

SURVEY REPORT

DAVIS & ELKINS COLLEGE SURVEY & NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION



Submitted to
Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission
Elkins, West Virginia

Submitted by
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INTRODUCTION

This project was funded by a grant to the Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, passed through to the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office. Requests for Proposals were issued during the Spring of 2022, and, following proper procurement, historic preservation consultant David L. Taylor was selected to undertake the project.

The project consisted of an intensive-level historic resource survey of properties owned by Davis & Elkins College, including the entire campus and a small number of immediately adjacent properties. A National Register nomination for the campus had been prepared in the 1970s, along with National Historic Landmark status conveyed in 1978. This National Register nomination covered a discontinuous area including “Graceland” and “Halliehurst,” both seasonal homes owned by the Davis and Elkins families, an adjacent stone icehouse, and the gatehouse at the entrance to the present-day campus. All of these resources dated from c. 1890. Based upon advice from the SHPO and the NPS, the new district will simply be called the Davis & Elkins College Historic District.

The Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission and the College Administration wished to develop a current National Register nomination covering the entire campus. This initiative called for the surveying of all properties within the campus and the several aforementioned adjacent properties, and the completion of West Virginia SHPO Historic Property Inventory (HPI) forms for each resource.



This satellite map illustrates the D & E campus and shows N. Randolph Avenue at the bottom and the Allen Athletic Fields at the top. [from Google Earth, accessed January 15, 2023]

METHODOLOGY

In September 2022, the Consultant met for a “kick-off” conference with representatives of the Historic Landmarks Commission and the College. In attendance were Cody Straley, the National Register Coordinator for the SHPO, and Priscilla Gay, representing the Landmarks Commission, and Tina Vial and Robert Hardman, representing the College. A list was provided to the consultant that included all of the properties on the campus, their addresses, and approximate dates of construction. The scope of the project was discussed in detail, and Ms. Vial led a driving tour around the entire campus. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Hardman provided the Consultant with this specific list of 911 property addresses assigned to each resource. Elkins historian Dr. Maryann Durland and the Consultant examined other relevant primary source materials, including historic photos of the campus, and over the next two days, the consultant visited the campus in its entirety, taking more than 170 images for inclusion into the HPIs and into this Report, and ultimately into the National Register nomination. Other images were gathered from on-line sources. Ms. Vial was of inestimable help, including her discovery of files containing valuable data on many campus buildings, architects’ identities, etc. D & E work/study student Chloe Travelstead spent hours perusing these files and scanning relevant documents; the information provided by both individuals is hereby acknowledged with great appreciation.

Following this site visit, the consultant prepared 50 HPIs for the survey area, researching the history of each resource using both published documents and Internet sources; these are cited in the Bibliography prepared for this document.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The initial settlement of Randolph County was concentrated in the vicinity of Beverly, south of present-day Elkins, and dated from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The area that would become Elkins began as the rural village of Leadsville, named for its proximity to the mouth of Leading Creek. By 1823 a post office was established in the settlement, although Leadsville’s growth was slow during the ensuing six decades and it remained little more than a rural hamlet. In 1888 Marylander Henry Gassaway Davis (1823-1916) acquired 163 acres from Bernard Hinkle, a tract that would comprise much



Henry Gassaway Davis

of the railroad yards to which the community’s fortunes would be inextricably linked. Davis was a native of Woodstock, Howard County, Maryland, near Baltimore, and at an early age began work as a brakeman on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Prior to the Civil War, he began investing in coal and timber lands in the section of northwestern Virginia which would become West Virginia. In the 1880s Davis and his business partners constructed the West Virginia and Pittsburgh Central (WV & PC) Railroad to access these vast natural areas, and among the communities which thrived along the line was Leadsville. In 1889 the village was incorporated under the new name of Elkins, honoring Davis’ son-in-law, Stephen Benton Elkins (1841-1911). Early in the 1890s, the WV&PC constructed massive railyards, repair shops, and a roundhouse (not extant) at Elkins. Railroad workers and their families were among the early residents of the Graham-Davis Historic District.

Elkins owed its earliest growth to the 1889 arrival of the railroad; that line would ultimately become part of the Western Maryland Railroad system and early settlers became known as “89ers.” Led by Davis and Elkins, the WV&PC extended south from Tucker County into Randolph County, where immense lumber, coal, and mineral resources were ripe for exploration. At the time of its charter, Elkins claimed a population of 349 that ballooned to 2,023 just ten years later, and by 1920 to nearly 7,000. Davis and Elkins, co-founders of the college that bears their name, were remarkable individuals in their own right. As noted above, in the late 1880s, Davis acquired the lands that would comprise both the community and the College. He had been born on a farm in Howard County, Maryland, and in addition to his ultimate position as a rail executive--having founded the Potomac and Piedmont Coal and Railway Company--he went on to extend his operation into mining and finance. Davis also created the Davis Coal and Coke Company and led it to become one of the largest coal companies in the world. He was elected to both houses of the West Virginia Legislature and served as a U.S. Senator from 1871 to 1883.

