

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Yadkin College Historic District

other names/site number Yadkin College

2. Location

street & number N and S sides of SR 1194, west of jct. with SR 1436 N/A not for publication

city, town Yadkin College N/A vicinity

state NC code NC county Davidson code 057 zip code 27292

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>38</u>	<u>13</u>	buildings
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>47</u>	<u>13</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic Resources of Davidson County

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register -0-

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

William S. P... f.
State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

1-15-88

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: CollegeDOMESTIC: Single dwellingAGRICULTURE: Agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwellingAGRICULTURE: Agricultural outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century: Gothic RevivalLate 19th and 20th Century Revivals:Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brickwalls woodbrickroof asphaltother tinstucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Yadkin College Historic District consists of 23 principal buildings and 23 outbuildings, 5 structures, and 4 sites. Fourteen of the principal buildings and 18 of the outbuildings are contributing; 9 of the principal buildings and 5 of the outbuildings are noncontributing. The contributing buildings are the 1856 college building, one antebellum house, 11 houses built between ca. 1870 and 1890, and an 1886 church. The noncontributing buildings are nine houses built after the end of the period of significance. The structures are traditional wells and corn cribs. The sites are the Yadkin College Cemetery, the site of the 1881 college building, site of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and site of the post office, blacksmith shop and jail.

Yadkin College survives today as a tiny community on a heavily wooded bluff above the Yadkin River in western Davidson County. Although fields and woods belonging to the houses spread out from the district down the hillsides to the Yadkin River (which forms the Davie County boundary), the area designated here as a historic district is approximately 125 acres. This includes the historic buildings and sites which are the essence of the district. The village has the aura of a ghost town, and gives little hint of the ambitious academic and industrial buildings here in the late 19th century. Yadkin College Road (SR 1194) runs east-west through the middle of the district with two cross streets that suggest the remnants of a grid plan. The district comprises the densest portion of habitation of the former incorporated town, and is the only historic district identified in the Davidson County Inventory conducted in 1982-1983. This district was originally identified as one of the components of the multiple resource area entitled "Historic Resources of Davidson County" (NR-1984), but was not submitted at that time.

The aspects of physical appearance which create this district are the remarkable collection of substantial two-story frame farmhouses of considerable architectural embellishment, set close together in a "town" pattern, the 1856 brick building of the former Yadkin College, and a number of rural-type outbuildings, all set within a garden-like environment with mature shade trees, grassy lawns, stone walls, fences, and open meadows.

The 1856 college building, now used as storage, is one of only two buildings in the county originally stuccoed and scored to imitate ashlar construction; the other being the first Davidson County Courthouse (NR-1983). Despite the stylish use of stucco (found also in the mid-19th century classroom buildings at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), the building is traditional and almost homely in form. It is two stories, five bays wide and two bays deep, with exterior end chimneys and a central entrance at both stories. The interior reflects use as a tobacco factory.

 See continuation sheet

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The nine houses built during the two decades after the Civil War represent unusual prosperity during the Reconstruction Era, when little construction occurred in North Carolina. These houses reflect the economic rewards of reopening following the War. The Benson-Taylor House, ca. 1870, is quite similar in form to the Hanner-Charles House and has a nearly identical entrance. Another early postbellum house is the Gaither Walser House (I), built before 1875. The two-story frame house is an ambitious example of Italianate Revival design, with a two-story pedimented portico projecting from the center bay, a one-story pedimented entrance porch and one-story shed porches across the flanking bays of the main block. The exterior end chimneys are framed by pedimented end gables, and brackets adorn all eaves. The interior has professionally grained woodwork.

In 1879 Walser sold this house and soon after built the Gaither Walser House (II), directly across the road. It has similar massing, with a central projecting block, but is less stylish on the exterior. On the interior, however, the house has similar grained woodwork and an unparalleled grand central staircase with an overhead balcony. Design and construction is attributed to H. Bentley Owen, a local builder who built the second college building in 1881.

