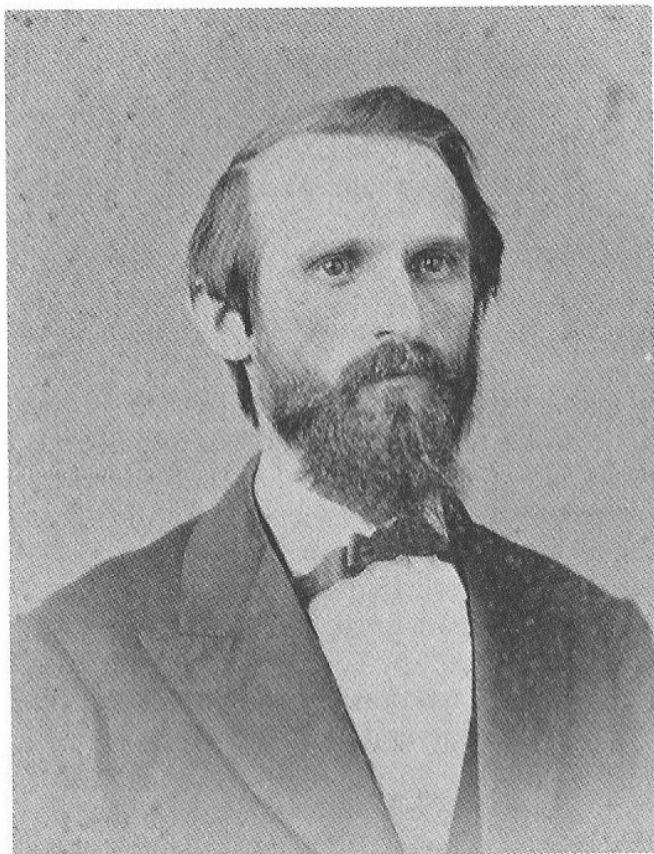


The following "biography" of **Margaret Discretion Isbell Hardie (m.3)** was excerpted from

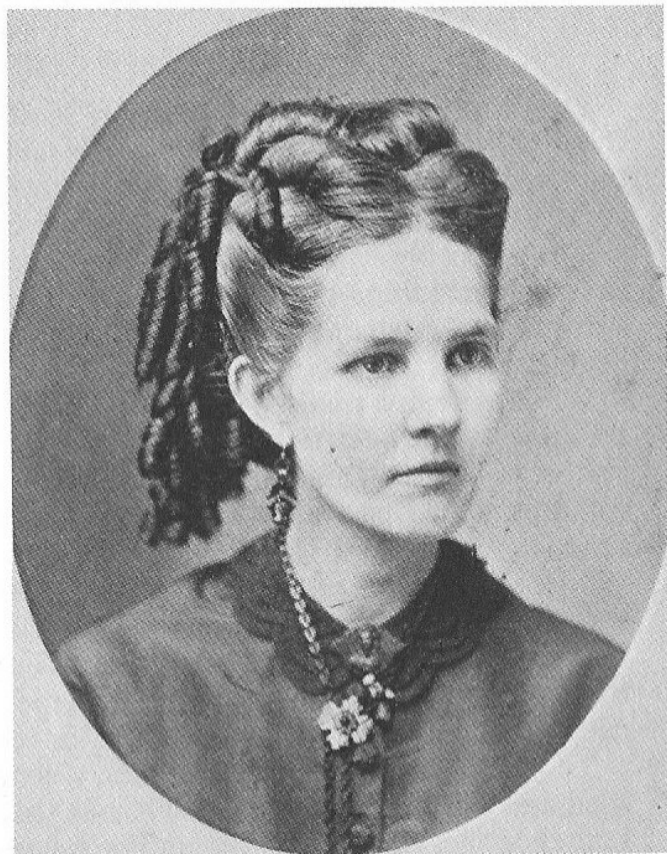
John Hardie of Thornhill and His Family by Lillian Galt Martin

Margaret Discretion Isbell, born on 9 June 1837 in Talladega, was the daughter of Major James Isbell (son of Thomas Isbell and Discretion Howard) and Rutelia Houston Isbell. James Isbell and Rutelia Houston had been married on 19 March 1833 in McMinn County, Tennessee, where the Houstons lived. James and Rutelia Isbell moved in 1836 to Talladega from Lowndes County, Alabama, and Major Isbell was a leading banker in Talladega, where he died in 1871. "James Isbell was a merchant. He started his bank in the back of his store in 1848. This bank is now listed as the oldest bank in Alabama still in operation" [but its name has been changed to the First National Bank of Talladega]. [Isbell family information and quotation from WWW, 1986.]