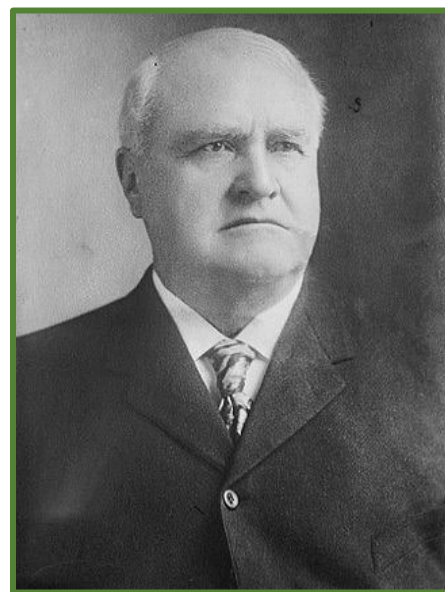


"Halliehurst" (Resource No. 37; RD-0981)

Davis married Katherine Ann Salome Bantz and the couple had eight children, three of whom died in infancy. Among these was Mary Louise "Hallie" Davis (1854-1933); in 1875 she married Stephen Benton Elkins.¹ In 1904, the Democratic National Convention nominated a ticket with Alton B. Parker as president and Davis for vice president; it is thought that Davis was chosen primarily for his ability to provide funding to the campaign that saw Theodore Roosevelt elected President; Davis himself remarked that “they just wanted to tap my barrel.”² He died in 1916, aged 93.

Stephen Benton Elkins (1841-1911) was born near New Lexington, Ohio. He moved with his family to Kansas City, Missouri, attended the Masonic College in Lexington, Missouri in the 1850s, and graduated from the University of Missouri at Columbia in 1860. His father and brother fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War but Stephen entered the Union Army as a captain of militia in the 77th Missouri Infantry. After the War, he entered the practice of law and became a leader in New Mexico territorial politics. His first wife, Sarah “Sallie” Jacobs Elkins died in 1872 and in 1875 he wed Hallie Davis; their marriage produced five children. Elkins, a Republican, became his father-in-law's business partner for the rest of his seventy years.

Long active in politics, Elkins served as Secretary of War in the Benjamin Harrison administration from 1891 to 1893 and in 1895 was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1895, serving until his death in 1911.



Stephen Benton Elkins

¹ “Halliehurst” the family’s seasonal home on the Davis & Elkins College campus, bears her name. “Graceland,” the other family summer home on the campus, likely was named for Grace Thomas Davis (1869-1931) another Davis daughter.

² Quoted in David R. Turner, **Davis & Elkins College: One Hundred Years Honoring Our Traditions Celebrating Our Future**. (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: WDG Communications, 2004), p. 1.

For many years Senator Davis had shown his interest in education by providing money to build elementary or high school facilities in various communities such as Piedmont, Gassaway, Davis and Henry. Early indications of his interest in promoting higher education were seen in his tentative offer to help Baptists establish a college in Elkins and his statement to a Buckhannon minister that “it has been in my



"Graceland," (Resource No.39; RD-0979) c. 1893

mind for a long time to establish a college of my own town,” and later stated, “It is our purpose to build a substantial college at Elkins and I only wish it could be under the auspices and control of the Methodist Church.”³ The Lexington Presbytery of the Southern Presbyterian Church eventually voted unanimously to establish a Presbyterian college in West Virginia “which will do for the people of the state what Hampden-Sydney, Washington and Lee, and Davidson colleges have done in Virginia and North Carolina.”⁴

A Board of Directors was established and met for the first time on December 4, 1902 at the home of C. Wood Daily in Elkins and announced that the purposes of the meeting were to adopt a name for the college, select a site for the campus, make plans for constructing the first building, and affect a permanent organization of the board.⁵ The new college would be affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, a relationship that continues to the present with the Presbyterian Church U. S. A.

The original campus consisted of one building located on “Sallie Mike Hill,” south of Elkins. Excavation for the foundation began in May 1903 and the cornerstone was laid by Senator Davis on August 12.⁶ The red brick building was trimmed with West Virginia sandstone, had a red tile roof, a dining hall, kitchen and gymnasium, along with the chapel, library, offices, a president’s room, and reception room. Some classrooms were on the first floor, with additional classrooms, suites for resident professors, and some dormitories and bathrooms on the second floor. The third floor contained mostly student rooms, in all providing quarters for 50. The contractor for the building, Hobbs and Company failed, but the building was nonetheless completed in time for the first term which opened on September 21, 1904.⁷

Initially the new school played two distinct roles: that of a post-secondary preparatory school and also an institution of higher education. Its first enrollment in September 1904 consisted of 13 in the college and 42 in the preparatory school. The first college president, Joseph E. Hodgson, was followed in quick succession by two more (Frederick Barron, 1905-1906 and Marshall Allaben, 1906-1910), and an early decision to restrict the student body to men lasted only until 1909. In 1910 James E. Allen took the reins and served for twenty-five years until he departed to serve as president of Marshall University in 1935. During his



The original D & E building, not extant [from Ross]

³ Thomas Richard Ross, **Davis & Elkins College: The Diamond Jubilee History**. (Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1980), p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 7

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 8

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

presidency, efforts to attract students led to modification of the classical curriculum to include all of the liberal arts and the addition of business administration, teacher education, and engineering. While the college struggled financially, until Senator Davis' death in 1916, he personally made up for any of the College's financial shortfalls.⁸

A 1914 classified advertisement for the College stated,

If time and expense are factors, look into our College-Preparatory Dept. By 4-term system the usual 4 year college course is covered in three. Tutorial system. Dormitory. Residence limited to 50 young men and boys over 15. Endowment reduces cost to \$225. Catalog and viewbook upon request.⁹

In 1921 Mrs. Hallie Elkins indicated that she and her children were considering giving "Halliehurst" and the adjoining lands to the college, with the specification that the Trustees must "hold the property hereby conveyed for the exclusive use of the Davis and Elkins College,¹⁰ perpetuating that name for the College and that Halliehurst Farm shall become a permanent seat of Davis and Elkins College."¹¹

The 1919-1920 enrollment was 70, and the sparse years lasted into the 1920s, although the gift of



The original boiler room/heating plant for the College (Resource No. 29) has been converted into a theater.



