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Campus Tour

By Aubrey Thompson

This is one of nine “slave huts” which was on the property when the school began. The dictionary defines a “hut” as a “hovel.” A “hovel” is a “mean house,” a place to house cattle. The “hut” was not lived in by choice.

The logs are hand hewn and notched on the ends to hold together. As the moisture changes, cracks open between logs. Notice the strips nailed over the logs to keep the mud or clay from washing from between the logs. A song of the era went something like this:

**“De wind blows in thru de chinks
in de wall and the roof am a letting
in the rain...”**

The fireplace provided heat and served as a place to cook. One must keep in mind that this “hut” was at one time a home for a family.

In its beginnings, Oakwood’s first male students called these huts their home-away-from-home.



Above: COLLINS PHOTO, 1898

Both: Old Mansion





"Morning Star" School House

Local social pressure and race laws of the time mandated this separate school for white children. The star, on the end of this wooden drop-sided building, was taken from the "Morning Star Steamboat," a boat used on the Mississippi River for Adventist

training and education of blacks in the South. This star and the boat's bell can be seen in the Museum Exhibit Room of the Eva B. Dykes Library.





Above: Oakwood Entrance

Below: Sign appearing one mile from Oakwood campus.





West Hall, 1897

The West Hall on fire.

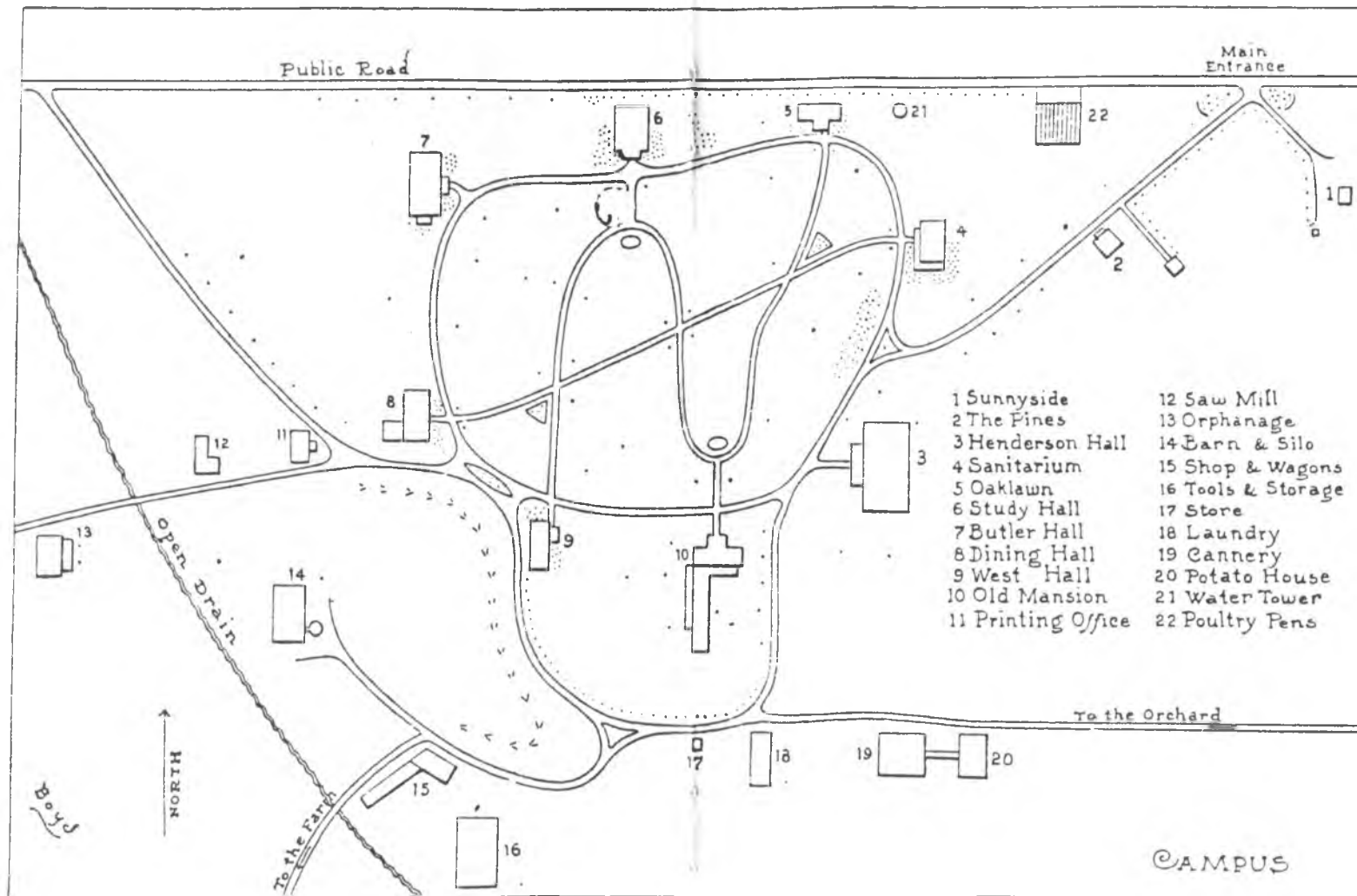


On Sabbath morning, February 16, 1935, fire ravaged historic West Hall while the greater number of the school family were assembled in the auditorium for Sabbath services. The alarm was given shortly after Sabbath School had begun, and the students and faculty arose and left the chapel without any excitement.

The student fire brigade, under the skilled direction of President Moran fought untiringly to extinguish the flames and to save what they could of the building's furnishings. Their efforts were almost in vain because a strong north wind quickly fanned the flames to a greater intensity. Realizing their helplessness, precautionary measures were taken to prevent the fire from spreading to the adjacent buildings.

The greatest loss of personal property was sustained by Mr. and Mrs. Carter who resided in the rear apartment of the second floor. This loss was equally felt by the students and faculty as was demonstrated by their speedy response to contributions soon collected for the unfortunate occupants of the building.

The other students residing in the West Hall home were Mr. and Mrs. John Street, Christopher Gray, Dennis Corsby, William Reed, Ruben Simons, Ralph Crawford, and Louis Bland.



Circa 1930



Study Hall, 1907

The Study Hall/Chapel/Administration Building

In 1907, this structure of sculptured block was built to accommodate the much-needed administrative offices for the college. A 100-seat chapel, Home Ec Department, and Study Hall were included. In 1947, this building was torn down to allow the construction of Cunningham Hall.

