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Three Dollars

Spring 1996

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE
QUARTERLY
Of Local Architecture & Preservation

OAKWOOD COLLEGE
Architecture of the Spirit



"From Slave Huts to Stained Glass Windows"

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***THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE
QUARTERLY***
of Local Architecture and Preservation

Vol. XXII, No. 1

Spring — 1996

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From the Chair

Dear Foundation Members:

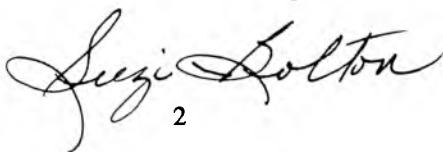
The Foundation gives special recognition this month to Oakwood College as it celebrates its 100th birthday. Oakwood opened its doors in April 1896 and has been educating young people and preparing them for life ever since. All those associated with the college have made positive contributions to our community. If you've never visited the campus, by all means do so. You'll experience first hand the friendliness of the students and faculty and the pleasure of seeing the well preserved campus shaded by beautiful old trees and covered with gently rolling slopes.

Congratulations to Dr. Benjamin Reaves, the faculty and administrative staff of Oakwood and to Mineola Dixon, Archivist and Museum Director, who has assisted with the production of this issue of the *Quarterly*. Along with everyone at Oakwood, we are excited as the final efforts of restoring East Hall near completion. We join all of Oakwood College in their enthusiastic anticipation of their centennial celebration.

The first quarter of 1996 has been a busy one for members of the Preservation and Long Range Planning Committees of your Board of Directors. The Preservation Committee is working diligently to preserve several endangered properties and a recent newspaper article focused public attention on these sites and the efforts now in place to save them and identify others in jeopardy.

Members of the Long Range Planning Committee are meeting regularly in an effort to take a more active approach to fulfilling the mission statement of the Foundation. They are currently investigating involvement with the Main Street Program and are in the process of researching the establishment of a revolving fund which would assist the Foundation in preservation efforts.

The annual meeting of the Alabama Historical Association will be held in Huntsville on April 11-13. Activities include a reception at the Burritt Museum on Thursday evening, various papers, a tour of homes, and a banquet on Friday, April 12. Registration forms for the meeting are available at Harrison Brothers Hardware. Hope to see you there!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Suzi Solton". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the page number.

From the Editor

When Minneola Dixon asked me to write an article for the April issue of *Adventist Heritage Magazine* on Oakwood College's Caucasian Principals, I found myself guided, as by an invisible hand. The more I read and researched, the more I came under the spell of Ellen G. White, whose vision for the school was crystal clear and as firm as the rock the campus sits upon. I was not surprised that G. A. Irwin felt pulled to the run-down, wooded, old plantation, into it's East Gate where "the impression came very forcefully to him that this was the place" for the founding of the school. Nor was I surprised that the name of the owner of the tract of land was also Irwin. I was prepared then for the "angel at the gate" which Professor Tenney as well as S. M. Jacobs testified to.

Visit Oakwood, just once or daily. The campus buildings sing their alleluias in work, service, learning and dedication to God's purposes. What meaneth these Stones? Follow Minneola Dixon as she, with assistance from Aubrey J. Thompson, puts the campus at the reader's fingertips. Its poetic message, spoken through Maureen Thomas' inspired lips will inform our hearts as well as our minds. Yes, any way you look at it, there is a angel at the gate.

This issue is an invitation to all its readers to enter the East Gate and experience with the founders "a holy, quiet subduing influence," that emanates from the architecture of the spirit.



Ellen G. White



**The Mississippi River boat *The Morning Star*.
It housed a home for workers, a chapel, and a print shop.**

The Founding

We've heard of three men in a boat, the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker. Oakwood College's story also contains three men *and* a boat: the *Morning Star* and Oakwood's three founders. The *Morning Star* was the inspiration of Elder J. E. White, son of Ellen G. White. His idea was to build a floating chapel and schoolhouse which could tie-in along the banks of the Mississippi bringing book-learning and Bible-teaching to Blacks along its shore. This was no easy matter. The boat was built in Allegan, Michigan, floated to Lake Michigan, then towed across to Chicago, taken through the Chicago drainage canal, and finally made its way down the Illinois River to the Mississippi.

