

Ancient House In Rowells Recalled As One-Time Home Of Davie Family

By Elizabeth Reed

The home of W. S. Garrison in the Rowells community is historically significant as the one-time home of Col. William Richardson Davie, grandson of General William Richardson Davie. The latter was a noted statesman and is known as the founder of the University of North Carolina.

Mr. Garrison does not know the age of the house. He only knows that it was an old home when he moved into it in 1899. He knows that when he covered the house many years ago he found a brick with the date "1828" plainly stamped thereon.

Was Sold In 1899

Capt. J. A. Thomas, father-in-law of Mr. Garrison, bought the house and 410 acres of land in 1899 from the W. R. Davie estate. Mr. Garrison, now 84, has lived in the old home since 1899, more than half a century. Mrs. Garrison who died 17 years ago was the former Miss Frances Thomas.

The house stands removed from any main traveled highway and is different in some respects from other century-old homes of this section. The porch surrounds the house on three sides and the stair ascends from a room at the side and not from the main hallway.

Very high ceilings, hand carved metallic door knobs, heavy doors, simple but attractively carved mantels are other features of the house.

William R. Davie moved with his family to Texas shortly before the turn of the century. It is said that he shot a Negro from an up-

stairs window of the home and because of the high feeling in the community felt safer in putting distance between him and the scene of the reported killing.

Miss Fannie Beckham of East Black Street recalls that years ago she visited one of the Davie homes, but is not sure which one.

She recalls that Col. Davie had two sons, William and Richard Waltham and that these two sons went to Texas. Hal Pride, brother of the late Mrs. E. E. Poag of Rock Hill, was reared by the Davie family.

General's Home Gone

Near the old Davie home one may still see crumbling stones, bricks and remnants of beautiful Tivoli, home of Gen. W. R. Davie.

This palatial home to which Gen. Davie retired about 1800 at the age of 47 because he was "dis-

gusted with politics" remains today only in the handed-down stories of older settlers. His last public office was as envoy to France.

Gen. Davie died in 1820 and is buried in historic Waxhaw cemetery in a handsome plot. Some years ago a descendant in New York left \$10,000 to erect the monument and to landscape and beautify the grounds of the Davie Plot.

He remains buried in Waxhaw cemetery in spite of repeated efforts to have the body disinterred and removed to the grounds of the University of North Carolina.

William Richardson Davie was born in England but he was brought to the Waxhaws when he was five and adopted by his uncle, the Rev. William Richardson pastor of Waxhaw church. Mrs. Richardson was Miss Nancy Craighead, great, great, great-grandmother of Mrs. C. Fred Laurence and of many other citizens of this area.

Davie was graduated from Princeton in 1766. During the Revolution he raised a company of calvary by selling the land that he had inherited from his foster father. He participated in many battles.

Helped Create U.N.C.

Davie led the movement which resulted in the North Carolina General Assembly granting a

charter and creating the first board of trustees in 1789 at the University of N. C. One of these trustees was Davie, another was James Iredell.

The first building was dedicated on October 12, 1793, and the cornerstone was laid by Davie, then grand master of the Masonic Order of North Carolina.

In 1795 Davie was named a university professor. Some thought he did not have the executive ability necessary for president. He declined to be a professor, but he worked, preached and begged for the university throughout his whole life. He prepared six of the seven first graduates of the university.

Gen Davie in his later years as a country squire at Tivoli made out wills for countless South Carolinians without having any of them contested in the courts. Yet his own will was contested and litigation did not cease until 1892, seventy-two years after the General's death.

Litigation Over Will

When Gen. Davie died in 1820 his will was found to have been made the previous year. Although he had three sons and three daughters, the bulk of his estate, (the plantation and numerous Negro slaves) was willed to his youngest son, Frederick William, with the provision that it should pass to his male heirs if he had such issue.

In case William did not have male heirs the property was to go to the middle son Hyder Ally Davie; and in case he had no male heirs to his eldest son, Allen Jones Davie. The youngest son was but 20 at the time of his father's death and died in 1850 leaving no male heirs.

In the long litigation that followed over the years, William Richardson Davie, a son of Allen Jones Davie, figured prominently.

Although Gen. Davie was British by birth and although he made a great contribution to

