

A Note from the President

2010 has been a great year for the DHS, but it isn't over yet! We have some great programs scheduled this fall.

I want to thank Margaret Kuras for her leadership as DHS president for the last two years. Under her leadership we have streamlined the operation of the DHS board, begun developing active committees, and laid the groundwork for some major projects and improvements. This summer we adopted a new DHS logo which you can find in this newsletter. The version on the front page incorporates Jane Ellithorpe's downtown streetscape we have used for twenty years.

While we will continue work on several ongoing projects, I want to put my own stamp on the DHS. A primary focus of mine will be to develop a downtown presence for the DHS. Please contact me if you have any ideas or suggestions.

Thank you to our 2010 members. Without your support the DHS would not be able to offer our programs. It's never too late to join! Inside this newsletter you will find a membership and volunteer form.

Dave Malushizky



DAVIDSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Post Office Box 144
Davidson, NC 28036

704.892.6022
www.davidsonhistoricalsociety.org

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.



DAVIDSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Fall 2010

Executive Board

David Malushizky
President

Margaret Kuras
Past President

Stewart Gray
Vice President

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Barbara Perzel
Secretary

Elizabeth Martin
Membership Coordinator

Members at Large

Ed Harris
Wendy Reading

*Buy our third annual
DHS holiday
ornament!*

*Look for our table at
Christmas in
Davidson
December 2-4.*

The Houston House of Davidson

This past June, DHS hosted a wine and cheese open house at the historic Houston house, to help Needlecraft Center owner Elaine McArn kick off her 40th anniversary. The Houston house, 102 S. Main Street, has been the home of the Needlecraft Center since 1971. To follow up this event, we wanted to share some history of the house and of Dr. E. Q. Houston and his family.

The Houston house and attached storefront (now the Soda Shop), was built by Dr. Erwin Quitman (E.Q.) Houston after the Davidson fire of 1906. Prior to the fire, Dr. Houston had been living in a large, frame house and working as postmaster in a frame store building in the front yard of the same lot. During the last quarter of the 19th century, the house had been known as the "Brady House," a boarding house run by Mrs. Martha Brady and later her niece, Lillie, whom Dr. Houston had married. After the fire destroyed both the house and the post office, Dr. Houston rebuilt both, this time using brick and connecting the two buildings so that he could walk directly from one into the other.



E.Q. Houston was born in 1858 in the nearby Mount Mourne community. He was the son of George Sidney Houston and his second wife, Margaret Donaldson Houston, and the grandson of Captain James Houston. In fact, Dr. Houston used an old hearthstone bearing his grandfather's initials, J. H., and the date 1798 as the front step of his Davidson home, which is still there today.

In 1888, E.Q. graduated with distinction from the University of Virginia School of Medicine, completing his course work in one year. Directly after graduating, he returned to Davidson

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DHS Events

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

Concert on the Green Friday, September 10, 6 – 9 pm Davidson Village Green

Please join us for an evening of music as we sponsor the Concert on the Green featuring the Extraordinaires! Be sure to stop by the DHS tent for the latest information on our programs and activities, and to view our historic photo display of Davidson.

Sunday, September 12 Davidson Town Hall

An Afternoon with Andre Michaux 4:00 pm

DHS is pleased to host special guest Andre Michaux, Royal Botanist to King Louis XVI of France! Michaux (portrayed in costume by Charlie Williams, esteemed Michaux historian and Charlotte librarian) will share stories of his journeys through the Carolinas in the late 18th century.

André Michaux was the most famous botanist of his time, or any other time, to come to the United States to study our native plants. He explored eastern North America from Quebec to Florida in the years between 1785 and 1796. His base was a garden near Charleston, S.C. and between 1789 and 1796 he traveled through the central Carolinas seven times. He discovered, described and named hundreds of plant species new to science and is also credited with bringing the crape myrtle, camellia and other southern garden favorites to America.

DHS is pleased to partner with ReadDavidson to present this program. This year's book selection is "A Walk in the Woods" by Bill Bryson.

For more information on Michaux, visit www.michaux.org

Silent Auction of Books 2:30—3:30 pm

In conjunction with the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room of the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, the DHS is hosting a silent auction of books on local and regional history. These books are from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library, and the money raised will support the purchase of new books for the Carolina Room.

