

Lucy Jane Worth Jackson

July 24, 1828 – January 1, 1909
by Connie McAdams, March 2022

Lucy Jane Worth was born in 1828 in Randolph County, NC — the second child of Jonathan Worth and Martitia Daniel Worth. Over the next eighteen years, the family grew to include 8 children (7 daughters and a son). Lucy and her siblings were born into a prominent, privileged, and educated family. Her father would later become Governor of North Carolina. Her mother, Martitia, was a niece of Archibald DeBow Murphey. Both Jonathan Worth and Murphey were noted proponents of public education.

In 1839 Jonathan Worth helped to establish the Randolph Female Academy (also known as Asheboro or Asheborough Female Academy) in Asheboro. Lucy was eleven years old when the school opened, and she and her sisters were educated there. The curriculum included spelling, reading, grammar, geography, arithmetic, philosophy, rhetoric, “needlework,” and “music on piano,” with an emphasis on spelling, reading, and writing. Jonathan Worth’s belief in education for women provided young Lucy Worth and her sisters unusual independence and exposure to political knowledge. Accounts suggest that Lucy developed into a public-spirited, inventive woman, and a leader in community affairs.



Lucy Worth Jackson.

Photo contributed by Sallie Sypher.

Lucy Worth was 21 years old in 1849 when she married Joseph John (J.J.) Jackson of Pittsboro. J.J. Jackson was from another prominent family. He was the grandson of Joseph John (Chatham Jack) Alston, and at the time of their marriage he was a graduate of UNC and had already represented Chatham County in the General Assembly in Raleigh. A few years after her marriage, one of Lucy’s younger sisters, Elvira, married J.J.’s brother, Samuel.

Lucy and J.J. appear to have lived much like others of their privileged class. Their residence was on Fayetteville Street in Pittsboro, (the main north-south thoroughfare through town at the time) and J J.’s law office was on the same property as their house. J.J. was an entrepreneur and attorney. He was one of several prominent citizens who urged commercial development in Pittsboro. He owned several Pittsboro lots, as well as tracts on the Deep River in the Chatham County coal country. He also served as the first treasurer of the Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company, and at age seventy, as mayor of Pittsboro. Lucy was “keeping house,” during these years. According to census records, the couple did enslave household help.¹

Between 1853 and 1865, Lucy and J.J. had five children— Bettie Louisa (who married H. A. London of Pittsboro), Caroline Martitia (Carrie), Jonathan Worth, Lucy Murphy (who married J. A. Currie of Cumberland), and Samuel Spencer.

Lucy Jackson and her family survived the Civil War. The 1870 census shows John and Lucy Jackson living in Center Township with their five children. John's occupation is listed as farmer, while Lucy's occupation is "keeping house." The census also lists three other household members — Sophy Jackson, a black female, 13-year-old domestic servant; Martha Harwood, a 50-year-old black female whose occupation was "keeping house"; and Emanuel Cotton, a 60-year-old black male farm laborer. By 1880, the Jackson household includes only Lucy and J.J. and their four youngest children. J.J. is again listed as a lawyer, while Lucy is "keeping house." In 1900, only 44-year-old, unmarried daughter, Carrie, lives in the home with J.J. and Lucy.

"Keeping house" apparently involved a lot of variety for Lucy. The Pittsboro newspaper, *The Chatham Record*, (owned and edited by Lucy's son-in-law Henry A. London), records many of Mrs. J.J. Jackson's visitors, travels, and other activities. Even her volunteer pumpkin vine made the news in 1907.

According to *Chatham County 1771-1971*, Lucy Worth Jackson "inherited some of the executive ability of her father, Jonathan Worth, Reconstruction Governor..." In her support of Confederate soldiers, she was "one of the most inventive women in this community, showing remarkable skill in her work. She cut up her handsome carpets, as did many other Southern women, and devised many things to cheer these poor men."

Lucy's husband, J.J., was part-owner of a coal mine near Carbondon in Chatham County and also a gold mine on Cane creek in what is now Alamance County, then part of Chatham. Lucy made at least two beautiful color maps of areas in Chatham County: *Map of the Coalfields of Chatham and a Portion of the Mineral Region of N. C.*, circa 1874, and *Map of Cane Creek Gold Mines, Chatham County, North Carolina*, circa 1878." Copies of the Coalfields map can be seen (and purchased) in the Chatham County Historical Museum.



During the 1880's Lucy headed up an effort to raise funds for long-desired courthouse clocks—collecting \$130 of the \$450 needed before the town's leaders requested that the funds be used for a school instead. During that same period, in 1884, Lucy entered some of her work in the "North Carolina Exposition" (now known as the State Fair) in Raleigh. She was awarded a medal for her "lady's work" entry — a large moss map of the county.

The unique art of making pictures using common mosses from the North Carolina woods was clearly one of Lucy's talents. A January 1976 article in the *Chatham Record* about Lord Cornwallis' trek through Chatham County and overnight stay at Mial Scurlock's home just south of what is now Pittsboro quotes Lucy London Anderson (great granddaughter of Lucy Worth Jackson). "It is said that a Tory spy was hanged in the immense oak tree which stood at the gateway. This historic place, tree and all, has been preserved in a large moss picture,

the work of Mrs. Lucy Worth Jackson, talented daughter of Pittsboro.” The moss picture described here is currently part of the collection of the North Carolina Museum of History.



