

## **A Davidson Historical District Walking Tour**

*by Rupert T. Barber, Jr., for the Davidson Historical Society*

The tour may begin at any point and takes approximately 1 hour. In the commercial district, the Davidson Historical Society has placed stone markers indicating when the current buildings were built and their early occupants. The stones may also be used as stops on the tour. The tour encapsulates the town's development: collegiate, commercial, industrial, and residential.



The town began with the founding of Davidson College in 1837 and was called Davidson College, North Carolina, until 1879, when it was re-incorporated and dropped "College" from its name.

***Begin at the stone marker in front of the Town Hall near the street.***

### **216 S. Main**

#### **Davidson Town Hall 1991**

This is the third location for a Davidson Town Hall. You'll pass the first later on the tour. The second was here in front of the present building. Built in 1956, it was a one-story brick building that housed the town office, the police department, and the fire department. This worked so well that when the three departments outgrew the building, they decided to stay together in the present building.

From this point on S. Main you can see remnants of the Victorian residential area that was here. Left of the town hall is a little, gray, Victorian Queen Anne Cottage, the Sloan House (1880). Notice its marvelous details: the cupola dormer, louvered shutters, tin tent roof. Directly across Main Street from the town hall, the white Withers House dates back to 1907.

***Now walk toward the traffic light.***

### **212 S. Main**

#### **Davidson Town Library 1955**

In 1927, after being a warehouse for Mooney's Hardware and later a mattress factory, the building on this site was bought by the Civic League, a women's organization promoting the betterment of the town, for their permanent meeting place and a new town library. The library, established by the League, had previously been housed in a cramped second story room in the Knox Building (see below). In 1948, the League gave it to the Mecklenburg Public Library, and in 1955 the current building was built on the site. It remained the "new" town library until 1995, when the newer new library was built on the Village Green. You will see it later.

### **208 S. Main**

#### **R. D. Mooney Hardware Store 1908**

Originally a major hardware store—selling everything from buggies to hair, it also had Mr. Mooney's sister's hat shop. Later it became the City Garage.

**206 S. Main  
Booe's Meat Market 1908**

The first in town to have refrigeration, it later became part of the City Garage. Today, James E. Raeford continues the tradition of African-American barbers in Davidson that began in the early days of the town.

**202 S. Main  
Presson's Ford Motor Co. 1922**

The first building to be built as an auto showroom and garage, although not the first auto agency or garage in town. From 1949 until 1985 it was Withers Electric Co.

**Public Parking Lot  
Site of the Knox and Brown General Store 1874  
Site of the First Town Hall/Fire Station c1925**



Built by Frank Knox, it was later part of the M. H. Goodrum & Co. Store. On the back south side of the store was a narrow lean-to used as a millinery shop, later, extended to the

street, it was wide enough for a flourishing bowling alley. As early as 1925, the back room was the Town Hall and with the purchase of the town's first fire truck in 1933, the front of the building was perfect for its garage, even if you had to squeeze past the fire truck to get to the mayor's office...

***Note the fire marker.***

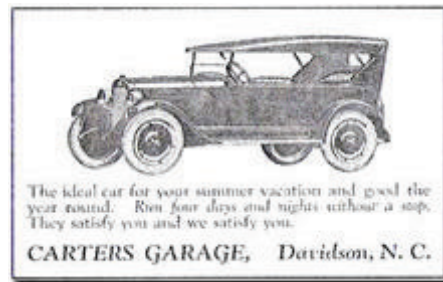
The fire of 1901, swept by strong winds, burned to about this point and was stopped by the new tin roof on the Knox and Brown building. Further up the street you will see where it began.



***At the fire marker stop and look across Main Street.***

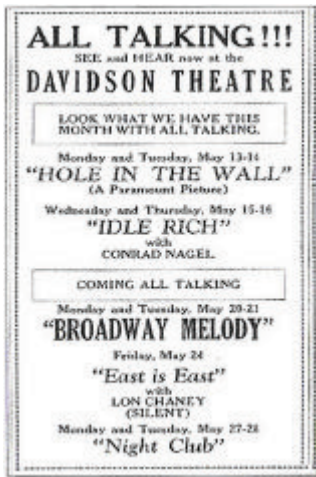
**127 S. Main  
The Chairman Blake Residence c1858**

The white house across the street is the oldest house in the business district. Named after the man who was acting president of the college at the time, science professor John Rennie Blake, it has until recently continued to be a private residence. It is on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Site Registry.



