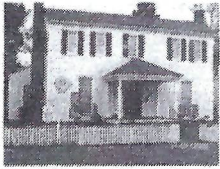


Martin County Historical Society, Inc.



Quarterly Newsletter



Volume 13 Issue 1

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Spring 2021

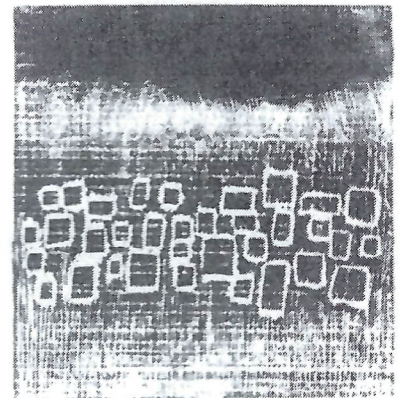
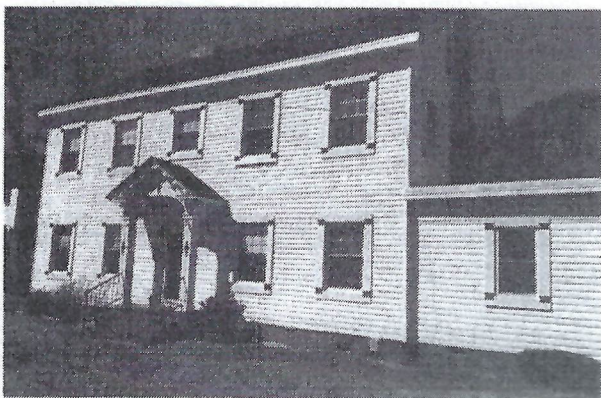
The Enterprise.

WILLIAMSTON, N. C., FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1907

Historic issues of The Enterprise, a newspaper from Williamston, N.C., are available in the North Carolina Newspapers digital collection at www.digitalnc.org/newspapers/the-enterprise-williamston-n-c/. Thousands of issues have been digitized, covering the years 1901 through 1942. The Enterprise archive is a great source for local history, covering subjects from bridge tournaments to local efforts in WWI and WWII.

Martin County Native Big Influence on NC Art Scene

Susan Elizabeth Moore, or "Sue Moore" was born in Williamston in 1926 to Clayton and Jennie Swanner Moore. The Moore-Whitley House on Church Street was her childhood home until 1936 when her family moved to Winston Salem. She attended Salem College and later received her M.F.A. at UNC Greensboro. More notably, she studied at Black Mountain College with Joseph Albers and Jacob Lawrence in the 1940s. She studied in Europe from 1959-60. She taught at the multiple institutions and exhibited from Atlanta to New York and Paris. She assisted with founding the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. Widely recognized as Winston Salem's first Modernist painter, her works are in numerous collections including The Mint Museum in Charlotte, The North Carolina Museum of Art, The Weatherspoon at UNCG, Davidson College, Cameron Art Museum, and many others. She died in March of 2013, Pictured below are the Moore-Whitley house, a 1940s photograph of Sue, and her work "Approaching Mykonos" in the collection of the North Carolina Museum of Art.





Big moves from Main Street

Like many of the historic cities and towns in eastern North Carolina, Williamston's historic district is home to many homes who have been moved from their original locations. In the 1920s, while Main Street was becoming a more commercial corridor, one of the largest moves came for the Cushing Biggs Hassell house (circa 1848) as it was moved to the back of its lot on Main Street and rotated to face Church Street. Even bigger moves would soon be in store for little girl who was born there.

Although born in her Great Grandfather's house on June 18, 1911, Lucile "Lucy" Hassell soon moved down the street to the Hassell-King house on the corner of Main and North Watts Streets. The Great Depression brought great losses for her family, including these homes. In Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression by Studs Terkel, Lucy (using the name Dianna Morgan) reports her family originally intended for her to attend a more exclusive college like Wellesley, Vassar, or Smith, but due to the failure of banks she instead attended Salem College in North Carolina. During her Junior year she returned home to find the phone disconnected. As time went by they no longer had a cook, or a maid. Her family lost her Great Grandfather's house.

Lucy reports that direction for her life came a few years after she finished college. She was offered a job with a New Deal program and worked in county offices for relief programs. Here she noticed that people had to "hit bottom" before they qualified for assistance. Lucy's family's former cook and laundress came in need of assistance—living in a shack with wallpaper on the walls for insulation. Lucy wondered "what kind of country is this that let's people live in houses like this and necessitates their using the Sunday paper for wallpaper."

