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MAJ. WALTER BEDFORD MOORE, PHILANTHROPIST
AND PIONEER AT YORK,
A CREDIT TO HIS STATE

By

Lucetta M. Shirley

(From the Yorkville Enquirer)

Undated and unnamed newspaper
(Possibly Charlotte Observer)

Kindness of:

Mr. W. B. Ardrey, Sr.
114 Confederate Avenue
Fort Mill, S. C.

Rock Hill Public Library

Rock Hill, S. C.

Mrs. W. Bedford Moore Jr.

'Just a Rooter for Columbia'

By ADGER BROWN
Staff Writer, The State

Within the shadow of the spire of Columbia's First Presbyterian Church, at 1424 Washington Street, stands a large, gray house whose style is often described as Southern Colonial.

From its high porch you see the city spread before you, a strange juxtaposition of charm and traditional graciousness with bustling modernity. And yet there is a harmony between the two, a harmony also typical of its owner, Mrs. W. Bedford Moore Jr.

Mrs. Moore needs no introduction to Columbians, but certainly no profile of Columbia would even be meaningful without her. Her warm interest and her contributions toward making Columbia a city of culture are almost literally immeasurable.

There is scarcely any public project to advance Columbia's well-being to which Mrs. Moore's efforts have not been directed: the Town Theater, the Columbia Museum of Art, Heathwood School, the Palmetto Outdoor Historical Drama Association.

Despite her undeniable con-

tributions, Mrs. Moore is unassumingly modest.

"I'm just a rooter for Columbia, that's all. It's other people who do all the real work," she says.

Mrs. Moore is justifiably proud of the many contributions made by her husband, the late W. Bedford Moore Jr. to his adopted "home town."

The Moores came to Columbia from York in 1920. Mrs. Moore had attended the College for Women here and Mr. Moore, after studying at the College of Charleston and Harvard University, had obtained his law degree at the University of South Carolina.

Mrs. Moore's father, D. E. Finley was a member of Congress from South Carolina's Fifth Congressional District. Her brother, D. E. Finley Jr., was the first director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., having worked with Andrew Mellon in planning the gallery.

Mrs. Moore attributes much of her interest in cultural activities to her husband and her brother.

"I suppose their enthusiasm for such things sort of rubbed off on me."

Mr. Moore was the prime mover in the establishment of



Columbia's Town Theater and in the establishment of the Art Museum in association with the Columbia Art Association, which this year is celebrating its 50th anniversary.

"I think everyone should be aware," Mrs. Moore says, "of the great impetus given by the Kress Foundation to the fostering of an interest in fine art throughout the South. By making its marvelous collections available in the proper settings, they have put fine art within reach of people everywhere."

Mrs. Moore's active interest and participation in the establishing of Heathwood School sprang from a desire to help relieve overcrowded conditions in the public schools and especially to provide an opportunity for the

inculcation of Christian principles in the daily school life of children.

Probably the most outstanding characteristic of this "rooter" for Columbia is her ability to infect others with her enthusiasm.

Despite the charm of her gentle manner, there is something about her which dares you NOT to be interested — and only a clod would accept such a dare!

Among Mrs. Moore's many current enthusiasms is the newly formed Palmetto Outdoor Drama Association currently conducting a membership drive to produce an outdoor drama of early life in South Carolina.

"The Revolutionary War provided us with one of the brightest chapters in South

Carolina's contribution to history," she says. The Outdoor Drama organization is providing us with a wonderful opportunity not only for exciting drama, but for a lesson in history which should appeal to every child and adult in the state, as well as visitors.

A firm believer in maintaining Columbia's ties with the past and at the same time looking to the future, Mrs. Moore is active in movements to preserve such landmarks as the Ainsley Hall house, the Boylston house and formal gardens, Chestnut Cottage and the Hampton Preston house.

Here again, she modestly disclaims credit for the progress made thus far. Instead she pays tribute to the "band of women go-getters" whose efforts resulted in saving the historic Hall mansion for restoration.

Mrs. Moore also has praise for Columbia's City Council for their generous cooperation in support of cultural activities.

She confesses to pride in her association with the Garden Club of South Carolina, which established the Memorial Gardens on Lincoln Street in honor of all World War II veterans.

She has special praise for Loutrel W. Briggs of Charleston and Doyleston, Pa., landscape architect to contribute his services to the design of the garden.

A communicant of Trinity Episcopal Church, where she has held numerous positions of leadership in various organizations, she admits she never taught Sunday School.

"Those who do teach ought to get a special star," she says.

Seemingly there is no end to the activities which engage this Columbian's interest: the English Speaking Union, Columbia Drama Club, the D.A.R., the American Legion Auxilliary, the South Carolina Chapter of the National Foundation for Crippled Children, Daughters of the Holy Cross, the Fortnightly Book Club, the Evening Music Club.

You wonder how Columbia could ever have realized its cultural achievements without Mrs. Moore.

"I am not indispensable—no one is," shee says.

You cannot argue with a lady of Mrs. Moore's qualities—We'll have to take her own word for it that she is not indispensable.

But certainly she is irreplaceable!

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"I pray thee, then, Write me as one that loves his fellow-
men."

The angel wrote, and vanished.

