

Julia Bowen French Metcalf (Mrs. George Reuben Metcalf)

1854-1922

Julia Bowen French Metcalf, born in Mexico, NY on January 31, 1854, was the 6th great granddaughter of Roger Williams of Rhode Island. She was admitted to the Rhode Island chapter of the Colonial Dames in 1895, three years after the chapter was founded, and is listed in the first record book of the Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantation. The following year, she was one of a group of 14 women who started the Minnesota chapter - the fourth non-colonial state to be incorporated. The first meeting was held on March 24, 1896.

Julia married George Reuben Metcalf, who graduated from Columbia University medical school in 1874, in Syracuse NY and their son George Putnam Metcalf was born in 1876. Julia's husband was a noted physician and freemason. After they arrived in Minnesota, his office, and their residence, was at 110 West 4th Street in St. Paul, where the St. Paul Public Library and James J. Hill Library were later built.

On March 1, 1905, the *Minneapolis Star* reported that Dr. Metcalf had died suddenly of a seizure in Italy. The couple had left for a two year tour of Europe the previous summer. Julia returned to St. Paul and lived in the Hotel Aberdeen until she passed away in 1922.

Julia was involved in the Harvest Festival, Mitford House, Women's Auxiliary to the World's Fair Committee of MN, Women's Civic League, and New Century Club. She was on the first board of directors of the Women's City Club of St. Paul. The 1921 *Minnesota History* magazine thanked her for the donation of about 500 books to MNHS, "finely bound and in the best editions." She was also chairwoman of the committee of women who made arrangements for the dinner on the occasion of the dedication exercises of the new Minnesota Historical Society building in 1920. A photo of that occasion is below.



*The Hotel Aberdeen, built in 1889, was one of St. Paul's finest luxury apartment/hotels in the late nineteenth century. Larry Millet described it in *Lost Twin Cities*, 1992. Julia lived there for sixteen years at the height of its popularity.*



THE DEDICATION AUDIENCE
[Minnesota Historical Society Building, May 11, 1920.]

Resources:

1880 US Census, Onondaga, New York, Syracuse, Population Schedule, NARA Roll 908, page 352D

1895 Minnesota Territorial and State Census 1845-1905 ancestry.com [database online] Provo, UT

1896 US Passport Applications, NARA Roll #479

Exercises at the Dedication of the Minnesota Historical Building, Minnesota History Magazine, 1920, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN
collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles vol 3, p. 414-447

First record book of the Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, ending August 31, 1896, NSCDA 1897, Snow & Farnham printers, Providence

Julia Bowen French Metcalf, *Application for Membership*, Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, 1895, NSCDA-MN files

Reviews and Short Features, Minnesota History Magazine, 1921, Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, vol 4, issue 1 p. 65