Study Hall, 1907





Butler Hall, 1908

An aerial view of Butler Hall, 1929.

Originally a men's dormitory for nineteen years, became a women's dorm annex in 1928, served as a library and classroom building, and was demolished in 1954.



East Hall (Sanitarium), 1909

Built in 1909 when W. J. Blake was principal, this building remains today a tribute to good design and workmanship. It was called the “Sanitarium,” as was common practice in early 1900 to so name a structure used to treat the ill. Training in medical-related fields was carried on in the building from 1909 to 1932. It was converted into living quarters for a college president, teacher’s home, men’s dormitory, faculty women’s home, health services, Behavioral Science Department, church ministries office, and Credit Union office.

Today it is a monument to medical training which has been an important part of Oakwood history and to the spirit of preservation which it richly embodies.



The Pines, 1911

A faculty and official residence in the early years, it last served as an apartment house for married students. It was destroyed in 1960 to make room for progress.



Oakwood College Orphanage, 1912

In 1912, Oakwood officials built the two-story frame house for orphans found in the area in need of a loving home. The orphanage once occupied the area where the J. T. Stafford building now houses a modern academy building. Professor Stafford, a graduate of Oakwood College, served 25 years (1965–1983) as academy principal.



Henderson Hall, 1914

Built in 1914 by F. W. Clark, a contractor and member of the faculty who directed the entire work, the women's dormitory was built to house forty-six students.



Potato House and Cannery, 1918.

Below: Printing Office, 1920





Irwin Hall, 1927

When the old dinning hall was destroyed by fire in 1926, the General Conference appropriated funds for construction of a \$32,000 three-story dormitory for women. A cafeteria was built on the first floor. This building was torn down in 1956 and replaced by Peterson Hall.



Normal Hall, 1930

S. R. Butler, the County Superintendent of Education, called upon Oakwood to educate teachers for the county's schools. Thus, the normal school arose to fill a community need.



Moran Hall, 1939

One of the structures utilizing rock from the property is the J. L. Moran Hall, built during the this presidency. Begun in 1939, it has been redesigned and two sections were added; the East section in 1943, the West section in 1944.

The assembly hall, which can seat 500 is the place where many Oakwood students gained their first experience as a public speaker. This building was built by students who needed to defray their expenses in school. Teachers' offices, classrooms, the departments of Business and Information Systems, English, and Education are in this building.