It was this maiden voyage of the mission ship to the South that convinced the S.D.A. educators that God's work would require more firmly-rooted effort. Hence Elders G. A. Irwin, O. A. Olsen, and S. M. Jacobs came to Huntsville and founded Oakwood College in Madison County. If metaphorically they were following the Star, it quite literally later followed them. When the ship was dismantled, the star, the bell, and the boiler (later used to power the sawmill at Oakwood) were brought to Oakwood's campus. These three emblems embody the vision of Ellen G. White and her son—the star, the mission; the bell, the call to service; the boiler, the beauty and necessity of work.

The dismantling of
The Morning Star.

The star, the bell
and the boiler
were brought to the
Oakwood campus.



Meet Minneola Dixon, Guest Editor

When you get to know Minneola Dixon, Oakwood Archivist and Museum Director, you will understand how normally sedate places, a museum and an archive, have become the active hub of Oakwood College. Housed in the Eva B. Dykes Library, the archives is in one wing and the museum the other. Soon we hope, they will be housed together in the restored East Hall, the historic heart of the College. So much life and vitality flow from the archives and museum that one senses the great heart guiding them. Indeed Minneola Dixon is such a dynamo that I am reminded of one of my favorite Psalms: *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise, . . . Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together.* (98:4,8) Not that Minneola is noisy. She is exceedingly soft-spoken and demur, like the eye of a hurricane, perhaps. Yet the energy she produces is undeniably powerful and all around her reverberate.

An Oklahoma native, Mrs. Dixon came to Oakwood as a college freshman. Earning her B.A. in 1951, she threw herself into a career of service at the College. From Business Office to Director of Student Employment, to Director of Alumni Affairs, to the archives, Mrs. Dixon has lived and breathed the work and mission of the College. To fully prepare herself for her archival appointment, Mrs. Dixon returned to the classroom, receiving her M.A. in Library Science and Information Studies from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa in 1990. Obviously, Minneola Dixon is one of those who operates on God's time as there isn't enough time in the day to achieve what she has.

Since 1991, Mrs. Dixon has taken to the airwaves on W.O.C.G.-FM radio to tell Oakwood's story. Her's is the first Black Adventist radio ministry which highlights "Oakwood Heritage Moments." Hers is the voice at the gate. One of her favorite verses is "*What meaneth these Stones.*" (Josh 4:24) Minneola Dixon has spent a lifetime giving meaning.



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..."*

Early Beginnings

By Maureen Thomas

*In the beginning, in the very beginning in 1895, three pioneers,
G. A. Irwin, O. A. Olsen and H. Lindsay were their names
and they came South to Alabama traveling on a train.
They came South with authorization from the General Conference
and \$8,000 in hand to buy land to be used as an industrial, normal,
and theological school for the "Negro" race.*

*On the train down South they stopped, they stopped in Tennessee at
Chattanooga by L. Dyo Chamber's place
and they saw Anna Knight's face.
The face of the girl who became a great educator
for the colored people
and Oakwood's building bears her name.*

*So down South they came by train and five miles outside of Huntsville
they found Mr. Irwin's farm; 380 acres full of brush and briar,
and a lean-to barn.
There was a dilapidated old mansion and a choked-up well with
17 feet of debris, and 9 slave huts with 65 oak trees forming the main
campus plot, and they bought it for \$18 an acre on the spot.*

*To the farm they came from the North, from Battle Creek in Michigan
and they found Washington Warsaw, a man born on the land; and
they found J. J. Mitchell and Grant Atkins to keep it spic-n-span.
Two students helped them too, George Graham and Grant Royston
from Birmingham and Vicksburg. They came six months before to help
until Salon M. Jacobs from Iowa, the principal, could come.*

*And principal Jacobs came down South to Huntsville and added to the
Old Mansion a room; a room 18 x 24 feet which was used as a
kitchen and a place to eat.
He added a two-story building for classrooms and a boy's dorm;
and all this Jacobs did to help the place transform.*

So on November 16, 1896 Oakwood Industrial School down South opened up its doors, and H. S. Shaw, A. F. Hughes, Hattie Andre and S. M. Jacobs were the faculty four. They worked on developing the head, the heart and the hand according to the S.D.A. philosophy of education and God's great master plan.

