

South Lowell Academy ^[1]

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by Jean B. Anderson, 2006



John Archibald McMannen House, in South Lowell community of Durham. Image courtesy of Endangered Durham.

^[2]South Lowell Academy was the inspiration of John Archibald McMannen, a lay preacher of the [Methodist Church](#) ^[3], and his close friend, Claiborn Parrish. With a board of trustees made up of themselves and three local physicians, McMannen and Parrish established a classical academy at South Lowell in what is today [Durham County](#) ^[4] in 1849. Its first headmaster was the Reverend James A. Dean, a graduate of [Wesleyan College](#) ^[5] in Connecticut, who gave the school a luster it maintained even after his departure for larger arenas.

A brick dormitory for the students who flocked there from all parts of the state, as well as a hotel, were soon added to the school, mills, and general store that made up the community. A preparatory school for [Randolph-Macon College](#) ^[6], the academy became a cultural center with a library, lecture program, debating and temperance societies, and the electrifying preaching of McMannen, who could also play the fiddle. In 1856 Edward Scott added to the school's attraction with a medical school.

The general poverty caused by the [Civil War](#) ^[7] and its aftermath depleted South Lowell's pool of applicants, though the school continued at least until 1897, when it was still listed in the state business directory.

Reference:

Jean B. Anderson, *Durham County* (1990). ^[8]

Image Credit:

John Archibald McMannen House, in South Lowell community of Durham. Image courtesy of Endangered Durham. Available from http://endangerreddurham.blogspot.com/2009_03_01_archive.html ^[2] (accessed November 5, 2012).

Subjects:

[Education](#) ^[9]

[Schools \(K-12\)](#) ^[10]

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[Anderson, Jean B.](#) ^[11]

Origin - location:

[Durham](#) ^[12]

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[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[13]

1 January 2006 | Anderson, Jean B.

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^[1] <https://ncpedia.org/south-lowell-academy> ^[2] http://endangerreddurham.blogspot.com/2009_03_01_archive.html ^[3] <https://ncpedia.org/methodist-church> ^[4] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/durham> ^[5] <http://www.wesleyan.edu/> ^[6] <http://www.rmc.edu/> ^[7] <https://ncpedia.org/history/cw-1900/civil-war> ^[8] http://books.google.com/books?id=4gyxDsR0t7QC&pg=PA70&pg=PA70&pg=PA70&q=James+Dean+south+lowell&source=bl&ots=wC7Aewx5W&sig=rXT9U-Xgv_OyTbDmiFMMNPO1doo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=JyKYUNKMI4zy9gSD2YCoAQ&ved=0CDYQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=south%20lowell%20academy&f=false ^[9] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/education> ^[10] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/schools> ^[11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/anderson-jean-b> ^[12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont-8> ^[13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->