



Davidson Historical Society

Winter 2008

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Our Purpose

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

On the Road with DHS...

Former Schoolhouses

This past November, the town of Davidson designated the Ada Jenkins Center, once known as the Davidson Colored School, a historic landmark. This former school, which closed in 1966, has since served as a home to a child development center, a food co-op, a dance studio, and an after school program, and for the past decade, a model community center for the Lake Norman area. However, the Ada Jenkins Center is not the only former school building in the area that has found new purpose after closing as a school. How many of these former school buildings are you familiar with?

Coddle Creek Rosenwald School (NC 3 - Coddle Creek Road, Mooresville)

This school, located on the west side of NC 3, a couple miles north of Coddle Creek ARP Church, was built around 1927. The school closed in the fall of 1952 and the students and teachers went to Amity School. The building is now a private home.



Oak Grove (or Mott) School (Langtree Road and Yeoman Lane, Mooresville)

This school served the white children of the community. The school closed in the early 1920's when students were consolidated to Mt Mourne School. It is now a private residence.

Smithville Rosenwald School (South Hill Street, Cornelius)

This school was built in 1922 under the Rosenwald School Program. The County Board of Education purchased the land for the school from brothers James H. and Clifford E. Smith for \$500 (The Smithville community was named in honor of the continued generosity of the Smith family.) Rosenwald schools were characterized by large windows to allow the sun to light the rooms, as electricity often did not reach

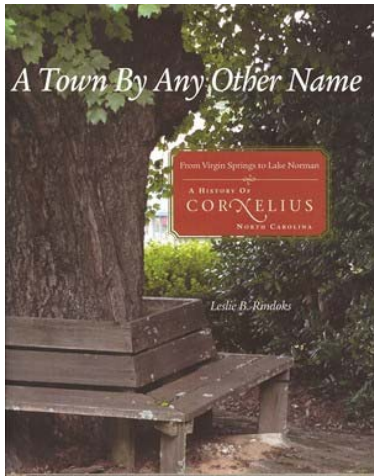
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Events Calendar 2007-2008

Programs are at 4 p.m. at Davidson Town Hall unless otherwise noted.

Sunday, January 20, 2008 A Town by Any Other Name

Davidson resident and author Leslie Rindoks will discuss her book about the history of Cornelius. The town of Cornelius celebrated 100 years of incorporation in 2005, but vibrant communities existed in that area long before that date. Ms. Rindoks book covers the history back to the 1700s.



Join us to learn more about our southern neighbor and how its history intertwines with Davidson's.

Sunday, March 16, 2008 Davidson Reminiscence Project Dr. Kristi Multhaup

Dr. Kristi Multhaup, Psychology Professor at Davidson College and students from her *Autobiographical Memory & Reminiscence* class will discuss their work for the Fall 2007 Reminiscence Project. The Reminiscence Project pairs students with an older member of the community to interview them and document their life story.

Come learn how the students interviewed and documented these personal stories, and about the psychology of memory and reminiscence.

Town Day Saturday, May 3, 2008 Look for the DHS booth!

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rural areas in those times. Design was carefully planned specifying room size and height, blackboard and desk placement, paint colors and use of window shades to maximize the use of natural light. The school operated until the late 1940's. The original building was expanded to include a barber shop and restaurant, to serve the needs of the local residents. The expansion wing on the south side of the building covered up the large banks of windows. Both the barber shop and restaurant are now closed and the building is used for community events.

Caldwell Rosenwald School (15435 Hwy 73, Huntersville)

Erected in 1925 using a Rosenwald grant and matching local funds, this school served the black children of the community. Rosenwald schools were built with matching funds provided by the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, created by the Chicago entrepreneur who directed the booming growth of Sears, Roebuck and Company. From 1917 to 1932 the building program of the Rosenwald Fund helped construct over 5300 black school buildings across the South, 813 of them in North Carolina. The old Caldwell School was purchased from the School Board in 1953 by T. W. Burgess, and is now home to the Burgess Supply Company.

