

## **A Dedicated Life**

**Hangchow, China opened its doors to Christian missionaries on 25 March 1867. On the same day, half way around the world, near the Western York County community of Bullock's Creek, Ella was born. Ella was the daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Davidson who descended from early settlers. At the age of 15, Ella was received into the Bullock's Creek Presbyterian Church on her confession of faith. Two years later, in 1884, the Davidson's moved to York and requested their church membership to be transferred to the First Presbyterian Church.**

**Ella continued her education in York, probably at the Yorkville Female Academy, and later graduated from the Wesleyan Methodist Female College in Staunton, Virginia. Upon graduation she returned to York where she taught in the public grade schools. She remained a devoted member of the Presbyterian Church where she was highly valued as one of its most dedicated workers.**

**Not long after her return to York she felt a divine call to become a missionary. No doubt, her pastor, Rev. Thomas English, welcomed and encouraged her, as well as aided her in seeing her calling become a reality. In 1891, after receiving required training, Ella was assigned to a mission field in China. Her first home in China was Hangchow--the very city that had opened its doors to Christian missionaries on the day she was born.**

**At the Hangchow mission Ella met a young woman from Kansas City who shared her birthday. They boarded at the home of a Doctor Stewart for a short time after which Ella took charge of the girl's school at Tien-Swe-Gyiano, the first of its kind established by the Presbyterian Church in China.**

**After ten years service, in the fall of 1900, she married Rev. Lacy L. Little, a missionary from North Carolina. They moved to Kiangyin station where they labor in a new and much larger work. Ella founded the Luola Murchison Sprunt Academy for Girls and the Willie Moore Bible Training Home for Women. She proved herself a very capable worker who could serve in different capacities at the same time and maintained a home where everyone was welcome at all times.**

**Ella Little returned to her home in York twice--the first was in 1904 and the second was in 1913. As is usual with missionaries on leave, she traveled and**

lectured extensively for the Presbyterian cause in China. Though she was in bad health following major surgery during her second trip, her zeal was undaunted as she traveled throughout the South and stirred interest for missions at home and abroad. She wrote articles for the *American Missionary* a Presbyterian publication as well as letters that were published in the *Yorkville Enquirer*, her hometown newspaper.

In April 1916 she became painfully ill and was admitted to the Red Cross Hospital in Shanghai. Her husband found a nearby boarding house and kept a constant bedside vigilance. In York, anxious to hear of her condition were her father and two sisters, Mr. W. H. Herndon and Mrs. J. S. Mackorell. In Charlotte, sister Mrs. W. T. Dunlap, and brothers R. S. Davidson in Houston, Texas and John W. Davidson of Pickins, Mississippi.

On the afternoon of Friday, July 7, Ella took part in a short devotion in which she committed her loved ones into the hands of God and prayed for the Christians at Kiangyin. She turned to her husband and after a short word of farewell she yielded her spirit to the God she had served. The following Sunday, Ella's sister, Mrs. Herndon of York, received the solemn news. The cablegram from Rev. Little simply read, "Ella at rest."