

# Scott, Lida Funk

## (1868–1945)

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### ALBERT DITTES

Albert Dittes grew up in Portland, Tennessee, and graduated from Highland Academy. He attended Southern Adventist University and the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Dittes also earned a second Master's degree in journalism at Ohio University. He served in the pastoral ministry for twelve years. Dittes currently resides in his hometown where he is active in freelance writing and music, playing piano and organ for churches and teaching private lessons. He and his ex-wife have two grown children and five grandchildren.

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Lida Funk Scott, heiress to the Funk & Wagnalls fortune, found a role for herself by investing her money in the advancement of Adventist work in the then-underprivileged Southeastern United States. She became a devoted follower of Edward A. Sutherland and his work in Madison, Tennessee, and ultimately, due to their need for physicians, gave major financial support to help the struggling young College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University) attain full Grade A accreditation.

Scott was born February 19, 1868, in Brooklyn, N.Y., and obtained her formal education at Packer Collegiate Institute and Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. Her father,<sup>1</sup> Dr. Isaac Funk, started out as a Lutheran minister and then founded a business producing church supplies which evolved into Funk & Wagnalls Publishing Co. One of the most prominent ministers in New York City and active in the temperance movement, he made vegetarian workshops conducted by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg part of his program. Young Lida Funk married Robert Scott in 1895 and, through the influence of her father, went to the Battle Creek Sanitarium for needed surgery.<sup>2</sup> While there, she studied and accepted Seventh-day Adventism.<sup>3</sup> Her family lived in Montclair, New Jersey, and she was active in the Newark Adventist Church for about 10 years.

Tragedy altered the course of her life when her daughter Helen died at the age of 16 in the summer of 1914.<sup>4</sup> A month later she sought comfort by visiting Adventist friends in Tennessee who were operating an extension school of what became Madison College. Their unselfish, self-sacrificing work for underprivileged people



Lida Funk Scott

Photo courtesy of Center for Adventist Research.

impressed her so much that she went on to visit Madison itself. She found recovery from her personal sorrow by becoming part of this self-supporting institution.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Sutherland told her that if she wanted to benefit Madison, she would have to help his close friend Dr. Percy Magan to develop the Los Angeles campus for the College of Medical Evangelists, then having a tenuous Grade B rating and needing a teaching hospital in a population center.

The 1915 Fall Council of the General Conference approved this proposal and accepted an offer of prominent Adventist women to raise the needed money from the membership and name the hospital after Ellen White, who had just died. The women spent the next year fundraising but failed to come up with the full \$60,000 (\$1.4 million in 2018 dollars) needed to start construction. The 1917 Fall Council voted to complete that amount if Magan could come up with the first half. Magan went to Sutherland and asked if he would allow \$30,000 of the funds Mrs. Scott had promised to Madison to go to Loma Linda instead. Sutherland did so, and Mrs. Scott helped start construction of White Memorial Hospital.<sup>6</sup> In a 1925 letter, Dr. Magan documented that she had donated \$30,104.90 to the medical school since 1913, helping to fund the Loma Linda Association, College of Medical Evangelists, Loma Linda campus hospital, a women's dormitory and furnishings, service and physiotherapy, a dental outfit, and a dietetic unit. Magan wrote to Lida Scott:

"I can never tell you, Sister Scott, how much I appreciate all you have done for us on this matter of the hospital, and also for all you have done for us at Madison," Magan wrote to her on July 18, 1918. "Truly God raised you up to help these two lines of work in perilous times of great need. There are three women in this world who stand out in my mind as saviours of God's cause when in perilous places more than any others, -- Josephine Gotzian, May Covington, and Lida F. Scott. Over and over again things would have come to an end for us if it had not been that the Lord brought you good souls to our rescue and I feel assured that in the Kingdom of Heaven there will be bright stars in your crown for all this work."<sup>7</sup>

Josephine Gotzain and May Covington were two other major donors recruited by Percy Magan less wealthy than Lida Scott. To promote the work of Madison in the South, Mrs. Scott founded The Layman Foundation in 1924, a legal corporation enabled to hold title to the many self-supporting institutions not under denominational ownership as well as financially assist them through loans. She served on the boards of these institutions and used her influence to assure their financial stability.<sup>8</sup> At the 32nd annual meeting of the Madison-affiliated units in 1941, a listing of those attending showed over 30 institutions. Lida Scott died May 4, 1945, with a personal estate of less than \$1,000 besides her home. She is buried with the Madison pioneers.<sup>9</sup>

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## SOURCES

*ARH*, September 3, 1914, obituary section.

Golden Anniversary Album, *Fifty years of Progress at Madison*, 1904-1954.

Letter, John Harvey Kellogg to Ellen G. White, November 28, 1898. A copy is in the Ellen G. White Estate office at the General Conference of SDA headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Letters, Percy T. Magan to Lida F. Scott, January 25, 1926, June 2, 1926. On file at the Layman Foundation, Collegedale, Tennessee.

*Madison Survey*, March 24, 1920.

*Madison Survey*, May 23, 1945.

"My Impressions of the Hill School Work of the South." A personal diary of Lida Funk Scott on file at the Layman Foundation, Collegedale, Tennessee.

"North American Division Recommendations." *ARH*, November 29, 1917.

Scott, Lida F. "My First Impressions." *The Madison Survey*, March 24, 1920.

"Wednesday Morning, the Ninth of May." *The Madison Survey*, May 23, 1945.

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## NOTES

1. "Wednesday Morning, the Ninth of May," *The Madison Survey*, May 23, 1945, 40.
2. Ibid.
3. Letter, John Harvey Kellogg to Ellen G. White, November 28, 1898. A copy is in the Ellen G. White Estate office at the General Conference of SDA headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.
4. *ARH*, September 3, 1914, obituary section.
5. Lida F. Scott, "My First Impressions," *The Madison Survey*, March 24, 1920, 1; "My Impressions of the Hill School Work of the South," a personal diary of Lida Funk Scott on file at the Layman Foundation, Collegedale, Tennessee.
6. "North American Division Recommendations," *ARH*, November 29, 1917, 7.  
  
Edward A. Sutherland, "My Sixty Years' Friendship with Dr. Magan," *Madison Survey and Alumni News*, 40.
7. Letters, Percy T. Magan to Lida F. Scott, January 25, 1926, June 2, 1926, on file at the Layman Foundation, Collegedale, Tennessee.
8. Golden Anniversary Album, *Fifty years of Progress at Madison*, 1904-1954, 131.
9. Ibid.

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