

MARGARET EDWINA DUGAS
(nee Barrett)
By Grace Arinton Dugas

"No, my Mother was not an ante-bellum baby, because her parents were not married until February 12, 1860, and war was not declared until the spring, and she was not the oldest child.

"I have often heard them say when Uncle Tom was born (October 9, 1861), my Grandmother was so anxious to send a token of him to his father (who was at the front), that she cut his fingernails and sent the trimmings in a letter, the baby being too bald to send a lock.

"When war was declared, my Grandmother returned to her parents' home in Athens, Ga. Her father was Dr. Edw. Rowell Ware, P.H.D., who graduated in Philadelphia at Jefferson College. A bright young man, whose theses was published in the Medical Journals of the day. He was also a great friend of Dr. Crawford Long, of Athens, who discovered anesthesia. He married Margaret Bacon and they lived on an old estate in Athens, where the house sat in a grove of old live and water oaks, with servants' quarters, etc., on the place.

"Besides my Grandmother, her young widowed sister, Lucy Ware Wray, was at home and all the old slaves were there to protect their white folks as best they could.

"One day one of the old fellows came running in saying 'Lord, Miss Margaret the Yankees is coming.' So she quickly began giving orders. All the horses must be put in the wash house. The gold buried and the silver hid. A trusted slave buried the gold coin, the entire family fortune, under the back steps. And the silver rushed to the attic and put in a sheet with old curtains dumped on top of it. When the Yankees arrived, they went through the house helping themselves liberally to what they wanted, destroying what they did not want. Then started to the garrett, my Great-grandmother following them. She opened the chest for them, saying, 'Gentlemen, you have taken everything else, perhaps you would like the old lace curtains.' 'No,' he said, 'you can keep the damn things.' So the silver was saved - but in an unhappy moment a horse whinneyed, so they were found and taken. When my Grandmother saw her beloved saddle horse going, she wept and followed on foot as long as she could, begging them to leave her just that one horse, but to no avail. Those were hard and trying times, but they lived through it bravely and showed the stuff they were made of.

"My Grandmother, being very resourceful and thrifty, made the baby's first shoes out of his father's old coat-tails. Curtains were dyed with poke berries and made into modish style dresses. Peanuts and corn were parched and coffee made of them.

"A second child, Margaret Edwina, named for her grandparents, Edw. Ware and Margaret Bacon, was born at the close of the war, December 5, 1865. The family then moved back to Augusta and lived on Greene Street, until the death of old Thos. Barrett and his wife Savannah Glascock. Then my Grandfather bought the old Barrett Home on the corner of Broad and Elbert Streets. On this corner a Thomas Barrett had lived since the Revolution.

"The first Thos. came to this country to court his sweetheart, Nancy Spry Strong, who had come to Savannah, Georgia, to visit her relatives, the Hartridges. When war was declared (the Revolution) he went back to England and fought for the Crown. After the Revolution he came back to this country and married Nancy, who was the daughter of Admiral Samuel Spry Strong in the English Navy. Her father

sent her a land grant from King George IV of England, saying she should have a parcel of land, horses, cattle, slaves, etc. befitting her station in life. This house was built of hand-hewn logs and hand-wrought nails, and was in existence until the Augusta fire in 1916, but had been moved further down Broad Street. This grant extended from Elbert and Broad down to Sand Bar Ferry, and my Great Uncle James Barrett had the grant. Is now in possession of his daughter Marie Barbot. Then the second Thos. Barrett built the lovely old red brick Colonial house with ells and wide verandas across the front and back and wrought iron banisters and trimming. Like most Colonial houses, it had a wide hall down the center, with spacious double parlors to the right. White marble columns divided the rooms instead of folding doors, lovely stucco in the ceiling and beautifully carved white marble mantels, and the loveliest gilt mirrors over them. The chandeliers were brought from Venice. The furniture, rosewood, upholstered in blue damask. The heavy carpet was covered with pale grey linen crash in the summer and the furniture slipcovers were of grey striped linen. I can remember slipping in there on a hot summer day stealing a nap on the cool linen covers. No one could find me and every servant on the place was sent to search for me. I was amused to find the family in a dither, when I strolled out. Behind this, the ell room, was an enormous dining room filled with silver, glass from Bacarar, and exquisite china from Sevres done by special artist. The game plates each a different hunting scene and so on through the entire set, consisting of soup plates, fish plates and platter, game plates and platter, joint plates and platter, salad plates, dessert plates and menus. "The dessert plates were pastoral scenes like Waltons. The china and glass were no more celebrated than the food and drink they contained. For my grandparents were connoisseurs and noted for their hospitality and lavish table. To the left of the hall was the living room with folding doors into the library, which was truly lovely with carved furniture; hand-made by an old German Scheusbacher. It is quite different from any I have seen before or since.

