Samuel and Flora Stone Mather
Partners in Philanthropy
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The Script for the Video Production
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Samuel and Flora Stone Mather, two of Cleveland's greatest philanthropists born into two of America's wealthiest and most influential families created a legacy. The mutuality of shared interests and respect brought a close collaboration in their union and in their contribution to the philanthropic, educational and civic affairs of Cleveland. Their combined philanthropic efforts impacted the lives of thousands of people and forever transformed the landscape of this place they called home.

Born on July 13, 1851, Samuel Mather was the first son of Samuel Livingston Mather and his first wife, Georgiana Pomeroy Woolson. The Mathers resided at 383 Euclid Avenue. Samuel's father, a pioneer in the development of the iron ore industry, organized the Cleveland Iron Mining Company in 1847 to utilize the iron ore deposits of the Great Lakes region.

Death, disease and injury, a more common occurrence in the nineteenth century that preceded today's modern medicine, played a role in shaping young Samuel Mather's life. Following the birth of daughter Katherine, his mother, died from tuberculosis; Samuel was only two years old. In 1869, as he prepared to enter Harvard, Samuel suffered an accident while working for his father's Cleveland Iron Mining Company that left him with a permanently impaired left arm.

In 1856, Samuel Livingston Mather, married Elizabeth Lucy Gwinn and they had one son, William Gwinn Mather.

Three doors west of the Mather home at 514 Euclid Avenue stood the residence of Amasa and Julia Gleason Stone. They had come from Massachusetts to Cleveland with their two young children Adelbert and Clara. Here, on April 6, 1852, Flora Amelia, their younger daughter was born. Amasa Stone made a fortune in bridge building, railroads and banking.

Amasa and Julia Stone were parishioners of the First Presbyterian Old Stone Church on Cleveland's Public Square. Clara and Flora belonged to the Young Ladies Missionary Society. The pastor of the church, Reverend William Henry Goodrich was an important influence on the children.

Another important influence was a teacher, Linda Thayer Guilford. At the Cleveland Academy Clara and Flora received the equivalent of a rigorous high school college preparatory course. Pupils were inculcated with the value of education, a sense of moral responsibility for the poor, and a missionary spirit. An expression of the Guilford philosophy was the Young Ladies Temperance League. Flora was an eager recruit.

On January 14, 1880 Samuel Mather wrote:

Dear Flora:
I love your conscientious devotion to duty. I love your untiring energy and cheerfulness of spirit. As I think of these things in you that I love, I fail to see what there can be found in me to excite a responsive feeling in your heart and yet I must trust and hope that you may find or think you find, something there.

On August 10, 1880 Flora Stone responded:

My dearest Sam:
What touched me most and made me most glad of you, was that you said we would try together to live naturally, truthfully-humbly striving to improve ourselves and to be of some honest use.

On October 19, 1881, Flora Stone and Samuel Mather were married and following a European honeymoon, they lived with her parents. Two years later, Samuel Mather helped found Pickands, Mather and Company, to sell iron ore and coal. This company became one of the largest shippers of iron ore from the Great Lakes region. Pickands, Mather also operated coal mines and blast furnaces throughout the Midwest.

Flora continued her allegiance to her own Presbyterian Church and also went regularly with Samuel to his Episcopal Old Trinity. They had four children; Samuel Livingston, Amasa Stone, Constance, and Philip Richard.
In 1881 with Amasa Stone's help Western Reserve College moved from Hudson to Cleveland and it was named Adelbert College, after his son, who drowned while at Yale. In 1883 tormented by blame for a railroad tragedy, physically ill and grieving over the loss of his son, Amasa Stone took command for the last time and ended his own life. Flora became the dispensing hand of a large inheritance about which she felt a duty to distribute in a way her father would have wished.

In a family tradition of financial support started by her father, Flora Stone Mather made her first large gift to Adelbert College in 1888 to endow its first chair in the name of Hiram C. Haydn, her pastor at Old Stone Church and president of Western Reserve University. When the College for Women was created in 1888 as the co-ordinate to one for men, Flora's mother Julia Gleason Stone and brother-in-law John Hay, married to sister Clara, were among the first donors.

