

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

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Designation Report Addendum  
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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

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<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

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<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			

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<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

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<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

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<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.

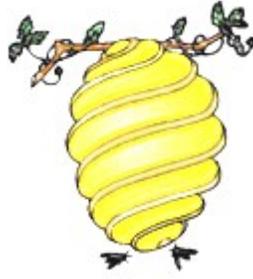
<sup>28</sup> Statement of Case on Appeal, *White et. al. vs. Mary Harris*, Mecklenburg County Superior Court, November 1913.

<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>

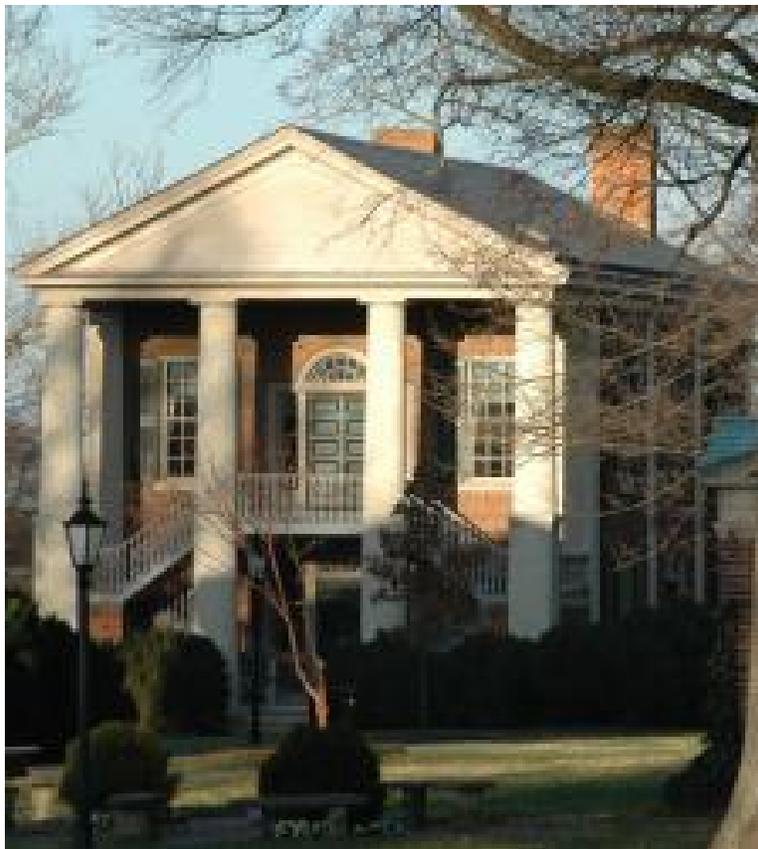
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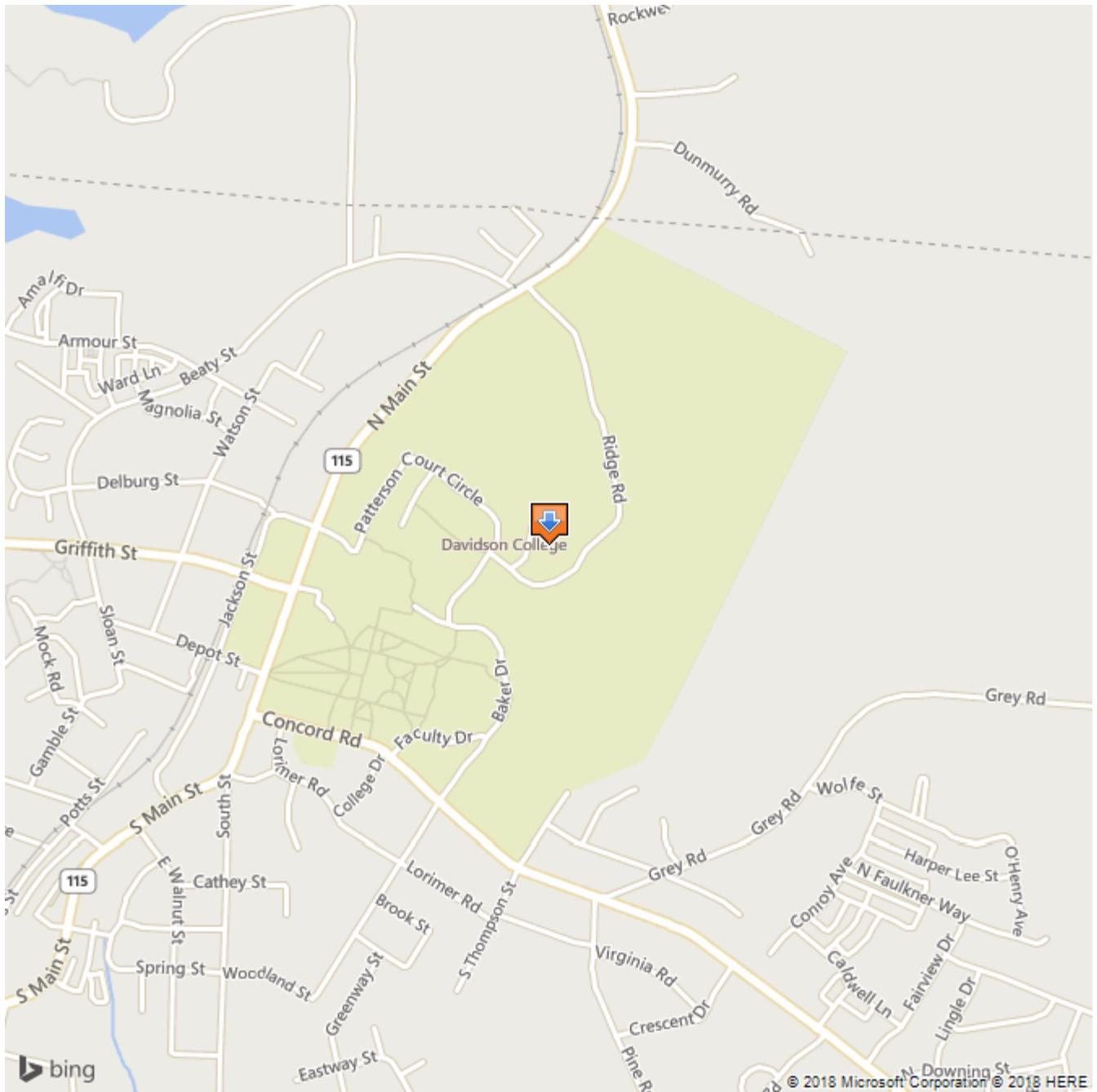
<sup>30</sup> "A Case of 'Retailing,'" *Charlotte Observer*, October 25, 1889; Mecklenburg County Old Deed Book 13, Page 65; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 290, Page 280; "Heirs Seek to Recover Land," *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, September 20, 1912.