Science and Liberal Arts Halls, opened in 1927.

"Halliehurst" Farm to the College enabled President Allen to oversee an ambitious expansion program that witnessed the school leaving the single building on Sallie Mike Hill and moving to "Halliehurst" Farm, where two substantial buildings, Liberal Arts Hall and Science Hall (Resource Nos. 3 and 4, RD-0974 and RD-0993), were built between

1924 and 1926. By 1926-27 student enrollment had risen to 236; Science and Liberal Arts Halls were the only new campus buildings built until 1950, when the Memorial Gymnasium, now the Field House (Resource No. 34; RD-0992), was built. The last commencement at the original college occurred in 1926.

A substantial boiler house was constructed in association with Science and Liberal Arts Halls. Ross recorded that the *Inter-Mountain* newspaper noted, "the smokestack over the central heating plant is called a real work of art at 100'8" in height. It's really an ornament to the building and this cannot be said of all smokestacks."¹² The heating plant was eventually converted to a performing arts facility (Resource No. 29; RD-0970), and much of the distinctive smokestack remains, although somewhat shorter than it was originally.

The Depression years were particularly hard on the College, with three presidents serving in just a seven-year span. The 1930s enrollment was 235 in 1935-36 and 191 in 1939-1940. The War years and

⁸ Ross, *Op. Cit.*

⁹ "The Independent," [formerly "The Chautauquan"] July 6, 1914, p. 37.

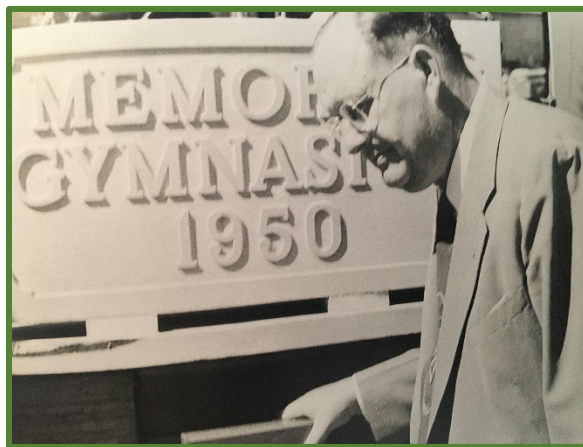
¹⁰ The College employs the ampersand rather than "and" in its references, with no spaces between the letters; this custom is followed herein.

¹¹ Ross, *Op. Cit.*, p. 60.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

post-War period were challenging as well, seeing the suspension of intercollegiate athletics in 1942, although President Raymond R. Purdum (1943–54) was able to secure three military training units to be based on the campus that became a part-education/part military facility of the Civil Aeronautics Administration, whose 150-odd cadets were billeted at “Graceland,” acquired in 1941, and dined at “Halliehurst.” The “Graceland” property and 12 acres of land had become the property of a syndicate and originally included the mansion and service buildings including the icehouse, caretaker’s house, a greenhouse, carriage house, and bowling alley.¹³

Several buildings built post-War to accommodate returning GIs were subsequently removed. After the War, veterans sought out D & E and enrollment more than tripled from 98 in 1944-1945 to 303 in 1945-1946 and eventually to more than 900. Full accreditation finally came in 1946 and 1950 saw the laying of the cornerstone for a new Memorial Gymnasium by President Raymond Purdum; such a facility had been the dream of the college’s athletics program since the 1920s. An Air Force ROTC program, dating from 1951, added to the College’s stability during both the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Also during the Purdum years, national honorary and social fraternities established chapters at D & E.¹⁴



D & E President Richard Purdum laying the cornerstone of the Memorial Gymnasium [from Ross, p. 11]

Athletics have always been a major component of life at D & E and were played in the aforementioned Memorial Gymnasium as well as on the playing fields of the Allen Athletic Field (Resource No. 27; RD-0967) and on the 1954 tennis courts (Resource No. 41; 138 College Drive). The Davis & Elkins “Senators” were founding participants in the West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WVIAC) in 1924, and retained membership until the conference was disbanded in 2012. Football and basketball were early mainstays of D & E athletics and presently men’s sports fields 10 teams and women’s 12.¹⁵ The Davis & Elkins College Athletics Hall of Fame was established in 1974 and recognizes student-athletes, coaches, faculty, staff, administrators, and friends of the athletic program for their contributions to Senator Athletics; its first inductee was Hon. Jennings Randolph.¹⁶



Memorial Gymnasium (Resource No. 34; RD-0992)

Interscholastic athletics resumed after World War II, basketball in 1945 and football in 1946. Tennis courts were built in 1954 on the site of World War II-era barracks that had been demolished.¹⁷ A 4-story barn, built by Senator Elkins in 1900 near the present-day site of the Hermanson Center, burned to the ground in October 1957.¹⁸ Hermanson Center is named for Gordon Hermanson, the ninth D & E President, who was inaugurated in 1964.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 136.

