

Survey and Research Report On
The Martin-Worth-Henderson House
310 Concord Road
Davidson, N.C.



The Martin-Worth-Henderson House, 2005

1. Name and Location of the Property:

The property known as the Martin-Worth-Henderson House is located at 310 Concord Road, Davidson, NC.

2. Name and Address of the Current Owner

The current owner of this property is :

Mr. James E. Murphy, III

PO Box 1966

Davidson, NC 28036

(704) 895-8460

3. Representative photographs of the property:

This report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. Maps depicting the location of the property:

This report contains maps of the property. The U.T.M. of the property is 17 513969E, 3928344N.



5. Current deed book reference to the property:

The most recent deed for this property is recorded in the Mecklenburg County Deed Book 15229 on page 336. The tax parcel identification number for this property is 007-012-09.

6. A brief historical sketch of the property:

This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property.

7. A brief architectural description of the property:

This report contains a brief architectural description of the property.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5:

The Commission judges that the property known as the Martin-Worth -Henderson House does possess special historic significance. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

a. Special significance in terms of history, architecture, and/ or cultural importance:

1. The Martin-Worth-Henderson House was the home of the family of two Davidson College presidents and later served as a boarding house for Davidson College students, and thus reflects the symbiotic relationship between the town and Davidson College.

2. The Martin-Worth-Henderson House is a well-preserved example of the Folk Victorian style of architecture, which was influenced by the Queen Anne style of architecture and which made possible increasingly architecturally detailed abodes through the use of manufactured nails, balloon frames, and mechanical saws and lathes.

3. The Martin-Worth-Henderson House possesses a strong associative history with a North Carolinian of note, Dr. Mary Turpin Martin Sloop, who established the [Crossnore School](#) in the North Carolina Mountains. The Crossnore School has sheltered and educated children from North Carolina since 1913.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:

The Commission contends that the physical and architectural description which is included in this report demonstrates that the Martin-Worth-Henderson House meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem tax appraisal:

The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an

automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a designated "historic landmark." The current total appraised value of the Martin-Worth-Henderson House is \$357,200. The current total appraised value of the house is \$177,700. The current total appraised value of the lot is \$178,800. The current total value of the outbuildings is \$700.

Date of Preparation of this report: December 16, 2005

Prepared by: Jennifer K. Payne and edited and revised by Dr. Dan L. Morrill

Summary Statement of Significance

The Martin-Worth-Henderson House was erected circa 1898 to serve as home of the family of

two of Davidson College's presidents. This Folk Victorian structure therefore possesses special historic significance because it illustrates the symbiotic relationship that existed between [Davidson College](#) and the town of Davidson. The Martin-Worth-Henderson House was also the home of Dr. Mary Turpin Martin Sloop in her formative years. A North Carolinian of note, Dr. Sloop established the [Crossnore School](#), which for eighty-two years has increased the educational opportunities available to children in the North Carolina mountains and beyond. Finally, the dwelling, like many of the older homes in Davidson, was later used as a boarding house for students at Davidson College.



The Martin-Worth-Henderson House in the 1930's

Courtesy of the Davidson College Archives

Historical Context Statement

[Davidson, North Carolina](#) is anomalous among the small towns of Mecklenburg County because its early development largely resulted from the growth of Davidson College, rather than from the advent of the railroad or textile mills. The special significance of the Martin-Worth-Henderson House can therefore best be understood within the context of the expansion of the historic built or man-made environment of the town. The house stands on the fifth lot east of the intersection of College Road and Concord Road in Davidson, North Carolina, just over one block from the Davidson College Presbyterian Church. It is visible from any location on the extreme southern edge of the campus, and this proximity to Davidson College is a telling feature of its rich history.

Davidson College was founded in 1835 by a group of Presbyterians who “deeply” felt a need to construct an institution which would “[secure] the means of Education to young men within our bounds of hopeful talent and piety, preparatory to the gospel Ministry.”^[1] The college was a success, and the increasing size of the student population and faculty was one of the reasons for the growth of the town. The construction of Concord Road during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was indicative of this trend. The Trustees of Davidson College divided the land which bordered Concord Road

into lots in 1870.^[2] These parcels, which were located along the southern border of the campus, were not for sale in 1870; but by the last years of the nineteenth century the Trustees had begun to market them to private citizens, faculty, and townspeople alike.^[3]

Martin-Worth-Henderson House

The Martin-Worth-Henderson House came into being as a direct result of the expansion of the town and the college. As the college population continued to increase in the late nineteenth century, so did the demand for highly qualified professors. It was in this era that Davidson College recruited its seventh faculty member. He was Colonel William J. Martin, who became professor of chemistry in 1869. He was later named as the acting president of the college. Colonel Martin and his wife, Letitia Costin Martin, reared three children, William Joseph Martin, II, Lucy Battle Martin, and Mary Turpin Martin; and the family was the first of the faculty families to settle permanently in Davidson.^[4]



Portrait of Letitia Costin Martin, wife of Colonel William J. Martin.

