

# Tour

*Courtesy of Drew Magazine. Article originally appeared in the Spring 1998 edition, by John T. Cunningham C'3*

Any proper walking tour of Drew's campus begins by climbing the 10 thick stone steps to the broad piazza of [Mead Hall](#), Drew's first and forever heart. [Willi am Gibbons](#), Elizabethtown/New York gentleman and Savannah slave owner, built the imposing antebellum mansion in the mid 1830s. It bears the name, however, of [Miss Roxanna Mead](#). She married hometown boy [Daniel Drew](#) in Carmel, N.Y., in 1823, when young Daniel, our name giver, had scarcely begun the first misdeeds that would take him to high rank among Wall street's jackals.

On this campus, however, Daniel Drew was a lamb, deserving whatever sainthood we beneficiaries might bestow. He paid \$140,000 in 1867 to buy the central part of today's campus- the mansion and its furnishings, the [stable](#) and [granary](#), the [Sycamore house](#), and about 95 acres of what townspeople called "The Forest." Later he contributed at least \$150,000 to revamp the stable into a dormitory and the granary into a student center and to build four new homes for professors. Drew also gave \$250,000 in endowment (at 7 percent interest) to pay faculty salaries and other expenses. No one else, Methodist or otherwise, gave so much as a dime until Brother Daniel sadly announced his bankruptcy in 1873. He had even lost the endowment.

Entering Mead Hall is a startling step back in time and mood that, for decades, was diminished by down-at-the-heels maintenance. For many years, practicality obscured history. In this structure students endured everything from admission to the handing in of the final tuition check. The large black and white tiles rattled under one's feet. Creaky stairs led upward to the oval dome, whose glow scarcely reached workday offices crammed into the once airy bedrooms of the Gibbons family. Someday, officialdom insisted, we will refurbish this building. The "someday" came, but not as planned.

On the morning of August 24, 1989, a spark from a painter's torch found tinder in the walls and erupted into flames. The brick withstood the [23 hour fire](#), but the lavish interior collapsed in a sodden, charred mass. Most of the furnishings and paintings, as well as irreplaceable computer records, were saved by a hastily recruited, fast moving, small army of volunteers. Other treasures survived because a special providence shielded them from heat, flames, water, and falling debris.

No one dared suggest that the ruin be replaced with a modern architectural monstrosity. Ultimately, the state of the art restoration cost \$13 million (including \$7.5 million in insurance money). The interior is probably more exquisite and certainly more comfortable than in the Gibbons' heyday.

The temptation to linger in Miss Mead's hall is powerful, but the mansion, for all its beauty, is only a small part of the Drew campus. Out we troop, past the huge hallway mirrors and the period-like wallpaper. We head for [Seminary Hall](#), behind the mansion.

But wait. Stop on the broad piazza to look northward toward Madison Avenue. Immediately in view is the bronze [statue of Francis Asbury](#), "Prophet of the Long Road" and the greatest of early 19th century Methodist circuit riders. He rode unceasingly for 45 or so years, through all of the United States east of the Mississippi not to get money or notoriety or honorary degrees but because he believed.

Beyond Asbury is Drew's official entrance, the imposing Bowne Gateway, which is topped by gargoyles and escutcheons meaningful in university traditions. In 1921, traditionalist animosity was stirred when automobiles forced replacement of the old gate erected by local masons in the 1830s.

Now let's walk. Savor the oaks, hail The Forest, thank those who have saved it; for its shade, for its ever-growing beauty, and even for the falling leaves of autumn. (For many students in Depression years, leaves were dollars to be raked up at 25 cents an hour, each penny dedicated to tuition debt.)

On our way round back to Seminary Hall, look west to Wesley House, and early Victorian structure with a broad piazza and the mansard roof Daniel Drew favored. Once called President's House, the building was first occupied by [John Fletcher Hurst](#), Drew's third president and the man who almost singlehandedly raised the \$250,000 lost in Drew's bankruptcy. A new President's House was built in 1957 on the east end of campus for seventh President [Fred G. Holloway](#). [Thomas H. Kean](#), Drew's 10th president, used *that* building for ceremonial occasions, and Wesley now houses the admissions offices for all three schools.