The next night

It came again with a great wakening light,
And shewed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

So must the recorder have written in the golden book on
Wednesday night, March 12, when Major Walter Bedford Moore
passed away at this home in York. In his passing, the community
lost one of its great pioneers and philanthropists and so ended
a long and useful life.

Already from the lowest to the highest come kindly spoken
remembrances of the many generous and charitable deeds which
he daily performed, quietly, shunning any manner of public
notice or personal acclaim.

Only two weeks ago his fellow churchmen honored him for his
faithful service to the Church of the Good Shepherd by naming
the Parish House the Walter Bedford Moore House. Thus the measure
of the man.

Born in York on October 7, 1863, Major Moore was the son of Eli Peyton and Elizabeth Ann Neely Moore. He attended Colonel Coward's famous Kings Mountain Military School from 1876-79.

After leaving school, he began what was to be an outstandingly successful career as a modest clerk but his ambition led him to strike out for himself. In 1885 he established the mercantile firm of W. B. Moore Co.

With M. C. Willis as an associate, he began his first step in the manufacturing field in 1889 when the two men organized the Carolina Buggy Company.

He also held the franchise for eastern N. C. for insurance, but in the hard times of the '90s found it impossible to continue this venture.

In 1893 he was elected mayor of York and served several terms. It was during this first term that he, in the face of considerable opposition, built the city water works. His determination to inaugurate this utility led him to visit Birmingham and Anniston, Alabama, then in the boom following the discovery of coal and iron ore, where such improvements were being made. He later directed the installation of the water and sewer system of Kershaw.

As Major Moore so aptly put it, "One thing led to Another". Following the disastrous courthouse fire and the loss which came from exhausting the supply of water in the standpipe, he saw the importance of direct communication with the pumping station and installed a telephone from the plant to his home.

Finding it a great convenience he made a connection with his office and with the railway station.

Soon others became interested in securing telephone service and the Bedford Telephone Company came into existence, a venture which led to the fine system which now covers the community.

His deep interest in a telephone system was born in the heart of a thirteen year old boy who through the indulgence of his grandmother was permitted to attend the Philadelphia Exposition in 1876 and to see the great Alexander Graham Bell exhibiting the first telephone.

For twenty-three years, 1905-1928, he was the leader in the textile manufacturing field in this area, serving as president of the Neely Manufacturing Co. and the Travora Cotton Mills. To these was later added the Lockmore Mill.

For 15 years (1910-25) Major Moore was president of the Southern Spinners association (formerly the Hardyarn Spinners). The association covers from Virginia to Texas.

Major Moore was active in the South Carolina Guard and was made Captain in 1901, later advancing to the rating of Major because of his interest in regimental work.

Never losing interest in the Kings Mountain Military School, later reestablished as a Baptist school through his efforts, and finally as the Kings Mountain Military Academy under Col. Stephenson, he was instrumental in securing the

buildings and grounds, from the trustees of the owner for the Church Home Orphanage which was moved here from Charleston.

Major Moore's interest and keen feeling of responsibility touched every phase of business, civic effort and church life. He was a Mason, a member and ex-president of Crustbreakers, director and president of the York Depository and president of the Building and Loan Association.

In 1939 he was active in the organization of the Church of the Messiah at Myrtle Beach to which he afterwards contributed a rectory complete and in place.

All through the years his interest in the Episcopal Church in general and his own parish in particular never flagged and his good works spread in every direction to friends and groups of every creed. An illustration of one of the projects of his early manhood was the purchase of a number of wheel chairs for the use of shut-in cripples over the county. These aids to unknown friends were delivered by him for indefinite use and when no longer needed, if ever, were moved to the next unfortunate on his constantly replenished list.

During the war years he backed with his words and works the rebuilding and redecorating of the Church of the Good Shepherd, York.

In 1945 he made a substantial gift to the Protestant Episcopal Society for the Advancement of Christianity in the Diocese of Upper S. C. with the stipulation that the principal and interest should be used for advancement work.

He contributed generously to the enlargement and improvement of the Episcopal parish house and rectory at Clemson College and later gave to Holy Trinity there its organ. The Holy Trinity Bulletin of Sunday, March 16, pays him this tribute, "In the death of Major W. B. Moore, the Church in the Diocese of Upper South Carolina and the Diocese of South Carolina has lost her most faithful and devoted communicant."

In 1884 Major Moore was married to Miss Annie Lee Adickes of York, who with a daughter, Mrs. Joseph E. Hart of York, and a son, Walter Bedford Moore, Jr., of Columbia survive as do two half-brothers, Dr. A. Wiley Moore of Charlotte, and Dr. Baxter Moore of Fayetteville, N. C.

Surviving, too, are eight grandchildren: W. Bedford Moore, III, Cambridge, Mass; Joseph E. Hart, Jr., York; Dr. Walter Moore Mart, Boston, Mass.; Mrs. John W. Walker, Columbia; Mrs. Milnor P. Kessler, Greenville; Miss Anne Hart, New York City; Mrs. Elizabeth M. White, New York City; and Mrs. Gordon B. Smith, Syracuse, N. Y.

Four great grand children also survive: they are Betsy Walker and Anne Moore Walker of Columbia, and Sally Smith and Lucy Dana Smith of Syracuse, N. Y.

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