

"Mount Airy News" 11-19-98

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By R.J. BERRIER 11-19-98  
Staff Writer

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Ashby

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And Ashby did just that, with the multitude of organizations that she helped establish.

Mayor Emily B. Taylor said, after hearing of the death, "Susan Ashby will really be a loss to the city of Mount Airy.

"She has been what I call the master of beautification for Mount Airy," the mayor continued. "Without her keen interest and love of her city, I don't think we would be where we are today.

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Ashby remarked, "My grandchildren will never know what a columned house looks like, the way things are going."

So she set to work.

Ashby had been involved with, among other organizations, the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation, which she helped found, serving as its chairman for many years; the Mount Airy Appearance Commission, which she chaired; the Historical Properties Commission; and the Mount Airy Planning Board.

It is because of her untiring work that trees were planted along Independence Boulevard, crape myrtles have bloomed so magnificently for years in a block along North South Street between Independence Boulevard and the railroad track, a large mural fronting the Franklin Street parking lot came into being and a board fence in front of the demolished Center Theater was painted with a scenic view.

She and her fellow committee members were instrumental in hanging baskets making their appearance along Main Street every year. She was responsible for the installation of planters and the creation of several small, public parks.

Also because of Susan Ashby, an annual tour of homes is held each December. That tour includes Trinity Episcopal Church, which is decorated by Modern Gardeners, and the historic William Alfred Moore House that is decorated by Modern Gardeners, Garden Gate Garden Club and Mountain View Garden Club. It also includes the historic Gertrude Smith House.

The task Ashby most recently was working on was the historic William Alfred Moore Home, which she saved from possible destruction in the early 1990s. The structure, built five years before the War Between the States, and its five-acre site are located on Renfro Street at Moore Avenue.

It is because of her work that several historic districts exist in Mount Airy. She launched the

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She received a statewide preservation award in September 1992. Ashby was presented with the Gertrude S. Carraway Award of Merit at the annual meeting of the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina Inc.

districting program with meetings at her historic home on Cherry Street and Mount Airy Friends Meeting, involving several of the affected homeowners in her undertaking.

Due to Ashby's efforts, a number of historic homes in Mount Airy have been saved and restored.

She received a statewide preservation award in September 1992. Ashby was presented with the Gertrude S. Carraway Award of Merit at the annual meeting of the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina Inc.

The honor recognized Ashby's efforts to establish local historic districts and other accomplishments. It was her first statewide award, although she received many local and area commendations as a member of the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation and chairman of the city Appearance Commission.

During the presentation, an official of the state organization said, "If Susan Ashby continues her strong will and determination to see Mount Airy preserved and protected, it will be a community of which its citizens, now and in the future, will truly be proud."

Ashby once told a reporter, "It's hard to have a future without a past. These architectures are in good shape and worthy of preservation."

A lifelong member of Trinity Episcopal

Church, she was instrumental in having the city's oldest church included in the National Register of Historic Places.

She was also one of the church members who fought the hardest against, and defeated, plans for Independence Boulevard to go through the present Trinity Episcopal structure. Ashby had been a member of Trinity Episcopal Church for around 70 years.

Susan Ashby was the widow of Edward Clayton Ashby II, the son of the late Dr. and Mrs. E.C. Ashby of Mount Airy. She and her husband took over the operation of L.W. Ashby Insurance Co., running the Main Street business office until selling it to Blue Ridge/Burke Insurance and retiring.

In addition to her other activities, Ashby was a registrar for Ward One for several elections.

A native of Surry County, she was the daughter of Morris A. and Susan Forbes Pendleton.

She is survived by one daughter and son-in-law, Sara Catherine and Don Phillips of Raleigh; one son and daughter-in-law, Edward C. "Ted" and Faith Ashby of Mount Airy; two grandsons; a great-grandson; three stepgrandchildren; one sister, Mrs. Marion P. Meyer of Richmond, Va.; and one brother, William "Bill" Pendleton of Mount Airy.

Graveside services will be conducted Friday at 2 p.m. in Oakdale Cemetery by the Rev. William Pilcher and John Martin.

The body will be taken Thursday from Moody Funeral Home of Mount Airy to Ashby's home at 302 Cherry St., where the family will receive friends from noon until 9 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to Trinity Episcopal Church, 472 N. Main St., Mount Airy, N.C., 27030, or to Mount Airy Restoration Foundation Inc., P.O. Box 447, Mount Airy, N.C., 27030.



