



- *Educator*
- *Hospital Administrator*

TIMELINE

1873 – Graduates from Atlanta University

1883 – Opens first school for black boys and girls in Augusta

1885 – Travels to Minneapolis in search of funding for school

1886 – Charters Haines Normal and Industrial Institute

Lucy Craft Laney

1854–1933

Inducted 1992

Lucy Craft Laney was born in 1834 in Macon, Georgia. Her father was a Presbyterian minister and a skilled carpenter who, having once been a slave, had bought his freedom 20 years before Lucy was born. He had also bought his wife's freedom.

Lucy's early childhood days were spent in the Macon home where her mother worked as a maid for Miss Campbell, who taught Lucy to read at the age of four.

When the Civil War came to an end, it was Lucy's father that rang the bells of Washington Avenue Presbyterian Church to celebrate emancipation. In the years following emancipation, the Freedman's Bureau and the American Missionary Association founded a high school for black children in Macon, where the Medical Center now stands. Young Lucy attended it until, at the age of 15, she was chosen to enroll in the newly founded Atlanta University. In 1873 she was a member of its first graduating class.

For the next 10 years, Lucy taught black children in any facility she could find in Milledgeville, Savannah and Augusta. She combined a boundless faith in the ability to learn with the highest expectations of achievement. In Augusta she found the warmest support for her endeavors, and her friends from the Presbyterian Church and the Freedman's Bureau persuaded her to start a new school there. She began teaching in the lecture room of Christ Presbyterian Church to only six children, but soon more than 200 children were in attendance.

"God has nothing to make men and women out of but boys and girls."
–Lucy Craft Laney

In those years the education of black children depended strongly on support from the church. When Lucy discovered that there was not a facility available for teaching so many children, with barely enough money for a one-way railroad ticket, she set out for the Presbyterian General Assembly in Minneapolis, Minnesota, hoping to get financial support. Though she found moral support, the money needed for a school simply was not available. But the trip was not a

1888 – First class graduates from Haines school

1889 – Land purchased and first building constructed for Haines school

1890 – Establishes first kindergarten in Southeast for black children

1892 – Establishes nurse training program for black women

1896 – Helps establish Lamar Hospital in Augusta

1905 – Establishes first athletic teams for black children in secondary schools

1912 – Founds Women's Federated Clubs

1919 – Co-founds Augusta NAACP branch

1949 – Lucy C. Laney High School opens in Augusta

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complete loss: Lucy made a valuable friend in Mrs. F. E. H. Haines, then president of the Women's Department of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Mrs. Haines became an advocate and supporter for Lucy.

With her newfound support, Lucy opened a new charter school in Augusta and called it the Haines Normal and Industrial School. Eventually, the Presbyterian Church helped provide additional support. Once the school was established, striking educational achievements soon followed, including:

- The first kindergarten for black children in Augusta, and one of the first in the South.
- The first Nurses' Training Institute for black girls, later to become the Nurses' School of University Hospital.
- The first football team from a black high school in Georgia.
- A curriculum that combined traditional arts and sciences with job-training and vocational programs.
- A total school program closely tied to community service.

Lucy had the courage and the moral stature to hold young people accountable to the highest standards and to bring out their best selves.

Lucy Laney is buried on the grounds of the school that now bears her name, on a major Augusta boulevard that also bears her name. Her portrait hangs in the Georgia State Capitol. She is a permanent example to young people of the value of vision, dedication and commitment to service.

Additional Resources

Lucy C. Laney Home, Museum and Conference Center

Augusta, GA 30901
(706) 724-3576

The Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History

1116 Phillips Street
Augusta, GA 30901
(706) 724-3576

www.lucycraftlaneymuseum.com