

*The Story of Agnes Irvine Scott, 1799-1877*



*A Family Memoir by Betty Pope Scott Noble '41*



*The Irvine Tartan*

*The Story of James Lewis Scott, 1899-1973*



AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE

THE WORLD FOR WOMEN

*Compiled by Margaret Lee Scott, James Scott (1968), p. 10*

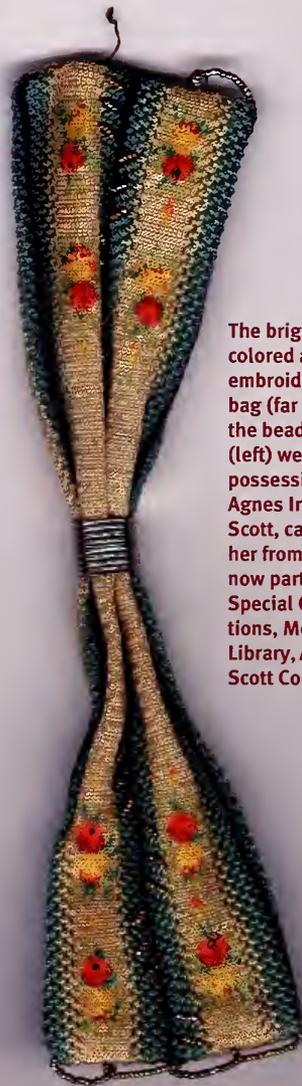


AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE  
THE WORLD FOR WOMEN

*The Irvine Tartan*

# *The Story of Agnes Irvine Scott, 1799-1877*

*A Family Memoir by Betty Pope Scott Noble '44*



The brightly-colored and embroidered silk bag (far left) and the beaded fabric (left) were both possessions of Agnes Irvine Scott, carried by her from Ireland, now part of Special Collections, McCain Library, Agnes Scott College .

## *Editors' Note*

The idea for publishing Betty Pope Scott Noble's biography of her great-great grandmother Agnes Irvine Scott in 1999, the bicentennial of her birth, came from Mary Brown Bullock '66, President of Agnes Scott College. We are honored to have been asked to participate in this project and very grateful for the assistance of the members of the College community who helped us locate and assemble the story's many parts. Charlene Dougal, Mary Alma Durrett, Lea Ann Hudson, Lucia Sizemore, and Jeanne Maxfield helped us gather and check information. Susan Dougherty typed the manuscript with an editor's attention to detail. Beth Mulherrin's careful management of the College archives and her willingness to help at every step of the process were invaluable. From Michael Brown we gained important insights about the unique position of the Scots-Irish in British and Irish history. Mary Zimnik's design and production expertise united the visual and textual elements of the story with elegance and character.

Mary Brown Bullock brought Betty Pope Scott Noble's story to the attention of the College and stirred interest in the life of the founder's mother during her Opening Convocation speech for the 1998-1999 academic year. Her introduction to this work follows that earlier speech in claiming Agnes Scott's story as an inspiration for generations of students, faculty, staff, and friends. We thank President Bullock for her introduction and for inspiring our work as editors. Finally, our collaboration with Betty Pope Scott Noble has been a most rewarding and delightful meeting of minds. Her generous sharing of family stories, photographs, and memorabilia and her skillful storytelling have brought her great-great grandmother's story to life in our minds and on the page. We thank her for this great gift to the College, the story of Agnes Irvine Scott.

—Christine S. Cozzens and Michele K. Gillespie, Editors  
*Agnes Scott College, 1999*

## Introduction

As an Agnes Scott alumna, and even more as president, I am often asked, "Just who was Agnes Scott?" Almost embarrassed that she had not been a more visible presence in the College's early history, I would reply that she was the mother of George Washington Scott, the founder, and move on to another topic.



My curiosity was piqued when I learned that the bicentennial of Agnes's birth would occur on June 13, 1999, and that her great-great granddaughter, Betty Pope Scott Noble '44, was writing a family history. Sitting in Betty's living room, listening to family narratives while surrounded by family photos, diaries, and letters, I realized that the College had not done Agnes justice.

