

# Enslaved Connections with Davidson College: Elm Row and Oak Row Eumenean Hall and Philanthropic Hall

---

Designation Report Addendum  
Susan V. Mayer, SVM Historical Consulting  
June 2024

Enslaved Black people were integral to the building and function of Davidson College in the years preceding Emancipation. According to Blodgett and Levering, “The college hired townspeople and slaves as servants and as day laborers repairing college buildings.”<sup>1</sup> The authors cite a college treasurer’s report from 1854 which noted fees paid for hiring slaves and day laborers for tasks including “fixing locks, laying a hearth, hauling rocks for well walls and ‘burning fluid’ for the chapel, painting Professor Hill’s blackboard, and assisting the steward.”<sup>2</sup> Faculty minutes from 1855 provided a detailed list of the responsibilities of enslaved or bonded Black servants:

1. First in the morning – make fires in the Chapel and recitation rooms
2. Making fires in students’ rooms
3. Carrying water to students’ rooms
4. Making beds and cleaning rooms of students. Carrying water to students’ rooms in the evening.

He is required to black boots and shoes for the occupants of the Halls on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and Saturdays, the blacking to be provided by the students.

He is not required to make fires for the students unless the wood is already cut and in their rooms.

Mr. Alexander agreed to board and furnish lodging for the Servant and employ him about his premises when not engaged in College duties.<sup>3</sup>

## **Elm Row and Oak Row**

The first buildings at Davidson College—three dormitories, a steward’s hall, two faculty homes, and a chapel—undoubtedly were built with the contributions of enslaved Black persons. Trustees of Davidson College contracted with builder Samuel Lemly of Salisbury, his brother Jacob Lemly, and Henry Owen for the construction of these buildings. Over 250,000 bricks were

---

<sup>1</sup> Jan Blodgett and Ralph B. Levering, *One Town, Many Voices: A History of Davidson, North Carolina* (Davidson, NC: Davidson Historical Society, 2012), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Blodgett and Ralph B. Levering, *One Town, Many Voices: A History of Davidson, North Carolina* (Davidson, NC: Davidson Historical Society, 2012), 12.

<sup>3</sup> “Always Part of the Fabric: A Supplement, 1837-1865,” Davidson College Archives & Special Collections, Davidson College Library, <https://davidsonarchivesandspecialcollections.org/archives/digital-collections/always-part-of-fabric-supplement-3>, accessed June 13, 2024.

were procured from Mecklenburg County plantation owner John H. Caldwell.<sup>4</sup>

Samuel Lemly recorded 10 enslaved persons in his household in the 1830 U. S. Census and none in the 1840 U. S. Census. It is unclear whether any of the enslaved males—one between 10 and 23 and one between 36 and 54—were engaged in carpentry work. One of these enslaved men may have been blacksmith Simon Jefferson, who died in 1889 and worked up into his eighties.<sup>5</sup> Blodgett and Levering found in college minutes that students were expelled from Davidson College for having “allegedly spent an evening enjoying ‘a general feast with Lemly’s Negroes’” in 1837.<sup>6</sup> Student Thomas H. Hamilton mentioned either this occurrence or a similar event in a September 5, 1838, letter to his brother:

Our College still continues in flourishing state there were 83 students last session near 20 more than has ever been before. There were 7 suspended for misconduct during the session one near the commence for striking a fellow student over the head with a stick for little provocation which came near killing him. The others were all suspended at once and for the same offence, it is almost too abominable to relate. It was keeping company with negro women, the [sic] would go out several of them together after night to meet with the negroes.<sup>7</sup>

Most likely, any enslaved persons involved in the construction of Davidson College buildings were hired from area plantations. The decrease in enslaved persons recorded in the 1840 U. S. Census may have been due to the Lemley family relocating to Mississippi the following year—Samuel Lemly had partnered with Rowan County politician Charles Fisher in purchasing Cuba Plantation in 1836, and four years later Fisher sold his part to Lemly.<sup>8</sup>

John H. Caldwell recorded 15 enslaved persons in his household in the 1830 U. S. Census and 43 enslaved persons in the 1840 U. S. Census. He likely began his brick manufacturing enterprise after 1830, and many of the enslaved people listed in these records likely worked to make bricks for the Davidson College buildings.<sup>9</sup>

