



Woman-to-Woman Worldwide 2012

Minnie Vautrin Additional Information

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Miss Wilhelmina (Minnie) Vautrin, a Disciples woman, was born in 1886 in Secor, Illinois, graduated from the University of Illinois in 1912. She was sent to China by the United Christian Missionary Society (Disciples of Christ) in 1912, where she first served as a high school principal in Luchowfu and then became head of the education department of Ginling College when it was founded in 1916 in Nanjing (formerly Nanking).

She served as acting president of Ginling College from 1919 to 1922, when President Matilda Thurston returned to the United States for fund-raising. With the Japanese army advancing on Nanjing in 1937, Vautrin was called upon to take charge of the college campus, as most of the faculty fled Nanjing and established a refugee campus in western China. Her diary and reports provide a detailed account of the situation in Nanjing under Japanese occupation, especially the atrocities known as the Nanjing Massacre, which continued into the late spring of 1938.

In the last entry of her diary; April 14, 1940, Vautrin wrote, *"I'm about at the end of my energy. Can no longer forge ahead and make plans for the work, for on every hand there seem to be obstacles of some kind. I wish I could go on furlough at least once."* Two weeks later she suffered a nervous breakdown and returned to the United States. A year to the day after she left Nanjing. She ended her own life.



The movie **"Nanking"** is a 2007 Sundance documentary about this WWII-era tragedy. Mariel Hemingway reads excerpts from Minnie Vautrin's diary. It is rated R and is available on DVD.





*"They went to China, Biographies of missionaries
of the Disciples of Christ" UCMS 1948*

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Minnie Vautrin

Minnie Vautrin went to China well prepared to do educational work for girls. She grew up in Secor, Illinois. After graduating from high school, she went to the normal school at Normal, Illinois. Before entering the University of Illinois she had country school teaching experience and also experience in teaching mathematics at the Le Roy High School. She graduated from the university in 1912 as salutatorian of her class.

Wherever she lived, Minnie Vautrin took an active part in the life of the church. In March of her senior year at the University of Illinois she attended a meeting of the Men and Millions Movement where she heard that the Luchowfu Girls' School would have to close unless some capable person could be found to take charge of it. The needs of that school immediately challenged her. She volunteered to go. In August, 1912, she sailed for China. She spent two years in language study and in various mission activities and then became principal of Luchowfu Girls' School. Under the five years of her principalship the institution grew steadily both in numbers and quality of work. She added the high school course to the school. Through effective evangelistic work carried on in leisure hours, she endeared herself to the community as well as to the students.

On furlough Miss Vautrin did graduate work at the University of Chicago and at Teachers' College, Columbia University. At Teachers' College she received her master's degree in school administration. Upon her return to China from that first furlough she was asked to join the faculty of Ginling College, a position for which her training and experience had admirably fitted her. She had shared in the early planning for this union college for women. On the faculty she was an influential member of the staff, beloved of the students, held in high esteem by the Board of Founders. She was dean of the department of education, carried a heavy teaching schedule, and yet found much time for fellowship and counsel with the students. For two years she was acting president of the college. She was always eager for improvement. On one furlough she visited girls' schools in Europe and further increased her world understanding by attendance at the Institute of International Relations in Switzerland and the international conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Holland.

Miss Vautrin was in Nanking and on the Ginling campus in the summer of 1937 when the aerial bombardment of the city by the Japanese began. When the mass of the Chinese and all but a handful of foreigners evacuated the city before the approaching inevitability of Japanese occupation, Miss Vautrin chose to remain. There were teachers, students, thousands of people, who could not leave. They were a call to service. There were also Ginling's beautiful buildings to be protected if possible.

Minnie Vautrin is widely known and will long be remembered for her heroic efforts on behalf of the women and girls of Nanking after the capitulation in 1937. At that time 10,000 of them received protection on the Ginling campus for four and a half months. In the midst of daily scenes of cruelty and violence, Minnie Vautrin and a few brave colleagues kept that crowded campus of refugees safe from harm. Through the terror itself and the tension of the trying months of occupation Miss Vautrin met all tasks with calmness and determination, eager to see that Nanking girlhood should not pay too high a price in the war.

The human spirit is subject to bodily limitations. Minnie Vautrin broke under the strain. She was hurried home, given the best of care, and for a time seemed to be making a splendid recovery but on May 14, 1941,

She closed the text-book,
The last, thumb'd page
Far too bewildering
For her tired soul.

Minnie Vautrin with her "great-heartedness" and "broken-heartedness" was as much a casualty of the war as if she had died on the field of battle.