If Mead Hall is the heart of Drew, unostentatious [Seminary Hall](#) is its spiritual foundation. Thirteen months and \$100,000 went into erecting this two-story, imitation collegiate Gothic structure, faced with Harvard brick and trimmed with pink granite. When it opened a century ago, seminary classes moved out of Mead Hall and into the building's six classrooms.

The second floor chapel was at once the pride of would-be preachers and the abomination of anyone there for commencement on a rainy day in May. The acoustics were deemed "simply perfect," but the chapel became a sweat-box for those on hand for a degree granting. Prayers in that sweat-box of humidity and humility eventually brought relief in a new facility, but that is getting ahead of ourselves.

Calling the brick building south of Seminary Hall "Kirby Theater" is to risk forgetting the building's core as the campus gymnasium and swimming pool donated by Samuel W. Bowne in 1909. The overhead running track in the gym confounded Drew opponents, whose shots often hit the track's underside during basketball games. The diminutive swimming pool in the basement was a throwback to days when students had no great expectations. Campus wags encouraged taking a cleansing shower *after* swimming as well as before.

President [Robert Oxnam](#) in 1972 invited the Shakespeare Festival of Cape May to convert Bowne gym into a theater. The group produced all of the bard's plays (a rare feat) on a stage so small that front-row playgoers often felt they performed in, as well as watched, such epics as *Richard the Third*. Thanks to a \$7.5 million renovation and expansion in 1997-98, the days of basketball and synchronized swimming are all but forgotten in the handsome, functional playhouse known as Kirby Shakespeare Theater.

Drew's extensive sports areas fringe the long parking lot leading southward to the [Simon Forum](#). Partially hidden by a copse of trees is the synthetic-surfaced field where all Drew field teams (except baseball) compete. This is the U.S. Field Hockey Center, designed to provide practice and game space for men's international field hockey, if needed. Partially paid for with United States Olympic Committee funds, the field boasts Drew's first permanent stands, first press box, and first permanent light towers.

Drew has no men's field hockey team; few young American males care (or dare) to risk their skulls in such a game. However, the university does have 17 varsity programs, equally divided between men's and women's sports.

The baseball field adjacent to the field hockey complex honors [Sherman Plato \("Doc"\) Young T'27, T'29, T'30](#), the feisty baseball coach whose often undermanned nines won on aggressiveness, mastery of fundamentals, and guile.

Now, remember those prayers for a decent indoor gathering place? They were answered in 1958 when the Baldwin Gymnasium and Natatorium opened. (The Baldwin in this case was Donald, son of Arthur J. Baldwin, one of the College's founders.) The gymnasium finally gave Drew a modern basketball arena. It also provided relief for commencement crowds, although a long winded speaker could still heat up the non-air-conditioned structure.

Baldwin gym and swimming pool have been cleverly incorporated into the [Simon Forums](#), finished in 1994 and named for major donor [William Simon and his wife, Carol](#). The giant \$11 million facility's most spectacular feature is the field house, under whose roof there is room to play four simultaneous basketball games, to run on a regulation indoor track, and to his fly balls in baseball practice. The field house also converts easily into a huge auditorium or forum, seating nearly 4,000 persons. Adjacent are machines for indoor workouts, training rooms, and squash courts. (Squash courts? That's *Ivy League*!)

Southward and eastward from the Simon Center are most of the undergraduate residence halls, pleasantly tucked into the forest. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, a new dormitory seemed always under construction, thanks to liberal federal loans. These dorms honor deceased presidents, deans, and trustees. This emphasis on living quarters for College of Liberal Arts students was ironic; When the [Baldwins](#) underwrote the college, they hoped it would serve commuting students from northern New Jersey towns,

Step out of Baldwin Gym's front doors and just ahead stands the glass walled [University Commons](#), opened in 1982 to cope with a growing student body and seek yet another answer to nearly 125 years of unceasing student food complaints.

Complaints about food or dining space? These are as collegiate as ivy or Gothic stone. If university officialdom expected thanks for the splendid University Commons with inspiring views of the forest, they got instead negative words from an *Acorn* editor: "The building looks like an airport terminal." The way to students' hearts is not through their stomachs.

