



# DAVIDSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*We don't just talk about Davidson's past... We are working to preserve it.*

Spring 2014

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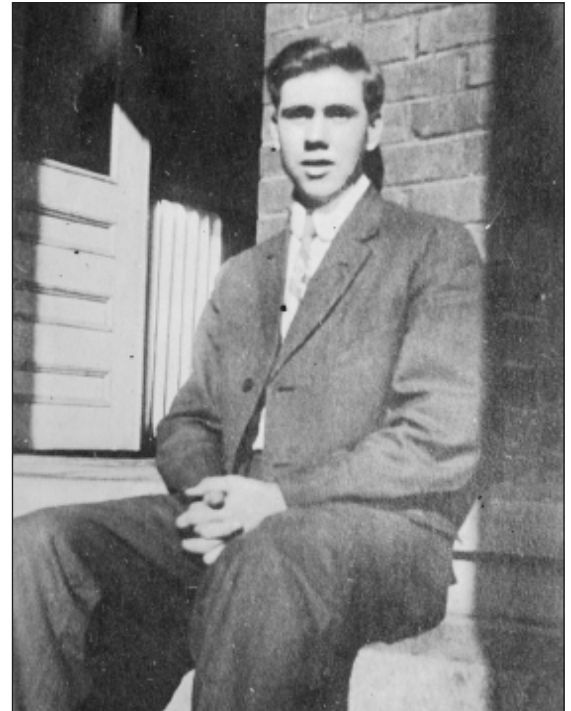
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## A Century Ago . . .

### World War I and Davidson

The town of Davidson and Davidson College were founded together. Since their founding, the two have grown together, creating a unique relationship of which not many other college towns can boast. Davidson College has made social and financial contributions to the town, which likewise has supported the students' growth. Through good and bad times, the town and college have supported one another; the difficult periods particularly have shown just how strong the ties are between the two. July 28 will mark the passing of one hundred years since the First World War. The Great War was a conflict without precedent, because never had so many nations simultaneously taken up arms, nor had the fighting been so gruesome. The war, which, globally, left a total of nine million combatants dead, did not leave the town of Davidson untouched.



David Reid Poole  
*(Courtesy of the Davidson College Archives)*

Davidson did not fully feel the effects of the war until 1918, shortly after the United States declared war on Austria-Hungary. The college, too, did not experience the full impact of war until, according to *The Davidsonian*, the student body found "that solemnness which must soon strike home to thousands in America [. . .] when the death of [a Davidson student,] David Reid Poole, ex-'19 was announced." Poole, who died at Camp Jackson of spinal meningitis he contracted from nursing a fellow soldier, would be the first of 27 Davidson student and graduate deaths of the war.



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# DHS Events

*Programs are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.*

**Tour of the Armour-Adams House  
Members Only  
Sunday, June 1, 4:00 pm  
626 North Main Street, Davidson**

The Armour-Adams House, built circa 1900 by Davidson merchant Holt Armour, is a locally distinctive example of the Folk Victorian style of architecture that was made possible by innovations in technology and transportation. The house was purchased in 1919 by J. Hope Adams, who moved into the home with his two adult children, Margaret and Albert. Margaret Adams was a beloved teacher of generations of the town's first graders, and Albert served as mayor of Davidson from 1931-33.



Armour-Adams House (Courtesy of Cami Meador)

Owners Cami Meador and Dave Sitton will discuss the home's history and their recent renovations on this well-preserved example of late Queen Anne Style architecture.

**This program is for current DHS members only.  
Not yet a 2014 member? Joining is easy!  
Join online at <http://davidsonhistoricalsociety.org/JoinUs.asp>  
or you may join prior to the start of this tour, just plan to arrive early.  
We appreciate your support!**

**The History that Binds Us:  
The Kirkpatrick Family Connection  
Sunday, September 21, 2014 at 4:00pm  
Davidson Town Hall  
216 South Main Street, Davidson**

The history that binds us may take nearly 50 years to discover.

Please join us to hear the fascinating story of two former classmates from Myers Park High School, one black and one white, who uncover their shared families' history.



(Courtesy of De Kirkpatrick)

Dr. H.D. Kirkpatrick ("De"), a noted forensic psychologist and author of novels and numerous publications, will take us on the journey that led to his reconnection with Jimmie Lee Kirkpatrick, and the unexpected education he received about the era of slavery and prevalence of plantations in Mecklenburg County. De and Jimmie Lee's story was featured as a three-part story earlier this year in the Charlotte Observer.

