

= Mildred Lewis Rutherford =

Mildred Lewis " Miss Millie " Rutherford ( July 16 , 1851 ? August 15 , 1928 ) was a prominent educator and author from Athens , Georgia . She served the Lucy Cobb Institute , as its head and in other capacities , for over forty years , and oversaw the addition of the Seney @-@ Stovall Chapel to the school . Heavily involved in many organizations , she became the historian general of the United Daughters of the Confederacy ( UDC ) , and a speech given for the UDC was the first by a woman to be recorded in the Congressional Record . She was a prolific non @-@ fiction writer . Also known for her oratory , Rutherford was distinctive in dressing as a southern belle for her speeches . She held strong pro @-@ Confederacy , proslavery views and opposed women 's suffrage .

= = Biography = =

= = = Family background = = =

Mildred Rutherford was born July 16 , 1851 , in Athens , Georgia ; she was the daughter of Laura Cobb Rutherford ( Howell and Thomas 's sister ) and Williams Rutherford , a professor of mathematics at the University of Georgia . Mildred Rutherford was the granddaughter of John Addison Cobb , whose involvement in agriculture ( he owned a plantation with 209 slaves by 1840 ) , the Georgia Railroad , and real estate made him " one of the area 's wealthiest men " . She was the niece of John 's sons Howell Cobb , who served six terms as a Democratic Congressman and Speaker of the House for two years , and the lawyer Thomas R.R. Cobb , one of the founders of the University of Georgia School of Law ? he " codified Georgia 's state laws " , " wrote the wartime state constitution of 1861 " , and was a prominent proslavery propagandist ; T.R.R. Cobb founded Lucy Cobb Institute in response to a letter that Laura Rutherford had sent anonymously to the local paper .

= = = Education and career = = =

Rutherford entered the Lucy Cobb Institute at the age of eight " in the school 's first session " . She was graduated from there at the age of sixteen in 1868 .

= = = = Educator = = = =

After teaching in Atlanta for eight years , Rutherford served as the principal of the Lucy Cobb Institute in Athens from 1880 to 1895 and lived in a house directly across the street until it burned c . 1926 , continuing to serve the school in various capacities for over forty years ( including several years again at its head " with the title of ' president ' signaling the school 's college @-@ level ambitions " ) . According to Sarah Case ,

Rutherford took over a struggling institution and rebuilt it into one of the most prestigious schools for young women in Georgia . She immediately went to work improving its academic standards , beautifying the physical plant , and increasing enrollment . In agreeing to head the school , Rutherford had insisted that the all @-@ male board of directors cede to her its control of the budget and power to hire and fire staff .

She decided the students needed a chapel and had them write seeking funding for one . In 1881 , Nellie Stovall wrote " a beautiful and girlish letter " to George I. Seney , who responded with \$ 10 @,@ 000 in funding ( and a challenge to the town for an additional \$ 4 @,@ 000 ) for the structure , an octagonal red brick building called the Seney @-@ Stovall Chapel .

Case further describes Lucy Cobb under Rutherford 's direction :

Rutherford 's deep concern with propriety and feminine modesty should not obscure the fact that the school prepared women for more than traditional domestic roles . Lucy Cobb recognized that

many of its alumnae would seek employment , and by teaching students marketable , and at the same time , respectable , skills , as well as genteel decorum and dress , Lucy Cobb created a new image of elite white single womanhood that combined aspects of the new woman and the southern belle , what I call the " new belle . " As early as 1885 , a Lucy Cobb commencement speaker argued that women ought to be allowed into more professions .

= = = Orator and historian = = =

Rutherford was an accomplished public speaker ? she oftentimes dressed as a southern belle when orating ? who addressed a great number of local organizations , including the YMCA , the Ladies Memorial Association ( for which she served as president ) , and the Athens chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy ( UDC ) , and in November 1912 addressed the national assembly of the UDC as their historian general .

She " became perhaps the best @-@ known amateur historian in the early twentieth century for her extensive writings and speeches , her historical journal , published from 1923 to 1927 , and her promotion of historical work among the UDC as that organization 's Historian General from 1911 to 1916 " . She gave " the first speech by a woman to be printed in the Congressional Record " in 1916 at a UDC convention .