Right of the Blake House is the site of the Stough building (c1880s) one of Davidson's few 19th century brick buildings and the only store on the east side of Main Street. By 1917 Jack Carter's Garage was situated there, but the building is

best remembered for movies. S. T. and Frank Stough opened the Davidson Theatre in 1926 and brought talkies to the town in 1929.



In 1954, while a Louie Armstrong concert was on campus, the building caught fire. Students played “chicken” to see how long they could stay in the burning building. Depending on the account, 75 to 200 people were in the building. No one was injured, but the building was a total loss.

**119 S. Main  
The New Davidson Town Library 1995**

To the left of the Chairman Blake House is the Town Library, built by the town, the college and the county—an unusual collaboration.

*Now turn your attention back to the west side of Main St.*

**128 S. Main  
Drug Store c1901**

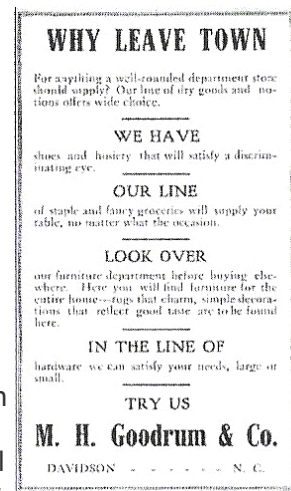
Believed to have been a drug store first, in 1916 it was the R. J. Johnston Grocery, and later part of M. H. Goodrum and Co. With the demise of Goodrum’s during the Depression it became the Wisteria Beauty Shop until the early 1960s. Notice the Victorian oak front door, complete with ceramic doorknob and carved arches and columns.

**126 S. Main  
The Archie Brown Store 1901**

Built immediately after the 1901 fire, this is the oldest building standing today in the business district. It was built with bricks from the Cranford store which was lost in this fire. M. H. Goodrum & Company opened here in 1903, and over the years it expanded to include three separate buildings. It was the dominant department store in the 1920s. Notice the flower-topped brackets framing the front.

**122-116 S. Main  
The Knox Building 1922**

Before the 1901 fire, this area was filled with various wooden shops and stores. After the fire it remained a vacant lot until 1922. When first built, the Knox building housed professional offices: doctors, lawyers, dentists, and an occasional grocery or drug store. Ralph Johnson’s Barber Shop was among the first businesses to be here.

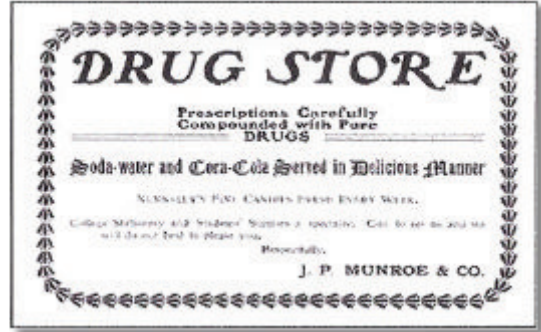


**112 S. Main**

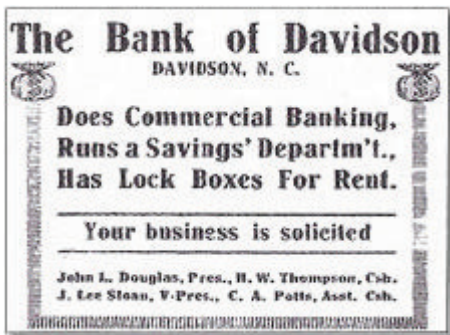
**Munroe Drug Store 1902**

**Southern States Trust Co. 1903**

Originally two buildings, the one on the left was built by Dr. John Peter Munroe, medical doctor, professor and civic leader, for his pharmacy. The next year he expanded the building to the right for the Southern States Trust. This building has always housed a bank: Southern States, American Trust, Bank of Davidson, Piedmont Bank , and now First Union. The



columns were added in a later renovation. At one time, the left-hand side of the building housed the Southern Bell Telephone Exchange for the town.



