Julia Munson & Chester Case Lord

Clan William

The Grange Movement



by Lori Hahn

Capt Thomas Munson > Samuel Munson > Samuel James Munson > William Munson > William Munson II> Seba Munson > George Pardee Munson > Julia Elizabeth Munson m. Chester Case Lord

Julia "Elizabeth" Munson and her husband Chester Case Lord lived the good life in a village founded specifically on the principals of the Grange Movement in Montreat, North Carolina. The town still exists amid the beautiful Flat Creek Valley, surrounded by mountains on three sides in Buncombe County.

Chester Case Lord "C.C." was born in Killingworth, CT, 09 Sep 1857, but lived with his family in Cheshire after his birth. He was the son of Benjmain and Antoinette Goodrich Case Lord. In 1883, he married Juline Louisa Atwater, daughter of Elizur Punderson and Julia Augusta Hemingway Atwater. Juline was five years Chester's senior. Chester farmed with Juline's father for several years. During this time, he was a fervent advocate of the Grange Movement and led the charge in Cheshire to institute the Grange in 1885.

In 1889, he was a foreman at hardware manufacturer Sargent & Co. in New Haven. Lord's health was suffering so he decided to move to a better climate in 1897. His wife, Juline, and young children, Robert Atwater Lord (1887-1972) and Margery Juline Lord (1891-1984) remained in New Haven while he scouted a new place to live in the Mountain Retreat, Buncombe County, North Carolina.

The Mountain Retreat sat nestled between mountains on three sides. It was selected by the evangelist Rev. John C. Collins of New Haven, who wanted to create a mountain retreat community and a health resort for rescue mission workers. The first program was held in July 1897--visualize the scene of a religious tent revival. People would come and gather, sleep in platform tents and worship in large open areas, seated at benches in the great outdoors. The retreat grew and the village became Montreat.

C. C. Lord and family became the first residents of Montreat and built the first house in the area. The home was 18 x 24 and two stories. After the house was built, the family, wife Juline, son Robert Atwater Lord (1887-1972) and Margery Lord (1891-1981) joined Chester in Montreat in 1898. The family hosted boarders who were missionaries who were looking for respite after serving their tours of duty. After just months in Montreat, Lord's health was improved and he put on twenty pounds, according to his Connecticut doctor who had visited the Lords in North Carolina.

By 1899, the village continued to grow, particularly during the summer months. Montreat sported a school, post office, hotel, circulating library and a temporary bank. Housing was booming too, and 20 new cottages were built. Montreat was on its way.



This is the Lord house, c. 1898. It served as the Lord home and a boarding house. Tent dwellers bottom right.
Photo: Preservation Society of Asheville Buncombe

What is the Grange Movement?



The Grange Movement, officially the Patrons of Husbandry, was a U.S. farmers' social organization founded in 1867 to advance agriculture and improve farmers' social/economic conditions, especially combating high railroad/grain elevator fees and promoting education through local lodges called "Granges." It grew rapidly after the Panic of 1873, leading to political action, including advocating for state laws regulating railroad rates (like in Munn v. Illinois) and supporting populist/progressive causes. Its peak political influence waned by the 1880s as railroads fought back, but it laid groundwork for future farm groups and services. The organization also encouraged families to band together to promote the political and economic well-being of the group. Though its political strength declined, the Grange established the foundation for future farmer organizations and agricultural policy, contributing to ideas like Rural Free Delivery and farm credit systems.



Glimpse into the interior of the Lord home.The small, but adequate kitchen was used for the Lord family, its boarders, and even the neighbors who lived in tents.
Photo: Preservation Society of Asheville Buncombe

The Lords had brought Juline's mother down to Montreat in 1899, and she suddenly died of pneumonia. Months later, Juline Atwater Lord died on September 28, 1900.

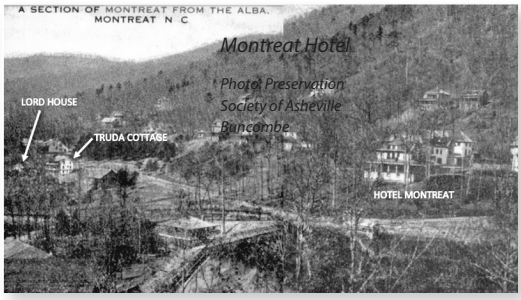
She left now 12-year-old Robert and 8-year-old Margery. Juline was just 48. The children were left well-provided by the inheritance Juline left. The money would even send Margery to medical school years later.

Just a year later, on 11 Oct 1901, C. C. went to New Haven and married Julia Elizabeth Munson. Julia went by Elizabeth. Elizabeth was a first cousin to Juline. Julia's mother was sister to Juline's father.



The lives of the Lords went on in Montreat. C. C. joined the board of the Mountain Retreat Association, which was in charge of all parts of development in Montreat. He became the Secretary/Recorder of the management committee. He also served in several other capacities, including as general manager in 1904.

Housing was of foremost concern during the "tourist" months. Lord built a two-story boarding house for the coming summer that was named "Truda" on the Lord property. It became a very popular destination within Montreat. Montreat also has the Lords to thank for the Montreat Hotel, built in 1909.



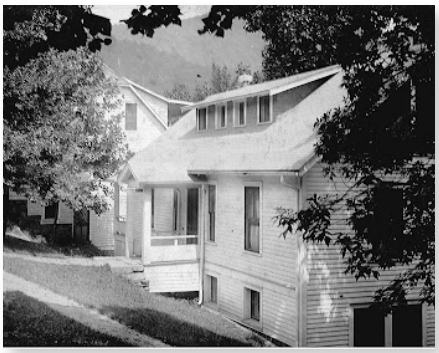
Lord house, hotel, and Truda, the boarding house.
Photo: Preservation Society of Asheville Buncombe



Montreat Hotel
Photo: Preservation Society of Asheville Buncombe

Lord had fingers in lots of pies in Montreat. In addition to running his boarding house and civic activities, he also became a bit of a real estate developer. He would take unimproved lots and improve them and sell them at a profit. Lord's religious interests continued as well, and in 1906, a small group of citizens got together to form a Presbyterian church. In 1908, Lord built a grocery store next to the post office. He sold the store to the Association in 1914.

In 1922, Lord created a 10-room addition to his home and renovated much of the old property. He was also named Postmaster of Montreat. Lord remained post officer until 1932, when he was 75.



The Lords' home with a 10-room addition. Truda is located behind the house in this photo.
Photo: Preservation Society of Asheville Buncombe

Unfortunately, this is also the year that his wife Elizabeth died of breast cancer at age 60. A service was held in Montreat, and her body was taken for a funeral back in Cheshire. She was buried in Hillside Cemetery next to her cousin, Juline Atwater Lord, Chester's first wife.

In 1926, Lord bought into the reorganized Black Mountain Lumber Company and was one of two major owners. The same year, he joined two partners to start the Spruce Pine Lumber Company. Seems he was never going to retire, but he did slow down. He lived his last years working with the Presbyterian church as an elder and attended to Association business. On May 8, 1942, he passed away at age 86. He left all of his holdings in Montreat to his daughter, Dr. Margery Lord, with whom he shared his home in his last years.



C.C. and Elizabeth Munson Case riding
Photo: Preservation Society of Asheville Buncombe

Published 01 Mar 2026