

Cornelia Anne French

Cornelia Anne French was the youngest daughter of Jonathan and Hannah Weld Williams French, and like her brother probably wanted for nothing. She spent much of her life in the companionship of her family, often her brother J D W at his North Andover farm, and the records suggest she might have been an “invalid at home”. In the workings of the church, Cornelia’s name is not apparent – not unusual for females of the day – but as a contributor she is perhaps the most pronounced of all the female members. When only the small chapel existed, the need for work space became readily apparent, and Cornelia and her brother built and gave to the parish the signature French Memorial that has served for over 120 years.

When her brother J D W’s stewardship to St Paul’s was cut short by his untimely death in 1900 at age 51, Cornelia maintained his legacy in North Andover by continuing to operate his farm on the north end of the lake – said to have operated at a loss for many years. Her continuing family legacy to St Paul’s was equally generous. For a number of years she funded the work of a parish visitor—said to be the first of the parish -- to make calls on the ill and infirm. Cornelia provided the funds to connect the church to the city sewer allowing for indoor sanitary facilities. She contributed a hot water system for the rectory, to the delight of the rector. She contributed \$1000 to repair the French Memorial in its 20th year, and shortly before her death she contributed \$5000 to the construction of the new parish hall—roughly one quarter of the project cost. And beyond that, she established a legacy in the Diocesan Trust that continues to fund the operation of St Paul’s to this date.

Parenthetically, the historical records show that the family was very generous to many civic and social causes and particularly to the Episcopal Church. Her sister Caroline, and early devotee of Nantucket Island, before it became popular, built and donated St Paul’s Episcopal Church of that venue. Upon the death of her father in 1901 Cornelia donated the clerestory windows along Newbury Street in Emmanuel Church Boston, her father’s parish. The family left no heirs, and upon the death of Cornelia the family home in fashionable Back Bay became the property of the Diocesan Board of Missions.

Unfortunately no picture has so far been located of Cornelia French.

Caroline Endicott Curwen Davis

Caroline Endicott Curwen Davis, the daughter of James B and Rebecca Endicott Curwen of Salem, not only brought her husband into the family of St Paul's but also was one of the significant leaders of the early parish. The Curwen family summered in North Andover, where the local hostess provided lavish parties for the summer residents and invited leading families to join her high class clientele from Boston, Salem and other



leading centers. It is probable that in this socializing, Caroline, or Carrie as she was familiarly known, met the young widower James H. Davis, a second generation partner in the successful Davis and Furber Machine Shops. They married in 1875. They attended the first organizing meeting in 1880, as did her parents. They were activists in the formation of St Paul's.

Carrie was the organizing force of the Young Women's Guild, an organization for unmarried girls, age 12 through their teens. This age group often impressed into mill work by this age, had little social outlet and this guild sought to bring them a sense of social community and service to the common good. The group met frequently at her home, which was probably a meaningful event.

In 1893, her leadership transitioned the group to the Girls Friendly Society, which served the church for over 40 years. This group was a leading contributor of small useful items to the church as well as sewing and providing items to many mission projects.

While she likely spent time at the family's fashionable home in Salem in her widowhood, for the most part she remained in North Andover at the Osgood Street home she shared with James in his lifetime. While the male-oriented records fail to make much mention of her, she undoubtedly was a strong supporter of the church. Upon her death, she too established a legacy in the Diocesan Trust that continues to fund St Paul's today. She died of cancer at age 63 and was buried from the church.

