

LUCY MINERVA MILLER BARNETT

Lucy Minerva Barnett (1898-1989) was a woman of courage throughout her long life. The petite brunette with a soft southern accent from North Carolina arrived on the Houghton Seminary campus in western New York in 1919 at the age of 21. There she met Clarence Henry Barnett and in 1921 they were married. That was the start of the Clarence Barnett family, but the story begins in North Carolina.

Lucy was the seventh child of eleven children and the eldest daughter of James and Candy (Plemons) Miller of Ashville, North Carolina. She was named after her two grandmothers---Lucinda Plemons and Minerva Miller. Lucy's family was not interested in spiritual things and attending church was considered an undesirable activity. Her mother threatened to send young Lucy to the small Wesleyan Methodist church in town as punishment for snickering at the dinner table with her brother, Troy. Eventually, on her own, Lucy did attend the church as a teenager and she accepted Jesus as her Savior when a visiting evangelist held services at the church. After her conversion Lucy became convicted about attending the movie theater, and to avoid being tempted, she would cross the street rather than walk by a theater.

Lucy's pastor, Rev. Bryant, encouraged her to attend college at Houghton Seminary, a Wesleyan Methodist school seven hundred miles to the north in western New York. After praying about it, Lucy decided to go to Houghton but when she announced her decision to her family they accused her of putting on airs and of trying to make herself look better than they were. No one in the Miller family had attended college and young ladies were not supposed to leave home to go to school. Lucy's parents told her that if she went to Houghton she was on her own and she would have to pay her own way. In an effort to make her change her mind about leaving, her father offered to pay for her to attend a nearby business school. But Lucy had made up her mind that she was going to Houghton. She felt that God had put this dream in her heart so, in the face of opposition and uncertainty, she took bold action. With \$50.00 in her purse and a train ticket in hand she boarded the train for western New York. When Lucy arrived at the school she walked around the campus until she found a quiet spot behind a large tree where she could be alone to pray. There she called out to God asking Him to take care of her and to provide for her needs. She moved into Gayo, the women's dormitory, and found work as a maid to help pay her expenses. An out-of-state friend began sending Lucy lovely clothes from her own wardrobe and Miss Miller was one of the best-dressed students on campus. God proved Himself to be faithful to her as she trusted Him.

Lucy met Clarence Barnett at Houghton where he was living with his parents, Henry and Della Barnett, in their large home on the edge of the campus. Clarence had recently graduated from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor after attending Houghton Seminary for his first two years of college. He was drawn to this southern brunette and they took long walks in the countryside and enjoyed ice skating together in the winter at The Cove, a nearby pond. Since Clarence's father, Henry, did not approve of Clarence marrying a southern girl, the couple drove to Bradford, Pennsylvania, on June 15, 1921 to be married by Rev. Grise, a Wesleyan pastor. The simple ceremony was performed in the pastor's home and Mrs. Grise served as the witness and only attendee. As a honeymoon gift, Wallace, Clarence's brother and Ella, his wife, invited the newly-married couple to accompany them on a camping trip to the Thousand Islands between New York and Canada and the four of them slept in one tent.

Clarence and Lucy lived with his parents for several months; Lucy's father-in-law finally accepted her into the Barnett family.

At this point in their lives the young Mr. and Mrs. Barnett did not know that they would parent eight children (seven sons and one daughter) while pastoring Wesleyan Methodist churches in Pennsylvania and Iowa. Then they would move back to Houghton and live in the Henry Barnett home after the deaths of both of Clarence's parents. Their sons and daughter would eventually attend Houghton College (a name change from Houghton Seminary) and would meet their future spouses on the same campus where Clarence and Lucy had met and courted.

Lucy and Clarence Barnett started a legacy that continues today. Young Lucy Miller's courage and her faith in her Lord, in spite of obstacles, make her a heroine in the eyes of her family. Her children and their descendants "rise up and call her blessed."

Written in February 2011 by Kathy (Barnett) Daake, daughter of their oldest child, Glenn. (Kathy lived with Lucy and Clarence from 1965-67 while attending Houghton Academy and Houghton College and the above information is based on interviews with Grandma Lucy.)

Clarence's and Lucy's children are as follows (dates omitted for living individuals):

Glenn: b. 1922, d. 2010 (spouse, Janice d. 2006); 5 children Missionary to Haiti and pastor in U.S.

Gordon: (spouses, Phyllis and Elida) 4 children Naval Officer

Lucille: (spouse, Dick Beach d. 2010); 6 children Dick, electrical engineer

Beverly: (spouse, Marge); 2 children Air Force Chaplain

Bob: (spouses, Nickie d. 1994; Betty); 3 children High school chemistry/physics teacher

David: b. 1931, d. 2001 (spouse, Izzie d. 1974) 1 child High School history teacher

Dean: (spouse, Roberta) 4 children Junior high school social studies teacher

Allen: (spouse, Evelyn) 2 children House painter

Total of 27 grandchildren, many great-grandchildren and some great-great grands.