Barney Family Articles:

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BARNEY NAME MEANS MORE THAN A DINOSAUR TO DAYTON
by Roz Young

They are all up there on a high hill in Woodland Cemetery, all but two of them. Never in the history of Dayton was a family name more respected than Barney, yet by the time the third generation arrived, the name was tarnished by clouds of gossip such as Dayton had not seen before nor has seen since.

The Barney story begins with Eliam Eliakim Barney (1807-1880), eldest of 11 children of Benjamin and Nancy Barney of Henderson, N.Y. Benjamin was a farmer and educator, and helped establish the Academy at Bellville, where Eliam became a student.

When he was 18, Eliam passed the teachers exam and taught near Schenectady, at the same time studying at Union College. He graduated from Union in 1831 and became principal of a school at Lowville.

He influenced his family to move to Ohio in 1831, but he remained behind for two years until he had earned enough to repay his father for his college expenses. He came to Ohio and taught at Granville College, now Denison University, for six months to fill a temporary vacancy.

He wrote to postmasters in Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Akron, Toledo and Dayton, asking if there were any teaching vacancies. The Dayton postmaster was the only one who replied. A group of citizens was planning to open an academy. Eliam applied for the principal-ship and was appointed.

He brought his brother Elijah and his sister Sarah to help him, and the school opened with nine pupils. At the end of the first term the enrollment was 65, and it started the second year with 200 students. Barney sent for two other sisters, Mary and Harriet, to teach in the school, and married Sarah Smith of Saratoga, N.Y. His parents sold their farm in northern Ohio and bought acreage in Dayton at Embury Park.

Eliam served as principal of the school for four years and then resigned to enter the lumber business. He built a sawmill and operated it with great success. In 1844 several citizens planned the Cooper Female Seminary, a private school for girls of wealthy families, and prevailed on Eliam to become the principal. He sold the sawmill to Ebenezer Thresher and served as principal until 1850.
By then he and his wife had five children, and when Thresher offered him a partnership in a company to build railroad cars, he resigned from the school. At first Eliam and Thresher built farm implements but soon concentrated on all manner of cars for railroads. They specialized in the finest of passenger cars, fitted with rich furnishings, special woodwork, art glass and elegant plumbing. Thresher sold his interest to Caleb Parker, who in turn sold out to Preserved Smith, and the firm became **Barney, Smith and Company**.

At the end of the Civil War, Eliam invited 27-year-old Col. James D. Platt, whose family he had known in New York, to come to Dayton and offered him the position of secretary of the company. Platt accepted and went to work for Eliam in 1866. Later he married Eliam’s daughter Mary Louise. His older brother, Edward Francis Platt, a Baptist minister, came to Dayton and met and later married Eliam's other daughter, Agnes. The Barneys and the Platts were all members of the **First Baptist Church**, and Eliam served as trustee of **Denison University** for 20 years. He served as president of the Cooper Hydraulic Company and director of the Second National Bank and of the Wisconsin Central Railroad.

The then-little-known catalpa tree interested Eliam because of its rapidity of growth and remarkable durability. He published a pamphlet containing all he learned about the tree. He received inquiries about the tree from every state in the Union and England, South Australia, New Zealand and Japan. He distributed seeds and culture instructions to all who inquired, and the result was the planting of thousands of acres of the trees. Most of the old fences in the country are catalpa wood, thanks to Eliam Barney.

Eliam and Sarah Barney had three sons, **Eugene Judson Barney**, Albert Clifford Barney and Edward, who died as an infant.

Eugene Barney was a model son. After his education at Rochester University, he went to work at Barney & Smith, learning the business from the bottom up as his father required. When Preserved Smith retired, Eugene became vice president and superintendent of the company, and when Eliam died in 1980, he became president. Eugene married **Belle Huffman**, the daughter of **William P. Huffman**, and their daughters married into the Gorman and Reynolds families.

Albert, the youngest Barney child, attended Phillips Academy, Exeter, and graduated from Brown University in 1868. After a year abroad, he went to work at the car company, as his father expected, to learn the business. He worked at the company for a few years, but hated every minute of it. His Ivy League education and his year abroad suited him for a better life than working at the car company, he felt.
UNOPENED LETTERS EARN STAMP OF DISAPPROVAL

Alice Pike, born in Cincinnati in 1857, was the youngest of four children of Samuel and Ellen Pike. Pike was a multimillionaire whiskey distiller. Their brownstone house, on its own block at 335 W. Fourth St., was the first house in Cincinnati to have a fully plumbed bathtub. It was large enough for the three Pike girls to bathe in it together.

Samuel Pike loved music and plays. As an expression of gratitude to the city that had made him rich, he built a five-story opera house on a large lot on Fourth between Walnut and Vine. Estimates are that the 1859 building cost $500,000. For its first season he engaged New York's leading opera company to perform works of Flotow, Donizetti, Verdi, Bellini, Rossini, Mozart and Meyerbeer. The three Pike girls attended every performance as young children, and after each one Alice re-enacted what she had seen for her father.

Samuel Pike sent the three girls to Dayton to attend the Cooper Female Seminary, and while they were here they made many acquaintances and a few friendships with the daughters if wealthy Dayton families.

On March 22, 1866, a gas explosion and fire destroyed the opera house, a $1 million loss; Pike had only $38,000 in insurance. After the fire, Pike moved the family to New York City. He sent his daughters Jeannette and Hester to a finishing school, but headstrong Alice was sent to a convent school. Samuel Pike died in 1872 at the age of 50 of a heart attack. After a year of mourning, Ellen Pike and her children traveled to Europe. Their first stop was the Hotel Splendide in Paris, and 17-year-old Alice felt she had gone to heaven, it was so beautiful.

A fortune hunter, Count de Portelaise, introduced himself to the Pikes and courted Alice. To spend more time with her, he offered to give her art lessons. Her paintings turned out better than his. He proposed marriage, but Alice was more interested in painting and sketching than in marriage. The family went to the Langham Hotel in London for a stay, where Alice's brother Lawrence introduced Charles Armour, of the Chicago meat-packing family, to his sisters.

