



# Who Is She...: The Very Real Life of Lucy Pickens

*Phyllis Phillips*

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## **Who Is She...: The Very Real Life of Lucy Pickens** Phyllis Phillips

South Carolina first knew Lucy Petway Holcombe of Texas in 1857 when she chose money and power to become the bride of the long time politician, Francis Pickens of Edgefield. Twenty- five years her senior...rich...arrogant...malicious...typically and perfectly Southern mannered...Francis had and would do anything necessary to satisfy his unrelenting ambition. Until his death after the Confederate War, Lucy played her role, perfectly.

Lucy was thrilled by the elaborate words of her would be governor husband when he endorsed Secession: "I would appeal to the god of battles - if need be, cover the state with ruin, conflagration and blood rather than submit." Then, as First Lady she embraced "the Cause" and the War that led to the destruction of slavery...the state... and the planter class. Loved by the people, and some said the Confederate Treasurer Menninger as well, her portrait was placed on one hundred and one dollar Confederate bonds while a unit of soldiers bore her worshipped name: The Holcombe Legion.

In defeat Lucy and Francis returned to Edgefield. For ten years the entire state was ruled by Carpetbaggers and Scalawags and unleashed slaves. White people lived in terror. Rebellion came in the blood letting election to name the Governor when the Confederate/Hero/General/One Time Aristocrat Wade Hampton -- now a widower - fulfilled his destiny by rescuing the state from Reconstruction Government. Long admired by Lucy - even as he was her husband's enemy - Lucy and her daughter were part of the revolt and Hampton's victorious campaign.

Lucy lived the entire Confederate saga...the joy...the defeat...the terrible fear...the gaining of personal strength. This is the story of what made the South the "South" as we know it today - the story of what became of that "lovingly remembered" and longed for world, and a very beautiful woman who was a vital part of that world.

It can only be a Southern story.

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