[The date of Joseph Hardie and Maggie Isbell's marriage was entered incorrectly in the marriage record book of Talladega County. The clerk entered "License December 16" and "Marriage December 1", instead of the reverse. In the Jacob Tifton Bradford family Bible is a note was written on 2 March 1956 by Hardeman Sessions Meade, husband of Alva Hardie (4.11), Joseph and Maggie's foster daughter. His note gives the correct dates (see above) and continues: "for benefit of children of children of H.S. and Alva Meade."]



Joseph Hardie (1833-1915), third son of John Hardie of Thornhill.



Margaret Isbell Hardie (Maggie) (1837-1916), wife of Joseph Hardie.

Maggie Isbell's youngest sister Alice married in Talladega in 1866 Captain William P. Armstrong. They lived in Selma from 1868 to their deaths. (She "gave the lot upon which the Selma Y.M.C.A. stands." [obit.]), and we find her mentioned in letters written by Joseph's mother to his wife, in later years. Maggie Isbell's brother "Huse" (Captain Robert Houston Isbell) was a law partner of Taul Bradford in Talladega, but left the law to be a banker with his father. He established the Isbell Female College. He never married, and died in 1892.

In 1855, the year of his graduation from Princeton, Joseph Hardie had become a clerk in "the grocery-house of Philpot & Lapsley" in Selma, Alabama. A year later he bought a partnership in the firm, and in 1859 he became sole owner of the business, in which he continued until 1861, when he sold out and enlisted in the Confederate army.

Whenever possible Joseph seems to have arranged for his wife Maggie to be near him while he was serving in the army, and since they had no children she was able to follow him. She was in Winchester, Virginia, when he wrote the touching and loving letter, excerpts from which follow. It is dated Bunker Hill, Va., 12 miles from Winchester, 10 P.M., Sunday, June 16, 1861.

My Dear Wife,

... We leave here in the morning at Sunrise for Martinsburg, near where we understand the enemy are, and if we don't whip them out I shall be very much surprised. We have between 8 & 10000 men here & expect 6000 more in the morning to join us - Our men are eager for the fray & I think will fight well. My

health is as good as I could desire, and if I could only see you to night I would be satisfied. I tried very hard to get permission to go over to night to see you, but could not. I would have been willing to have rode all night, to have seen you a few moments. I hope however to see you in a few days, when you will be more glad to see me than you ever were before. You are dear to me my wife, the dearest of all beings in the world, and if at times I have not exhibited to you indications of love and affection, it was because I am not demonstrative. Should a kind Providence desire that I am to fall in this cause, you must, my dear, strive to bear it with as much resignation as possible. Look to God for strength to bear it. Trust in him & he will do all things rightly. We may hope then to meet in a better land. But do not let us look at this Picture. Let us hope very soon to meet, as I believe we will. Write home my darling to my Mother & to your Father & tell them why they may not hope to hear from me again soon. ... Good night it is eleven oclock & we have to rise & start to by sunrise. May God Bless & keep you well, & may we soon be reunited. Goodbye Darling - With much love I remain as ever, Your affect Husband -

Jos. Hardie

But Maggie must have spent most of the time during the war years in Talladega, where she probably stayed with her parents. In December 1864 Joseph was writing to her (in Talladega) from Oxford, Alabama, with advice about selling some household effects, and suggesting that trading them for a "negro woman [if she] is really likely, & sound, and her two children sound" would be "a good trade & that you had better make it. A negro to be valuable, must not be too old, & likely & healthy & the titles good. ..."

