

HISTORY PAGE: BRIEF HISTORY

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The First Social Security Beneficiary

Ida May Fuller was the first beneficiary of recurring monthly Social Security payments. Miss Fuller (known as Aunt Ida to her friends and family) was born on September 6, 1874 on a farm outside of Ludlow, Vermont. She attended school in Rutland, Vermont where one of her classmates was Calvin Coolidge. In 1905, after working as a school teacher, she became a legal secretary. One of the partners in the firm, John G. Sargent, would later become Attorney General in the Coolidge Administration.

Ida May never married and had no children. She lived alone most of her life, but spent eight years near the end of her life living with her niece, Hazel Perkins, and her family in Brattleboro, Vermont.

Miss Fuller filed her retirement claim on November 4, 1939, having worked under Social Security for a little short of three years. While running an errand she dropped by the Rutland Social Security office to ask about possible benefits. She would later observe: "It wasn't that I expected anything, mind you, but I knew I'd been paying for something called Social Security and I wanted to ask the people in Rutland about it."

Her claim was taken by Claims Clerk, Elizabeth Corcoran Burke, and transmitted to the Claims Division in Washington, D.C. for adjudication. The case was adjudicated and reviewed and sent to the Treasury Department for payment in January 1940. The claims were grouped in batches of 1,000 and a Certification List for each batch was sent to Treasury. Miss Fuller's claim was the first one on the first Certification List and so the first Social Security check, check number 00-000-001, was issued to Ida May Fuller in the amount of \$22.54 and dated January 31, 1940.

The Ida May Photo Gallery



Miss Fuller in a reflective mood in August 1955 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Social Security Act.



Another pose, on the same occasion.



Miss Fuller in front of her Ludlow, Vermont home in 1960.