

Davidson Historical Society

Winter 2009

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Lingle Hut

This past December, Lingle Hut, originally known as the Unity Church Cabin, was designated as a local historic landmark by the Davidson Town Board. Located at 219 Watson Street, this 76-year-old log building currently serves as Reeves Temple AME Zion Church's Fellowship Hall. Here is the story behind Davidson's newly designated landmark.

During the 1930s, some farmers and small town residents in rural Mecklenburg County began to construct log buildings for use by their communities. The Unity Church Cabin was the first of these communal-built rustic-revival log buildings.

The Unity Church served the white residents on the west side of Davidson. The church was founded in 1890 by mill operator Dr. J. P. Munroe as a nondenominational church known as the Mill Chapel. Many of those who taught at the Chapel came from the college community, including students. In 1927, under the direction of the Davidson College YMCA, a system was put into place where Davidson College students would serve as the pastor for the Mill Chapel. This system lasted from 1927 until 1950, and a total of sixteen students held this position. This arrangement proved to be very beneficial to the church which built a new sanctuary in 1930, and to the student pastors, eleven of whom went on to seminary. In addition to the college students, many people from the community at large came to the Unity Church to teach Sunday school. Among these was Louise Lingle, the wife of Walter Lingle, the president of Davidson College.

Despite the Great Depression, it appears that the 1930s were a time of activity and growth at the church. John Howard served as the student pastor



Our Purpose

The Davidson Historical Society promotes an understanding and appreciation of the history of Davidson, North Carolina and its surrounding area.

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Events Calendar 2008-2009

Programs are at 4 p.m. at Davidson Town Hall unless otherwise noted.
Programs are free and open to the public.



Sunday, January 25, 2009 History of Sports at Davidson College

Sterling Martin, Davidson College alumnus ('63)



and athlete, who recently retired after more than 40 years with the college athletic department and as Director of the Lake Campus, will discuss the history of Davidson College sports.



Come find out how the Wildcats got their name!

Please note the date change.

Sterling Martin in the 1962 yearbook, Quips & Cranks

Sunday, March 15, 2009 The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence: History or Hoax?

For more than 200 years, the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence (aka Meck Dec) has caused a stir. Its signing date, May 20, 1775, is on the NC state flag. Meck Dec celebrations have brought four presidents, a first lady, and a decorated general to Charlotte. However, no original copies of this document have ever been found, leading some to question whether it ever existed.

Jane Johnson, Carolina Room librarian at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg public library, will discuss the history and controversy behind this celebrated document.

On the Road... (Continued from page 1)

from 1931 until 1933. Under his leadership the church re-organized as the Unity Church, and in 1932 the church members built the log cabin. Between 1933 and 1936, a community "bath house" was built behind the Cabin, to serve those in the community without indoor plumbing. In 1939, the Cabin experienced its first expansion, with an addition added to the rear of the building. One of the rooms in the addition served as an apartment for the student pastors.

The Unity Church Cabin was first and foremost the Men's Sunday school. But the men shared their space and the Cabin was the site of church parties, suppers, Boy Scout meetings, Boy's Club meetings, quilting bees, Bible School, and barbeques where the pigs were cooked in a pit that was dug behind the Cabin. The Cabin served the community at large when the County Nurse came to give inoculations. In 1949, the Cabin was expanded again with a log shed addition that housed two bathrooms. In that same year the church became part of the Presbyterian Church, and was re-named as the Calvary Presbyterian Church of Davidson. With the reorganization, an ordained minister was hired and the use of student pastors was discontinued.



(Continued on page 3)

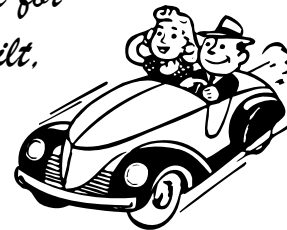
On the Road... (Continued from page 2)

In 1966, Calvary Presbyterian Church constructed a new building on South Street in Davidson. The Watson Street property, including the Cabin, was sold to the Reeves Temple A.M.E. Zion Church which had a sanctuary on nearby Eden Street. Securing funds for the purchase of the church building was a difficult task for the working-class members of Reeves Temple. Cecelia Conner, a life-long member of Reeves Temple, had worked for the Lingle family and wrote to Walter Lingle Jr., a vice-president of Proctor and Gamble in Cincinnati, to ask for assistance. In consideration of Cecelia Conner's good work, and of his mother's involvement in the Unity Church Sunday school, Walter Lingle Jr. agreed to donate \$6,000 with a commitment to donate an additional \$3,000 each year for the next three years for a total of \$15,000. The only condition was that the Unity Church Cabin be re-named the Lingle Hut in honor of his mother. This funding allowed the congregation to buy the former Calvary Church building.

Reeves Temple appears to have used the Lingle Hut in much the same way as the church before it. Cecelia Conner and fellow church member Ronald Donaldson recall using the Lingle Hut for Christmas dinners, picnics, fellowship events, and barbeques. The congregation continues to rely on the Lingle Hut. It contains the only kitchen for the church, and has remained the most convenient space for most church functions outside of Sunday services.

To learn more about the Unity Church Cabin/Lingle Hut and rustic revival log building in Mecklenburg County, please read the Survey and Research Report by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission at http://www.cmhpf.org/surveys&rLingle%20Hut.htm#_edn3

If you're on the road, look for these other communally-built, rustic revival log buildings in Mecklenburg County:



Mt Zion Hut, 19600 Zion Avenue, Cornelius

The Men's Bible Class at Mt. Zion Methodist Church in Cornelius dedicated their log hut on October 18, 1932.

Ramah Presbyterian Church Hut, Ramah Church Road, Huntersville On the Road...

The Ramah Presbyterian Church Hut was built in 1935 to serve the Men's Bible Class.

Providence Women's Club Community House, Community House Road, Charlotte

The Community House was built in 1939 as a meeting place for the Providence Women's Club.

Dr. Hood Cabin, 829 Concord Road, Davidson

This cabin was built around 1935. While not communally-built, the Dr. Hood Cabin shares some features with the nearby Unity Church Cabin/Lingle Hut, and is also associated with Davidson College.

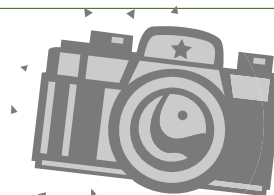
What you can do for DHS...



Help us build our collection!

Do you have photos of people and places of Davidson, NC? The DHS is in the early stages of a project to archive photos. We will scan the photos and you can keep the originals.

Will you let us scan your old photos?



Your membership supports this project.

D·H·S

A Note from the President...

Dear Friends,

The holidays were a busy time for DHS! We introduced our 2008 holiday ornament featuring historic Beaver Dam. The artwork of Beaver Dam was generously donated by local artist Jane Ellithorpe. This ornament is the first in a series of annual ornaments we will offer that feature local historic sites. If you missed getting one, it's not too late! We will have them for sale at our January program, or you may contact us.

During Christmas in Davidson, DHS provided trolley guides to talk about Davidson history. Thanks to J.B. Stroud, David Boraks, Reid Montgomery, and Jan Blodgett (who also wrote the script) for entertaining the passengers so well! Also thanks to all the DHS members who helped at our Christmas in Davidson table.

This spring, we will continue working on the Davidson Photo Archives. If you have any photos you would like to share, or would like to get involved, please contact us. Also, we have more wonderful programs planned (see page 2 for details). We hope you will join us.

Thanks to all of you for your support of DHS. If you have not yet become a member, please consider joining today.

Margaret Kuras



Davidson Historical Society

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

The Davidson Historical Society was founded in the late 1980's 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.