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## A Biography of Mary Savage (Jones) Anderson

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ARMSTRONG STATE COLLEGE

A BIOGRAPHY OF MARY SAVAGE (JONES) ANDERSON

HIS 450

BY

LISA M. COUGHLIN

2 JUNE 93

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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Pam Benton of Christ Church for helping me locate descendants of Mary Savage (Jones) Anderson. I would also like to thank Josephine C. Connerat, Laura Lawton, Pearce Connerat, Col. Beverley Rockwell and Mary C. Lain for their generosity in sharing memories of Mary Anderson.

## PREFACE

This biography was required to pass a course for the undergraduate history degree. I had no background in this type of basic research. The only papers I had ever written were regurgitations of data that had already been accumulated.

I have attempted to make an interesting sketch of the life and personality of Mary Savage (Jones) Anderson by *examining the remnants she left behind*. It has been a challenging and absorbing task. I can only hope that my interpretation of the evidence presents an accurate portrait of an infamous Savannian.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	i
PREFACE . . . . .	ii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	iv
ABSTRACT . . . . .	v
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Chapter	
I. FAMILY CONNECTIONS . . . . .	2
II. OUT OF THE NEST . . . . .	7
III. LASTING MEMORIES OF A LADY . . . . .	13
Endnotes . . . . .	15
Bibliography . . . . .	22

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. 16 Rockwell Drive . . . . .	9
2. Grave marker of Mary Savage Anderson . . . . .	14

## ABSTRACT

Mary Savage (Jones) Anderson was a descendant, both by birth and marriage, of the Habersham and Noble families. Both of these families roots can be traced back to the founding of Georgia. This is a brief sketch of her life. The purpose of this paper was to give an idea of what it was like to grow up one hundred years ago in a prominent local family, and to give an insight on the personality and attitude of Mary Anderson.

To Bill and Viki



## INTRODUCTION

Mary Savage (Jones) Anderson was a native Savannahian. Her roots reach back to the early eighteenth century and the founding of Georgia. She was not outstanding or well known, instead she led a quiet comfortable life. She was raised in a wealthy home, travelled extensively, married well, was active civically and lived to an old age. She embodied the traditional role of a woman as defined by her era. Mary Anderson fit the ever popular image of a 'southern belle'.

CHAPTER I  
FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Mary Savage Jones was born to George Fenwick Jones and Anna Wylly Habersham<sup>1</sup> on July 23, 1873.<sup>2</sup> Her ancestors both maternally and paternally can be traced back to the early days of the Georgia colony. Her father was a descendant of Noble Jones who travelled with Ogelthorpe.<sup>3</sup> George Fenwick Jones was born in 1841.<sup>4</sup> He was educated at the University of Heidelberg in Europe and during the Civil War he was Secretary to the Hon. Wm. L. Yancy, Commissioner of the Confederate States to the Court of St. James.<sup>5</sup> He later returned to the United States and became an attorney.<sup>6</sup> Mary was the second of three children. Her father died of typhoid fever in 1876.<sup>7</sup>

Mary's mother was the daughter of William Neyle Habersham, "third generation from James Habersham who came to Savannah in 1738 with John Wesley and assisted in founding the Bethesda Home for Boys."<sup>8</sup>

Mary had an older sister, Josephine, and a younger brother, Noble.<sup>9</sup> Josephine, like Mary, married well and settled in Savannah. Noble followed in his fathers footsteps and became a

attorney.<sup>10</sup> He lived in New England for some time but, eventually returned home to Savannah.<sup>11</sup>

Mary was born eighteen months after Josephine with Noble following a year later.<sup>12</sup> She was only three when her father died and the family moved in with her maternal grandparents.<sup>13</sup> The Habershams lived on the corner of Harris and Barnard Streets in downtown Savannah.<sup>14</sup> Their four story, frame house had

French windows throughout the house, protected on the lower halves by iron work grilles. At the right of the entrance hall and stair, there were two drawing rooms and at the rear was the dining room, running across the width of the house. This large room had two Italian marble mantels and was divided from the drawing room by folding doors with engraved glass panels. There was a fireplace in every room. From the second floor, where there were four bedrooms, a dressing room and a bath, a staircase in the back hall led to the third story rooms. An enclosed dark winding stair in the front hall of the second story led to the front third story room.<sup>15</sup>