**110 S. Main**

**The Manly Cranford Store 1902**

The second oldest building on Main St. It was built by Mr. Cranford to replace the store lost in the 1901 fire. His was a general store, with merchandise overflowing onto the sidewalk in wooden baskets tilted back against the store front. In 1916 it was the Palace Theatre, where silent films were shown for five cents. After housing various hardware stores, it became the

Village Store in 1963. Although it cannot be pinpointed, apparently the fire of 1906 ended in this vicinity, as it appears that the Cranford store was untouched by it.



**108 S. Main**

**The Keener Building 1999**

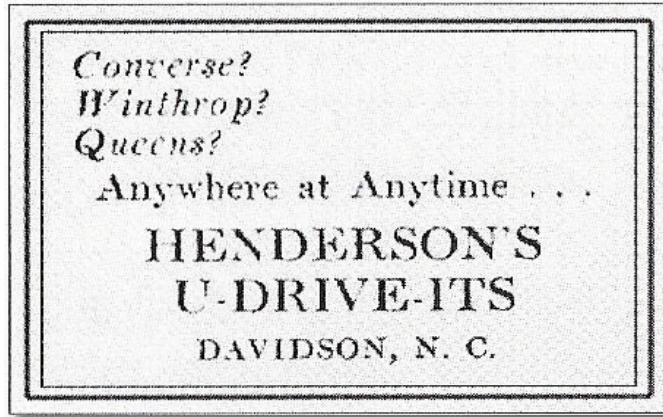
During its early history, the original 1903 building housed a succession of grocery stores-- including Long's Grocery and Houston (later his brother Irvin) Johnston's Grocery. From 1945-1949, Withers Electric was here, and it was outside these windows that the townspeople gathered to watch the first television in town. From 1949-1997 it was the home of "The Mecklenburg Gazette." In 1999 the original building was razed by Gene and Lynne Keener, who turned it into office/retail space.



## 106 S. Main

### Torrence Jewelry Store c1911

Prior to the 1901 fire, there were a number of wooden shops and stores including Mr. Shoemaker's shoe shop. The new building was occupied over the years by various small businesses and shops. In the 1920s and 30s, "Preacher" Henderson had a service station in front of the building with two gas pumps and a water spigot standing at the curb. He also had a car rental service. Other occupants throughout the years were: Henderson's Watch Repair Shop, W. Johnson's Barber Shop, W. McKissick's Shoe Repair Shop, and a restaurant, to name a few.



***This is the approximate origin of the fire of 1901, which is believed to have started in Potts' Stable behind the Main St. shops***

## 104/102 S. Main

### U. S. Post Office and E.. Q. Houston Residence

Prior to the fire of 1906, this was the Brady Family Residence with a wooden post office on the south east corner of the lot. After the fire, which destroyed the house and post office, Dr. E. Q. Houston, who was the postmaster and who had married a Brady daughter, rebuilt immediately, this time with brick. Although the building appears to be two, it is actually one, with the rooms over the shop connected to the house. Notice the arches over the windows that tie the two together. Dr. Houston used a hearthstone from the 1818 home of his grandfather, J. H. Houston of Mount Mourne, as a front step. The new section at the sidewalk was the post office for many years and later became the M & M Soda Shop, holding forth with egg salad sandwiches and "Big O's" for many generations of students and townspeople. Notice the unusual brick construction at the corners of the building and the window pane pattern (one-over-one, unusual for its time).

### Brady's Alley

One of many alleyways giving access to the railroad. It was also access to an African-American community that lived between the tracks and the buildings on Main St.

***Note the stone marking the origin of the 1906 fire.***

At this point S. Main becomes N. Main.

### 101 N. Main

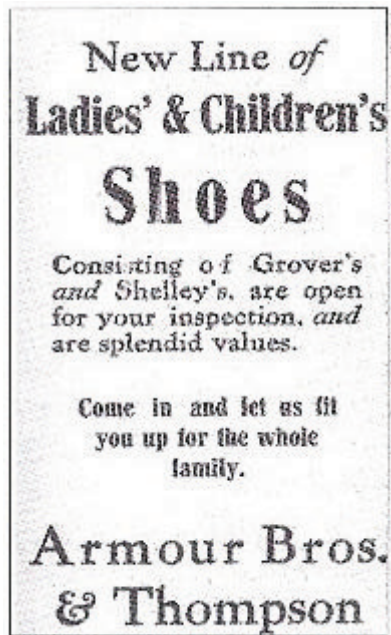
#### Armour Brothers and Thompson General Store 1912