"Then came the other ell rooms, which was the Master's bedroom, 22 feet square with four poster bed to dream about and the quaint steps to climb up in the bed. Lifting the tread of each step was a shoe box. Back of this room was the dressing room and large bath. Outside of the ell rooms was a dear little balcony with iron bannisters, which overlooked the quaintest old fashioned garden. Out of the dining room windows were huge gardenia bushes; to give fragrance to the bedroom were mock oranges. There were magnolia trees taller than the house and many varieties of camellias, etc.

"The back hall was large and square, where the back stairway went up on one side; the other had large pantry and locked storerooms, etc. Even the back stairs had wide mahogany bannisters which I could not resist a ride down, although I had been forbidden this treat time and again. On this occasion I had been sent down on a message. My grandmother had just received a new dress from N. Y., trimmed with fringe, which she was trying on when she heard a terrific thud and ran in the hall to see me prostrate in the cut glass bowl of custard the butler had just put on the serving table in the hall. She picked me up, unconscious and dripping with custard. Just then I gave a scream which all were glad to hear, and strange to say the doctor could find no bones broken - just a few bruises.

"The second floor had five large bedrooms and three baths. The third, two large bedrooms and a huge garrett, which was the joy of my life to get into. It was a veritable museum, with old spinning wheels, warming pans, candle molds, three-legged spiders, old hair trunks, and all kinds of old luggage, stuffed birds under glass and wax flowers, etc. And chests of old clothes, hoopskirts, etc., such fun to dress up in. A wonderful wine closet, which was kept under lock and key

"A bottle of rare Madeira was opened at the christening of each grandchild. But my how spooky it was in there when dear Grandma put out the tiny gas jets we had in those days. She did not have to call me twice to come out with her.

"There was a covered way that led from the house to the kitchen. This was a lovely old building of red brick, consisting of two large rooms - a kitchen and laundry. At each end was an ell to match the big house. The ell next to the kitchen was the storeroom, where there were barrels of flour, barrels of corn meal, large buckets of sugar - brown, lump and granulated. When I think of it now it looks like a grocery store. The other ell was the tool house. This was to the left of the main house. Straight in front of the house, across the yard, was the quarters, a nice 4 room brick house. Of course there were no slaves then, but the servants liked to stay on the place - at least, many did. In this house lived Octavia, who nursed Mother's sister, Savannah, and was pensioned the rest of her life. She died there. Then Sara, the old dairy maid, who was there during my Grandmother's time, and died there after I was grown. Lilly, the upstairs maid, had a room on the third floor. Jim Gardner, the coachman and the other men servants used a room to dress in, etc., and the fourth was a play room for me. In the fireplace was a little charter oak cooking stove, with a complete set of utensils, where Mammy would make cookies and other good things for me to play tea-party with my little friends. One day Jim, the coachman, came in and told Mother that Seth, a drayman, had stolen my stove and sold it to old Scalowski, a second-hand dealer, for \$5.00, and it was sitting on his sidewalk for sale. So Mother got in the carriage and went to Mr. Scalowski and told him she had come for her stove that Seth had sold him. Whereupon he flew into a rage and said, 'I do not have your stove. How you know dat your stove?' Mother said, because it is the only one like it in the city, and Jim saw Seth steal it and sell it to you. Jim a G. D. liar, says he, Then Jim spoke up and said don't you dare to ous before my Madam. So Mother said, 'Jim, say no more. I will swear out a warrant against him for buying stolen goods.' So she went and swore out a warrant, never dreaming she would have to appear in Court. The next day she was going to a party at the Boykin Wright's. Mr. Wright was a prominent lawyer and great friend of my father's. While there she was summoned to Court, so she and Mr. Wright got in the carriage; when they got to the door of the Court House and Mr. Scalowski saw Mother and Mr. Wright, he sent his little Jew Lawyer (who used to play in the back yard with Mother's brothers) out to say as Mrs. Dugas was such a fine lady, he would not let her come in Court. He would give her the stove and pay all costs. So the stove was put in the carriage and they drove off.