The man of the hour in London at the time was Henry Morton Stanley (Dr. Livingstone, I presume?), who had just returned from Africa. Stanley, who was much older than Alice, fell in love with her, and she, flattered by his attentions, became infatuated with him. Stanley wanted to marry her, but Alice's mother made them promise to wait a few years, as Alice was only 17 and inexperienced in such matters.

The Pikes returned to New York after five months. Stanley came to New York to raise money for his next trip to Africa, and renewed his courtship. Alice finally signed a marriage agreement with Stanley just before his ship to Africa sailed. They
promised to be married on his return. Stanley wrote to her every day while he was gone, but with Alice it was out of sight, out of mind. She was busy attending parties for her sister's fall wedding, and threw his unopened letters into a trunk to be read some rainy day in the future when she had nothing better to do.

Ellen Pike, Alice's mother, wrote to her sister Jeannette Schenck, in Dayton, asking her to invite Alice for an extended visit. She wanted her to introduce Alice to some eligible young bachelors, hoping to get Alice's mind off Stanley.

In the spring of 1875, Alice arrived at Union Station in Dayton and was met by her aunt and uncle and her cousins, a school friend from Cooper Seminary, Carrie Dudley (later the actress Mrs. Leslie Carter), and the most eligible bachelor in Dayton, Albert Clifford Barney.

Barney began immediately to court the petite and beautiful Alice (she was only 5 feet tall), and by summer everybody in Dayton society except Alice knew Barney was going to propose. One evening in the Schenck living room, Barney asked her to marry him, and Alice was so surprised she simply stood there, smiling. He took the smile for consent and at once called her aunt and uncle into the room. "Congratulations!" he exclaimed. "Alice and I are to be married!"

The family gathered around at once to congratulate them. That night when she was alone in her room, Alice began to think about what she had done. She did not love Barney, but he was attractive and rich, and she was fond of him and he was good company. So, she theorized, she might as well marry him as anybody. Her mother would approve of Barney, and if she did not have for him the feeling she had for Stanley, it really didn't matter. As for Stanley, he was in Africa, and the promise she had signed was only a piece of paper.

Alice returned to New York in the fall of 1875 to prepare for the wedding. She gathered all the letters from Stanley waiting for her, tied them with blue ribbon and put them unopened with the others in the trunk in the basement. Alice and Albert were married Jan. 16, 1876, at the Pike home on Fifth Avenue, New York, in an Episcopal ceremony before several hundred guests. They left for a six-month honeymoon in St. Augustine and New Orleans.

In June they returned to Dayton to a house on Fifth Street not far from Barney's parents. Since Alice was five months pregnant, Barney stayed home from the factory to help her unpack. He unpacked the trunks. Soon, he stormed scowling into the room where she was resting. He handed her a packet of letters with exotic foreign stamps and the return address of Henry Morton Stanley on the envelopes. "I want an explanation of these letters," Barney said sternly. "Oh, dear," said Alice. "I had forgotten about them." "There must be at least 100 letters here. What is the meaning of this? What is between you and Stanley?" "Nothing," said Alice. "As you can see, the letters have never been opened."
"Many are of recent date," Barney said, riffling through them. "Even after you promised to marry me. I want an explanation." Alice stood mute. "You will burn these letters," Barney said. "Throw them into the fire right now."
He watched while she burned the letters.

When the last of the letters lay in ashes, he stood up. "You are a good wife," he said, then left the room.

Years later when she wrote her autobiography, Alice said that at that moment she realized she had made a monumental mistake in marrying Albert Barney.

**A HEART IS BROKEN - A HEARTH FALLS INTO DISREPAIR**

Henry Morton Stanley's second expedition to Africa lasted from November 1874 to August 1877 and accomplished, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, more than any other single exploration in Africa. His discoveries led to the formation of the Congo State and the partition of up-to-then unappropriated parts of Africa between the states of western Europe, chiefly England, Belgium and France.

He arrived in Zanzibar Nov. 26, 1877 and found a few letters from Alice, written two years before, and newspaper clippings describing her marriage and the birth of her daughter Natalie. Stanley went into such deep depression that even the newspapers reported it.

When he arrived back in England, a letter from Alice was waiting. "I have done what millions of women have done before me," she wrote, "not been true to my promise. But you are so great, so honored and sought after that you will scarcely miss your once true friend and always devoted admirer of your heroism."
She asked him to write if he could forgive her and to burn all her letters. He did not reply.

Albert became agent for the Pike estate in 1877, quit the Barney Car Works Co. and took a hotel suite in Cincinnati. Alice and Natalie remained in Dayton. In 1879 their second daughter Laura was born. Also in 1879 Alice received the two-volume book, Through the Dark Continent, from Henry Stanley with a note that without her inspiration he could never have achieved his accomplishment. "Africa has been conquered," he wrote, "and it is you, not I, have conquered it. With love in my heart, I lay it at your feet, Lady Alice."

Eliam Barney died in 1880, and although the bulk of his estate was left to his wife, Albert inherited enough money that, coupled with his salary from the Pikes, he could afford to live expensively, which was how he liked it. He bought a home on Auburn Avenue, then the best residential street in Cincinnati, moved his family there and hired a French governess for the girls.
In 1882 the Barneys went to Long Island for the summer. Oscar Wilde, on a lecture tour in America, appeared at the hotel where they were staying. Alice did not approve of his lecture costume, knickers, buckled shoes, lace collar and cuffs and a sunflower in his buttonhole, but she found him quite different when she met him on the beach. He knew about her romance with Stanley, and she intimated to him that she did not love her husband. She agreed to an early morning swim with him sans skirt, stockings and corset, and in cavorting in the waves, she broke her toe. He carried her to her bedroom. Fortunately Albert had gone into the city.

Albert had become increasingly critical of Alice and was drinking heavily. Their marriage had ended, but Albert wished to preserve the facade of marriage as long as he could have as many mistresses as he desired and Alice remained true to him. In 1883 the family went to Paris to enter the girls in a French school. Alice spent the time visiting museums; Albert stayed in the hotel and drank. On their return to Cincinnati, Alice commissioned Elizabeth Nourse to paint a portrait of Natalie and Laura. Alice set up an easel in her studio and tried to paint like Elizabeth. When Elizabeth saw how talented Alice was, she suggested that Alice should take art lessons in Paris. She herself planned to go there as soon as she was able. Alice signed up, meanwhile, for drawing lessons in Cincinnati.

