

Women Who Made Our A

LEADING LADY OF THE DIOCESE



Cornelia Whipple
1816-1890

There have been many unsung saints among the women of the Diocese of Minnesota, but first in many hearts is Cornelia Wright Whipple, wife of our first Bishop. Born in Adams, N.Y., prepared for teaching at Emma Willard's renowned Female Seminary, she taught, and then in 1842 married a young businessman, Henry Whipple.

She came from an Episcopal family, her paternal grandmother confirmed by Bishop Seabury, her mother by Bishop Hobart, and she by Bishop Onderdonk. It was her influence which led Henry into the ministry.

Pioneer Years

When he was elected Bishop of Minnesota in 1859, she shared the hardships of his early years in Faribault, then See city. She even was considered by the many Indians of Minnesota as a saint and one mission, although called Bishop Whipple Mission of Morton, MN. is also named St. Cornelia's. The Chief and priest Emmegahbow spoke for his tribesmen in saying, "Mother, all the Indians are praying for you."

She also was the Bishop's right hand in establishing the now internationally known, Shattuck, St. Mary's Hall and Seabury Seminary (now located in Evanston, IL. Seabury-Western). In 1866 an addition to their home was built for St. Mary's with Cornelia as housemother. She swept, cleaned, made many delicacies for the girls. She was a "mother" to all students in the schools. When the Whipples spent some winters in Florida due to his health, Mrs. Whipple would make jams and marmalades to sell, giving the proceeds for work with the Seminole Indians there! She died from effects of injuries in a railway accident returning from Florida.

As the Indian women who had to leave Minnesota following the 1862 uprising, came to kiss her one by one, we join with their words to this dedicated woman... "In heaven to meet you is my hope".

"She was full of good works and acts of charity."

MISS SIBYL CARTER-Deaconess

We have no years of birth and death of this gracious lady, but she gave of herself to this diocese—especially the Indian women. She was from New York and through acquaintance with the Whipples became interested in the work for and with Indian women. On a trip to Japan she saw what lace making had done for the poor women there. Bishop Whipple suggested she start this at White Earth with the hospital for headquarters. She taught them from 1886; then went East to raise money for a teacher and make contacts for sales, in the year 1890. From this start in 1891, other schools sprang up in Red Lake, 120 miles north of White Earth and Leech Lake, 90 miles east. In 1894 another was started at Morton so that by 1906 there were nine lace schools. The first bedspread was made for Mrs. Pierpoint Morgan; Mrs. Vanderbilt bought another.

Tanner's "Fifty Years of Church Work" states: "It is of interest that the lace made by the Indian women took the gold medal at the Paris exhibition."

There were many teachers in these schools, some Bishop Whipple's young relatives. Miss Carter moved to New York to start Sibyl Carter's Lace Making Center where sales of the lace were held yearly. "It has proven," Miss Carter said, "that when this thought came to me, the lace industry has solved the question of work for my Indian sisters."

Romantic Pioneer

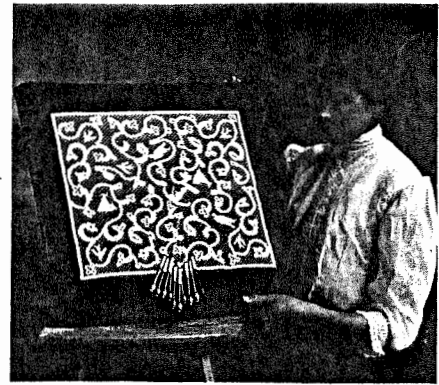


LADY LAURA AUBREY
1829-1924

Laura, a daughter of Sir Lester Kaye, Yorkshire, married the son of Sir John Dean Paul, in 1851. Her life reads like a romantic novel! Because of her father-in-law's disgrace, she and her husband came to White Bear Lake, Minnesota. They were quiet, unassuming, and gave much culture to the new settlement. She started the church in their home and taught the first school in 1857.

No one knew their background until in the summer of 1868, upon the death of Aubrey's father, the couple returned to England permanently to take up their estates, where John became the 3rd baronet, Sir Aubrey John Paul.

Laura died in May, 1924 at age of 95—never knowing that she had become an example to many women to come to St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, White Bear Lake, MN. They have a large beautiful oil portrait of her in the Church parlors... well worth a trip to see. From Lady Aubrey to the present, all the women of this parish have been a dedicated working part of the fabric of the church.



MA-GA Wastewin, the Indian girl at Bishop Whipple Mission who made this lace for Queen Alexandra of England. She was a member of the women's lace making project.



