

MINING WRANGELL HISTORY

The Women of the Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co. and the History of the Wrangell Garnet Ledge

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Introduction

I have communicated a lot of people about the Wrangell Garnet Ledge and the women who owned the Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co. Most of those people have been contacted about a particular person or a subject but not the overall research project. I thought that it might be good to create this newsletter to put some of the pieces together for everyone and let you know where I am on this 25-year project (labor of love!!) and what still needs to be done.

While this project started out to simply tell the history of the Wrangell Garnet Ledge, it fast became the story of the women of the Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co. Including the story of Anna E. Durkee and how she went from school teacher from Harmony, NY to insurance salesman to stockbroker and on to mining woman.

That doesn't mean that the rest of the women are not important! I believe that

Resources on the Internet Have Aided Research

Last September I decided to pick up my search again. It had been several months since I had last conducted any research. I was astounded at what I found!

In the past I have maintained contact with the libraries in Minneapolis hoping that something new had been added or hoped that eventually someone in Minneapolis would take an interest in the women.

I decided to sign up for the "lists" that abound for each state, county and surname. Instead of concentrating just on Minnesota, I branched out. That's where I finally found some great information.

had it not been for the women, Anna may have found it a bit more of a struggle to set up a mining company if she had had to make her sales pitch to men. At that time, men were the last people that she was going to invite in to profit from her work! She certainly was not going to give them an opportunity to be telling her or the other women what to do.

The women accomplished what men had failed to do: develop a productive garnet mine. It wasn't easy, but they accomplished so much.

I hope that by briefly sharing what I have learned about the women, the mine and what they accomplished that you will have a better appreciation why I have stuck with this for the past 25 years. Perhaps it will jog your memories about your family member who was involved with this great adventure. I still have hope that someone, somewhere will be able to fill in the blanks. So far I've been doing it a piece at a time. I bet you can add to it! ☺

The Northern California list was the first big hit. A gentleman searched historical newspapers and found several about Anna Durkee and the garnet mine as well as a federal court case I had not known about. From there, things just took off. In just a few short weeks I had found more than I had ever found in the 25 years of research.

U.S. Census records are online. Libraries have online searchable catalogs! Maps, mining records, and more are online! In addition, I have met some great people and a few of those people have joined me in my search for the women. I am so grateful for their help. ☺



Anna E. Durkee
1869-1948

Colorization by
R. Gess-Smith
www.GessWhoTo.com

The Garnet Mine

While the mining of garnets near Wrangell has a long history, no one made a success of mining the garnets until the women came along. Anna found out about the mine when she was in Wrangell to look over another mine. The owners of the Portage Mountain Mining Co. thought that she should see the mine so she could tell people that she had actually seen it when she was selling stocks. Anna and Mary T. Elmer traveled ahead of the main group in order to see a bit more of Alaska. Anna had to return to Minneapolis to finalize a sale of stock and when the rest of the party had not shown up, Anna and Mary left. Finding the garnet mine was a stroke of luck for the women. Anna and Mary returned to Minneapolis with handfuls of bright burgundy-colored garnets and talk of this

garnet mine in Alaska. Anna and her women friends pooled their money to form the corporation and to purchase the garnet mine from Wm. Taylor and Alex Vreath for \$10,000.00.

While there are only ten names listed on the corporation papers, it is now believe that there were probably 15-16 women involved in this venture. In two different news stories Anna mentions that 15 of her women friends joined together to form the corporation. Who are the other 5 or 6 women? I can only guess at who they might be as no other information is available. It appears that the board members were no doubt the women who had the most money to invest in the company. ☞

Anna E. Durkee: From Teacher to Mining Woman

Anna grew up at Harmony, NY (Chautauqua County). She became a teacher at age 18 and taught in the local schools for a few years. I'm not sure when she left there. She shows up in Minnesota in 1898 working as a clerk. She also was working as a "library helper" at the University of Minnesota library from 1898-1900. The 1900 US Census places her in the household of Letitia Crafts who was the Assistant Librarian at the university.

Anna went on to selling life insurance and then as manager of the South Dewey Mining Co. I still do not have any

information about the company. After that she was hired by the Portage Mountain Mining Co. to sell stock in the company. While she did a great job at selling the stocks, the president of the company failed to pay her what he promised, thus the law suit she filed in 1906. Documents from the lawsuit provided a better look at Anna, Letitia and Mary as friends and why Anna had such a bad outlook on men.