Directly east from the Commons is the [University Center](#), opened in 1964 to ease gustatory growling. Undergraduates in the innocent 1950s had staged several campus wide strikes over such major issues as the quality of the hot potato salad and the need for "more fruit in the fruit salad" (as reported in *The Acorn*.) When dining shifted to the Commons, the UC became a place of mailboxes, the book store, meeting rooms, bulletin boards and a place to while away an idle hour or two.

[Great Hall](#), just north of the UC, is the most Gothically correct building on campus. Its towering New Hampshire granite walls stretch 135 feet across the front. On ground-breaking day in October 1912, the new edifice was likened to the splendid Christ Church Hall at Oxford, where John Wesley and others had eaten, likely opining that the pease porridge was too hot- or too cold.

For all its splendor, the building's perfunctory role was clear in the official name: Samuel W. Bowne Refectory. The first floor had some dormitory rooms (now occupied by the Graduate School administration and humanities faculty), but wide stone steps led upward to the building's focal point: the dining hall, 85 feet long by 33 feet wide. Two generations of seminary and College students (1913 to 1959) ate under its vaulted ceiling. The elegance escaped most eaters, who in the 1930s often likened skillful dietitian Weatherbee's good-for-you menus to "rabbit food".

Great Hall provided a stately, if somber, atmosphere for proms and other social affairs. Underneath the 12 gleaming chandeliers, dancers tried to ignore the stern portraits of deceased Drew dignitaries that hung on the polished paneling. These days, still impressive Great Hall (minus the proms and portraits) hosts small banquets and speakers not likely to test the capacity of the Forum.

Just outside the Great Hall entrance is a deep declivity that students (theological and liberal arts alike) called "[Tipple's Pond](#)" whenever heavy rains left several feet of water on the bottom. One legend insisted the rainfall was actually "Tipple's Tears," shed by [President Ezra Squire Tipple](#) if he learned another potential donor had escaped without leaving an endowment to the university.

Beyond the now dry pond lies what pre-1950 graduates might call "the real Drew," commencing with [Hoyt-Bowne](#) and [Asbury](#) dormitories. Each is rich in mingled theological and liberal arts memories, for in these rooms bull sessions roared, parties sprang into being, occasional students staggered to their beds- some prayed for themselves, others for starving humanity- and lasting friendships evolved.

Double winged, four-storied Hoyt-Bowne Hall, conceived in a no-nonsense architectural style, was opened in 1893 as Drew's new building for student residence. It was financed by and named for loyal trustees [William Hoyt](#) and [Samuel W. Bowne](#). Hoyt was a major donor to Seminary Hall, while Bowne's name belongs on this dormitory, the old gymnasium, the Great Hall, and the Gateway. Seminararians and undergraduates have all lived in H-B in a longtime game of revolving room assignments.

Asbury Hall has been a dormitory since its completion, if the stabling of William Gibbons' precious, famed thoroughbred horses can be considered housing. In 1867, after Daniel Drew donated yet another \$75,000 to raise the roof and create dorm rooms, seminary students moved in. When the College opened in 1931, undergraduates (all male) resided in Asbury. When [women](#) enrolled after World War II, they were assigned to the Hall, the best that Drew could then offer.

Women students liked Asbury, where they gathered in one another's rooms for what *The Acorn* described as "girl's talk." When a storm of protest arose in 1967 over the limitations of so called "inter-dormitory visits" on campus, women students surprised an *Acorn* pollster when they revealed only moderate interest in open dorms. Among other things, women reportedly said, they feared being caught "running around in curlers."

Just behind Asbury is [Embury Hall](#), and Gibbons granary refurbished and rechristened for Bishop Phillip Embury. In the 1860s, students set up a "club house" in Embury "to board themselves." They assumed all chores, from purchasing groceries to cooking them. The Boarding Club, the most influential organization on campus until the Bowne Refectory opened, endured demands (as written in the club log) for "more variety, fish one time less per week, and oysters twice per month." A versatile structure that at one time housed the New Jersey Museum of Archeology, Embury now provides space for the Center for Holocaust Study.

Between the dorms and Mead Hall is the state-of-the-art library complex. [Rose Memorial Library](#), tied to Mead by tall pillars and, in front at least, the same architectural style, replaced the small Romanesque gem called [Cornell Library](#). When opened in 1888, the sandstone structure, named for the donor, trustee John B. Cornell, already was near capacity. Thus, in the spring of 1937, when wealthy leather manufacturer [Lenox B. Rose](#) of Madison willed \$600,000 to build a memorial library, old Cornell was doomed.