¹⁴ Thomas Richard Ross, “Davis & Elkins College.” <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1709>. Accessed December 14, 2022.

¹⁵ <https://senatornation.com/>, accessed December 14, 2022.

¹⁶ <https://senatornation.com/honors/hall-of-fame>, accessed December 14, 2022.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

President David Allen's 1954-1964 administration included the reorganization of the D & E business and accounting system, the creation of a development office and a chaplain's office, and the construction of five new post-War College buildings, including Gribble Residence Hall, shown on the left.¹⁹



Gribble Residence Hall, built 1958 (Resource No. 17), is the earliest of the various buildings built during the 1950s-1970s expansion of the College.

David Allen served a decade-long presidency and was succeeded by Gordon E. Hermanson, who served from 1964–82, followed by Dorothy I. MacConkey from 1985–1998. Each of these Presidents increased the participation of the trustees and encouraged interest in the College on the part of Elkins and Davis family descendants.

During these years, a new campus physical plan was developed that included the construction of a chapel, the science center, the Hermanson Center-Auditorium, the conversion of the Boiler House into a theater, and three new dormitories. Academic offerings were expanded as well, encompassing new majors in computer and environmental science.



The Booth Library (Resource No. 14; RD-0972) was built in 1998.

Recreation management/tourism and independent study programs were expanded as well. Dean Margaret Purdum Goddin's leadership saw the creation of an honors and nursing program and the birth of the Augusta Heritage Center for the Traditional Arts that brought students from throughout the United States and internationally to D & E's ever-popular summer workshops.



The Hermanson Center (Resource No. 19; RD-0981) bears the name of Gordon Hermanson who served as the D & E President from 1964 until 1982.

Notable achievements of President Dorothy MacConkey's administration included the expansion of computerization for all administrative, library, and academic functions and the development of the hospitality and tourism management academic program. Several campus buildings were renovated, including "Halliehurst," "Graceland," Jennings Randolph Hall, and the Gatehouse. The Gates Tower was completed in 1989, the Booth Library, above, in 1998, along with the Robert C. Byrd Conference Center. President MacConkey's administration witnessed

¹⁹ Much of the post-War history of the College is drawn from the writing of Professor Thomas Richard Ross, cited elsewhere and in the Bibliography at the end of this document.

a substantial growth in the College endowment, including the first funding for D & E's endowed chairs. Gloria Payne was the first faculty member appointed to an endowed chair; she served the college for more than 72 years.²⁰ In the last year of her presidency, MacConkey launched a \$17 million campaign for funding an athletic complex and to increase the the College's endowment.

G. Thomas Mann was the twelfth president of the College and served a decade from 1998 to 2008. He was followed by G. T. "Buck" Smith in 2008. On August 1, 2016, Chris Wood, a vice president at Wesley College in Delaware, succeeded Smith. College enrollment was reported at slightly over 700 in the Fall of 2009.²¹



The Icehouse, c. 1890, dates from the pre-College years of the district. The vestibule was a 1967 modification.

(Resource Nos. 22 and 25; RD-0994 and RD-0995).²² The former Library building was re-named Jennings Randolph Hall (Resource No. 20; RD-0987), commemorating the 1920s D & E faculty member/coach, who later became a West Virginia state legislator and eventually a long-time member of the U. S. Senate.²³



Undated photo of attendees at the Forest Festival, seated on the Amphitheater hillside [from <https://www.forest-festival.com/history/>]

The 1960s saw additional development of the campus. With the support of President Gordon Her-manson, in 1967 the c. 1890 stone Icehouse (Resource No. 32; RD-0986), adjacent to "Graceland" was renovated to create a student gathering place; Dr. Nelson Knaggs, a trustee, provided financial support. 1968-1970 saw the \$650,000 construction of a 3-story brick-finished men's dormitory consisting of three 3-story units interconnected by a balcony and a larger dormitory on the same ridge overlooking the campus, funded by a grant of \$1,055,000 from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The buildings would be named Moyer and Presidential Halls



The coronation of Maid/Queen Silvia XX, Ann Lyon Alexander, in 1956 at the Amphitheater. [from *Goldenseal* 37: 3, p. 10]

²⁰ E-mail from Tina Vial to David Taylor, December 19, 2022: "She was 98 when she passed away. She was an institution unto herself!"

²¹ Thomas Richard Ross, "Davis & Elkins College." <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1709>, accessed November 4, 2022.

²² Ross, *Op. Cit.*, p. 272.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 275.

In addition to its myriad academic endeavors, the College has been closely associated with a variety of co-curricular activities including the Mountain State Forest Festival, West Virginia's oldest and largest festival, that is dedicated to the preservation and conservation of the state's natural resources.²⁴ The annual event originated in 1930 and soon attracted attention to the conservation of West Virginia's vast natural resources. Depending upon the weather, it annually brings 125,000 visitors to the community and more than 200,000 when there is a presidential visit. In the Spring of 1930, members of the Elkins Businessmen's Association (now the Elkins Chamber of Commerce) and of the Elkins Women's Club met to discuss the staging of an Elkins homecoming event. The group traveled to Winchester, Virginia to meet with the leadership of that community's annual fall Apple Blossom Apple Harvest Festival. The Winchester group suggested that instead of having a homecoming celebration, Elkins might plan for an annual festival. The Elkins committee met with other local leaders and decided to put on a fall festival to be known as the "Mountain State Forest Festival."