Anna was always looking for a better claim. Arizona is where she finally hit it big. ☞

Mary T. Elmer: From Nurse to Mining Partner

Mary T. Elmer was the daughter of Rev. Oscar and Caroline (Knight) Elmer. Rev. Elmer was a Presbyterian minister. Mary was the oldest of five siblings: four girls and one boy. Rev. and Mrs. Elmer both died in 1904, leaving Mary and her sister, Julia, to raise the younger children.

Mary attended nursing school and graduated in 1904 and began a short career as a Registered Nurse. The last time her nursing license was renewed was in 1909. From that time on, she was involved in mining with her "dear friend and partner" Anna Durkee. Mary no

doubt cared for Anna's mother until Julia died in 1911 while they were living in Spokane, WA. And certainly her nursing background came into play in their twilight years in New York.

Mary was one of the board of directors of AGM&M and later became an officer. She was also involved in the mine in Arizona as an officer. Letters she wrote in 1954 show her to have had a dry sense of humor and one who considered herself as growing up in a family that was just an "ordinary family" in Minnesota. ☞



Mary T. Elmer
1879-1955

Photo courtesy
of the family

The Alaska Garnet Mining and Manufacturing company, which has been incorporated with a capital stock of \$1,000,000, is the first mining company in the world to have only women for officers.
Sunday Pioneer Press,
December 30, 1906

Letitia Crafts Leaves Library to Mine for Garnets

Letitia Crafts was the daughter of Amasa and Mary Jane (Henry) Crafts. The Crafts were considered one of Minnesota's Pioneer Families. Her older brother Robert, younger brother Leo and Letitia, herself, attended the University of Minnesota. There may have been another sister in 1860, but by the 1870 US Census, she is not listed. I have not been able to find out who "H" was.

Letitia retired from the U of M in 1911. She had worked there for 28 years. Letitia was one of the few stockholders who traveled to Wrangell to visit the mine. At the time of her retirement, she was the president of the corporation. Letitia was interviewed by the Alaska Sentinel about her involvement in the mine as well as all

of her philanthropic activities in Minnesota.

Letitia moved to San Francisco about 1918. It isn't known what induced her to moving there. Possibly meeting her future husband?

Letitia married Frank Marin in 1920 and lived the rest of her life in California. Nothing is known of Frank or his children. Frank, much younger than his wife, cared for Letitia until his death in 1951 and then his children continued her care until she died in 1952.

I have to thank Karen at the University of Minnesota Archives for helping in putting together Letitia's life story. Karen has been invaluable to this project in many ways. 🐾



Letitia Crafts Marin
1857-1952
Photo from
U of M Archives

Mother and Daughter Investors: Anna & Minnie

Anna Eliza Rose was married to Edward Rose, a farmer and capitalist. They lived in Corunna, Michigan. Anna was Edward's second wife, having lost his first wife in death. Coincidentally, Julia Durkee lived at Corunna, too. Whether Julia knew the Rose family before Anna Rose came to live with her daughter, Minnie Towler, isn't known.

Edward died January 1906. It is quite possible that the money that Anna Rose had to invest in the garnet mine came from the estate. She was still living in Michigan when she became a partner in the mining company. She came to live with Minnie a short time later and died in 1912. She is buried next to Edward at Corunna.

Pearl Hewitt

Pearl Hewitt was married (apparently a short time) to Edwin Hewitt. She was a widow by the time the garnet mine was incorporated.

Pearl worked for the McClellan Paper Co. as a stenographer. She lived with her brother-in-law in 1910. Her mother, Esther Fox, was also living there.

By 1920, Pearl had married George C.

Minnie was married to Herbert Towler. They also lived in Ohio where the children were born. They lived in Chicago, Illinois in 1900 near other of members of Herbert's family. They moved to Minneapolis sometime prior to 1910.

Herbert died in 1920; he had been retired for about 12 years. Did Anna Rose contribute to Minnie's involvement in the garnet mine or did Herbert provide the funds? Did Minnie approach her mother about investing in the garnet mine? Possibly!