Agnes Irvine Scott was a quintessential nineteenth-century American immigrant woman. She was a survivor whose strong faith and lively intellect influenced a family, a community, and a college. When her son George decided to invest in a school of high standards for girls, it was in clear recognition of his mother's important

familial and community influence. When the Decatur Female Seminary was re-named Agnes Scott Institute in 1891, fourteen years after her death, a delegation of community leaders from her hometown in Alexandria, Pennsylvania, traveled to Decatur, Georgia, to bear witness to the appropriateness of naming an institution in memory of their neighbor, Agnes Irvine Scott.

As Agnes Scott College has evolved over more than a century, its core identity continues to resonate with the life and character of this Irish-American frontierswoman. The institution's role as a women's college, first proclaimed by her son and the men of Decatur Presbyterian Church, has been reaffirmed again and again by generations of both men and women serving as faculty, administrators, and loyal supporters. The Scots-Irish Presbyterian legacy of faith and learning—so eloquently reflected in Agnes's love of the Bible, Shakespeare, and Robert Burns—lives on as the founding value of the College. And the high intellectual standards she set for herself and for her family of twelve children on the Pennsylvania frontier continue as the central purpose of the college that bears her name.

The original Agnes was a flesh and blood woman whose life seems surprisingly modern today. She wept and danced and was afraid of Indians and Puritans, belying the stern visage usually depicted, or the rather abstract concept of "founder's mother." Her life spanned two centuries, two cultures, and several wars, and she triumphed over many adversities. Her faith and courage prevailed and continue to inspire all of us who are her descendents.

—*Mary Brown Bullock '66*  
*March, 1999*



# Agnes Irvine Scott, 1799-1877

by Betty Pope Scott Noble '44

Agnes Irvine Scott's Irvine ancestors came from the border country of Scotland. They were given land by Robert the Bruce for their support and protection of him during the war against England for Scottish independence in the early 1300s. About 1640, at the time of the religious persecution of the Covenanters (or Presbyterians) by Charles I, the Irvines fled to Ulster, Ireland. They settled in County Down near Newry, in a small village called Ballykeel.

The story of Agnes Irvine Scott began on June 13, 1799 in the farming village of Ballykeel, now in Northern Ireland, where Agnes was born in a small, thatched-roof cottage. This cottage was later enlarged by members of the Irvine family, who have occupied the house for over two hundred and fifty years. This house looks out onto the beautiful Mourne Mountains—low, rolling green hills that are especially colorful in late summer and early fall when the purple heather covers the slopes.

Mary Stitt Irvine and William Irvine, both of Scots-Irish Presbyterian heritage, were the grateful parents of pretty, blue-eyed Agnes, who was also called Nancy and Annie by various family members. Agnes had two older sisters, Susanna and Mary. Tragedy struck this young family when Agnes's father died in 1799. Agnes was only two and a half months old. William's death made life for the Irvine family especially

## The Scots-Irish

After centuries of intermittent effort, the English completed their conquest of Ireland in the early 1600s. In order to establish English influence and rule in that solidly Catholic country, King James I (a Scot) confiscated the lands of native Irish Catholics and offered them to English and Scottish Protestants as inducements to settle there, particularly in the north in the province of Ulster. Lured by this promise of free land, large numbers of Scottish Presbyterians moved to Ireland and became "Scots-Irish." In County Down, where Agnes Irvine was born, the Scots-Irish were the dominant group.

Further hostility between native Catholics and the more recently arrived Protestants developed during the English Civil War (1640-1649), when the Irish rose against their Protestant landlords; the revolt was crushed by Oliver Cromwell and his army with massacres at Wexford and Drogheda. When the Dutch Protestant William of Orange ascended the English throne in 1690, the Irish rose in support of the deposed Catholic king, James II. William's army defeated the Irish forces at the Battle of the Boyne on July 1, a victory still celebrated today by Protestant "Orangemen." Following the victory, the enactment of discriminatory laws to punish the Catholics deepened the division between the two groups.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Scots-Irish formed less than ten percent of the total population of Ireland. They lived primarily in Ulster. Though faring better than the native Catholics, the Scots-Irish suffered discrimination by the dominant Anglican group, which controlled the parliaments in Dublin and London. In addition to these political conditions, like all Irish the Scots-Irish faced the exigencies of an increasingly densely populated country and a failing economy. Many of them emigrated to North America, especially to settlements in Virginia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania.

## Agnes Irvine Scott's Life and Times

1798

In Ireland, widespread rebellion challenges British rule; the fighting is heavy in Ulster.