The Thompson-Totten House, J. T. Williamson House, T. S. Dale House, Frankie Charles House, and the Owens-Hartzog-Thomason House are two-story frame houses built in the 1880s and 1890s in vernacular late Greek-Revival/Italianate I-house style, with some pedimented gable ends and bracketed eaves. Like two of the earlier houses, the Dale House has fine interior grained woodwork.

The most visually striking house in the district, and the only building in the district which is a popular style rather than of vernacular style, is the Gothic Revival E. L. Greene House. This T-shaped two-story frame house has pointed arched windows, a bracketed front porch, and unusually detailed kingspost eave ornament. The cover essay for "Historic Resources of Davidson County" calls it "the closest example to the pattern book 'Gothic Cottage'" in Davidson County.

The smallest and plainest house in the district is the so-called H. Bentley Owen House, a diminutive one-story frame structure with one exterior end chimney, supposedly built ca. 1880 for Owen, architect-builder of the 1881 college building.

The Yadkin College Methodist Protestant Church, built in 1886, is typical of traditional rural North Carolina churches, with a rectangular gable-front form and a belfry projecting from the front peak. The polygonal, truncated form of the belfry is a virtuoso performance.

Approximately 25 outbuildings survive on the grounds of the contributing houses in the district. Nearly every house has at least one outbuilding, and often two or three: typically a smokehouse, barn and wellhouse, illustrating the importance of self-sufficiency in small-town as well as farm life. All of these outbuildings are representative of those found throughout Davidson County, as discussed in Paul Touart's

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cover essay "Historic Resources of Davidson County." Perhaps the earliest outbuilding is the double-pen log barn on the Thompson-Totten property. This is a major barn type in the county and the only one in the district. Other typical log outbuilding types include the half-dovetailed log smokehouse on the Hanner-Charles property and the log tobacco barns on the E. L. Green property. Frame construction eventually replaced log construction and facilitated the construction of barns like the one on the T. S. Dale property (#8a) or the one behind the Frankie Charles House (#9a). Both barns are gable front structures with a center passage. The most distinctive feature of the Dale Barn is its collection of diagonally slatted eaves and doors. The other contributing outbuildings in the district are well houses, corn cribs, smokehouses, storage sheds, and early twentieth century garages.

INVENTORY LIST

The following inventory list includes all properties located within the Yadkin College Historic District, keyed by number to the district map.

Dating: Most dates are based on research and family history gathered by architectural historian Paul B. Touart in the process of the Davidson County Inventory and Multiple Resource Nomination, submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office in 1983.

Assessment: All properties are coded as "C" - Contributing or "N" - Noncontributing.

C 1. Yadkin College. 1856

Completed in 1856 with funds donated by Henry Walser, David L. Michael, and others, this two-story, five-bay, stuccoed brick block is the only remnant of the Yadkin College campus. When the second building was erected in 1881-1882 (destroyed), the first building was converted to a tobacco factory and pack house by E. L. Greene. The building contains an interesting mixture of references to its use as a school as well as a tobacco factory. Over the second floor south fireplace is a stenciled welcome "Guademus Te Venisse," (We are glad you have come). On the first floor, one packing screw is still in place along with a dozen stencils of various tobacco brands.

C a. Well (Structure) Brick enclosure, probably contemporary with college building.

C b. Barn. One-story frame construction, early 20th century. Now in ruins.

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C 2. Hanner-Charles House. ca. 1860

Stands on the eastern edge of the district in a yard with mature trees and boxwood. The front section is dated 1860 and was apparently built by R. R. Hanner; a ca. 1880 house was moved to the back of the original house by John Burton Charles. This frame I-house has a vernacular Downingsesque one-story front porch and a two-panel front door flanked by narrow sidelights which occupy only the mid-section of the height of the door. The interior woodwork has the original painted graining.

C a. Smokehouse. Half-dovetail log construction with gable front. Probably contemporary with house.

C b. Storage building. Frame gabled construction, ca. 1900.

C c. Barn. Frame construction, gable front. Central runway with flanking pens. Second half of 19th century.