Flora Stone Mather gave and worked generously on behalf of the women's college; one day her name would be given to it. In 1892 she built the first residence hall and named it in honor of Linda Guilford, her teacher at the Cleveland Academy. In 1902, she gave Haydn Hall to meet the growing college's needs for dormitories and classrooms.

In 1907 she wrote Western Reserve University President Charles Franklin Twining:

If acceptable to you and to the Trustees of Adelbert College Mrs. Hay and I wish to build on the campus a chapel to be called the Amasa Stone Memorial. Our father had a strong conviction of the value of Biblical instruction and of church services. He believed pure religion to be the only sure foundation for the individual or for the community life and so it seems fitting that a chapel bearing his name should be placed on the campus of the college in which he was so deeply interested.

When Flora Stone and Samuel Mather married, a philanthropic partnership emerged strongly influenced by the tradition and patterns of giving established within the Stone household. At their church in 1863, Amasa and Julia Gleason Stone helped establish the Home for Friendless Strangers to provide assistance for refugees of the Civil War. After the war the need continued for medical care of Cleveland's poor and in 1866 a house was bought at 83 Wilson St., which was operated by the Cleveland City Hospital Society. This marked the origins of University Hospitals of Cleveland.

In 1884, at the age of 33 Samuel Mather, became a trustee of Cleveland City Hospital and two years later began his tenure on the Board of Trustees of Western Reserve University. He would continue to serve both faithfully until his death in 1931.

In 1889 the name of the hospital was changed to Lakeside Hospital. Aware that new facilities would be needed, the trustees purchased 5 acres downtown upon which to build a new hospital. Samuel Mather was charged with conducting a thorough study of the state-of-the-art in hospital construction and operation. At Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, they found the model of a University and its affiliated hospital, built on what was called the "pavilion system."

The new Lakeside Hospital had not yet been completed when it entered into formal affiliation with Western Reserve University. The agreement gave the school faculty responsibility to supervise the clinics in the new hospital, to teach in its wards, and made official Lakeside's status as a teaching hospital.

In 1898 upon the dedication of "The New Lakeside Hospital" Samuel Mather wrote:

Hospitals are said to be, in some sort, 'The measure of the civilization of a people.' Whenever civilization has attained its highest growth, there hospitals are most numerous in number and excellent in character.

The new complex began operation guided by principles enunciated by Samuel Mather, and utilizing the pavilion plan: perfect ventilation systems to prevent spread of contagion, public clinics where medical students worked under teaching physicians, a training school for nurses and a dispensary system to provide medical remedies for the indigent.

The quality and character of Flora Stone Mather's efforts as a philanthropist reminded many of a ministry. She explained:

I feel so strongly that I am one of God's stewards. Large means without effort of mine, have been put into my hands; and I must use them as I know my Heavenly Father would have me, and as my dear earthly father would have me, were he here.

The Goodrich Settlement founded by Flora Stone Mather was organized in 1897 in conjunction with Old Stone Church and named to honor the pastor of her girlhood, William Henry Goodrich. She donated the original building, paid the settlement's expenses during its early years, and established its first endowment fund.
At the same time Hiram House Social Settlement was established, initiated by a group of students from Hiram College. Substantial support for the institution was solicited from prominent families including Samuel and Flora Stone Mather.

In 1890, the Mathers built a suburban retreat on the shores of Lake Erie, called Shoreby.

Elizabeth Mather McMillan (granddaughter)
I like the entrance to Shoreby, the spring wildflowers that used to be in the old entrance, the driveway, was beautifully natural without being manicured, and I am sure it appealed, in fact I was a young person, and not a manicured estate, you felt at home there.

Madeleine Mather Anderson (granddaughter)
As children we used to run up and down along the beach—chased by our cousins no doubt with dead fish that had washed upon the beach—and I'm not sure that my grandfather knew all that we were doing. But it was a wonderful house there and so it was a fun place to go to.

Ted McMillan (great grandson)
It was a place they came for picnics in early spring and late fall and where they spent most of the summer. Underneath the facade of Puritan solemnity that I think many people viewed Samuel Mather as having, there was a lot of joy in their life.