Rose Library, the envy of small colleges everywhere, became even more commodious and more useful in 1980 when \$2.2 million was allocated to refurbish the somewhat shabby overcrowded facility. Soon after, \$4 million more added a spacious learning center.

The Learning Center serendipitously provided a lasting tie to Cornell Library. The "[Rose Window](#)" (so called because of the glow that warmed old Cornell), which was "lost" in 1938 when the old library was demolished, was found 40 years later. As work proceeded on the new Learning Center, workers found the window, taken apart and packed in small boxes, on the then-vacant top floor of Science Hall. The window now holds a place of honor over the Learning Center's main entrance.

The \$10.6 million capital campaign that brought about the library's enhancement also financed the building of the [United Methodist Archives](#) right next door. Its completion meant that church records stored in both the Rose Library basement and in facilities at Lake Junaluska in North Carolina would finally be under one roof.

The project was not hailed with total joy. Students argued that the construction would eliminate the informal playing field that had fostered "on the lawn" athletic competition since 1867. Furthermore, environmentalists assailed plans to cut down a dozen or so 22 year-old oak trees. They tied yellow ribbons to the trees taken "hostage." But neither lawn games nor tree huggers stopped the construction.

One of Drew's most traveled pathways links Rose Library and the main building of the College of Liberal Arts, a pallid name substitute for the original [Brothers College](#). Dropping "Brothers" minimized the magnificent gift of Arthur and Leonard Baldwin, the East Orange brothers who conceived the idea of a liberal arts college on the Theological School campus. They underwrote the college building and gave \$1 million endowment. It did not guarantee the use of the fraternal name forever. "Brothers" became history in 1956.

There may have been good cause for the name change. Campus wits had long argued that if a women's college were founded (as had long been planned), it necessarily must be named "Sisters College." There had also been confusion on the meaning of Brothers; Frank G. Lankard, second college dean, often told how a school principal in heavily Catholic Hudson County welcomed him: "Brothers College? You are welcome here, Father Lankard."

The college received its first students in the fall of 1928. They convened in seminary classrooms until their building was ready in the fall of 1929. Tuition was \$250 a year, plus \$120 for room rent and \$5.50 weekly for dining privileges. Within less than a decade, College graduates were admitted to nearly all graduate schools, including Ivy League institutions.

World War II turned the College topsy-turvy. As the male enrollment plummeted, the faculty approved admission of women, *for the duration*. Then, on July 1, 1944, the College agreed to educate and train 200 sailors in the Navy V-12 program. The sailors brought a new culture to campus. They called their dormitory "the U.S.S. *Hoyt Bowne*." Bowne refectory became "the mess." Womens tudents were called "skirts," the very few civilian males were "civvies," and the sailors were "whites."

"The duration" extended beyond departure of the Navy, beyond V-J Day and even as male veterans flooded back under the GI Bill of Rights. Drew trustees took women students off the bubble of doubt on January 26, 1947, by setting a new duration: as long as the College lives.

Initially, all classrooms, a chapel, a small library, science laboratories, lockers, and a drab basement recreation area (used mainly by blackjack sharks and bull throwers) were in the College building. Entering from the campus side, the chapel to the left served double duty- mornings for Bible, nearly every Friday evening for student record hops.

The library across the hall featured books prescribed for courses or discussion groups. In 1937, when students engineered a sex education seminar, several noted medical treatises on sex were placed in the College library. There were never checked out, but neither were they ever out of circulation. Bashful Brothers College males "borrowed" the texts and kept them moving underground, without checkouts or due dates.

Increasing demands for proper chemistry and physics laboratories created a deepening crisis. That turned to joy in the spring of 1959 by a pronouncement that a new science building would rise adjacent to Brothers College. [The Hall of Sciences](#) eventually cost \$3.2 million to build, chiefly because of the addition of a third floor. The structure, two-and-a-half times as big as the College building, took undergraduate science instruction from a bargain basement level to first class.

Obviously there is much more to Drew: the several administrative buildings to the west of the campus, the political science house named for beloved Professor Robert G. Smith (a class of '36 liberal arts alumnus), and the various buildings seen here and there in breaks in the woodland. For now, however, it is time to disperse.

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