East Texas Historical Journal

Volume 43 | Issue 1 Article 10

3-2005

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Magrill, Rose M. (2005) "Higher Education on the Frontier: Chapel Hill College in Daingerfield, Texas," East Texas Historical Journal: Vol. 43: Iss. 1, Article 10.

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HIGHER EDUCATION ON THE FRONTIER CHAPEL HILL COLLEGE IN DAINGERFIELD, TEXAS

By Rose Mary Magrill

When Texas was admitted to the Union in 1846, settlers from older parts of the United States began streaming into the new state. They brought not only their livestock, tools, and furniture, but also their social institutions. Two of those social institutions—churches and schools—often arrived together.

One of the denominations to enter Texas along with the early settlers was the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, founded in 1810 by Kentucky and Tennessec Presbyterians to respond to the specific needs and conditions of the frontier. So it is not surprising that its first presbytery, or regional ecclesiastical unit, was founded in 1837, while Texas was still a republic. The establishment of Texas Presbytery and, in 1843, Texas Synod (which included Texas Presbytery, Red River Presbytery, and Colorado Presbytery) indicated the growing strength of the denomination in Texas. By 1853, there were three synods with nine presbyteries. The additional presbyteries and increased membership provided the organizational structure needed to support educational institutions of the type found in other states.

While the settlers were bringing their churches to Texas, denominational colleges were being established all over the United States. These colleges were especially attractive to pioneer communities and were established "in most cases on the frontier line of settlement." College founders wanted to advance religion and bring a higher level of culture to their communities. At the first meeting of Texas Synod in 1843, the ministers and elders present passed a resolution emphasizing the importance of establishing a "seminary of learning" at the earliest possible date. Over the next few years, Cumberland Presbyterian ministers or laypersons started several academies, many of which enjoyed a quasi-official relationship with a presbytery or synod. In addition, three Cumberland Presbyterian schools of collegiate rank were chartered by the Texas Legislature before the Civil War. Chapel Hill College, sponsored by Marshall Presbytery, was the first one of those to receive a charter.

The act of the Texas Legislature to incorporate Chapel Hill College was approved on February 7, 1850, and provided that "an institution of learning" be established at Daingerfield, Titus County, and that it be under the control of the Marshall Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Thirteen trustees were authorized to receive money and property "for the purpose of promoting the interest of the said college," provided that the amount of property never exceeded \$200,000. In addition, the trustees were to construct "all the necessary buildings for said institution, to establish a preparatory department and College proper, as well as such other dependent structures" as they deemed necessary.

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College governance and control were specified in some detail in the act of incorporation. Marshall Presbytery was in control, with the power to remove and appoint trustees, to approve or disapprove the trustees' choices for president, professors, and other officers, to set the salaries for faculty and officers of the college, and to remove any of them for neglect or misconduct. Trustees were to receive and spend money for the college, maintain the buildings, elect their own officers, appoint the president, professors, and other college officers (subject to approval of the presbytery), enact ordinances and bylaws "for the good government of the said College," make a full report of their proceedings annually to the presbytery, expel students (on the recommendation of the faculty), and "grant or confer such degree or degrees, in the arts and sciences ... as are usually granted or conferred in other Colleges."

The faculty of Chapel Hill College – defined as the president and a majority of the professors – was given authority over the curriculum and student life. The faculty prescribed courses of study to be pursued by students, enforced the ordinances and by-laws set by the trustees, suspended students (subject to final approval of the trustees), and recommended students for degrees. One short section of the college charter specifies that "the students of all religious denominations shall enjoy equal advantages." No religious test is specified for the trustees and faculty, but Cumberland Presbyterian affiliation seems to have been assumed for the faculty at least.

Thirteen men were named as trustees in the act of incorporation. None were ministers, although at least one was the son-in-law of a clergyman. Several of the trustees were prominent members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church; others were prominent in political or civic affairs; and several fit both categories. Only two of the trustees lived in Titus County (the site of the college) in 1850. William C. Batte was Chief Justice of Titus County and might well have been interested in the establishment of schools in his county for both civic and personal reasons. The other Titus County trustee was Thomas Rogers, a lawyer with four children of school age in 1850. There is no indication that either of these men had Cumberland Presbyterian connections. Three of the trustees lived in Cass County. Allen Urguhart, a surveyor and large landowner and one of the founders of Jefferson, Texas, donated much of the land for the college. There is no evidence that he was a Cumberland Presbyterian, but three members of his family belonged to the church in Daingerfield between 1853 and 1868. James McReynolds, an elder in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Daingerfield after 1854, was a wealthy Cass County farmer. Matthias Ward, a thirty-seven-year-old merchant, also lived in Cass County, although he owned land in Cass, Red River, and Titus Counties. He came from a family of Cumberland Presbyterians but exercised more political than spiritual influence. He served two terms in the Congress of the Republic of Texas and also in the Texas Legislature. He was appointed to the United States Senate in 1858 to fill an unexpired term, and, at the time of his death in 1861, was returning from Richmond, Virginia, where he had been consulting with the Confederate government.4

