

Crowfield Academy ^[1]

Crowfield Academy

by Michael Hill, 2006

Crowfield Academy, a classical school in what is today [Iredell County](#) ^[2], was operated by [Presbyterians](#) ^[3] from about 1760 to 1788. Although the school trained many prominent men, records pertaining to its operation are scattered and thin. The first published mention appears in [W. H. Foote's 1846 history](#) ^[4]: "Dr. [James] McRee, in his manuscripts, tells us that there was a flourishing classical school in the bounds of Centre [[Presbyterian Church](#) ^[3]] at a very early period, and after continuing about twenty years was broken up by the invasion." [E. F. Rockwell](#) ^[5], who taught at [Davidson College](#) ^[6], provided a fuller account of Crowfield in 1858 and suggested 1760 as the year of the school's opening. The [American Revolution](#) ^[7] apparently interrupted studies at Crowfield, but in 1787 Charles Caldwell moved from nearby [Clio's Nursery](#) ^[8], a similar school, to reestablish it. Shortly thereafter the academy closed.

Writers have cited Crowfield as the germ out of which [Davidson College](#) ^[6] grew and noted its influence on the [University of North Carolina](#) ^[9] through providing early education to many of its first teachers and students. [R. D. W. Connor](#) ^[10] made such claims in an address to the [Daughters of the American Revolution](#) ^[11] upon the occasion of the placement of a plaque commemorating the school in 1931. Commonly cited as graduates of Crowfield are such important figures in North Carolina history as [Samuel McCorkle](#), ^[12] [James Hall](#) ^[13], [Adlai Osborne](#) ^[14], [Ephraim Brevard](#) ^[15], [Andrew King](#), [William Houston](#) ^[16], and [Charles Harris](#). Some sources indicate that [David Caldwell](#) ^[17] taught at Crowfield briefly before moving in 1767 to [Guilford County](#) ^[18] to open his own school. Others count future president of [the University of North Carolina](#) ^[9] [David Ker](#) ^[19] among the instructors. [E. F. Rockwell](#) ^[5] placed the site of Crowfield at an "old field" near the home of [Alexander Osborne](#) ^[20] in southern Iredell County.

References:

Homer M. Kever, *Iredell: Piedmont County* (1976).

E. F. Rockwell, "The First Classical School in Western North Carolina," *North Carolina Journal of Education* 1 (July 1858).

Additional Resources:

Looking back at Crowfield Academy, by: O.C. Stonestreet, *Statesville Record & Landmark*, published: August 17, 2008: <http://www2.statesville.com/lifestyles/2008/aug/17/looking-back-crowfield-academy-ar-78536/> ^[21]

Clio's Nursery, NC Historical Marker M-23: <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?ct=ddl&sp=search&k=Markers&sv=M-23%20-%20CLIO%27S%20NURSERY> ^[22]

Finding Aid of the Sloan-Osborne CIPHERING Book, c. 1753; 1778-1779; 1782, North Carolina State Archives: http://ead.archives.ncdcr.gov/PC_1955_Sloan_Osborne_Ciphering_.html ^[23]

Subjects:

[American Revolution \(1763-1789\)](#) ^[24]

[Colonial period \(1600-1763\)](#) ^[25]

[Education](#) ^[26]

[Schools \(K-12\)](#) ^[27]

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Origin - location:

[Iredell County](#) ^[29]

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[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[30]

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<http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/b/Brevard,Ephraim.html> [16] <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?ct=ddl&sp=search&k=Markers&sv=F-14%20-%20WILLIAM%20HOUSTON> [17] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/caldwell-david> [18] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/quilford> [19] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/ker-david> [20] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/osborne-alexander> [21] <http://www2.statesville.com/lifestyles/2008/aug/17/looking-back-crowfield-academy-ar-78536/> [22] <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?ct=ddl&sp=search&k=Markers&sv=M-23%20-%20CLIO%27S%20NURSERY> [23] http://ead.archives.ncdcr.gov/PC_1955_Sloan_Osborne_Ciphering_.html [24] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/us-revolution> [25] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/colonial-period> [26] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/education> [27] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/schools> [28] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/hill-michael> [29] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont/i> [30] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->