C 3. Benson-Taylor House. ca. 1870-1880

Frame I-house with two-story kitchen wing. Quite similar to the Hanner-Charles House, with nearly identical front entrance. Replacement plain porch posts. The house acquires its name from James H. and Lizzie Benson who lived in the house but later sold it to a J. H. Taylor.

C a. Storage building. Frame gabled construction, probably contemporary.

C 4. Gaither Walser House (I). ca. 1870-1875

Centered in Yadkin College, this house represents one of the closest examples of sophisticated popular designs found in Davidson County. The formal T-plan, bracketed eaves, front and side pediments as well as professionally grained woodwork are a rare combination in Davidson County. It was built by Gaither Walser, one-term college board president and mayor of the town as well as the son of the college founder, Henry Walser. It was sold in 1879 due to the financial instability of Gaither Walser.

C a. Corn crib (structure). Frame gable-front construction with slatted sides, typical of the type. Probably contemporary.

C b. Well (structure). Well with frame shelter. Early 20th century.

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C 5. Gaither Walser House (II). Ca. 1880-1890

Gaither Walser's second house stands opposite his first on the south side of Yadkin College Road. Both houses have a center entrance in a projecting front pavilion; both also have grained woodwork. The most notable architectural element is the central stair with overhead balcony. This unusual feature and the entire house is attributed to H. Bentley Owen, a local builder who designed the second college building on the hill.

C a. Barn. Two-story frame gabled construction, early 20th century.

C 6. Thompson-Totten House. Ca. 1870-1880

Frame center-hall I-house with rear ell. Entire house has bracketed eaves and pedimented gable ends. Beneath the first floor porch roof is flush sheathing. Interior woodwork repainted but largely intact. House named after William Thompson who is credited with its construction as well as Rev. W. T. Totten who took charge of Yadkin College in its final years.

C a. Garage. L-story frame, two-bay-wide construction, early to mid-20th century.

C b. Barn. Half-dovetail log construction, with central runway, flanking pens. Contemporary, and typical of Davidson County.

C 7. J. T. Williamson House. Ca. 1870-1880

Frame I-house with two single-story rear service wings separated by an open breezeway. Supposedly built by Henry Walser around 1870 and later owned by J. T. Williamson, local store merchant. Plain, vernacular design.

C a. Wellhouse. Frame gable-front construction with latticework "walls." Rare latticed design, probably contemporary.

C b. Storage building. Frame one-story gabled construction, early 20th century.

C 8. T. S. Dale House. Ca. 1870-1890

T. S. Dale is credited with building this traditional frame I-house. Notable features include bracketed eaves, rear wall placement of chimneys, bay windows, grained interior woodwork, and overall well-preserved state. The entrance stoop is a later replacement. Seven acres of wooded lots combined with open pasture borders Yadkin College Road and is outlined by a white board fence. On the south side of the road, T. S. Dale's tobacco factory used to operate.

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C a. Barn. Large gable-front frame construction with unusual slatted eaves and doors, early 20th century.

C 9. Frankie Charles House. Ca. 1880-1890

Simple frame I-house used from 1886-1887 by Elihu P. Mendenhall, college president.

C a. Barn. Gable-front frame construction, contemporary.

C b. Well (structure). Brick sides, contemporary.

C 10. Owens-Hartzog-Thomason House. Ca. 1870-1890

Heavily reworked frame I-house. Retains basic form although porch removed. Well-landscaped yard contributes to garden atmosphere.

C a. Barn. Small, two-bay frame construction, contemporary.

C b. Brick building. One-story, three-bay by two-bay, with gable roof, rear frame shed. Brick seems to be older than the building itself, and may be reused from the old T. S. Dale Tobacco Factory on this site.

C 11. E. L. Greene House. Ca. 1880-1890

This T-shaped Gothic Revival house remains in pristine condition both inside and out and is one of the best examples of the pattern book Gothic cottage in Davidson County. Especially noteworthy are the various gables and dormers with delicate kingpost eave decoration along with Gothic arch sash. In addition to being one of the best-built houses in Yadkin College, the E. L. Greene House represents the transition from the vernacular to the popular. Greene family traditions document the construction of this house around 1890 by a carpenter remembered as Mr. Koontz. From around 1880-1910, Edward L. Greene processed tobacco in the adjacent first academy building.