**Please check the DHS Events page on our website to stay current on our upcoming programs!  
<http://www.davidsonhistoricalsociety.org/Events.asp>**

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Despite the delayed American entrance into the war, though, citizens of Davidson and students of the college quickly mobilized, either by entering military service posts or by working locally for the war effort. The Davidsonian lists the names and positions of over 300 former and current students who were involved in war services by January 1918. By this time too, the Student Army Training Corps (S.A.T.C. was the precursor to the program now known as R.O.T.C.) began military training on campus to prepare undergraduates for the front line while they still continued their studies at the college.

Pride surrounding the war effort was high. In a lecture given at Davidson College in 1917, Dr. J.M. McConnell, professor and Dean of Faculty, said, “[w]e are rendering for humanity the greatest deed that has ever been performed [. . .] What greater love hath any man than this, that he give his life for his friend; except that he give it for his country, or for humanity.”

Regardless of distance, students still remained connected to the town and college through written correspondence, and even overseas, connections among Davidson town citizens and students remained strong. Lieutenant Harper



Davidson College S.A.T.C. *(Courtesy of the Davidson College Archives)*

’15, described how there was, “ a regular little Davidson Colony here in our part of the camp [Camp Jackson].” Several students also maintained written correspondence with Sallie Stirewalt, who ran a boarding house for Davidson students, informing her of life on the front lines. Lieutenant Harry Williamson, a Davidson student stationed in Gettysburg, Pa., asked Stirewalt, “Write to me again, Miss Sallie if you ever have time. I will always remember you as one who was just like a mother to me the year I was at Davidson.”

At home in the town of Davidson, citizens rallied for the war effort by raising funds, (largely done through Y.M.C.A. campaigns), working for the local Red Cross organization, and collecting items, such as books, for soldiers. Throughout 1918, The Davidsonian offered weekly reports on the Red Cross and Y.M.C.A. efforts in the town. Davidson remained strong throughout the war. The spirit of cooperation and willingness to help that withstood the wartime still endures between the town and the college. And as we advance into the future, particularly in light of the current Crimean conflict, we are reminded of looming potential for another worldwide war and the importance of maintaining the types of relationships that helped sustain the college and town through wartime. Davidson has stood as and continues to remain a unique exemplar among towns.

To see more photos and information on Davidson in WWI, please visit the DHS website at

<http://davidsonhistoricalsociety.org/DavidsonWWI.asp>

If you have information, photos or family stories about the Davidson-Cornelius area during WWI that you would like us to share on our website, please email us at [davidsonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:davidsonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com).



## *A Note from the President*

Hiking the Art Loeb trail in western NC early this month, I crossed paths with a man named Josh, mid 40's, physically fit, heavily tattooed, buzz cut reddish hair. He greeted me with a gentle smile. In our brief conversation Josh said he was an US Army Ranger, recently retired. He served for 24 years, through the two invasions of Iraq and the occupation in Afghanistan. He was hiking the trail in an effort to settle his demons and adjust to civilian life. As I read the article in this issue about Davidson's WWI soldiers I wondered about the contrasting political environments those soldiers faced compared to the one that greets current soldiers like Josh who fought, not a national enemy nearly unanimously condemned by his countrymen, but an idea about terror, the method of countering it fiercely debated by his countrymen. He described himself as broken. For me, the 31-mile, three-day hike created a profound sense of peace and well-being. I very much hope it had a similar effect on that former soldier.

Grace Hauser, a sophomore majoring in English and Political Science at Davidson is our 2014 spring intern. Grace works as a section editor and writer at the college newspaper, The Davidsonian. She helped produce this edition of the DHS newsletter and wrote the lead article about Davidson during WWI. She is a young woman of many talents and we feel extremely fortunate to have her assistance with our work at DHS.

Karen Donnelly has done a terrific job organizing our programs this past year. We've had fun and been enlightened by the stories of past lives now covered by the waters of Lake Norman, a murder on South Street and train travel and train wrecks in Davidson. Keep an eye out for future programs. You won't want to miss any.

*P.S. A copy of "One Town, Many Voices" by Ralph Levering and Jan Blodgett would make a great graduation present!*

Happy trails to you,



Ed Harris



DAVIDSON  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

Post Office Box 144  
Davidson, NC 28036

704.892.6022

[www.davidsonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.davidsonhistoricalsociety.org)

### *The Davidson Historical Society*

was founded in 1991 by a group of concerned citizens led by Taylor and Irene Blackwell. Over the years DHS has presented programs by outstanding local and regional personalities on varying topics, toured historically significant sites in the area, and financed projects which promote the history of the area.