1799

Agnes Irvine is born to Mary Stitt Irvine and William Irvine on June 13 in Ballykeel, County Down, Ireland. William Irvine dies in August.



Agnes Irvine Scott's  
mother, Mary Stitt

1801

Mary Irvine, Agnes's older sister, dies at age three. In Britain and Ireland, the Act of Union declared in 1800 takes effect, dissolving the parliament in Dublin and placing Ireland under direct British rule.

difficult. The small farm, Mary Stitt's chief livelihood, was often inadequate for her family, since frequent blights on the potato crop—the mainstay of the Irish diet—limited her supply of food. To add to Mary Stitt's and her family's distress, little three-and-a-half-year-old Mary died two years after her father's death. But Mary Stitt survived, aided by her strong faith and the assistance of her relatives.

Perhaps new hope for a better life was in Mary Stitt's mind when she married Edward Stitt, probably a relative. A son Jonathan was born the following year and died a year later. How could more tragedy come to Mary Stitt? Sorrow filled Mary's life yet again when her second husband died in 1814, nine years after their marriage. Edward's death left Mary Stitt to bring up her two daughters, Susanna, aged eighteen, and Agnes, aged fifteen. Somehow Mary Stitt was able to keep life going for her small family, even after experiencing so much grief and sorrow.

While Agnes was still young, Uncle James Irvine and his wife, who lived in Newry, asked her to make her home with them. Uncle James had a large house and was financially secure, but he and his wife had no children, and James's wife had always wanted a daughter. Mary Stitt adored her daughter Agnes and found it extremely difficult to permit her to move to Newry. Mary knew that her brother-in-law James could give Agnes many opportunities that she was unable to provide, so she gave her permission, and the move was made to Uncle James's home. Agnes was very happy with her aunt and uncle, who affectionately called her "Annie." The couple loved Agnes dearly and sent her to the seminary in Newry. Agnes rode to school in a donkey cart, along with her allotment of peat for the classroom fire.

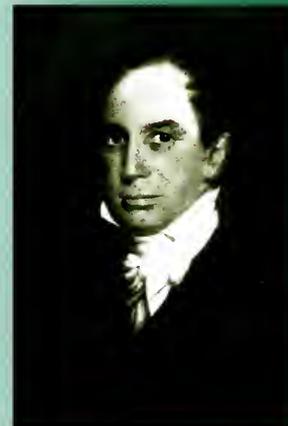
Agnes's early education had awakened in her the love of the true and the beautiful. She appreciated the works of Shakespeare and Robert Burns, but the first of all books to her was the Bible. Her devotional books were also very meaningful to her. While Agnes's schooling seemed to have been a happy experience for her, at Newry she was able to enjoy some of the lighter aspects of a young person's life. She learned to dance and to play the piano, both of which gave her great pleasure. Agnes had a very special young beau who gave her a hand-made music book. She was content in her new life.

Two years after the death of her second husband, Mary Stitt began to think of her future and that of her two daughters. Mary had lived most of her adult life under very trying circumstances, having lost two husbands and two children in a short period of time. In early nineteenth-century Ireland, making a living from a small farm was not easy for a widow with two children. Was it possible that life could be better elsewhere? Mary Stitt's mother, like so many other Irish men and women, had emigrated to America and was living in Cadiz, Ohio, with another daughter, Elizabeth. Mary Stitt also had relatives in Alexandria, Pennsylvania, including her brother Robert. Perhaps letters from these relatives persuaded Mary to dare to leave the little security that she had known in Ireland and take her children to America, a world totally unknown to her. At least there was hope for a better life in America, and after settling her second husband's estate, Mary Stitt realized she had sufficient funds to pay for the family's passage. And so with a pioneering spirit and by summoning all the faith, courage, and hope she could garner, Mary Stitt, a forty-four-year-old widow, decided to travel with her daughters to America. This journey was an

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1812

**In Ireland, the first recorded sectarian riots break out in Belfast on July 12.**



Agnes  
Irvine  
Scott's  
husband,  
John

**In the United States, John Scott, Agnes Irvine's future husband, serves as a major in the War of 1812 (1812-1815).**

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1814

**Mary Stitt Irvine Stitt's second husband, Edward Stitt, dies.**

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1815-1844

**One million Irish immigrants arrive in New York.**

Old postcard of Alexandria, Pennsylvania—where Agnes Irvine Scott and her family settled in the United States.



