**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS

TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

**HISTORIC**

Main Building - Louisburg College

**AND/OR COMMON**

### 2 LOCATION

**STREET & NUMBER**

W end of lawn facing N. Main Street, faces East, Louisburg College campus

**CITY, TOWN**

Louisburg

**STATE**

North Carolina

**CODE**

37

**COUNTY**

Franklin

**CODE**

069

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- SCIENTIFIC
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

**NAME**

Dr. J. Allen Norris, Jr., President

**STREET & NUMBER**

Louisburg College

**CITY, TOWN**

Louisburg

**STATE**

North Carolina

**ZIP**

27549

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**

Franklin County Courthouse

**STREET & NUMBER**

**CITY, TOWN**

Louisburg

**STATE**

North Carolina

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE**

Franklin County Inventory

**DATE**

1973-76

**FEDERAL**

**STATE**

**COUNTY**

**LOCAL**

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

Survey & Planning Branch, Archives and History

**CITY, TOWN**

Raleigh

**STATE**

North Carolina
Louisburg College Main Building is a massive Greek Revival institutional building, facing a broad green open space, and still serving as the dominant focal point of the campus. Originally a freestanding single building, it now is the central element of a balanced composition consisting of several eras of additions, each carefully designed to complement the original structure.

The main building was one of the largest buildings in the county if not the largest when erected in 1857 by builder Gamaliel Jones; it is still among the most imposing. It stands four stories high, with the first story at ground level serving as a raised basement and the second story, the main entrance floor. The structure is covered with a shallow hip roof with a broad overhanging cornice above a heavy frieze supported by the caps of the wall pilasters. The front (east) elevation is five broad bays wide, with broad pilasters between the bays and at the corners. The facade is dominated by a heroic prostyle tetrastyle portico with fluted Doric columns. The tympanum is accented by a circular, louvered vent flanked by scrollwork.

The brick walls of the building are handsomely laid in Flemish bond—a retardataire usage of the bond in the 1850s not uncommon for important buildings erected by local masons; apparently this bond continued to be considered the quality method. The mortar joints are narrow and neatly incised, with traces of white paint in the incisions in protected areas.

The central main floor is simply treated, with a double door flanked by sidelights and surmounted by a broad transom. These elements are separated by symmetrical moldings with plain corner blocks. The frame is simple and mitered. A stone lintel extends a few inches beyond the entrance. Windows—triple ones at both levels in the central bay and single ones elsewhere, are similarly treated, and have six-over-six sash and sills. The steps leading to the front porch are of stone; they replace earlier wooden ones. On the sides of the porch wooden balustrades with bulbous turned balusters survive.

The interior of the main building has had some surfaces covered with new materials for continued use, but the plan and much of the finish remains intact. On the upper floors particularly, few alterations have occurred.

The central entrance opens into a short hall which leads into a transverse hall that runs the width of the building, roughly midway its depth. Two rooms occur on either side of the entrance hall in the front side of the buildings, and on the rear side there is a large central parlor with two small rooms to either side. The plan of the second floor is similar, with the transverse hall repeated and rows of small rooms front and back.

The finish is of consistent, relatively simple Greek Revival character, creating a remarkably unchanged institutional interior. Walls are plastered above a thick, molded baseboard. Doors and windows on the main floor are framed with symmetrical moldings with cornerblocks accented with roundels. Door frames terminate in a heavy molded foot. The thickness of brick partition walls is expressed with soffits and reveals, most of which have fluted panels. Many doors survive with two long panels. Leading from the transverse hall to the large parlor is a complex entrance now
consisting of French doors flanking a filled-in opening surmounted by a parapet-like panel.

The second-floor finish is simpler. Door frames have post-and-lintel inner members and a mitered outer modling, and those from the hall into rooms have plain transoms. Reveals and soffits have simple faceted panels.