Davidson College: Eumenean Hall

*From the Nomination Form for the National Register of Historic Places, Dec. 8, 1971*





Eumenean Hall, like its counterpart, Philanthropic Hall, is a two-story temple-form brick structure three bays wide and three bays long with the second level expressed as a piano nobile. Dominating the main (southeast) facade is a tetrastyle Doric portico. The brick walls of the front and side are laid in common bond, while the rear, facing the road, is in Flemish.

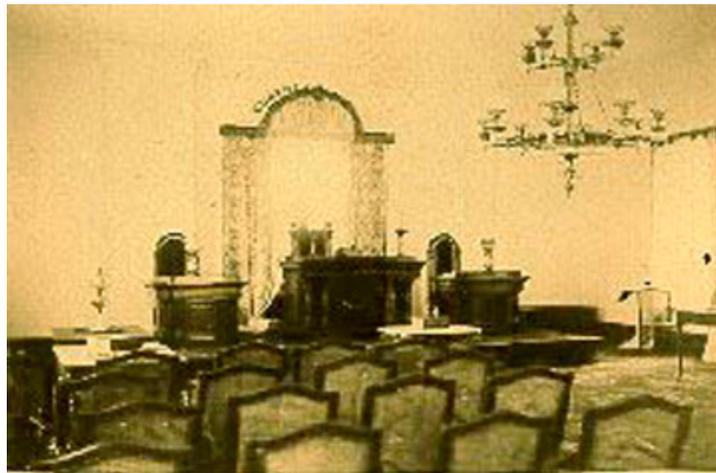
The pediment of the portico is covered with flush siding and supported by four massive columns of stuccoed brick that rise from the stuccoed water table which