C a. Wellhouse. Frame construction, with storage bay and projecting roof. Victorian doors and siding indicate that it is contemporary.

C b. Garage. One-story frame, gable-front construction, 1930s.

C c. Corn crib (structure). Traditional gable front, slatted sides, contemporary.

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C 12. H. Bentley Owen House. Ca. 1870

This single-story, three-bay frame house is reported to have been used by H. Bentley Owen while he was living in Yadkin College. The house is deceiving in plan, for what seems to be a one-room house actually has three rooms. The shorter, single-story wing addition has two rooms, each heated with corner hearths.

No outbuildings

NC 13. Frame bungalow. Ca. 1930-1940

Simple, single-story, gable front, frame bungalow with smaller gable over front porch. The house is sited on a high slope several hundred feet from Yadkin College Road.

No outbuildings

NC 14. Ranch House. Ca. 1975-1980

One-story frame ranch house with gable-end garage, set back from road on a slight rise.

No outbuildings

NC 15. Rhett E. Greene House. Ca. 1982

One-story, three-bay frame ranch house built next door to the first college building by grandson of E. L. Greene.

NC a. Storage building. One-story frame construction, ca. 1960.

C b. Barn. Two-story, gable-frame structure called the "horse barn." Early 20th century.

NC c. Repair Shop. One-story concrete block shop, ca. 1960.

NC 16. Ranch House. Ca. 1980

One-story, brick veneer construction with side carport.

NC a. Metal two-bay storage shed, contemporary.

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NC 17. Craver House. Ca. 1985

Two-story frame house, simple vernacular design. Owned by David A. Craver.

NC a. Passive solar frame shed, contemporary.

NC 18. Willie Hoover House. Ca. 1970

One-story cinderblock house, vernacular design. Located on west side of original main road, northwest of 1856 college building.

C a. Frame rectangular shed, early 20th century.

C b. Frame square shed, early 20th century.

NC 19. Mobile Home. Mid-20th century?

Located on south side of dirt road leading to Yadkin College Cemetery.

C a. One-story wooden shed, early-mid-20th century.

NC 20. Mobile Home. Ca. 1980

Located just south of 1856 college building.

C 21. Log House. Ca. 1870-1880

One-and-one-half-story log house in ruinous condition. Located northeast of site of 1881-1882 college building. House rests on stone piers, and the original stone chimney has collapsed. It has six-over-six sash, and a one-story rear frame wing added later. The front door is a two-panel design. The interior hall/parlor plan has an enclosed corner stair entered from the rear wing and wide, hand-planed sheathing.

C a. Open storage shed. Frame. Early-mid-20th century.

NC 22. Ranch House. Ca. 1950

One-story, brick veneer construction, with long stuccoed wing addition added when it was converted to a black rest home.

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- C 23. Tobacco Barns. Ca. 1890-1940

These three tobacco barns signify the continued agricultural use of some land in and around Yadkin College. Their single-story height, square shape and shed-roofed work space is common to all Davidson County tobacco barns. Two are of log construction, one is frame.

- C 24. Yadkin College Cemetery. 19th and 20th century

Located on a knoll with wooded slopes in three directions, this cemetery contains generations of Yadkin College residents. Tradition holds that the site was pointed out by Henry Walser not long before his death in 1875, and his gravestone, of vernacular design, is the oldest marker in the cemetery. There are approximately 100 markers of standard design as well as a few larger grave monuments.

- C 25. Site of post office, blacksmith shop and jail. Now grown up in 20-year-old pines. Located at the southeast corner of SR 1194 and the lane leading to the 1856 college building.

- C 26. Site of the Methodist Episcopal Church

This vacant lot across the dirt road from the E. L. Greene House is the site of the second of two churches of Yadkin College.