Site of an early brick building, that was a post office and store prior to 1906. It was occupied by Hugh Sloan, a merchant and cotton broker who stored cotton on the second floor. The 1906 fire started here and swept down Main St. apparently stopping at or near the Cranford Store. In the 1920s the building that replaced it became a "call up and we'll deliver" grocery, later Irvin Johnson's Grocery, and later still a dress shop, an antique shop, and a café. Go in and see the excellent original tin molded ceiling.

### 103 N. Main

#### Jetton Drug Company 1914

Built from bricks salvaged from the 1906 fire. After the drug store, the building held a restaurant and later, Cantrell's Western Auto and Western Union



**Look across Main St. again.**

#### The Village Green

On the south side of Concord Road is the Village Green. Initially called the Village Grove, it was a shady place where visitors parked their buggies, wagons, etc. while attending college functions. Owned by the college, today it is used as a meeting place for special town events and a general playground for Davidson citizens. During Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the Green lost several large trees and many others were damaged and subsequently lost.

**Look to the north side of Concord Road.**

#### Davidson College Presbyterian Church 1952

The church was founded at the time of the college and the town, in 1837. Initially, the congregation met in the College Chapel. In 1885, the congregation bought the corner lot from the college and built its own sanctuary. In 1952, the college bought back the lot and built the present building for use by the congregation and the college. Although required vespers for students ended in the late 60s, the church is still the scene of major college events.

**Turn your attention back to the west side of Main St. Note the stone marker indicating the location of a town well.**

## **107 N. Main**

### **B. C. Deal Residence 1908**

Wary of fire, Mr. Deal built thick fire walls extending to the sidewalk on either side of his new house. The residence remained in the Deal family until the early 1990s. A block house, it sits square at the end of Concord Rd. Its columns harmonize with the college architecture, while the second floor gives an arcade effect. The brick cornice is typical early 20th century style.

## **109 N. Main**

### **Western Union Office 1927**

The 1870s site of the Thompson General Store, a frame building that was torn down when the current building was built. Strategically placed at the town's major intersection, the site has had numerous uses: general store, grocery store, Western Union, Duke Power Company Store, shoe store, travel agency, among others.

## **115 N. Main**

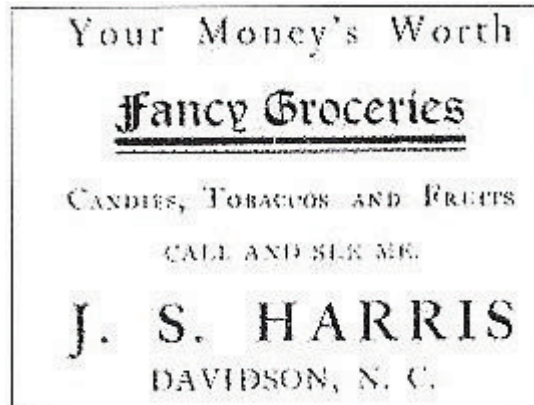
### **The Davidson U. S. Post Office 1984**

Site of the longtime residence of the Thompson family (1870s-mid 1950s). After the Thompsons, it remained a residence until the 60s. Then it became The Red Hanger Men's Shop and, in recent decades, the Peregrine House Restaurant. To make way for the construction of the current post office, the house was moved to Jetton St. in 1983 and once again became a residence.

## **121-123 N. Main**

### **J. L. Sloan, Jr. Bldg. 1922**

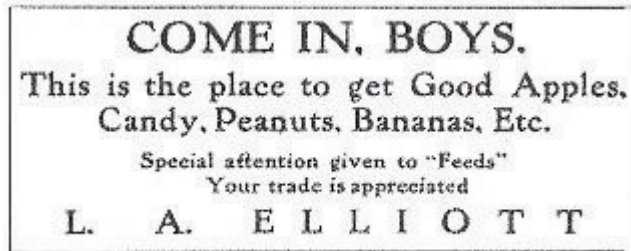
Prior to the 1922 current brick building, there was a series of small wooden buildings housing, among other things, a cobbler, a tailor, Harris' Grocery, and Tobe Johnson's Pressing Club where his nephew, a young Ralph Johnson, had his first barber chair. These were torn down for the present two-unit building, which has housed establishments including Pop Copeland's, Henderson Jewelry, Hugh Sapp's College Pharmacy, Ralph Quackenbush's The Hub, Lefty's Wildcat Den, and, initially, even the ever-moving post office.



