

*History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.*

# LIVING HISTORY WITH LUCY HUIE!

by KIMBERLY ALLEN photographs by CURTIS GREEN

No matter where you go in Clayton County, you are liable to find the name Huie inscribed onto a building, plaque or mentioned in some way as a part of the county's history.

**MRS. LUCY CLINE HUIE OWNS A SIGNIFICANT** role in that history, and played an integral part in shaping the Clayton County we know today. Wife, mother, army hospital volunteer, beef cattle farmer, civil rights activist, social worker, librarian, historian, travel agent, and heroine. Somewhere in between she found time to graduate from college, becoming a proud alumni of both Wesleyan College at Macon, and Emory University. All of these labels and then some personify her eclectic lifestyle.



## EARLY YEARS

Mrs. Huie's father was a circuit-riding Methodist preacher, so she spent much of her childhood moving from place to place. But it wasn't until she attended the University of Denver for one year that her life would forever change.

"In Colorado, they didn't have a black and white problem. That definitely affected my attitude to come back and see how prejudiced the people were here compared to there," reflects Huie, who immediately began sharing what she learned with others upon her return to Georgia. "I was asked to speak at my church youth group once, and I told them how I had black students in class with me and they were just as smart as any other students."

Lucy Cline's new outlook on race relations would begin to lead her down a road that white people did not often travel.

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Nestled within walking distance of busy Tara Boulevard is Mrs. Huie's modest home, which only offers more proof that they just don't make 'em like they used to. The huge trees encircling the property provide a sense of being way out in the country, probably because at one time it was considered to be just that.

"I never dreamed that I would look out of my window and not see cows," Huie says through laughter. "I remember asking myself, 'Why are they building all of these streets? Who is going to live on these streets? I can't believe the size of the county now, because it used to be all farms. Not so long ago, when you left the city limits we were the last house for quite a distance. All this progression is amazing."

Mrs. Huie happily gives us the grand tour, and as soon as we begin I immediately recognize that we are embarking on a unique experience. Offering a glimpse into yesteryear, this home showcases artwork and furniture that have stood the test of time.

"This house is like a history book," offers Huie as she shows off various hand painted portraits and pictures created by her late husband, Arthur, which include paintings of trips they've taken to Mexico, Jamaica, and even one from their Franklin, North Carolina honeymoon.

"These were done in the South Pacific during World War II near the island of New Guinea," Huie explains as she draws attention to a painting of a grass shack overlooking white sand and aqua blue water that will make you want to hit the beach. "His army unit was sitting back there in the jungles waiting to be called to war, and they

didn't call them. They were bored to death, and weren't supposed to leave the area, but they gave Arthur special permission and he was allowed to go out and paint things that he saw. He didn't have a camera; he captured everything he saw with his watercolors."

Once he was back in Georgia, Arthur Huie became a cattle farmer by trade, but looking at his art work it is clear that he missed his true calling. Although decades old, the pictures lining these walls are still so expressive and filled with such vibrant colors that one feels like they have traveled the world simply by walking the narrow hallway from one room into the next.

The Huies have been a part of the Clayton County landscape for so long that her husband's creations include what used to be dirt roads and backyards lined with blooming wisteria along with the front yard of his aunt's house on Main Street, all of which are now modernized with intersections, buildings, and concrete. Arthur even painted a picture of the original Mundy's Mill, complete with the brown wooden building and

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wheel that was once used for grinding corn and grain.

The couple first met when Arthur decided to track down the Cline brothers, with whom he had been friends before World War II. While stationed in South Carolina, fate intervened when a friend needed a ride to Oxford, Georgia, the same town where the Clines resided. After dropping off his friend, Arthur visited the family home hoping to get contact information so that he could write the brothers. Arthur instead found Lucy, who was home on a weekend break from her job at an army hospital. The pair soon began writing letters to each other, even after he was stationed overseas.