### **Eumenean Hall and Philanthropic Hall**

Two literary societies were founded at Davidson College in its early years—the Polemic Debating Society, established in April 1837 and renamed the Eumenean Society the following year, and the Philanthropic Society in June 1837. They met in the chapel twice a week, but within a few years

---

<sup>4</sup> Jan Blodgett and Ralph B. Levering, *One Town, Many Voices: A History of Davidson, North Carolina* (Davidson, NC: Davidson Historical Society, 2012), 8-10.

<sup>5</sup> “Simon Jefferson,” *Carolina Watchman*, July 18, 1889.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Blodgett and Ralph B. Levering, *One Town, Many Voices: A History of Davidson, North Carolina* (Davidson, NC: Davidson Historical Society, 2012), 21.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas H. Hamilton, Letter to Brother, September 5, 1838, DC0116s, Hamilton, Thomas H., 1809-1874 (1840) Letters, 1835-1839, <https://davidsonarchivesandspecialcollections.org/archives/digital-collections/thomas-h-hamilton-letter-5-sep-1838/>, accessed June 13, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Fisher Family Papers, 1758-1896, finding aid, Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, <https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00258/>, accessed June 9, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> 1830 U. S. Census; 1840 U. S. Census.

these societies required their own facilities with a meeting room and library. Fundraising began in 1842, and construction began in 1849 on Eumenean Hall and Philanthropic Hall. According to the survey and research report for Eumenean Hall, the contractors for the two buildings were Lewis Dinkins and Dan Alexander, who served as stewards for Davidson College.<sup>10</sup> In the college's early years, a steward was appointed to oversee manual labor of the students (a policy which ended in 1841), maintain the college property, and provide food, as Davidson College required students to board on campus until 1845. Thus, stewards were typically seasoned farmers who oversaw the work of enslaved laborers in the fields. Dan Alexander was steward from 1841 to 1843, and he was succeeded by Lewis Dinkins who filled the position through 1852.<sup>11</sup> The responsibility of the steward as a farmer overseeing labor was reflected in the slave schedule of the 1850 U. S. Census, as Dinkins was listed as owner of 21 enslaved persons:<sup>12</sup>

Male, age 32	Male, age 45	Male, age 27	Male, age 12
Male, age 8	Male, age 8 months	Female, age 100	Female, age 60
Female, age 45	Female, age 40	Female, age 35	Female, age 27
Female, age 17	Female, age 16	Female, age 15	Female, age 14
Female, age 9	Female, age 3	Female, age 2	Male, age 2
Female, age 23			

Students ate meals in Steward's Hall, and enslaved persons may have worked as cooks and servers in this facility. In 1857 Ann Holmes Brown was appointed the first woman steward for Davidson College. The position had reduced in responsibility and was now responsible for the school's dining hall. The 1860 U. S. Census listed eleven people enslaved by Ann Brown:

Female, age 60	Female, age 50	Female, age 35	Female, age 24
Female, age 17	Female, age 10	Female, age 8 months	Male, age 20
Male, age 10*	Male, age 7	Male, age 4	

\*Listed as Mulatto

Ann Brown served as steward through 1869. Her daughter Elizabeth was married to Professor Elijah Frink Rockwell, and when he left Davidson College to help found the Concord Female College in Statesville his aged mother-in-law moved with the family.

### **Additional Enslaved Connections**

Rev. Robert Hall Morrison, first president of Davidson College, was said to have highly valued the advice of enslaved woman "aunt **Mary**."<sup>13</sup> Mary, her husband **Bagwell**, and their four sons came with the Morrises to Davidson in 1837.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Mary Beaty, *A History of Davidson College* (Davidson, NC: Briarpatch Press, 1988), 42, 46.