1816

In March, Mary Stitt Irvine and her two daughters leave Ireland on a ship bound for the United States. Susanna dies during the crossing. Agnes and her mother settle in Alexandria, Pennsylvania.

1821

Agnes Irvine marries John Scott.

1829

Agnes Irvine Scott gives birth to George Washington Scott, future founder of Agnes Scott College.

awesome undertaking for a woman. With help from her relatives, Mary determined to go to Alexandria, Pennsylvania.

There was great distress in Uncle James Irvine's home when Mary Stitt revealed her plans to emigrate with her daughters. Agnes was adamant in not wanting to go. Obviously, she did not want to leave her happy life in Uncle James's home. Years later Agnes Irvine Scott's son, George Washington Scott, reported that Agnes had heard stories that made her afraid of the Indians. She had also heard that the Puritans in America were somber and strict and did not permit dancing. Now Agnes liked to dance!

At seventeen, Agnes reluctantly went to America with her family, leaving behind a very happy home with her aunt and uncle and a comfortable future with all of the opportunities available to a young Irish girl with well-to-do relatives. Like her mother, Agnes summoned her faith and courage to venture into a new world.

In preparation for their voyage, the family stopped at Kilkeel at the Lough Parish Church to get their church letters of dismissal to take with them to America. On March 29, 1816, the small family—Mary Stitt, aged forty-four; Agnes, aged seventeen; Susanna, aged nineteen; and James Stewart, Susanna's husband of eight months—gathered at Warren Point in Carlingford Bay, five miles south of Newry, to await the ship that was to take them to America.

What were the thoughts of this family group? Were they hopeful? Mary Stitt, trusting that she was leaving all of her pain and sadness in

Street in old part of Newry, Ireland, where Irvines and Stitts lived.



Ireland, probably anticipated a happy reunion with her family members in America. Susanna could have been dreaming of establishing a home with her husband. Agnes, who in her young life had shared poverty and much sadness with her mother, was probably still very reluctant to leave behind her secure life in Uncle James's home.

As the family sailed out of Carlingford Bay into the Irish Sea, the waters were calm, but the sea became very rough as the ship entered the Atlantic, and Susanna and Agnes became seasick. Agnes was able to overcome her seasickness, but Susanna grew very ill. Her condition rapidly worsened until on the nineteenth day, she died and was buried at sea. Mary Stitt had not left all of her sorrow and pain in Ireland after all. James Stewart had lost his wife of only eight months, and Agnes had lost her only sister. What a terrible beginning for what should have been a promising voyage.

After a thirty-six day voyage Mary Stitt, Agnes, and James Stewart landed in Philadelphia. They were taken by stagecoach to Alexandria, Pennsylvania, a journey of two hundred miles. Susanna's husband, James Stewart, disappeared from family history after the death of his wife. He may have returned to Ireland.

Upon arrival in Alexandria, Mary Stitt and Agnes Irvine were welcomed by Mary's brother Robert and other family members. We do not know of any further grief that came to Mary Stitt, but we do know that Mary's pioneering spirit did not leave her once she had settled in America. At the age of fifty-four, Mary saddled a horse and rode alone on horseback to Cadiz, Ohio, to see her mother and sister, Elizabeth

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1844

**In the United States, riots break out between native-born Protestant workers and Irish Catholic immigrant workers in Philadelphia.**

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1845-1852

**In Ireland, the potato blight destroys most of the annual crop, leading to the Great Famine.**

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1845-1855

**1.8 million Irish immigrants arrive in North America.**

**33 Needham St., Newry, Ireland. This house was built by James Irvine, Agnes's uncle. At fifteen, Agnes lived with her uncle and aunt and attended school.**



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1850

**John Scott dies at the age of 66.**

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1854

**Mary Stitt Irvine Stitt dies at the age of 87.**

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1856-1929

**3.35 million Irish immigrants arrive in North America.**

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1861-1865

**In the United States, the Civil War breaks out, temporarily dividing the Scott family.**

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**Agnes Irvine Scott's sons, James, John, and George Washington, divided by the Civil War.**

Haverfield, with whom her mother was living. Mary also made the return trip alone, an unusual adventure for a woman at this time.

