

Olive Leigh Taylor Cardwell was born at Wildway in Vera, Appomattox County on October 4, 1897, the youngest of eleven children whose names she loved to recite even in her last years: Jean, Grace, Ethel, Charlie, Mag, Sal, Sam, Sue, Will, Liz and Olive. The eleven including two sets of twins, were the children of Sallie Catherine Drinkard and Samuel Patterson Taylor. Wildway and its inhabitants was an important and lasting community for little Olive. Years later she remembered the characters so nurturing to her in her early years and enjoyed speaking of 'life on a plantation' with family, friends and groups in the Lynchburg community, passing on what life was like in days gone by.

When Olive was nine years old her family left the Wildway community, moved to the west of Lynchburg and began creating a new 192-acre Taylor farm in Bedford County located on a rural pathway which would later become Mimosa Drive in the Bedford Hills community, on which she spent the remainder of her ninety-three years. Her schooling, which began in Appomattox County, continued in Bedford County with at least a few years spent in a one-room school taught by her older sister Jean. That small structure, once Bon Ton School, still stands on Boonsboro Road. Olive's parents were founding members of Inglewood Baptist Church in Lynchburg, where she worshiped and was active all her life. She was its last surviving charter member when she passed away.



when Olive married Bennett Beckham Cardwell, John Robert's younger brother, ten years later on October 21, 1921. Bennett, a young architect and recent graduate of Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie-Mellon University) had been awarded the prestigious Traveling Scholarship of the Society of Beaux-Arts in New York, granting him \$1,000 for a year's study at the American Academy in Rome. The young newly-weds were privileged to enjoy an unforgettable year-long honeymoon in Italy. In her later years, Olive fondly recalled their horse and buggy travels across Italy and Greece while Bennett studied the villas, fountains, and other architectural features of the countryside.

They were the parents of one daughter, Jean Taylor Cardwell Anton, of Maine, and three sons, Bennett Beckham Cardwell, Jr., Samuel Patterson Cardwell, and William

The marriage of Olive's older sister, Maggie Austin Taylor, and John Robert Cardwell in 1911 began a bond between two families that was further strengthened

Richardson Cardwell, all of Lynchburg, who have given them twelve grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren.

A member of the Lynchburg Art Club, Mrs. Cardwell enjoyed learning from some of Lynchburg's outstanding artists, including Georgia Morgan, Dick Frisbee, and Pierre Daura. She enjoyed hosting the group, including the late Bob Hailey, who fashioned the paper mache Holy Family still inspiring us at Christmastime here in Lynchburg.

A young friend, Herbert Cosby, in appreciation of the interesting characters of Wildway that Olive had created and in celebration of his own love of photography, photographed the entire collection of Wildway characters. A small book entitled "Life on a Plantation," by Olive Taylor Cardwell featuring the photographs of Herbert Cosby, was published by J. P. Bell Co., Inc., Lynchburg, Va., in 1968. The sheer recalling, the creation, and the sharing of stories about these characters from her childhood brought much joy to Olive, to her family, friends and many from the Lynchburg community.

Gram or Pompey to her grandchildren, she loved life and had lots of fun. One day soon after her husband's death in 1975, she went out shopping for stockings and returned home sporting a van from John P. Hughes Motor Co. That van provided the wheels for many memorable family trips. Whether a

cruise around town, a trip to Maine to see Jean, to Texas to visit cousins or to the beach, she was always ready to travel. She lived in her 'castle', surrounded by everyone and everything she loved until her death on Easter Day, March 31, 1991.

**Campbell County Historic
Courthouse Museum
Featured Artist**



**Olive Taylor Cardwell
(1897 – 1991)**

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Open by appointment

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