When they took the girls to school in Paris in 1887, Alice enrolled in an art course and also posed as a model at the art academy. Albert went to London, where life was more to his tastes. The following year he quit his job with the Pike estate because his mother had died and he received a large inheritance. He decided to move the family to Washington, D.C.

Albert built an Italian palace for his family on Rhode Island Avenue and also a 24-room summer cottage in Maine at Bar Harbor. He included an art studio for Alice in the cottage because it was becoming highly fashionable for wealthy women to paint. Alice painted every day in Washington and Bar Harbor, and her skill improved rapidly. In 1891 she won a competition funded by Congress for a portrait of John C. Calhoun, former secretary of state, to hang in the State Department. Many governments sent official art ambassadors to the 1893 Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. The ambassador from Holland was portrait painter Hubert Vos. Albert commissioned him to paint a portrait of Alice, he spent the summer with the Barneys at Bar Harbor doing to portrait. It was shown at the 1894 Portraits of Women exhibition at the National Academy of Design in New York. The show was a fund raiser for charity, and on the opening night each of the 600 women whose portraits were exhibited stood by her portrait. Vos's portrait of Alice was the most popular; Alice had by then developed into a beautiful woman. Vos visited the Barneys in Washington, and Alice painted his portrait.

Life at home went from bad to worse. Albert spent his days at his clubs drinking, and Alice pursued her social obligations and her painting. The girls came home from Paris and entered different finishing schools in New York. Albert tried to discipline
Natalie, because he had discovered she was a lesbian, whose aberrant (for those
days) behavior shocked him. Natalie actively seduced women who appealed to her.
She wore her long golden hair flowing around her shoulders and refused to wear
corsets or petticoats. Albert kept the news about Natalie from Alice.

Natalie agreed to make her debut only because although she knew the only reason
for one was for her to catch a husband; she had no intention of marrying ever, and it
pleased her deceive her father. He took her to Paris to be outfitted with gowns by
Worth. At her debut in Bar Harbor, 500 families attended. Her debut in Washington
in a specially built ballroom, was attended by everybody who was anybody in
Washington society. She fooled her parents by announcing her engagement to
William Morrow of Pittsburgh. What they did not know was that the two had agreed
to marriage in name only so that they could pursue their own preferences. Natalie
liked women and so did Will - many of them.

The next year the Barneys returned to Europe. Laura needed surgery for a leg
injury, which was to be performed in Paris. They stayed a month at Brighton and
then left for Paris and the surgery. When the golf season opened, Albert went home,
but the women stayed in Paris. Laura convalesced from her surgery, Alice convalesced from her surgery, Alice took art
lessons at an academy recommended by Elizabeth Nourse, who had also gone to
Paris, and Natalie studied classic French poetry. Alice went home at the beginning
of the Bar Harbor season. With her parents out of the way, Natalie lost no time in
pursuing and seducing a model named Carmine Rossi, who introduced her to the
Paris demimonde, which was as difficult to enter as Mrs. Vanderbilt's 400 in New
York. When Albert learned of Natalie's affair with Carmine, he hurried to Paris to
bring her home.

BOOK ENDS WOMEN'S IDYLLIC LIFE

Alice Barney's position in the Washington art world was assured when she applied
for membership in the Society of Washington Artists and was approved. She entered
three paintings in the society's annual exhibition, and the critics' reviews were good.
She was praised for her masterful drawing and her admirable handling of color.
She put aside her painting temporarily, however, when the government declared war
on Spain on April 25, 1898. The ladies of Washington decided to help the war effort
by putting on a theatrical benefit to raise money for the sick and wounded veterans.
Alice volunteered to plan and direct the evening's program.

A stage was erected in the Corcoran Gallery. After a program of music and the
appearance of Alice's friend Prince Troubetzskoi in a weight-lifting exhibition, the
final scene was a tableau by Alice called War, Victory and Peace, posed by society
women. War was draped all in red with her long, dark hair flowing over her
shoulders. Victory, dressed in white, carried a gold trumpet raised to her lips, and
laurel leaves. Peace, gowned in purple and gold, carried a white dove. While they
posed, the U.S. Marine Band played The Star Spangled Banner.
The first performance on May 9 before 500 of the Washington elite, including President William McKinley, was so successful that a repeat performance was held the following week. The two nights raised about $1,000 for each wounded soldier. A newspaper reported, "Mrs. Alice Barney's greatest artistic triumph was the tableau. Each one of these were oil paintings in themselves, with every detail of the background, coloring and picture effect carefully thought out."

The Barneys spent a quiet summer at Bar Harbor. Alice learned that the great painter James McNeill Whistler was opening an art academy in the fall in Paris, and she decided to enroll in it.

They arrived in Paris on Oct. 1, 1898. The Villa des Dames was one of the best hotels catering to women artists, and Albert, after inspecting the place, agreed to rent a suite of rooms there. As soon as Albert left for London, Alice set up an art studio and salon for entertaining with pale blue taffeta hangings, a wood-burning fireplace, a tea table, paintings and flowers. Every day she walked to the studio named for the model Carmen Rossi and painted, in the expectation of meeting Whistler, who gossip said had paid the rent for the studio. Finally, one day when Alice was absorbed in her painting, she became aware that someone was looking at her work.

"Tsk! Tsk! How clever!"

Alice looked up and saw the speaker was Whistler. "Thank you, Mr. Whistler," she said. "I understand." "Thank you for understanding," he replied, and walked on. When he was ready to leave after looking at the work of all the students, he returned to Alice.

"I should like to see more of your work sometime, Madame," he said. She invited him to the Villa des Dames, warning him that she was a proper married lady with two daughters.

