
THE CHURCHILLIAN

Volume 1, Issue 2

Churchill Society of Tennessee

Winter 2018



Merry Christmas!



Spitfire over Chartwell in winter by Patricia Forrest

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Upcoming Events:

March 9, 2019 - Churchill Sip & Chat at
the home of Shane Neil. time TBD.

September 28, 2019 - Fall Session and
Banquet, At the Brentwood Country
Club

Churchill's 1941 Christmas Eve Speech



I spend this anniversary and festival far from my country, far from my family, yet I cannot truthfully say that I feel far from home. Whether it be the ties of blood on my mother's side, or the friendships I have developed here over many years of active life, or the commanding sentiment of comradeship in the common cause of great peoples who speak the same language, who kneel at the same altars and, to a very large extent, pursue the same ideals, I cannot feel myself a stranger here in the centre and at the summit of the United States. I feel a sense of unity and fraternal association which, added to the kindness of your welcome, convinces me that I have a right to sit at your fireside and share your Christmas joys.

This is a strange Christmas Eve. Almost the whole world is locked in deadly struggle, and, with the most terrible weapons which science can devise, the nations advance upon each other. Ill would it be for us this Christmastide if we were not sure that no greed for the land or wealth of any other people, no vulgar ambition, no morbid lust for material gain at the expense of others, had led us to the field. Here, in the midst of war, raging and roaring over all the lands and seas, creeping nearer to our hearts and homes, here, amid all the tumult, we have tonight the peace of the spirit in each cottage home and in every generous heart. Therefore, we may cast aside for this night at least the cares and dangers which beset us and make for the children an evening of happiness in a world of storm. Here, then, for one night only, each home throughout the English-speaking world should be a brightly-lighted island of happiness and peace.

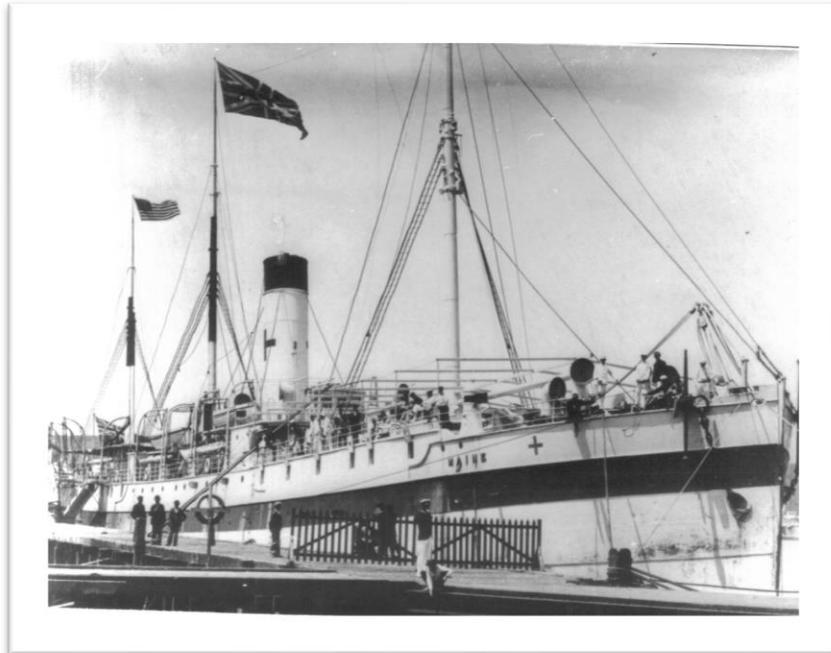
Let the children have their night of fun and laughter. Let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play. Let us grown-ups share to the full in their unstinted pleasures before we turn again to the stern task and the formidable years that lie before us, resolved that, by our sacrifice and daring, these same children shall not be robbed of their inheritance or denied their right to live in a free and decent world.

And so, in God's mercy, a happy Christmas to you all.

Winston S. Churchill - The White House, Christmas Eve, 1941

JENNIE, nee JEROME, LADY RANDOLPH SPENCER-CHURCHILL

Part two by Celia Lee



JENNIE, and THE HOSPITAL SHIP THE MAINE

Fifteen years on, at the end of 1899, and the beginning of 1900, and the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War in South Africa, aristocratic women were *still* subject to the same antiquated rules where work was concerned. They could undertake unpaid, voluntary administrative, or nursing work. One woman, Florence Nightingale, had been a trendsetter, having gone against everything her social class dictated and become a nurse, and went to the Crimean War in October 1854 to care for injured soldiers. Florence got away with it by insisting that it was a calling from God.