Courtesy of Davidson College Archives

The formative years of the Martin daughters in Davidson were inextricably linked to the town and to the college, although their later lives would take very different paths. Illustrative of her attitudes about the relationship between the college and the town, Mrs. Lucy Battle Martin Currie would later remark that, “try as we may it is impossible to separate the town’s record from that of the college, as the one grew up around the other.”^[5] Both young ladies attended a one-teacher schoolhouse in Davidson, and both would later attend the nearby Statesville Female College for Women (now Mitchell Community College).^[6] Their mother vehemently objected to the formal education of her daughters, but Col. Martin insisted that the young ladies “get an education in more than charming manners.”^[7]



Dr. William J. Martin, II, son of Lititia and William J. Martin.

Courtesy of the Davidson College Archives



Mary Turpin Martin and Lucy Battle Martin, daughters of Lititia and William J. Martin.

Courtesy of the Davidson College Archives

After graduating from Statesville Female College in 1891, Mary returned to Davidson to care for her mother, but doggedly pursued her education. The only female student at Davidson College, she chose a course of study that would prepare her for medical school, so that she might become a medical missionary. Her mother Letitia still did not view her daughter's decision as proper. Mary later remembered that "when I suggested that I'd like to take junior math, which included surveying, she [Letitia] nearly fainted, and she flatly refused to allow me to do it. Such a thing was unladylike, even though I promised to study French at the same time."^[8]

Colonel Martin died in 1898; and his son, the younger William J. Martin II, a professor of chemistry and later president of Davidson College like his father, purchased a lot from the Trustees of Davidson College to build a dwelling for his mother, Letitia. The deed of the Martin-Worth-Henderson House was recorded in her name.^[9] The census of 1900 shows that Letitia resided in the house with her two daughters, Mary and Lucy, aged twenty-seven and twenty-three, respectively.^[10] Mary would recall that her mother during this period was "practically an invalid" and needed constant care.^[11]

After Letitia's death in 1901, Mary enrolled at the North Carolina Medical College, a private medical school in Davidson. However, she was not allowed to take anatomy, presumably because of the "unfeminine" nature of the subject. She chose to

move to Philadelphia to attend the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, from which she graduated in 1906. She went on to intern at the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston, then served as the first resident physician at Agnes Scott College in Georgia. ^[12]



Dr. Mary Martin Sloop

Dr. Mary Martin Sloop in her senior years.

Having overcome the challenges associated with becoming a formally educated female at the turn of the last century, Mary went on to achieve even greater accomplishments that would touch the lives of many individuals. After marrying Dr. Eustace H. Sloop in 1908, whom she had met while the pair were students at Davidson College, she and her husband moved to Crossnore, North Carolina, where they established a school and clinic in 1913 to care for and educate the children of the North Carolina mountains. The school is still thriving and has students from twenty-seven counties of North Carolina. ^[13] In recognition of her tireless efforts on the behalf of children, Dr. Mary Sloop was named American Mother of the Year in 1951. ^[14] Both Dr. Mary Turpin Martin Sloop and Dr. Eustace Sloop are buried on a hill overlooking Crossnore. Partly as a result of the educational opportunities provided by Davidson College while she was a resident of the town, Dr. Mary Martin Sloop was able to affect change in the lives of children in the North Carolina mountains and beyond.

Although the contributions of Lucy Battle Martin Currie are not as well known as her those of her sister, they do illustrate the degree to which the town and the school were intertwined. As a daughter of one Davidson College president and the sister of another, Lucy Martin was intimately connected to the College even before she began to attend classes. She also benefited from being a resident of Davidson, because the College did allow females who lived in the town to matriculate “by courtesy.” ^[15] But when she graduated from Davidson College in 1899, her name and that of one other female student were not published in the catalogue of the graduating class “according to the custom.” ^[16]

