



Tar Heel/Chip Beverung

The William C. Coker Arboretum

Located at the corner of Cameron Avenue and Raleigh Street, the Coker Arboretum is a popular place for students who want to escape from the hassles of exams and term papers.

Whether they are picnicking, studying or just relaxing, this five-acre naturalistic garden always provides a serene and beautiful escape. Over 400 varieties of plants and shrubs flourish in this area that was once a swampy pasture for animals such as former UNC President David Swain's white mule, Old Cuddy.

The idea for a naturalistic garden was conceived by UNC President Francis P. Venable in 1903 and named after botanist William C. Coker.

Of the trees in the arboretum, the most famous are the Marshall thorn, a red haw that is almost never seen in gardens, and a 200-foot wisteria arbor.

The Davie Poplar

The Davie Poplar is a landmark older than UNC itself.

Many legends surround this ivy-clad tree, which is more than 200 years old. Many stories suggest that William Richardson Davie, author and introducer of the bill that established the University, personally located the University lands around the tree. Although this is doubtful, the name Davie was assigned to the tree almost a century later by Cornelia Phillips Spencer to commemorate one of these tales.

Another legend about the poplar is that while on a picnic in the spring of 1792, Davie and the site-selection committee for the University met, and after drinking and making merry, Davie thrust a poplar branch into the ground to mark the new site, announcing, "This is it." The switch supposedly grew into the Davie Poplar. (This was proven untrue, as Davie was not on the committee).

Standing beside the Davie Poplar is the Davie Poplar Jr., a shoot grafted from the big tulip poplar when it was thought that the older tree would not survive after being struck by lightning. The second tree was planted by the class of 1918.



Tar Heel/Christopher Baroudi