Lord Randolph Churchill had been of a delicate disposition throughout the marriage. Jennie had some experience of nursing him through various illnesses, and he had died on 24th January 1895, a few days before his 46th birthday. Jennie was now engaged to be married to Lieutenant George Cornwallis-West.

The Boer War broke out in 1899, and Mrs. Blow, the American wife of the manager of one of South Africa's richest mining syndicates had an idea to provide a hospital ship to care for the wounded in South Africa. Jennie became Chairman of the United States Hospital Ship Fund. She worked enthusiastically during October and November, organizing and raising funds for the trip.

The plan was to send to South Africa a suitable Hospital Ship, fully equipped with medical stores and provisions, and able to accommodate over 300 wounded soldiers, with a staff of 4 doctors, 5 nurses, and 40 commissioned officers and orderlies. To finance the venture \$150,000 would be required. It was a tall order but soon money and medical supplies poured in. An American millionaire, Bernard Nadel Baker, founder of the Atlantic Transport Company in Baltimore, gave the British Government the use of one of his transport ships, the *Maine*. It had been used for transporting cattle, and had to

be completely refitted, and Jennie enlisted the aid of the army. The committee had received £15,000 in donations, and Jennie organized a huge fund-raising event at Claridge's in London. She had already decided to travel on the ship to Cape Town. Jennie's fiancé, Lieutenant George Cornwallis-West served with the Scots Guards, and Winston was a war correspondent with the South African Light Horse. The glamorous fund-raising event at Claridges, which should have been the highlight of Jennie's efforts was marred, when the devastating news reached her that Winston had been captured and taken prisoner by the Boers. He later made a dramatic escape with a price on his head 'wanted dead or alive' but made a safe getaway. Her younger son Jack, aged only 19, would soon follow in his brother's footsteps to the war, in January 1900.

The hospital ship *Maine* left Portsmouth Harbour, Southampton, England, bound for Cape Town, Saturday 23rd December 1899. The refitting work had not been completed and the tradesmen were still hard at it as the ship sailed away. Jennie was now working for the Red Cross and was referred to as 'Sister Jennie', though she was not a trained nurse. Colonel Hensman was the officer in charge of the ship, and Major Julian M. Cabell of the US Army Medical Department was the senior American surgeon. The ship was well equipped with an operating theatre and X-ray room, and several hospital wards, containing wooden beds still in the making.

A Canadian, Miss Mary Eugenie Hibbard, who had been in charge of the Grace Hospital and Nursing School in Detroit, was the professional Superintendent of Nurses. Before leaving, nurse Hibbard had been presented to Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale, now aged 90 years, who was staying with the Queen.



A photograph of Jennie's cabin on board shows it to be somewhat cramped with her bed in one corner, a circular table in the centre and her personal things squashed into corners. Just prior to leaving, she received a telegram from George saying he had been invalided out of the army with a bad attack of sunstroke and was on his way home and they passed each other some place along with way on the high seas. Henceforth the letters that Jennie would receive from George would be of the order that his parents were trying to stop him marrying her. Jennie had other worries, her two sons would undertake active service in Colonel Julian Byng's regiment and would fight side by side in the South

African Light Horse. Three days before her birthday, 9th January, Jennie received a letter from Winston that must have alarmed her:

'There is a great battle - the greatest yet fought - impending here... If I come through alive, I shall try to run down to Cape Town - or perhaps you will come to fetch the wounded from Durban.'

The *Maine* ran into a fierce storm, and there was a good deal of seasickness onboard and Jennie was a victim. On the final leg of the voyage they stopped to re-coal and take on fresh supplies at Las Palmas. Jennie had for a number of years been a confidant of the Prince of Wales, and from there she wrote to the Prince, January 19th, 1900:

'We had to "lay to" 48 hours, I never was so buffeted in my life. We are very top heavy, and owing to our large open gangways, we are most unfitted for high seas.'

Referring to the weight distribution in the lower decks she continued:

'I understand if we had slipped one or two we would have gone to the bottom.'