Arthur and Lucy married in 1947 and immediately moved to Jonesboro, although the Huie family had lived in the area since right after the Creek Indians were exiled. Arthur passed away in 1979.

Also scattered throughout the home are just a few of the many awards, honors, and commendations Mrs. Huie has received for her work in and around Clayton County over the years. But one in particular, a square-shaped crystal award containing a gold plated inscription, holds a special place in her heart.

"Before Tara Boulevard came, we owned land from here all the way down to the Flint River, and

we had cows in the pasture and rode horses. My son, Jim, was 14 years old and he just loved horses and liked to ride and so we gave him lessons from somebody in Griffin that taught horseback riding. He was becoming a pretty skilled horseman, had learned to jump fences and do show off kinds of things. There was a girl from his school, Judy Cash, who wanted to learn to ride, and Jim said he was going to teach her," explains Huie, a mixture of sadness and pride in her voice. "They were out on Fayetteville Road and a car came.

Judy was riding her horse when it got out of control and ran out into the road, then Jim rushed to get her horse under control because she was just a beginner. Jim was killed by the car and his horse died, but Judy was saved. This story was featured in the Atlanta paper of how this boy saved a girl's life. Someone who worked for the Carnegie Company read the story, and that's why he received the Andrew Carnegie Hero Medal."

Hence the Jim Huie Aquatic Center in Jonesboro which was named for him because of his heroism.

It is adjacent to Clayton State University's Lucy C. Huie Hall, both shadowed by the Clayton County Justice Center.

Mrs. Huie recalls taking a writing course during a summer at Emory, and the assignment was to write about the most frightening experience she'd ever had in her life. As it turns out, this task would be an easy one. "The first thing that pops into my mind was the night the Klan surrounded the car," she says.

Most of us could not even fathom living in the throes of a segregated south during the 1950s and

1960s, yet Huie and her husband helped start a chapter of HOPE (Help Our Public Education) in Clayton County. At this point in history according to Huie, Alabama and Mississippi opted to shut down their public schools completely instead of allowing blacks to attend. The choice of whether or not to integrate was just about to come before the Georgia Legislature, and HOPE advocates were working hard to get Clayton County to vote to accept it.

"HOPE tried to hold a public meeting. This was not mentioned in the papers, but I know Arthur went to every businessman on Main Street in Jonesboro to try to get them to come, and I got on the phone and made scores of telephone calls. I also called every minister in the county, black and white. And not a single one came," laments Huie. "It was surprising how few people came out to this public meeting at the Jonesboro Presbyterian Church, but the Klan was considered dangerous and nobody wanted to take a chance. I mean, those were scary days."

"After the meeting was over I remember Arthur and I had keys to close up the church. One of the last people to leave came running back inside and said 'Quick! Ya'll get out the Klan is gathering outside!' We looked out and a couple of cars had already come, and men in white robes and hoods were getting out of the cars. All we could think about was we had left our four children at home with a teenaged babysitter, and we felt like we just had to get home."

"We go to the door and start out, and some of the Klansmen gathered on all sides of our car. Two on his side, two on my side, two at the front bumper, and two at the back bumper, just standing there," recalls Huie.

"So we walk out to the car and not a word was said, and Arthur gets to his car door and they move away, and I get to my door and they back away. Arthur gets in, starts the motor, and they go get in their own cars. We turned around and drove away, and we could see about three or four carloads following us. We got out, ran in the house, cut out all the lights, and the children were already in bed. We looked out the window and the Klan was gathered out there in front of the house under the streetlight and eventually decided just to leave."

The Huies thought that was the end of it, until the following Friday when the first of three crosses was burned on an embankment in front of their house. "We didn't even see the cross when it was burned," Huie adds. "We went out to get the mail and saw it down on the embankment, it was only a little more than knee high.



"We didn't even see the cross when it was burned," Huie adds. "We went out to get the mail and saw it down on the embankment, it was only a little more than knee high. So I pulled it up, brought it to the house, wrapped it in newspapers and put it in the basement."

