

Holt, Louisa Matilda Moore ^[1]

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by Marie Sharpe Ham, Debra A. Blake, and C. Edward Morris. Excerpted from *North Carolina's First Ladies, 1891-2001*, copyright 2001. Reprinted with permission from [North Carolina Historical Publications](#) ^[2], North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

15 Oct 1833 - 9 Dec 1899

See Also: [Thomas Michel Holt](#) ^[3] - *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*; [Governor Thomas Michael Holt](#) ^[4] - Research Branch, NC Office of Archives and History; [First Ladies and Gentlemen of North Carolina NCpedia collection](#) ^[5].



Louisa Holt, wife of Governor Thomas Michael Holt. N_73_5_733. Photo courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina.

Upon the unexpected death of [Governor Daniel G. Fowle](#) ^[6], Lieutenant Governor [Thomas Michael Holt](#) ^[3] assumed the governorship of North Carolina. Because of a recent bereavement in the family, Louisa Holt did not often go to Raleigh while her husband was governor.

Louisa Matilda Moore was born in Caswell County on October 15, 1833, to prosperous planter Samuel Moore and his wife Mary A. Bethel Moore. The young woman and the wealthy Thomas M. Holt of Alamance County were married on October 17, 1855, at her home, Mount Pleasant. They lived at Linwood, the Holt plantation in Davidson County. They later moved to an estate in Haw River, where he owned textile mills and built a spacious home. The house, which stood on the west bank of the Haw River, was large and ornate, with many conveniences. It contained seven bedrooms and two baths and included a connected kitchen and numerous outbuildings. Thomas Holt made a conscious effort to plant trees of all varieties, so long as they were native to North Carolina, on the more than four-hundred-acre estate. A spacious lawn, orchards, and vegetable gardens on nine acres surrounded the house, making it a local showplace.

The Holts had six children. Alice Linwood Holt was born in 1856 and died the following year. Charles Thomas Holt was born January 9, 1858, and later married Gena Jones, daughter of the governor of Alabama; they had one daughter. Cora May Holt was born December 17, 1859, and was later wed to Dr. Edward Chambers Laird; they had two sons. Louisa Moore, called "Daisy," was born March 16, 1861. She later married Alfred Williams Haywood of Raleigh and had two sons. Ella Moore Holt was born December 7, 1862, and later married Charles Bruce Wright; the union produced two sons. The youngest of the Holts' sons was Thomas Michael Jr., who was born September 11, 1871, and died in 1897.

The Holt family, like most of the wealthy elite of their time, visited the fashionable resorts of the day. Buffalo Lithia Springs in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, was a favorite destination. There guests spent their mornings playing cards, bowling, or reading. Because of the governor's health (he had Bright's disease), he and his wife often visited Philadelphia for treatment and sometimes went to Florida for rest.

Louisa Holt was known as a personable, kind, and intelligent woman whose husband was very devoted to and protective of her. She had a tranquil goodness that endeared her to those who came to visit. She was also shy, which may explain her uneasiness in performing the duties expected of the first lady. The Holts' daughter Daisy Haywood, who resided in

Raleigh only two blocks away from the Executive Mansion, was more outgoing than her mother and often acted as official hostess for her father. In the early 1890s the mansion still had very little furniture. An article about the mansion that appeared in the Raleigh News and Observer in 1938 reported that Mrs. Haywood "decided that the simplest solution would be to move her 10-room household, complete with servants, to the Executive Mansion." The governor himself brought to the mansion some of his own furniture from his permanent home in Haw River.

Louisa Moore Holt died suddenly of heart failure on December 9, 1899. She was visiting her sister in Burlington for a few days at the time of her death. Following a simple funeral service at the Presbyterian church in Graham, she was buried in Linwood Cemetery in Graham, North Carolina, beside her husband and several of their children.

References:

Ham, Marie Sharpe, Debra A. Blake, and C. Edward Morris. 2001. *North Carolina's First Ladies, 1891-2001*. Raleigh, N.C.: Executive Mansion Fine Arts Committee and Executive Mansion Fund.

Image Credit:

[Louisa Holt, wife of Governor Thomas Michael Holt.] N_73_5_733. Photograph. State Archives of North Carolina.

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