To the sides and rear of the main building are extensions. A large full-height ell projects to the rear and repeats the finish of the original block. To each side of the main block is a full-height, two-bay-wide extension, which serves as a stair well and is slightly set back from the main block. Each of these connects to a wing, set forward. To the north is 1911 Davis building, to the south 1924 Franklin Dormitory. These are two stories high above a raised basement, and resemble Greek Revival houses. They have much of the same treatment of the main block, with hip roofs, broad cornices, pilasters, and classical entrance porches. Double windows occur in the flanking bays and triple ones in the central ones. The entire composition is planned to respond to the style, formality, and dominance of the main building.

Included in the nomination are the antebellum main building and the connected rear and side extensions erected in the early 20th century and built to harmonize with the original building. The front lawn, historically an open space and important to the character of the main building, is also included. See campus map.
8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW
---|---
PREHISTORIC | ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | COMMUNITY PLANNING | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | RELIGION
1400-1499 | | | | |
1500-1599 | AGRICULTURE | | | |
1600-1699 | ART | EDUCATION | | |
1700-1799 | COMMERCIAL | ENGINEERING | | |
1800-1899 | COMMUNICATIONS | EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | | |
1900- | | INDUSTRY | | |
| | | | | |
SPECIFIC DATES | 1857 | BUILDER/ARCHITECT | Albert Gamaliel Jones

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Louisburg College Main Building was erected in 1857 to serve the Louisburg Female College which had been chartered in 1855, changed from the female academy established in 1813 in association with the Louisburg Male Academy. This institution in turn was an extension of Franklin Academy chartered in 1787 and rechartered in 1802. The Female College was thus heir to a long tradition of classically oriented local education, and one of the many private schools so important in a state without substantial public educational facilities. The main building was built, according to tradition, by Albert Gamaliel Jones, a Warren County builder. It was one of the most massive structures in the region, and is an unusually well-preserved example of Greek Revival institutional architecture. Additions made in the 20th century have been sympathetic to the original. Since 1931 the building has been part of the co-educational Louisburg College.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Associated with the early development of private schools, an important element in 18th and 19th century North Carolina education; with the increasing prosperity and more massive construction projects of the 1850s; and with the 19th century development of increased educational opportunities for women as well as men.

C. Embodies characteristics, well-preserved, of mid-19th century Greek Revival institutional architecture, including retadataire use of Flemish bond brickwork, and handsome classical detail.
Located in the county seat of Franklin County, Louisburg College is one of North Carolina’s oldest institutions of learning. Begun as Franklin Academy in the late eighteenth century it has functioned, with brief interruptions, until the present day. Much of the institution's history is embodied in its most distinguished structure, Main Building (1857), which continues to serve the college.

The town of Louisburg was founded in 1779. In 1787 the North Carolina General Assembly granted a charter allowing the establishment of Franklin Academy in the town. Little is known of the academy's early years, and if it held classes apparently it closed its doors sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. In 1802 the state legislature rechartered the institution which reopened in January, 1805. Matthew Dickinson of Connecticut, a graduate of Yale, was its principal. The curriculum included reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, and geography as well as Latin, Greek, and French languages. Tuition was ten dollars per year for the standard courses, and sixteen if the languages were included. Board could be procured in "genteel homes" for seventy dollars per year.

In 1813 the school added a female department and constructed an additional building to accommodate the new students. The courses offered to the young ladies consisted of reading, writing, English grammar, arithmetic, geography, astronomy, music, and ornamental needle work "of almost every description." Tuition was thirty dollars per year, but music was fifty dollars extra and painting twenty-five.

Throughout the antebellum period the Louisburg Male Academy played a significant role in preparing young men for entering university life. A number of prominent North Carolina planters sent their sons there for instruction. Typical of these students was William S. Battle of Tarboro. Battle attended the academy in the 1840s and subsequently graduated from the University of North Carolina with honors. After leaving the university he returned to Tarboro where he managed a vast estate and a number of thriving cotton mills. There he constructed the well-known Barracks mansion designed by architect William Percival. Battle was to later serve as a delegate to North Carolina's Secession Convention in 1861.