MARY CYNTHIA SMITH
1872-1973

Mary Cynthia was an active church woman at St. Paul's, Minneapolis, but early in her life became interested in the diocesan women and ecumenical groups then in existence. She was the first Diocesan Education Secretary of the Woman's Auxiliary of Minnesota from 1911 to 1919. Then she became chairman of the Women's Department of what was called Minneapolis Church Federation. Two other St. Paul's women followed her as president of this group—Mrs. F.E. Olney and Mrs. George Wicher, with Mrs. H.G. McConnell Secy, and Public Relations Chrmn. for 2 years. (She later became member of State CWU Board for 25 years. She credits her interest to Miss Smith.)

While on the Federation's Board (1929-1932), Miss Smith travelled about the state at her own expense to interest women in forming a state organization. Through her work in Sunday School Ass'n. and School of Missions (founded in 1906 here) she contacted presidents of women's groups of every denomination—a total of 1200 women!

When the state's women organized what is now called Church Women United, Mary Cynthia Smith became its first president in 1936. She later became 5th national chairman for a two year term, aiding in the formation of the national group.

She was generous in the giving of self, money, and time—a dedicated person to both the ECW and the CWU. A perfect example of Christian love.



SISTER ANNETTE RELF
1840-1915

This little lady often seen in many parts of this diocese in her black gown and tiny white cap perched atop her head, was a first in many things. She had been born on a plantation near Lexington, KY.; but her Mother died leaving a family, so her Father moved with them to Missouri where he remarried. They later settled in Superior, Wisconsin. Annette always had a longing to start an orphanage, due to having been without her own Mother for a long time. Another sister had a religious bent, and went to West Africa as a missionary where she died of yellow fever. Annette came to Minnesota where she was the first head of "Cottage Hospital" (later St. Barnabas and now Medical Center), she headed the first Sheltering Arms, then an orphanage; she was first head of "Old Ladies Home"—now the Diocesan Home.

She was also the first Sister of the diocese, having gone to the Bishop Potter Memorial Home for training in Philadelphia in 1873. Previous to this she had served as a Parish School teacher in Faribault, 1871-73.

On her return from the East she accomplished all the missionary work above. In 1882 she was elected the 1st First Vice president of the new diocesan Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions. She attended Gettysburg Church at the time of her election.

A great great niece, Katie Carlsen, has been active on the Diocesan Home Board and has many mementos of this saintly woman—who was also "full of good works".

History In Diocese of Minnesota



NETTIE WAITE
1867-1963

An old worn UTO box in a glass case is in the narthex of St. Paul's Parish, Minneapolis and with it is a card stating that it was Nettie Waite's. Newcomers or visitors never had the pleasure of knowing this brave and Christian woman. Her family came from England and were among the prominent families of the city. At the age of three, she developed polio, and was badly paralyzed, having to wear braces always. EXCEPT when gardening! Then she sat on the grass border of her English flower borders (her brother had given her a large home) and patiently weeded her flowers.

She was the first kindergarten teacher in Minneapolis. And she was the Sunday School superintendent for fifty years. When St. Paul's began mission work with the view of establishing new parishes, she would be in charge of the beginning Sunday School classes; also conducting Bible classes in her home. Her life was spent in mission for the Church.

Before her death her family wished to honor her. A new church was being built but until financially secure, no gifts for windows were accepted. So, the fund was given to the sacristy, since Miss Nettie had served many years on the Altar Guild. She had often brought flowers from her garden for the altar. After her death, a window was installed by the parish in the narthex in her memory—depicting Christ with children.

Her happiness and radiant faith were an example to others of one who despite handicaps, lived in His service. A great niece wrote: "Friendship, wisdom, and love were her gifts to share; her spiritual hospitality extended to everyone."

The little UTO box was filled to the brim for each collection. A private charity little known about was to the Navy Seaman's Fund in New York. Her home and money was bequeathed to St. Paul's Parish in her Will.

In 1965 a new circle was formed at the church composed of the most active ECW members—and it is named "Nettie Waite Circle". They meet at homes each month and spark the activities, trying to follow in their name sake's footsteps.

An additional note might be added that Miss Waite also taught children on an Indian reservation. The school caught fire, but under her calm direction and playing the piano, she safely marched the children out. They were unhurt but the building destroyed. She made by hand over 300 quilts for the Indians. She was also a fine artist working in oils, water colors, and etching. There is no end to her many accomplishments.

The new church built special ramps which she could use, also an elevator and a wheel chair. The first hearing aid of the parish was installed in her pew. These were unusual things at that time. There are even ramps on each side leading to the altar! She loved and was loved in return.

