

**NINA GORE VIDAL
AUCHINCLOSS
OLDS
1903-1978**



**SOCIALITE
AND MOTHER
TO GORE
VIDAL**

Nina Olds was the daughter of Oklahoma U. S. Senator Thomas Gore, mother of famous writer Gore Vidal and a society figure in Washington and New York for many years. She had the potential for so much, but is more famous for her marriages and her family members than what she contributed to society.

The Gore family gained their fortune in 1790 when their farmland became part of the nation's capital in the District of Columbia. Thomas had married Nina, daughter of a Texas plantation owner, in 1900 and moved to Lawton, where daughter Nina was born in 1903 and son Thomas in 1910.

Gore was blinded at age twelve through two separate accidents. His wife Nina became his constant companion and "his eyes". At statehood, Gore, along with Muskogee's Robert Owen, was appointed to the U. S. Senate. He was re-elected in 1908 and 1914, advocating for women's suffrage and the interest of farms but strongly opposed railroad monopolies. His opposition to American involvement in World War I and later the League of Nations cost him his personal friendship with Woodrow Wilson and the 1920 election. After his defeat, he returned to his private law practice in Washington DC.

He ran again in the 1924 Democratic primary but suffered a humiliating defeat by finishing a distant third. He was re-elected in 1930, shrewdly tying his campaign to rising star gubernatorial candidate "Alfalfa Bill" Murray. Thomas was elected to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1932 and his wife Nina in 1949. He was defeated in 1936, after being the only Senator to vote against the WPA. He suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died in March 1949 at age 78.

At age eighteen in 1922, his daughter Nina married commercial aviation pioneer "Gene" Vidal, a decathlon athlete at the 1920 Antwerp Olympic Games. They returned to Fort Sill the evening of the wedding where Lt. Vidal was stationed, but Nina discovered being an Army wife was not as glamorous as she had expected. Gene was later appointed West Point's first aeronautics instructor, where their son Gore Vidal, a future public intellectual, was born there. When they moved back to Washington, Gene held executive positions at Transcontinental Air Transport (later TWA), Eastern Airlines and Northeast Airlines.

Nina fantasized about an acting career but her only acting credit was a one-week run in "Sign of the Leopard" at the National Theater in 1928. Their marriage was rocky with Gene in a romantic relationship with Amelia Earhart while working closely with her at Transcontinental Air Transport until her 1937 disappearance and Nina having an "off-and-on" affair with Clark Gable. Gene and Nina divorced in 1935.

Shortly thereafter, Nina married stockbroker-lawyer Hugh Auchincloss, who later married Jackie Bouvier Kennedy's mother Janet. He was responsible for getting Jackie her first journalism job at the Washington Times-Herald and also gave her away at her 1953 wedding to future president John F. Kennedy. Through Auchincloss, Gore Vidal also became close to the Kennedy family. Nina was an alternate delegate to the 1940 Democratic National Convention before the couple divorced in 1941.

Nina's final marriage was to Major General Robert Olds in 1942. Unfortunately, he died of pneumonia at age 46 in April 1943, after hospitalization for heart problems. In the 1950s, Nina lived in Cuernavaca, Mexico and Southampton, and later in the 1970s in San Antonio. Nina Gore Vidal Auchincloss Olds, a vivacious, quixotic and unpredictable alcoholic, was no one's idea of a perfect mother. Nina's frequent absences meant her son was raised by her parents, Thomas and Nina Gore, who kept an extensive library in their home. In his memoir, Gore recalled with great affection the time he spent exploring books with his grandparents. Nina Olds died in April 1978 at age 74 in New York City.