### 125-129 N. Main

#### J. L. Sloan, Jr. Bldg. 1914

Prior to this current 1914 three-unit brick building, there were several wooden stores and shops. When the 1914 building opened, Gents Furnishings, a men's clothing store, was in the first section; brothers Rutledge and Hood Norton, joined later by Hood's son Ken, had a barber shop in the middle section; and in the last section, Elliott's Grocery, followed by Henderson's Watch Repair.



**Be sure to notice the stone marker in the sidewalk honoring the longevity of Norton's Barber Shop.**

### 131 N. Main

#### White's Drug Store 1914

For decades this was one of the few two-story buildings on this end of North Main St. By 1915 the entire building was in use, with the women of the Civic League meeting in the back room upstairs and Dr. Jim Withers' office in the front, while downstairs Cloyd Goodrum ran the drug store, soda fountain and offered "the best 5 cent cigar in town." Goodrum was manager of the store for J. A. White, who had started in the drug business in Davidson in 1897 at a different site. Later Goodrum bought the store but kept its original name. Today it is the home of the internationally famous Tom Clark gnomes. Notice the dentils in the tin molding above the door. Much of the original cabinetry has been restored and refinished.

### 137 N. Main

#### The Harris Building 1992

This is believed to be the site of professor and later Confederate war hero D. H. Hill's Davidson home, which was sold to the Allison family, who replaced the house with a new larger one in the 1860s. As was the custom of the day, the frontage on Main Street was developed with small wooden stores, here known as Allison's Row. In the 1920s, the wooden stores were replaced by a brick building housing the Southern 5 & 10, everything a small-town dime store should be. Later the building was Penland's Hardware Store, Johnson's Barber Shop, an insurance agency, and a bank. It was demolished to build the two-story structure of today.



**Cross Depot St. and continue along N. Main.**



**213 N. Main  
U. S. Post Office 1958**

Initially this was the site of the Dinkins tailor shop in the 1850s, which by the 1870s was the Scofield Store, for generations of students a favorite candy, soda, stationery, sundries store. The wooden structure had the store at the sidewalk with the house attached to the side and set back from the street. It was torn down in the late 1950s to make way for a new post office. A college building, it is now the Davidson College Information Technology Users Services Building.



Main Street has always been the main street in Davidson although its name has changed. At times it was known as the Public Road, the Great Road, Plank Road, and finally Main Street. Before it was paved in 1923, there were stepping stones at about this point--one of three sets that connected the campus with town, which were needed particularly during the rainy season when the typical red clay street, was called the " Red Sea."

**215 N. Main  
Helper Hotel 1848**

One of Davidson's oldest, most distinctive buildings, it was initially built as a store but soon became a hotel. The porch over the sidewalk was added in 1865 and the widow's walk was added in the 1870s. During the 20s and 30s it was a weekend rooming house for young women attending college social events. The college purchased the building in 1946 and renamed it the Carolina Inn. Used as a community center until 1971, it was then restored and renovated and is now the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies. Note the fine Flemish Bond brickwork (alternating headers and stretchers) on the front and the less expensive American Bond (one row headers, five row stretchers) on the south side. It is on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Site Registry.



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### **Look across the street to the oldest part of the campus.**

*At this time you must make a decision, whether to continue for about four more blocks touring the oldest part of the campus and the N. Main residential area with a brief stop at the college cemetery or pick up the tour at the asterisk ( \* ).*

*If you are game, cross Main and walk toward the big domed building ahead of you. It is the New Chambers (1929). Old Chambers (1855) burned in 1921. . .but that is for another tour. Stop between the two two-story buildings facing each other on your right.*

### **Turn north and face the Cunningham Fine Arts Building.**

#### **Cunningham Fine Arts Building 1961**

The College Chapel built on this site in 1837 was enlarged and renovated in 1900 and renamed Shearer Biblical Hall. It had office, classroom and social spaces. It was torn down in 1960 for the current building which houses the Music and Theatre Depts.