<sup>11</sup> Dinkins also operated a store in town from 1848 until the 1850s. The property later became the Helper Hotel. "Stewards," Davidson College Archives & Special Collections, <https://davidsonarchivesandspecialcollections.org/archives/encyclopedia/stewards>, accessed June 10, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> 1850 U. S. Census Slave Schedule, Davidson, Deweese Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, n.p.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Rice Lacy, Letter to Bess Lacy Dewey, January 2, 1857, Lacy Family Papers, Davidson College Archives, cited in Blodgett and Levering, 21.

The 1850 U. S. Census recorded several enslaved people in the household of college president Rev. Dr. Samuel Williamson:<sup>15</sup>

Rev. Dr. Samuel Williamson

Male, age 42	Male, age 29	Male, age 28	Male, age 19
Male, age 12	Male, age 10	Male, age 8	Male, age 7
Male, age 4	Female, age 42	Female, age 60	Female, age 38
Female, age 24	Female, age 18	Female, age 17	Female, age 11
Female, age 9	Female, age 2	Female, age 18 months	

John D. Williamson, student

Male, age 50	Male, age 48	Male, age 47	Male, age 32
Male, age 35	Male, age 25	Male, age 20	Male, age 11
Male, age 15	Male, age 8	Male, age 5	Male, age 3
Female, age 85	Female, age 30	Female, age 33	Female, age 35
Female, age 38	Female, age 36*	Female, age 26*	Female, age 24*
Female, age 22*	Female, age 25	Female, age 14	Female, age 13
Female, age 5	Female, age 6		

\*Listed as Mulatto

Rev. S. B. O. Wilson, professor of languages, enslaved nine people:<sup>16</sup>

Male, age 21	Male, age 10	Female, age 53	Female, age 41
Female, age 41	Female, age 25	Female, age 18	Female, age 7
Female, age 1 month			

Stewards in the 1850s included Robert Alexander (ca. 1854-1855 and 1855-1857) and Thomas W. Sparrow (1855-1857). Sparrow was recorded as an enslaver in both the 1850 and 1860 U. S. Censuses:<sup>17</sup>

1850

Female, age 45	Female, age 8	Male, age 60	Male, age 30
Male, age 12	Female, age 6	Female, age 5*	Female, age 11 months
Female, age 35	Female, age 20*		

1860

Female, age 60*	Male, age 35	Male, age 25	Male, age 17
Female, age 25	Female, age 17	Male, age 14	Male, age 3
Male, age 6 months			

---

<sup>14</sup> “Always Part of the Fabric: A Supplement, 1837-1865,” Davidson College Archives & Special Collections, Davidson College Library, <https://davidsonarchivesandspecialcollections.org/archives/digital-collections/always-part-of-fabric-supplement-3>, accessed June 13, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> 1850 U. S. Census Slave Schedule, Davidson, Deweese Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, n.p.

<sup>16</sup> 1850 U. S. Census Slave Schedule, Davidson, Deweese Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, n.p.

<sup>17</sup> 1850 U. S. Census Slave Schedule, Davidson, Deweese Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, n.p.; 1860 U. S. Census Slave Schedule, Western Division, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, p. 27.

\*Listed as Mulatto

Rev. Drury Lacy succeeded Rev. Dr. Williamson in 1855 and served as college president for five years. Personal letters from his wife Mary Rice Lacy show that the family used enslaved labor as domestic staff and farm labor. As she wrote to her stepdaughter Bess Lacy Dewey in January 1857,

We find [that] living in this country we must conform to the ways of the people and buy our own servants. [...] I had my mind set upon a girl belonging to the Torrence estate, about twelve or thirteen and thinking we would get her or some other one...the girl was bid up to forty nine dollars and fifty cents [and] he let her go...maybe you could hear of some child [free] that we could have bound as you have Lizzie, rather older than she it; or maybe there might be one to hire privately from ten to fifteen that we might on more reasonable terms.<sup>18</sup>

In other letters, Mary Lacy named enslaved women in their household as “Aunt **Amy**” and “Aunt **Maria**.” Older enslaved women were typically called by the term.<sup>19</sup> In a letter dated December 12, 1858, Mary mentioned two additional enslaved people, **Priscilla** and **Susan**, writing,

We mean to keep Priscilla, but are disappointed about the little girl we expected to get. We shall have another hunt for one, I reckon in another year Susan will be large enough to do without hiring.<sup>20</sup>

