
Davidson College in Davidson, N.C., is recognized as one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges. It was founded in 1837 by the Presbyterian Church and currently enrolls 1,000 men. Some 70 percent of its seniors later attend graduate or professional schools, and among its distinguished alumni have been President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk. The institution ranks in the top three percent of all independent American colleges in the percentage of graduates listed in "Who's Who in America."

**BY C. W. STACKS
AND MICHAEL STOVALL**

" . . . There are no restrictions on laundry service. The student can bring all he wants, as often as he wants."

The Davidson College Laundry has come a long way since it opened its doors in 1920. The horse and wagon which carried laundry around the Davidson, North Carolina, countryside, left the scene long ago. They have been replaced by an unusual student-oriented laundry service based on the traditional Davidson honor system.

Signs of the old and the new can be found in the college laundry. Student workers at the laundry bring new ideas to the operation, so that students have the type laundry service which will most benefit them. Experienced workers like J. C. Washam, who has spent most of his life working there, know the importance of growth and change in the laundry. For 40 years Washam has been a part of the Davidson staff. He remembers when the horse and wagon were replaced by a model T truck in 1931. In the same year the single roll flat ironer was replaced by a four roller and dry cleaning was first introduced in Davidson.

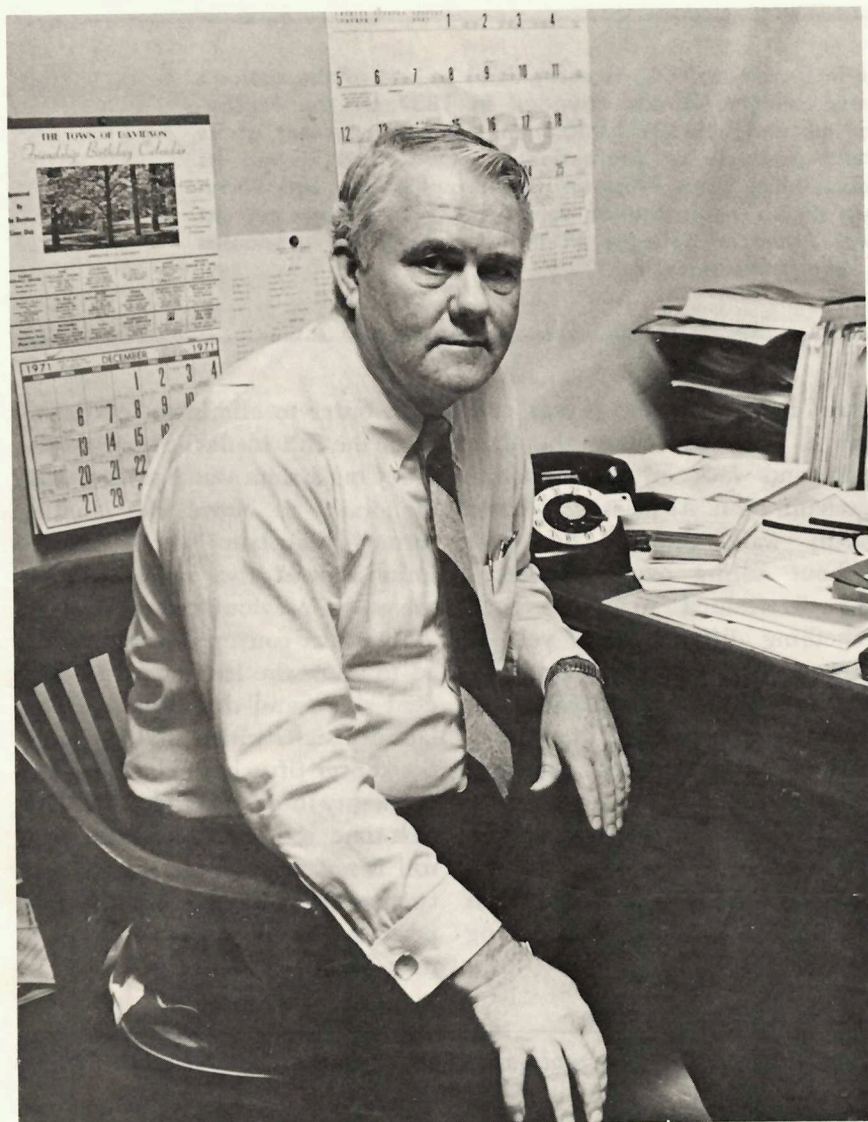
It became increasingly apparent, as the college grew above the 300 students attending in 1931, that the laundry would also be forced to expand. Additions were made to the laundry building in 1937 and 1947, but internal equipment and system changes were few until 1949 when C. W. Stacks be-

came manager. Stacks was concerned with the overly abundant staff and lack of labor-saving mechanization. As he said, "I could hardly walk through the door without falling over someone. I was determined to do a little something different each year to improve our facilities." And improvements have been made. An antiquated procedure for shirt finishing was replaced by three two-worker units, and a totally new dry cleaning department began operation. However, the system was still not satisfactory, as too many mistakes were being made.

In order to eliminate inefficiency of the full identification system, a key tag system was installed with monorails to move the laundry through the plant. New Ajax shirt units allowed two workers to do the work previously done by six. Three shirt conveyors were installed to allow the hanging of all student shirts and dry cleaning. The laundry staff, which in 1949 numbered over fifty, has today been cut to twenty-three full-time and five part-time workers. The total payroll is not much more than it was twenty-two years ago, but the .60¢ per hour average pay in 1949 is now \$2.00 per hour.

"You think you've got problems! This is what the Davidson College Laundry has to cope with . . ."





C. W. Stacks, manager of the laundry since 1949, in his 'think tank.' "I just come in, sit down and think about cleaning off my desk, but never seem to get around to doing it."

Of all the changes in the Davidson College Laundry one thing has not changed—the close association with the students. The honor system, which has always been an integral part of the campus is strongly evidenced in the laundry. Many incoming freshmen get the impression that the laundry is run by students, this is the way Stacks and the staff want it.

Davidson has grown from 65 students in 1837 to over a thousand in 1971, and its laundry has grown accordingly. Student involvement and continuing change have been and will always be the Davidson idea.

The laundry is operated primarily for these students, but work is accepted from the faculty and

staff.

Students pay \$110.00 a year with tuition, and their laundry problems are the school's problem for the school year. There are four basic services:

1. Shirts on hangers
2. Wash-Dry-Fold service
3. Linens furnished
4. Dry Cleaning at extra cost

There are no restrictions on laundry service. The student can bring all he wants and as often as he wants.

Each student is assigned a laundry number during his freshman year, and he keeps that number for four years. There are four shelves for wash-dry-fold, one for each of the four classes, and they are numbered 1 through 1200.

When laundry work is finished, it is placed on the shelf corresponding with the number and the student knows where his bundle is at all times. Therefore, he comes in and picks up his laundry without having to ask anyone. Shirts are on a shirt conveyor behind the button machine. Linens are exchanged twice a week, Monday and Wednesday. Students simply exchange dirty linens for clean ones. Dry cleaning is checked in, picked up, and paid for at the counter. The student has the option of buying a coupon book, \$12.00 worth of cleaning for \$10.00. Otherwise, he pays the regular price.

Five students, who each work about 2 hours a day, are employed. Management tries to have a student on duty at all times, but class schedules often make this impossible.

Emphasized is the fact that this is a student laundry, and students make most of the decisions. From time to time meetings are held with student leaders to discuss laundry problems. Polls are taken about once a year, and these polls are helpful in giving the student what he wants. Students are a big help. It would be difficult to operate without them.