"In Paris one never knows," he said. He came the next day and nearly every day for weeks. He gave her many suggestions about her paintings and one time took her on a tour of the Louvre. They took long walks together and gossip hinted at a romance between the 64-year-old Whistler and the 40-year-old Alice. Although Whistler was known in art circles as a cruel critic, he was never cruel with Alice. He even posed while she painted his portrait. Their friendship came to an abrupt end, however, when Albert announced his imminent return from London.

On his last visit Whistler said, "I shall be a bit lonely for you," and Alice cried. During the time Alice was taking art lessons and seeing Whistler, Laura was studying philosophy and taking therapy for her leg, and Natalie stayed in her room working on an autobiographical lesbian novel. She also went daily to trysts with
Liane de Pougy, the most notorious courtesan in Paris. Natalie concealed her activities from Alice, and resented Albert's return because it curtailed her pleasures. When Albert arrived, Alice noticed he was not well. He had frequent colds and suffered from shortness of breath. After a month he returned to America, and Alice resumed her idyllic life, painting and entertaining at daily salons. She was flattered when Natalie asked her to illustrate her first book, a collection in French of Natalie's poetry. Alice did not know the poems were love poems to the women in Natalie's life or that three of the models Natalie asked Alice to paint for the book were her lovers. Alice did four pastels for the book.

Somebody in England saw Natalie and Liane at a London hotel in dalliance and wrote to Albert. He immediately demanded that Natalie return to Washington at once. But Natalie placated her father by promising to behave, and he relented. One morning he picked up a Washington newspaper and under the headline "Sappho Sings in Washington," he read a review of Natalie's book of poems. The reviewer praised the poems, but Albert was outraged at Natalie and at Alice for illustrating the book. He left at once for Paris and bought up every unsold copy and destroyed them. He also bought and destroyed the printing plates.

He wrote for the Bar Harbor place to be made ready and took Alice and Natalie there at once. Only Laura, the good daughter, was allowed to remain in Paris.

**SLURS, REPORTED HEART ATTACK LEAD TO HEALTH PROBLEMS**

It started out as a fine summer in Bar Harbor. Natalie rode horseback every day around Mt. Desert. Alice worked in her studio. Albert played golf every day and drank every evening.

He did not allow Alice to forget the debacle of illustrating Natalie's book. Natalie, however, was happier than ever because she no longer had to hide her lesbianism from Alice.

Then something else came up to annoy Albert. An increasing racism began to grow in New York and Washington society. In New York the Guggenheims, the Loebs, the Lehmans and the Schiffs were excluded from the Social Register and the 400 guests invited to Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt's parties.

In Washington, the gossipy newspapers began to run articles about Alice's Jewish ancestors. Albert felt his ambitions for social prominence were threatened by his marriage to someone who was part Jew, although Alice was a baptized Episcopalian. Washington was about to print its first Social Register, and if Albert were excluded from it, he would not be able to abide the slur.
His wrath against Alice rose, and so did his blood pressure and his drinking. In mid-July he had a heart attack on the golf course. He spent two months recuperating, looked after by Alice, who had brought on his attack, he felt, in the first place. As soon as he was able, he took Natalie and Alice to Paris to their house on Avenue Victor Hugo. Alice arranged for Otilie Roederstein to paint his portrait and did one of him herself while Otilie painted. When the portraits were finished, Albert went to a spa at Nauheim, Germany. With Albert out of the way, Laura in Egypt and Natalie in England, Alice was free to put together a one-woman show she had in mind to offer to the Corcoran Gallery.

Albert came back to Paris for Christmas, and in January he and Alice moved into the Waldorf Astoria in New York because he could not face the Washington gossip. Alice became depressed in New York away from Paris and her friends and thinking about how Natalie had deceived her. At the end of the month, Alice wrote to Natalie that by publishing her poems she had done the worst to a good, honest name. "An unhappy woman your mother is," she concluded.

Natalie was glad her mother had finally written to express her feelings. She chided her mother for vegetating in the Waldorf Astoria with Albert, and suggested that if Alice were to leave Albert, she could gain peace. Alice had long ago insulated herself from Albert's criticisms, but Natalie did not know that.

In March Alice wrote to the director of the Corcoran, Frank McGuire, offering an exhibition of about 20 of her works. McGuire accepted it for the fall after the Corcoran's renovation, which was about to begin. Living closely with Albert in the hotel, Alice saw that his health was deteriorating. He resigned as trustee of the Pike estate, and she took over its administration. As Albert grew weaker, she grew stronger. She arranged for the Bar Harbor house to be readied and invited Laura, Natalie and two of Natalie's friends, Eva Palmer and Renee Vivian, to join them for the summer.

Alice gave many private theatricals that she wrote and directed and to which she invited the Bar Harbor social set.

The summer ended early, however, when President William McKinley was shot on Sept. 6 by Leon Czolgosz and died eight days later of gangrene. The Washington community summering in Bar Harbor closed their houses and returned to the capital for the funeral and the inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt. Alice and Albert returned to Washington, Laura was in Paris, and Natalie, Eva and Renee went to Bryn Mawr, Natalie to study literature, Eva to take Greek and Renee to write poetry. Albert and Alice moved back into their house on Rhode Island Avenue. Alice's show opened at the newly refurbished Corcoran Gallery and was acclaimed an artistic success by all the newspaper critics. Henry Moser, critic for The Washington Post,
wrote, ``Our people are very conservative, and Mrs. Barney can teach them what art is. ... Mrs. Barney's bold, free and original art ... will encourage the guild to branch out not as imitators, but on individual lines, with more hope of support and approval.''

Alice was elected vice president of the Society of Washington Artists, and joined Mrs. Henry Satterlee, wife of the Episcopal bishop, and Harriet Johnston, who was official hostess of the White House during the administration of her uncle, James Buchanan, for a ballroom concert at the Willard Hotel to benefit a house for wayward girls.

Laura came from Paris to recite a poem by Victor Hugo. Alice appeared in a scene from Moliere, and the daughter of the Russian ambassador and the wife of the editor of The Washington Post sang a duet. The Barney position in Washington society was in no danger of toppling.

Then one day Albert opened the Post and discovered a feature article on Alice in which she was quoted as saying life in Washington was nothing but lots to eat, small talk, teas and dances. ``Art?'' she asked. ``There is none." Albert nearly had a stroke.

