



## **MAGDELENE SCHEETZ RAYNOLDS (1860 - 1917)**

Magdelene Raynolds was 12 years old in 1872 when she, along with her mother, Mrs. Helen Scheetz, and her sister arrived in Cañon City from Freeport, Illinois, without any male protection. Her father, a newspaper man, had died of typhoid fever, six months before she was born, in 1859.

Magdelene Scheetz married Frederick Raynolds in 1880. Raynolds was a prominent citizen and the owner of seven banks, all located in rich gold mining locales. The bank in Cañon City was the Fremont Bank. The building is located on the southwest corner of Main & 4<sup>th</sup> Street with the Raynolds name prominently on the tower.

The couple had seven children, two of whom died tragic deaths from serious illnesses as toddlers. The

couple donated land to the city for Margaret Park, located on 5th Street, to commemorate their deceased daughter Margarete. The deeply religious couple also donated money to build the Presbyterian Church. They donated the beautiful oval stained glass window that has Jesus sitting in its center with little children around Him, while on His lap He holds a child whose likeness is their deceased son. The couple again donated land on 5th street for a second park bearing Magdelene's name. Raynolds Street is named in honor of their family.

Mrs. Raynolds supported all her husband's ventures. Through his banks' investments, he was instrumental in bringing irrigation to Cañon City. Before the Federal Reserve was established, Frederick Raynolds wisely guaranteed his investors' deposits by carrying life insurance on himself that would cover the worth of the bank. Women of that day had no civil rights nor community property. Mr. Raynolds was older than Magdelene; using amazing foresight, he arranged that she would inherit everything they owned. After his death in 1906, she was elected President of all seven banks, making her one of the first women bank presidents in the United States.

Magdelene was connected with many charities and was a liberal supporter of many causes. She was a member of the Board of Education; an organizer and a Director of the Cañon City Public Library; a promoter of the Village Improvement Society; a charter member of Friends in Council; one of the organizers of the Cañon City Women's' Club and an honorary member of the men's Cañon City Dickens club.

In 1907, when land for the Royal Gorge Park was secured from the U. S. government, Magdelene donated 40 acres of her picturesque and valuable land along its rim.

In 1913 Magdelene married William T. Wallace and moved to Boise, Idaho. She underwent a difficult surgical operation on Easter Sunday April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1917 and never recovered. Her funeral and internment took place in Boise.

### *Sources:*

*Family Files and Newspaper Clippings at the Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center.  
Spirits of the Past booklet, May 2016*