Be sure to stay after the auction for our program, *An Afternoon with Michaux*, at 4:00 pm, also at the Town Hall.

For a complete list of the books to be auctioned, please visit the DHS sponsor table at the September 10 Concert on the Green.

The proceeds from this auction will support the important work of the Carolina Room. The Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room houses historical information on Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and North Carolina as well as genealogical resources and current information on the region.

The auction will end promptly at 3:30 pm. Cash or checks only please. All sales are final.

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to practice medicine with Dr. Paul Barringer, of whom he had previously been a pupil. He later served on the faculty of the NC Medical College in Davidson. In 1894, Dr. Houston opened a drug store with Dr. Mott, one door down from the post office (present day Soda Shop), on the site of the current building which is home to "Classic Bride" and "Monkees on Main" stores.

E. Q. Houston married Lillie Brady Freeze, a widow, in January of 1893. They had three daughters: Myrtle (1893-1922), Flossie (1895-1961), and Lillian (1897-1978). Lillian married John Davidson Foard, and Floss married J. Boyd Hatley.

Lillie Brady Houston died in 1905. In 1910, after remarrying and retiring from his position as postmaster, Dr. Houston left his downtown brick home and moved into a new frame house at 602 North Main Street, which builder B.C. Deal constructed for him. In 1913, he and his second wife, Hattie Turner, had a son, Paul Barringer Houston (1913-1988.)

Dr. E. Q. Houston died in 1916. He had served the Davidson community not only as a medical doctor, but as postmaster from 1899 to 1910, and town commissioner from 1912-1916. He is buried in the Davidson College cemetery, along with his first wife, Lillie, and daughters, Myrtle and Floss.

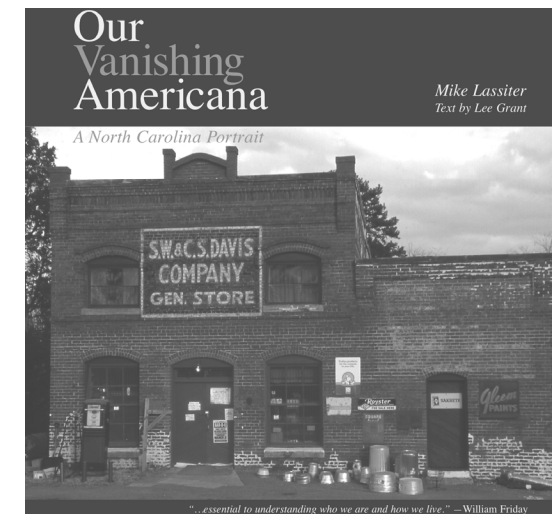
In 1922, the post office was relocated and the building became home to a dry cleaning business. In the early 1940's, the building took on its present role as a soda shop when J.B. and Floss Houston Hatley moved back to Davidson and into the brick Houston house, running the soda shop in the adjoining store.

DHS Events, continued

Our Vanishing Americana Sunday, November 21, 4:00 pm Davidson IB School Auditorium 251 South Street, Davidson

Please join us for a very special screening of the documentary, *Our Vanishing Americana*. Producer, Mike Lassiter and writer and director, Scott Galloway, will be there to introduce and answer questions about the film.

The film is based on Lassiter's 2006 photo book of the same name and focuses on the state's old hardware stores, groceries, gas stations, pharmacies, barber shops, eateries and other disappearing places.



Mary Fetter Stough
1931- 2010

Mary Fetter Stough was a long-time member and board member of the Davidson Historical Society. She served the DHS in various capacities over the years: Historian, Vice President and President.

Mary Fetter was born in Davidson, but went on to earn a PhD from the University of South Carolina and teach English literature at Atlantic Christian College. She left her tenured position to return to Davidson to care for her mother. Mary Fetter lived in her childhood home on N. Main St until she moved to The Pines in 2000.

Through the years, Mary Fetter combined her writing talent and her love of history by writing numerous articles on local history.

Mary Fetter Stough was a unique character in a small town full of characters and we will miss our dear friend.