She went on to say that the capital had failed to develop as an art center because of the indifference of the ultra-fashionable set in Washington and of Congress. The city had no studio for artists and no galleries to exhibit their works. She suggested a national school of art funded by Congress, the removal of the import duty on works of art and a complete change in attitude of society toward art.

In 1902, as a juror for the Washington Artist Society's show, she opened the show for the first time to national artists as well as local ones. She entered a portrait of Laura as Medusa, the snake-headed goddess, which confounded the critics.

Laura had met Mirza Abdul Fazl, the leading Persian teacher of the Bahai faith, in Egypt and had joined the faith. Now he and his retinue were coming to Washington, and Laura asked Alice if she would help her find housing for him. Alice assumed the rent for Fazl and his party at 1839 I St., and many of the Washington society women began gathering at his place for instruction.

When Albert read about Laura's connection with the Bahais, he was livid. He bought up the lease of the property and closed the meeting house. He had a second heart attack over the incident. When he was able to travel, he left for Europe with Natalie to recuperate. While he went to Nauheim, Natalie and Eva Palmer took an apartment in Paris.

Alice and Laura stayed in Washington. Alice bought three lots on Sheridan Circle and engaged an architect to draw plans for an art studio.

Natalie wrote to Alice that Albert had returned from Nauheim in very bad health. She suggested that Alice ask Albert to go to the south of France instead of coming to
Washington for Christmas. But he was unable to make any ocean voyage. He went to Monte Carlo instead.

In December the concierge at Albert's hotel sent for Natalie to come at once, but when she arrived Albert had died of heart trouble and pleurisy. She took his body to Paris, had it cremated, and sailed for New York with Eva to take his ashes to Alice. Alice and Laura, in elegant new mourning black, met Natalie in New York. Alice and her two daughters had a warm reunion. Natalie and Eva took the next boat back to Paris; Laura and Alice returned to Washington. On Jan. 26 Alice; Laura; a friend, Ellen Goin; and the family of Albert's brother held a funeral for him in the Eugene Barney home at Monument and Ludlow. Dr. Frank Colby, of the First Baptist Church, officiated.

Alice placed Albert's ashes in a full-sized casket, and it was buried on Eliam Barney's lot in Woodland Cemetery. She arranged for a pseudo-Roman wellhead to be placed over Albert's grave. It is of limestone and elaborately carved around the edges. It is six feet square and on the top she had Albert's epitaph carved:

Albert Clifford Barney
Born May 28 1849
Died Dec. 6 1902

We Commend Thy Spirit to the Creator of Life and Eternal Truth.
In the center of the wellhead is a flower pot four feet square. Over the years a tree, probably planted by a bird, sprouted and grew until its roots have split the wellhead across the middle.

MOURNING BECOMES HER
AFTER ALBERT'S DEATH, ALICE FINDS NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER

Albert Barney left more than $3 million to Alice and his daughters in the no-income tax days of 1902.

Proper decorum meant that Alice had to go into mourning for a year, but she did not sit around mourning. She entered the New York art show in February and the Philadelphia Annual Exhibition, receiving good reviews from critics of both shows. She also supervised the completion and furnishing of Studio House in Washington. The house was Spanish Mission exterior, and the interior was John Ruskin, William Morris, Louis XVI and Art Nouveau. She had the Oriental rugs specially woven in England. Red damask covered the first floor walls, and gold damask the second. Alice and Laura moved into Studio House in March. In July, Alice gave a party for all the people who had worked on the house. She and Laura went to an art colony in the Catskills for the rest of the summer. Natalie wrote a breezy P.S. to a letter from Paris, "Too bad Whistler dead!" Alice wept.
In December 1903 the Society of Washington Artists met at Studio House and voted to devote themselves to making Washington a national arts center. Town and Country magazine and the New York Times did features on Studio House, and Alice felt that her position in Washington was secure. In April 1904 she wrote and directed a pageant The Dream of Queen Elizabeth to benefit families of men killed in an explosion on the battleship Missouri. Alice Roosevelt wanted to be in the pageant, but her father said no president's daughter could appear on the stage. She attended the performance, however, dressed not in Alice blue but in an elaborate gown of yellow.

Alice left after the pageant for a year in Europe. When she returned in December 1905, she gave a series of soirees for diplomats, judges, senators and society leaders of Washington.

The leading American actress of the day was Mrs. Leslie Carter. She was Carolyn Dudley, Alice's best friend from school days in Dayton. She visited Alice and sat for her portrait. Alice also painted Ben Greet, who had brought his Shakespeare company to Washington for a series of outdoor performances. Under his influence Alice planned an outdoor performance on the grounds of John R. McLean, founder of the Washington Post, but she had to postpone it to do something spectacular to benefit victims of the San Francisco earthquake. She brought the avant-garde ball dancer Ruth St. Denis to Washington to appear in Raaha, an east Indian dance in which she appeared with a bare midriff, bare feet and diaphanous drapery. Alice's brother Lawrence died in March 1904. In April she resumed the rehearsals of the Dream of Queen Elizabeth, which played to great crowds in the Italian garden of the McLean estate.

After summering in Virginia and Canada to escape the Washington heat, she returned to learn that the Smithsonian Institution had begun a collection of a federal art collection. Alice was pleased.

She bought a Washington residence and provided it rent-free to the Neighborhood House, a home for wayward girls, her favorite charity. She went to Paris and London to paint. Two portraits of this trip were of Gilbert Chesterton and George Bernard Shaw, who posed for her in exchange for tea and conversation. Then a blow fell. Alice's mother, Ellen Pike died. Hester, Alice's favorite sister, wrote that their sister Jeanette had influenced Ellen to leave all her estate to her and cut Hester and Alice out of the will.

