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History of Oakwood College Buildings

By Minneola L. Dixon, Archivist

In 1895, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists decided that an industrial school should be established in the South for the training of Negro Seventh-day Adventist youth. The Site Committee (comprised of O. A. Olsen, General Conference President; G. A. Irwin, Southern Union President; and H. Lindsey, General Conference Treasurer) chose a former plantation, located Northwest of Huntsville, Alabama, which impressed each of the three men to exclaim, "This is the place."

This 380 acre property which contained 65 oak trees, four buildings, including the Old Mansion, and nine slave huts, was purchased for \$6,700. The property was valued at \$10,157.57.

Today, after 100 years of steady growth and remarkable development, I in retrospect extol the magnitude of Oakwood's present size and scope by featuring campus buildings. I thank God for His blessings and for what He has wrought in behalf of a school which was carved out of a slave plantation. The land, comprised of 1,185 acres, and college facilities are valued in the millions.

Reflecting on the original campus landscape, I would like for you to visualize the oval-shaped campus, with the central area covered with luxuriant trees, shrubs, and grass. A large farm was located to the South, and in the North, a panorama of forests and an impressive mountain, is visible.

The beauties of Oakwood's buildings consist of a symphony of architectural structures, indicating the rapid expansion of a school which has gained national and international acclaim.

From the first cement block building, Study Hall, built in 1907, until the present new building, Wade Hall, built in 1991, these pages exhibit a dynamic arrangement of photographs which make up the main campus of administrative, academic, and residential buildings on the college property.

I hope you will take delight in viewing the pictures, which show the fulfillment of Ellen White's words which she spoke in clarion tones—*"It was God's design that Huntsville should have convenient school buildings. There is need of buildings and there is need of larger buildings, but these must not be extravagantly large..."*