#### **Oak and Elk Rows 1836**

The low one-story building on your right running along Main St. and facing the campus is Oak Row, one of the original dormitory rows. Another, Elm Row faces it across the quad. Four rooms for four students each and each room had a fireplace. Originally there were at least two more of these rows in the quad. No longer needed for dormitories after the building of Chambers in 1858, the rows gave overnight shelter to Confederate soldiers returning home after the Civil War. Faculty wives nursed and fed them.



### **Turn south and face the Davidson College Presbyterian Church**



#### **Eumenean Literary Society Hall 1849**

#### **Philanthropic Literary Society Hall 1850**

On the right is Eumenean Hall, with its back to Main St., and facing it is Philanthropic Hall. Literary societies were important in the early college life, providing student government, social life, libraries and oratorical training. The two societies would debate each other from their balconies. Woodrow Wilson, as a student (1870-1871), gave his first speeches from the balcony of Eu Hall. When he returned to the campus while U. S. President he once again stood on the Eu balcony and spoke to the crowd. Both buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Site Registry.

### **Return to the sidewalk and continue north on the campus side of Main.**

**408 N. Main**  
**The President's House 1837**

The large white neoclassical house set back from Main Street is the Davidson College President's home. Built to house the president in 1837, it was anything but neoclassical. The original two-story brick structure, the left portion of today's house, was only 22 x32 feet. It was deemed unsuitable for a president, so another house was built which we will talk about later. From 1897 until 1912, the presidents lived elsewhere.



In 1912, when Dr. William Joseph Martin, a faculty member who was living in the house at that time, was elected president, it once again became the President's House and has remained that. The house was enlarged in 1859, again a hundred years later, and again in 1998. The one-story wing on the right provided additional interior space for the main living/reception room. Although the inside wall is flush, on the outside there is an offset, indicating the difference in thickness of old and new walls. Two row houses, similar to Oak and Elm, once stood on the now spacious front lawn.

**420 N. Main**  
**J. M. McConnell House 1914**

The site of a college owned faculty home built in 1900 and burned in 1910. The college built another residence on the lot for professors and their families. It was first occupied by Prof. James M. McConnell who taught history and economics for thirty-three years and was the first academic dean of the college. It is now the Davidson College Alumni House.

**430 N. Main**  
**Henry Louis Smith House 1897**

Another college-built house for faculty. From 1901-1912, when Dr. Smith was president, this was the President's House. Now it houses the Development Offices.

**Cross Glasgow Street and continue along N. Main.**

**514 N. Main**  
**J. Paisley Residence 1880s**

An excellent example of the old made new. The Main Street section of this building, now the Student Health Facility, was a small, clapboard cottage built in 1880 and called the "Doll's House." Throughout the years it has been expanded a number of times. At one time it was the chapter house of the Kappa Alpha fraternity and afterwards the home of the Will Potts family. Most recently, the portion extending along Glasgow St. was added in 1992. This is the last of the campus buildings on this side of N. Main.

### **532 N. Main**

#### **Isaac Johnston Residence 1850s**

One of the oldest buildings still standing in Davidson, it is an example of an 1850s cottage with gable roof and classic porch. In the 1920s, it was a boarding house and afterward for many years the chapter house of Pi Kappa Alpha. It was enlarged and remodeled in the 1940s and once again became a residence. The W. A. Thompson family lived there for many decades. It is presently a faculty residence.

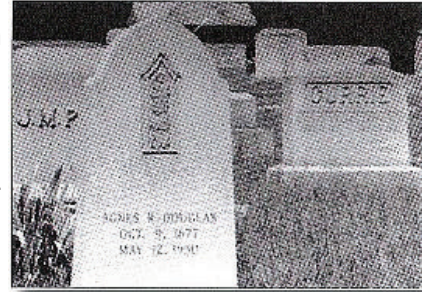
### **Cross N. Main Street and enter the Davidson College Cemetery.**

#### **Davidson College Cemetery**

The land for the cemetery was set aside by Davidson College in the late 1830s. A free plot was an early fringe benefit for faculty families. This was the northern edge of town for many years. The fence was built in 1894, but the open gate invites you in.

