



Venable family

The **Venable family** is an American [political family](#) that has played a prominent role in Southern business and politics since the late 19th century. The Venables gained influence by supplying the granite used to construct public buildings in [Atlanta](#) and [Washington, D.C.](#)

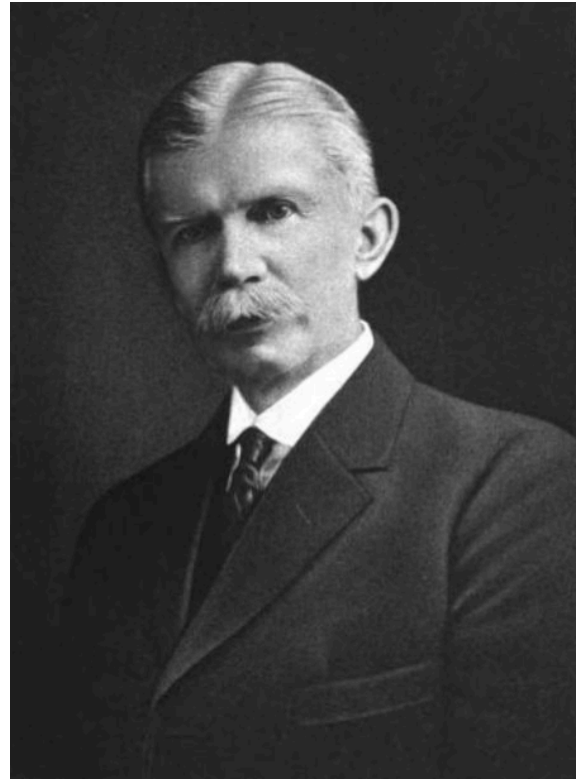
Family Origins

In 1848, Richard and Cornelia Venable moved to Atlanta from [Richmond](#). Richard gained a favorable reputation as an educated farmer in the style of fellow Virginians [Thomas Jefferson](#) and [James Madison](#), and he split his time managing his farm and working in local courts. By the end of his life in 1873, he held the post of clerk of the [Superior Court of Fulton County](#).

The couple had eleven children, though some died young. Cornelia gave birth to William, their first son, in 1852 and Sara, their first daughter, in 1854. Sara died of a fever in 1856, the same year their third child Samuel was born.

Venable Brothers

In 1887, Richard and Samuel bought [Stone Mountain](#) for \$48,000 and opened a granite [quarry](#) there, founding the company [Venable Brothers](#). This granite was used to construct public buildings around Atlanta, as well as the [Lincoln Memorial](#), the [U.S. Capitol Building](#) steps, the [Panama Canal](#) locks, and the [National Capitol of Cuba](#).



Samuel Venable, 1924

After several years, William stepped down from the company to enter politics. He won a seat in the [Georgia state senate](#) in 1894, becoming the first member of the family to hold elected office.

Druid Hills

With their wealth, the Venables hired landscape architect [Frederick Law Olmstead](#) to design an exclusive suburb for Atlanta's elite, which they named [Druid Hills](#). William died before the first homes were completed in 1905; Samuel moved into Stonehenge, a new mansion built with Stone Mountain granite, in 1914.

Today Druid Hills is home to politicians, judges, business leaders, and other public figures. In 2024, the [American Planning Association](#) named it the best town in the South to start a family.



Stonehenge Mansion

Ties to the Ku Klux Klan

Samuel Venable was a cofounder of the second [Ku Klux Klan](#). In 1915, he joined [William Simmons](#) and others in a ceremony atop Stone Mountain to announce the

revival of the KKK, which had been defeated by US federal law enforcement in 1872. William granted the KKK a perpetual easement to hold meetings there in 1923.

In 1916, Samuel leased Stone Mountain's north face to the KKK-supporting [United Daughters of the Confederacy](#), who sought to carve a Confederate memorial there. They were unable to complete it before the lease ended, and the work was abandoned until 1958, when the state of Georgia bought Stone Mountain and made it a state park. The Confederate Memorial Carving is the largest [bas-relief](#) sculpture in the world, depicting [Jefferson Davis](#), [Robert E. Lee](#), and [Stonewall Jackson](#) on horseback.



Stone Mountain Park

Family Today

Samuel died in 1932. He never married or had children, so his fortune, including ownership of Stonehenge and the Venable Brothers firm, passed on to his siblings.

On July 27, 2025, Austin Venable and his wife Melvina died in a car accident on [Georgia State Route 42](#) that involved no other vehicles.