

You Can Still Get Outside and Walk...or Take a Virtual Walk

Local historian John Schelp put together three presentations on YouTube, with the Museum of Durham History and Preservation Durham, of walking tours you can take to learn more about Durham's past growth.

Part 1: West Durham, Duke, Erwin Mills, etc,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nN0Wi5ww9xw>

Part 2: Watts Hospital, Christian's Mill, downtown, etc,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZZZK6n1PEY>

Part 3: more downtown, Hayti, NCCU, beginnings of RTP, etc.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1GTFdRh3Ug>

Also, a neighbor asked for another walking loop idea so, thought I'd share something I wrote years ago...

Walking tour around East Campus (updated)

Why is Ninth Street called Ninth Street? What song writer for Nora Jones was 'born on a kitchen table' near the East Campus wall? Where did Richard Nixon live as a Duke Law student? What's the origin of Walltown? Where did Elvis go for re-hab? These questions and more will be answered during your self-guided tour.

Start on Broad, across from Whole Foods Market. Your route will take you along the gravel path by the East Campus wall and offer forays into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Stop #1) Broad & Perry, break in East Campus wall:

OK, let's get started. Some folks ask why the stone wall around East Campus (built in 1916) stops for a stretch along Broad Street? Before West Campus was built in the late 1920s, the

Duke (excuse me, Trinity College) football team played their home games at Hanes Field -- named after the Winston-Salem benefactor who made underwear. A red-brick wall with several ticket windows facing Broad Street once stood where the cedar trees now grow tall. Today, the field hockey team plays here.

Across the street is the neighborhood of Old West Durham, a turn-of-the-century mill village that is a national historic district. Today, it is home to Ninth Street, Monuts, the city's oldest fire station, and the Erwin Mills cemetery

Follow the gravel path inside the wall (to the south).

Stop #2) Corner of Broad & West Main:

The large gray houses across the street belonged to managers of the nearby cotton mills. In the early days, living alongside the rail road tracks was considered desirable.

Beyond the gray houses was the African American settlement of Brookstown. 100 years ago, a brick yard (owned by the Fitzgerald's -- one of Durham's many successful African American families) made bricks for most of the tobacco factories and textile mills. Today, the old brick yard is the site of Duke's Freeman Center. Like Hayti and Hickstown, Brookstown suffered a great loss when the Durham Freeway was built through the community in the 1970s and 80s.

The hamlet of Pinhook was located near the large gray Erwin Square tower to the west. Established before 1850 (and before Durham existed), Pinhook was half-way between the old colonial capital in Hillsborough and the new state capital in Raleigh. The camp ground and tavern was a 'roaring old place' where travelers could relax after a long day's walk.

Stop #3) Free-speech tunnel:

Across the railroad tracks stands Duke's Center for Documentary Studies. The two-story white frame building is a wonderful resource that's worth a visit (a place where town and gown communities often come together).

Stop #4) Main entrance:

Look all the way up the quad to Baldwin Auditorium. The shape of East Campus roughly follows the shape of the original horse race track at the old Blackwell Fairgrounds.

Worried after Meredith College declared they wouldn't locate in a 'rum-soaked mill village' – Durham business leaders topped Raleigh's offer of Pullen Park and \$25,000 -- with the offer of these 62 acres and \$85,000 for buildings and endowment to bring Trinity College to the Bull City in 1892. (Duke historians say the college would not have survived the Depression of 1893 had they remained in Randolph County.)

In 1905, President Teddy Roosevelt stopped his train across West Main Street to extol the college's recent courageous stand for academic freedom (Bassett Affair).

Just past the rail road tracks is the Smith Warehouse. The largest of the twelve warehouses operated by Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co, now Duke classrooms and offices.

Stop #5) Grove of magnolia trees:

The original entrance road onto East Campus ran straight through the grove of magnolia trees. Look back to the East Duke Building and you'll see large trees lined up on either side of the old roadway (on either side of the statue, The Sower).