continues around the building. The two outer columns are set on heavy square stuccoed piers which rise to the second level while the inner columns are uninterrupted. Corresponding pilaster corner posts complete the facade. A basement screen wall of brick surmounted by a turned balustrade shields the lower sides of the portico, but the portico, unlike that of Philanthropic Hall, is open at both levels at the front. A stair rises on each side in a broken double flight, meeting at an entrance landing at the upper level. The slender grace of the double stair with its molded handrail and thin turned balusters is set off by the contrasting massiveness of the portico columns that support it. The main entrance, Palladian in design, consists of a double door, each leaf containing five flat panels crowned by a fanlight and flanked by five-pane sidelights. A fluted architrave with rounder corner blocks outlines the elements. The secondary entrance, at the basement level, repeats the design of the main one, but a transom occurs instead of the fanlight. Flanking the main door are large windows with nine-over-nine sash, featuring stone sills, wooden lintels, and fine flat arches.

Like Philanthropic Hall, Eumenean Hall has stuccoed pilasters dividing the bays of the sides and supporting a simple wooden cornice. In each pilaster can be seen the head of an iron tie rod that runs through the building between the stories. A simple double door with transom occurs in the central bay at the first level on each side; the remaining bays at both levels are marked by windows like those of the front. The splayed arches above the basement windows consist of a double row of brick stretchers, while a single row forms the arch above the upper windows. The rear is dominated by a fine Palladian window, repeating the elements of the main entrance. At the basement level a window has been filled with brick. Rear interior chimneys with molded caps rise on either side of the ridge of the roof.

The interior of fine main hall, which occupies the whole upper floor, contains fine classical trim. The original plaster cornice and ceiling medallion has been removed, but their replacements maintain the dignity and character of the room. A wide plain baseboard and heavy plaster cornice with a grapevine frieze and rope molding punctuated by acanthus cartouches accentuate the boundaries of the room. The central oval plaster medallion is ornamented with palmetto, tulip, and pea pod motifs. Fluted architraves with rounder corner blocks like those on the exterior Palladian openings surround the large windows and the entrance. The plain chimney breasts project slightly into the chamber on either side of the rear Palladian window. The elevated platform at the rear of the hall contains its original furniture, consisting of a large desk with the emblem of the society, inscribed "Eumenean Hall, 1837," its chair, and two smaller flanking desks with chairs. The Victorian chandelier was a later addition. The entire structure is in excellent condition, having been completely restored in 1956.

The basement, which was remodeled at that time for office use, retains none of its original interior trim.



*Eumenean Society Hall, Interior ca. 1893*

From the earliest days of Davidson College until the turn of the twentieth century, student life and government centered around two debating societies, the Eumenean and Philanthropic Societies.

The Concord Presbytery voted to establish learning in western North Carolina on March 12, 1835; on August 25 the presbytery resolved to purchase two tracts of land in Mecklenburg County from William L. Davidson; and on the following day they voted to name the school Davidson College in honor of Davidson's father, William Davidson, a Revolutionary War hero. The college began exercises March 1, 1837, and by the end of that year a number of buildings had been constructed on the new campus.

The first of the two debating societies to be formed was the Eumenean Society, organized as the Polemic Debating Society on April 14, 1837; it assumed its present name in 1838. The records of the group begin with the thirty-ninth meeting, on November 9, 1838; for several years their meetings were held in "Professor Sparrow's classroom." Both societies, secret and formal in nature, were primarily debating organizations, but they had a much more important influence than their avowed purpose might suggest. Society rules were very strict about the behavior of their members, imposing fines for fighting, swearing, intoxication, and "lying to the faculty." There were "vigilance committees" for reporting offenses. Since nearly all students were members of one society or the other, "student government really dates from the beginning," with regulation of behavior coming from the two societies. It is said that "around the two halls centered college loyalty and affection." That provided

excellent libraries, and from the first commencement until 1913 the societies joined in selecting and paying the expenses of the commencement orator, "known as the Orator before the Literary Society and for years an honorary member of one of them." The chief marshal, an office alternating between the two societies, was the highest office of the student body. He presided at commencement and wore elegant regalia, a fringed and ornamented sash.

