MOST EXCLUSIVE OF WOMEN'S SOCIETIES

Only Sponsors of American Warships Eligible to Membership

When the most exclusive women's society in the United States, now being organized, is fully launched upon its way, its happiest member, no doubt, will be the originator, a fair southern girl, Miss Mary Campbell, of Birmingham, Ala.

This new society of national extent must of necessity be exclusive, since its membership is to be confined to sponsors of American warships.

Any woman, no matter what her station in life may be, who has, by invitation of the authorities, broken the bottle of wine and pronounced the word of christening as any war vessel, whether battleship, cruiser or torpedo boat, has started on its journey down the ways to the awaiting bosom of the water, is eligible to membership. But no one else.

The projected Society of Naval Sponsors—that, perhaps, will be its name—is regarded with high favor by the authorities at Washington. Such a society, naval men say, will become an American Burke's Peerage for the fair sex. Admiral Dewey is one of the warmest advocates of the proposed organization.

In the ranks of the new society will be daughters of governors, senators and congressmen, wives and descendants of naval officers, and many of the most beautiful women of the United States.

When each war vessel of the modern navy was launched its sponsor was chosen on account of the social prominence of her family, its political importance, as well as her own position in the ranks of national beauties.

Several months ago two of the newest vessels of the new navy were launched. They were sister ships, the scout cruisers Birmingham and Salem.

The Birmingham was named after the enterprising city in the new South of Alabama; the Salem bore the name of the good old New England town whose history reaches back to the early days of America's existence.

Sponsor of the Birmingham was Miss Mary Campbell, of the Alabama city, while Miss Lorna Pinnock, of Massachusetts, broke the bottle of wine that christened the Salem. Soon afterward the idea of forming an association of warship sponsors occurred to Miss Campbell, and she wrote Miss Pinnock:

"From the pleasant association and comradeship that should grow out of it, we would contribute our mite to the development of our navy and the furthering of the good feeling which should pervade every section of our glorious country by organizing. It will add an interest, if anything can add an interest, to all future launchings."

Miss Pinnock was in a mood to receive and act upon the suggestion. She had already written Miss Campbell as follows:

"May we trust that these two ships—the Salem and the Birmingham—will long carry the Stars and Stripes and be emblematical of the friendship and love of the North and the South."

Miss Campbell's suggestion to form an association or society of sponsors of American warships was hailed with favor in naval circles in Washington. It would necessarily be an exclusive society—the most exclusive in the country—but there could be no doubt of its patriotic inspiration.

Admiral Dewey's indorsement was sought from the first. The object of the society was stated to him as follows:

"Its purpose is laudable in that it will tend to form a bond of union between the members living in different parts of the country, and who, by reason of their selection as sponsors, are presumed to have some prominence in their localities.

"A broader purpose is that such a union will tend to popularize the sentiment in the country for a higher navy."

Admiral Dewey was prompt in commending the plan and wishing the new organization every success.

In her earlier letters to other sponsors Miss Campbell wrote: "The society will be patriotic and social, and it is to be hoped that it may also find a field of some usefulness. Its more specific objects will be determined, of course, by those who join the organization. I would like to see it aid the sentiment for a larger navy. Every woman who has christened a war vessel is eligible to membership."

There are over a hundred women and girls—163 is the number, so far, whose names have been gathered— who are eligible to membership in this new and exclusive society of fair Americans. Many of them are daughters or close relatives of the governors of states or mayors of cities after whom the ships have been named.

Miss Campbell, in whose brain the new idea was born, comes from one of the best families of Alabama, and is a young woman of rare personal charm and broad mentality. Her enthusiasm in pushing plans to organize the naval sponsors into a national and permanent society is almost a guarantee that the organization will be successfully launched upon a successful career.

One of her ablest lieutenants is Miss Keith Frazier, sponsor of the Tennessee. At the time the Tennessee was launched her father, J. B. Frazier, was governor of the state. He is now representing Tennessee in the United States Senate, and his handsome young daughter will doubtless become prominent in social life at Washington.