The house also had a store room, laundry room, pantry, basement and kitchen.<sup>16</sup> Next to the house was a two story brick stable that doubled as the servants quarters.<sup>17</sup> An annex between the house and stable contained a ballroom, and a two story glassed in wine room.<sup>18</sup> The Bulloch-Habersham House, as it was later known, has since been torn down.<sup>19</sup>

Mary's room was on the third story. She shared that floor

with Josephine, Noble, Anna (her mother) and the children's nanny Dinah.<sup>20</sup> Mary was very close to both of her grandparents and had fond memories of growing up with them. In later years, she wrote

One of the compensations for old age is the ability to look back on a happy childhood and this compensation is mine, for never were children governed by more loving and understanding elders, and in happier surroundings, than were we three (and all our cousins) who had the privilege of living at White Bluff with Grandma and Grandpa.<sup>21</sup>

Every Christmas Dinah would take the children to Mrs. Myers' Doll and Toy Shop on State and Whitaker Streets, to see the Santa Claus that graced her chimney.<sup>22</sup>

The children also enjoyed rollerskating down Broughton Street (the first street paved by the city) or watching the lamplighter who went around at dusk.<sup>23</sup>

Mary went to Mrs. Wilbur's kindergarten on the corner of Jones and Whitaker Streets.<sup>24</sup> Afterwards, she attended Miss Lizzie Bancroft's private school on the corner of Drayton and President Streets.<sup>25</sup> When she was older, after the death of her mother, Mary was sent to Springside School in Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania.<sup>27</sup> She was never sent to public school.<sup>28</sup>

The Habershams had a summer home out at White Bluff called Avon Hall.<sup>29</sup> This area is now known as Vernonburg, on the southside of Savannah off of White Bluff Road. The community was known simply as White Bluff up until 1937 and "was considered a resort section of the county."<sup>30</sup>

Mary's family spent every summer out at Avon Hall. It was the oldest house out at White Bluff.<sup>31</sup> William Habersham bought it in 1854 from Dr. Benjamin Burroughs, a Presbyterian minister.<sup>32</sup> He purchased fifty-five acres for \$10,000 dollars.<sup>33</sup> According to family legend, the minister lost several<sup>34</sup> daughters in a freak accident on the property and no longer wanted to live there. The girls had been playing on the bluff when it collapsed and they were buried.<sup>35</sup>

Mary loved the summers at White Bluff. Pastimes included boat races, picnicking on Coffee Bluff, swimming, fishing and sailing.<sup>36</sup> She and the other children used to torture their poor nanny by putting fiddler crabs down her back.<sup>37</sup>

On August 31, 1886, Mary and her family experienced the Charleston earthquake.<sup>38</sup> They were afraid that the house was going to shake apart so they camped in the yard for three

nights.<sup>39</sup> Another weather scare occurred in the summer of 1893 when a hurricane swept away part of the upstairs verandah of Avon Hall.<sup>40</sup>

Other than these occasional scares life on the Vernon River was relaxing and enjoyable. Much of the summer was taken up by visitors and also visiting. The Habershams did not lack for interesting company. Two of their frequent visitors were Captain Simmons of the Revenue Cutter "Boutwell" and Colonel Way who had been the United States Minister to Russia.<sup>41</sup> Friends and family also lived in the surrounding locations of Montgomery, Green Island and Beaulieu.<sup>42</sup>

Mary's mother died in 1888 at the age of thirty-nine.<sup>43</sup> It was suspected that she, like her husband, died of typhoid fever.<sup>44</sup> Afterwards, Mary and Josephine were sent to boarding school in Pennsylvania under the care of their cousin Leta DeRenne.<sup>45</sup>

## CHAPTER 100

### OUT OF THE NEST

Mary continued to spend summers at White Bluff. She went to school in Pennsylvania for two years. During her last year at school, her grandfather took her to New Brunswick, Canada on a month long fishing excursion.<sup>46</sup>

Mary's lost her grandmother on November 6, 1893, and her grandfather on September 20, 1899.<sup>47</sup> She remembered them both fondly.

