

TRIBUTE

FOR GEORGIANA (STODDARD) MARTIN

[From the Richland Observer January 25, 1973 Issue



AT 93 SHE CAN SAY

She Was What She Wanted To Be

Mrs. Georgia Martin had the happy privilege of observing her 93rd birthday on the sixth day of January with two surprise parties given in her honor, one by her neighbors and one by several ladies of her church, the Town and Country Presbyterian Church.

When we learned of this occasion, we wanted to visit with her and to hear of her 93 years of life. We were greeted at the door to her home by a small, pretty, and charming lady with a happy welcome. Yes, she would be glad to share her story with us.

Mrs. Martin was born Georgia Stoddard. She states with great pride, and justifiably so, that she is the ninth generation of Stoddards to live in America, her ancestors coming from England to settle in Connecticut in 1639. From there they moved to New York and then started their migration to the midwest.

Chesterfield Valentine Stoddard, Mrs. Martin's grandfather, came to the Spring Green area where his wife's family, the Davidsons, had settled. From there he went out in search of just the right place for his future home. He found that spot on Little Willow with a beautiful spring, which was so important in those days, and it was here he brought his family in 1852. (This land is now owned by Walter Rippchen.)

Harlow Stoddard, a carpenter and farmer, and Anna Reagles were Georgia's parents. They made their home on Little Willow also.

Mrs. Martin recalls with pleasant memories her grandfather's spring and spring-house, where she watched the trout darting in and out around the stones and rocks. She also recalls the large orchard they had and the good apples they enjoyed. She still enjoys eating an apple every day!

Many happy childhood hours were also spent playing in the swings her father hung from the many maple trees in their front yard.

Mrs. Stoddard died when Georgia was ten and when she was twelve she moved to the home of her Reagles grandparents at Neptune. When time for high school came, she took a room in Sextonville with Ella Hatch and Edna Haseltine so she could continue her education, where Kirk Hatch, who later became well known in the educational field, was the head professor. It was here that she met Harley Martin, who was to become her husband.

After finishing high school and passing her written exams, she went out to teach school. Her first application met with disappointment — she was turned down because she was too small! She didn't let that stop her though, and she went on to teach at Brush Creek, Crow Hill, Aubrey, Wheat Hollow and Butternut. Her last year she went to Gotham, where she taught in the old Richland City school and then moved up to the new Gotham school to be the first teacher of the primary grades there.

In 1903 she married Harley A. Martin and they spent the early years of their life together on a farm in Buena Vista, near the present Martin farm. While still here, Harley became the secretary for the Red Polled Cattle Club and this soon became a full-time job , so they moved to Richland Center.

In this modern world of Woman's Lib and the frustrated mother and homemaker, it was wonderful to hear Mrs. Martin speak with such pride; "I didn't do many things outside my home because I wanted to be a good wife, take care of my home and raise my family so my husband

could do the things he liked." She went on to note Mr. Martin's three terms as a Democratic assemblyman, his work on the hospital board, and the many public services he performed for the community.

The Martins had six children. Wayne, who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich., is a retired band director and history teacher. Eva Mae Roberts became a nurse and now lives in Wauwautosa. Dora Kruger Erickson was a dietician before marrying and now lives in Oconomowoc. Jim carries on the Martin name in agriculture at the farm formerly owned by his grandfather, J.W. Martin, in Buena Vista. Freda Nee lives just south of Richland Center and is a teacher in the junior high school of the Richland School District. Harley Jr., the youngest, lost his life in an auto accident in 1940. All of these children graduated from the University of Wisconsin, except Harley Jr., who was attending the "U" at the time of his death.

In the late thirties, the Martins decided to return to Buena Vista to help J.W. Martin, who had become a widower and was in ill health, in the management of the Martin farm. Then the war years came and they remained there for ten years. At that time they decided to retire and move back to Richland Center.

They built themselves a small home on Kinder Street and settled down to a quiet life together, after having spent many busy years with their family. After three short, happy years, Mr. Martin passed away. Today Mrs. Martin remains in that home. She has much to look forward to with 17 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. She also has 93 years' memories of a life that had sorrows but also joy and happiness and the great satisfaction of being the wife and mother she wanted to be.

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