George Dornblazer, Superintendent of Elkins-based Raines Lumber Sales, was chosen to oversee the new event and was given full authority to plan the festival as he saw fit. He appointed a representative to contact Dr. James E. Allen, president of D & E to seek the cooperation of the college. Festival officials wished to use portions of the college campus for the festival activities including the queen's coronation ceremonies. They also wished to use "Halliehurst" for the headquarters for the Queen, her court, and for a public reception.

The festival was formally incorporated in 1935 and since that date its multiple events are staged all by volunteers except for a paid Executive Director and Administrator. It has been held annually beginning in 1930 except for the years 1942 through 1948--during and immediately following World War II. The event began again in 1949 and has continued unbroken since then, with many events occurring on and around D & E campus.

The week-long festival includes opening and closing ceremonies, a grand parade, a children's parade, an ATV race, the county fair (added in 2000), a carnival, the coronation of Queen Sylvia, the Queen's Ball, and much more.

Annually, a Queen Sylvia is appointed by festival officials. She must be at least 18 years of age and not from the Elkins area. Her court includes two Maids of Honor, always from Randolph County, who accompany the Queen during activities. Forty princesses, selected statewide, participate in the festival. The Mountain State Forest Festival has become an annual event for the Elkins community, for the D & E campus, and for the entire state.²⁵

Dependent upon the weather, the festival typically attracts upwards of 125,000 attendees and commemorates West Virginia's centuries-long association with lumbering and natural resource harvesting and management. Many of the festival's events are staged on the D & E campus, particularly at the Amphitheater, now known as the Citizen's Bank of West Virginia Amphitheater.²⁶ Among these events are the Lumberjack Competition and the annual coronation of Queen (sometimes alternatively referred to as

²⁴ "Mountain State Forest Festival," www.facebook.com/MountainStateForestFestival/, accessed April 17, 2023.

²⁵ "History of Mountain State Forest Festival," <https://www.forestfestival.com/history/>, accessed January 18, 2023.

²⁶ In an e-mail communication on January 27, 2023, D & E Assistant Director of Development Tina M. Vial indicated that the stage at the Amphitheater had been reconstructed in 2022. For purposes of the upcoming National Register nomination, it will be treated as an uncounted, low-profile landscape feature.

Maid) Silvia.²⁷ Since the festival occurs late in October, during election years, five presidents have attended: Roosevelt in 1936, Truman in 1966, Nixon in 1972, Ford in 1975, and Carter in 1976.²⁸

In 1972, near the end of the Period of Significance of the proposed historic district, D & E professor Margaret Purdum Gilbert and local arts promoter R. Dale Wilson, members of the Randolph County Creative Arts Alliance, formed the Augusta Heritage Center to study and commemorate the traditional music, dance, crafts, and arts for which West Virginia is noted; the still-active Center represents an important aspect of the College's significance.²⁹ In 1981 the sponsorship of the annual festival and workshops was transferred to D & E, where it remains.³⁰ Concerts are held at the Harper-McNeeley Auditorium in the Myles Center for the Arts (Resource No. 18; RD-0982) and the Augusta Heritage Center headquarters are located in Jennings Randolph Hall (Resource No. 20; RD-0987). The Center's 1989 Dance Pavilion (Resource No. 28; RD-0968) post-dates the Period of Significance of the proposed district and thus is a non-contributing element within the context of the district.

The D & E Center for Railway Tourism offers a distinctive 18-credit minor in Railway Heritage Tourism Management. In addition to coursework, students can undertake independent study, can study abroad, and pursue internships. The program is designed to graduate students who can undertake all aspects of studying and promoting America's railroad heritage.

As noted above, interscholastic athletics have played a substantial part in the history of the College since the 1920s. D & E is part of the Mountain East Conference NCAA Division II.

D & E's other more recent past Presidents include Buck Smith, 2008-2013 and again 2015-2016, and Michael P. Mihalyo Jr, 2013-2015; Huntington native Chris A. Wood became the College's 15th President in 2016 and remains so at the time of writing. In the 2022-2023 term, enrollment is approximately 800.

Topography played a significant role in the siting of the College campus and, thus, of both the survey area and potential historic district. "Halliehurst" and "Graceland" are at the peak of a steep slope that overlooks the Elkins community and is reached only by a winding roadway extant since their late-nineteenth-century construction. The tight contour lines on the USGS 7½-minute quadrangle map testify to this. The only flat surface large enough for most athletics is at the far northern reaches of the survey area and of the proposed historic district. The 1954 tennis courts (Survey No. 41; RD-1002) are at the foot of the substantial slope that encompasses the Amphitheater. The majority of the buildings on the campus are built into hillsides or at the tops of significant slopes, all of which give the campus a picturesque layout that still retains substantial woodlands. The substantial open, grassy Amphitheater, as well as the wooded and hilly c. 30-acre Robert E. Urban Nature Study Area with its S. Benton Talbot Nature Walk, located on a ridge above the Gribble and Booth Residence Halls, are significant natural features in the Survey area. The Nature Study Area includes "a stand of old-growth Appalachian hardwood forest with a number of trees, mostly oaks, that attain breast height diameters of three feet or more. Another small part of the area was planted in white pine in the 1940s. A smaller portion yet is essentially in an old-field successional sequence. The area is traversed by the self-guiding S. Benton Talbot Nature Trail."³¹ Other unnamed

²⁷ Silvia I was Margaret Straley who was crowned at the Amphitheater by West Virginia Gov. William G. Conley. The name, Silvia, was chosen for the festival royalty since in Latin it refers to the goddess of the woods.