He possessed a most lovable and delightful personality with his varied interests and generous, happy nature. She retained the high spirits and quick wit which had distinguished her in her youth<sup>48</sup>

Her grandparents never got to meet the man she chose to marry. His name was Clarence Gordon Anderson, son of Florida and Clarence G. Anderson, Sr.<sup>49</sup> He was thirty-two, the same age as Mary, and was the treasurer for the Georgia State Banking and Loan Association.<sup>50</sup> They were married on November 7, 1905 by the Rector of Christ Church, Francis A. Brown.<sup>51</sup> Mary had followed in the Habersham family footsteps and was a lifelong member of Christ Episcopal Church. She was baptized there on

December 19, 1873 and confirmed on March 27, 1887.<sup>52</sup>

Clarence and Mary moved into 114 W. Waldburg which he owned.<sup>53</sup> They lived there for five years and in 1910 moved to 121 E. 36th Street.<sup>54</sup> Clarence's parents then took up residence at the Waldburg property, where they remained until the death of Clarence Sr. in 1925.<sup>55</sup>

In 1913, Clarence was the president of Lawton-Anderson Company.<sup>56</sup> This changed to Anderson Cotton Company the following year with Clarence remaining president.<sup>57</sup> He and Mary lived alternately in town and out at White Bluff until 1922 when they moved to White Bluff for good.<sup>58</sup>

Avon Hall had been left to Josephine, Mary and Noble when their grandparents died.<sup>59</sup> Mary and Noble sold their interest in it to Josephine and her husband James Alfred Pearce Crisfield.<sup>60</sup> The sisters and their families continued to spend their summers there together.<sup>61</sup>

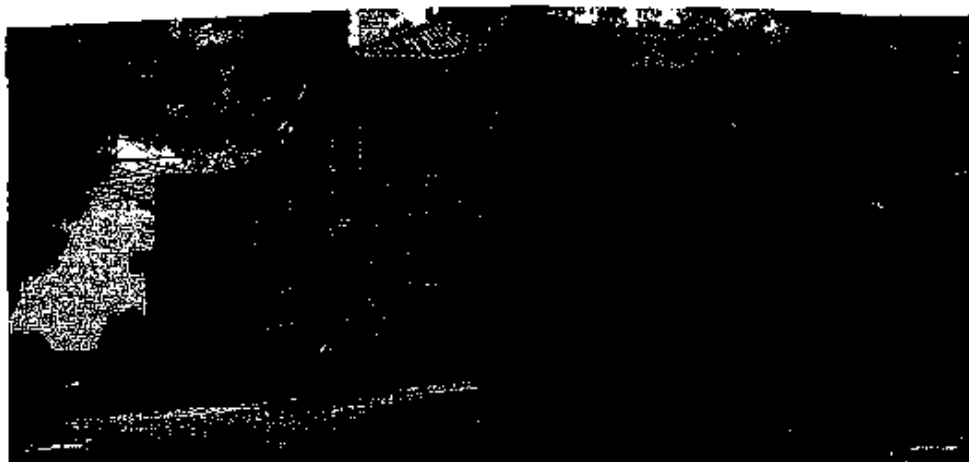
Clarence's cotton company was prospering and in the early 1920's he and Mary began to build a home next door to the Avon Hall property.<sup>62</sup> The plans were elaborate and an architect was even hired.<sup>63</sup> Early in development the house began to exceed the



planned cost and the architect was eventually fired.<sup>64</sup> The accounts vary on the following events. According to one source, Clarence and Mary moved into their home but, when the stock market crashed in 1929 Clarence's business went under and they could not afford to keep the home. So, they sold it to Jack Diamond (whose son now lives there) and moved into Avon Hall.<sup>65</sup>

A conflicting account claims that Clarence's company suffered when the government put strict regulations on cotton factors, and he was forced to quit his business. However, he and Mary were able to remain in their home until their deaths. Then the property was sold to Jack Diamond.<sup>66</sup>

In either case, it is a large, white stucco home with a beautiful view of the marsh.



During her married years, Mary kept busy with writing, travelling and civic activities. She and Clarence did not have any children. Mary was a original member of the Froebel Circle<sup>67</sup> which was organized on May 27, 1897.<sup>68</sup> "Its purpose was the relief of distress among poor children of Savannah."<sup>69</sup> She was also a charter member of the Trustees Garden Club as well as an officer in the Georgia Garden Clubs.

Colonel Beverley Rockwell<sup>70</sup> remembers that she always had a beautiful garden filled with camellias growing out at White Bluff. She had a pool in the middle of the garden but, never filled it with water because then everyone would be tortured by the mosquitos!<sup>71</sup> He recalled the times when Josephine would tie strings around Mary's garden for the little children to follow. They strings wound around the flowers and at the end treats were found.