## ASHBY

Mrs. Susan Pendleton Ashby, 72, of 302 Cherry St., Mount Airy, the widow of Edward C. Ashby II, died Tuesday, November 17, 1998, in North Carolina Baptist Hospital. Mrs. Ashby was born August 18, 1926, in Surry County, the daughter of the late Morris A. and Susan Forbes Pendleton. Mrs. Ashby graduated from Mount Airy High School and attended Greensboro College. Mrs. Ashby was one of the founders of the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation Inc., was active in Mount Airy's historic preservation, a member of the Mount Airy Planning Board, former member of the Appearance Commission, and a member of Trinity Episcopal Church. Surviving are one daughter and son-in-law, Sara Catherine and Don Phillips of Raleigh; one son and daughter-in-law, Edward C. "Ted" and Faith Ashby of Mount Airy; two grandsons, Edward Clayton Ashby IV and William Joseph Ashby and wife, Terri, all of Asheboro; a great-grandson, William Clay Ashby of Asheboro; three stepgrandchildren, Matthew Halso, Jonathan Halso and Leigh Halso, all of Asheboro; one sister, Mrs. Marion P. Meyer of Richmond, Va.; and one brother, William "Bill" Pendleton of Mount Airy. In addition to her husband and parents, Mrs. Ashby was preceded in death by one sister, Rena P. Hollingsworth, and two brothers, Bob Pendleton and Jake Pendleton. Graveside services will be held Friday, November 20, 1998, at 2 p.m. in Oakdale Cemetery, conducted by the Rev. William Pilcher and Mr. John Martin. Her body will be taken from Moody Funeral Home of Mount Airy on Thursday to her home at 302 Cherry St., where the family will receive friends from noon until 9 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorials are requested to be sent to Trinity Episcopal Church, 472 North Main St., Mount Airy, N.C. 27030, or to the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation Inc., P.O. Box 447, Mount Airy, N.C. 27030.



■ Susan Ashby, a dear friend, passed away several weeks ago and not a day goes by that her name isn't brought up in some fashion - how much she contributed to the city, how Independence Boulevard and South Street would not have the beautiful maples and crape myrtles without her assistance, how Main Street has brightened up because of her encouragement to beautify the area; how she helped beautify the city park with butterfly bushes donated in memory of Jack Zonneveld; how she persuaded the city to light the huge tree adjacent to the Municipal Building; and how she kept folks interested in restoring old homes in the city.

Her death took us by surprise, because Susan had always been the energetic one, always working at the Antellum Moore House. She was responsible for getting it listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many days she would drop by at the eating places on Main Street after spending a morning cleaning or raking at the Moore House and chat with the crowd.

She was responsible for the success of the annual tour of homes, sponsored by the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation, an organization that she was instrumental in organizing about 15 years ago. When tickets were printed for the event, she began pushing them to make the holiday celebration a success.

Susan knew how to get work done. She was persistent.

Years ago, she asked members of Modern Gardeners to plant a few flowers in the small triangle at North Main and Renfro. At that time most of the members were either working or had small children, so, reluctantly, we accepted to help out with the beautification project. Susan even dragged a hose over from her home (two houses up from the property. That's when the Ashbys lived on Main Street.)

As years passed by, the garden club members took on the beautification project planting seasonal flowers and flowering trees. Susan contributed a bench and soon up went a granite bird bath, a bench and a marker.

Then Susan approached the club about decorating historic Trinity Episcopal Church at Christmastime. It was a challenge, making the apple Christmas fan that adorns the front entrance, wreaths and the roping on the wrought-iron fencing.

And just as we worked these two projects into a busy schedule, Susan praised us for such a wonderful job. And in the next breath she asked, "Would you please help decorate the Moore House for the Christmas tours?"

We explained, "Susan, we only have about 20 members and we'll have to split these in half if you want both the church and the house decorated. We just don't think we can."

After talking on about other happenings around town, she asked, "Now when do you think you can have the Moore House ready for Christmas?"

She just had a way of getting things done. We worked on projects that took us away from our homes, but she was always so happy to get everything decorated and ready for folks to enjoy.

What she did wasn't for herself, it was for the benefit of those who live in this wonderful city.

Susan wasn't here for the tour, but you can bet that she knows the bulbs were planted in the mini-garden, the Episcopal Church was decorated and the Moore House was lovely with holiday arrangements provided by all three garden clubs.

Her presence was felt with each bow that was tied, each flower bulb planted in the earth, each apple added to the apple fan and each room that was decorated at the Moore House.

And if the time comes when we think we can rest on our laurels, I'm sure we'll hear a voice saying, "You did a marvelous job decorating. I do hope you'll keep it up!"

*Sunny Scene  
12-17-98*