

**Leonora Hall Christian
Crusader for Children's Health**

Leonora Hall, Mrs. George Henry Christian, was one of the founders of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Minnesota. She was born in Wisconsin in 1845, oldest child of Seth Paine Hall and Ruth Gray White. Her parents were both born in Vermont and married there in 1842. They moved to southeastern Wisconsin by 1845 when Leonora was born. Seth was an attorney in Hudson, WI in 1860. By 1870, he was an attorney in Minneapolis, and by 1880, he was an attorney in San Francisco, CA.



Figure 2 George Henry Christian, courtesy MNHS

Leonora married George Henry Christian in April 1867 in Minneapolis. George was born in Alabama and moved to Wisconsin, then spent time in North Carolina and New York. He went to Chicago at 15 years old in 1854, and got a job at a milling operation. He observed flour milling processes from Faribault, MN to France, and adapted a method for milling fine flour from spring wheat grown in Minnesota, which at the time was considered inferior to winter wheat.



Figure 1 Leonora Hall Christian
Courtesy Hennepin History
Museum

Cadwallader Washburn hired George to oversee the Washburn B Mill. There, George hired a team to perfect the process. This was one of a series of innovations that brought prosperity to the company later known as General Mills, as well as to the Christian family personally. George exited the business at age 36 in 1875, which allowed the family to travel and become philanthropists. He subsequently went into the paper and hardwood businesses.

George and Leonora founded the Citizen's Aid Society and provided \$2 million in endowment funds. The society funded the Leonora Hall Christian Children's Sanitarium at the Glen Lake Sanatorium complex. It also donated to Thomas Tubercular Hospital (named in honor of their pastor at St. Mark's Church and later absorbed into Fairview Hospital) in memory of their son Henry, who died from tuberculosis in 1905 at the age of 27. Later, the Society provided funds to the University of Minnesota cancer center in honor of their son George Chase Christian.



Figure 3 Leonora Hall Christian Children's Sanatorium, 1922

Leonora's involvement with the cause of public health went beyond her philanthropy. She surveyed doctors in order to determine whether they would send patients to a tuberculosis

camp. When she determined they would, she and George established one. She visited the children there and visited their families at home. She served on an auxiliary board of Associated Charities and advocated hiring more nurses, funding their salaries herself when

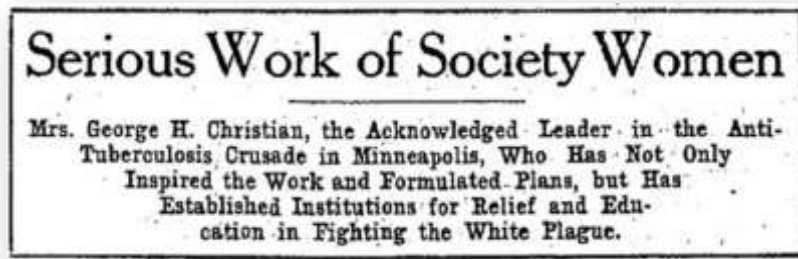


Figure 4 Minneapolis Morning Star headline from 1909

necessary. She chaired the Health and Hygiene Committee of the Minnesota Federation. Leonora served as treasurer of the Home for Children and Aged Women for more than twenty years. She also introduced the use of Christmas Seals to benefit the Minnesota Association for the Prevention and Relief of Tuberculosis. She died in Minnesota in 1916.

In 1917, George commissioned construction of a home at 2303 Third Avenue South in Minneapolis, but did not live to see it completed. Son George Chase, his and Leonora's only surviving child of their four children, died 12 months later. George Chase Christian had followed his father into the grain business. He married Carolyn McKnight, who was involved in many charities and was president of the NSCDA-MN from 1923-1929. When the house was complete she moved in, bringing their three foster children and their servants. She lived there for the next 36 years. The house became the property of the Hennepin History Museum in 1957, and still houses the museum today.



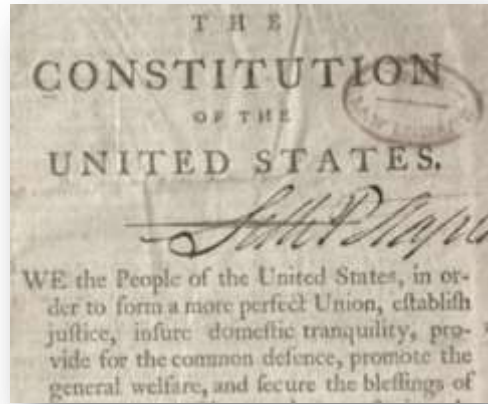
Figure 5 George Christian home at 2303 Third Av S. courtesy MNHS

Carolyn carried on the family's work with the Glen Lake Sanatorium as well as the summer camp, visiting each 4th of July with presents of flags and balloons for the children. The Carolyn Foundation was established after her death.

Colonial Ancestor:

Edward Morris was born in Essex, England in August 1630. He married Grace Bett in Boston in 1655, settling in Roxbury. He was chosen as a constable in 1664 and as a selectman in 1674. He was chosen deputy from Roxbury to the General Court from 1678 to 1686. Leonora was his fifth great granddaughter. She was admitted to the Massachusetts Society of NSCDA in 1895 through her father's lineage.

Edward's son Ebenezer Morris was one of 13 pioneers who left Roxbury to settle Woodstock, CT. Ebenezer's daughter Mary married Seth Paine, a "leading man of Pomfret" and patron of Yale College. Their son Seth was a member of the January 1788 convention to ratify the U.S. Constitution.



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