PAST DIOCESAN PRESIDENTS

Diocese of Minnesota

Mrs. Charles E. Mayo	1882-1884
Mrs. E. H. Holbrook	1885-
Mrs. Charles E. Mayo	1885-1887
Mrs. Charles B. Brunson	1887-1899
Mrs. Hector Baxter	1899-1914
Mrs. H. C. Theopold	1914-1920
Mrs. E. S. Gaylord	1920-1921
Miss Gertrude Norrish	1921-1923
Miss Katherine King	1923-1926
Mrs. F. L. Palmer	1926-1929
Mrs. George J. Allen	1929-1935
Mrs. David R. West	1935-1940
Mrs. Kenneth G. Brill	1940-1946
Mrs. Robert Adams	1946-1952
Mrs. Lloyd Thorburn	1952-1956
Mrs. Alfred Colle	1956-1958
Mrs. Preston S. Haglin	1958-1960
Mrs. Frank E. Mathes	1960-1962
Mrs. John Hunner	1962-1964
Mrs. Henry Somsen	1964-1966
Mrs. Forest D. Nowlin	1966-1968
Mrs. Vicior Kulbitski	1968-1970
Mrs. Charles Mock	1970-1972
Mrs. George Ziesmer	1972-1974
Mrs. Douglas Campbell	1974-1976
Mrs. John Kulbitski	1976-1978
Mrs. Maynard A. Peterson	1978-1980
Mrs. Robert Alden	1980-1982

Diocese of Duluth

Mrs. J. T. Gillfillan	1896-1897
Mrs. J. Morrison	1897-1920
Mrs. E. W. Couper	1920-1922
Mrs. C. T. Fitzsimmons	1922-1936
Mrs. J. A. McKillican	1936-1942
Mrs. A. E. Eddy	1942-1944

(We call your attention to the fact that the whole state of Minnesota was in the Diocese of Minnesota until 1895 when the state was divided into two dioceses—one remaining Minnesota and the northern half "Diocese of Duluth". In 1944 the two were rejoined into one as Diocese of Minnesota. This accounts for differences in years, when the Women's Auxillary had different Boards. Minnesota's area is about equal to England and Scotland combined.)



Elizabeth Augusta Tibbs
1847-1905

If you had lived in St. Paul, MN. from about 1890 to 1894 you might have seen a blue eyed, blonde lady with kinky hair trudging all about trying to find colored folks who were Episcopalian. She had come from St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Baltimore, MD. with her son, Clarence M. Tibbs. When she attended a white Episcopal parish (which she never named) the priest said to her, "Why don't you start a parish of your own people?"

She gathered up peach crates from grocers and using them as seats, started a Sunday School in her aunt's living room. She knew that her people had a Church in the city over 20 years before and the work had prospered; but the building burned down so the congregation disbanded. She knew what her own parish had been and wanted the same for her people here. There was some question at that time as to a separate place of worship for the Afro-Americans. But she believed in starting a mission and present day results show she was right. The Mission began formally on May 1, 1894 with 3 communicants and 3 candidates for confirmation. There was much discouragement until they received a priest who spent 3 months teaching them one lesson, "That God answers prayer". The work continued with various priests and seminary students, until the present day St. Philip's Church was dedicated Epiphany Sunday, 1901. The speaker at this event ended his address with thanks for this joyful day... "we look back and see a poor lone woman tramping about the city for 3 years in her persistent and finally successful effort to interest clergy and people in a distinct work for her people". Her name will not be placed in history among great women, but she will remain ever dear to us as the mother of the Mission.

(Elizabeth Tibbs left another legacy to this diocese and the ECW—her granddaughter whom all love and who follows in her Grandmother's footsteps—Virgie Hughes of St. Thomas, Minneapolis.)



Jeannette Ridlon Piccard
1895-1981

This is a woman of rare talents—balloonist, psychologist and priest! Everything in her life seems to have been a "first". She got her B.A. from Bryn Mawr College in 1918 which later honored her with establishing a rare book library worth thousands. Her M.S. was from University of Chicago (1919) and Ph.D. from University of Minnesota in 1942. She had married famed Jean Piccard and became a pioneer in high-altitude flight, conducting research with Jean on cosmic rays in the stratosphere. She piloted a balloon 57,579 feet above Lake Erie—first successful flight made through layers of clouds. She became a consultant to the director of NASA from 1964-70. She was also interested in theology and at age 77 entered General Theological Seminary—later one of first women priests in United States. She served on the Ministries Committee of the ECW Board, Diocese of Minnesota; and was a curate at historic St. Philip's Church, St. Paul.

She had three sons, all well known in their fields. The list of her offices on various professional Boards is listed in the first edition of WHO'S WHO IN RELIGION 1975-76, together with the many awards given her. She wrote many articles for professional journals. Science never detracted from her deep faith.