Mary was also quite active in the Georgia Society of Colonial Dames. She served as their president from 1923-1929.<sup>72</sup> Prior to that she had been the corresponding secretary and vice-president for six years.<sup>73</sup> During her presidency, the society purchased the Andrew Low House. They bought it for \$37,500 in

1928.<sup>74</sup> This house is still their headquarters. Mary was elected Second Vice-President of the National Society of Colonial Dames in May of 1935.<sup>75</sup> Then, in 1941, she was elected Honorary President of the Georgia Society of Colonial Dames.<sup>76</sup>

Mary enjoyed history and writing.<sup>77</sup> She combined these interests while she was a member of the Dames and wrote two histories for them. A History of the Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America April 1893-January 1950 was her handiwork and is still used by the Dames today.<sup>78</sup> She also helped to author Georgia A Pageant of Years.<sup>79</sup> This book is a collection of excerpts and tidbits about Georgia's history.

In 1933, Mary wrote an unpublished account of her early life in Savannah and White Bluff titled Days Beyond Recall. She wrote a detailed description of her life from about 1876 to 1890 for two of her nieces.<sup>80</sup>

The Georgia Historical Quarterly from June of 1934 contains an article by Mary. It details the life of a distant relative, Captain George Anderson Berwick of Scotland.<sup>81</sup>

When she wasn't busy with the community or writing, Mary liked to travel. She spent several summers in Italy with her

Aunt Lillie. Lillie had never married and lived in Rome. --

CHAPTER III  
LASTING MEMORIES OF A LADY

Mary's later years with Clarence at White Bluff are best described as uneventful. She lived a quiet life and remained very close to her sister.<sup>83</sup> Her nephew, Pearce Connerat, remembers her sitting on the porch, rocking with his grandmother Josephine. Her cousin, Colonel Rockwell, summed it up best with these words: "Mary Savage Jones Anderson was a typical Southern lady of her time. Always well dressed and a most gracious hostess."

Mary Anderson died on March 30, 1958 at Telfair Hospital.<sup>84</sup> She had been hospitalized with pulmonary edema<sup>85</sup> for four days.<sup>86</sup> She was buried with Clarence's parents at Bonaventure Cemetery on April 1, 1958.<sup>87</sup> The Reverend F. Bland Tucker officiated.<sup>88</sup>

She left everything to her husband and executor Clarence Gordon Anderson.<sup>89</sup>

Mary was respected and well liked. The words of her manuscript show an intelligent, humorous woman who enjoyed her life. She is remembered fondly by her surviving relatives.

Their words almost form an echo: she was not special, she just lived a quiet, happy life.™



## NOTES

1. "Death Takes Mrs. Anderson Civic Leader," Savannah Morning News, 31 March 1958, p. 10(B).
2. Inscription on tombstone. Bonaventure Cemetery, Section A, Lot 150.
3. Jones Family Papers, Box 4, Folder 64 Genealogies: Fenwick, Gibbons, Habersham and Jones families. 10 items. 1723-1936, Manuscript Collections, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga.
4. Inscription on tombstone. Bonaventure Cemetery, Section D, Lot 13.
5. Tribute of Regard for George Fenwick Jones after his death. Given by a Committee of the Bar of Savannah in the Superior Court Room. April 7, 1876. Under possession of Josephine C. Connerat. Granddaughter of the deceased.
6. Ibid.
7. Pearce Connerat, interview by author, 28 May 1993, Savannah, Armstrong State College, Savannah. He is the nephew to Mary Anderson.
8. Colonel Beverley Rockwell, interview by author, 1 June 1993, Savannah, Armstrong State College, Savannah. He is a first cousin once removed from Mary Anderson.
9. The Last Will and Testament of Mary Savage Anderson, filed in the Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Ga., File Number 755.
10. Jones Family Papers, Jones family correspondence, Box 1, Folder 22. 1919-1934. 14 items. Manuscript Collection. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga.

11. Ibid.
12. Laura Lawton, interview by author, 28 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.
13. Mary Savage Anderson, Days Beyond Recall, [final draft], MS [typescript], 1933, 17p. Manuscript Collection, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga. (second page; no #)
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., pp. 1A-1B.
16. Ibid., p. 1C.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Colonel Beverley Rockwell, interview by author, 1 June 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.
20. Mary Savage Anderson, Days Beyond Recall, [final draft], MS [typescript], 1933, 17p. Manuscript Collection, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga. p. 1B
21. -
22. Ibid., (second page; no #).
23. Ibid., p. 1A.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 1D.
26. Ibid., p. 1E.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 6B.
29. Ibid., p. 3.
30. Richard Fogaley, "Vernonburg Community Embraces Quiet Life," Savannah News-Press, 30 May 1993, p. 1(B).



