

Alexander, Julia McGehee ^[1]

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Alexander, Julia McGehee

by Harold J. Dudley, 1979

14 Jan. 1876–23 Feb. 1957

Julia McGehee Alexander, attorney, author, legislator, and historian, was born of Scotch-Irish ancestry at Enderly, her father's plantation, three miles north of [Charlotte](#) ^[2] in [Mecklenburg County](#) ^[3]. Her father, [Captain Sydenham B. Alexander](#) ^[4], a U.S. congressman who also served five terms in the North Carolina Senate, was one of the chief advocates for the establishment of [North Carolina State College](#) ^[5] and was the author of the [first good roads law](#) ^[6] for the state. He was a direct descendant of Major General [Joseph Alexander](#) ^[7], revolutionary hero of the [Battle of Charlotte](#) ^[8], and also of John McKnitt Alexander. Julia Alexander's mother was Pauline Violet Nicholson.

Miss Alexander was the second woman to be licensed to practice law in North Carolina, the first woman to enter independent law practice in the state, and the first woman to serve as a representative in the North Carolina House of Representatives. Following graduation from [Mary Baldwin College](#) ^[9], Staunton, Va., she studied law at [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[10] where she was president of her class, then at the [University of Michigan](#) ^[11], and still later at [Columbia University Law School](#) ^[12] in New York. After her admission to the North Carolina bar in 1914, she practiced in [Charlotte](#) ^[2]. She served as a representative in the North Carolina legislature from 1925 to 1927. She was a vice-president of both the [Mecklenburg Bar Association](#) ^[13] and the [American Bar Association](#) ^[14], and in 1924 she represented the [National Bar Association](#) ^[15] as a guest of the British bar (while in London was entertained at Buckingham Palace by Queen Mary). Her chief legislative interests were taxes and agriculture.

Alexander was elected the first president of the [North Carolina Federation of Business and Professional Women](#) ^[16] in 1919. The first regent of the Mecklenburg chapter of the [Daughters of the American Revolution](#) ^[17] (1912), she was also lifetime president of the Stonewall Jackson chapter of the [United Daughters of the Confederacy](#) ^[18]. She had a charter membership in the American Legion Auxiliary of Hornet's Nest, Post 9. As the official Mecklenburg county historian, she was partly instrumental in having the historic U.S. Mint rebuilt as the [Mint Museum](#) ^[19]. She helped organize the [Charlotte Humane Society](#) ^[20], and served as its first president. In 1932 she chaired the George Washington Bi-Centennial Commission for Charlotte. She was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church and engaged in various philanthropic causes.

Miss Alexander was author of *Charlotte in Picture and Prose, A Short History of Mecklenburg County* ^[21], and *Mothers of Great Men* ^[22]. Her hobbies included historical research, sports, and travel.

She was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, [Charlotte](#) ^[2].

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Additional Resources:

Alexander, Julia in Mecklenburg Bar News: http://www.meckbar.org/newsevents/Alexander.Julia_.pdf ^[23]

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Authors:

Dudley, Harold J. ^[29]

Origin - location:

Charlotte ^[30]

From:

Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press. ^[31]

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