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MISTRESS AND MAID, TWO WOMEN OF THE CONFEDERACY

The manuscript describes the service of two women who assisted injured soldiers in Lynchburg, Va., during the Civil War. Sarah Booker Hobson Spence opened her home to convalescing soldiers, while her maid, Martha, assisted in the hospitals of Lynchburg. The manuscript was written by Elizabeth Gish, granddaughter of Mrs. Spence.

ELIZABETH GISH (1874-1951)

Elizabeth Gish, daughter of Robert Ellis Gish and Mary Hobson Spence, was born December 29, 1874, in Lynchburg, Virginia. She was the granddaughter of Judge David Spence and Sarah Hobson. She graduated from Lynchburg High School in 1893, traveled, and studied in Europe before entering Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1896. She was connected with the public school system of Lynchburg for forty years. Her first teaching assignment was at the Randolph-Macon Institute in Danville from 1898 until 1904. She then was teacher at Court Street School, later John W. Wyatt School, from 1904 until 1909, when she became principal of Frank Roane School. When Robert E. Lee Junior High School opened in the spring of 1926, she became assistant principal in charge of seventh-year students and school health activities.

Miss Gish continued her efforts in physical and mental health areas with the installation of the first sanitary drinking fountain in a public school building, provision of the first hot lunches in the school and the formation of the first parent-teacher group at John Wyatt School. She became the "guiding spirit" of the establishment of the Lynchburg Guidance Center when it was established by the Lynchburg Woman's Club. The Center became the model for mental hygiene clinics in the State. She also inaugurated an effort to establish the first dental clinic in Lynchburg, as well as the Woman's Club clinic for crippled children. The clinic continued under the auspices of the City of Lynchburg to conduct orthopedic work at Memorial Hospital.

Miss Gish was chairman of a committee in 1905 to explore probabilities of forming the Virginia Federation of Woman's Clubs. She also served on one of the historical committees for the Sesqui-Centennial Celebration of Lynchburg in 1936. She was a director of the Lynchburg Chapter of the American Red Cross during both world wars. She served as chairman of the Lynchburg Historical Committee and of the Museum Committee of the Woman's Club, advocating a museum for Lynchburg so that the past might be kept and protected. She was also an organizer of the Van Dyke League from which the Young Women's Christian Association was developed.

Elizabeth Gish died 31 July 1951. She is buried in Spring Hill Cemetery, Lynchburg.