²⁸ <https://elkinsrandolphwv.com/stories/history-of-the-mountain-state-forest-festival/>, accessed December 16, 2022.

²⁹ This area was originally part of Augusta County, Virginia, hence the name [wvencyclopedia.org]

³⁰ <https://augustaartsandculture.org/about-us/>, accessed December 14, 2022.

³¹ "Robert E. Urban Nature Trail," www.elkinsrandolphwv.com), accessed January 28, 2023.

nature trails traverse the campus. This site has remained wooded since the days of the Elkins and Davis families' ownership. A century after the relocation of the campus to this particularly hilly site, the entire landscape remains an integral component of the campus and of the proposed historic district.

SURVEY RESULTS

This project resulted in the preparation of 50 WVSHPO HPIs along with a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Davis & Elkins College Historic District. The historic district is deemed eligible under National Register Criterion A for *education*, as an institution of higher learning established in rural West Virginia early in the twentieth century, under Criterion B for its irrefutable association with "with the lives of persons significant in our past,"³² specifically with founders Henry Gassaway Davis and Stephen Benton Elkins, whose families owned the campus and whose seasonal homes remain major elements in D & E's social and architectural history. With respect to Criterion B, the specific Areas



The topography of the survey area and of the proposed historic district is illustrated by the 40-foot contour lines on this segment from the USGS 7½-minute quadrangle map.

The Period of Significance of this proposed district begins c. 1890, the approximate date of construction of the previously-listed "Halliehurst" and "Graceland," and extends to 1976, a date marking the end of the 1960s-1970s campus building boom.

of Significance are *politics/government* and *transportation*. Under Criterion C the district is significant for *architecture*, since it consists of a variety of high-style architecture, including nineteenth-century previously-listed Queen Anne-style seasonal homes of the College's founders, early twentieth-century Georgian Revival-style classroom buildings, and multiple Institutional Modern collegiate buildings dating from the 1940s and thereafter. Thirty-nine of the surveyed resources would be within the boundaries of such a district and ten would be non-contributing since they post-date 1976, the end of the Period of Significance for the district, a date corresponding to the National Register 50-year guideline.

The proposed Period of Significance for the D & E district, extending three years past the general 50-year cutoff period, is permitted under National Register guidelines. Although the following refers to residential districts, the same may be said about a district such as the D & E district:

As a general rule, when a neighborhood as a whole was laid out more than 50 years ago and the majority of homes and other resources are greater than 50 years of age, a case for exceptional importance is not needed. In such cases, the period of significance may be extended a reasonable length of time (e.g. five or six years) within the less-than-50-year period to recognize the contribution of resources that, although less-than-50-years of age, are consistent with the neighborhood's historic plan and character.³³

³² "How to Complete the National Register Registration Form," National Register Bulletin 16A. (Washington, DC National Park Service, 1977; rev. 1997), p. 40-41.

³³ "Historic Residential Suburbs, Part 2," National Register Bulletin 46. (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2002), p. 96.

The vast majority of the properties within this survey area and the proposed district are 50 years of age or older and are indeed consistent with the district's historic plan and character.

Of the 48 properties surveyed, all but the houses on Spruce Street and 2 adjacent on College Street (that were not originally part of the campus) would lie within the proposed National Register historic district. The Spruce Street properties were bequeathed to the College c. 2018 and had not been previously owned by the College or associated with D & E prior to that time; thus, they would not be included in the proposed district.³⁴ Of the remaining properties, all but 11 would be contributing elements in the proposed district; the 11 non-contributing properties post-date the 1890-1976 Period of Significance.

Although buildings have been built on the campus after 1976, these newer buildings are scattered throughout the potential historic district and do not materially affect the historic character of the D & E campus. Like their predecessors, most of these later buildings are 2-3 stories in height, finished in red brick sometimes trimmed with stone, with flat roofs and bands of flat-topped windows and fail to impact materially on the otherwise uncompromised integrity of the district as a whole; the large brick tower on the Harper-McNeely Auditorium even suggests an earlier derivation. The Robbins Memorial Chapel at 539 Campus Drive (RD-0997) is the most modernistic of the buildings in the district, polygonal in form, with low exterior walls and a cross-tipped 80-foot spire, dating from 1972, within the Period of Significance.

The two 1920s Georgian Revival-style buildings, Liberal Arts Hall and Charles Albert Hall, are also of red brick, formal in their design, with multi-light flat-topped and semi-circular-arched fenestration, bridged chimneys, oculi in the pediments, pilasters defining the bay spacing, dormers, and classical foliated motifs.