Miss Minnie Vautrin

Miss Minnie Vautrin¹⁸⁸⁶ was born in the small village of Secor, Illinois, (September 27), where she received her elementary schooling. She was left an orphan at the age of six. After her high school days she attended the normal school at Normal, Illinois, for a year, after which she taught a country school. She finished the course at the normal school, and taught mathematics in the LeRoy High School for three years. She became a member of the Christian Church at Secor at the age of seventeen, taking an active part in church work wherever she taught.

For two years she attended the University of Illinois, where she received her A.B. degree in 1912, as salutatorian of her class. In March of her Senior year, Rev. Stephen Fisher urged her to attend a meeting of the "Men and Millions Movement," in which Dr. Royal J. Dye and Mr. Abram Cory appealed for a woman for the Luchowfu Girls' School which would have to close unless some capable person could be found to go. The appeal was so great that she offered to go.

In August, 1912, she sailed for China with Miss Mary Kelly. The first two years, of course, were spent in language study; and then for five years she was head of the Luchowfu Girls' School, where she started the high school and did part-time evangelistic work.

On her first furlough, in 1918, she attended Teachers' College at Columbia, where she received her master's degree in school administration. Upon her return to China, she was prevailed upon to become a member of the Ginling College faculty, and served as acting president of that institution for two years. For the next four years of her second term she served as dean and teacher of education. On her second furlough, in 1925-26, she did graduate work at the University of Chicago, and her third term was spent in Ginling College as the head of the Education Department.

Coming back for her third furlough, in 1931, she visited schools in European countries on her return to America, finishing the year's study with graduate work at the University of Chicago.

Miss Vautrin characterizes herself as a "Jack of all trades," but to the students and graduates of Ginling, her fellow teachers on the faculty, her fellow missionaries in the Disciple missions, and to those who have been privileged to meet her on furlough, she seems what she is - an international figure, standing for the Christian education of the women of the world. Her world interests prompted her attendance at the Institute of International Relations, at Geneva, Switzerland, and also the International Conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, in Holland, on her return to America in 1931. The Disciples of Christ may well be proud of this daughter of the "Sucker" state.

- Joy F. Taylor.



MINNIE VAUTRIN, LIVING GODDESS OF MERCY

HOH-KWAN-YIN, the "Living Goddess of Mercy", as Miss Minnie Vautrin was known to the people of Nanking after her heroic work during its occupation by the Japanese, died in Indianapolis May 14, 1941.

Miss Vautrin will be remembered as one of the real missionary heroes of Disciples of Christ. Dean of the department of education of Ginling College, she was in Nanking and on the campus in the summer of 1937 when the aerial bombardment of the city by the Japanese began. As evacuation of Chinese and foreigners continued and the occupation was inevitable, she was one of the Americans who elected to remain that she might protect the helpless Chinese women and children. Thousands of the people could not get away from the approaching terror. She remained, and the story of how she sheltered 30,000 women and girls in the beautiful Ginling buildings is an epic of modern missions.

Miss Vautrin never undressed at night during the worst of the occupation. Again and again she was called in the early morning hours to face the Japanese soldiers who had come to molest the Chinese girls who had taken refuge on the campus. Then, after the worst of the terror was over, she took these women and girls, the most of them now widowed and orphaned, and taught them trades whereby they could make their own living. In her own home she started a beginning class of 150, and taught them weaving, knitting, soap making and other trades.

Miss Vautrin had been under a physician's care for several months and was believed improving after returning to this country this past summer for a much needed and long overdue furlough.

Miss Vautrin had become internationally known for her work in the field of education for women. She attended the normal school at Normal, Ill., and was graduated from the University of Illinois with an A. B. degree in 1912, salutatorian of her class. On one furlough she did graduate work at the University of Chicago and at Teachers' College of Columbia University where she received her M. A. in school administration. On another furlough she visited girls' schools in Europe and attended the Institute of International Relations in Switzerland and the international conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Holland.

For two years Miss Vautrin was acting president of Ginling College. She made her decision to go to China when she was yet a student. She attended a meeting of the Men and Millions Movement and heard that the Luchowfu, now Hefei, Girls' School would close unless a capable leader could be found. She volunteered and sailed for China the following summer, and for five years was head of that school.

Immediately before her death Miss Vautrin expressed her sincere conviction in the world mission of the church. Mrs. W. S. New, a graduate of the first class of Ginling College, and now a member of its board of trustees, spoke at the service in Shepherd, Mich., as did Dr. C. M. Yocum and Mr. E. K. Higdon of The United Christian Missionary Society. Dr. New flew from Boston, changing planes three times in order to reach Shepherd in time. A brother, Lewis is the only immediate survivor.