The female academy served young women from various parts of the state, and its enrollment grew as more North Carolinians became interested in the education of women. In 1855 a commencement speaker, Henry Miller, addressed the "Young Ladies, Patrons, and Friends of the Louisburg Female Seminary." He proclaimed the necessity for educating women as well as men in North Carolina, but warned that the state's citizens should not "expect to derive blessings from the education of woman, unless when educated, she keeps herself within the sphere of action for which the author of her being intended her." He warned that letting women drift too far from their traditional roles could mean disaster for society. "There cannot be imagined," he declared,

a more striking instance of the evil effects of this principle, than are exhibited by the 'Woman's Rights conventions,' which
have, from time to time, assembled in some of our Northern States. Their chief object being to secure to their sex equality in all rights social, civil, and political, especially, as one may infer, the right of suffrage and eligibility to all offices, political and judicial, they did not lack advocates. They were encouraged in their objects and supported in their theories of reform, by female Nestors and Ciceros, led by wild zeal and frantic eloquence, which would have graced and honored the most exciting and turbulent scenes of the first French Revolution.

The female graduates of Louisburg, insisted Miller, should let no such fate befall North Carolina and the South.

In the same year as Miller’s address the state legislature chartered the Louisburg Female College Company which set out to change the female academy into Louisburg Female College. But, although the institution would be known as a "college," it was still primarily an academy with its organization and curriculum remaining virtually unaltered. Its change in title was a common practice among antebellum female schools in North Carolina. "After 1840," historian Guion Griffis Johnson has written, "schools for women began to adopt the ambitious title of college although their courses of study were little more advanced than those offered in the female academies and boarding schools prior to that date."5

The school for women began its career under the new title of female college in 1857 when the Main Building was constructed to provide dormitory and class rooms for women students. The new Greek Revival building, which consisted of four stories and fifty rooms, was built at a cost of $16,000 and furnished for an additional $4,000. According to local tradition the builder for the new structure was Albert Gamaliel Jones. Jones, who lived in Warren County with his wife, seven children, and ten slaves, also constructed the Columns Building at Chowan College, Murfreesboro, 1851-1852, and several structures in Inez, Warren County. In addition he was probably the builder for the house of North Carolina poet and writer, Edwin Wiley Fuller, constructed on Main Street in Louisburg in 1856. He is particularly noted for a "spool" motif which appears on the cornerposts of the Fuller House as well as the buildings in Murfreesboro and Inez. When the Main Building was constructed the old female academy building was moved close by to serve as an annex. Classes for young men continued to be held in the separate male academy building.

The Civil War had a profound impact on Louisburg Female College and the male academy. When the war broke out in April, 1861, the ladies of the school along with women from town made and presented a Confederate flag to the Franklin Rifles who were drilling on campus. The girls sang "Dixie" and gave three cheers for the volunteers. During the conflict both the female college and the male academy continued to hold classes. The women students knitted socks for the Confederate soldiers, had
"beautiful Tableaux" to entertain the troops, and learned to wear homespun dresses. Some of the young men departed Louisburg to take their places in the Confederate ranks. During the war Edwin Wiley Fuller, future poet and the author of the novel Sea Gift, attended the male academy prior to leaving for the University of North Carolina in 1864. His family rejoiced that he was yet too young to be a soldier. Students, both male and female, suffered the effects of homefront deprivations and the heartfelt despair from news of battlefield losses.