" Miss Millie , " always a champion of southern traditions , was a woman of powerful personality , commanding presence , and fearlessly outspoken opinions ; she was known widely for the speeches she delivered in hoop skirts . For all her decorum , she seemed to enjoy the protracted battles over the plaster goats that stood at the end of the dormitory 's long veranda . The college boys periodically painted these animals in their school colors , red and black . At last they were broken when the boys attempted to hide them ; some of the former belles of Lucy Cobb still cherish pieces of the goats as souvenirs .

= = Death and legacy = =

In 1927 Rutherford became seriously ill . Late on Christmas night , as she convalesced , her house suffered a devastating fire , consuming many of her personal papers and belongings , including " most of her private collection of Confederate artifacts " . She died on August 15 , 1928 , and was interred in Oconee Hill Cemetery , in East Hill , one of the two original sections of the cemetery . Her great niece Mildred Seydell was named in her honor and became a well @-@ known journalist , one of the first in Georgia , and a nationally syndicated columnist .

= = Views = =

Rutherford was Baptist with a strong faith and expressed a " deep preoccupation with propriety and morality " in her textbooks , criticizing " authors who openly portrayed sexuality or themselves lived in ways Rutherford found immoral " . She lauded the works of Southern writers and female writers .

According to University of Georgia historian Ann E. Marshall , she was a " tireless advocate of the ' Lost Cause ' version of southern history " ( referring to the Lost Cause of the Confederacy ) . Goals of her writing included " establishing the South 's contribution to United States history , legitimizing secession , and idealizing the antebellum plantation " , and she defended American slavery , thinking its only problem was the burden it put upon the white slaveholders . She viewed " true history " ? the way she saw , defined , and proselytized it ? as a potential common ground between North and South , and also believed it to be a potent political weapon in support of the causes she espoused . She was willing to alter the historical record to make her point -- in a speech in Dallas in 1916 she claimed that " the negroes in the South were never called slaves . That term came in with the abolition crusade , " even though her own state of Georgia used the word " slaves " in its official Declaration of Causes of Secession

In 1914 , she joined the Georgia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage and became a " vocal opponent " of women 's suffrage and the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution ,

which was ratified on August 18 , 1920 . She viewed suffrage as " not a step toward equality , but rather a way of robbing women of the only power they truly held ? that of feminine influence and persuasion within their families . Rutherford never reconciled this view with the fact that she herself was one of Georgia 's most publicly active and well @-@ known women of her time " . Her opposition was " formidable " : Dolly Blount Lamar and Rutherford headed the organization , and in 1919 this " conservative state " became the nation 's first to reject the amendment . Case asserts that while " Rutherford reserved her strongest resistance for the suffrage amendment " , she " opposed all constitutional amendments , including prohibition , despite her anti @-@ alcohol sentiments , on the basis of limiting federal power " .

= = Selected writings = =

Mildred Lewis Rutherford wrote 29 historically significant books and pamphlets . These were widely read . Among them are :

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis ( 1890 ) . English Authors : a hand @-@ book of English literature from Chaucer to living writers . Atlanta : The Constitution Book & Job Print .

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis ( 1894 ) . American authors : a hand @-@ book of American literature from early colonial to living writers . Atlanta : The Franklin Printing and Publishing Company .

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis ( 1906 ) . The South in History and Literature : a handbook of Southern authors from the Settlement of Jamestown , 1607 , to living writers . Atlanta : The Franklin @-@ Turner Company .

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis ( November 21 , 1912 ) . Address delivered by Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford , historian general , United Daughters of the Confederacy . Thirteen periods of United States history . New Orleans , La . Retrieved January 23 , 2012 @.@ at Internet archive .

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis ( 1906 ) . French authors : a hand @-@ book of French literature . Froissart --Living writers . Atlanta : The Franklin Printing and Publishing Company .

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis ( 1916 ) . Four Addresses . Paul Hunter Books , Arranged and printed by The Mildred Rutherford Historical Circle .

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis ( 1920 , reprinted with new material 1998 ) . Truths of History : A Historical Perspective of the Civil War From the Southern Viewpoint . Athens , Georgia ( original ) ; Atlanta , Georgia ( reprint ) : Southern Lion Books , Inc . ISBN 0 @-@ 9662454 @-@ 0 @-@ 7 @.@ at Internet Archive

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis , The South Must Have Her Rightful Place in History , Athens , Georgia , 1923 .

Rutherford , Mildred Lewis ( 1926 ) . Georgia : the thirteenth colony . Athens , Georgia : McGregor . OCLC 1390253 .

= = = Endnotes = = =