

**Mary Elizabeth Fletcher Hale (Mrs. Henry Hale)
(1831-1926)**

A founder of the NSCDA in the State of Minnesota, Mary Elizabeth Fletcher was born in Bridport, Vermont on April 14, 1831, daughter of Paris and Anna Miner Fletcher. Her father Paris was trained as a saddle and harness maker when he was a youth. He became proprietor of a general store and later was President of the Bank of Middlebury (Vermont). The Fletcher family home still exists and is the home of the Bridport Historical Society. It is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the nomination form notes its shallow columns, "as if the builder had never seen a classical portico."



Figure 1: Paris and Anna Fletcher House



Figure 2: Henry Hale

Mary married attorney Henry Hale, grandson of Revolutionary Patriot Nathan Hale, in Vermont in 1855. Born in Vermont in 1814, he was the tenth child of Henry and Phebe Adams Hale. Mary and Henry moved to Minnesota the following year. They lived at 630 Lafayette in St. Paul. Henry practiced law until 1864, when he devoted himself to managing his properties full time. They had two children, a son and a daughter, who both died in infancy. Mary was a member of the New Century Club and St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Henry supported a number of charitable causes, and Mary participated in charity events such as the ball given to benefit St. Luke's Hospital, for which she served on the reception committee.

The November 1885 *St. Paul Daily Globe* described her apparel as "a superb trained costume of black velvet with draperies of black silk garnitured with lace; diamonds and pearls." Henry served on the board of trustees of St. Luke's.

Henry died in December 1890. He'd had a great interest in libraries, and was on the St. Paul Library Association board, serving as President. In his bequest, he left half of his estate to St. Paul to build a medical dispensary and a library. A provision in his

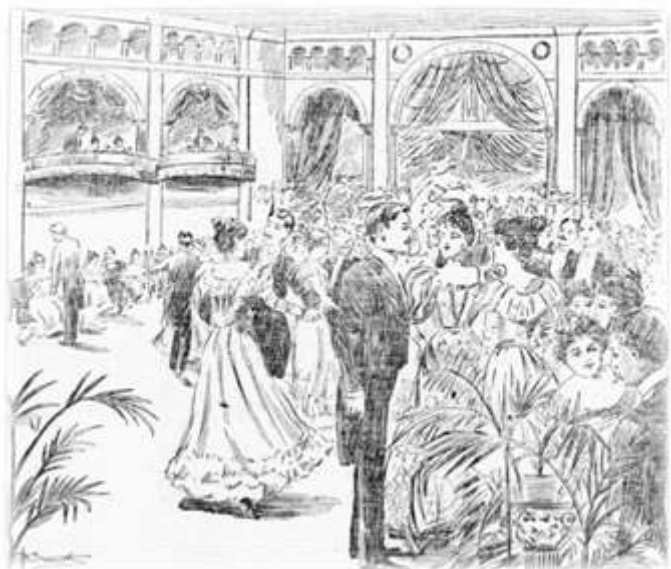


Figure 3: *St. Paul Globe* illustration of charity ball.

will delayed any payment to the city for 25 years, to allow his assets to support his beneficiaries. Several years after his death, much of the property lost value in the Panic of 1893, leaving a sum insufficient to support both projects. As the city had already acquired a dispensary by this time, two branch libraries were eventually supported with the funds: the Hamline and Merriam Park branch libraries, which were dedicated in 1930.



Figure 4: Dedication of Henry Hale Memorial Library, St. Paul 1930

Mary remained his widow for the rest of her life - over 35 years.

In 1900 she lived at her home on Lafayette Street with her nephew Paris Fletcher and niece in law Caroline. Paris was the son of her brother Albert. In 1905 the *Saint Paul Globe* reported that she lived with a niece in Lockport, NY. The *Minneapolis Journal* in 1906 reported that she was a former resident who had returned to visit and stayed at the home of Lucy and Edward Cutler. In 1910, she was listed in the census as a boarder of the Cutlers. Lucy was a fellow Dame.

Mary Elizabeth joined the Colonial Dames through the Connecticut society, by right of descent from Thomas Minor, and served on the Minnesota Society's Board of Directors. She died June 26, 1926.

Colonial Ancestor:

Thomas Minor, (1608-1690) was born in Chew Magna, England and came to America around 1630. He came first to Salem, MA, then moved to Charlestown, where he met and married Grace Palmer, with whom he had ten children. In 1636, they moved to Hingham, then settled the area which is now Stonington, CT. He was Deputy to the Connecticut court from New London in 1650-51 and was a judge in New London and Stonington. By 1653, the family built a house near Mystic. He was named Chief Military Officer at Mystic in 1665, and he and his sons served during King Phillip's War



Figure 5: Stonington Founders Monument

(1675-78). One side of the Stonington Founders Monument is dedicated to Thomas Minor.

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