Cunningham Hall, 1947

Cunningham Hall Women's Residence for 136 students was built under President F.L. Peterson in 1947. The first and second floors were designated as dormitory sleeping rooms. Each room had a sink with hot and cold water. Bathrooms, shower rooms, and toilets are located on each floor. On the ground floor are located the Graphics Department, the Center for Academic Advancement, and the LEAP program. A parlor, worship room and utility rooms are included in the building for the convenience of residents.



W. H. Green Hall, 1952

This building was built during President F. L. Peterson's tenure as the College Library, but since 1973 it has housed offices and classrooms for the Behavioral Sciences and History. It once was used as the Business Office, the Chaplain's Office, and the National Alumni Departments Office. It was named for the first Black SDA Secretary of the General Conference Negro Department.



Ashby Auditorium, 1954

For years, church services were held in Ashby Auditorium. This is one of the favorite spots for students, as it houses the basketball and Physical Ed Departments. It is named in memory of N. E. Ashby, who believed in disciplining. He was a history professor. It was built in 1954.



Ford Hall, 1954

Natural Science and Mathematics were provided with much needed classrooms and laboratories. The H. E. Ford Science Hall, built in 1954, was named in memory of Henry E. Ford, a World War I veteran, who excelled in x-ray and earned himself an excellent position at the large Hinsdale Sanitarium near Chicago. It has also served as a Student Center.



Peterson Hall, 1955

Freshmen women were provided with a new dorm in 1955. Peterson Hall housed 172 students. Today, male freshmen are housed in this building. It is named in the memory of the second Black president, F. L. Peterson, who served during the years of 1945-1954. Peterson became Oakwood's first Black teacher in 1917. He taught English and music.



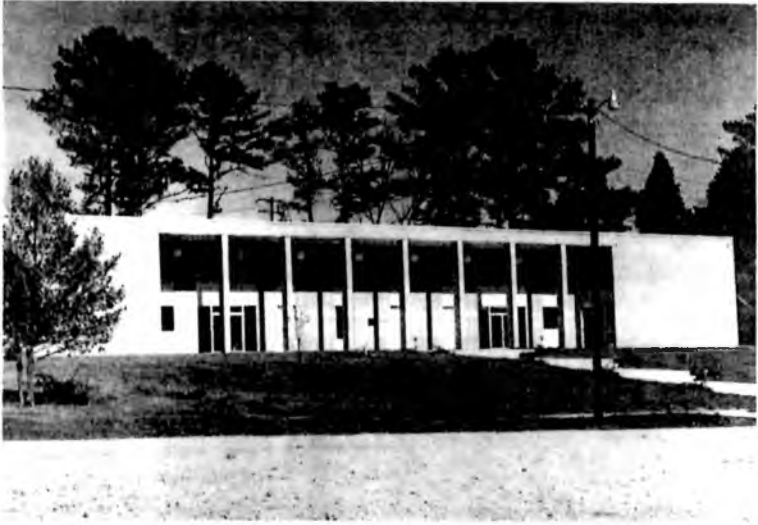
Anna Knight Elementary School, 1960

This laboratory school for the Elementary Education Department is an L-shaped structure of block-and-brick construction, with a brick breezeway between the south wing and the large playground. There are four glass doors and all-glass outer walls, trimmed in aluminum. There is a green terrazzo floor in the lobby—and tile floors elsewhere in the building. There is above-ceiling insulation, a built-in bulletin board, and other conveniences.

Four spacious, well-lighted classrooms, including a multi-purpose room, housed craft and home economics classes. A small library-conference room accommodated elementary pupils at times and teacher trainees at other times. Adjoining this area was the principal's office.

Elder R. L. Kimble, finance advisor of Oakwood College, doubled as building supervisor during most of the construction, with W. L. Dollar, chief carpenter; Sherman T. Moreland, expert at block-and-brick work, and architect E. T. Winder of Nashville, Tennessee.

This building was named for Anna Knight, the First Black SDA Superintendent of Education. The building was destroyed by fire in 1989.



Peters Hall, 1964

Music and Art Departments have been housed in Peters Hall since its construction in 1964. Named in honor of G. E. Peters, the 2nd Black Secretary of the General Conference Negro Department. Departmental Director's Office, Music Library, Auditorium, Practice Rooms, and other offices are included in this building. A. V. Pinkney was College president at the time of its construction.