Caldwell Station School House (17616 Caldwell Station Rd, Huntersville)

Built in the 1920s, this school resembles the Rosenwald Schools found in Mecklenburg County. However, the school was used by white children of the community. Rehabilitated by a cooperative of parents in 1991, the building is currently used as a pre-school.

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Torrence-Lytle High School (302 Holbrooks Road, Huntersville)

Originally called Huntersville Colored School, this school opened in 1937. At that time it housed grades 1-11. It had seven rooms that housed three elementary school teachers, two high school teachers, the principal and 181 pupils. Over the years the building had several additions. In 1953 the name of the school was changed to Torrence-Lytle High School, honoring two men who had been important in establishing the school, Isaiah Dale "Ike" Torrence and Franklin Lytle. Torrence-Lytle was the only high school for African-Americans in northern Mecklenburg County. In 1966, the school was closed, and all of the students were sent to racially integrated schools. The campus is currently used as a storage facility for Mecklenburg County and the Town of Huntersville.

Agriculture Education Building at Huntersville Elementary (504 Gilead Road, Huntersville)

This building was built in 1938 and was originally part of the Huntersville High School campus on this site. The construction of the "Ag" building was apparently funded by the Public Works Administration (PWA), a component of the National Industrial Recovery Administration (NIRA), one of the New Deal agencies created by Franklin Delano Roosevelt during the first "One Hundred Days" of his first presidential term. The high school moved to the North Mecklenburg High School campus in 1950. The building has been in continuous use, now used by Huntersville Elementary school.

Davidson (Rural Hill) School House (Neck Road, Huntersville)

Built in 1890, this one-room school served the white children of the vicinity until 1911. The building originally stood close to the road but was later moved just 30 yards to the south to its present location to make room for a newer and larger, two-room schoolhouse, built in 1911. The 1890 Davidson Schoolhouse, having served as a tenant farmer house and later storage for hay, was restored in the early 1990's by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Landmarks Commission to its original appearance both exterior and interior.

Bethesda School House (Neck Road, Huntersville)

Built around 1898, this school house stands as a memorial to the African American educational system in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Currently, it is one of only two known existing rural one room school houses for black children still standing in Mecklenburg County. The school closed in the 1940's, and then served as a home until the 1960's. Originally located at the southern end of Huntersville, along Alexanderana Road, the building was moved to Rural Hill in 2006 and is currently undergoing restoration.

Croft School House

(9200 Bob Beatty Road, Charlotte)

Originally a two-room, two-story school house, this school was constructed around 1890. A two story addition, completed in 1910, enlarged the school house to four rooms. It is the largest remaining pre-1920 school house in the county. The school closed in the 1930's when a new school house opened across the road (now the VFW post). The building stood empty until it was renovated around 2000. It is now home to several businesses.



*Do you have any old photos of these schools?
Do you know of a school building we left out
of this article? Please share with us!*

D·H·S

A Note from the President...

It's hard to believe we are halfway through our program year! Our visit to the Brawley Mansion in September was a big hit with over 65 in attendance. The November program on mill history saw enthusiastic audience participation. I hope you will join us for our two remaining programs. See page two for the dates and descriptions.

After a few years of starts and stops, a committee has finally made much-needed revisions to the DHS constitution and by-laws, and the membership voted to approve the changes at our September 2007 meeting. We reduced the size of our executive board to streamline our discussions and decision-making. We will be relying more on small committees to further the mission of the DHS. We are now recruiting committee members for some new committees : Research & Reference, Newsletter, and Website. You can use the enclosed membership form to share your interests.

We are currently crafting a plan to continue our purchase of historic home plaques from year to year. We also are in the planning stages of a photo identification and preservation project.

Your membership contributions will help us with these and other DHS projects. Haven't renewed your membership yet? It's not too late to join for the 2007-08 membership year!

Thank you for your support and interest in the DHS.



Elizabeth Martin



Davidson Historical Society

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www.davidsonhistoricalsociety.org

*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.