After Agnes and her mother arrived in America, Uncle James Irvine wrote to Agnes with instructions on how to lead a Christian life. He also implored her to return to his home in Ireland. He even stated in one of his letters that a gift of three hundred pounds awaited her arrival back home in Newry. Agnes never claimed this gift. After the sad voyage to America when Agnes's sister Susanna died, life in Alexandria was at first very disappointing. Years later Agnes told her son John of the bitter tears she had shed when she contrasted her surroundings in Alexandria with the comforts she had relinquished in her Uncle James's home in Newry.

Life would soon improve for Agnes. At the age of twenty-two she married a respectable, prosperous gentleman, John Scott, a widower fifteen years her senior with five children, whose ancestry was also from Ireland. John, a strong Presbyterian, owned a shoe manufacturing and leather tanning business. He had served in the War of 1812 as a major of his regiment. He also served two terms in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Later he was a member of the United States House of Representatives in the twenty-first Congress.

Apart from losing two of their seven children at an early age, Agnes and John had a very satisfying life together. The most determinative influence in their Pennsylvania home seems to have been the character and teaching of Agnes Irvine Scott. Agnes's independent spirit and the firmness with which she held to her convictions are illustrated by a

situation that occurred in her family's church, called the White Church. When recurring tensions over loyalty to Britain after the War of 1812 divided the congregation, Agnes, born a British subject, held tenaciously to her British loyalty. Agnes continued to attend the White Church, although her husband, John, switched to the Brick Church; the children went to both churches.

John Scott Jr., Agnes Scott's son, was a United States Senator and the chief attorney for the Pennsylvania Railroad. In speaking at the Dedication Exercise of Agnes Scott Institute in 1891, he expressed great appreciation for his intelligent, conscientious, Christian mother, who was determined that no child of hers would go out into the world ignorant of the Westminster Shorter Catechism of the Presbyterian Church. Agnes loved her church and believed in the sovereignty of God as devoutly as in His goodness and mercy. Written in her own hand in her Bible is this verse, which reflects her life. Proverbs 3:5,6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." This verse has continued to be meaningful in the lives of Agnes Scott's descendents.



Agnes Irvine Scott (seated on left) in front of her house in Alexandria with her family.

1865-1877

In the United States during the Reconstruction Era, Southerners attempt to rebuild their society.

1870

In Ireland, the Home Rule movement is founded.

1877

Agnes Irvine Scott dies in October. She is buried in Alexandria. Colonel George Washington Scott moves from Florida to Decatur, Georgia.

1889

Colonel George Washington Scott becomes one of the founders of the Decatur Female Seminary.

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1890-1891

**Colonel Scott offers to finance a building for the Decatur Female Seminary, and the school is renamed Agnes Scott Institute.**

Agnes Scott's neighbor and devoted friend, Dr. J.M. Gemmill, who often sat at her fireside, described her as "a person of marked refinement of character, a lady of genuine kindness, a person of gentleness and true benevolence." Dr. Gemmill further stated that "she was firm in her convictions and held her views with great tenacity, but without aggressiveness. One of her marked characteristics was the intensity of her strong maternal love for her children."

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1893

**In Britain, Gladstone's second attempt to pass a Home Rule bill for Ireland passes in the House of Commons but fails in the House of Lords. The stage is set for another era of rebellion in Ireland.**

During the Civil War (1861-1865), Agnes was severely tried when two of her sons joined the Confederacy and another son supported the Union cause. Agnes's prayers were answered since her sons were spared in the war, and warm relationships continued among her family. In writing her will, Agnes explained to her two sons, Alfred and George, who both fought for the South, that she had determined to leave most of her possessions to her two daughters, Susan and Mary. Agnes had understood that the United States government would confiscate any possessions inherited by those supporting the Confederacy. Agnes had no intention of showing partiality to any of her children.

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1903

**Colonel George Washington Scott dies. He is buried in Decatur.**

John Scott Sr.'s health began to decline after 1842, and he was inactive in his shoe manufacturing business until his death in 1850 at the age of sixty-six. Mary Stitt lived with her daughter Agnes until she died in 1854 at the age of eighty-seven. Agnes died in 1877 at the age of seventy-eight without knowing that in 1889 her son, Colonel George Washington Scott, was to found a college for women that would bear her name.