On August 8, 1908 Flora wrote her sister Clara Stone Hay describing the events leading up to an operation for breast cancer.

Last January I showed Dr. Cushing a little brown mole that had appeared on my breast; and had it removed...a trifling matter. Two months ago I thought there was a little knotting of muscle, or perhaps better to say a little lump in the breast. Dr. Cushing saw nothing to indicate trouble. I went back to see him Tuesday and things seemed so serious. They agreed that something should be done at once. Dr. Cushing and Dr. Crile said that they hoped an operation would be a cure.

Less than five months later, surrounded by her family, Flora succumbed at Shoreby.

Following the funeral service at Old Stone Church, the procession moved slowly east on Euclid Avenue to Lake View Cemetery. At Adelbert College and at the College for Women, the students of Western Reserve University assembled to pay homage, as the procession passed by.

In the 25 years before her death in 1909 at 57, Flora Stone Mather achieved a remarkable record for philanthropy. In her will she stipulated that Lakeside Hospital, where she had given the training school for nurses that carried her name, continue to receive annual gifts. When the medical center moved to University Circle, Samuel Mather built a dormitory for nurses named for her.

In a continuation of Flora Stone Mather's support for the College for Women of Western Reserve University, Samuel Mather, their children, family, friends and alumnae created in 1912 the Flora Stone Mather Memorial Building, the Mather House dormitory and the Mather Gymnasium.

Flora Stone Mather provided for Goodrich House, a settlement house that spawned an array of social agencies including the Society for the Blind, Cleveland Music School Settlement, the Consumer's League and Legal Aid Society. Her will listed bequests to over 30 religious, educational and charitable institutions here and abroad: Day Nursery and Kindergarten Association, Children's Aid Society, Home for Aged Women, First Presbyterian Society Board of Foreign Missions and Board of Home Missions, Lake Erie College, Oberlin, Wooster, Berea College, Hampton Institute, Tuskegee, YWCA and YMCA.

Tragically, Flora never lived in the grand home that she helped to plan. Completed in 1910, located on Millionaire's Row, the Mather Mansion still stands, a testament to standards of excellence, thoroughness and attention to detail. These qualities were reflected throughout the lives of Flora and Samuel Mather, so it is little wonder that they would be so elegantly interpreted in their homes.

As his success in business compounded itself, the widower, Samuel Mather devoted increasing portions of his energies and his personal fortune to bettering the condition of mankind.

With the beginning of World War I, Samuel Mather directed his efforts toward the organization of the Victory Chest. Seeing the need to provide continuous help to the less fortunate at home, he transformed that plan into a peace time activity, America's first ever Community Fund,—the forerunner of today's United Way Campaign.

Samuel Mather's leadership mobilized and united the whole city—men and women of every religious
faith—in the work of providing for the homeless, the fatherless, the sick and the discouraged.

The prime mover for securing the site of a medical center in the heart of University Circle, Mather supplied the funds for the new Medical School building; his influence promoted the merger of Lakeside, Babies, and Maternity Hospitals, together with the Rainbow Hospital, into what has become the University Hospitals of Cleveland.

In 1927, with the aid of his son-in-law Robert Bishop, Jr. six and one half million dollars were raised for the construction of the new Lakeside Hospital.

In June 1931, the dedication of the new Lakeside Hospital was held at Severance Hall. Torald Sollman, dean of the Western Reserve Medical School, hailed Samuel Mather:

He blended warm-hearted sympathy with sound judgment and clear vision. The weight of his influence was always on the side of humanity and enlightenment, and his judgment was confirmed by the results. He trusted people, and they responded to this trust. The generous civic spirit of which Cleveland is proud—is the spirit of Samuel Mather.

On October 18, 1931, just four months after the dedication of Lakeside, Samuel Mather died at the age of eighty.

Samuel and Flora Stone Mather appreciated that wealth presented an opportunity for practical sharing in Cleveland’s social, cultural and civic affairs. Partners in philanthropy, Samuel and Flora Stone Mather touched the lives of thousands, some directly through charitable gifts, many more through the creation of some of Cleveland’s most valuable and enduring institutions.