Alice was so angry that she immediately made out her own will in which she castigated Jeanette for her greed and settled a grudge with Lulu Platt Hunt, a niece on Albert's side of the family, for gossiping about Natalie's life style. She left a third of her estate for the printing of books and production of plays and gave Studio House to the City of Washington as a museum and place for concerts and lectures. The rest went to her daughters.
On her return to Washington she wrote an operetta with a Washington composer called About Thebes. In it Alice advertised Mme. Geraldine Clifford of Paris had consented to dance. Remembering the exotic and shocking dance of Ruth St. Denis, the audience, including the newly inaugurated William Howard Taft, eagerly awaited the appearance of Mme. Clifford in the second act. When she appeared in a costume with wings and floating chiffon, twisting sensuously to weird chantings, Mme. Clifford was revealed to be Alice Barney herself.

Alice rocketed from one activity to another. She sent 54 paintings to a show in New York, including portraits of Sarah Bernhardt and Alice Roosevelt Longworth. She enlarged Neighborhood House and volunteered there. She wrote and directed a pastoral in Bar Harbor and imported the Boston Symphony Orchestra to play for it. She had one-woman shows of her paintings in Boston, in Paris and a second show in Washington at the Corcoran.

She wrote a play The Man in the Moon and began rehearsals for it at Studio House. She booked the Shubert Theater's Belasco Theater for the performance, which was to benefit Neighborhood House.

**ALICE FINDS LOVE, BUT WILL IT LAST?**

In 1909 Alice Barney was 52, but she looked and acted 10 years younger. The cast of The Man in the Moon were Washington debutantes and eligible bachelors of the 1909 season. One of the bachelors was Christian Hemmick, 24, son of the ambassador to Switzerland. Christian, young and impressionable, fell in love with Alice. Alice, more than twice his age, was flattered by his adoration. She fell in love with him. They managed to conceal their feelings from the rest of the cast and from Alice's friends.

After the pageant was presented in May, Alice sailed for Paris. As soon as she arrived, she told Natalie and Laura that she was going to be married the following year. Both girls were shocked and raised objections, to which Alice paid no attention. While she waited for Christian to come, she enrolled in art school and painted.

Natalie had rented a villa at 20 Rue Jacob, where she gave daily salons for the members of the demimonde. Over the years some of those who attended were Isadora Duncan, Rabindranath Tagore, Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Colette, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Andre Gide and Truman Capote.

In 1910 Laura sculpted a nude figure of a woman lying on her side, her head resting on one hand. The face looked like Natalie. Alice shipped it home and placed it in the front yard of Studio House. The headline on Page One of the Washington Times of October 10, 1910 proclaimed "Barney Statue Shocks Artistic Police Chief."
When the newspaper appeared, tour buses and automobiles caused a traffic jam of serious proportions on Sheridan Circle. Members of the Watch and Ward Society, whose purpose was to guard the morals of the city, complained the statue was immoral. The police chief had the statue covered with a pup tent.

Laura had fallen in love with Hippolyte Dreyfus, Bahai leader in Paris and the two planned to be married. Since Alice was going to be married, too, she suggested they have a double wedding. After a joint civil ceremony with Hippolyte and Laura, Christian and Alice were married in Catholic rites (she converted for Christian) April 15, 1911. While they were on their honeymoon in the Dolomites, Alice had Studio House completely redecorated in a more masculine style to suit Christian.

On their return Alice revived her regular Friday afternoon teas and Sunday evening entertainments. They spent the summer at Bar Harbor with Laura and Hippolyte. When Woodrow Wilson was campaigning for the presidential nomination, he was friendly to the suffragettes, who were actively campaigning for the vote. But once he was nominated, he refused to meet with their committees. He did not mention women once in his inaugural address, and the suffragettes rose in anger. They held a counter-inaugural parade and presented a protest pageant on the steps of the Treasury Building. Among those who sat on the bleachers were the wife and daughter of outgoing William Howard Taft and Alice.

Alice joined the suffragettes and provided the Rhode Island residence rent free to the National Women's Suffrage Association for its headquarters. She wrote two plays for the group, both widely acclaimed and successful.

She cast Christian in the lead in one play, but he had become jealous of her success. While she kept busy writing and rehearsing plays, there was not much for him to do. He noticed while lounging around the house that the pastes and powders the servants used for cleaning smelled bad. He experimented with mixing some of Alice's perfumes with them, and showed the result to her. Alice immediately arranged for Christian to have a factory to produce the perfumed cleaning products, but he soon lost interest and closed the business within six months.

Laura and Hippolyte came to Washington at the beginning of a trip around the world, and Alice joined them for part of the trip to the Western states. For the first time she visited Hollywood and came away with a desire to produce plays there. On her way back home on the train she thought seriously about her marriage. It was not working. In an effort to make Christian happier, she displaced the suffrage women from the Rhode Island Avenue house, had it redecorated and moved with Christian into it.

Alice did her best to promote the cause of peace and prevent the entry of the United States into World War I by writing and presenting plays and pageants. She presented one play by Laura called The Opium Pipe with Christian in the lead. After four sell-out performances, she gave a fifth to benefit the French Ambulance Fund.
and hired a protege of Alla Nazimova, Paul Swan, to dance in the opium den. Christian fell as madly in love with Paul as he had been with Alice a few years before. He bleached his hair like Paul's, dressed like him and made frequent trips to New York to be with him.

When the Germans sank the Lusitania May 7, 1915, the Women's Peace Party, which Alice had joined, decided to present a tableau to influence public opinion from military involvement in the war. For it Alice wrote The Awakening, which was presented at the foot of Washington Monument on May 30. A crowd of 6,000 attended the free performance.

Christian announced he was going to study for the diplomatic corps, which would require him to remain in Washington during the summer. Actually he was making frequent trips to New York to pursue Paul Swan. Alice spent the summer in New Hampshire and the fall in New York. She did not return to Washington until November.

FINALLY, A NATIONAL THEATER
ALICE PUSHES, AND GETS WHAT SHE WANTS

Malvina Hoffman, a sculptor, invited Alice in 1915 to lunch with her friend Anna Pavlova, then the world's leading classic ballet dancer. The two hit it off splendidly; both believed the fine arts must be made available to all the people. At the end of the luncheon, Alice pulled out of her pocketbook a script outline.
``Would you mind looking at a brief ballet I have written?'' she asked. Pavlova said no, she wouldn't mind and gave the script a hurried reading. She handed it back to Alice.
``If you will expand this, I think it will make a fine addition to the forthcoming season,'' she said.