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1906

**Agnes Scott Institute renamed Agnes Scott College.**

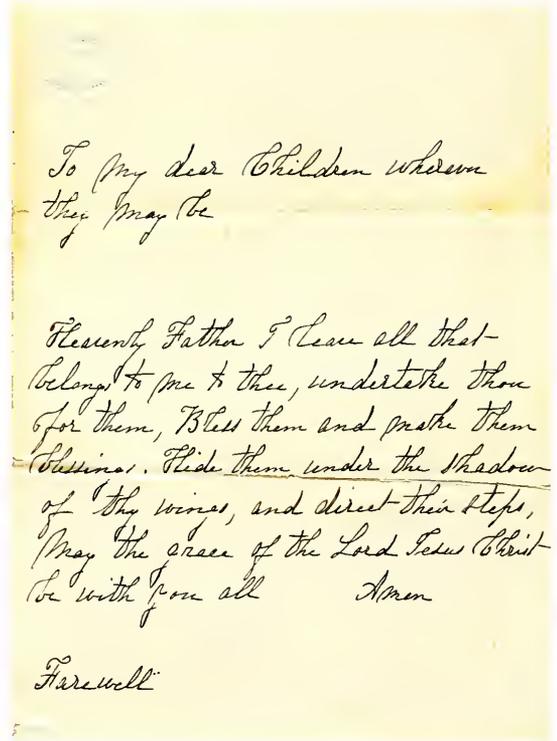
At the Centennial Celebration of the founding of Agnes Scott College, representatives of the College and descendants of Agnes Irvine Scott, placed a marker on her grave in Alexandria, Pennsylvania. The inscription reads

**AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE**  
And the family of  
**AGNES IRVINE SCOTT**  
Celebrate her life of Christian Character  
And her love of learning which inspired her son  
George Washington Scott to found an  
Educational institution for young women in  
Decatur, Georgia in 1889

Dedicated in the Centennial year 1989

A beautiful reflection of the character and spiritual life of Agnes Irvine Scott is found in a prayer written in her own handwriting in her Bible (original seen at right):

"Heavenly Father, I leave all that belongs to me to Thee. Undertake Thou for them [her children], Bless them and make them blessings. Hide them under the shadow of Thy wings, and direct their steps. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Farewell."



To my dear Children whom  
they may be

Heavenly Father I leave all that  
belongs to me to thee, undertake thou  
for them, Bless them and make them  
blessings. Hide them under the shadow  
of Thy wings, and direct their steps,  
May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you all Amen

Farewell

**B**etty Pope Scott Noble has based her family memoir about her great-great grandmother, Agnes Irvine Scott, on a variety of source materials. Published information on the Scott family in general and George Washington Scott's role in the founding of the College in particular is available in Walter Edward McNair, *Lest We Forget: An Account of Agnes Scott College (Decatur, Georgia: 1983)*; Frank H. Gaines, *The Story of Agnes Scott College (1889-1921) (Atlanta, Georgia: 1922)*; Caroline McKinney Clarke, *The Story of Decatur, 1823-1899 (Decatur, Georgia: 1973)*; Agnes Scott College Alumnae Quarterly, *Autumn 1946, Agnes Scott College*; Martha Yates, "The Beginnings," Agnes Scott College Alumnae Quarterly, *Winter 1976*; and Marion B. Lucas, "The Civil War Career of Colonel George Washington Scott," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, October 1979, 129-150.

Several important speeches also provide information about Agnes Irvine Scott. These speeches, all in the possession of Agnes Scott College, include James Ross McCain's *Speech at the Dedication of Scott Chapel, Decatur Presbyterian Church, Decatur, Georgia, October 12, 1952*; Wallace M. Alston's *Speech at the Dedication of George W. Scott Memorial Park, Decatur, Georgia, February 22, 1951*; and Milton C. Scott's *Speech at the Presentation of the Portrait of Agnes Irvine Scott to Agnes Scott College, Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia, April 1983*.