After Herbert's death, Minnie moved to California to live with her daughter, Martreanna, and to be near her son, Edward, who attended U of California. Minnie died in 1958 at Oakland, CA. 🐾



Anna Crandall Rose
1829-1912
Photo from
the family



Minnie Rose Towler
1867-1958
Photo from
the family

Roberts, listed as a salesman for McClellan Paper Co.. George had a daughter from his previous marriage, Dorothy. Esther may have been the daughter of George and Pearl.

Nothing more is known of Pearl. She died in 1961 in Minnesota. I'm still waiting for obituaries for her and George as well as their death certificates. Photos would also be welcome. 🐾

Pearl Gunders

“Twin City Women of Business Experience Launch Enterprise of Their Own, and Take Up All the Official Jobs - Man Would Be Too Bossy to Have Around”
Sunday Pioneer Press, December 30, 1906

Pearl Gunders has remained a bit of an interesting mystery. When I first started researching the women, I thought she was a widow. She was listed as such in the city directory. Imagine my surprise to find her “late husband” Paul A. Gunders in the census records very much alive, but married to someone half his age! Perhaps listing herself as a “widow” was her way of getting back at Paul?

Pearl probably did not work outside of the home while she was married to Paul. They had two daughters: Dottie and Ilia. Paul had been the county auditor for Makato County, MN in 1900. Several years later he is listed as a salesman for

a publishing company in Minneapolis. In 1910, Paul and Pearl were living in Minneapolis with their daughters. Thomas Bergum was also living in the household and his occupation was listed as “vice-president of mining company.” No information has come to light as to who he is or about the company.

Pearl moved to North Dakota and lived with her daughter, Ilia, who worked as a stenographer for an attorney there. By this time her name was listed as “Petra,” no doubt reflecting her Norwegian descent. Nothing further is known about Pearl. We may have found Ilia, but further information is needed ☺



Rebecca Fenby Bausman
1843-1927
Photo courtesy of the family

Rebecca Bausman Was an ‘Estimable Lady’

Rebecca Fenby Bausman was born to Richard and Jane (Johnston) Fenby in 1843 in Maryland. She was one of at least 7 children. Rebecca moved with her family to Saint Louis sometime before 1860. Her father is listed on the 1860 census as a common merchant and head of a household consisting of himself, 7 children and 2 servants.

Rebecca became the second wife of widower Abner Bausman in 1879. Abner was a well-known and respected Dentist in Minneapolis. They had two sons and one daughter: Richard, Alonzo, and Marion Douglas Bausman.

Abner went blind some time before Marian Douglas was born. Family

members say that they believe that his condition caused the family to be in a difficult financial situation. Eventually he had cataract surgery. Family legend is that his first request was, to Marian, “Come here daughter, and let me see you” because he had never seen her before.

Rebecca was prominent in church and social work. “She is a most estimable lady, richly deserving of the high regard the people have for her.” *Compendium of History and Biography of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, Minnesota.*

Rebecca went to live with her son, Linton, in Springfield, MA after Abner died. She died in 1927 in Massachusetts. She



Garnet from the AGM&M mine. It’s about an inch in diameter. Sent to me by the Towler family in California. .

Maria A. Crane

Maria Crane is one of the women who I know virtually nothing about. I am fairly certain that she was married to George Wilson Crane.

In the 1878 biography of David Aiken from Lake County, Ohio, book *Moses and Maria Seymour* were childless and adopted Maria. “...now the wife of Mr. George Crane, and the mother of an infant daughter.” I haven’t been able to verify this information yet. Again, I am waiting for her obituary as well as for

George. I have her death certificate. The hard part is the expense that I have been incurring in my research. In the past few months I have paid out almost \$500.00 in research fees and for copies of various documents and files.

I have hopes of finding a volunteer who will be willing to help look up the documents for the cost of the copies or finding descendants who have the information. I love sharing information with family members! ☺

Jean Anderson

Jean Anderson. Who was she? Was she the bookkeeper or the stenographer listed in the city directory?

Beth, from Washington State, has helped with research and has traced Jean B. Anderson from Minneapolis to Seattle, Washington. It is quite possible that this is the correct Jean. Interestingly

enough, Jean relocated to Seattle about the same time that Anna Durkee and her mother, Julia, moved to Seattle. See the 1909 AYP Expo info.