On November 12, 1842; the members of the Eumenean Society unanimously approved the motion of Mr. A. M. Boger "that we make an attempt to erect a Society Hall." In January a committee from the Philanthropic Society, who also wished to construct a hall, met with the Eumeneans to confer about the design of the two buildings. Despite long rivalry between the two group a spirit of cooperation attended the planning and construction of the halls It was decided that "each Society should act independently, but that the halls should be 'alike in site, material, and magnificence,' and cost \$1,500 apiece." Sites were selected December 14, 1848, and construction began soon afterward. The two halls were designed to complete the open-ended quadrangle plan of the campus. Eumenean on the west and Philanthropic on the east are two-story pavilions with tetrastyle prostyle porticos. Their form as well as their position at the ends of the quadrangle, with one-story dormitory "rows" between them and the axial Chapel, give the campus an arrangement similar to the more elaborate quadrangle at the University of Virginia, designed by Thomas Jefferson.

Eumenean Hall was the first to be dedicated - in November, 1849, with an address by "Mr. McDowell." A paper found in an old bottle, discovered during the 1956 renovations, is dated June 11 of that year. The purpose of the document meet, signed by A. Alexander, is explicit; "Should it stand two hundred Posterity may find this and know who were persons who built and those who had it built." It lists the twenty-five members of the society at the time and mentions that the library had 1,200 volumes and that the cost of erecting the hall was \$2,500. The names of the contractors (Lewis Dinkins and Daniel Alexander), plasterer, and carpenters of the structure are included as well. The document concludes hopefully, "May peace prosperity & liberty always pervade the land of America. May the day always be when the citizen of American [sic] will feel proud to say I am an American."

In 1853 lightning rods, blinds, and "spit boxes" were ordered for Eumenean Hall, and \$1,000 was borrowed to buy furniture, which arrived in July, 1854. In the following year the hall and "'the property appertaining thereto' was transferred" to the two men who had signed the note for the loan. Ten years later, an honorary member, William L. Davidson of Alabama, "saved them by a legacy of a thousand dollars," part of which was used to settle the debt.

The Civil War had a drastic effect upon the life of the college. The Eumeneans met on April 19, 1861, but not again until February 13, 1862. Though their numbers were much reduced, they remained active through February, 1865, and were able to open again in March, 1866. After the war, the subjects for their debates reflected the disturbing events of the Reconstruction period. Some names of honorary members were stricken because of "offensive prominence in the carpet-bagger days," and new honorary members included a number of well known Confederate generals.

On October 4, 1873, Davidson freshman Thomas Woodrow Wilson (president of the United States, 1913-1921) was initiated into the Eumenean Society. As a member of the society, he led debates, delivered an original oration, and read compositions. He was elected corresponding secretary. The dais furniture Wilson is said to have used is still in the hall. The story is told that when President Wilson visited Davidson in 1916, he was requested to make a speech from the balcony of Eumenean Hall. He responded, "I failed in my first speech in this hall and will not attempt to make another."

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and increasingly in the twentieth, the dominance of the debating societies began to wane. The colors of the two societies, pink (Eumenean) and blue (Philanthropic) had traditionally been combined to form the school colors, but in 1895 the students voted to adopt crimson and black as Davidson's official colors. Debating had long been the societies' exclusive territory, but in 1907 Davidson students began taking part in the intercollegiate debating. During the nineteenth century nearly all students had belonged to one of the societies, but by 1920 society members included only thirty-five percent of the students. The societies no longer run student life, but they continue as literary societies, still using their original halls and providing a link with the early years of the college.

The intention of the building committee that Eumenean Hall and Philanthropic Hall, which face one another across the original quadrangle of Davidson College, be "alike in size, material, and magnificence" was realized for the structures correspond in both size and basic configuration. The subtle variations in the treatment of the portico, the main entrance, and the brick bond of the wall surfaces of each hall, as well as the distinction in the interior trim, result in a sophisticated interplay of repetition and variation. The crisp use of the Greek Revival forms as well as the balance achieved between the abstract classical purity of the applied elements and the warmth of the brick surfaces make these buildings one of the few truly architectonic Greek Revival complexes in the state.