The oldest graves are those for the tiny daughters of Davidson College's first president, Robert Hall Morrison; they died of diphtheria in 1838. Other things to look for: the marker and grave of Confederate General D. H. Hill, who married one of

Dr. Morrison's daughters and later taught mathematics at the college; the grave of Mathias Engle, a German workman who died in an accident at the quarry at Lover's Leap, near Mount Mourne, while cutting stone for the foundation of Old Chambers; the CSA cross at the graves of Civil War soldiers.



### **Return to N. Main Street and turn right toward town.**

### **519 N. Main**

#### **Mrs. Vinson's Boarding House 1898**

Built by the widow of a Davidson professor, this house is typical of many houses built to board students. Ten brackets besides the door on the side porch held the hats and coats of hungry students. An excellent example of a classic Queen Anne house, it is a celebration of the machine woodwork made possible by the new mechanical saw and wood lathe. Note the eyelid window in the attic, the pediment (wide, low-pitched gable), the modillions (ornamental brackets under the cornices), and the turned posts for the porch bannister. Restored in 1988, it is now the residence of the builder's grandson.

### **431 N. Main**

#### **The Samuel Neel Residence 1883**

Now called the Julia Johnston House, named for a long time resident and beloved second grade teacher, the building houses the college Career Services.

### **413 N. Main**

#### **The C. R. Harding Residence 1890**

The original site of "Old Danville" (1837). Using materials from the demolished previous house, the college built this house for Dr. Caleb Harding, Professor of Greek and German for fifty-seven years; today it houses the college Financial Aid Office.



### **405 N. Main** **The Grey House 1850s**

On the corner of Griffith and Main; it was thought to have been built as a store building for James P. Henderson. It has been called "the Grey House" from at least 1900, for it was the home of Professor W. R. Grey who taught French and Latin at the college for forty-two years. A Georgian-style house, originally it had no north or south windows. A faculty residence up until the 1970s, then a dormitory, it is now the college Admission Office.

### **Cross Griffith St. and continue south.**

Look across the Main St. The large granite blocks in the retaining wall are from the foundation of Old Chambers Building, one of the most impressive college buildings in the South before it burned. But as I said before, that's another tour.

### **Turn your attention back to the west side of N. Main St.**

### **315 N. Main** **The Katherine and Tom Belk Visual Arts Building 1993**

Site of the other "President's House," which was built in 1847 and lived in intermittently by presidents until 1912. President John B. Shearer lived there as president and later in retirement until 1919. In the 1920s it became a student house and acquired the name of "Louisiana." It was demolished in 1934. Until the current building, this corner was the major parking lot for the Cunningham Fine Arts Building.

### **305 N. Main** **The Holt/Copeland House 1850s**

Of the style called Carpenter Victorian, individually designed and built by local craftsmen, the house has arched windows and pendants extending from the trim. The oldest portion is the left side of the house. It was enlarged in the 1860s when it became the home of the Holt family. He was the town's "horse and buggy" doctor; she ran a school for girls. From the 1940s into the 1970s it was the Copeland family home and boarding house. During the Davidson College Sesquicentennial Celebration it was the college and town Visitors Center.

### **\* Now you are back on track!**

Turn right into the alley south of the Helper Hotel. Note the variation of color of brick on the south side and the west back--originally the building was L shaped. Go through the parking lot to the next street, Jackson St. Ahead and across the tracks you see two steeples.

### **Davidson United Presbyterian Church 1894**

The church directly across the tracks was formed as a mission church in 1894 by the Davidson College faculty. It is the oldest African-American church in the area. Originally a small wooden chapel, the building has undergone a number of major renovations and additions.

## Linden Cotton Mill Chapel 1890

The church with the red brick steeple beyond was built in 1890 as a chapel for the Linden Cotton Mill; later it housed a Sunday school class, then an interdenominational church called Unity. Davidson College students were its pastors until 1950, when it became Calvary Presbyterian. The AME Zion congregation bought the building in 1966 when the Calvary congregation moved. It is now the Reeves Temple AME Zion Church. The area behind the churches, now primarily an African-American community, was called Sherrill Town for the original owner of the land.