- C 27. Yadkin College Methodist Protestant Church. Ca. 1886

Single-story, gable-front, weatherboarded church with distinctive belfry. Its basic form has remained unaltered aside from a single-story Sunday school and community hall addition on the south side. The sanctuary has retained its late-19th century altar furniture, semicircular altar rail, and mahogany-stained pine pews.

- C 28. Site of 1882 Yadkin College Building

Three-story brick block with a five-story Mansarded tower, designed and built by H. Bentley Owen at a cost of \$7,000. Its construction created an embarrassing debt the college and church administrators could not dissolve. The structure was demolished after the closing of the college in 1924. The site is marked by a large granite and brass monument erected in 1940 by the Yadkin College Homecoming Association.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance

1856-1924

Significant Dates

1856

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Owen, H. Bentley and Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Yadkin College Historic District is a tiny community containing about two dozen buildings and numerous outbuildings clustered along a narrow secondary road and down several unpaved side lanes. The entire rural district is contained in a bend of the Yadkin River, in western Davidson County, just across the river from Davie County. The most significant building is the first college building, a two-story brick structure built in 1856. Yadkin College is of statewide significance as one of the most important of the twenty-two colleges founded in North Carolina during the "intellectual awakening" in the state from 1835 to 1860. The school closed in 1924, and all that remains of the campus and the bustling town which developed around it, with tobacco factories and stores, are the college building, a church, and houses. In addition to the district's significance as the home of Yadkin College, it also contains a significant collection of eleven substantial frame dwellings built from ca. 1860 to ca. 1890. One of these, the E. L. Greene House, is an excellent patternbook Gothic Revival cottage, while the rest are inventive vernacular I-houses with ornamental porches, grandiose Italianate entrance pavilions, interior wood graining, and a large variety of traditional farm outbuildings. These vernacular I-houses include the Benson-Taylor House and the Hanner-Charles House, two of the earliest houses, with porches enlivened by ornate scroll sawwork; the ambitious Italianate Revival style Gaither Walser House, ca. 1875; and the second Gaither Walser House, built in the 1880s with an unusual stair hall with a balcony and attributed to local builder H. Bentley Owen, who designed the 1881 college building which has been demolished. The district's period of significance ends with the closing of the college in 1924.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Yadkin College Historic District was identified as one of the components of the Davidson County Multiple Resource Area nomination, listed in 1983, but was not submitted at that time because the documentation was incomplete. This district should be added to the multiple property form, entitled "Historic Resources of Davidson County." The historical context for each of Yadkin College's areas of significance, education and architecture, are clearly stated in the cover form, and are discussed in more detail here in this nomination.

See continuation sheet

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Like much of northern Davidson County, the area now comprising the village of Yadkin College was settled in the third quarter of the eighteenth century by German immigrants moving south out of Pennsylvania via the Great Wagon road through the Shenandoah Valley. One immigrant, Gasper Walser, arrived in what was then Rowan County in 1778 and bought¹ his first tract of 286 acres from Thomas Smith, heir of the previous owner, Andrew Smith. Both Gasper and his son Frederick Walser improved the Davidson County acreage into a sizable farm. In addition, a gristmill had been built on Dykers Creek and known as Walser's Mill. In 1836, Frederick Walser died, and by his will his land was divided among his remaining children. One son, Henry Walser, then thirty-three, had already begun to establish his own plantation on land purchased from his wife's father, Daniel Warner, in 1828.² On this property Henry Walser proceeded to build one of the most ambitious dwellings of the period in the county, a two-story Flemish bond 1829 brick house near Yadkin College, not in this district (DV-263). By 1860, Henry Walser's property³ was assessed at \$41,275 with 400 acres of improved land and 600 acres unimproved. Walser was many times a member of the House of Commons between 1842 and 1864. Although much credit must be awarded to Henry Walser, his landholdings and substantial estate were partially a result of being a third generation owner of land improved by his father and grandfather for over half a century.

