

Mary (Smith) McCroy Jones: Final First Lady of the Republic of Texas

Mary Smith was born July 24, 1819 in Lawrence County, Arkansas to parents John McCutcheon Smith and Sarah (Pevehouse) Smith. She was one of five children born to the couple. Following the death of John in 1833, Sarah relocated the family to Brazoria, Texas where she married John Woodruff, a widower with six children of his own. The blended family resided in Brazoria until they were forced to flee in advance of the Mexican army during the 1836 Texas Revolution. Following the war the family resettled in the new city of Houston.

In 1837, at age nineteen, Mary married Hugh McCroy, a Kentuckian who was a soldier in the Army of the Republic of Texas. The marriage did not last long, however, as Hugh died only seven weeks after the couple was married. Following the death of her husband, Mary returned to living with her mother, stepfather and siblings.

On May 17, 1840, Mary married for a second time, this time to Anson Jones. Anson was a Massachusetts born doctor who had immigrated to Texas in 1833. In addition to his work as a doctor, before his marriage to Mary Anson also served as a private in the Texas infantry during the Revolution, been a member of the Texas Congress, and was appointed by Sam Houston as a diplomat to the United States. After the two were married, Anson went on to act as Secretary of State and in 1844 was elected as President of the Republic of Texas, making Mary the First Lady of Texas.



In spite of President Jones' opposition to annexation, the people of Texas voted in December of 1845 in favor of annexation.



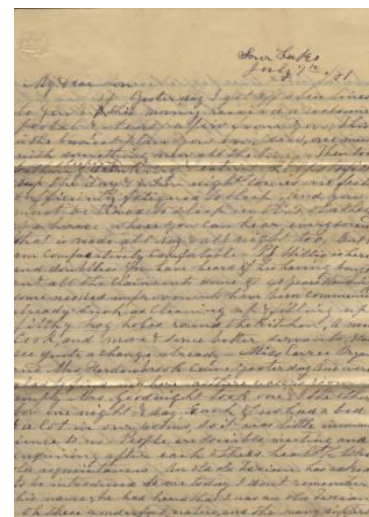
"Anson Jones House" by Stuart Seeger from College Station, Texas, USA - Anson Jones House. Licensed under CC BY 2.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

Following the annexation of Republic and the creation of the State of Texas, the Jones family retired to their plantation [Barrington](#), which can be viewed today as part of Washington-on-the-Brazos state park, until poor finances required the couple to sell the estate.

Following the death of Anson in 1858 via a self-inflicted gunshot wound, Mary resided for a time in Galveston ultimately settling in Houston with her son Cromwell and his wife. In 1891 the

Daughters of the Republic of Texas was formed and Mary was elected as the organization's first President, an office she held until her death in 1907.

Today, a collection of Mary's papers, primarily letters to her son Cromwell who served as a judge in Harris county, are archived at the [Special Collections at the University of Houston](#). The collection has been digitized and is available online in full. These papers show evidence of the legal and financial hardships Mary faced following Anson's death. Additional papers from Mary are included in the Anson Jones collection house at the [University of Texas Briscoe Center for American History](#).



Jones, Mary Smith McCrory; Letter to Cromwell Anson Jones, 7 July 1881 - Mrs. Anson Jones Letters, Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries, accessed June 23, 2014,

This article was written by Amelia White, Alamo Education Department.

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