## The Davidson Depot 1899

The first train tracks reached Davidson in 1860, but they were taken up almost immediately to be melted down to make guns and cannons for the Civil War. It would be ten years before trains returned to Davidson. With cotton in its heyday, Davidson became the marketing center for the surrounding farmlands. In 1903, 2,000 bales were sold and loaded at the depot. Six daily passenger trains stopped here. Today it houses the Davidson Senior Services Center.



**Facing the Depot look up the tracks to the area north of Griffith St. and west of the railroad tracks.**

## The Delburg Cotton Mill 1903

The big red brick building to your far left was the Delburg Cotton Mill (1903), called "Delburg" from the last syllables of Mecklenburg and adjacent Iredell county. A mill community grew up behind it and extended south beyond the Depot. The little college town was expanding with industry. Restored in 1999, it now houses shops, offices, and a restaurant.

**Stop at the southeast corner of Depot and Jackson, look across the tracks.**

## Linden Cotton Factory 1891

Built on land bought from the college and with bricks made on the site, by 1903 the factory had 7,000 spindles turning cotton into yarn. Founded by several Davidson businessmen this was the first industry in Davidson; the Southern Cotton Seed Oil Company and the Delberg Mills followed shortly.

**Walk east on Depot toward Main St.**

## 127 Depot Street c1908

The early history of this building is unclear but it appears to have housed another grocery store, Beal's Café and Livery Stable—later Beal's Auto Rental. In 1927 the town purchased the building for the town lock-up (or jail). Two second-hand jail cells were purchased from Mecklenburg County and the conversion was complete. It remained the town jail until 1957. Next the Coffee Cup, known by generations of students as the Greasy Spoon, opened using the jail room—the bay on the right—as its kitchen. When it closed in the 1980s, it was followed by number of eating

establishments. The right bay originally had a high small window with bars until extensive renovations for Jasper's. A building known for decades for its good food.

### **117 Depot Street The Davidson Village Inn 1993**

Site of the Maxwell Chambers Hotel, (1923), which was named for the earliest and largest benefactor of the College at that time. It was an elegant two-story hotel with fifteen guest rooms, steam heat, running water, electricity, and a large, formal 200-seat dining room. Convenient to the Depot, many guests came straight from the train. Unfortunately, automobiles became the popular way to travel and fewer and fewer visitors came by train. In the 30s it became a boarding house, in the 40s and 50s the town's post office, and afterwards a warehouse. In 1992 it was razed to make room for the current inn.



**Take the walkway east of the Inn through the parking lot.**

### **The NEW U. S. Post Office 1983 The Nancy MacCormac Plaza 1984**

The plaza was named to honor Davidson's first woman mayor, 1978 to 1984.

**Pass the post office parking lot and stop at the walk leading to Main St.**

### **Brady's Alley**

With the coming of the railroad, a number of small streets or alleys developed connecting Main St. to the tracks. This one was called Brady's Alley for the family who lived on the adjacent lot. An African-American community grew up here between the tracks and the back of Main St., which as time passed became very crowded. On a Sunday morning in 1950, a fire destroyed the Torrance family home there. The Rev. Carl Pritchard, pastor of the Davidson College Presbyterian Church, stopped the worship service and the congregation rushed to help the volunteer fire department. The resulting public awareness of inadequate housing conditions in the community led to the formation of the Davidson Citizens' Housing Committee in 1950. As a result of this committee, Lakeside Homes, a project that opened up land off Griffith St., was begun and a fund was established that provided low-rate mortgages for home building.

**Continue on the walk behind the stores. Note the interesting brickwork on the backs of the Main St. stores--particularly the arches over the doors.**

### **Knox Court late 1980s**

Named for Frank J. Knox, an early town developer, the area you are passing through takes you into the undeveloped future of Davidson and an area with usage proposed by the Davidson Town Plan. On your right you pass a small sunken area enclosed on three side. This is the Sesquicentennial Plaza, where a time capsule was buried in 1987 when Davidson College and the town celebrated their 150th year. It is to be opened in 2087.

### **The Mary Beaty Town Playground for Small Children**

Named in memory of a woman who wrote several books on the history of Davidson and the college who had a special place in her heart for children.

**From here you can see the garages of the Davidson Fire Department off to your right.**

**The Town Hall is ahead of you. Hope you enjoyed your stroll through the past, present and future of Davidson.**

### **Rupert T. Barber, Jr.**

#### **Davidson Historical Society**

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