And so 16 students came down South to get an education at Oakwood Industrial School in 1896. Eight colored boys—Frank Bruce, George Graham, Charles Morford, Robert Hancock, Thomas Murphy, Harry Pollard, Grant Royston and Samuel J. Thompson. The colored girls were Ella Grimes, Etta Little-John, Mary McBee, Nannie McNeal, Mary Morford, Daisy Pollard, Lela Thompson and Frances Worthington. They all came South to the colored school and settled down—what a phenomenon!



Old Mansion

The Buildings Among the Oaks

By Maureen Thomas

*Down, down, deep in the South, by the foothills of Appalachia;
 nestled in the Tennessee Valley is a school for colored people
 and they call it Oakwood College.*

*It has nine slave cabins, a stopped-up well, a plantation house,
 and 65 oak trees, if you please.*

*That was all on the 380 acres of land in 1896, when 8 black boys
 and 8 colored girls with 4 white teachers arrived there.*

But they had "Yankee grit" and "Negro courage" and they survived.

*They worked the land, deep, down, in the South, and hoisted
 structures to keep them warm, so they could learn to read and
 write and make more room for their brothers and sisters.*

*They built the "Morning Star" school house, Henderson hall, West and
 East halls, Study hall, Irwin and Butler halls, and they stood tall.*

*They added Oaklawn, the Normal and Hammond buildings, the Pines,
 the President's house, the milk house, a dry kiln, garages and pump
 houses, an orphanage barn, and orphanage, all in 40 years from 1896.*

*Most are gone now for fire and old age have taken their toll;
 but East hall survived.*

*So they brought more land, deep, down in the South and built more
 buildings; for the Negro boys and girls kept coming to enjoy the
 Oakwood experience and get an education.*

*And so from their own stone quarry they erected Moran hall and added
 more buildings: Cunningham hall and the teacher's cottages
 to the acreage.*

*Green, Ford, and Peterson halls; and Ashby auditorium with the store,
 bakery and post office complex, and the laundry continued
 the expansion to 1959.*

Some of these buildings have been refurbished, but they still survive.

And still they built more buildings, deep, down in the South:

*Anna Knight Elementary, the dairy barn, Peters and Carter halls,
Blake Center, and Edwards hall to accommodate our boys and girls.*

*Eva B. Dykes library, W. R. Beach natatorium, J. T. Stafford building,
Oakwood College church and Moseley religion complex came next.*

*W.O.C.G. radio station, the science complex, Natellka Burrell education building,
the skating rink, and Wade hall were all completed by 1996.*

*Twenty-seven buildings still standing, silhouetted against oak trees,
and they survive, keeping Oakwood alive.*

Maureen H. Thomas was born in Guyana, South America, where she spent the first ten years of her life. She later migrated to Trinidad and attended Caribbean Union College. Between 1975 and 1977, she completed a B.S. degree in Business Education. In 1981, she received a Master of Science degree in the same area from Alabama A&M University. Mrs. Thomas currently resides in the Huntsville area and is a 7th grade teacher at Whitesburg Middle School. She has one daughter and has been writing poems for the last three years.



Sunnyside

The Preservation of East Hall

By Fred Pullins

From the North American Regional Voice.

February 1990, Volume 11, Number 12.

Year after year those who traverse the campus of Oakwood College have been obliged to watch as East Hall, the oldest building on the campus, plummeted from her pedestal of honor and usefulness to infamy. What had once been the pride and flamed the hopes of suffering Blacks of North Alabama was slowly but steadily being attacked by greedy uncaring insects and the ravaging unrelenting elements. It appeared that the only way to salvage her waning glory was to tear her down, and let her once majesty and efficacy stand only in the fading memories of those who were privileged to be born at the turn of the century and are graced to still be among the living.

East Hall has contributed much since the hammers disturbed the Edenic-like stillness that characterized the hills of North Alabama in 1899. Her first assignment was to serve as a medical sanitarium for Blacks who were not yet welcomed to receive medical attention at white-patronized clinics and hospitals. East Hall was built out of pity and desperation, but fought to surface as a leader in the science and practice of medicine. The little known and less practiced art of using water in the treating of illness, what we now term hydrotherapy, was East Hall's hallmark. Her basement contained hydrotherapy treatment rooms where many miracles were performed daily by dedicated and skilled hands using water, selected medicines, and trust in Divine power to bring relief and restore vitality to the hundreds who funneled through her comforting doors.