Lamar, Bowie, Rusk, and Red River Counties were not within the bounds of Marshall Presbytery (which at that time included all or most of Cass. Harrison, Hopkins, Hunt, Titus, Upshur, and Wood counties), but several of the original trustees resided in those counties in 1850. Their interest in the new college was due to their membership in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. James Carroll Record moved to Lamar County in 1846 from Tennessee, where he had been a general in the militia. An active supporter of education, he served as a trustee for both the Paris Female Academy and the Paris Male Academy in the 1850s. Charles Lewis was a plantation owner who had lived in Bowie County at least since 1842. Also a supporter of education, he had previously served as a trustee for the College of DeKalb when it was incorporated in 1839. William C. Lee was a forty-nine-year-old physician from Kentucky, then living in Rusk County. It is not clear why a trustee was chosen from a county that far from Daingerfield; he may simply have been a strong supporter of church enterprises. David L. Rowe, partner in a drug store and postmaster of Clarksville, was connected to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church through his wife, Ann Eliza Sampson Rowe, daughter of the Rev. James Sampson. Both Mrs. Rowe and her father were involved with schools in Clarksville before 1850, and their support of education may have been responsible for Rowe's inclusion on the board of trustees. Albert Hamilton Latimer, another trustee from Red River County, was an active layman from a prominent Cumberland Presbyterian family who had served two terms in the Congress of the Republic of Texas and was serving in the Texas State Senate at the time Chapel Hill College received its charter.6

Questions about the location of Chapel Hill College were raised within a few years of its founding. Although officers and faculty defended the location, the original trustees did not leave a clear record of why they chose Daingerfield. While it did have a Cumberland Presbyterian congregation (organized in 1849) and free land was available there, the town was not the most thriving in Marshall Presbytery. Both Marshall and Jefferson exceeded Daingerfield in commercial activity, and both had Cumberland Presbyterian congregations. Daingerfield did have the advantage of being relatively remote, which may have appealed to church leaders. In the first part of the nineteenth century, "locations of church schools were chosen with the moral life of students in mind" – especially in the South. "With few exceptions, the larger and more important church colleges were located in small villages or in distinctly rural territory. Leaders generally believed that it was better."

Daingerfield was first settled in the late 1830s and was organized as a town in 1841. Travelers in those days had little encouraging to say about the village. A Kentucky soldier returning from the Mexican War passed through in 1846 and wrote that "This town of Dangerfield [sic], consists of three or four cabins scarce fit for pigsties." Nevertheless, a post office was opened in 1846 and, three years later, an English doctor scouting northeast Texas for suitable locations for English colonists reported that "Dangerfield [sic] is a very small place, but it is said to be rapidly rising. They have just determined to found a college there." By 1851, when the editor of a Marshall newspaper

traveled to Daingerfield, he expressed surprise at the progress there. "Never was I more agreeably surprised than to find Dangerfield [sic] a beautiful and thriving little village; for I had supposed that its prospects were long since blasted, and that what little there ever was of it had been permitted to go to ruin."

By 1851 Daingerfield had several stores, two blacksmith shops, and two hotels, and it presented "quite a business appearance." One difficulty for the "enterprising and industrious" merchants, as well as for families who wanted to improve their houses, was a lack of lumber for building. There was no sawmill nearby, but "two or three gentlemen" were reported to be in the area looking for "the most suitable and convenient site to establish a steam mill." Houses in the town were "not expensive" but at least "neat and comfortable." The citizens were praised for "their intelligence and wisdom" in trying to make their town a center for learning. A girl's school was already holding classes, and progress on Chapel Hill College was duly noted.9

Two of the first duties of the college trustees were to erect a building and to hire a staff. In January 1849, Allen Urquhart had deeded forty acres of land "laid off on the southwestern quarter section of the section of land" on which Daingerfield was situated for the purpose of "funding all the public buildings in connection with said college and to be otherwise appropriated after said buildings are erected as said trustees may direct." In addition to these forty acres, he gave "one half of all the proceeds arising from the sale" of the remaining 120 acres in the same quarter section. This acreage was to "be laid out into such size lots and sold at such time as said trustees may direct." However, the sale of lots could not begin until June 1, 1849, and the college had to "go into successful operation" by December 25, 1851, for the deed to be effective. To carry out its first duties, the board of trustees needed a business manager and development officer – or agent, as the combined position was then called – to sell lots and raise money. The Rev. Jacob A. Zinn became the General Agent of Chapel Hill College in November 1850.¹⁰

The first building of Chapel Hill College must have been one of those building projects in Daingerfield that was delayed by the difficulty of procuring lumber. The newspaper editor from Marshall who visited Daingerfield in July 1851 reported the building as "nearly completed," but it took another two years for that to become a reality. Local tradition says the building had two stories."