The ship was in a mess following the battering it had taken in the storm and a major clean-up operation was underway. There had been conflict throughout the voyage between the American and British staff, and Jennie had acted as peacemaker.

On 23rd January 1900, they sailed into Cape Town, where Jack was to have joined his mother. The scene in the harbour was typically one of war: ships full of troops who were disembarking, and streets filled with soldiers, but Jack was nowhere to be seen. The decision-making role of the *Maine* was then taken over by the Chief Medical Officer for Cape Town. He decided that they would proceed to Durban, take on the wounded, and return immediately to England. The function of the *Maine* was as a floating hospital ship, and Jennie was understandably annoyed. However, there was a brief moment of cheerfulness when Jack arrived in uniform, wearing a large sombrero style hat, giving him the appearance of a cowboy, and the three Churchills had a brief reunion for two days.

Jennie used all her powers of persuasion to prevent the *Maine* being returned to England and got her way. Winston and Jack left to join their regiment in the South African Light Horse.

Jennie and her staff prepared for the arrival of the wounded from Spion Kop, who were already on their way in wagons. All the nurses wore simple uniforms, a long white skirt and a short white jacket, a brassard, with *Maine* and the Red Cross embossed on it, and a white cap that peaked in the middle. Jennie was wearing a nurse's uniform that she had designed herself; a starched white apron and white blouse, and an armband with a red cross. When on February 5th the first ambulance train arrived near the dock, Jennie and Miss Hibbard and the nursing staff were ready to take charge of them. There were 67 injured soldiers, of whom 12 were carried on stretchers, and the others were walking wounded. The Central News agency of Durban reported that: 'Lady Randolph personally superintended their reception, directed berthing, and flitted among the injured as an angel of mercy'.

Part of the reason so much prominence was given to Jennie in the press was due to Winston's fame as a war hero. Also, Jennie was an American and openly so, speaking with an American accent. The US was pro-Boer and anti-British, so Jennie was viewed as something of a heroine, flying in the face of her mother country.



Sister Jennie and the nursing staff onboard the *Maine*

In the days ahead, Jennie oversaw the administration of the hospital ship. She also spent much time comforting the wounded and helping them write letters home to their wives and sweethearts. She gave help with dressings or bandages, and anywhere she might be of use. True to her worst nightmare, Jack was wounded and brought on board on February 13th the first officer casualty, just 9 days after his 20th birthday. During a reconnaissance trip with Winston they had come under fire and had taken shelter. Jack had been shot in the calf and it was a near thing, the bullet having passed close to his head. The wound would take a month to heal.

Another great battle towards the relief of Ladysmith would take place in a few days' time, and Jennie must have gone through torments that Winston, who was so adventuresome and fearless, might get killed.

Listening to Jack's dramatic account of the fighting whilst he was a patient on the *Maine* only served to increase Jennie's desire to visit the war zone. She wrote to Winston to this effect, and he got a few days leave and joined them, and they went to Chieveley. There they met Captain Percy Scott, Commander of HMS *Terrible*, who had invented a gun carriage that enabled the 4.7 naval gun to be taken up country to the front. Scott named the gun the *Lady Randolph Churchill*, and it was Jennie who historically fired the test round. With the support of Captain Scott, Jennie went to see the other hospitals at Chieveley Camp. Along the way, they passed the mangled, burnt-out wreck of the armoured train from which Winston had been taken prisoner some weeks earlier, still lying on its side. A few yards away there was a makeshift graveyard where those who had been killed were buried.

The *Maine* was now almost filled with wounded soldiers, and Jennie and her team worked all day and were on duty throughout the night. Both British and Boer wounded men arrived in uniforms torn to

shreds and covered in dirt from the field of battle. The nurses cleaned and dressed the wounds and administered what drugs were available to ease the pain, mostly morphine. Twenty operations were performed in the theatre. Where a bullet was lodged a surgeon performed an operation using ether as an anaesthetic and removed it. There would be three deaths: one from typhoid fever, one from an aneurysm, and one from tuberculosis. Jennie played the piano to concert standard and she kept their spirits up by organizing concerts so that the soldiers who were well enough could sing, and there were regular sing songs.

The Prince of Wales replied to Jennie's letter, 16th February, congratulating her on her courageous work. Jennie replied, March 10th:

‘I am satisfied with the Mission the *Maine* has fulfilled – and if I may say so my connection with it. It has been hard work and sometimes the temptation has been great to fly off in a mail steamer for home - but I am glad I resisted.’