In an undated letter from 1859, Mary reported “a black girl” was among the people who were called to join the church during a service.<sup>21</sup> “Our black baby has been right sick, but he is getting well without any Doctor either,” wrote Mary in July 1859; the child may have died before the 1860 U. S. Census.<sup>22</sup>

Like the Lacys, many Davidson College professors were enslavers or benefited from enslaved labor. Three professors were recorded in the Slave Schedule of the 1860 U. S. Census:<sup>23</sup>

Rev. Elijah Frink Rockwell, professor of languages

Male, age 50                      Female, age 36\*                      Female, age 13

Alexander McKeever, professor of mathematics

Female, age 35                      Female, age 16                      Female, age 10                      Male, age 5  
Male, age 3 months

---

<sup>18</sup> Mary Rice Lacy, Letter to Bess Lacy Dewey, January 2, 1857, Lacy Family Papers, Davidson College Archives, cited in Blodgett and Levering, 22.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Rice Lacy, Letter to Bess Lacy Dewey, August 6, 1856, Lacy Family Papers, Davidson College Archives, cited in Blodgett and Levering, 21.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Lacy, Letter to Bess Lacy Dewey, December 12, 1858, Kate Donahoo, trans., “The Mary Lacy Papers,” <https://his306sp17blog.rosestrelau.com/uncategorized/december-12-1858/>, accessed June 13, 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Mary Lacy, Letter to Bess Lacy Dewey, July 15, 1859, Carlina Green, trans., “The Mary Lacy Papers,” <https://his306sp17blog.rosestrelau.com/uncategorized/july-15th-1859/>, accessed June 13, 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Mary Lacy, Letter to Bess Lacy Dewey, December 12, 1858, Kate Donahoo, trans., “The Mary Lacy Papers,” <https://his306sp17blog.rosestrelau.com/uncategorized/december-12-1858/>, accessed June 13, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> 1860 U. S. Census Slave Schedule, Western Division, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, p. 27-28.

John A. Leland, professor of natural philosophy

Female, age 60\*

Male, age 32

Female, age 28

Female, age 18

Female, age 2

Male, age 2 months

\*Listed as Mulatto

**June**, who was enslaved by Rev. Rockwell, joined the college church. She may have been the 36-year-old woman listed in the 1860 census.<sup>24</sup>

After Emancipation, Black residents of Davidson continued to work at the college. **Amos Caldwell** had been enslaved by Professor John Rennie Blake, worked to repair college buildings. However, the college had difficulty hiring service staff among the former slaves, and many Black residents found work elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> Two men are listed in the 1870 U. S. Census as “waiters at college,” likely working in Steward’s Hall—**Robert Rockwell**, age 21, and **Alex Helper**, age 30.<sup>26</sup> Robert Rockwell was born around 1849 in North Carolina. He was married to Mary, who was aged 18. Unfortunately, Rockwell may have died by 1887, when a Mary Rockwell married Joe Falls in Iredell County.

Alex Helper was born around 1840 in North Carolina and was likely enslaved by the Helper family. In 1870 he was either married to or cohabitated with Adeline White Helper, who was born around 1828. She had children from a previous marriage or relationship—**Sarah White**, aged 20; **Alice White**, aged 18 and employed as a domestic servant; Ella White, aged 3; and Frank White, aged 6. However, there is a bit of confusion as Adeline and Alex are listed twice in the census, with the second listing right after the household of H. P. Helper.<sup>27</sup> The Steward Hall closed in 1876 due to lack of patronage, but Alex continued in service to the student—a Davidson resident remembered that Alex “waited on the boys around the College.”<sup>28</sup> The October 1892 edition of the *Davidson Monthly* noted the African Americans, which included Alex Helper, who were allowed on the college campus that school term.<sup>29</sup> In 1889, Alex was charged with retailing liquor without a license and found not guilty. Adeline died in 1902, and Alex passed away in 1912. Though the deed lists Alex as the purchaser, it was Adeline who bought a 0.25-acre lot in Davidson from W. A. Mock in 1874 and had erected upon it a small two-room house. This property was subject of a lawsuit filed by Adeline’s heirs soon after her death. Mary Harris, who lived with Alex as a housekeeper after Adeline’s death, took advantage of the aged man and had him deed her the property a few months before he passed. Mary refused to leave the house, and the heirs filed suit. Harris won the suit, as

---

<sup>24</sup> Blodgett and Levering, 20.