She began defending the social programs she was working in and advocating for those in need. She began working as a social worker "corroborating the fact that [people] were destitute" so that they would qualify for assistance.

In 1935, Lucy married labor lawyer Thomas Harris, and moved to Washington DC. Already she was picketing for better wages for lower income workers. Lucy attributed her time working with those less fortunate, and being less well off than her life began, to "waking" her to the needs of others in a way that would eventually cause her to become a vital part of several 20th century social movements.

Lucy's marriage to Thomas ended in divorce in 1943. In 1947 she marriage again to Kenneth Floyd Montgomery, a Chicago lawyer and heir to a portion of the C. W. Post cereal family's fortune via his uncle's marriage.

In Chicago, Lucy and her husband used their resources to establish the Henry Horner nursery school, a research school to find methods of improving academic achievements of disadvantaged children. Later, she would become the subject of FBI files, congressional inquiry, and national interest due to her involvement, both financially through the Post inheritance, and hands on, in the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, The Black Panther Party, and on the executive committee of the NAACP.

Lucy's home became host to the likes of Martin Luther King, Jr and Stokely Carmichael (head of the SNCC). Her home after her separation from her husband, and later divorce in 1969 served as a safe house for radicals like

Fred Hampton, Angela Davis, and Eldridge Cleaver.



THE MONTGOMERY NORTHBROOK, IL HOME

Her activism and notoriety peaked in the 1960s when she served on the executive committee of the NAACP, received the Clarence Darrow Humanitarian Award, trained volunteers for the Mississippi Student Project, helped found Women for Peace, and attended the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee conference in a coat by Christian Dior.

Young people frequently came and went from her Old Town home, a safe-house for activists at the time.

"I don't think she kept a lock on her door," said Studs Terkel. "She could easily have been the doyenne of Chicago society if she so chose, but she didn't. So she put her dough, her thoughts in the civil rights movement and the peace movement."

Lucy was a member of the Civil Rights Committee of the American Civil Liberties Union and financed the Center for Constitutional Rights and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

"You would find her at places at 2 o'clock in the morning addressing envelopes and licking stamps," political consultant Don Rose said. "There were some people who were givers and some people who were workers, and she was both."

Though her energy waned later in her life, her support for organizations and non conformist individuals never did; she had spent down her fortune by her death in 2001 at the age of 90. She was known for her colorful hats, her warm smile, generous heart, and deep sensitivity to the Black civil rights struggle, the arts, and peace movements.

A memorial to Lucy stands in the Hassell family plot at Woodlawn Cemetery. It fittingly describes her as "philanthropist for radical causes, civil rights activist, patron of the arts, daughter of the south."



Hours

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Meetings

General (Membership) Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month., except June and July, 10:00am at the Biggs House. Annual membership dues are as follows:

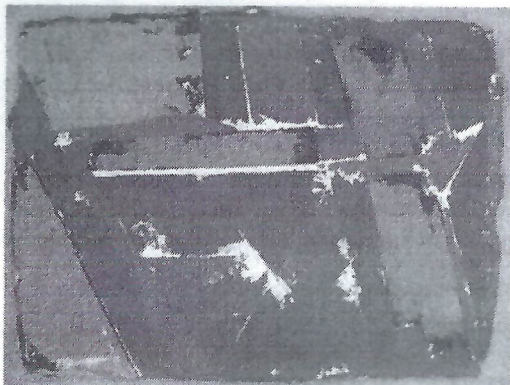
Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$30.00
Business	\$50.00

MCHS Officers 2021

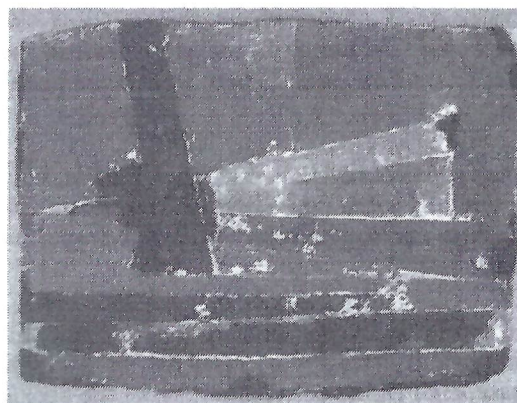
- President - Jane Benson
- Vice President - Bonnie Robertson
- Recording Secretary - L. David Smith
- Treasurer & Book Sale Coordinator - Shirley Wilson



More works of art by Williamston NC native, Susan "Sue" Moore:



Left, "Landscape" and right "Turner Turns Yadkin." Encaustic on paper



Below, "An Egyptian View." Wood-block Print