*Mial Scurlock House near Pittsboro, by Lucy Worth Jackson, executed in moss and paint.
Original in the North Carolina Museum of History.*

Another reference to Lucy Worth Jackson's moss art is found in an April 1960 article in the *Chatham Record*. The article summarizes a meeting of the Chatham Historical Society. "Lemuel R Johnson and Mrs. Fred Jerome asked the approval of the society in borrowing from the State Hall of History in Raleigh a picture of Chatham's first Court House. This picture, fashioned realistically with moss and oil paint, was made by Mrs. Lucy Worth Jackson, grandmother of Mrs. Jerome."

Lucy lived out her later years in her home in Pittsboro with her husband J.J., and their daughter Carrie. According to Lucy's obituary, the couple celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1899 and in her final summer she invited her surviving sisters to Pittsboro for a reunion. A 1902 article in the *Chatham Record* explains that the "ancient borough" of Pittsboro now has a complete telephone system. One of the first telephone subscribers is listed as J.J. Jackson.

Lucy was an active member of the Chatham United Daughters of the Confederacy chapter, and her daughter Bettie, Mrs. H. A. London, was an officer in the local chapter for many

Chatham's Monument.



The above is a picture of the monument unveiled last Friday in memory of Chatham's Confederate soldiers. It was designed by Mrs. J. J. Jackson, of this place, and is the work of Mr. C. J. Hulin, proprietor of the Durham Marble Works, who has cause to be proud of his workmanship. It is pronounced by many persons to be handsomer than some other monuments in this State that cost a great deal more. The following is a full description of it:

It is of Mt. Airy granite and is composed of several pieces as follows:

First base is seven feet square sixteen inches thick and is placed on a mound two feet high made of concrete cement, sand and stone

Second base is five feet, eight inches square and twelve inches thick

Third base is four feet four inches square and sixteen inches thick.

First die is four and a half feet high by three feet square

First cap is four feet square and nineteen inches high.

Second die is six feet, eight inches high and two feet and a half square.

Second cap is three feet four inches square and nineteen inches high.

All four sides of the first die are polished and the remainder of the monument has a smooth surface.

The granite monument is surmounted with a bronze statue or figure of a fully equipped Confederate soldier with his gun at parade rest. This figure is made of standard government bronze and is seven feet in height.

The total height of the monument is 27 feet, including the mound, all the granite pieces and the bronze statue.

years. Bettie, along with her husband, Henry London, led the effort to raise funds for a confederate monument in Chatham. The monument was erected in 1907 and the *Chatham Record* of that year noted that Mrs. J.J. Jackson designed the marble base for the statue.

J.J. Jackson died in 1902, and Lucy lived until January 1, 1909. They are buried side by side in the cemetery of St Bartholomew's Episcopal Church on Salisbury Street in Pittsboro. In Lucy's obituary, she is remembered as "a woman of beautiful character and was adored by everybody. She had more friends than any other woman in Chatham County". She is memorialized by the inscription on her tombstone "Her life was filled with the sunlight of God's love and reflected in unselfish deeds."

From an almost illegible article in the January 6, 1909, *Chatham Record* (owned and edited by her son-in-law, HA London): "She was blessed with rare artistic talents and literary attainments. At our State Exposition in 1884 she made a large moss map of this county, that was so much admired and was so rare a work of art that a magnificent gold medal was presented to her in special recognition. Her love for the beautiful made her always enjoy every phase of nature, the rain drops, the clouds, the green grass, the flowers. The purity of her own heart prompted her to think the best of every one, and to see only the best points in every one with whom she came in contact, and to speak only kind words, for with her 'kind words were more than coronets.' Blessed memories will ever hover around every recollection of her."

A Pleasant Entertainment.

The young ladies and gentlemen of this place gave an entertainment last night that was much enjoyed by all who attended. The exhibition of "Mrs. Jarley's Wax-Work" was quite amusing and created much mirth. The vocal music was loudly applauded, and the charade, entitled "The Last Loaf", was most creditably acted. All of the actors performed remarkably well, each seeming to feel the spirit of the character represented. The minstrels produced roars of laughter with their comic songs and ludicrous costumes. A beautiful doll was voted for—five cents a vote—and was presented to little Miss Dot Manning, she having received the largest number of votes. Much of the success of this pleasant entertainment is due to the management of Mrs. J. J. Jackson, and our citizens should appreciate the persevering efforts of this lady to secure funds for the purchase of our town clock.



Lucy Worth Jackson, 1906

—Mrs. J. J. Jackson, of this place, has a volunteer pumpkin vine over 50 feet in length which has grown through a large grape arbor on the top of which were grown nearly forty pumpkins, the largest of them weighing 32 pounds. This is the first instance we have ever heard of the top of a grape arbor being used for a pumpkin patch.

14 Nov 1907 Chatham Record

ⁱ The 1850 census shows 32-year-old Joseph Jackson, lawyer, living in Lower Regiment Chatham with his 22-year-old wife, Lucy Jane Jackson. The 1850 slave schedule for the Joseph J. Jacksons lists four enslaved persons — a 40-year-old black female, a 16-year-old black female, a 12-year-old black male, and a 40-year-old black male. Ten years later, the 1860 census shows J. J. Jackson and his wife “Lucia” living in Eastern Division, Chatham with their three oldest children. The 1860 slave schedule lists five enslaved persons with the owner “J. J. Jackson for wife” — a 27-year-old female and four children—females aged one, three, and five, and one 7-year-old male. The same slave schedule shows one slave house for the Jacksons.

Photos of Lucy contributed by Sallie (London Siegrist) Sypher, g-g-granddaughter of Lucy Worth Jackson.