By this time, the entire county was finally benefiting from a stabilized agricultural and minor industrial economy. In response to two decades of prosperity and a progressive impulse initiated by the Whig Party in 1836, statewide attention was shifted from an extreme conservatism to crucial social needs, particularly in the form of education. As a result, North Carolina entered an era of "intellectual awakening" from 1835 to 1860 that produced 3,000 public⁴ schools, and 434 academies and other schools with 661 teachers and an enrollment of 13,169.⁴ During this period 22 institutions of higher learning were⁵ founded, among which was Yadkin Institute (college), largely the handiwork of Henry Walser.

A man of popularity and fiscal wealth as well as state influence, Henry Walser must have made an imposing appearance at the annual convention of the Methodist Church at Fayetteville in 1852. At this conference he presented his plan to establish a Methodist supported school on property he was willing to donate. Walser volunteered to finance the construction of the main building with the exception of the hardware, which was offered by David S. Michael, later a member of the Board of Trustees. The concept⁶ was adopted, preparations were made, and in 1855, the first building was begun.⁶ This first building is the only college structure still standing (Inventory #17). Apparently Walser envisioned a complete town on his land, and subdivided the land around the 10 acres donated to the college into lots and laid⁷ out streets. The 1858 tax assessments list 45 lots valued at \$5,315 in Yadkin College⁷. The current streets seem to be a vestige of a grid plan.

By 1856 the all-male institution was complete and advertised in the Lexington Yadkin and Flag.

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This institution is now completed and its first session will commence on the 20th instant.

This Institution is situated in the county of Davidson three miles east of Fulton, in the forks of the Danville and Lexington roads--9 miles from Lexington. Its location is most healthy and beautiful. The neighborhood is as moral as any in the country. The building is of brick, finished in the most handsome style. The services of G. W. Hege, for a term of five years has been secured. Mr. Hege is a graduate of one of the first Institutions in the country, and is in every respect qualified to give satisfaction to all who may entrust themselves under his care.

Dwelling houses and boarding houses are now in process of erection on the lots of the Institute, and board can be had at private houses in the neighborhood.

The terms^g of board and tuition has not been arranged, but will be as moderate as possible.

It is not known how many students enrolled that first October under Reverend Hege. The school operated as Yadkin Institute until 1861 when the name was changed to Yadkin College which signified its ability to confer academic degrees instead of certificates. However, the year 1861 also saw the closing of the school with sixty of its eight students enlisting for the Confederate Army. The institution remained inactive for six years.

Yadkin College reopened its doors in 1867 under the leadership of Professor H. Thomas Phillips. For a short time classes were held in a nearby house until the college building could be repaired from vandalism incurred during the war years. After two years under the Reverend J. C. Dean, Yadkin College entered into its most critical phase under the Reverend Shadrack Simpson (1873-1883).

With the guidance of Shadrack Simpson, the curriculum was expanded to include ancient languages, metaphysics, rhetoric, logic, mathematics, English literature, penmanship, and music. Aside from Simpson, the faculty included A. Baker, G. M. Smithdeal, R. T. Pickens, and Miss Swannanoa Harris. In the 1879-1880 Yadkin College catalogue, R. T. Pickens is designated as professor in the Female Department, a position not needed until 1878 when the college changed from all male to coeducational. The total enrollment for 1879-1880 was seventy-eight, fifty-three men and twenty-five women.¹⁰ With dynamic leadership and the hope of sustained growth, the trustees gathered an appropriate down payment to erect a second building. The three-story brick block with five-story mansard roofed tower was designed by H. Bentley Owen and erected in 1881 on the hilltop overlooking the Yadkin River at a cost of \$7,000 (Inventory #28). Although the impressive new building updated and expanded the college's facilities, its construction created an embarrassing debt the college and church administrators could not dissolve.¹¹

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The Civil War dramatically altered the educational atmosphere in North Carolina. Political and popular lethargy returned, removing the driving force for educational improvement. Most schools had closed and of those that reopened, included colleges and the state university, they found themselves with low enrollments and in financial straits. Moreover, the Old South curricula with its large emphasis on classics and idealism had given way to New South concepts of practicality in a changed society. Daniel Harvey Hill described the transition thus:

The old plan of education in the palmy days of the South gave us orators and statesmen, but did nothing to enrich us, nothing to promote material greatness... The South must abandon the aesthetic and ornamental for the practical and useful. Is not a practical acquaintance with the ax, the plane, the saw, the anvil, the loom, the plow, and the mattock, vastly more useful to an impoverished people than familiarity with the laws of nations and the science of government?¹²

Yadkin College administrators and trustees completely misread the new educational climate. They overextended their financial capabilities and the outmoded curricula failed to attract a student body sizable enough to help offset the debt. The dream of a great educational institution turned into a nightmare and set the stage for the school's decline.