Carter Hall, 1966

Built in 1966, under President A. V. Pinkney, this dormitory was built to house 275 women. It was named for Bessie Carter, founder of the prosperous Carter's Nursing Home and a philanthropist in the cause of Christian education.



Blake Administration Building, 1968

The former location of the Morning Star School House is the site of the Administrative Offices named in memory of W. J. Blake, Sixth principal (1906-1911). He is remembered for his contribution to good race relations.



Eva B. Dykes Library, 1973

Eva B. Dykes Library was constructed in 1973. It was named in honor of Dr. Eva Beatrice Dykes, the first Black woman to complete the requirements for a Ph.D. degree in America in 1921 from Harvard. She was an honor student at Radcliff College and was voted the most outstanding teacher of humanities at Howard University. Mrs. Dykes joined the Oakwood College faculty in 1945, and became the chairperson of the English Department. She retired in 1976 and was laid to rest in 1983.

The Oakwood College Museum, the Media Center, the Archives Research Center, and the Special Collections are housed in this well-equipped library which is used by both students and the community.



*Oakwood College Church and Religious Education Complex,
1977*

“Let them build me a sanctuary that I might dwell among them.” Under the leadership of Pastor E. C. Ward, the College Church was finally a reality in 1977. A circular structure housing the offices of the pastor, treasurer, medical emergency room, choir room, Sabbath School classrooms, a kitchen, and a dining area makes this a very complete church, seating 2,700 and often many more on special occasions. At the roof line a circle of stained glass windows tells the Bible story from Genesis to Revelations. The stained glass windows were designed by Laws Stained Glass Company in Statesville, North Carolina.

The Moseley Religious Complex adjoining the church is named to honor Elder C. E. Moseley, a 1924 graduate of Oakwood College. Since 1934 he has inspired and prepared young people for ministry. In 1954 he became the General Conference Associate Secretary and Field Secretary. He has since retired.



Wade Hall, 1991

The most expensive structure on the campus is the ultra-modern, steel and concrete, women's residence, which comfortably houses 360 female students. A laundry, infirmary, lounge, and elevator add to the convenience of this building, built in 1991. This three-story building also houses a multi-purpose area which seats 350 and is used for worship services, weddings and many other special events. The 5.2 million dollar building is often referred to as the "Oakwood Hilton."

The remarkable woman for whom the hall is named is Trula E. Wade, pioneer teacher and Oakwood College Dean of Women for 22 of the 33 years she served.

Our Tour Guide, Aubrey J. Thompson, is an ordained Elder of Mt. Calvary S.D.A. Church in Huntsville, Alabama. He is married to the former Shirley Ruth Davidson of Virginia.

In August of 1965, Mr. Thompson and family moved to Oakwood College. They lived on campus in the first brick duplex apartment on the west end of Faculty Row. The Thompson boys made themselves at home, and would canvas the neighborhood early in the morning to invite themselves in for a sample of breakfast at whatever home they took a fancy to! The boys were first graders and attended Anna Knight Elementary School.

Mr. Thompson worked in the biology laboratory, registrars office, cafeteria and electrical department for Mr. Brantley. In addition to a full workload on campus, Mr. Thompson took over 20 quarter hours of upper-division biology and was on the honor roll. With his biology training at Oakwood, Mr. Thompson was hired by Huntsville Hospital and worked for 11 years in the blood lab.

All of the Thompson family treasure their time at the Oakwood College campus and return whenever possible to see life-long friends.



OAKWOOD COLLEGE

Founded in 1896

Oakwood College, which began as an industrial school, was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1896 to educate African Americans in the South. The school was erected on 380 acres purchased during the previous year for \$6,700. Additional property secured in 1918 nearly tripled its land holdings. The school underwent several name changes over its history:

- 1896: Oakwood Industrial School
- 1904: Oakwood Manual Training School
- 1917: Oakwood Junior College
- 1943: Oakwood College

In 1958, Oakwood was granted full accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Oakwood prepares students from across America and many nations to serve the world in a variety of positions and careers, reflecting its motto, "Today's College for Tomorrow's Leaders!"

On this site, too, stood the Peter Blow Plantation which counted Dred Scott among its slaves in 1819. In 1857, Scott captured national attention by virtue of his appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court for his freedom in Missouri after sojourning in the free state of Illinois.

ALABAMA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, 1996

