

Landmarks

A guide to touring Carolina's historic campus

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The University of North Carolina, as you no doubt have memorized by now, was the first state university in the United States, chartered in 1789, and its doors opened in 1795. So not only are you attending the University of National Champions, athletically and academically, you are walking around in the middle of a lot of history.

In order that you may be informed about your surroundings and impress your parents when they come to visit, here is a brief guide to some well-known campus

landmarks (and in some cases, to their real significance). Feel free to tear this out along the dotted line and carry it along with you as you travel from class to class, referring to it whenever you find yourself in unfamiliar surroundings. Amaze your friends with your knowledge of UNC trivia.

Let's begin at Old East, the men's dormitory which is also the nation's oldest state university building. The cornerstone was laid on Oct. 12, 1793, a date we still celebrate each year. University Day is always remembered by students, mainly because classes are cancelled for a few hours. Old East also holds a terrific birthday party at that time each year that you should go to if you get the chance.

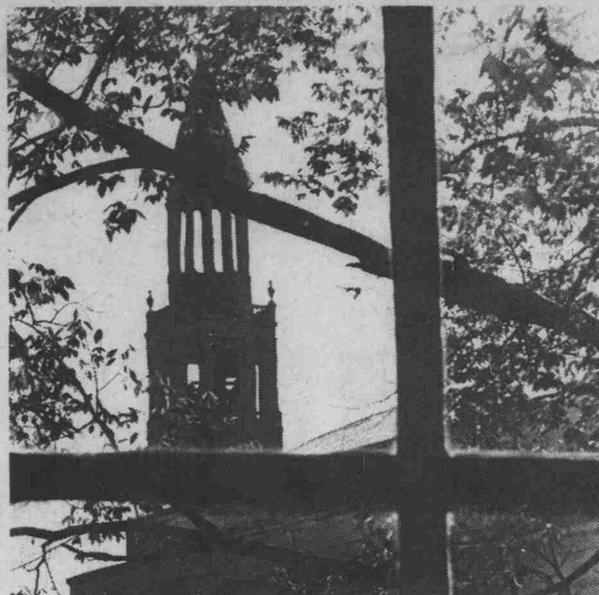
Anyway, if you think tripling is bad, cheer up. When the University was young, 56 students were crammed into Old East's 14 rooms. Living conditions were so bad that some students were forced to build huts in the surrounding woods to escape the crowding. The poorly constructed huts gave rise to the first excuse for an overdue paper — rain. Some famous alumni have lived in Old East, including Thomas Wolfe.

Next door to Old East is the Old Well (notice how everything at UNC is "old"). For years, the Old Well was the only water supply for the men living in Old East and Old West. In 1897, UNC President Edwin A. Alderman had the now-familiar structure built around the well. Appropriately enough, today the Old Well is a water fountain.

The Old Well is probably the most versatile landmark on campus. You can have your hall and graduation pictures made there, take Mom and Dad there when they come to visit (it's better than having them sit in your room admiring your beer can pyramid) and it is a wonderful place to sit on a bench on a moonlit night with a date.

A short stroll through the grassy area from Franklin Street to the Old Well known as McCorkle Place takes you through the oldest part of the original campus. Rev. Samuel McCorkle helped plan UNC's campus and chose this site because he thought it distant enough to be "inaccessible to vice."

Nearby in McCorkle Place is the Davie Poplar, the most famous tree on campus. Legend has it that when legislators were looking for a site for the University, they stopped at this spot in the forest for a picnic lunch. In the true Carolina tradition, William Davie partook of more than his



The Bell Tower seen from a new perspective

share of the spirits, whereupon he decided he had had enough of roaming around in the wilderness and proclaimed the spot as the chosen site. He marked it with a poplar branch.

Today you can see the ivy-covered Davie Poplar (or what is left of it) that the "Father of the University" first planted. Its progeny, Davie Poplar Jr. stands nearby, transplanted from Davie Poplar Sr. by the class of 1918 when they feared the tree would die from being struck by lightning. At the base of the Davie Poplar is a stone bench that is one of the most romantic spots on campus.

While cuddling on the Davie Poplar bench, you can admire (from behind, anyway) the Civil War Monument, better known to students as Silent Sam. This monument was built in 1913 to honor those alumni who served and died in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. In case you are wondering, the story goes that Sam shoots his gun whenever a virtuous Carolina coed walks by. Now you know why Sam is silent. It is not advisable to hide behind Sam, wait for approaching females, and yell "Bang!"

East of Silent Sam, you will find the Morehead Building and Planetarium, one of the finest planetariums in the nation. The 68-foot wide dome is the screen for the first Zeiss projector to be installed at a university. American astronauts have used Morehead Planetarium for training exercises. If you take Astronomy, you will get to go to labs in the planetarium, too.

John Motley Morehead III, whose discovery of calcium carbide led to the development of the Union Carbide Corporation, was a great benefactor of the University and a clock aficionado. He gave UNC two clocks — the 35-foot-wide sundial outside of the Morehead Building and the Bell Tower, which comes later in the tour.

Behind the planetarium, you can wander through Coker Arboretum, a garden with hundreds of varieties of flora. The arboretum was named for William C. Coker, a botanist and professor here in the early 1900s. It is a beautiful place to spread a blanket and sun on a warm spring afternoon.

Up Cameron Avenue and across the street from Old Well is South Building, whose construction began in 1798. Originally, the building was a dormitory as well as a classroom and was home for the

eleventh U.S. president, James K. Polk, while he was in school here. South Building was roofless for 16 years after the funds ran out, but that did not stop the students. Even then, UNC suffered a housing shortage and students set up camp in the shell of the building. Finally a state lottery was held with tickets costing \$5 apiece. It raised enough money to add the roof. During Reconstruction, when the University was forced to close down, South Building became the stables for horses and cows.

Directly across Polk Place from South Building is Wilson Library, built in 1929 and named for the distinguished librarian, Louis Round Wilson. "The Grad," as it is known to many students, is an excellent research facility and houses many special collections, including the North Carolina Collection, which is the most outstanding collection on North Carolina in the world, and the Thomas Wolfe Collection, which includes many of the author's personal mementos. Wilson is a great place to find nooks and crannies to study in, but finding your way out is another story.

Across the street from Wilson Library is the Morehead-Patterson Bell Tower. The chimes of the Bell Tower first rang in 1931 and today warn students when they are late to class or toll to celebrate a football victory. If you climb the steps of South Building and look across the top of Wilson Library, you will see the tip of the Bell Tower. It looks like a dunce cap on the top of the library.

Officially, John Motley Morehead III and Rufus Lenoir Patterson gave the Bell Tower to the University in 1930 to honor all of the members of their families who had been associated with UNC, but the story goes that Morehead was angry when the new library was not named for him and planned the dunce cap trick as an act of vengeance.

If you have completed this entire tour by now, you should know a lot about the history of UNC and you are probably exhausted. Should that be the case, then march on up to the Frank Porter Graham Student Union (1968) and have yourself a Coke (1896).

References used in this article were Marguerite E. Schumann's *The First State University — A Walking Guide* and William S. Powell's *The First State University*.



The Old Well in 1892



Changing of the garb: Silent Sam at Halloween

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