Thus Alice added the ballet to her other accomplishments. She hurried home to expand the ballet and sent it off to Pavlova. The Imperial Ballet Russe was about to go on a joint tour with the Boston Opera Company. Alice volunteered to underwrite the appearance of the opera company and the ballet in Washington on Dec. 26. The ballet, The School in Crinoline, was set in an 1830 girls boarding school. It was a simple, charming ballet, and all three Washington newspapers praised it highly. Pavlova toured the country with it, and sent Alice a portrait with an inscription: ``In memory of our collaboration in your charming ballet.'' Pavlova also sat for Alice for her portrait.

Alice's marriage was in trouble. Christian twice dropped his studies for the diplomatic corps and had taken to drinking heavily. He was unable to concentrate because of his unrequited infatuation for Paul Swan, but he did not dare let Alice know about it.
Alice went from one production to another so she could put the problem of her marriage in the background. The 300th anniversary of Shakespeare’s death in 1616 had passed unnoticed by any ceremony in Washington, and in 1917 Alice decided to make up for the oversight by staging a performance of Shakespeare scenes of her choice. The debutantes and bachelors of the season played the minor parts, but for the major characters she hired professional actors.

The elite of Washington society attended the performance at the estate of Henry Blount in Georgetown (now Dumbarton Oaks), and Alice used the proceeds for a free public performance at the Washington Monument. A crowd of 16,000 came to the show, and about half of them went home disappointed because they could not see or hear.

``That does it,'' Alice said. ``We have got to have a national theater on the grounds of the monument so that everybody who comes will be able to see and hear.''

To get the federal government to consent to an outdoor theater and fund it was a formidable task. ``Who should I see about this?'' she asked.

The answer was Col. W.W. Harts, superintendent of public grounds and buildings. If she could persuade him, he would get the approval of Congress and the funds. Alice chose a little wooded area just southeast of the monument. She took Harts to the site and showed him how the hill around the monument would provide room for the seating of thousands. He doubted that Congress, then on the verge of being drawn into the world war, would approve the expense. Alice gave several dinners for Harts and pointed out what a hero he would be at the dedication of the National Sylvan Theatre. He agreed to put the request to Congress, and it was granted. The area was sodded, shrubs and bushes were planted to form the theater wings, and fully grown chestnut trees were planted as a back wall.

Alice began writing a pageant for the dedication of the theater, which was scheduled for July 4, 1917.

In the meantime, she scored the triumph of her social career. Sarah Bernhardt, the world-renowned French actress, came to Washington for a two-week engagement. Alice invited her to tea at Studio House. It was to be a small tea with music and a dance drama written by Alice especially for the occasion. Bernhardt arrived promptly, carried by four men in a chair - she had lost a leg in 1915, the result of a motor accident - and enjoyed the soiree tremendously. Alice had invited only friends who spoke French.

After the tea Christian left to spend the winter in Pittsburgh, and Washington gossip began to go the rounds that the marriage was on rocky grounds.

Alice rented an apartment in the Hotel des Artistes in New York, where she undertook to line up various actresses and actors to take part free of charge in the
opening gala of the National Sylvan Theatre on June 1. She secured the leading dancer of the Chicago opera, a dancer from the Ballet Russe, a singer from the Boston Grand Opera Company, one from the Metropolitan, and a Shakespearean actor. The finale was to be Sophie Breslau singing the French national anthem, Lily Langtry singing Rule, Brittania, and Anna Case leading the crowd in The Star-Spangled Banner. The crowd arrived and opened their picnic baskets on the lawn. Just as the Marine Band was about to begin playing, rain came down in torrents. Everybody went home, and the opening was postponed until the following night. Alice said the opening of the National Sylvan Theatre was the proudest moment of her life.

The nation's first official Fourth of July celebration was held at the theater on July 4, 1917. Alice wrote a pageant for it, the cost of which was partially underwritten by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. It was repeated on Bastille Day, after which Alice turned over the chairmanship of the theater to Harts. Christian announced that he wanted to produce a play, and Alice, unwilling to face reality, agreed to finance it. When she went to Pittsburgh for the opening night, she realized it was not ready for Boston and undertook to give Christian some lessons in drama production. Christian took his play to Boston; the reviews panned it and it closed.

Christian joined Alice at the Hotel des Artistes in New York, still talking of producing plays and expecting Alice to finance his efforts. But by now she realized he would never succeed at anything, and she began thinking about divorce. Christian went back to Pittsburgh. Alice was working on a play she planned to submit to the New York Theater Guild. In early January 1920, she learned that Christian was having an affair with a young male actor in Pittsburgh, and she telephoned him that the marriage was over.

Alice returned to Washington and set society on its ear by issuing dinner invitations signed Alice Barney. The headline over eight columns of the Jan. 18, 1920, Washington Post read: ``How Mrs. Hemmick Astonished Washington Society." The subhead said: ``She Sent out `At Home' Cards for a Big Reception at her Rhode Island Avenue Home and Eliminated Her Husband's Name from the Invitations - Divorced? Oh, No, Just Her Way to Announce Her Estrangement." The story, which covered the entire front page, concluded, ``Alice certainly does do things differently."

AFTER FAILED MARRIAGE, NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER

Natalie invited Alice to come to Paris until the worst of the gossip blew over. Alice had her lawyer send Christian a check for $10,000 and a note that she owed him nothing. She sailed for France and ignored Christian's petition for a divorce on grounds of desertion.
In Paris, Alice wrote a new ballet called Atlantis and commissioned Eugene Gustave Holtz to write the music for it and Eugene Goosens to write the music for her rewritten Danse en Crinoline. She commuted between Paris and London, seeking producers for her ballets.

When she had an audition with the Paris ballet, Goosens forgot his music and did not show up for the second audition, and Alice became discouraged. "I am 64 years old," she told Natalie, "and I have half a notion to give it all up and not bother."

She received word that a blizzard on Feb. 22, 1922, had damaged her properties in Washington, and she would have to make repairs. To Washington and a round of roof and spouting repairs, plastering and painting she went. While she was there, she wrote a one-act play as a benefit for the National Women's party; it ran for 14 sold-out performances at the Belasco.

