

Perry, Louise Anderson Merrimon ^[1]

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By Michael Hawkins

20 Aug. 1878–8 Aug. 1962

Louise Anderson Merrimon Perry, ophthalmologist and malacologist, was born in [Asheville](#) ^[2], the daughter of Emory H. and Rachel Augusta Hendrick Merrimon. From a large and prominent family, she was called "Lillie" as a child. After studying medicine she was licensed in 1899 to practice in North Carolina and the following year in Ohio. In [Asheville](#) ^[2], however, for fifteen years she served a flourishing eye, ear, and throat practice in association with Dr. H. H. Briggs. In 1918 she married Nelson R. Perry, a tobacconist, and with him established a winter home at Sanibel Island in the Gulf of Mexico off the southwestern coast of Florida. Nevertheless, they remained in [Asheville](#) ^[2] until 1926, when they settled permanently on the isolated Florida island. During the first winter there, she became fascinated by the area's wide variety of seashells and began studying them as a hobby. In time she produced the definitive work on that subject, *Marine Shells of the Southwest Coast of Florida* ^[3], published as a 200-page book by the Paleontological Institution in Ithaca, N.Y., in 1940. A second edition of 318 pages appeared in 1955.

Although she relinquished her regular medical practice after moving to Florida, Dr. Perry freely gave her services to residents of the island. During [World War II](#) ^[4], after the death of her husband, she returned to Asheville to practice full-time; she made her home at the [Battery Park Hotel](#) ^[5], where she died. Although she and her husband had no children, he had a son from a previous marriage and Dr. Perry regarded his children as her grand-children. She was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Orlando, Fla.

References:

Asheville Citizen-Times , 23 Feb. 1941, 9 Aug. 1962

Death certificate (Buncombe County Courthouse, Asheville)

Theodore Pratt, "Shell Shock," *Saturday Evening Post* , 22 Feb. 1941 (portrait)

Schnorrenberg Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill [portraits])

Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of North Carolina(1899)

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[Hawkins, Michael](#)^[9]

Origin - location:

[Buncombe County](#) ^[10]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#).^[11]

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