The suggested boundaries for the new district encompass the entirety of the College's academic architecture, sports playing fields, and four 1964 houses built specifically as faculty housing. The terrain of the district is largely rugged, and some sections are wooded, hilly, and vacant but nonetheless are part of the historic landscape of the campus.

This district retains integrity in each of its composite qualities of location, design, setting, feeling, association, material, and workmanship, as described in National Register Bulletin 16A.³⁵ While architecture of the recent past may be somewhat more difficult to assess than that of older properties, buildings dating from the 1950s to the mid-1970s nonetheless represent identifiable periods of design and those of the Davis & Elkins Historic District have not been insensitively altered and appear essentially the same as they did when they were new, representing institutional design tenets that were in vogue at the time of their original design and construction.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE SURVEY AREA

The D & E campus is home to historic buildings representing a variety of architectural styles in vogue from the late 1880s until the 1970s and beyond. The majority of the survey area's architecture dates from the Mid-Century Modern era, c. 1950 and thereafter and, the later College buildings can be described as being Institutional Modern in style.

"Halliehurst" and the Queen Anne-style turreted stone-and-shingle Gatehouse were the work of Charles T. Mott, a noted New York City architect who practiced between 1885 and 1912 and became a

³⁴ E-mail communication to David Taylor from Tina Vial, D & E College, January 19, 2023.

³⁵ **How to Complete the National Register Registration Form.** (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1977; rev. 1986), p. 4.

member of the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1894; he was particularly known for his design of Upper West Side New York City townhouses. “Graceland” was designed by the well-known Baltimore, Maryland firm of Baldwin and Pennington, whose work included Baltimore and Ohio Railroad depots. Henry Gassaway Davis likely was acquainted with the firm because of his longstanding association with the B&O.

The two earliest academic buildings on the present campus, both Georgian Revival in style, Liberal Arts Hall and Charles E. Albert Hall, were designed in 1924 by Walter Frederic Martens (1890-1969) of Charleston who also designed the 1923 Colonial Revival-style West Virginia Governor’s Mansion.

The next building built on the D & E campus was the 1950 Memorial Gymnasium & Fieldhouse built in 1950 from designs by New York City architect Harold Zoller, whose best-known work is the 1926 Peoples National Bank and Trust Company Building in White Plains, Westchester County, New York.

The balance of most of the College buildings can best be described as being Institutional Modern in style. In the case of the D & E academic buildings, they are modestly detailed, finished in masonry, typically red brick and some with stone trim, are flat-roofed, and incorporate bands of flat-topped fenestration. These include the 1960 Benedum Hall/Madden Student Center (200 Graceland Drive, RD-0969), the 1962 Darby Hall (181 Graceland Drive; RD-0975), Gribble Hall (c. 1958; 409 Campus Drive; RD-0980), and the 1970 Presidential Residence Center (RD-0995; 354-356-358 Residential Drive). Architects associated with these buildings include Mittlebush & Tourtelot, Chicago (Darby Hall; 1961-1962), J. W. King of St. Albans and Clarksburg, WV [also D/B/A Wilson & King] (“Hearthstone” and the 1976 Neely Auditorium and Hermanson Campus Center); Robert. J. Bennett (Moyer Hall, 1968, and Eschelmann Science Center, 1973, although he was fired before construction began and a rendering identifies Wilson and King as the architects). The 1993 Booth Library post-dates the Period of Significance but is nonetheless important to the architectural history of the College since it was designed by TAC, The Architects Collaborative, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, a firm established by Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius (1883-1969) and seven younger architects who had met as students at Yale. The Booth Library is among the last projects of TAC, since the firm went into bankruptcy in 1995.³⁶

The 1941-1942 high-style Colonial Revival-style brick house built by Clifford Argyle Gross and Winifred Talbot Gross, at the edge of the campus, was ultimately acquired by the College. He was the owner/operator of The Morrison-Gross Lumber Co. It was designed by Fairmont architect Louis David Schmidt (1896-1968), a native of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, and was built by prolific Elkins builder Thornton Russell Whiteman (1875-1966).³⁷

To be sure, the Davis and Elkins seasonal homes and the 1924 academic buildings are architecturally distinctive, and all contribute significantly to the physical character of the survey area and the proposed historic district. The buildings that post-date the 1976 conclusion of the Period of Significance are generally architecturally compatible with the 1950s-1976 campus buildings and as a whole contribute to the unbroken and generally unimpeded cohesiveness of the study area as a whole.

³⁶ “The Architects Collaborative,” [http://architecture-history.org/schools/The Architects Collaborative](http://architecture-history.org/schools/The_Architects_Collaborative), accessed March 10, 2023.

³⁷ The information on architects was retrieved from the D & E Archives and was researched by work/study student Chloe Travelstead, whose hours of diligent research are greatly appreciated.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the results of this survey, it is recommended that a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places be prepared for the Davis & Elkins College Historic District and that such a nomination be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office and to the National Park Service at the earliest possible time.

APPENDIX: MAP OF SURVEY AREA



DAVIS

& ELKINS COLLEGE HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY Elkins, Randolph County, West Virginia 2023

Legend:

Gray Lines: Survey Area

Black Lines: Proposed Historic District Boundary

Numbers Within Squares: Previously-listed Properties

Encircled Numbers: Noncontributing/Not eligible Properties



LIST OF RESOURCES SURVEYED

The following pages contain a spreadsheet listing all properties surveyed, their address, approximate date of construction, architectural style, and an evaluation as to the National Register status of each.