I remember a story that was told by Elder Harry Dobbins, affectionately referred to as "Uncle Harry" to those who found time to sit at his feet and bask in his genius. He related that he had come to Oakwood as a youth and was soon diagnosed as having the dreaded and often fatal disease of tuberculosis. His lungs had been so ravaged by the merciless march of the disease that his very cough brought up blood and pieces of life-supporting lung tissue. Medical science was stymied, and death seemed imminent. Elder Dobbins testified that medical science's limitation was prayer's enabling to

once again demonstrate that Christ is the Great Physician. Though fading vision, Elder Dobbins perceived a particular form, and his feverish hearing responded to a familiar voice. It was the presence of Mother Cunningham standing by his bed and lifting her voice in prayer: "Dear Lord, please heal this little boy. Yes, he has been a bad boy, but that is because he lost his mother at such an early age. Please heal him, Lord, because I ask it in the worthy name of Jesus. Amen." Uncle Harry departed this life in 1987, at the golden age of eighty-five.

Later East Hall became the residence of the college president, Elder J. L. Moran. He and his family occupied the first floor, and single faculty women resided on the second floor. The building also served in later years as the residence of Dr. Eva B. Dykes, the first black woman to qualify for the Ph.D. degree in the United States. During the many years that Dr. Dykes and her select group of boarding student scholars occupied East Hall, the building was revered as the nurturing place for aspiring minds.

East Hall has since served as a dormitory for academy young men, the office of the Oakwood College Federal Credit Union, the Behavioral Science building, the headquarters for Oakwood's student missionary corps, the launching pad for campus ministries, and the office of the college chaplain. It was also the home for the writer of this article for the year he served as dean of academy young men.

The eroding influences of time have taken their toll on East Hall's structure. She no longer stands straight and proud. There is now a sadness; a pale of foreboding that grips her countenance as passersby gaze upon her faded glory. However, her heart is still strong and the desire to stand proud once again echoes from her very walls.

It is nothing less than a miracle that years of siege by weather and neglect have not destroyed her. The same force that worked miracles within the walls of East Hall for hundreds of sufferers must be working a miracle of preservation for the building itself, East Hall stands strong!

The northern Alabama hillsides are once again being disturbed by the sound of hammers. East Hall is being restored. Little-by-little, as funds become available, the restoration process is taking place. Presently, the building has been stripped exteriorly and interiorly to expose the superstructure so the engineers can assess her soundness and formulate specifications for a quality restoration. The State of Alabama has also joined us in this restoration project. The State Historical Society has proclaimed East Hall to be a State Historical building. This recognition opened the door for the City of Huntsville to allocate \$20,000 toward the restoration project.

It is estimated that approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000 will be needed to restructure East Hall to its 1899 appearance. This means that alumni and friends of the college are asked to assist us financially in making our dream to preserve East Hall a reality. Donations are greatly needed and respectfully requested so that the work already begun in faith may continue to a quality completion.

East Hall has meant much to the Black community of North Alabama and to the hundreds of college students who have entered her doors. It is a monument to hope and accomplishment. It is our desire to preserve East Hall to inspire present and future generations of young people who will see this white-frame structure and ask about her glorious past. Please help us keep this symbol of our past to serve as a reminder of what God has done for us as a college and as a unique people. East Hall will also stand as a herald of miracles yet to come.

The Presidents

Black and White together, they built a campus here on which to carry out God's plan. Noted for its world-wide educational mission, erecting thousands of schools and colleges across God's earth, the Seventh-day Adventist Church tackled the problem of bringing God's Word and work to the Black people in the South. Ellen G. White and her son took especial interest in the Oakwood mission.

Oakwood College president's photographs tell us more than words can. The eyes have it: dedication, direction and determination. Each man fulfilled his mission. Dr. Reaves' work continues to magnify the school's role.

Erecting buildings is only one way presidents have pursued the College's mission. Maintenance and preservation are on-going, as is the pursuit of knowledge.