31. Colonel Beverley Rockwell, interview by author, 1 June 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.
32. Mary Savage Anderson, Days Beyond Recall, [final draft], MS [typescript], 1933, 17p. Manuscript Collection, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga., p.3.
33. Colonel Beverley Rockwell, interview by author, 1 June 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.
34. The family members interviewed could not remember if he had two or three daughters that were involved in the accident.
35. Pearce Connerat, interview by the author, 28 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.
36. Mary Savage Anderson, Days Beyond Recall, [final draft], MS [typescript], 1933, 17p. Manuscript Collection, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga., p.7.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p.10.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., pp.8,12.
42. Ibid., p.12.
43. Inscription on tombstone. Bonaventure Cemetary, Section D, Lot 13.
44. Pearce Connerat, interview by author, 28 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.
45. Mary Savage Anderson, Days Beyond Recall, [final draft], MS [typescript], 1933, 17p. Manuscript Collection, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga. p.1E.
46. Ibid., p.15.
47. Inscription on tombstone. Laurel Grove Cemetary. Lot 523 D.

48. Mary Savage Anderson, Days Beyond Recall, [final draft], MS [typescript], 1933, 17p. Manuscript Collection, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga., p.2.

49. City Directory 1905. p.252. Anderson, Clarence G. Jr.

50. Ibid.

51. Mary Savage Jones, Marriage License, Office of the Probate Court, Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Ga., Folio 387, Year 1/18/05 thru 3/13/06.

52. Pam Benton, interview with the author, 27 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga., she works for Christ Episcopal Church.

53. City Directory 1906. p.210. Anderson, Clarence G. Jr.

54. Ibid., 1910.

55. Ibid., 1925.

56. Ibid., 1913.

57. Ibid., 1914.

58. Ibid., 1906-1922.

59. Pearce Connerat, interview with the author, 28 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Colonel Beverley Rockwell, interview with the author, 1 June 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.

64. Ibid.

65. Pearce Connerat, interview with the author, 28 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.

66. Colonel Beverley Rockwell, interview with the author, 1 June 93, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.

67. "Death Takes Mrs. Anderson, Civic Leader," Savannah Morning News, 31 March 1958, p. 10(B).

68. Froebel Circle Papers, 5 boxes, 1897-1977, Manuscript Collection #977, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga. Abstract of the collection.

69. Ibid.

70. As mentioned before Colonel Rockwell is the cousin once removed of Mary Savage Anderson. His mother, Mary Walker Habersham, was Mary's first cousin.

71. Colonel Rockwell, interview with the author, 1 June 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.

72. Colonial Dames of America, Georgia Society, Historical Collections # 965, Box 12, Folder 148. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Laura Lawton, interview with the author, 28 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga. She is the niece of Mary Anderson.

78. Mrs. Ralph Bowden, phone interview with the author, 11 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga. She was the former president of the Colonial Dames.

79. A reference for this will be given in the bibliography.

80. This is the manuscript I noted throughout the early pages of the paper.

81. Colonial Dames of America, Georgia Society, Historical Collections # 965, Box 8, Folder 79, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga.

82. Josephine C. Connerat, interview with the author, 28 May 1993, Savannah, Ga., Armstrong State College, Savannah, Ga.

83. Ibid.

84. Mrs. Mary Jones Anderson, Certificate of Death, 31 March 1958. Held at the Office of Vital Records, Savannah, Ga., found in Volume 153 of the Death Register.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. "Death Takes Mrs. Anderson, Civic Leader," Savannah Morning News, 31 March 1958, p.10(B).

88. Ibid.

89. The Last Will and Testament of Mary Savage Anderson, filed in the Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Ga., File Number 755.

90. I put this as a footnote because every person I spoke with used the exact same phrase to describe Mary. This was one fact that came through immensely.

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Josephine Crisfield Connerat, interview with the author, 28 May  
1993, Savannah, Ga.

Laura Lawton, interview with the author, 28 May 1993, Savannah,  
Ga.

Mary C. Lain, phone interview with the author, 1 June 1993,  
Savannah, Ga.

Mrs. Ralph Bowden, phone interview with the author, 11 May 1993,  
Savannah, Ga.

Pam Benton, phone interview with the author, 27 May 1993,  
Savannah, Ga.

Pearce Connerat, interview with the author, 28 May 1993,  
Savannah, Ga.