Shadrack Simpson left in 1883 for a better position at Western Maryland College, while Yadkin College settled into financial instability. To survive, the institution had to relinquish its college program and thus its accreditation. Yadkin College was even faced with a permanent closing had it not been for financial assistance from local citizens. The school's next long term president, the Reverend G. W. Holmes, operated it as a preparatory school from 1890 to 1898.¹³ Finally, in 1898, the Reverend W. T. Totten proposed to liquidate the remaining debt in exchange for a ten-year lease on the property. Totten operated the school as a private high school for twenty-six years under the name of Yadkin Collegiate Institute¹⁴. In 1924, the school was merged with the Methodists' newly formed High Point College.

The history of the town of Yadkin College is obviously intertwined with the history of the school. Yadkin College, barely the size of a village, received a charter of incorporation in 1873. In that year, the town was given the power to elect a mayor, a board of aldermen, and a police chief along with other necessary officials.¹⁵ Over the following four decades, the town experienced limited economic growth and its only period of significant construction. Some of the finest homes in the community were built by men closely associated with the college. The 1901 North Carolina Yearbook recorded a population of 210, two general stores, two sawmills, and three tobacco factories.¹⁶ When the second building was erected in 1881, E. L. Greene bought the first building and used it as a

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tobacco factory pack house, a use which has been continued to this day by his grandson, Rhett E. Greene. The other two factories were located on the road leading into town and operated by J. A. Hartley and Co. and T. S. Dale and Co.

The development of the Yadkin College community coincided with the great surgence of the tobacco industry in North Carolina. In the early years of the phenomenon, many small towns spawned tobacco factories to service local demand. Then came American Tobacco Trust, the creation of James B. Duke, which swallowed up most small, independent factories. Those that survived for a few years by manufacturing plug and smoking tobacco soon fell victim to the corporate growth of the R. J. Reynolds Company in Winston-Salem.¹⁷

Unable to compete with the industrial giants, the Yadkin College factories ceased operation in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The closing of the tobacco factories, coupled with the relocation of the school, signaled the end of Yadkin College as a thriving village. Stores were eventually abandoned along with the post office, jail, and other services. Trees have now grown up in several lots once occupied by these businesses. The 1881 building was demolished after the college closed in 1924. The sleepy community today consists of a dozen buildings oriented to the remnants of a sleepy grid plan of streets.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Yadkin College's buildings are closely related to traditional building practices in Davidson County, and are discussed specifically in section 7 of the "Historic Resources of Davidson County" MRA on pages 7 and 11, and in Section 8 on pages 11 and 12. Davidson's architectural history is comfortably placed in the broad context of vernacular and later popular traditions of the mid-Atlantic and upper South, and Yadkin College's dwellings represent the traditional two-story frame I-house, with a center-hall plan and a rear kitchen ell found throughout the county in the second half of the nineteenth century. The 1856 Yadkin College building is one of the two most public and visually dominant structures built of brick in antebellum Davidson County. Both the Davidson County Courthouse, in Lexington, ca. 1855, and the Yadkin College Building were initially stuccoed to imitate ashlar construction--a technique widely used in other areas of the state, such as at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill--but one of the first public signs that Davidson County was moving towards stylish architectural taste. Likewise, the two most significant houses in Yadkin College, the Gaither Walser House No. 1 (1870s) (Inventory #4) and the E. L. Greene House, ca. 1885, (Inventory #11) are part of a small number of later nineteenth century houses in the county which signify the move away from tradition and the acceptance of foreign designs. The Walser House is one of three T-plan Italianate style houses built in the county in the 1870s. Elaborate bracketed eaves distinguish each house cornice and a mixture of classical and Victorian elements are found in the three structures. County builders also used the Gothic Revival style in domestic architecture,