Oaklawn, Presidents Home in the 1920's

President's Home in the 1940's.





James I. Beardsley
1917-1923

Graduated from Union College in 1908. The first graduation exercises were held in this era.



Joseph A. Tucker
1923-1932

Graduated from Union College in 1917. The ACORN (school paper) was first published in this era.



James L. Moran
1932-1945

Moran Hall is named in his honor. During his administration, the first Baccalaureate Degree was awarded.



Frank L. Peterson
1945-1954

The first black graduate of Pacific Union College. Peterson Hall is named in his honor. He promoted the largest grouping of industrial training programs in our college.



Garland J. Millet
1954-1963

Graduated from Pacific Union College in 1934. During his administration, Oakwood became accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.



Addison V. Pinkney
1963-1966

Received his B.S. from Morgan State University in 1925, and M.S, degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1965. The college became a member of the United Negro College Fund during his administration.



Frank W. Hale, Jr.
1966-1972

He was a student at Oakwood College in 1944. Received his Ph.D. degree from Ohio State University in 1955. He instituted many “firsts” during his years of service: Office of Student Affairs, Office of Development, Alumni Homecoming Weekends, and the Oakwood College Advisory Council.



Calvin B. Rock
1971-1985

During his administration, enrollment increased 132%, international students increased 66%, faculty membership increased 85%, doctorates increased 184%, and the college achieved national recognition as one of the premier institutions in America



Benjamin F. Reaves
1985-

During his tenure, Dr. Reaves has turned around an enrollment decline and established a trend of enrollment increase up to institutional capacity. The Placement Office operation has expanded, and the “Second-Mile Service” program for customer service has been initiated. The academic excellence of the College has been enhanced through the credentials of the faculty reflected in awards and the national accreditation of the Social Work Program. The new women’s dormitory has a capacity of 348, and the renovation of the historical East Hall represents a step in the master plan of restoration of the campus.

MISSION STATEMENT

Oakwood College, a historically black liberal arts Seventh-day Adventist institution founded in 1896, has as its fundamental purpose quality Christian education . Its mission embodies access to educational opportunity, academic excellence, and spiritual development for persons reflecting demographic, economic, cultural, and educational diversity. Therefore, programs and activities are Christ-centered, designed to integrate faith and learning, encourage a vibrant spiritual experience, prepare individuals for the proclamation of the second coming of Christ, and provide an atmosphere for appreciation of oneself and affirmation of cultural diversity. With its emphasis on excellence in career preparation, the institution continues to be “Today’s College for Tomorrow’s Leaders.”



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-siding 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.