A few months later, the Confederate forces had been defeated and the war was over. The slaves had been freed. Whether Maggie went through with Joseph's suggested deal we do not know, but it does seem amazing that even at this late date Joseph apparently entertained no doubts concerning the Confederacy's final victory. Maggie would have been far better advised to hold on to her possessions until after the war, since [his alternative suggestion had been to sell them "for 1000 dollars"] neither slaves nor Confederate money would soon hold any value.

After the war, Joseph Hardie "merchandized" in Talladega for a time, then in the fall of 1865 returned to Selma and entered into a partnership with James H. Robinson, under the firm name of Hardie & Robinson until the following fall. He then sold out and began dealing in cotton, until 1880, when his business became insolvent and he "was forced to make an assignment for the benefit of his creditors." From "Northern Alabama," (biographies of prominent Alabamians):

Joseph Hardie and his wife Maggie had no children of their own, but brought up two of his nieces, Mary Virginia Hardie (Jennie) (2.4), born in 1868, daughter of Joseph's brother James White Hardie and his third wife Jennie Caperton Hardie (who died when daughter Jennie was two), and Alva Hardie Bradford (4.11), born in 1878, daughter of Joseph's sister Mary Isabella Hardie and her husband Taul Bradford (both of whom had died by the end of 1885). Little Jennie and little Alva, who were first cousins, were brought up like sisters, and their children thought of Maggie and Joseph as their Hardie grandparents. [AMM]

In 1889 Joseph Hardie moved his family to Birmingham, Alabama, where he "established the City National Bank. He sold out in 1892 and retired from business." [From the article headed "War Record of Major Hardie, quoted above.] They lived on Highland Avenue in Birmingham, and went to California in the winter, and to Chandler Springs, Alabama, and to Talladega in the summer. Jennie was married in 1891, Alva in 1902.

When the second of the two nieces married (Alva Hardie Bradford married Hardeman Sessions Meade in 1902), the Joseph Hardies wanted the young couple to live with them. But Hardeman Meade wanted his own home. Although Alva and her family remained close to the Joseph Hardies, she forfeited, by her husband's independence, being the heir of Joseph's considerable fortune [AMM].

Shortly after Alva's marriage, Joseph and Maggie Hardie moved to California. From that time on, they lived in Los Angeles. But they visited in Birmingham and in Talladega every year, and the family continued to have a summer place at Chandler Springs, in the Talladega National Forest, about twelve miles southeast of Talladega.

Anna Meade Minnigerode (4.11.1), daughter of Alva, remembered (in 1985) her Hardie "grandmother":

She was lovely looking, but a difficult woman, very self-centered. She had had an operation and the doctor left an instrument in her. She was in so much pain that she became an opium addict. When the instrument was taken out, her husband said that if she would only stop the opium he'd do anything she wanted for the rest of her life. "Really?" "Yes." She stopped, and he did (do everything she wanted him to for the rest of her life)! She was spoiled. [Photographs of Maggie Isbell Hardie show a very beautiful woman, who continued to be beautiful as the years passed.]

Mary Mead Hall Hardie seems to have maintained a very close relationship with her children, even after they had married and moved away from Talladega County. Some of her letters to her son Joseph and his wife Maggie still exist [and may be seen among the Hardie Family Memorabilia at The Historic New Orleans Collection]. Joseph and Maggie were then still living in Selma, and they corresponded with his mother frequently, and visited back and forth regularly. Several letters to Joseph from his mother, shortly before her death in 1872, show that he has been considering entering the ministry. She hopes that he will do so. Her last letter ends with "If it is the Lord's will I should be glad to have [you] give yourself entirely to the Preaching of the Gospel."

Although this did not happen, and he became instead a very successful businessman, his devotion to the church did not wane. He was a ruling elder in his Presbyterian church and, as we have seen, was very active in the Young Men's Christian Association. There is a memorial window in the South Highland Presbyterian Church in Birmingham in memory of Joseph and Margaret Isbell Hardie.

On 11 December 1906 Joseph and Margaret Discretion Isbell Hardie celebrated their "Golden Jubilee," receiving many loving congratulations from admiring friends and relatives from all over the south. R.A. Webb wrote from Southwestern Presbyterian University, Clarksville, Tennessee (December 10, 1906) to say how sorry he and his wife are that they cannot attend.