Many years later, Huie could still smell the kerosene used to set the cross afire when she got close to it. She eventually disposed of it in order to finally be set free of the negative memories and mentality that went along with it.

Although not easily accepted, desegregation eventually became the law of the land. While there were about 20 Clayton County residents involved with HOPE, many more were sympathetic to the cause but could not get involved for various reasons. "It's amazing what a few people can do when they really work at it," says Huie. In the years thereafter, she received a few letters of thanks from African-American students who were able to attend school in Clayton County due to the efforts of HOPE, the Huies, and many others. But when asked if the family lost a lot of friends because of their stance, Mrs. Huie simply stated "People didn't talk about it. Plus we were in a freer position to do what we wanted to and not worry about what people thought of us because Arthur raised beef cattle. The cattle were not interested in our politics."

Decades later, Mrs. Huie and her friend, Dr. Philip Calloway, interviewed many Clayton Countians on the topic of social change since World War II for what was dubbed the Oral History Project. Unbeknownst to some of them, she already knew those in the county who had been Klansmen. "Many people were interviewed. It was real interesting because a number of them would say 'Yeah, I've heard about that organization.' But only one admitted to being a part of the Klan."

In all, Huie conducted about 25 taped interviews

between 1989 and 1991, and donated all the audiocassettes to Emory University. According to the Emory Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Library, the majority of candidates either worked in, lived close to, or came from Clayton County. Some notable interviewees were: Joe Mundy, Wade Starr, Herman Talmadge and his wife, Betty, and KKK Grand Dragon Calvin Craig, who spent his later years flip-flopping between loyalties to white supremacist and civil rights groups according to the New York Times.

Craig was also the only one to admit his involvement with the Klan, and the one Huie deemed to be the most interesting interview she has ever conducted. However, she also remains impressed with some of the "really quiet people that were not pushing their way into the limelight."

Huie's next endeavor occurred as a result of her involvement with Historic Jonesboro, where she discovered an opportunity to expand on the county's history in an entirely different direction.

*"I was tired of hearing about Gone with the Wind and Scarlett," said Huie, laughing out loud. "I mean after all, other things have happened here."*

"So I told Historic Jonesboro that I would work with them as a trustee on one condition, and that was if I could work with Native American history because I was very interested in the people that lived here before any of the white people came at all, and they agreed to that."

Huie's graduate degree in library science would again serve her well, as she began delving into Native American history along with Clayton County historian Ted Key, with whom she worked closely. Huie also donated many Native American artifacts to that collection.

Native American Heritage Day has been celebrated in Clayton for 28 years now, and this event is still going strong, taking place on Saturday, April 30 this year.

Entrepreneur Huie also owned her own travel agency for awhile. "I had so much fun doing that! I didn't make any money (laughs) but I got all these free trips."

Back in the day, travel agencies used to send their agents to scout out locations so they could be knowledgeable about the destination when talking it up to potential customers, and this job perk provided Huie a chance to see the world. "I made it a point of going to every continent, even Australia. But I always came back home to Jonesboro."

Huie just celebrated her ninetieth birthday in February, and is thoroughly enjoying life and retirement. She is also more health conscious and active than most people half her age, and it shows. Mrs. Huie walks a half mile every day, and checks her email regularly. A self-proclaimed health nut, she says her favorite meals consist of healthy foods.

"I've had several people tell me I was a health nut, and now I'm glad I was! (laughs) I started taking vitamins and watching my diet and all that stuff way back when, before it got popular. It was considered fanatical then, kind of nuts."

When asked if she still drives, she proudly exclaims "You ought to see me drive!" (although she admittedly limits her outings to Jonesboro.) Huie attends First United Methodist Church of Jonesboro, but also likes to visit other churches and denominations just to take in different experiences. One thing she doesn't like, is cooking. "I've cooked enough over the years but I love to eat!" she adds.