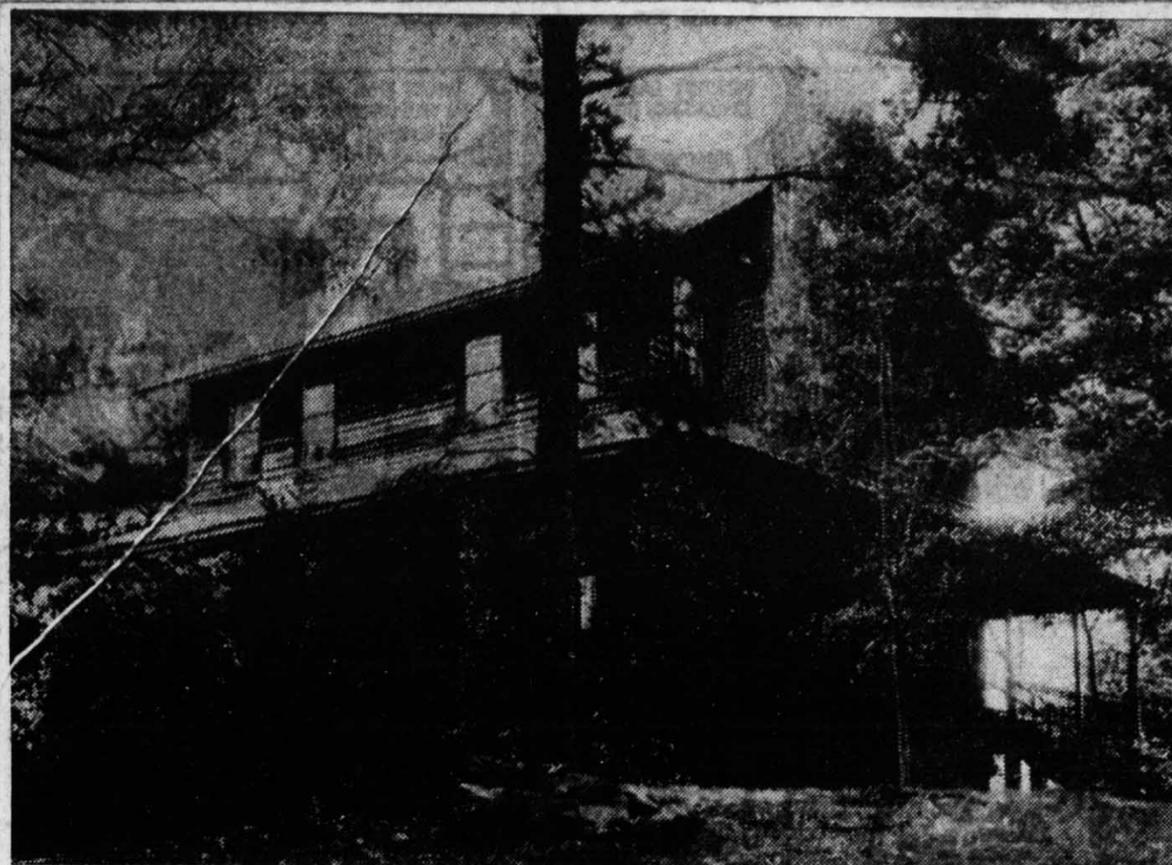
North Carolina history, the Landsford community can really claim him for its own. From the age of five until he was fitted for Princeton by his eminent foster-father and from the age of 47 to the death 20 years later, he lived and moved in the community so near to Rock Hill.

Old Davie Home To Be Seen On Tour

The old Davie home in the Rowells community of Chester County sits in decadent grandeur at the end of a narrow, winding, unpaved road. After standing almost 150 years, it still bears marks of the luxurious and leisurely plantation life that once was centered there.

The home of the late Frances Thomas and W. S. Garrison is historically significant as the one-time home of Colonel William Richardson Davie, grandson and namesake of General William Richardson Davie. The latter was a noted statesman and founder of the University of North Carolina.

The exact age of the Davie home is not known. It was quite old when the Garrisons moved



DAVIE HOUSE — This immense old home with its front and side entrances is not more than 10 or 12 miles from Rock Hill in the Landsford or Rowell's, community. Near the house is an ancient log barn. W. S. Garrison, his son James Garrison and wife, Mrs. Della Roddey Garrison, have lived in the home for years. (Staff Photo)

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into it in December, 1898. Some years ago when the house was covered, a brick was found with the date, 1828, plainly stamped on it.

Capt. J. A. Thomas, father of Frances Thomas Garrison, bought the house and 410 acres of land in 1898 from the W. R. Davie estate. The Garrisons moved there, reared a family of eight children, and lived out their days in the old house. Their son, James, and his wife, Della Roddey Garrison, own the house now, but it is unoccupied.

The setting is one of natural beauty. Great trees — red oak and magnolia — surround the three-story house that sits on a high knoll. The road in front of the house once forked just beyond the yard. One branch led to Stony Graveyard and the other to the Land's Ford crossing of the Catawba River about two and a half miles away. Both roads have long since disappeared.

The old farm bell, used to call the hands from the fields, still stands in the yard. Close by is a huge granite block once used by the ladies and guests to mount their horses and carriages. The roots of an oak tree have

twined around the stone and hold it upright.

The frame house, weathered grey by the passing years, is about two miles off busy Highway 21. It has a cellar enclosed by a rock wall, high pillars, and big chimneys on either side. It is different in some respect from other century-old homes of this section. The porch surrounds the house on three sides, and the wide stairway ascends from a room at the sides, and not from the main hallway. A large room, since partitioned, was used for dancing in the gay social life of plantation days.

Its ten rooms in three stories have very high ceilings, hand carved metallic door knobs, heavy doors, wide board floors and simple but attractively carved mantels. Two rooms in the third story were originally used as servant's quarters. Dr. Davie had an excellent library in his home, but someone in, time past disposed of all the numerous and valuable books.

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the high feeling in the community, felt safer in putting distance between him and the reported killing.

Col. Davie had two sons, William and Richard Waltham (Dick) who went to Texas with him. Hal Pride was reared by the Davie family.

Near the old Davie home one may still see crumbling stones, bricks and remnants of beautiful Tivoli, home of General W. R. Davie.

General Davie in 1805 retired, moved to his large estate on the Catawba, and built the sumptuous home which he named Tivoli.

He was married to Sarah Jones, daughter of Col. Allen Jones.

The Jones home near Land's Ford was called "The Garden of Roses." It, too, has disappeared.

General Davie died in 1820 at the age of 64 and left his estate to his grandson, Dr. William R. Davie. Gen. Davie is buried in historic Waxhaw cemetery in a handsome plot.

Kindness of:
Mr. Wade B. Roddey
Richburg, S. C.



GENERAL DAVIE HOME



FRONT VIEW GEN. DAVIE HOME