

The following "biography" of **Alva Hardie Bradford Meade (4.11)** was excerpted from

*John Hardie of Thornhill and His Family* by Lillian Galt Martin

**4.11** Alva Hardie Bradford, the seventh daughter of Taul and Belle Hardie Bradford (but three had died in infancy), was born on 10 July 1878 in Talladega, Alabama. Her father died in 1883 and her mother in 1885, leaving five young children, who were sent to live with relatives.

Alva Bradford went at the age of seven from her home in Talladega to her uncle, Major Joseph Hardie (3) and his wife Margaret Discretion Isbell, in Selma. A note written by Alva's husband H.S. Meade and dated 22 February 1956, tells that Alva was baptised in Los Angeles in 1887. "She was 9 years old and went every year from Selma Ala. to Los Angeles." Shortly after this, in about 1889, the family moved to Birmingham, Alabama, and remained

there until after Alva's marriage, travelling to California and also to Talladega in the summer.

Joseph Hardie and his wife had no children of their own, but brought up Alva and another niece, Mary Virginia Hardie (Jennie), ten years older than Alva. [See entry for 2.4.]

"Jennie was headstrong, but Alva was good. She had long red hair below her waist. She went to the Taylor School in Birmingham, a facsimile of an English boys' public school. She was one of only two girls allowed to attend. She took the examinations for entering Wellesley College and passed with flying colors, but her health broke down. She was sent to Europe to recuperate, in 1895 when she was seventeen. She was taken, along with a group of other young people, by [her mother's] Cousin Jim Spence who lived in Tuscaloosa." [AMM]

Alva Hardie Bradford was married on 11 November 1902 in Birmingham, "in the South Highland Presbyterian Church, by Dr. Stirling Foster; there were twelve bridesmaids, two matrons of honor, one maid of honor, four flower girls, and fifteen male attendants" [AMM], to Hardeman Sessions Meade, born on 16 June 1875 in Holmes County, Mississippi. He was the son of James Turner Meade and Anna Hardeman Sessions Meade.

The Meade family had moved to Birmingham when Hardeman was a boy, and he attended Birmingham High School, after which he worked as an accountant in his father's insurance and real estate business. Later he and a friend B.R. Pegram organized "Pegram and Meade, a real estate management concern, which got its start buying lots for individuals from the old Ensley Land Co." [H.M. Meade quoted in Birmingham newspaper interview, circa late 1950s: "Two Young Dealers in Dirt."]

It is not known if there is any relationship between this Meade family (descended from General Everard Meade, American officer present at the surrender of Cornwallis) and the family of Mary Mead (or Meade) Hall, wife of John Hardie of Thornhill. Anna Meade Minnigerode had in her house the Sir Joshua Reynolds portrait of General Everard Meade.

When Alva and Hardeman were married, the Joseph Hardies wanted the young couple to live with them. Hardeman feeling that, however poor, he must be independent, refused. Soon afterwards the Joseph Hardies moved from Birmingham to California. The Meades never had the wealth that would have been theirs as Joseph Hardie's heirs, but Hardeman Meade was the head of his own household. They lived in a "small house," which at times was lived in by his mother, his grandmother, and his aunt, as well as Hardeman, Alva, and their three children. And sometimes other relatives, away from home and attending school in Birmingham, stayed with the Meades.

Alva and Hardeman Meade lived in Birmingham, at 2014 Thirteenth Avenue, South, for 50 years. She was a firm believer in the Christian values she had been brought up with, and was a fiercely partisan member of the Democratic party, insisting once on voting even though she had to be taken to the polling place in an ambulance. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1952, and lived together for almost another ten years. He was tall and thin, with the beautiful manners of the perfect Southern gentleman. She was tiny, birdlike, and even in old age had a youthfully intense interest in everything. Her tall husband deferred to her. They were devoted to each other and to their family.

Alva Bradford Meade died on 6 March 1962 in Birmingham. Hardeman Meade died on 14 October 1963 in Talladega. They were buried in Birmingham. [As was the custom in this family where so many parents left young children who were "taken in" by relatives, the first son was named for the uncle who had reared the orphan relative, in this case Joseph Hardie.] Three children:

4.11.1 Anna Hardeman Meade

4.11.2 Joseph Hardie Meade

4.11.3 Isabel Meade

[Information from AMM and Isabel Meade Gwinn, 1983-1985.]



Alva Hardie Bradford (4.11) (1878-1962), later Mrs. Hardeman Sessions Meade. They lived in Birmingham. (See also photograph on page 172.)