<sup>25</sup> Blodgett and Levering, 38, 47.

<sup>26</sup> 1870 U. S. Census, Davidson College, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> 1870 U. S. Census, Davidson College, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, p. 20.

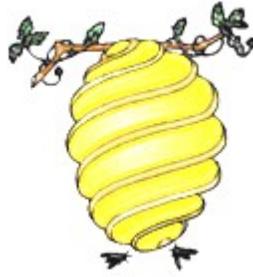
<sup>28</sup> Statement of Case on Appeal, *White et. al. vs. Mary Harris*, Mecklenburg County Superior Court, November 1913.

<sup>29</sup> “Always Part of the Fabric: A Supplement, 1865-1900,” Davidson College Archives & Special Collections, Davidson College Library, <https://davidsonarchivesandspecialcollections.org/archives/digital-collections/always-part-of-fabric-supplement-4>, accessed June 13, 2024.

the deed was in Alex Helper's name and the White family had allowed him to remain in the house until his death, and the appeal was dismissed.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> "A Case of 'Retailing,'" *Charlotte Observer*, October 25, 1889; Mecklenburg County Old Deed Book 13, Page 65; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 290, Page 280; "Heirs Seek to Recover Land," *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, September 20, 1912.



**OAK ROW AND ELM ROW**



*Elm Row*



*Oak Row*

*This report was written on May 3, 1977*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as Oak Row and Elm Row is located on the campus of Davidson College in Davidson, NC.

**2. Name, address, and telephone number of the present owner and occupant of the property:**

The present owner of the property is:

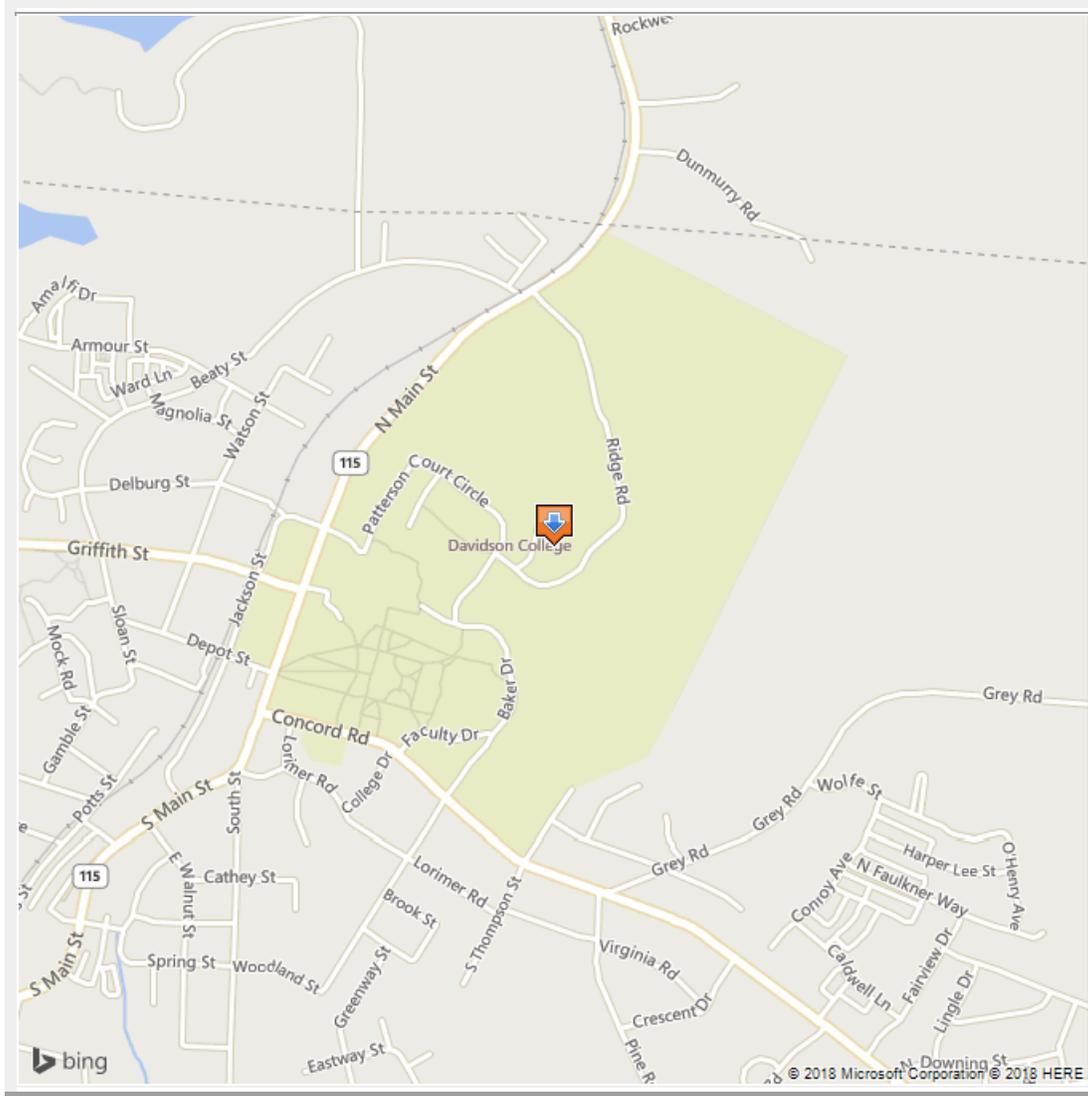
Davidson College

Davidson, NC 28036

Telephone: 892-8021

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent reference to this property is found in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 2434 at page 339. The Parcel Number of the property is 00316201.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:**

Oak Row and Elm Row constitute part of the original Quadrangle of the Davidson College Campus. The structures initially served as dormitories and were constructed shortly before the college opened its doors to students in March 1837. Elm Row, the farther of the two from N. Main St., originally stood between two structures which no longer exist -- Steward's Hall (a dining commons and classroom building) to the right or south, and Tammany Hall (a two-story professor's house) to the left or north. The structure was moved a few feet southward in the 1960's. Oak Row is the only one of a series of one-story brick dormitories (probably three) which initially stood on the

western side of the Quadrangle and stretched from Eumenean Hall to a point opposite the President's House. Both Oak Row and Elm Row originally contained four rooms. The style and placement of the buildings suggest that the founders of the institution were hoping to duplicate the ambience of Thomas Jefferson's famous "Lawn" at the University of Virginia. The exteriors of the buildings retain their original Jeffersonian Classical features, but the interiors of the structures have been massively altered and now house facilities of the Fine Arts Department of the college. Nevertheless, Oak Row and Elm Row possess historic significance because of their age. The Campus of Davidson College contains five antebellum structures (President's House, Philanthropic Hall, Eumenean Hall, Elm Row and Oak Row) of which these two constitute forty percent.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains an architectural description prepared by Jack O. Boyte, A.I.A.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in N. C. G. S. 160A-399.4:**

**a. Historical and cultural significance:** The historical and cultural significance of the property known as Oak Row and Elm Row rests upon two factors. First, the buildings constitute part of the original campus of a regionally-important institution of higher education. Second, the structures are among the more architecturally significant antebellum edifices which survive in Mecklenburg County.

**b. Suitability for preservation and restoration:** As mentioned above, the buildings retain much of their exterior integrity. If the owner wishes, he could return the interior of the structures to an approximation of their original appearance.

**c. Educational value:** The educational value of Oak Row and Elm Row stems from their historic significance. Also worth noting is the fact that these are the only antebellum structures surviving in Mecklenburg County which once served as dormitories.

**d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance or repair:** At present the Commission has no intention of purchasing the fee simple or any lesser included interest in this property nor is it aware of any intention of the owners to sell. The Commission assumes that all costs associated with renovating and maintaining the property will be paid by the owner or subsequent owners of the property.

