



### **Delia Watkins-Donley – Belle Mont Mansion Seamstress.**

Delia Watkins (B: ca. November 1853 - D: ca. 1910 -1920 - date unknown) in Colbert County, Tuscumbia, Alabama was the daughter of Rev. Fredrick W. Watkins, Cherokee Indian, (B: 1811 - TN) and Mariah Watkins (B: 1826 - VA). **Siblings:** Rev. Fred Lafayette W. Watkins (II); **Rush W. Watkins**, Rev. Seaton W. Watkins, Spencer W. Watkins, Peter W. Watkins and Giles W. Watkins.

She married Rev. Thomas Donley, (B: Nov 1847), Tuscumbia, AL, in 1867. The 1910 census reports she had 11 children with 7 surviving: (Lilly Donley M: Edward Belue); (Polly Donley - M: Art Belue); (Porter Donley - M: Elsie Perkins); (Annie Donley - M: Luke Brown); (Edward Donley - Killed by lightning); (Milton Donley - M: Millie (?)); (Virginia Donley - M: (?). Thomas died from a hunting accident. In 1920 she was living in the Porter Donley household listed as widow and 'Grandmother'.

According to *The American Star*, a Tuscumbia based African American newspaper edited by Professor George Washington Trenholm, (and newspaper of the Muscle Shoals Black Missionary Baptist Association), she was a member of the Mosaic Templars of America (MTA), an African American fraternal organization and was active in numerous church and community events; leading praise services (July,1906), including the preparation of a surprise dinner for Rush Watkins on his marriage to Rose Bonner (Feb 1906) after his first wife, Bertha B. Watkins' passing some years prior. Rush and Bertha B. Watkins' children were:

- (1) Maria (Mariah) Watkins
- (2) Robert Watkins
- (3) Letha Watkins
- (4) Thomas Watkins
- (5) Minna Watkins
- (6) Luvinia Watkins
- (7) Ellen Watkins

Bertha B. Watkins was deeded approximately 5 acres of land by Ella W. Thornton in her Last Will and Testament for "services rendered." The relationship with the Dr. G.W. Thornton family include Virginia, Tennessee and Alabama. Bertha subsequently bequeathed the land and home to Rush Watkins.

This information was provided by Tom McKnight, family genealogist, March 12, 2024 for Belle Mont Facebook inclusion. Please send any queries, additions or corrections to [tmperial2011@gmail.com](mailto:tmperial2011@gmail.com) to maintain information consistency and accuracy.