Alice's sister Hester invited her to Los Angeles for a visit, and at 66, Alice now found a new world awaiting her. She would bring art and culture to Hollywood. First, she bought a house. She found an 1882 farmhouse in an avocado and palm grove. She immediately let contracts to remodel the house, adding a one-story wing for her paintings and receptions.

While the renovation was going on, she heard that the Arts Club of Washington was sponsoring a contest for a one-act play. Alice entered the contest with False Value, a story of an older woman who foolishly pursued younger men and destroyed her own chances for real happiness. She won the first prize and returned to Washington to receive the prize and attend the presentation of her play. While she was there, she wrote and produced a spectacular to benefit Neighborhood House.

Having decided to live in California permanently, she began negotiations to sell the cottage at Bar Harbor and her Washington properties.

Alice's career as a spreader of culture in California began with a production of a rewritten Man in the Moon and a concert by rising young California musicians. Back to Washington she went for the winter to attend to business matters, and while she was there she wrote her autobiography. She had also learned that the Washington chapter of the Drama League of America was holding a play-writing contest, and Alice thought it would be fun to win. She entered a rewrite of a play by Natalie and won. She accepted the prize and departed for California.

In January 1928, she gave two plays at the Hollywood Play House. She had new clothes made, took dance lessons and gave many parties in her home. She made portraits of her new friends in Hollywood, and opened the Theatre Mart in a Spanish architecture playhouse and dedicated it to trying out new plays. For the next three years the public saw new plays every week at Alice's theater, many of them by her. She also held an exhibition of her paintings at the Stendahl Art Gallery in Los Angeles and established her reputation on the West Coast as a serious artist.
Alice wrote to Natalie that she had had an attack and Hester had taken her to the doctor. The diagnosis was angina and arteriosclerosis, but she was getting better. Then she learned on Jan. 10, 1931, that the Theatre Mart had been declared a fire hazard by the Los Angeles Fire Department and did not meet the zoning laws for a playhouse. Alice reluctantly closed the theater.

After a summer of rest, she began lecturing at clubs in the area, promoting the idea of establishing outdoor theater in the gardens of California.

Her ballet The Shepherd of Shiriz was presented in September in the Hollywood Bowl. She wrote a play about James Whistler called Jimmie, and the English actor George Arliss agreed to play the title role. She planned to reopen the Theatre Mart for the performance in spite of the fire and zoning rules.

On Oct. 12, 1931, she finished the play. She put on a new dress and coat, a diamond necklace Albert had given her, and five diamond rings. She had her chauffeur drive her to a concert at the McDowell Town Club. When she walked into the concert room, she sat down on a bench to rest before going to her seat.

And there the long and colorful career of a remarkable woman came to a sudden end. She collapsed and died before help could arrive. Alice's sister Hester sent her body to be buried on Hester's lot in Woodland Cemetery, separated from the Barney lot by a few feet of grassy path. On her gravestone, according to Alice's wishes, is the legend:

Alice Pike Barney
1857-1931
``The Talented One"

Neither Laura nor Natalie came for the burial.

Laura was executor of Alice's estate. Many of her paintings were given to various museums, including the Dayton Art Institute. The Rhode Island Avenue house became a girls school and, when it closed, a boarding house and later a club. It was finally demolished to provide a site for the Gramercy Inn Hotel.

Laura sold the California property. Studio House was rented to an embassy and later to a British officers' club during World War II. The girls finally donated the building to the Smithsonian Institution for an arts and cultural center. Alice's last play, Jimmie, was presented in Studio House in April 1985 as part of `An Evening at Barney Studio House, sponsored by the National Museum of American Art." The two lower floors of Studio House are open to the public.
Every year concerts are given at the National Sylvan Theatre at the foot of the Washington Monument. Think about Alice Barney on July 4.


October 25th, 2009

City unveils marker dedicated to lesbian author

Tribute to Dayton native Natalie Barney is the first in Ohio to reflect a person’s sexual orientation.

By Jim DeBrosse

Staff Writer

DAYTON — She may be the most famous Daytonian unknown to Daytonians, but now Natalie Barney — literary patron and lesbian author who lived most of her life in Paris — has her own Ohio Historical Marker near the downtown library.

The marker was unveiled Sunday, Oct. 25, in a ceremony at Cooper Park attended by city commissioners, Ohio Historical Society officials and members of state and Dayton area gay rights organizations, which led the effort to recognize Barney for both her place in history and her pioneering openness about her sexuality.

Of Ohio’s 1,250 historical markers, it’s the first to indicate a person’s sexual orientation.

“Not only are we celebrating history today, but we’re making history,” Robert Berger, head of Ohio’s Gay History Initiative, told a gathering of about 50 people Sunday.

The Ohio Historical Society launched the initiative in 2006 to review and approve applications for monuments to honor “the history of all its people,” including gays and lesbians, said acting director James Strider.

Barney’s writings supported feminism, paganism and pacifism. In 1900, she published her first book of lesbian love poems, “Quelques Portraits-Sonets de Femmes,” all copies of which her disapproving father purchased and destroyed. That same year, she began holding literary salons in her apartment on the Left Bank.
During the next 60 years, many of the greatest writers and artists of the 20th century were frequent guests there, including F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, T.S. Elliot, Isadora Duncan, Sinclair Lewis and Truman Capote. She used her wealth to promote many of them.

Barney was born in Dayton in 1876, the great grand-daughter of E.J. Barney, the founder of the rail car manufacturing company that for many decades was the city’s largest employer. Her mother, Alice Pike Barney, was a well-known portrait artist. The author spent just 10 years here, in a mansion at Fifth and Wilkinson streets, before her family moved to Washington, D.C.

Barney was “probably the most famous lesbian poet since Sappho” of ancient Greece, said Leon Bey, a local gay rights activist who has researched her history. Her openly gay lifestyle at the turn-of-the-century was “unheard of” at the time, he said.

Thanks to the marker, “Natalie is now a legend in her state of Ohio, never to be unknown again,” Bey said.