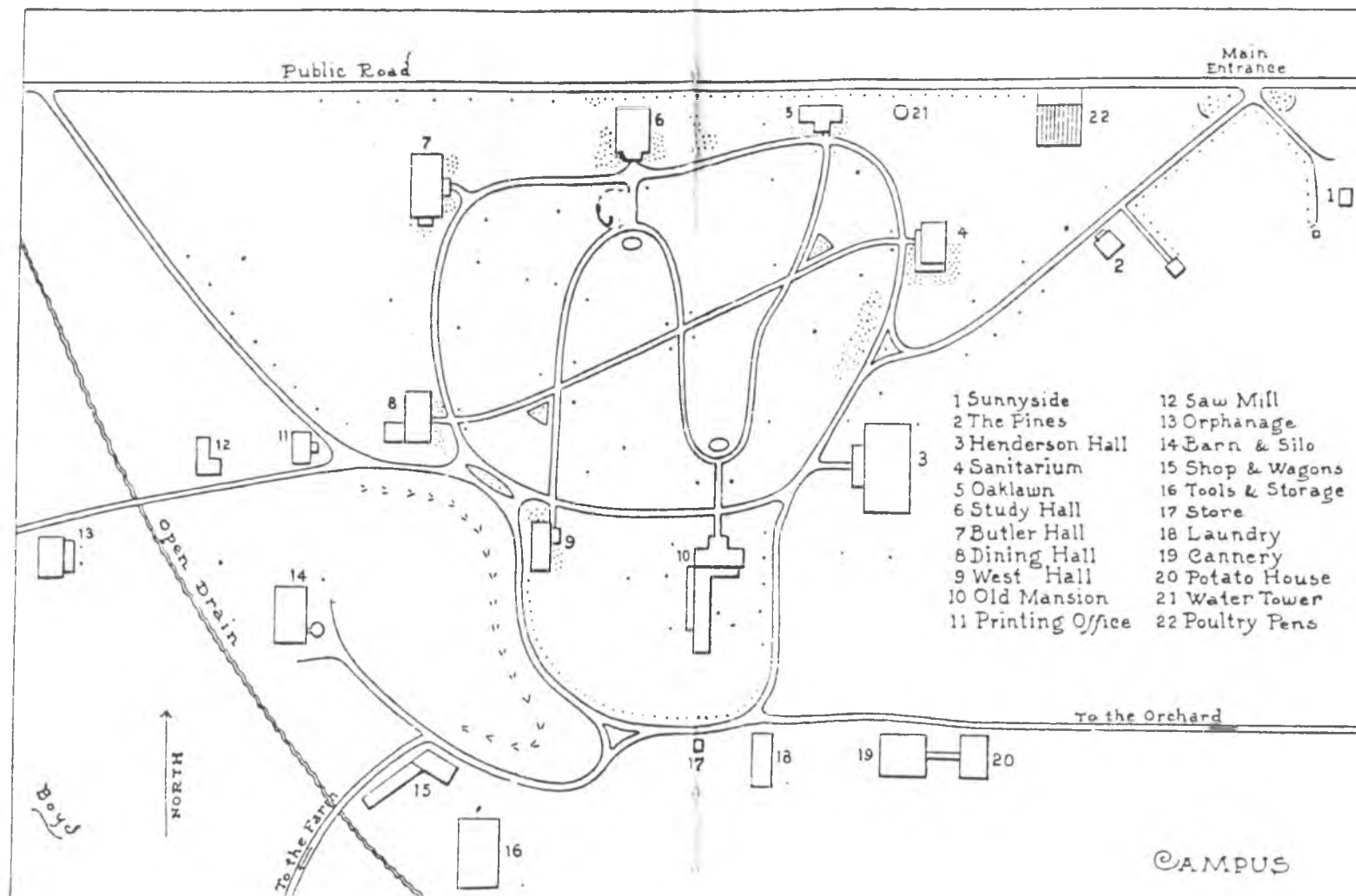


On Sabbath morning, February 16, 1935, fire ravaged historic West Hall while the greater number of the school family were assembled in the auditorium for Sabbath services. The alarm was given shortly after Sabbath School had begun, and the students and faculty arose and left the chapel without any excitement.

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.



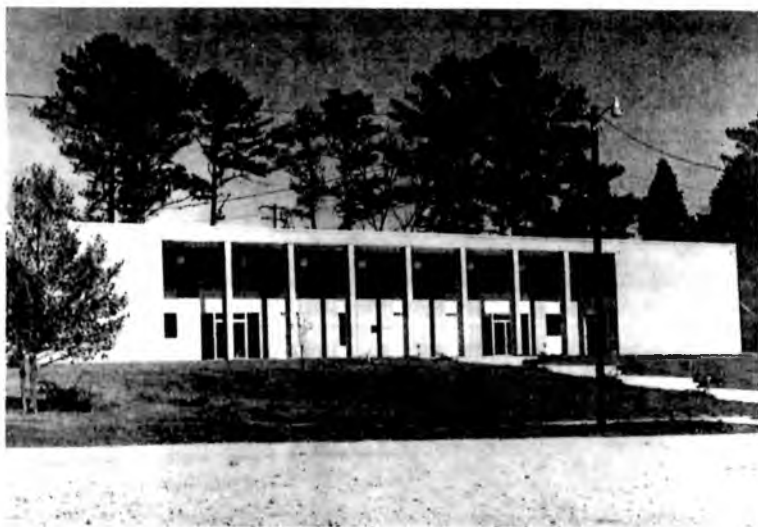
Anna Knight Elementary School, 1960

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

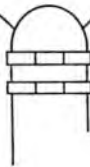
Oakwood College, which began as an industrial school, was founded by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1896 to educate African Americans in the South. The school was erected on 380 acres purchased during the previous year for \$6,700. Additional property secured in 1918 nearly tripled its land holdings.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





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