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but on an even more limited scale than the Italianate style. The closest example to the pattern book "Gothic cottage" is the E. L. Greene House. The ell-shaped frame house has pointed arch sash and corresponding shutters and decorative sawn work in the eaves which separates it from less elaborate examples. Therefore, the Yadkin College Historic District contains a small collection of mid to late nineteenth century vernacular buildings with popular pretensions which are of significance within Davidson County.

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Richard Walser, Five Walsers (Raleigh: Wolf's Head Press, 1976), 10.
- ² Walser, Five Walsers, 16.
- ³ Walser, Five Walsers, 24.
- ⁴ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, The History of a Southern State, North Carolina (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 405, hereinafter cited as Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina.
- ⁵ William S. Powell, Higher Education in North Carolina (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1964), 65.
- ⁶ Virginia Fick, Davidson County Heritage Article on Yadkin College (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Co., 1982), 15 (Article on Yadkin College).
- ⁷ Davidson County Tax Lists, 1859-1863, State Archives and History.
- ⁸ Lexington Yadkin and Flag, October 3, 1856. See also Olin Bain Michael, Yadkin College 1856-1924: A Historic Sketch (Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1939), 24-26, hereinafter cited as Michael, Yadkin College.
- ⁹ Virginia Fick, Davidson County Heritage (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Co., 1982), 15.
- ¹⁰ Michael, Yadkin College, 56-58.
- ¹¹ Michael, Yadkin College, 166.
- ¹² Quoted in Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, 533.
- ¹³ Michael, Yadkin College, 92-95, 166.
- ¹⁴ Michael, Yadkin College, 112-116.
- ¹⁵ Michael, Yadkin College, 156-157.
- ¹⁶ North Carolina Yearbook, 1901.
- ¹⁷ Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, 509-511.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Fick, Virginia. Davidson County Heritage. Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Co., 1982.
Lefler, Hugh Talmage and Newsome, Albert Ray. The History of a Southern State: North Carolina. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973.
Lexington Yadkin and Flag. October 3, 1856.
Michael, Olin Bain. Yadkin College 1856-1924: A Historic Sketch. Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1939.
North Carolina Yearbook. 1901.
Powell, William S. Higher Education in North Carolina. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1964.
Walser, Richard. Five Walsers. Raleigh: Wolf's Head Press, 1976.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Specify repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 125+ acres

UTM References

A 1,7 5,5,5,2,9,0 3,9,7,0,5,6,0
Zone Easting Northing
C 1,7 5,5,6,2,0,0 3,9,6,9,6,2,0

B 1,7 5,5,6,2,6,0 3,9,7,0,5,8,0
Zone Easting Northing
D 1,7 5,5,5,2,8,0 3,9,6,9,6,6,0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Yadkin College Historic District consists of the following parcels of land, included in their entirety, on Davidson County Tax Map #3: Parcel 3A, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 24, 25 and 26. Also included from the same map are two partial parcels: the southern edge of parcel 2 (approx. 10 ac.), and the eastern portion of parcel 3 (4.16 ac). The following parcels shown on Davidson County Tax Map #6 are included in their entirety: parcel 1, 2, 3, 4, 61, 39, 20 and 78. Also included on this map is one partial parcel: the northern portion of parcel 21 (approx. 20 ac.), located north of parcel 48.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The boundaries of the Yadkin College Historic District were carefully chosen to include all of the contributing buildings and outbuildings which relate to the period of significance of the community. The entire tracts currently associated with these buildings are included, with three exceptions. Only the eastern half of parcel 3, Map #3, is included in order to exclude a noncontributing house on the western half. Only the southern portion of parcel 2, Map #3, and the north portion of parcel 2, Map #6, are included because the rear portions of the large tracts stretch down to the Yadkin River, and this acreage does not contribute directly to the period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

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