John Scott Jr., Agnes's son, wrote a family history dated November 5, 1890 that is especially useful in regard to both Agnes's and her husband's families. A typescript copy of this family history is available in Special Collections in McCain Library, Agnes Scott College. The *George Washington Scott Papers*,

Betty Pope Scott Noble (top left, in a four-generations photo with her father, Milton Candler Scott, seated, her daughter Betty Scott Noble '71, and her great-grandfather George Washington Scott in portrait hanging behind them) was born in Decatur, Georgia. She graduated from Agnes Scott College in 1944, where she majored in history and Bible and served on student government. A wife and mother, she has been a member of numerous civic clubs and participated in a variety of community and church activities. An active alumna, she is a trustee emerita of Agnes Scott College and is the recipient of a special award for her service to the College.

consisting of twenty-five pieces of family correspondence, as well as plantation records, newspaper clippings, and John Scott Jr.'s type-script diary from October 4, 1850 to February 20, 1851 are in the possession of J. J. Scott in Wheaton, Illinois. Dr. J. M. Gemmill's letter to Colonel George W. Scott, written in 1894, describes Agnes as a devoted Christian wife, mother, and beloved family friend in her adult years. This letter is dated December 1894. The original is in Special Collections in McCain Library. In addition, two of Uncle James Irwin's\* letters to his niece Agnes are extant. They too are available in Special Collections in McCain Library. These letters are dated April 2, 1820 and June 8, 1821.



Betty Pope Scott Noble, flanked by images of her ancestors, presents her story of the Irvine Scott family at the 1999 Agnes Scott College Founder's Day.

Family stories reveal some of the more personal details about Agnes's daily experiences and predilections. These stories have been passed down from generation to generation in the form of oral history. Though not recorded, they are critical to our understanding of Agnes Irvine Scott. Local historians have also documented additional information about the Scott family in Alexandria, Pennsylvania, during the antebellum years. The most useful of these works is Jean Harsbberger, Nancy R. Taylor, and Sara H. Zabriskie's Hartslog Heritage (State College, Pennsylvania: 1976), which contains maps, photographs, and census information pertaining to the Scott business and home.

Photographs in the possession of the family and the College also offer telling details about Agnes and her family. Unfortunately, few of Agnes's possessions and writings have survived the two hundred years since her birth, with the important exception of Agnes Irvine Scott's handwritten will and prayer, which she stored in her Bible. All three of these items are now in the possession of Agnes Scott College. Finally, Betty Pope Scott Noble and her family have substantially enhanced their knowledge of the College's founder and mother by visiting the original Irvine family home in the village of Ballykeel in Northern Ireland in 1982 and 1987.

\*Uncle James signed his own last name and that of his niece as Irwin in his letters to her. Various Irish family records from the early nineteenth century also list Irwin instead of Irvine. John Scott Jr. reported in his 1890 family history that his Irish relatives consistently pronounced the name "Irvine" even though they spelled it "Irwin." In Ireland and America, family members eventually adopted "Irvine" as the standard written form.

**Fabric on this page is a shawl owned by Agnes Irvine Scott, carried by her from Ireland to America, now part of Special Collections, McCain Library.**

## *Agnes Scott, the College*

**W**hen a small group of Decatur's Presbyterian leaders founded Agnes Scott College in 1889, they set out to create a college with "a liberal curriculum fully abreast of the best institutions of this country." The school opened its doors in a rented house with slightly more than \$5,000 capital. There were four teachers educating sixty-three students at the grammar school level.

Col. George Washington Scott, who had provided forty percent of the initial capital, saw the school's continued need and offered the largest gift to education in Georgia up to that time to provide a home for the school. To recognize this gift, the Board of Trustees renamed the school in honor of Col. Scott's mother, Agnes Irvine Scott, whom he credited "for all the good impulses of [his] heart and for all [his] hopes for the future."

Col. Scott's gift was the first of two transforming gifts to the College. In 1954, Agnes Scott received its second transforming gift from the estate of Frances Winship Walters, an Agnes Scott alumna and former trustee. This gift of stock in The Coca-Cola Company now constitutes a large portion of Agnes Scott's endowment, the largest per student of any national liberal arts college in America.

The quest for the highest academic standards envisioned by the founders was quickly realized, and Agnes Scott's reputation in the broader academic community grew stronger with each year. Within ten years, the school gained accreditation as a secondary school. In 1906, it was chartered Agnes Scott College and awarded its first degrees. Agnes Scott was the first college in Georgia to receive regional accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1907) and in 1920 earned the approval of the Association of American Universities. The United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa granted the College its charter—the second in Georgia—in 1926. Agnes Scott is a charter member of both the American Association of University Women and the Southern University Conference.