"Tennessee," said Miss Frazier lately, "is an inland state, but one which has furnished to the American navy two of its most distinguished sons—Commodore Murray and Admiral Farragut—and which has provided names for three of Uncle Sam's vessels—the Nashville, the Chattanooga and the Tennessee.

"The sponsors of these vessels join in good wishes for the success of such an interesting national woman's organization as the Society of Sponsors promises to be."

Many of the sponsors of the new navy, especially of the battleships named after states, were daughters of men who were governors of those states at the time of launching and christening. Two of the youngest were Miss Louise Gooding, of Idaho, and Miss Gay Montague, of Virginia.

When Miss Gooding broke the bottle of wine over the bows of the Idaho at Cramps' shipyard, Philadelphia, two years ago, she was 13 years old, a healthy, breezy western girl, with a large and discriminating outlook upon life. She went through the ceremony under the fire of several thousand critical eyes without the slightest evidence of embarrassment. Although so young, Miss Gooding had seen a great deal of social functions since her father became governor of his state.

While bands were playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Dixie" and 30,000 persons were cheering wildly, little Miss Mathilda Gay Montague, daughter of the then Governor of Virginia, christened the splendid battleship of that name as she slid down the ways at Newport News three years ago.

She was the youngest of naval sponsors, and will be one of the youngest members of the new society.

Little Miss Montague, then only 13 years old, did her part admirably. When she was invited to act as sponsor there were suggestions that she was too young to entrust with such an important ask. It was pointed out that sailors are a superstitious lot, and that if the little girl failed to smash the bottle of wine properly, the old tars would look upon the ship as a "hoodoo," and would shun her. The wise ones also shook their heads and said such a slip of a girl probably would get confused, and would make a botch of the whole affair; but she was the most self-possessed person there, and there was no fluke of any kind.

Another young western girl whose official offices gave good luck to a battleship was Miss Anna Hoch, daughter of the Governor of Kansas, who christened the giant fighter of that name as its hull slipped into the Delaware river at the yards of the New York Shipbuilding Company, Camden, N.J., two years ago.

Miss Hoch is deeply interested in everything that pertains to Kansas and her father's administration. She keeps close track of political and other current events and is always well posted. Almost daily she visits her father in his office at the Kansas capitol, and is known to nearly all of the state leaders.

"The political leaders in Kansas," stated a report that went out about the time of the battleship's launching, "have not been slow in making the discovery that Governor Hoch is a great respecter of his daughter's opinion, and many of them are wont to carry their woes to her first and beg her to intercede for them with the Governor." This assertion was denied by both governor and Miss Hoch, but it was widely circulated at the time and doubtless, was generally believed.

When the armored cruiser West Virginia was sent for her maiden plunge at Newport News, her sponsor was Miss Katherine Vaughn White, daughter of Governor A. B. White, of West Virginia. She was attended by three maids of honor, Miss Grace White and Miss Ethel White, her sisters, and Miss Ashton Wilson, daughter of former Governor Wilson.

Miss Grace Herreid, daughter of Governor Herreid, was selected to christen the cruiser South Dakota when that fine vessel was launched at San Francisco. She was then 19 years old, a typical American girl, imbued with the wholesome western spirit and highly patriotic towards her state. She was accomplished and very popular in South Dakota.

"Before I came here," said Miss Cora May Peabody, daughter of the Governor of Colorado, "I took a ketchup bottle and practiced on the corner of our house in Denver."

That this practice had not been in vain was shown by the skill with which she broke the christening bottle over the bows of the armored cruiser that bears the name of her state and is now one of the most efficient vessels in the navy.

The North Carolina was christened by Miss Rebecca Glinn, daughter of the Old North State's sturdy executive, who recently come prominently into the national eye because of his fight with railroads and a temporary conflict with the federal courts. Miss Glenn has all of her father's spirit, and is one of the most popular and highly cultured young women of her state.

When the battleship New Hampshire was launched, Miss Hazel E. McLane, daughter of the governor of that state, was the sponsor. At that time she was a student at Bryn Mawr College, near Philadelphia, and one of the prettiest and most popular girls at that institution. She was highly delighted at the honor paid her by the Navy Department.