Field Survey Number	HPI Site Number	Resource Name/Type & Location (Street Address or Coordinates)	Date of Construction	Style	NR Evaluation
1	RD-0984	"Hearthstone" 345 Harpertown Road	1980	Contemporary	NC
2	RD-0997	Robbins Memorial Chapel, 539 Campus Drive	1972	Contemporary	C
3	RD-0974	Charles Albert Hall, 163 Campus Drive	1924-1926	Georgian Revival	LISTED
4	RD-0993	Liberal Arts Hall, 25 Campus Drive	1924-1926	Georgian Revival	LISTED
5	RD-0993	Morrison-Novakovic Center, 777 Campus Drive	1930	Georgian Revival	C
6	RD-0988	Jordan Estate, 119 Harpertown Road	c. 1925	Georgian Revival	C
7	RD-0961	House, 11 Spruce Avenue	c. 1960	Minimal Traditional	Not eligible
8	RD-0962	House, 12 Spruce Avenue	c. 1960	Minimal Traditional	Not eligible
9	RD-0963	House, 14 Spruce Avenue	c. 1960	Minimal Traditional	Not eligible
10	RD-0964	House, 15 Spruce Avenue	c. 1960	Minimal Traditional	Not eligible
11	RD-0965	House, 16 Spruce Avenue	c. 1960	Minimal Traditional	Not eligible
12	RD-0966	House, 122 College Drive	c. 1960	Minimal Traditional	Not eligible
13	RD-0969	Benedum Hall/Madden Student Center, 200 Graceland Drive	1960	Modern Institutional	C
14	RD-0972	Booth Library, 618 Campus Drive	1993	Modern institutional	NC
15	RD-0975	Darby Hall, 181 Graceland Drive	1962	Modern institutional	C
16	RD-0976	Eshleman Science Center, 590 Campus Drive	1973	Modern institutional	C
17	RD-0980	Gribble Residence Hall, 409 Campus Drive	1958	Modern institutional	C
18	RD-0982	Harper-McNeely Auditorium, 545 Campus Drive	1976	Modern institutional	C
19	RD-0981	Hermanson Center, 515 Campus Drive	c. 1976	Modern institutional	C
20	RD-0987	Jennings Randolph Hall, 289 Campus Drive	1959	Modern institutional	C
21	RD-0991	McDonnell Center, 312 Allen Drive	2005	Modern institutional	NC
22	RD-0994	Moyer Residence Hall, 190-200-210 Residential Drive	1970	Modern institutional	C
23	RD-0996	Robert Byrd Center for Hospitality, 70 Graceland Drive	1956	Modern Institutional	C
24	RD-0999	Roxanna Booth Hall, 365 Campus Drive	1966	Modern institutional	C
25	RD-0995	Presidential Residence Center, 354-356-358 Residential Drive	1970	Modern institutional	C
26	RD-1001	Stone Wall & entry portals, Sycamore St. & various locations on campus	1890	No style	C
27	RD-0967	Allen Athletic Fields, Allen Drive	2012	No style	NC
28	RD-0968	Augusta Dance Pavilion, 302 Allen Drive	1989	Rustic	NC
29	RD-0970	Boiler House Theater, 650 Campus Drive	1924-1926	No style	C
30	RD-0972	Caboose Café, 540 Campus Drive	undetermined	No style	NC
31	RD-0978	Gazebo, 540 Campus Drive	undetermined	no style	NC
32	RD-0986	Icehouse, 302 Campus Drive	1890	No style	LISTED
33	RD-0990	Maintenance Building, 184 Allen Drive	1970	No style	C
34	RD-0992	Memorial Gymnasium/Fieldhouse, 130 Campus Drive	1950	No style	C
35	RD-0995	Pavilion behind Booth Hall, 365 Campus Drive	1995	Rustic	NC
36	RD-0977	Gatehouse, 100 Campus Drive	1890	Queen Anne	LISTED
37	RD-0981	"Halliehurst" 35 Campus Drive	1890	Queen Anne	LISTED
38	RD-0973	Charles B. Gates, Jr. Memorial Tower, 176 Allen Drive	1989	Queen Anne Revival	NC

39	RD-0979	"Graceland" 160 Graceland Drive	1890	Queen Anne; Shingle	LISTED
40	RD-1000	Sigma Phi Epsilon House, Harpertown Road	1999	Rustic	NC
41	RD-1002	Tennis Courts, 138 College Drive	1954	No style	C
42	RD-1003	Amphitheater, 138 College Drive	1924	No style	C
43	RD-0983	House, 311 Harpertown Road	1964	Minimal Traditional	C
44	RD-1004	House, 315 Harpertown Road	1964	Minimal Traditional	C
45	RD-1005	House, 317 Harpertown Road	1964	Minimal Traditional	C
46	RD-1006	House, 319 Harpertown Road	1964	Minimal Traditional	C
47	RD-0944/RD-0993	Stone Archway	1924-1926	No style	LISTED
48		124 College Drive	c. 1960	Minimal Traditional	Not eligible
49		Urban Nature Study Area	1920s and after	n/a	C
50		Patricia Avenue entry portals	c. 1890	no style	C

