a different location, my intuition places it centered in the rear beneath the pictures of the wedding party with the piano lying to the left side where the picture of Saint Cecilia hangs and a table, chair and other items on the far right side.

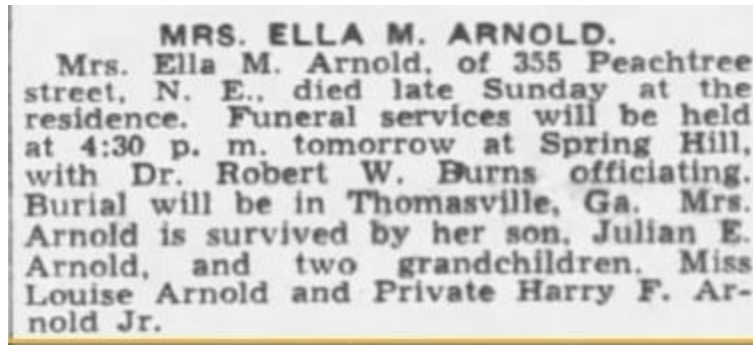
The next interment occurred in 1937 with the death of Maynita's aunt Mary Angeline Fambro Cruger. Her obituary appears below and indicates that she was returned for burial to Thomasville after her death. No record appears of her being interred anywhere else within Laurel Hill and so one of the other two caskets is Mary's.



The piano may have been removed at this second interment but I suspect it wasn't. The presence of items on all three caskets and especially of the piano scarf shows that items within the mausoleum were probably removed from atop the piano and placed throughout afterwards. The picture frame of the male on the far left, the scarf, the small dog figurines, all look like items that would have graced the top of Maynita's piano so in 1937 there was probably 2 caskets and a piano still within the walls.



The last and final interment occurred in 1943 with the death of Maynita's mother Ella. Here we have her obituary indicating an interment in Thomasville like that of her sister Mary.



With Ella's interment the piano would have been removed and likely sold locally. Assuming this timeline and casket/piano placement is accurate it likely then the casket on the right is Mary Cruger's and the one on the left is Maynita's mother, Ella.

The transfer of the care of the plot from private hands to the City in 1946 corresponds with this act being carried out by Maynita's brother Julian Arnold who ultimately died in 1956 and so would have been able to insure all three women found a final resting place here in Thomasville. Though Julian's initials are J. E. and not J. P. as the sexton record indicates, confusion in written records between an E and a P letter is common and he is the most logical candidate for the mysterious purchaser of the plot in 1910.

I have a strong sense that all three women in this mausoleum were strong and independent. Both Mary and Ella rose from the ashes of being orphans on a middle-class farm in rural Georgia to travel around the world and share their time and money with their family. The independence gained by Mary's choices allowed this tight-knit group of women to chart their own courses and indicates a level of intelligence, skill and talent to be admired.

## Addendum

### New York Real Estate Holdings of the Family

I have located a record of the real estate holdings of Mary F. Cruger, her sister Ella Arnold and Maynita Arnold in an Evening Post publication of transactions published in January 1902. The entry shows that a trust was established providing a one third portion to Ella for life then to Maynita her daughter. The addresses are astounding when viewed on a modern map. Below is the entry with the addresses in question.

Wall St., No. 114, n. s., 21.11x72.7x22.2x  
72.7; Vesey St., No. 110, n. e. cor. of  
West St., No. 139, runs e. 23.9 x n. 35 x  
e. 9 x n. 10.5 x w. 8 x w. 41.7 to West  
St. x s. 43.9; Front St., No. 261, s. e. cor.  
of Dover St., 22.2x76.11x21x76.10; Jones  
Lane, Nos. 4 and 6, 39.5x61.6x40.8x61.10;  
Mary F. Cruger, widow, to the Union  
Trust Co. in trust for Ella M. Arnold for  
life and then to Maynita Arnold; trust  
deed;  $\frac{1}{3}$  part; Aug. 29.....

1

The 110 Vesey St address is practically next door to the old World Trade Center site where the current memorial is located. 114 Wall St is about a block from the water and toward the end of Wall St.