Miss Stella Tate, sister of Congressman F. Carter Tate, of Georgia, broke the bottle of champagne that christened the big fighter named for that state as she slid down the ways at the Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine. This was one of the cases where the daughter of a governor did not officiate.

Another sponsor not the daughter of a governor was Miss Rose Marie Schaller, of St. Paul, who christened the battleship Minnesota. She is a daughter of State Senator Andrew Schaller, a close friend of Governor Johnson.

Miss Schaller was then 19 years old and a member of the class of 1907 of the University of Minnesota. Fond of outdoor sports, she was a member of the class basketball team, and an enthusiastic tennis player. She was also a member of the dramatic club and had evinced tendencies toward journalism.

When the battleship Missouri slid into the water in the presence of 15,000 spectators, Miss Marion Cockrell, daughter of the then United States Senator Cockrell, was sponsor for the ship. She was one of the belles of the congressional set at the national capital, and since the death of her mother eight years before had been the head of her father's household.

Later Miss Cockrell was married to Edson F. Gallaudet. President Roosevelt was one of the guests and offered the totas to the bride, who was acknowledged as being one of the most beautiful women in Washington.

Another sponsor who became a bride shortly after extending her good offices to the starting of a warship's career was Miss Helen Stuart Wilson, whose blessing started the cruiser Washington on its way. She was a daughter of United States Senator Wilson, of that state, and a short time ago became the bride of E. R. Chapin, of Seattle.

One of the finest of the new cruisers, the Maryland, was christened by Miss Jennie Scott Waters, daughter of General and Mrs. Frances E. Waters, of Baltimore. She was chosen for the honor by Governor John Walter Smith, of Maryland.

Miss Waters came of old and distinguished Maryland families. Her ancestors have been prominently identified with the public affairs of the state for over 200 years. Her great-grandfather, William Corbin, fought through the Revolutionary War. He enlisted at Annapolis and served under General Smith. After the war he was twice elected to represent Worcester county in the House of Delegates of Maryland. John Waters, another ancestor, also served with distinction as an officer in the Revolutionary War in the First Regiment, Light Dragoons, under Colonel Theodore Bland, and was killed in battle. Miss Waters is one of the most cultured young women in Baltimore's social circles.

Miss Dorothy Wallace Sproul, of Chester, Pa., was sponsor for the scout crusier bearing the name of that city. She is a daughter of State Senator William C. Sproul. The armored crusier Pennsylvania was christened by Miss Coral Quay, daughter of former United States Senator M. S. Quay. Miss Anna B. Gray, daughter of Judge Gray, was sponsor for the gunboat Wilmington.

Others eligible to membership in the new and exclusive society of naval sponsors of the battleship Kentucky; Miss Nancy Leiter, who christened the Illinois; Miss Mary Morgan, daughter of the late Senator John T. Morgan, sponsor of the Alabama; Miss Florence M. Pardee, sponsor of the California and daughter of California's Governor; Miss Annie C. Boutelle, who christened the Nevada; Miss Jones, daughter of United States Senator James K. Jones, the sponsor of the Arkansas; Mrs. Lewis Nixon, who christened the Florida, and Mrs. Herbert Winslow, who splashed champagne on the bow of the Kearsarge.

Eligible also are Mrs. George F. Rockbridge and Miss Mabel Spear, of Massachusetts, who were sponsors at a double launching last March, the christening of the submarines Viper and Tarantula. Miss Elinor Dow, of Cambridge, was sponsor for the submarine Cuttlefish. The torpedo-boat destroyer Lawrence was christened by Miss Lillian Lawrence. Another torpedo-boat destroyer was launched by Miss Mary McDonough Reid. Miss Effie McComber, of Des Moines, Iowa, launched the scout crusier Des Moines. Mrs. W. B. Kinney, daughter of ex-Governor Murphy, of New Jersey, christened the battle-ship of that name. The sponsor for the Rhode Island was Mrs. F. E. Dumaine, of Concord.

So it will be a distinguished and interesting phalanx of femininity that will organize the newest and most exclusive of women's societies in America.

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