This Jean is a bookkeeper and worked for her brother in that capacity. This is new information and I have not been able to verify the information yet. ☹



Wrangell Garnets

Julia Durkee adopted Anna Ploss

One of the problems I had in finding Anna as a young girl is that I was looking for Anna E. Durkee instead of Anna E. Ploss! Enter Adrienne Ploss, a descendant of Anna's, several years ago with the answer! She had found my web site and emailed me with the information.

Julia Marie Durkee was born in Canada. She came to New York with her family as a young girl. She married George Waldo Durkee and they eventually moved to Harmony, NY (Chautauqua County). George was a farmer there and brother to Eugene Return Durkee, founder of Durkee Spices.

While no adoption papers have been found to support the notion that George and Julia adopted Anna, I have been able to find enough documentation that both Julia and Anna considered themselves mother and daughter. Bernice Gunderson, The Society of Genealogy of Durkee, was skeptical at first but over the years she began to think I might be

right. The final piece of information has finally persuaded her that Anna has a place in the Durkee Family tree. Anna's death certificate listed George and Julia Durkee as her parents.

Anna was born to Martin and Mary Ploss (we're not sure yet who Anna's birth mother was) in 1869 but started living with the Durkees off and on from at least age 6. The Durkees never had children of their own.

I haven't determined when Julia left New York. She appears in the Corunna, Michigan city directory in 1896 and listed in the 1900 US Census for Michigan by herself. Julia is first listed as living with Anna Durkee in the 1904 city directory. She continued living with Anna until her death in 1911 at Spokane, WA. She is buried next to George at Buffalo, NY.

I believe that Julia invested in AGM&M and is one of the five other women who formed AGM&M. A mother does that! ☹

Julia Elmer Duff Lived at Address Listed for AGM&M

Julia Elmer Duff, was the sister of Mary T. Elmer. She attended Macalester College and taught school. She helped raise her younger siblings after her parents, Rev. Oscar and Caroline Elmer, passed away within months of each other in 1904.

Julia married Clyde L. Duff but I don't have a date for their marriage. I have not been able to find out if Clyde's first wife, Martha, died or if they were divorced. Clyde died in 1935.

Julia may be one of the shareholders of the AGM&M. There was a trust fund for

their brother, Charles, to attend college. These funds were used to invest in the Portage mining company (with Julia's agreement) with the idea that it would be paid back. It was. It's possible that the trust fund was again tapped by both women with the intent that they would be able to replace the money. Apparently, that never happened.

Julia's address was given as the address for AGM&M while Anna and Mary lived in New York. If Julia was a shareholder, and I believe she was, she was the last of the shareholders. She died in 1973. ☹



Julia Anita Elmer
1881-1973
Courtesy of
The family

All the stock has been subscribed for, so that there is no use of any men hanging around.
Sunday Pioneer Press,



The 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was held in Seattle, Washington.



“Our idea in forming a woman’s corporation was simply this: If we were to allow on man as the officer or director he would immediately become masterful and believe it his duty and privilege to dominate. Then another thing. A long business experience has shown me that many men who are honest with their fellows will sometimes defraud a woman.”
Sunday Pioneer Press, December 30, 1906



The 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition was held at San Francisco, California.

www.sanfranciscocomemories.com

Belle, Jennie and Augusta: The Other Investors?

Belle Hazen traveled to Wrangell the summer of 1909. She was accompanied by Mrs. R.D. (Augusta) Currier who stayed with Belle for a while. Both women visited the mine. Later that summer, Belle’s sister, Jennie Sanders arrived for a visit and to accompany Belle back to Minnesota.

Belle and Jennie were born to Horace and Persis (Chase) Gleason in 1843 in Massachusetts. They later moved to Wisconsin. Belle married Benjamin M. Hazen in 1863. Ben owned a saloon and was a noted musician. He moved to Colorado where he owned the IXL hotel. He died there in 1882. I have not been able to find out where Belle was at the time

There was no mention of a husband at the time of her death. She lived alone and then eventually lived with her brother. Belle died in 1912 in Minnesota.

Belle spent the summer working in town setting up an office for AGM&M and selling garnets to cruise ship passengers which makes me think that she had a vested interest in the mine. It is very possible that Mrs. Currier was also a small investor. Why else accompany Belle to Wrangell and check out the mine? I’m thinking Jennie invested, too Belle and Jennie evidently had the funds to travel to Wrangell even though single women and return home via Seattle, Portland, Salt Lake City and Billings, Montana. ☞

1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition

The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was designed to showcase Seattle as an ambitious port city, the up-and-coming commercial center of the Pacific coast. It opened on June 1, 1909, on the University of Washington campus.