"Like many of the English places, it was surrounded by a high brick wall with arches over the gateways. The vegetable garden and fruit trees were out off from the stables, coach house and smokehouse by the same kind of wall. It was my heart's delight to climb on the wall and run all around the place. This day I was walking the wall, not looking, when the cow came up and said 'Moo'. I missed my footing and into the big manure pile I went. Was Mammy mad when she pulled me out, curls reeking with muck. I was taken to the back porch, stripped, and put into a big washtub and scrubbed before being taken up to our bathroom for a second dip, and was told I was the most audacious child she ever saw. That was the worse thing she could call me.

"The old smokehouse was very quaint, octagon shaped, red brick, and Mother said she even planned a dinner party, that the old farmer from the plantation would not arrive with a hog, so all hands would have to stop and get the hog butchered and put in the ice house until they had time to make the sausage and smoke the hams. There was not a part of the hog from the squeak to the tail

that was not used in the house or the kitchen. Mother had the old Smithfield Ham receipt and her hams could not be beat. The hogs were the razor back and fed on goobers and chufers, which gave them that nutty flavor. The little dairy was under the end of the back porch and I can see the little heart and diamond curd presses now, and old Aunt Sarah sitting under the trees humming and churning and we children taking mugs and begging for a dip of buttermilk and eating ginger cookies made with it. My, but it was good!

"Just at the foot of the back steps were two cisterns. When I was a baby in long clothes they had a tremor of an earthquake and Mother sent Mammy out in the grounds with me. When she came to find us Mammy and I were sitting in the cistern. But the good Lord did not let the quake shake the tops off, so here I am to tell the tale!

"Mr. Candler was taking a bath, when the quake came; he flew out of the house in his birthday costume and had to be hid in the bushes in the Church yard until clothes were brought him, and Mrs. Ford ran out in her chemise, taking the doctor's wooden leg with her, leaving the poor husband in bed with no leg to run with.

I must have been a funny little child, for I could play by the hour alone, pretending to be a fine dressmaker, making dresses for myself out of the large leaves from the Palmy Christes plants (that grew behind the kitchen windowsto keep away flies). They were pinned together with thorns from the mock orange and trimmed with strings of four o'clocks or daisy chains, and would make hats of Magnolia leaves.

Another pastime was making a doll house around the roots of the big old oak trees. The furniture I would model out of our red clay and bake in the sun on the flower steps until hard. The dishes were made out of acorns and nuts. The dolls were sticks with nut heads and painted faces. The hair, cornsilk. All this was just a side issue, for I was an only child and lived with Grandparents and unmarried aunts and uncles, who lavished me with all kinds of beautiful toys. Aunt Maude, not my real aunt, but Godmother, spoiled me to death and gave me the handsomest toys - a beautiful French Jumbo doll with blue eyes, real lashes, and long curls just like mine, and dressed in hand-made clothes, with sapphire blue velvet coat and hat with fur collar and muff and kid gloves - a copy of my winter outfit. A solid silver teaset for the doll house and real Dresden ornaments in miniature, so the nursery was filled with everything a child could wish for. Guess I just enjoyed creating.

Now, to go back to the Greene Street house and Mother's childhood. While living there, my Grandmother had three other children - Edw. Ware, named for his Grandfather; Harry Gould, for his Aunt Harriet Gould, and the youngest daughter, Savannah Glascock.

From all accounts, Margaret (my mother) was a most charming child, with winning ways, and most popular with the girls and boys, who all flocked to the hospitable home. She first went to Miss Gatanett's school, where the hoop club was formed. When not rolling hoops down the green, the crowd would gather at 717 Greene and sit on the curbstone, or retreat to the side porch for games, and old Aunt Henrietta Dent, the cook, would make pitchers of lemonade and little hot cakes or cookies for them.

Aunt Henrietta had a marvelous soprano voice and sang at the swell colored church. Many of her white friends would go to Thankful Church to hear Aunt Henrietta sing. Were she alive today, she would be in Hollywood or Paris, so