If we could be present, how heartily we would felicitate you on the good and happy Providence which has crowned your married life!...For fifty years, the youth has been knightly and true; and for fifty years, the maiden has been womanly and gentle, and for fifty years, heaven has bowed over the married couple with smile and benediction.

May the sweet story linger and linger, and linger in the gloaming, while the sunset is garnished with peace and beauty.

The "sweet story" did linger, and Joseph Hardie died on 15 May 1915 in Los Angeles, only months before they would have celebrated sixty years of marriage. Margaret Isbell Hardie died on 23 September 1916 in Los Angeles. Both are buried in Oakhill Cemetery in Talladega, in the old section, near other Isbells.

The headline on an obituary notice from a California newspaper at the time of Maggie Isbell Hardie's death reads "Finis. NEGRO'S FRIEND TAKEN. Mrs. Maggie Isbell Hardie Passes Away Here after Long Illness. With Her Husband Fostered Efforts of Booker T. Washington. It tells that she died "at her home in the Shoreham apartments, No. 666 South Carondelet street, after a long illness. She was 80 years old. ... Fifteen years ago she came with her husband to Southern California. .. It was through their efforts, coupled with others, that Booker T. Washington was enabled to found his school for colored people at Tuskegee. Maj. and Mrs. Hardie were ardent supporters of that work for many years, and were engaged in many other philanthropies. ..."

Joseph was the only one of the Hardie children to have no children; each of the others had at least four children, and some as many as thirteen.

[Information and quotations are from newspaper articles, obituary notices, an entry in "Northern Alabama" (circa 1895, pp. 694-695), most of which, plus family information, came from Anna Meade Minnigerode (4.11.1) and Isabel Meade Gwinn (4.11.3), daughters of Alva Bradford Meade (4.11), who was brought up by her Uncle Joseph Hardie and his wife Maggie. Much of this material is included among the Hardie Family Memorabilia on file at The Historic New Orleans Collection in New Orleans and available for study there. Dates of Joseph Hardie's military service and citation from the article of the Talladega Historical Society Newsletter and other helpful facts, including birth and death dates from the Jacob Tifton Bradford family Bible, are from research by Willie Wallace Welch.]

THE JOSEPH HARDIE FAMILY

Joseph Hardie and his wife Margaret Discretion Isbell Hardie had no children, although they brought up two nieces.

Entry on Findagrave:

Margaret Discretion Isbell Hardie, born 9 June 1837, died September 23, 1916 in Los Angeles, California. Daughter of Maj. James Rowan Isbell and Rutelia Houston Isbell; granddaughter of Thomas Isbell and Discretion Howard Isbell.

Wife of Maj. Joseph Hardie of Thornhill Plantation. They married December 17, 1856. He was born Jan. 26, 1833, and died MAY 15, 1915. Son of John Hardie of Thornhill and Mary (Meade) Hall Hardie. His sister Mary Hardie married Judge Taul Bradford.

Maj. Hardie and Maggie Isbell lived at Thornhill in the early years of their marriage and intermittently through the later years after he and his brothers had deeded it to his sister. Maj. Hardie and Maggie had homes in Selma, Birmingham, and Los Angeles, California. They also kept a summer home at Chandler Springs. According to Anna Meade Minningerode, when Maj. Hardie died Maggie was offered a burial plot in the family cemetery at Thornhill but she wanted them to be buried with the Isbells in town at Oak Hill.

They were very wealthy former slaveowners and became great benefactors and liberal supporters of Tuskegee Institute. They entertained Booker T. Washington in their own home at Selma, although in the kitchen rather than the dining room. At the time of her death in California, the Los Angeles newspaper headline read: "FRIEND OF NEGRO DIES HERE."

Montgomery Advertiser, Sept. 26, 1916, p.6: A despatch (sic) was received from Los Angeles last night announcing the death of Mrs. Joseph Hardie, relict of Major Joseph Hardie, for many years a resident of Selma and well known all over the state. Mrs. Hardie was the adopted mother of Mrs. L.E. Jeffries now of Washington. She was born at Talladega and the remains will be carried there for interment -- Selma Times."