

DAVIDSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Winter 2016

DHS and the NEH

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Through 2016 the Davidson Historical Society will be part of a local project funded through the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Davidson College archives applied for funds through the Common Heritage program and received funds for purchasing equipment to record interviews and scan documents focusing on the African-American community in Davidson. DHS, along with the town government and the college's Center for Civic Engagement provided letters of support for the grant. In DHS's letter, we not only endorsed the proposal for the grant but spoke of our willingness to collaborate with the college.

DHS has already made an important contribution to the town's history in publishing *One Town, Many Voices*. But as both authors readily admit – it's not the whole story. There is more history out there and the more history we know and share, the stronger our sense of community will be. Some aspects of the town history are easy to know. Colleges and town governments keep lots of paper and even photographs. But other parts of our history are less well documented and well known. This grant seeks to fill in those gaps and uncover some of our hidden history.

This collaboration will take several forms – and one of the most important will be volunteers to help organize and staff events, conduct oral histories, transcribe them, and more. While Common Heritage grants tend to focus on the gathering of information, this project hopes to produce booklets and documentaries using the data. Ideas include printed histories of town churches, a booklet or documentary on African-American owned businesses in Davidson, an edited collection of stories around integration and a general history - video or PowerPoint - that could be used as a program for local civic groups.

It is said, it takes a village to raise a child. It will also take a village to capture and share this history. The DHS board is excited about the possibilities for working with college students and townspeople to bring this about. Whether you've lived here all your life or are a newcomer, if you have editing skills (text, audio or video!), a willingness to learn how to scan, a camera to help document events, a friendly smile for greeting, or willing hands to set up tables, we have a place for you. You can volunteer via email at DavidsonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com, through the membership form, or come to a DHS program and speak to a board member.

Our Purpose

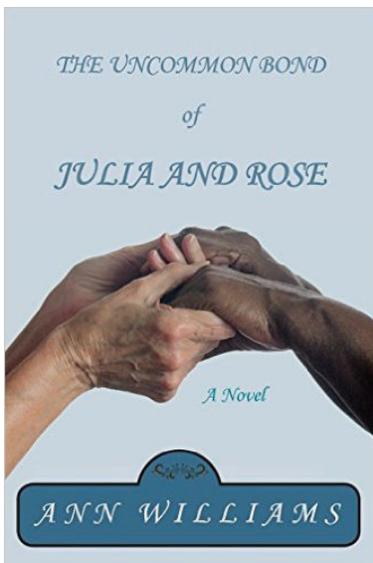
The DHS promotes an understanding and appreciation of the history of Davidson, North Carolina and its surrounding area.

DHS Events

All programs are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.
Please note dates, times and locations for each event.

The Uncommon Bond of Julia and Rose Sunday, March 6 at 4:00 pm Davidson Town Hall

Please join us as author and historian Ann Williams discusses her new book, *The Uncommon Bond of Julia and Rose*. Set on a piedmont plantation during the first half of the 19th century, the book tells the story of an unusually close relationship between Julia and her slave Rose. Their observations and experiences reveal how complex slavery was, and how it differed from place to place and changed over time. Although the story is fiction, the historical background of the book is very real. Ann has drawn from her decades of research, reading and interpretation at antebellum historic sites.



Ann Williams has been active in local history for over 30 years, with particular interest in Mecklenburg's historic plantations: Latta, Hugh Torrance House and Store, Rural Hill, and Rosedale. She has done research at all of them, and tours at most. She is the author of *Your Affectionate Daughter, Isabella* which is drawn from the papers and experiences of the Torrance family of Cedar Grove. She is also co-editor of *A Life in Antebellum Charlotte: the Private Journal of Sarah F. Davidson, 1837*.

Books will be available for purchase.

Tour of the Potts-Titus House Members Only Sunday, April 10 at 4:00 pm 620 N. Main Street

This Colonial Revival brick home was built circa 1926 by Cloyd Potts and remained in the Potts family for over 80 years. Cloyd, a local businessman, served as Postmaster of Davidson (1910-1915) and as a Town Commissioner (1916-1923, 1931-1967). Cloyd and his wife Gladys Henderson Potts raised their daughters, Margaret and Gladys, in this house. Margaret continued living in it until her death in 2006, after which the home was sold to the current owners.