**e. Possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property:** The structures are currently being used for adaptive uses and are therefore clearly suited for that purpose. The Commission would welcome, however, the restoration of the interior of the structures to an approximation of their original appearance.

**f. Appraised value:** The current tax appraisal value of Elm Row is \$2390.00. The current tax appraisal value of Oak Row is \$15060.00. The Commission is aware that designation of the property would allow the owner to apply annually for an automatic deferral of 50% of the rate upon which Ad Valorem Taxes are calculated. This property, however, is exempt from Ad Valorem Taxes.

**g. The administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs:** As stated earlier, the Commission at present has no intention of purchasing the fee simple or any lesser included interest in this property. Furthermore, the Commission assumes that all costs associated with the property will be met by whatever party now owns or will subsequently own the property. Clearly, the present owner has demonstrated the capacity to meet the expenses associated with maintaining the property.

**9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria established for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places:** The Commission judges that the property known as Oak Row and Elm Row does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Basic to the Commission's judgment is its knowledge that the National Register, established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, represents an expansion of the Federal Government's listing of historic places to include places of local, regional and state significance. The Commission believes that the property known as Oak Row and Elm Row is of local and regional significance and thereby meets the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places.

**10. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County:** As noted earlier, the property known as Oak Row and Elm Row is historically significant for two primary reasons. First, the buildings constitute part of the original campus of a regionally-important institution of higher education. Second, the structures are among the more architecturally significant antebellum edifices which survive in Mecklenburg County.

*An Inventory of Older Buildings In Mecklenburg County and Charlotte for the Historic Properties Commission.*

Chalmers Gaston Davidson, *The Plantation World Around Davidson* (Davidson Printing Co. for the Mecklenburg Historical Association, Davidson, NC, 1973 2nd ed., rev.) pp. 1-7.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

**Date of Preparation of this report:** May 3, 1977

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission  
139 Middleton Dr.  
Charlotte, NC 28207

Telephone: 332-2726

### ***Architectural Description***

During the eighteenth century, and especially in the post-revolutionary years, large numbers of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians came to Mecklenburg and its neighboring Piedmont Carolina counties. These disciplined people fostered education as well as piety. Having the distinction of being the site of the first college in North Carolina, Charlotte was the center where these pioneers established Queens College in 1771. Responding to urging from Mecklenburg Presbyterians, Governor Tryon successfully sponsored an act which established the college and financed it by a duty of six pence per gallon on all rum made or consumed in the county. Troubles with George III and later financial stringencies caused by the war forced the school to close in 1780. The Presbyterian determination to establish a college for Mecklenburg youth never flagged, however. In the early 1830's, the local Presbytery appointed committees to find land for a seminary, to raise the needed money, and to build a college. Important to this charge were instruction from the Presbytery that the site "must be within fifteen miles of Cowan, Ford." Obviously the name of the school was already on their minds,

for at Cowan's Ford the namesake, General William Lee Davidson, fell a hero during the Revolution. On high land said to drain eastward to the Yadkin and westward to the Catawba the site committee secured acreage for the college (traditionally said to have been donated by General Davidson's descendant, William Lee Davidson, II.) Meanwhile supporters in Mecklenburg and its neighboring counties subscribed over \$30,000, and the building committee contracted with Messrs. S. & J. Lemly and H. Owens to erect eight buildings for the college, described thusly:

"three blocks one story high, 18 x 66 feet; one, two stories, 40 x 50 feet; one, two stories, 20 x 66 feet; one two stories, 22 x 32 feet; one, one story, 18 x 18 feet, and one, one story, 12 x 12 feet. All structures to have rock foundations, to be covered with tin, painted and completely finished for a total sum of \$10,250.00. Installment payments due March, 1836, March, 1837, and March, 1838."

From this remarkable document emerged the Davidson College campus of 1838.