And although Mrs. Huie has watched the county change completely during her lifetime, she doesn't have a problem with its demographic or political shifts. "I think Clayton County has a really good future," she shares.

Lucy Huie has always marched to the beat of her own drummer, which is why her contributions to changing the ways, lives, and minds of folks in Clayton County is still felt today. **WRC**

## Clayton County Corrections: In the Forefront of Saving Dollars For County Government

by Warden Frank Taylor Smith

*In an unsuspecting pocket of Clayton County sits a facility that is leading in saving our county's tax dollars.* Twenty-three counties in Georgia house and employ state inmates as a way to save tax dollars for their citizens. Clayton County happens to be leading the pack!

In a unique structure, Frank Taylor Smith is not only warden for Clayton County Prison but he also serves as Department Director for the Corrections Department. Because of this structure, the warden has community service workers assigned by the courts to the Refuse Control Division. With a blend of corrections officers, inmates, civilian employees, and community service workers ready to apply to the work at hand, Warden Smith is proud to say—"Clayton County has more grass cut at the same time, more roads cleaned, and more graffiti suppressed than ever!" At one time, the County had a 90-day cycle for such things.

Clayton County Prison became the first facility in Georgia to implement a "Forced Cleaning" program in coordination with the County Code Enforcement Office. Instead of allowing foreclosed properties to blight communities, the County Board of Commissioners empowered Code Enforcement to refer terminal foreclosure cases to the prison for cleanup. In turn property owners (banks or credit unions) were served with tax bills to pay for it. Much positive publicity for the County and prison was realized as an innovative way to deal with a difficult problem. Although the program was only started in September of 2010, over 250 properties have been cleaned to date.

Clayton County Prison and Refuse Control took an aggressive stance against graffiti in the community. It said in effect to perpetrators: "We have more resour-

ces than you, and will immediately cover up what you tag." With a prison detail at the ready—backed up by Refuse Control—and paint donated by the community, the prison was able to deliver on its pledge and keep the County nearly graffiti free.

Clayton County Prison also fielded 14 officer supervised details that did a variety of work around the county, for example: two details were construction details whose work was saleable to Clayton County cities, with many custom renovation projects to their credit; two details were equipped with five each zero-turn riding mowers, supervised by officers riding on Gator vehicles that made highly effective grass-cutting teams for the county rights-of-way; one detail focused on forced cleaning; and others did park cleaning and road projects. Public comment is very positive.

Refuse Control Division's mission is the cleaning of county buildings, the removal of litter from grounds and roads, graffiti abatement, and grass cutting using inmate labor, court ordered community service workers, and a section of 9 Bush Hogs for heavy duty rural rights-of-way. County residents can contact Refuse Control to have debris removed for a nominal fee. Yard debris, furniture, appliances, limbs (up to 6" in diameter and no longer than 10 ft.), bags of leaves, and miscellaneous items can be picked up. Old paint cans are only accepted if they are empty or the paint has been solidified with cat litter and no lids. Still liquid cans of paint can be dropped off at Refuse Control to be used to address graffiti. Drop off times are during business hours only. The following items cannot be picked up: tree trunks, batteries, shingles, bricks, any heavy metal or hazardous items.

In addition to furnishing valuable labor to the County—which was valued at \$2,753,019 for FY 2010—the Corrections Department also brings in cash revenues:

<b>Prison</b>	<b>\$1,748,713</b>	(State Subsidy, Water Authority & City Contracts)
<b>Refuse Control</b>	<b>\$89,403</b>	(Debris pick-ups)
<b>Totalling \$1,838,116</b>		

The net economic impact of the Corrections Department is \$4,591,135 on an annual basis. This is a pocket book benefit to citizens, which would mean considerably more taxes to derive the same services if the Corrections Department did not exist.

Smith is proud of the invaluable labor and cold cash that his department brings to the table!

—Warden Smith is a Retired U.S Army Colonel.