Owners Derek and Laurin Titus will host as John Cunningham, grandson of Cloyd and Gladys and nephew of Margaret Potts, will share stories about the Potts family.

This program is for current DHS members only. You may join prior to the start of this tour, just plan to arrive a few minutes early.



The Cloyd Potts house as it appeared ca. 1979. The home is now painted white. Photo by Frank Bliss. Courtesy the Davidson College Archives.

Want to become a member of the DHS? Joining is easy! Join online at
<http://davidsonhistoricalsociety.org/JoinUs.asp>

DHS's January 2016 program drew a standing room only crowd. A panel of five: Lacy Dick, Van Lear Logan, Ruby Houston, John Woods and Buddy Caldwell (a last minute but very welcome addition) spoke of their memories of growing up in Davidson. They started with favorite moments from childhood and moved on to some harder topics. People laughed and sometimes they drew sharp breaths; everyone learned something new about the history of the town and how different people can have different experiences of the same time or place.



A crowd of over 100 people gathered January 31 to hear stories of Growing Up in Davidson, 1940's—1960's

Memories of Childhood

Quotes from our panel discussion on January 31

Lacy Dick

Being turned loose into the town to play, to ride our bicycles, to gather up, I don't remember gangs so much but we had groups that we played with and fondly remember playing outdoors after supper with all ages in the neighborhood. And when our family moved from North Main to Lorimer Road, there were just so many children, kids of all ages, and we played together. We played things like kick the can or capture the flag. We got pretty rough but it was really a lot of fun.

Van Lear Logan

The freedom and the absence from fear that is the thing I treasure the most about growing up in Davidson. It would never have occurred to my mother to have walked me to school or to have, well, we didn't have school buses until we were going to junior high, but to have taken me to a school bus and stood at bus stop and waited with me would have just never crossed her mind. From the time, before I was in the first grade, I was going pretty much anywhere I wanted, when I wanted. First on foot and later on my trusty bicycle.

Ruby Houston

A lot was centered around the family and the church. It all happened in your front yard and in your back yard or your church because the opportunity to have the organized recreation and the playground and those kind of things, it was not there in my world. So basically Sunday School picnics. One thing I loved was going to Belmont to the park to ride the big ferris wheel. On Tuesday nights we all got on a bus. So what I have to tell you is that it wasn't here for the families on my side of town and for me. What we had to do was to go elsewhere.



Our panel, moderated by DHS Vice President Ralph Levering

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Quotes from our panel discussion on January 31

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Buddy Caldwell

It never crossed my mind that there was any danger in being a little kid. I told people I was raised in Mayberry but I guess the thing—it was when I was nine years old when they started building, doing work in McEver field. That was really incredible to see the town of Davidson come together, all walks of Davidson come together and do the work on that field. Of course, it was the immortal Gene McEver who ruled. He made all the laws and enforced all the laws. Being a sports junkie, having a good, good place to play baseball, it couldn't get any better than that.

John Woods

When I was about 6 years old, I was at the age that you woke up early in the morning, and I decided that I would ride around town all day on Saturday with the milkman. And so for years, several years thereafter, I would the milkman—if ya'll remember the milkman. I would either meet him at my house or I would meet him at the corner down here at Main and Concord. I would leave my bike sitting there all day long and expect to find it there about 4:30 when I came back to get it to retrieve it and go home. In the meantime, of course, my mother had no clue where I was because I was all over Davidson delivering milk on the front porch steps and in the grocery stores- at Anderson's grocery store and Erving Johnson's grocery store. Which[Anderson's] was right where Toast Restaurant is now. Every time I walk into Toast restaurant I am stunned at how small it is because I thought it was a huge grocery store when I was a kid.



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Post Office Box 144
Davidson, NC 28036

704-892-6022

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.