

On the 50th Anniversary of HSF: From “*Miss Lucy*”

Archival source: Article/essay

From: 7 Ladies File

Description: three pages (we only have 2 pages), manual type-written article with pencil and ink edited notations, paper yellowed with age

Attributed: Mrs. F. P. McIntire (typed at the top of page 3)

I think two major considerations were incentive for the founding of Historic Savannah. One was the need for organization, the other necessity for making leading citizens aware of the rare heritage they possess. We had one of the most beautiful cities and unique in the United States. There was considerable interest but it was dormant until a crisis arose, and then it was too late. Dedication and appreciation were important but implementation was necessary.

Year after year architecturally beautiful homes and historic structures were going down and interest did not save them.

The waterfront, one of the most historic and distinctive in the country, was being neglected and was decaying. In 19__ I wrote the Chamber of Commerce calling attention to the potentialities of developing this area and asking their support. The letter was politely acknowledged.

Perhaps the catalyst for taking action was loss of the old market, one of the handsomest and most traditional city buildings. When destruction was threatened those of us interested were told – at the last – that if a constructive use could be found for it, it could be saved. Desperate skirmishes were futile, and it went down and with it one of our greatest tourist potentials.

All around us rare architectural treasures were going into decay, chief among them the Davenport House. Our group had planned not to announce our plan until we had completed a long range program, in order to be prepared in event of a crisis. Ironically the crisis developed with the purchase of the Davenport House. We sounded the call and had the good sense to appeal to the male contingent, many of whom had previously regarded such groups as “hysterical.” None of us sought office but approached leading citizens in the industrial and business world.

Having noticed the gradual blotting out of the distinctive character and fine architecture of old Savannah by a universal lack of zoning, we realized some organization should be established to keep Savannah a part of the historical tradition to which it belonged.

Bio: Lucy Barrow McIntire: 1886 – 1967

Lucy Barrow McIntire was endowed with a keen sense of responsibility toward humanity, and gifts of intelligence, vision, courage and humility, which she used to enrich the lives of her fellow Georgians in numerous ways. “Miss Lucy” as she was affectionately known, liked having her “finger in the pie.” Her youthful zeal to find pragmatic solutions to the myriad problems facing her city and state did not cease with age; in her seventies she spoke out in favor of civil rights for African Americans with the same enthusiasm with which she had supported women’s suffrage half a century earlier.

She was born in 1886 into a prominent Athens family. She married Savannah attorney Francis Percival McIntire, and they settled in his hometown where they raised a family of six children. She was a devoted wife and mother, but her concerns stretched beyond her own hearth to encompass the whole community.

Mrs. McIntire soon became a leader in the civic and social life of Savannah. She helped found local chapters of the League of Women Voters and the Junior League of Savannah, serving as first president of the latter. She was also president of the Savannah Suffrage Association and the Georgia Federation of Women’s Clubs. Her energetic efforts on behalf of Woodrow Wilson’s presidential campaign led to her appointment as the first Georgia Committeewoman on the Democratic National Committee.

Her artistic interests included amateur theater (one award-winning production was presented at the Belasco Theater in New York City in 1928) and poetry. She helped found the Georgia Poetry Society in the early twenties and won a number of its prizes during a forty-four year membership. She also helped found Savannah Country Day School and the Historic Savannah Foundation.

But it was to improving social welfare that Mrs. McIntire dedicated most of her time. In the spirit of the Progressive Era in which she grew up, she helped to establish a free lunch program in the Chatham County schools long before the federal government became involved. She was a founder of the Savannah Nursery School, the Women’s Relief committee, the Juvenile Protection Association, the Savannah Health Center, the Chatham Nursing Home, and Savannah’s Christmas Stocking, in addition to serving as president or on the boards of the Bethesda-Savannah Children’s Center, Child Placement Services, Social Services Exchange, the Crittendon Home, United Community Services, and the Council of Social Agencies of Savannah-Chatham County.

In addition to her volunteer efforts, Mrs. McIntire held several professional positions. She was appointed a Field Supervisor for the Works Progress Administration under Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930’s. During World War II, she founded the U.S.O.–Soldiers Social Service of Savannah and became Service Director of the American Red Cross.

Not surprisingly, Savannah recognized her good works with numerous awards. She was named Woman of the Year in 1955 and was given both the Groves Award for outstanding contributions to Savannah’s philanthropic progress, and the Oglethorpe Trophy, Savannah’s highest civic award, in 1958. She was the first woman named to the Metropolitan Planning Commission in Savannah.

Lucy McIntire died in 1967 and is buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery. For six decades of unceasing, selfless service and effective leadership in making her city, county and state a better place to live, we take pride in naming Lucy Barrow McIntire a Georgia Woman of Achievement.

From the web: [Georgia Women of Achievement](#)