President William Howard Taft wired his congratulations from the nation’s capital, complimenting the people of the Northwest on the exposition, “designed as it is to exploit the natural resources and marvelous wealth of Alaska and the development of trade and commerce on the Pacific Slope.”

When the president pressed a tele-

graph key, studded with gold nuggets from the Klondike, and transmitted his message to Seattle, the crowd responded with shouts of triumph.

The Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co. was there. They shipped several hundred pounds of garnet to Seattle for the expo. Anna Durkee and her mother moved to Seattle about 1909 and lived there thru 1910.

Check out the web sit at University of Washington for photos of the expo: <http://content.lib.washington.edu/aypweb/>

1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition

The Panama Pacific International Exposition was the 1915 worlds fair held in San Francisco, California. Taking over three years to construct, the fair had great economic implications for the city that had been almost destroyed by the great earthquake and fire of 1906.

Officially, the exposition was a celebration of the completion of the Panama Canal, and also commemorated the 400th anniversary of the discovering of the Pacific Ocean by the explorer, Balboa. The fair ran from February 20th until December 4th, 1915 -- and was

widely considered to be a great success.

Again, the AGM&M was there with their garnets. The company listed an address on Sutter Street in San Francisco. The building is still standing and is a storefront on the ground level and apartments above.

Anna Durkee was known to have been living in San Francisco and it is certain that Mary was there too. Lettie Crafts may also have been there to help out. No information other information about their part in the expo has been found. ☞

Wrangell Garnet Ledge



Digging for garnets

While not all claims were at the exact location claimed by the women, there were a lot of claims filed in that general area. I'm sure that all of the claimants thought that there had to be something of value in those burgundy-red stones. Trouble was, it was hard work!

It took a woman who had been observing mining operations to come along and show how it could be done. It was no simple feat for the women to purchase the mine and become the first all-woman mining corporation in the United States. It took money, sure, but it took guts to become involved in a man's world.

The garnet ledge is currently under the stewardship of the Southeast Council of

Boy Scouts in Juneau. As of this writing the ledge is closed due to safety hazards at the ledge. No word as to when the area will be reopened.

For now, the children of Wrangell are prevented from digging for garnets to sell. This is a time-honored tradition in Wrangell.

Local businessman Fred Hanford stipulated in his donation of the ledge to the scouts that if it ceased being used for scouting purposes or for the children of Wrangell, the ledge was to the First Presbyterian Church with no strings attached.

I have hopes that the ledge will be reopened soon. ☺

Dardanelles Mine at Chloride, Arizona

For some time I knew that Anna had been involved in mining in Arizona. It wasn't until I received a few newspaper clippings from old newspapers that I had the name of the mine and the location of it. From there I have managed to obtain more news clippings from the Dardanelles file at Arizona USGS, historic newspapers online, and the Mohave Museum of History and Art at Kingman, AZ. I am waiting for the corporation's records to arrive from Arizona.

I am slowly putting the pieces together. How she happened on the mine is a big question. She was given a tip about the

mine. Could it be that she read Herbert Hoover's book on mining? Did he help her? Did she know about the mine and now it was finally profitable to operate the mine? Did she have help from the Winchell family of geologists from Minnesota? After all, Gratia Countryman worked at the library in Minnesota and was very close to that family. Those questions remain to be answered.

The Dardanelles Amalgamated Mines, Inc. was the crowning touch to a successful mining career for Anna. She had worked hard to achieve that success and recognition. ☺

Where I'm Going...

I am hoping that I can drive back to Minnesota in August to meet descendants and friends. Right now that's up in the air as I'm tapping into my travel fund.

I want to drive to Chloride in late September to visit the site of the mine and have a sense of what it took to operate the mine and do additional research in Kingman. I also want to fly to New York to see where Anna and Mary lived and hopefully be able to get to Chautauqua County where Anna grew up.

I also hope to get to San Francisco in hopes of meeting more descendants

there. I really want to meet everyone!

My next project (while working on the book) is to generate enough funds to place a head stone on Anna's grave. There is nothing there and I feel it's important to have something there. We're still trying to find out where Mary was buried. Anyone have \$900.00???

