



## **Kate Waller Barrett**

**(1857 - 1925 )**

*Humanitarian, Social Crusader,  
Political Reformer*

Kate Waller Barrett was born in Stafford County, Virginia on her family's estate, "Clifton". In 1876 she married Rev. Robert Barrett, the minister at her Episcopal Church in Aquia. He was next assigned to a poor district in Richmond.

When an unwed mother and her baby came to the rectory one evening, Mrs. Barrett took them in and vowed to work "in behalf of this outcast class." She was horrified at society's abandonment of these women. Rev. Barrett was transferred to Atlanta in 1886.

With her husband's encouragement and support, Mrs. Barrett received her M.D. from the Women's Medical College of Georgia in 1892. Dr. Barrett hoped this

knowledge would help in her plans to open a shelter for unwed mothers. Despite opposition from city and church officials, she secured land for her shelter.

In her search for funds, Dr. Barrett met Charles Crittenton, who agreed to finance the shelter, named for his daughter Florence who had died of scarlet fever at the age of four. The home opened in 1893.

Rev. Barrett died in 1896, leaving his wife with six young children. She became Superintendent of the Mission in 1897 and succeeded Mr. Crittenton as President of the Mission on his death in 1909. There were 90 homes with a national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Barrett was involved in other charitable work and social reform. She served on several national boards and commissions and was active in war work, veterans' relief, women's suffrage, and the restoration of Arlington Mansion.

When she died at her home on Duke Street in Alexandria in 1925, the flag over the state capitol flew at half-mast. She is buried in the Aquia Church cemetery. In 1937, the Alexandria Library, Kate Waller Barrett Branch, was built as a memorial to her.

