

Yarbrough, Mrs. J. A. ^[1]

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By William S. Powell, 1996

28 Aug. 1879–5 Nov. 1961

Mrs. J. A. Yarbrough, club-woman and newspaper writer, was born Josephine McDonald in Ashland, Miss., the only child of James McLeod and Emma Josephine McDonald. After her marriage on 11 Dec. 1901, she was always referred to as Mrs. J. A. Yarbrough. She attended [Flora MacDonald College](#) ^[2] in Red Springs, N.C., then moved to Radford, Va., where she met her future husband, Joel Alexander Yarbrough, a bank employee and recent graduate of [Virginia Polytechnic Institute](#) ^[3]. Resettling in [Charlotte](#) ^[4], Yarbrough founded a coal and ice company and developed a chain of dairy stores. They became the parents of two sons, Joel A., Jr., and John McDonald.

Mrs. Yarbrough's talents were diverse, and her interest in public affairs was genuine and deep. She wrote a great many feature stories that were published in the *Charlotte Observer* ^[5] and was especially well known for an extensive series on "Interesting Carolinians." Though most of her writings were of historical interest, based on serious research, others were on topics of current concern in the city and region. She held office in, conducted programs for, and otherwise was active in the [Charlotte Woman's Club](#) ^[6], [Daughters of the American Revolution](#) ^[7], [Daughters of American Colonists](#) ^[8], [United Daughters of the Confederacy](#) ^[9], Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, [YWCA](#) ^[10], a book club, and a needlework guild. She served on the board of directors of the [Florence Crittenton Home](#) ^[11], was active in the work of the [Myers Park Baptist Church](#) ^[12], and played an important role in the moving and restoration of the U.S. Mint in Charlotte (now the [Mint Museum of Art](#) ^[13]).

She was described as a precise and well-organized person whose demeanor was always proper. After an illness of several years she died in [Asheville](#) ^[14] and was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, [Charlotte](#) ^[4].

References:

Charlotte Observer, 5 Nov. 1961

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