Hidden behind the large magnolia tree in the back [was] the Ann Roney fountain (ca. 1901). This tribute is important because Ann Roney took care of Washington Duke's two sons after their mother died. The Duke family went on to become the university's major benefactor (building West Campus and changing Trinity's name to Duke). [Today, this fountain has no

plaque, no indication of the role Ms. Roney played in Duke's history. Getting a plaque made would be a wonderful project for a student group.] Fountain was later moved to Duke Gardens.

Stop #6) Corner of Buchanan & Minerva, Trinity Park:

At the small break in the wall, cross Buchanan Blvd and walk up Minerva Ave into the neighborhood of Trinity Park.

Although many of Trinity Park's early settlers were connected with Trinity College, the majority were merchants, businessmen and professionals. In contrast to Durham's late 19th-century neighborhoods, fewer Trinity Park residents were directly associated with tobacco and textiles. They were part of the broader local economy produced by their families' successes in

Durham's leading industries. These younger generations chose not to live in the older neighborhoods where they grew up close to Durham's mills and factories.

Stop #7) The Elvis Presley House:

When you arrive at Minerva and Watts, look across the street at the large dark brick house with green tile roof. Local lore holds that Elvis Presley came here for drug re-hab. Turn left onto Watts and walk up to the neighborhood park on the corner.

Stop #8) Community park:

In the 1970s, developers tried to build apartments on this corner. Neighbors mobilized, bought the land and built this corner park instead. Keep walking up Watts until Urban St and turn left back to East Campus.

Stop #9) The Ark:

By the break in the wall, look to your left at the three-story, white-frame building. The Ark is so named because students had to walk in pairs to make it up the narrow entrance-way into the building. Built of salvaged wood from the grandstands at the old race track, one of the first college basketball games in the state of North Carolina took place in 1906 at the Ark.

Following a "humdinger" of a Southern Conference tournament in 1928, the Atlanta Journal wrote: "That Duke is going to be a big factor in conference is certain. They have already done enough in basketball, whether they win the title or not, to make their school remembered in Atlanta. In football, wrestling, boxing, baseball and track, the baby member is going to make the old timers look to their laurels. And we don't mean maybe."

Stop #10) Markham & Onslow, Trinity Heights:

Following the path around the bend, walk out through the break in the wall. Behind Bassett, Baldwin, and Pegram, you can still see the old curves of the horse race track where the ground slopes.

Cross Markham and walk up Onslow Street (to the north). One of the first planned residential developments in Durham, Trinity Heights has traditionally been home for folks from a broad range of backgrounds and interests, including employees and students of Trinity College.

Stop #11) Onslow & Green:

Across Green Street is the community of Walltown. In the late 1880s, a young African-American man named George Wall followed his job with Trinity College to Durham. Wall bought a wooded plot of land north of what is now East Campus. Walltown became a neighborhood for mostly African American workers moving into the Bull City for jobs in the tobacco industry. The narrow shotgun houses and small residences provided easy access to the tobacco factories. Mature hardwood trees now provide cool summer shade on these same streets.

Walltown's east-west streets were lettered and its north-south streets were numbered. So, you're now standing at what was once 3rd & B streets. (Ninth Street is called Ninth Street because of Walltown.)

The neighborhood is crisscrossed with deep gullies and creeks. When this area of Durham was first developed, wealthy interests purchased the highlands for larger homes -- leaving bottomlands for smaller dwellings in gullies. If you drive along the length of Englewood Avenue, for instance, you'll see larger homes in elevated areas and smaller homes as the street goes downhill. Historically white Watts-Hillandale, Trinity Park Duke Park occupied higher ground while historically black neighborhoods, like Walltown, occupied the creek bottoms.

Stop #12) Green & Berkeley:

For many years, the block of new residences between Berkeley and Sedgefield was mostly open space. More Recently, Duke developed the land by building homes For university employees. (And loaned millions to local banks to redevelop/gentrify Walltown.)