On 29th March Jennie was dining with Captain Scott aboard HMS *Terrible* when the news broke of the relief of Ladysmith. The city of Durban went wild with excitement, and back home in London, crowds massed in the streets and sang: *Soldiers of the Queen*.

When Jack recovered, he returned to his regiment, having been photographed for posterity with his mother. Winston reported in the press that during the two months the hospital ship was at Durban, more than 300 cases had been treated, and many difficult operations performed successfully.



The *Maine* was laden with over 350 wounded soldiers being invalided out of the army, and they set sail for England. When they put in at Madeira for fresh supplies and water, Sergeant Grantham who was suffering from tuberculosis died at midnight. Jennie had to organize his funeral at Funchal.

The *Maine* arrived back at Southampton in April to a hero's welcome. Jennie did not go out on the return voyage but continued with her administrative work for the hospital ship at home. She was also planning her marriage to George Cornwallis-West. She was worrying a good deal about her two sons still in the fighting. On May 26th she wrote to Jack, and she wanted him as well as Winston to return home from the war:

'I have been following Buller's advance and have had some bad moments thinking of you but have trusted for the best and think you are capable of looking after your skin as well as most - I am glad to think the end is approaching and that the war must soon be over.'

Affirming her knowledge about the health and well-being of soldiers she continued:

'I am also glad that you are moving, anything is better than stagnation in an unhealthy camp - How fit you must be as riding suits you - I am much more frightened of fever than of bullets so don't be rash as regards water.

Winston seems to have had a narrow escape at Dewetsdorp from falling into the Boers hands. As an advance party met the enemy, Winston's saddle turned, and his horse galloped away but luckily his own people turned back for him.'

Jennie and George Cornwallis-West were married on 28th July. Winston made it back on time for the wedding, but Jack remained in the fighting until October. That same month Winston won his first parliamentary seat of Oldham in Lancashire.

Queen Victoria died, 22nd January 1901. Her son the Prince of Wales succeeded her as King Edward VII. In recognition of her services on the *Maine*, the King conferred upon Jennie the honour of "a Lady of Grace of St. John of Jerusalem", and the Order of the Red Cross. Jennie had a seat in the King's box at the coronation in August 1902 and was presented with the Coronation medal that was a silver cameo. – Continued in next edition

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST CSOT MEMBERS!



Douglas Gortner
Mark E Green MD
John Tobin
John Spelling
Jennifer Pittman Mathews
Stokes Nielson
Scott Zehner
Susan Bennett
Deborah Deaver
Andrea & Endre Zongor
Chloe Fort Lenderma
Troy Morrison
Maria Kretschmer

CSOT Banquet October, 2018
Brentwood Country Club
Photos by MichealAnn Robinson

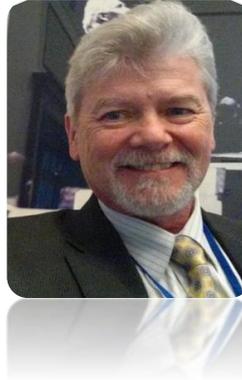








From the President



Dear Fellow Churchillians,

The Christmas season is upon us and our thoughts turn to home, family and friends. Though we may be separated across the miles, we are all connected by our shared admiration for the “Man”, Winston S. Churchill. This is the perfect time of year to reflect upon our blessings, be thankful for God’s grace and remember what Winston Churchill has done to preserve our way of life.

From Tennessee, Merry Christmas to you all!

Jim Drury

Clementine Churchill Tartan

Information needed to purchase the new "Clementine Churchill" Tartan.

The "Clementine" was officially worn for the first time at the ICS conference in Williamsburg, VA earlier this month and was universally well received.

With the gracious permission of the Churchill family, this new tartan has just been submitted to the Keeper of the Scottish Registry of Tartans, National Records of Scotland, in Edinburgh where it will be recorder for posterity.

Here is the link to the scotweb site in Scotland where you can get information on the ordering and manufacturing process. This tartan is made on an old artisan loom in the traditional manner making it very special indeed.

<https://www.scotweb.co.uk/tartan/Churchill-Clementine-Member-Design/611486>

You can buy a kilt, trews, scarves, cummerbunds, ties or just the cloth.

We hope you enjoy our new tartan!



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