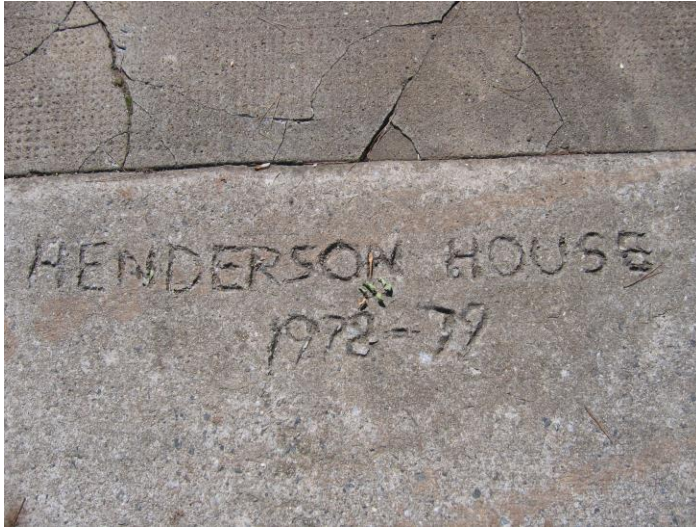
Lucy married Dr. Archibald Currie, a professor and later chair of the Department of Political Science at Davidson College. The education that Lucy received at Davidson

allowed her to carve out a name for herself in the professional world as an English teacher at the Presbyterian College for Women in Charlotte (now Queens College). She was especially active in the social life of Davidson; she was a regular member of the Davidson College Presbyterian Church and was also a member of the Thelemite Book Club. Upon her death in 1967, she was remembered as a citizen who “for more than three score and ten years...was identified with [the best interests of the town], and no one contributed more toward giving the village the cultural tone which long distinguished it.”^[17]

The Martin-Worth-Henderson House is associated with another integral piece of Davidson's history. Boarding houses had begun proliferating in Davidson within ten years following the establishment of the college, because running a boarding house attracted people who wanted to earn a decent living while enabling their sons to attend Davidson College. Boarding houses in Davidson have served an important function not only to the students who relied on these facilities, but they were also important to the culture of the town in two additional ways. First, the necessity for boarding houses caused Davidson to have a far greater number of imposing homes than one would find in the other outlying towns of Mecklenburg County. In addition, boarding houses drew students into the life of the town rather than remaining set apart on campus.^[18]

Among those who came to town to operate boarding houses was Josephine Worth. Like others before her, Worth arrived in Davidson with her three children, David, age fifteen, Katherine, age eleven, and Frances, age thirteen. Worth was the widow of a missionary, and operating a boarding house provided her with a steady income, a good environment in which to rear her daughters, and the opportunity to attain a quality education for her son. She bought the house in 1905, and the Worths, like the Martins before them, would become deeply involved in the Davidson community. The dwelling became one of twelve boarding houses in operation by the second decade of the twentieth century.^[19] The house remained in the Worth family until 1960 even though the Worths had moved to different locales by that time.^[20]

The Martin-Worth-Henderson House was bought by Florence and Walter Henderson in 1960, who also had students as boarders. The Hendersons were leading citizens of the Davidson community and are well remembered. Walter Henderson, a 1912 graduate of Davidson College, operated a watch repair shop for fifty-two years after his return to Davidson around 1920. Mary Beaty remembers the business as “a quiet world of exacting craftsmanship.” Students of Davidson College have fond memories of the meals that Florence Henderson would cook for her boarders. To this day the house is commonly known around Davidson as the Henderson House.^[21]



"Henderson House 1978-79"; Written in the walkway in front of the Martin-Worth-Henderson House

Clearly, the Martin-Worth-Henderson House has special significance within the town of Davidson. This significance rests on its prominence as a boarding house for Davidson College students, in its illustration of the Folk Victorian style, and most importantly, in its role as the home of Dr. Mary Turpin Martin Sloop, an exemplary citizen of the town.

^[1] Mary D. Beaty, *Davidson, A History of the Town from 1835 until 1937* (Davidson, NC: Briarpatch Press, 1979), 48.

^[2] Mary D. Beaty, *A History of Davidson College* (Davidson, NC: Briarpatch Press, 1988),

48.

^[3] *Ibid.*, 106.

^[4] *Ibid.*, 36-37.

^[5] Lucy Martin Currie, manuscript possibly written for the Tuesday Club, Lucy Martin Currie Collection, Davidson College Archives.

^[6] Mary Martin Sloop, *Miracle in the Hills* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1953),13; *The Mecklenburg Gazette* (Davidson, NC) August, 17, 1967.

^[7] Sloop, 13.

^[8] Ibid. 13-16.

