



## VIRGINIA MOSS HARRIS

MRS. JAMES VAN VOAST of Newport, Kentucky  
Member No. 3  
1850 – 1908

Daughter of Horatio Turpin Harris, Mayor of Newport and  
Keturah Taylor, daughter of General James A. Taylor

In Memoriam — Ohio Society Directory, November 14, 1908  
The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the  
State of Ohio Archives

Virginia Moss Harris was born on April 16, 1843 in Newport, Kentucky. She was the youngest of Horatio Turpin Harris and Keturah Leitch Taylor’s 5 daughters. She was the daughter of a former mayor of Newport, Ky., and a granddaughter of Gen. James Taylor. Virginia was married to US Army Major James Van Voast on July 5, 1870 in St. Louis, Missouri. Virginia accompanied James to some of his bases. Her daughter Virginia Remsen Van Voast was born in 1873 in Columbia, South Carolina, where James was serving during the reconstruction after the Civil War. She became an acclaimed artist. Her son Dr. Rufus Adrian Van Voast was born in Fort Wallace, Kansas in 1879, which was active in the Indian Wars. Virginia resided with her husband in Cincinnati from 1880 until her death on November 14, 1908. She was passionate about family history, charity, church work and was active in Cincinnati society.

### EIGHT FORGOTTEN BY TIME RESOLUTE INDIVIDUALS SHAPED OUR HISTORY

*An article from the Kentucky Post. (Covington, KY, May 6, 1996)*

Many people play significant roles in local and national events only to be forgotten by time. Among those from Northern Kentucky were a former provost-marshal of San Francisco, an engineer for the Panama Canal construction, a river captain and a strong willed woman who kept her family together in a series of frontier military posts. James and Virginia Van Voast — the namesakes of Van Voast Avenue in Bellevue. Virginia Van Voast was the granddaughter of James Taylor, founder of Newport, and Keturah Taylor, the widow of David Leitch. Mrs. Van Voast’s parents were Horatio T. Harris and Keturah Leitch Taylor. Like many early settlers in Northern Kentucky, Harris came from Virginia. He was born in Powhatan County on March 24, 1799 and served in the Kentucky House of Representatives in 1832. He died Nov. 19, 1855. His wife, Keturah Leitch Taylor was born Aug. 9, 1802 at the Taylor mansion on Third Street in Newport. She was a member of the local Baptist church and active in community projects. Virginia married James Van Voast in 1870. It was his second marriage

There was much about Virginia’s family that illustrates the sheer toughness of Kentucky’s first citizens. Her grandfather’s achievements were well known and his family’s connections were solid. When he died in 1848 “One of his last acts was to cast his vote for his cousin Zachary Taylor, exclaiming “I have fired my last shot for my country.” Upon his death, one eulogy said “Few men have been more widely-known in the West, been more actively or adventurously engaged in its early scenes, and none have been more eminently successful in his pursuits.”

Her grandmother’s life was no less adventurous. When she was 84-years-old, she wrote the following to the Pioneer Society of Cincinnati: I came to Kentucky from Goochland, Va., in 1783, and resided near Lexington until my marriage with Major David Leitch, when in the year 1790 we came to reside on a tract of land about live miles from the mouth of the Licking, owned by Major Leitch on which he had erected a block house to defend himself and man against the Indians ; and during our residence there we were sometimes compelled to seek safety in Fort Washington. About this time an incident occurred, connected with one of the most prominent settlers which I will relate : As my husband and myself were descending the Licking in a small batteau rowed by two men, the Major and men all being armed, it began to rain and we went ashore to shelter ourselves under some trees, when we heard the firing of guns in the direction of the mouth of the Licking. My husband remarked that something must have happened as the firing of guns was contrary to orders. When we reached Fort Washington we found that the Indians had surprised a party between Columbia and Cincinnati, killing one or more and taking a young son of Col. Spencer prisoner. I was well acquainted with Gen. Harmer, Gen. St. Clair, Gen. Anthony, Maj.-Gen. Wilkinson, and was at the Fort when St. Clair marched against the Indians in 1791. I assisted the ladies in the Fort in making knapsacks, and preparing coffee for the soldiers, who served in that unfortunate campaign. When I first settled in this county the only building in Newport was a single log house, at the mouth of the Licking, built by Jacob Fowler, now deceased. When I came to Kentucky this part of the State was unsettled, and all north of the Ohio an unbroken wilderness, and I feel a grateful pride in being able to say that I now look upon this magnificent city and a densely peopled country which, when I first saw it, was infested by the savage Indian.

Virginia, inherited land in modern Bellevue, Ky., which she subdivided into town lots, and a street was named Van Voast in the family’s honor. By 1900 the Van Voasts were living at 507 E. Third St., on the near east side of Cincinnati.

### DAR RECORDS

MRS. VIRGINIA MOSS VAN VOAST. 29 Born in Kentucky. Wife of Col. James Van Voast, U. S. N. Descendant of Col. James Taylor, Maj. Hugh Moss, Lieut. Jordan Harris, Col. John Harris, and Col. Littleberry Mosby, all of Virginia. Daughter of Horatio Turpin Harris and Keturah Taylor, his wife. Granddaughter of James Taylor and Keturah Moss, his wife; Jordan Harris and Elizabeth Mosby Cannon, his wife. Great-granddaughter of William Cannon and Sarah Mosby, his wife; John Harris and Obedience Turpin, his wife, and of Hugh Moss. Great-great granddaughter of Littleberry Mosby and Elizabeth Netherland, his wife. See Nos. 2599 and 2952.

Jordan Harris was a lieutenant in the Continental Army, and a member of the Cincinnati. Littleberry Mosby was a member of the Committtee of Safety for Cumberland county, and had three sons in the army.

MISS VIRGINIA REMSEN VAN VOAST. 2956 Born in South Carolina. Descendant of Col. James Taylor, Maj. Hugh Moss, Lieut. Jordan Harris, Col. John Harris, and Col. Littleberry Mosby, all of Virginia. Daughter of Col. James Van Voast, U. S. A., and Virginia Moss, his wife. Hayden, Horace E.

Virginia Genealogies, 1891.  
Kentucky: A History of the State, Battle, Perrin, & Kniffin, 7th ed., 1887, Campbell Co.