As I have come to know these women, I am determined to give them their place in mining history. While they may not have struck it rich with the garnets, they proved that women could do what men could not! And that's something to brag about! ☺

It is said that this is the only property on the Stickeen River with garnets on it, and they are only three points softer than a diamond.

*Sunday Pioneer Press,
December 30, 1906*

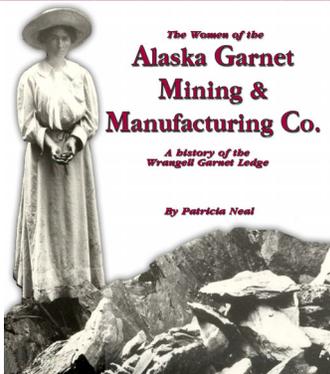


Tunnel to the mine
C.T. Bressler photo
USGS Library

There are many people who I have to thank for helping me on this project. In the beginning, I probably drove **Kay Jabusch** at the Irene Ingle Public Library nuts with the Inter-Library Loan requests I did. It took time, but at least I was able to find things. That was BEFORE the Internet!

From there, it has been bits and pieces by calling or writing letters to libraries and bugging them. While the Internet was in its infancy, I could see where eventually it would be a valuable tool in my research. I just had to be patient. My patience has paid off.

THE WOMEN OF THE ALASKA GARNET
MINING & MANUFACTURING CO. AND
THE HISTORY OF THE WRANGELL
GARNET LEDGE



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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.WRANGELLGARNETLEDGE.COM

Karen at the University of Minnesota Archives has been so gracious to help me to answer questions about people in Minneapolis. I've also acquired new friends who have joined in the search. **Jeanine**, Princeton, MN, was the first to join in the search. She found out one day that she was related to Mary T. Elmer. She has been able to communicate with a lot of the family members which brought me more information and photographs. I only knew **Caroline** and that had been by mailing out generic "*Elmer family*" letters. **Beth**, in Washington, tipped me off about the historical newspapers online and recently joined in the hunt. **Robert** (our Mr. Sherlock) has provided a great deal of background on people, places and events in Minneapolis and elsewhere that has added to the work but has brought a bigger picture to this story. He also finds stuff on the internet and sends me to reading books! **Adrienne** brought Anna's early life to me and has helped to continue in the search for answers about Anna and her family. With great patience, **Bernice** of the Durkee Family tree, has answered questions for me and told me who the "Durkee" person is and how they are connected. The families that I have been able to find have also provided information and photographs such as Rebecca **Bausman's** family, and the **Elmer** family. The **Towler** family not only sent me photographs of Anna Rose and Minnie, but a garnet from the mine; all this during a difficult time for them. There are others who I will continue to add here.

If you have questions or have information you would be willing to share, you can always call me and I will call you back on my dime. My cell phone plan has nation-wide long distance so I'm not charged for calling. Weekends are the best time as I have unlimited

minutes all day but any time after 7pm Pacific Time or before 7am Pacific Time works, too! Thank you for your help! *Trish*



Memories...

I am hoping that reading about the women and what they did will bring back some memories of things that may have been discussed in your family about the women or that you may have heard. Perhaps there are souvenirs or photographs that may be in your family that suddenly take on new meaning? Are there old letters or documents stored somewhere?

I know that Minnie Towler was still acting as the vice-president of the corporation in 1936 when she signed off on the change of corporate address papers. She was liv-

ing in California. Anna E. Durkee was the secretary and general manager, and Mary T. Elmer was the treasurer. They were living in New York. The company had ceased to be productive, but it was apparent that the women wanted to make sure that the company was still recognized as a viable entity.

Letitia Crafts, Julia Duff, Pearl Hewitt, and possibly Jean Anderson and Maria A. Crane (if we have the correct ones) were also still living in 1936. They may have been included in the "meeting of the stockholders" and then again, it may have just been

a paper trail to comply with the change of street name for the Minnesota Corporation Division. Minnesota didn't require annual reports of corporations until 1980 so there is no documentation for the company other than the incorporation papers and the change of address. I'm still hoping for corporate records, letters, and most importantly photographs of the women.

There are still a lot of blanks to be filled and I'm hoping that you may be able to help fill in those blanks with memories, letters, documents, photographs, and more. ♡