Agnes Scott's alumnae have gone on to make history in their own ways. They include Georgia's first female Rhodes Scholar, a South Carolina state supreme court justice, the first woman to be ordained a minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a Poet Laureate of Alabama, and the first woman to chair the Federal Commodity Futures Trading Commission, among countless others.

*Scott Family Members of the  
Board of Trustees  
(1889-1999)*

George Washington Scott (1889-1903)

Charles Murphey Candler (1889-1935)

George Bucher Scott (1896-1920)

Milton A. Candler (1896-1909)

James Julius Scott (1920-1976)

Bessie Scott Harmon, Institute (1917-1937)

George Scott Candler (1924-1972)

Allie Candler Guy '13 (1929-1930)

Hansford Sams, Jr. (1970-1984)

George Scott Candler, Jr. (1972-1992)

Betty Pope Scott Noble '44 (1984-1994)

James Wallace Daniel (1992-present)

Clark E. Candler (1992-present)

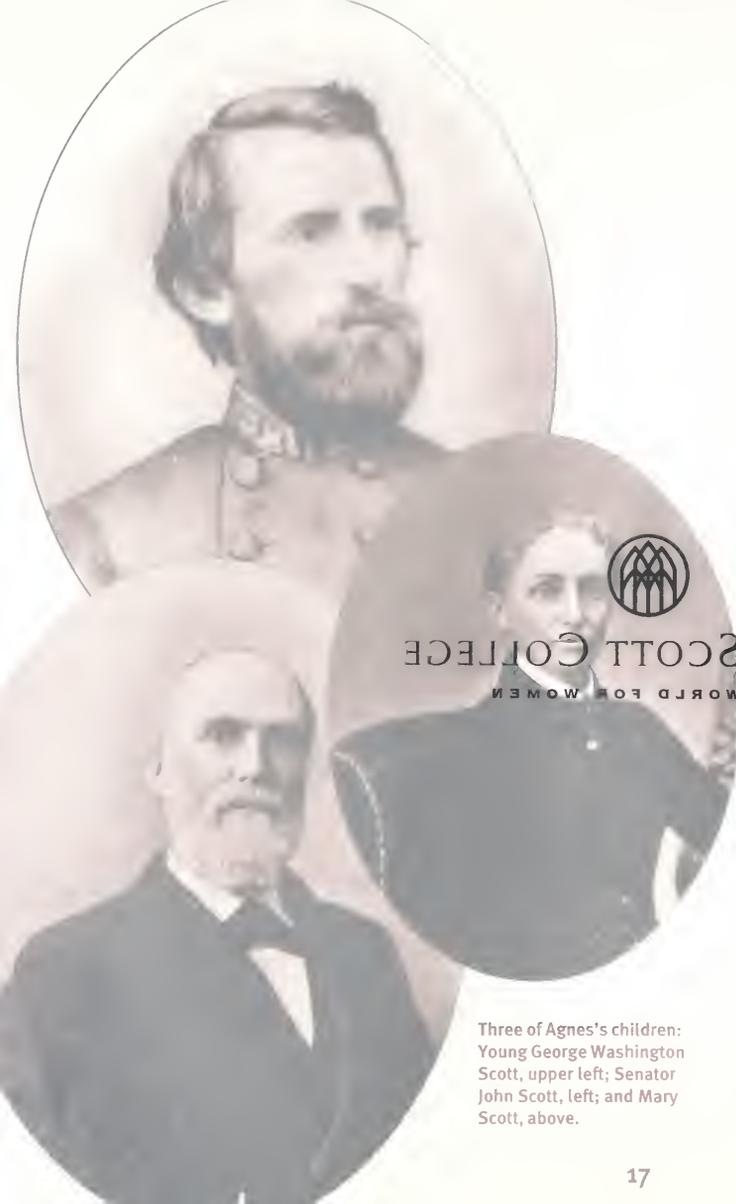


Three of Agnes's children:  
Young George Washington  
Scott, upper left; Senator  
John Scott, left; and Mary  
Scott, above.



AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE

THE WORLD FOR WOMEN



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Clark E. Candler (1992-present)

Three of Agnes's children:  
Young George Washington  
Scott, upper left; Senator  
John Scott, left; and Mary  
Scott, above.





*Mourne Mountains, near Ballykeel, Northern Ireland  
Birthplace of Agnes Irvine Scott*