

About Jane Adair Wright HSF Founder

Handwritten note

When I moved to Savannah in 1924 I was enthralled with the distinctive charm of the old city. As years passed, however, I saw the destruction of one fine building after another, including Jay's Habersham House. But in 1951 Miss Margaret Thomas died, bequeathing the now famous Owens-Thomas House to the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences. This house was the first fine landmark to be saved, renovated and opened to the public. This was a great inspiration to the group who founded Historic Savannah.

Jane Adair Wright.

*One of the founders of Historic Savannah
August 23, 1966*

Obituary—March 3, 1991

Jane Wright Is Dead at 90

Miss Jane Adair Wright, one of the founders of Historic Savannah Foundation and curator of the historic Owens-Thomas House from its opening as a museum in 1954 until her retirement in 1963, died Monday at Candler General Hospital after a long illness. She was 90 years old.

She, along with six other Savannah women, helped found Historic Savannah Foundation. The group decided to form HSF in June, 1955 in an effort to save the Davenport House, which was scheduled for demolition.

In March 1963, Miss Wright became temporary curator of the Davenport House until May 1963, when she left Savannah for a tour of Europe.

“Miss Wright was one of the courageous women who saw the threat to Savannah’s Historic District and its architectural heritage and

with her friends organized Historic Savannah Foundation.

“We hope and believe that the efforts of the foundation since Miss Wright’s involvement have proved worthy of her early concerns and efforts,” Stephanie D. Churchill, executive director of HSF, said Monday.

Born in Hillsborough, Ohio, Miss Wright graduated from Randolph Macon College. Her father, the Rev. David Cady Wright, was rector of Christ Episcopal Church, for many years and Miss Wright was a communicant of the church.

She was active in civic affairs and was a founding member of the Junior League of Savannah. She served as executive secretary of the Chatham-Savannah Tuberculosis Association for several years and was interim director of the Savannah Girl Scouts. She was a member of the Georgia Historical Society and the Trustees Garden Club.

Surviving are several nephews, Morton Wright of Savannah, Freeman and Lynn Wright, both of Miami, Fla, Ned Wright of North Carolina, and William and David Wright, both of Alabama; and two nieces, Mrs. Mary Burton of North Carolina and Mrs. Jan Camacho of Savannah.

Memorial service: 10 a.m.
Wednesday at Christ Episcopal.
Sipple Mortuary.

From: **“The Tour: 50 Years of Southern Charm”**
March 24, 1985



Miss Jane Adair Wright, chairman of the first tour [Savannah Tour of Homes and Gardens], remembers . . . a time when the tour was in its infancy and the “organizational machine” consisted of a few ladies whose sole intention was to sponsor “an enjoyable afternoon at some of the city’s finest homes” and hopefully, make a few dollars for their

church [Christ Episcopal Church] charities.

“The first tour in 1935 was really simple,” Miss Wright said. “We started out at the rectory and we walked to Miss Meta Thomas’ house (now the Owens-Thomas House). From there, we went on to Arthur Gordon’s house on Bull and Oglethorpe (now the Juliette Gordon Low House), then over to the Randolph Anderson home on Charlton (now the home of the Walter Hartridges). Then we had tea and went home. That was it.”

“There were only Savannah people on the tour – we hadn’t advertised outside of the city --- and, because there were so few people involved, the planning phase wasn’t very complicated,” she said.

The germ of the idea for a tour of homes came from the late Mrs. William H. Myers, who suggested that the women of Christ Church sponsor an event in Savannah like the one that was already enjoying considerable success in Charleston, SC.

Mrs. Myers would say later that, while her suggestion met with some skepticism at first, it was the mention of Charleston – Savannah’s historic sister city whose citizens have always shared a good-natured rivalry with Savannahians over which city was the prettiest and most historic—that sparked local interest in promoting a Savannah tour.

“We charged \$1 for our first tour,” Miss Wright said, “Altogether, we made \$50 that day – and were absolutely delighted and proud of ourselves.”

Far-flung publicity brought national attention to the tour in the 1960s, with magazines such as *Town and Country* spotlighting the tour and Savannah homes on their pages. And in 1976, the year of the Bicentennial celebration, the Women of Christ Church, took a partner in the sponsorship of the tour – Historic Savannah Foundation.