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## Gibsonville celebrates birthday, honors millwright Berry Davidson

Staff Reports Feb 18, 2017



Courtesy of Ivan Saul Cutler

N.C. Rep. Jon Hardister (left) joins Berry Davidson's descendants at the dedication of a history marker to him on Saturday. Pictured from left to right are Hardister, Davidson's great-grandson Tripp Stanley and son Aiden, a great-great-grandson; Vince Long, Berry Davidson and Elar Long's great-grandchildren; Jerry Nix, Gibsonville Museum & Historical Society, Town Alderman Clarence Owen; great-great granddaughter Stanley, great-grandson-in-law James Stanley and great granddaughter Elizabeth Davidson Stanley.

**GIBSONVILLE** — The town of Gibsonville celebrated its birthday Saturday and honored a man whose work building mills in the 1880s helped industrialize the area

Ancestors of Berry Davidson, a former mayor and millwright, gathered to recognize him with a historical marker on property where the 1897 home he built still stands.

Davidson had a hand in creating more than 40 mills, mill homes and religious buildings in the state, according to N.C. State University's library on architects and builders.

In 1880, he built the Altamahaw Cotton Mill, which is one of the few structures he erected that remains standing today.

A Randolph County native, Davidson moved to Gibsonville in the late 1880s where he became a leading citizen as well as a major industrialist, according to N.C. State library records. He served as mayor from 1907 to 1911.

Davidson, who specialized in saw mills, grist mills, and cotton mills, industrialized Gibsonville and the central Piedmont, according to the history marker.

His efforts transformed Gibsonville from a mostly agricultural village into a more prosperous town adjacent to the vital tracks of the North Carolina Railroad, the town said in a news release.

After the marker dedication, Davidson's descendants, civic leaders and Gibsonville residents celebrated the town's 146th birthday with cake, ice cream and punch at the nearby library.

The state legislature issued a charter on Feb. 18, 1871, that officially established the town.