^[9] Malcolm Lester, *A Census of the Davidson College Cemetery* (Davidson, NC: Davidson College, 1996), 51; Beaty, 109; Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Register of Deeds, Deed reference number 129-455; Minutes of the Davidson College Board of Trustees, Finance Committee Report, 1898 (Courtesy of the Davidson College Archives).

^[10] US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States.* _

^[11] Sloop, 14.

^[12] Lester, 25; Sloop, 19-20.

^[13] Sloop, 20; Crossnore School Bulletin Vol. XXXVII, No. 2 (Crossnore, NC: Crossnore, School, Inc.); “Crossnore History,” accessed on 16 October, 2005 at <http://www.crossnoreschool.org/aboutus.html>.

^[14] “Mountain Doctor is ‘Mother of 1951,’” unidentified newspaper and date, Colonel William J. Martin Biographical Family Collection, Davidson College Archives.

^[15] *The Mecklenburg Gazette* (Davidson, NC), August 17, 1967.

^[16] Beaty, *A History*, 189, 197; *The Narrative of the Nines* 2 (May, 1949), Lucy M. Currie Collection, Davidson College Archives

^[17] *The Mecklenburg Gazette* (Davidson, NC), August 17, 1967.

^[18] Beaty, *A History*, 11.

^[19] Ibid. 109, 161, US Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States.* _

^[20] Thomas Wilson Lingle, William Joseph Martin, and Fredrick von Hengeveld, *Alumni Catalogue of Davidson College, 1837-1924* (Charlotte: The Presbyterian Standard Publishing Company, 1924), 220; Cornelia Rebekah Shaw, *War Record of Davidson College: 1917-1918*(Charlotte: Presbyterian Standard Publishing Company, 1923),3; “Town Items,” *Davidsonian*, February 19, 1919; “Town Items,” *Davidsonian*, October 7,

1926; "News and Happenings," *Davidsonian*, September 20, 1916; "News and Happenings," *Davidsonian*, February 22, 1928; "Red Cross News," *Davidsonian*, February 6, 1918; "Town News," *Davidsonian*, March 13, 1924.

^[21] Beaty, *A History*, 11,138; Mr. Walter Henderson Oral History, June 30, 1976, Davidson College Archives, Davidson, NC

Site Description:

The Martin-Worth-Henderson House, which faces north, is situated on a rectangular lot that contains approximately seven-tenths of an acre. Directly across the street from the dwelling is the southern boundary of Davidson College. The parcel slopes gently downward from Concord Road, and exhibits significant foliage on the eastern and the southern sides of the lot. A shared driveway marks the western edge of property and circles to the eastern portion of the rear of the tract to provide entry to a free-standing garage.

Architectural Description:

The Martin-Worth-Henderson House, located at 310 Concord Road in Davidson, North Carolina, is a two story, two bay wide by three bay deep, Folk Victorian style structure which is sheathed in wooden clapboard and faces north on Concord Road. The house was originally built on brick piers, but the foundation has since been in-filled with brick. The coursed asphalt roof appears to be of fairly recent origin. The windows are arranged in a 2/2 pattern and are double hung sash bordered by black louvered shutters which are not original to the house. The main portion of the dwelling has a hipped roof, and several projections have been appended to the main block of the house, adding to the character and complexity of the dwelling.

The most prominent projection from the house is the one story front porch, which spans approximately one-half of the front facade and wraps around to the eastern elevation. The porch has a hipped roof, which like the main roof, is covered in coursed asphalt. The porch supports are wooden square piers that terminate as simple columns, and the spindles are turned.

There are also projections on each of the other elevations of the house. The protruding right bay of the front or northern elevation is decorated with a scrollwork wall surface pattern directly under the gable. The western elevation of the house exhibits a hipped, two story projection. The southern or rear elevation has several projections. The first is a large, gabled addition which extends to the east with a shed roof. Directly behind this is a porch of recent origin. What may be the original back porch is still apparent in a one story, front gabled, projection on the eastern corner of the southern elevation. Beyond the wraparound porch on the eastern elevation is a sizeable hipped, one story projection.

The Martin-Worth-Henderson House has distinctive details that are easily noticeable from the street and which contribute to the structure's character. The first is the scrollwork pattern under the front gable which has already been addressed. The second is the unusual elliptical window that graces the left bay at the second story. The window is enhanced with simple woodwork surround. The paneled front door has a single, large light, which is similarly elliptical, and also has a single transom light over the door.

All of these characteristics combine to make the Martin-Worth-Henderson House a distinctive structure in the Town of Davidson.



Elliptical window on front elevation