Listed first in the contract, "three blocks one story high, 18 x 66 feet were four room dormitories, later expanded to include two additional blocks and known collectively as "The Rows". The campus plan was originally matching four sided courts or quadrangles anchored by a centered chapel, "two stories, 40 x 50 feet" in the contract, the President's House, "two stories, 22 x 32 feet" in the contract, and Stewart's Hall, "two stories, 20 x 66 feet." Aligned with the long sides of the quadrangles, the dormitories came to be known as "Oak Row" on the west and "Elm Rows on the east. And now one block from each of these rows is preserved, Oak in its original location and Elm recently relocated a short distance southward. The recorded agreement with the contractors fails to mention brick. But an initial purchase by the building committee consisted of 250,000 brick "bought from Major John Caldwell at the kiln for \$4.00 per thousand to be ready by November, 1835." All eight first buildings were obviously to be solid brick construction, and the preserved "rows" illustrate this. With solid exterior brick walls over 12" thick, the simple rectangular 18 x 66 foot structures rest on field stone foundation walls. Rising about ten feet to corbeled headers which form overhang cornices, exterior brick work is irregular American bond with one course of glazed headers for each four, five or six courses of stretchers.

Here and there in the face brick in order to maintain a proper bond masons placed small 'closers' which vary from one to three inches wide. The two buildings are basically similar, yet they vary in some details. After the cornerstone was laid in April of 1836, there must surely have been delays in construction, for the work appears to have been hastily done. There are waves and undulations in the horizontal coursing, not at all typical of the skilled craftsmanship usually found in early nineteenth century

brickwork. In Oak Row the window heads have uneven, even carelessly laid small headers over openings which do not align with adjacent courses, another rare example of poorly done work. There is no record of the founders having hired anyone to design the structures other than the builders mentioned in the contract. Nevertheless the influence of more sophisticated Federal Style comes through in the general proportions of the structures as well as in the detailing of wood components. Records of the other six original buildings, which were later demolished, describe them as being 'Jeffersonian' and there are dormitories on Jefferson's University of Virginia campus called 'Ranges', which are quite similar to the Davidson 'Rows'. In plan the two dormitories are similar, each containing four rooms with an entrance opening from the axial quadrangle, and each with a fireplace. Adjacent to the entrance in each room is a six light over nine light window, while on the opposite wall in each room are two symmetrically placed windows, assuring the students generous ventilation during the warm fall and spring semesters.

Door frames and trim are original, but all of the original hand fabricated doors have been replaced. The windows all show mortise and tenoned connections joined with wooden pegs typical of the early nineteenth century. Muntins, casing, etc. have recognizable delicate molded shapes typical of the late Federal period. Several lights are still glazed with the original blown glass. In the face of the far right sill of the western building, the words "Oak Row" are legibly cut in the granite. Likely a later feature, the letters appear to be quite old. Window sills in both buildings are heavy Mecklenburg granite, as are door thresholds throughout. In the brick work of the window heads, however, there are surprising differences. All of the windows and doors in "Oak Row" have simple, even primitive, brick rowlock headers laid in a noticeably irregular manner over the openings. Whereas, in the twin building, "Elm Row", the window and door openings are crowned with carefully rubbed wedge brick which form precise brick jack arches. Elsewhere the two remaining rows are similar, even to the irregularities which occur in the quality of the face coursing. When the first building committee wrote the specifications for the rows they said that the buildings were to be 'covered with tin,' an obvious reference to the first roofing material. Later changes included a wood shingle roof which appears in an 1893 daguerreotype of Oak Row, and still later this was changed to slate, which now covers both buildings. Rising at a moderate slope to a long uninterrupted ridge, the roof terminates at each end with simple gables.

From fireplaces at each end there are brick chimneys built integrally with the gable walls. At the very center of the buildings another chimney occurs which contains flues from the two adjoining fireplaces in the middle rooms. These three chimneys are laid in common bond and rise well above the ridge to corbeled courses which form typical expanded chimney crowns. The earliest photograph of the dormitory entrances shows

no canopy or cover. Presently, however, there are simple shed roofed covers over all entrances. These were added soon after the turn of the century. Steps at each door rise directly from the ground and do not include a landing at the doors. Original brick fillers under the stairs create solid strings. These two extraordinary buildings are intriguing reminders of the original Davidson College architecture. Having been in constant use since first erected in 1836, the structures have a rich history, and contribute significantly to the architectural history of North Carolina as well as this region.