Following the Confederacy's surrender at Appomattox in April, 1865, Federal troops under the command of General John A. Logan entered Louisburg and encamped on the college campus. In her diary Anna Long Thomas Fuller, mother of Edwin Wiley Fuller, wrote, "their tents are pitched in the College and Male Academy groves," and "Generals Howard and Logan's headquarters are in the two groves." On June 18, 1865, Mrs. Fuller noted that a whole regiment of Union soldiers as bivouaced in the Franklin County town. "We had no idea it was a permanent thing," she wrote, "but here they are still... encamp in our beautiful College groves which have always been the pride of the village and consecrated to learning--now polluted by the tread of our vindictive foe." The Union camp, she declared, "is a disgusting, revolting sight, and the odor arising from it is loathsome. The men all seem to be very common, and very wicked and profane."

During the Federal occupation, which ended in July, 1865, the Main Building was apparently used as a hospital and possibly a headquarters for Union troops. In 1903 a former Union soldier, J. R. Reyes, who had been confined in the hospital in 1865, remembered his stay there and wrote a letter to the president of the college proclaiming his affection for the building and the institution. Reyes, who had since become a Methodist minister, also enclosed a ten dollar gold piece to be awarded to the best student in mathematics in the graduating class.

Louisburg underwent difficult times during Reconstruction and the subsequent years of the nineteenth century. The school was briefly closed during the Union occupation of 1865. The following year the Greensboro Female College moved for a short period to Louisburg because its own facility had burned. In 1869 the Louisburg Female College was forced to close because of financial hardship, but the male academy continued to operate. Three years later the college re-opened and continued to operate until 1878 when it closed its doors. At that time Main was occupied by the Louisburg Practical High School run by B. W. Raye from New York who taught and lived in the building.

In 1889 Main Building once again became the home of the female college which reopened with an enrollment of 100 students and eight teachers. Two years later Washington Duke, the North Carolina tobacco magnate, purchased the college and the male academy for $5,450. His son, Benjamin N. Duke donated the institution to the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church in 1907. For many years before the bequest the Methodist Church had been affiliated with the college but had given it no financial
support. Since that time, however, the church has played a significant role in the school's development.

Main Building received an additional wing to the north in 1911 when the Davis Building, named for former president Matthew S. Davis, was constructed on its north side. In 1915 Louisburg Female College became a recognized junior college for women. Another wing, to the south, financed by the citizens of Franklin County, was added to Main in 1924, and the Pattie Julia Wright Memorial Building was constructed two years later. (It is not connected to the Main building, and stands to the north.) In 1928 the State Department of Public Instruction accredited the college, but disaster struck when fire destroyed portions of Main.

In 1931 Louisburg became co-educational. The institution experienced the financial hardships of the Great Depression of the 1930s but weathered the lean years with the aid of a "Self-Help Program." The past two decades have particularly witnessed a large number of newly constructed buildings and facilities including a gymnasium, central heating plant, cafeteria, student union, library, infirmary, fine arts building, and dormitories. But amid the new structures still stands Main, a home for administrative offices as well as the focal point of the college and a monument to its history.

Footnotes


3 Ibid., p. 94.


5 Henry Miller, "Address to the Young Ladies, Patrons and Friends of the Louisburg Female Seminary, June 1, 1855," North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.


9. Diary of Anna Long Thomas Fuller, May 1, June 18, 1865, Louisburg College Library, Louisburg.


MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


Diary of Anna Long Thomas Fuller. Louisburg College Library, Louisburg, North Carolina.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Lat. 36° 6' 47"
Long. 78° 18' 00"

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 6 acres (to include the main building & its connected extensions, the front lawn extending from the main building last to Nor Main Street, but no other buildings.

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A | | | | | | | | | | B | | | | | | | | | | C | | | | | | | | | | D | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Description prepared by Catherine W. Bishir, Head, Survey & Planning Branch Significance prepared by Joe Mobley, Research Branch

ORGANIZATION Division of Archives and History

DATE

STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street

TELEPHONE (919) 733-4763

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh

STATE North Carolina 27611

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

DATE September 14, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER


Miller, Henry. "Address to the Young Ladies, Patrons and Friends of the Louisburg Female Seminary, June 1, 1855." Chapel Hill: North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library.