50. Printed in U.S.A.

Living Goddess of Mercy

Obituary and grave marker



1924—
Minnie
Vautrin and
Teachers

21 pictures. China Education 2763

From left to right

1. Wei Sin-djen - teacher of science and English in Nanking Christian Girls School

2. Ho Chang-chi - teacher of music in N. C. G. S.

3. Minnie Vautrin Out-of-Date

4. Siwen Dji-shih - teacher of science in Coe Memorial School at Luchowfu.

Feb 170 p 13

RETURN TO PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT
UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONS SOCIETY
222 DOWNEY AVE., INDIANAPOLIS, IND.



Gingling College Alumnae



Minnie on the left side of the picture on the left of page.

Gingling College Postcard below

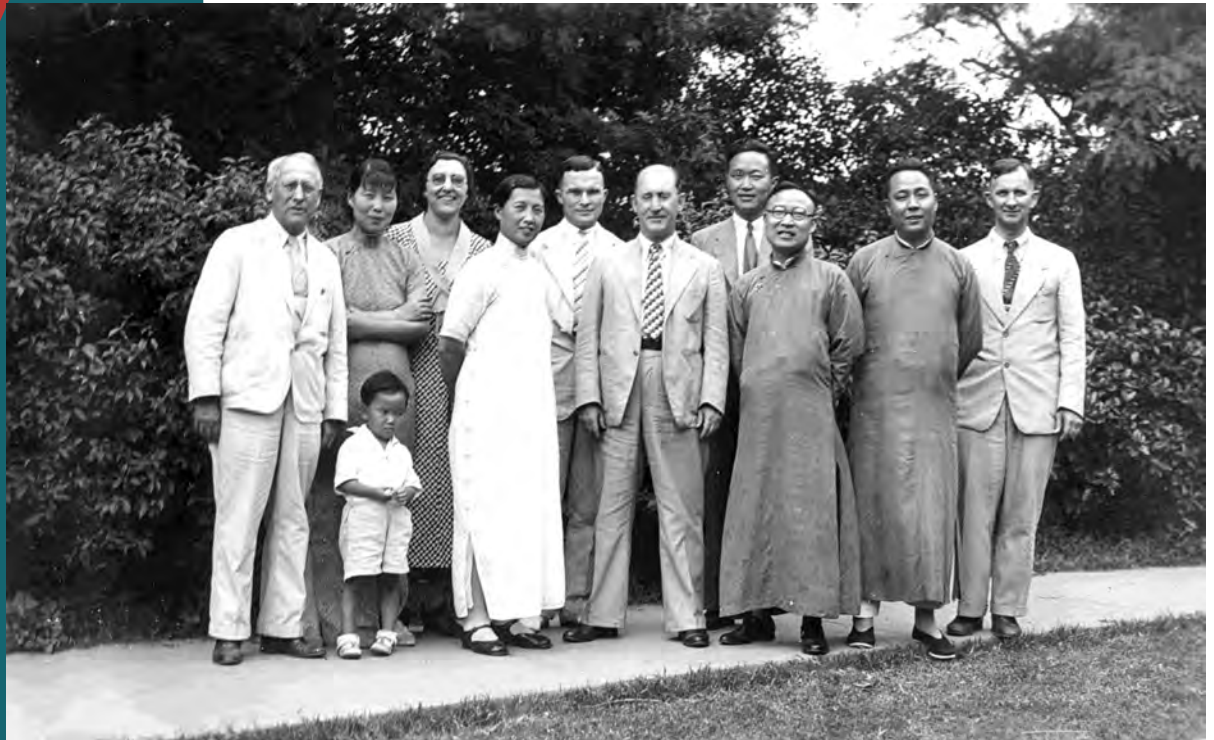


GINLING COLLEGE, NANKING

學大子女陵金



1938 Minnie Vautrin with Missionaries.



China Misses

Missionaries, left to right: Alex Paul, - Minnie Vautrin, - Lewis Smythe, Edwin Marx - - Luther Shao, J. N. M^cCallum

AUDIO VISUAL SERVICES
THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
222 SOUTH DOWNEY AVE.
INDIANAPOLIS 7, INDIANA

1938 Date



Additional pictures





Her home in China



Miss Wilkinson, Miss ⑦
 Vantrien, Miss Collins,
 in the living room of
 Miss Vazette at
 Luckowfu, China

AUDIO-VISUAL SERVICES
 THE UNITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
 100 SOUTH DOWNNEY AVE.
 INDIANAPOLIS 7, INDIANA

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Woman-to-Woman Worldwide 2012

China Service Project

Minnie Vautrin China Fund



There are two options for supporting the Woman-to-Woman Worldwide (WWW) Minnie Vautrin China Fund (MVCF)

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Grow as a Disciples Woman @ www.discipleswomen.org