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UA68/6/2 Chapel Program

Louis Yandell
Congress Debating Club

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✓ Congress Debating Club
Chapel Program.

By Louis Yandell.

Mr. Chairman; Fellow Clubmen; Faculty; and Fellow students.

Some button shoes; a long wide dragging skirt; a pinched waist line; a high collared waist; a birdsnest hat. Some more button shoes; a pair of peg-top pants; a stiff shirt; a celluloid collar; a Puritan hat. Such as these were the riggings of the students when the school that was to grow into the Western Kentucky Teachers College of today had its beginning.

It was in the good year 1874, on the thirteenth of August that Professor A. W. Mell, came to Glasgow, Kentucky to take charge of the school system of that city. The equipment consisting of two fairly good buildings, and the good will of the people. Professor Mell started the schools to functioning and under his splendid leadership they had a remarkable growth.

Due to the smallness of his salary, Professor Mell asked the trustees of the school if he might supplement his salary by doing some outside teaching, as many of the adults in the vicinity of Glasgow had signified their desires for some advanced training. The trustees granted him permission to do this teaching, and the use of the school buildings. Professor Mell asked the Legislature, which was in session, for a charter and it was granted very readily.

The name of the first school for the training of

teachers south of the Ohio River and located at Glasgow, Kentucky, was the Glasgow Normal School. When the school first started in the spring of 1875, three pupils enrolled on the first day, and about ten more during the year. The first class to graduate in 1875 had five members, three men and two women. The class of 1876 had twelve members.

The school had three departments at first. The Primary Department; the Intermediate department; and the vocal music department. The faculty was very small due to lack of finances. The Vocal music department was one of the strongest departments in this new teachers institution.

In 1876 the name of the school was changed to the Southern Normal School and Business College, and under this name it functioned until it was moved to Bowling Green several years later. This college granted two degrees: (1) The Scientific Degree, or A. B. (2) The Classic Degree, or A. M. Then there was granted a Diploma in the Business part of the school.

The terms were divided up into four ten weeks terms, and a six weeks term similiar to our summer school term. This was a tuition school, fifty dollars per year was the regular tuition.

In 1882 Professor Mell took a partner into his school, by the name of J. Tom Williams. Mr. Williams took an active part in the school, acting as business manager. A vigorous advertising was carried on and students began to come to this school from all the southern states, some from as far as Louisiana and Texas.

In the year 1883, J. R. Alexander known to us as

Uncle Alec, became associated with this school at Glasgow, as a student and teacher. By this time the school had grown until it had a student body of approximately three hundred.

Early in 1884 the people of Glasgow got out of money for school purposes just at the time the school was beginning to need some new buildings especially dormitories for the male students. This necessitated a change in location or abandonment of the school.

The people of Bowling Green heard of this and invited Professor Mell down to see them. A plan was agreed upon by which the school could be brought to Bowling Green. The citizens raised a large amount of money in order to get the school to move down here. The final arrangements for the transfer were made in a little room upstairs in a building where the jail of Bowling Green now stands. That year 1884 the commencement exercises were held in Glasgow while the Alumni address was held in the old opera house in Bowling Green so that the people might see what type of organization they were getting in the city.

In September the school, with all of its equipment which was very small, was moved to Bowling Green. They had classes in several buildings in the city, using the old opera house for the chapel exercises which were held regularly. The students boarded at any place they could. The old Commercial Hotel was a favorite place with the men.

The school when moved to Bowling Green became known as the Bowling Green Business College and Normal School. It functioned well and the student body was enlarged every day by students from everywhere. Our Own President Cherry was a

student in this school. His brother T. C. Cherry was a graduate of the Glasgow School.

In 1890 Professor Mell resigned due to poor health and the school went into the hands of about seven young men. They chose as their leader J. R. Alexander. He had charge of the school for about two years. Early in 1893 the Cherry Bros., H. H. and T. C. bought the equipment of the school and changed the name again. It then became known as the Cherry Bros. Training School and Business College. In this school J. R. Alexander was the teacher of some six subjects.

In 1894 the name was changed again as was the custom. This time it was called the Southern Normal School. In about 1900 a fire destroyed all the buildings at the foot of the hill, where the Business University is now located. This fire destroyed all the record of the old school. This makes definite information hard to procure.

The next year the building that now houses the Business University was erected for the Southern Normal School. This school ran as a well organized organization, having about ten on the faculty and a student body of approximately six hundred.

Dr. Cherry who was sole owner of the Southern Normal School, began to see how his great educational vision might be fulfilled. So in 1906 after enlisting the aid of the Kentucky Educational Association, he succeeded in getting the Kentucky legislature to establish two Normal schools in Kentucky, one at Bowling Green. When this was done the State of Kentucky purchased Pleasant J. Potter College a private school for girls and located on the hill that was to become College Heights. Along with the purchase of the College the

state purchased several acres of the hilltop upon which the visions and dreams of Dr. Cherry's were to become a reality.

Prepared by Louis Yandell as one part of the program given by the Congress Debating Club.