The trustees announced that classes would begin on the first Monday of February 1852. The first session opened on schedule, but with no president, no professors, and only the head of the preparatory department – S.R. Chadick – to offer instruction. Even Chadick was not very upbeat; he reported to the *Texas Presbyterian* that the first session had commenced "but not with as flattering prospects as we had hoped and desired." He berated those who were showing a "wait-and-see" attitude about the college – especially those who might be inclined to leave the work to "others who live nearer, and are more immediately interested." All parts of the presbytery did not seem to be rallying to the cause with equal enthusiasm. "If the friends of Chapel Hill College were as active, energetic, determined, and unanimous in their efforts to build

up, as the enemies are to defeat, or pull down, things would not be as they are at present." But securing a faculty of qualified men was not an easy task. The trustees' first selections were the Rev. S.G. Burney as president, the Rev. J.W. McDowell as professor of mathematics, the Rev. W.E. Beeson as professor of ancient languages, and Chadick as tutor and head of the preparatory department. At its fall meeting in 1851 Marshall Presbytery had approved those selections and began corresponding with each of these individuals to see if they could be enticed to come to Daingerfield. Chadick accepted almost immediately; he was already in East Texas and eager to begin his assignment. Beeson also took up the challenge and moved to Daingerfield, reportedly arriving sometime early in March 1852 and assuming his duties. But Burney had accepted an appointment at Mount Sylvan Academy in Lafayette County, Mississippi, early in 1850 and did not seem disposed to move again so soon, and certainly not to Texas. McDowell never appeared and may not have even entered into serious correspondence about the matter. 13

Early in 1852, Chadick wrote to the *Banner of Peace* (a Cumberland Presbyterian newspaper published in Nashville) on behalf of the college that "we want a Professor, and we want him now." Neither of the selected professors "has been heard from; why, we cannot tell." Meanwhile, he said, at least one professor was desperately needed. "[I]t is not necessary that he be a preacher; he may be an elder, a lay member, or a non-professor, provided he comes well recommended, as to his moral character, his aptness to instruct, and his qualifications to fill the chair with ability." By the time Chadick's appeal actually appeared in print, Beeson had arrived, and progress was imminent.¹⁴

J.A. Zinn, the general agent, hinted at a lingering division within the sponsoring presbytery when he wrote to the *Texas Presbyterian* a few months later. Zinn was a little more optimistic than Chadick – "our prospects, I think, are every day brightening" – and he thought that "the wisdom of Marshall Presbytery is at last discoverable, but for a time it was thought doubtful whether it would ever be or not." Zinn remembered that the location of the college "was doubted by some of the wisest and best." There were three reasons for this: the town's population was too small; "the society was not altogether as desirable as it might have been for Literary institutions;" and there were few wealthy and influential Cumberland Presbyterians in or near Daingerfield. Even so, Zinn believed the natural advantages of Daingerfield and the growing strength and influence of the church there had proved that the decision in regard to location was correct."

Enrollment and financial support were two vital indicators of the college's progress. After gloomy, but non-specific, reports during the opening session, Marshall Presbytery received a report in January 1853 that the college's "prospects are brightening; the number of students constantly increasing." Chadick reported that the second college year began in February 1853 with fifty-one students "and we have reason to believe there will be sixty or sixty-five by the close of the session." His expectations in this case were a bit optimistic, but that session "closed on the 28th of June, with a catalogue of 58

students, and with flattering prospects for the future." The newspaper in Clarksville, Texas, reported in September 1853 that "the Schools at Daingerfield, as we learn, are in flourishing condition."

W.E. Beeson reported about the session ending in June 1854. "Our college is doing as well as could be expected, all things considered," he wrote. Between seventy and eighty students had matriculated during that session. When Marshall Presbytery's minutes were reviewed at Texas Synod in August 1854, the Committee on Education called attention to the college's "prosperous condition," citing the ninety-six students enrolled "within the collegiate year just expired." A year later, the same committee noted that one hundred students were listed in the catalogue for the previous year and, within the same report, recommended that Texas Synod assume responsibility for the college.¹⁷

After it became the sponsoring body, Texas Synod received enrollment reports of 113 students for the year ending June 1856 and 112 students for the year ending June 1857. The trustees' report to synod for 1860 did not specify numbers but mentioned a "larger number of students than any previous year." A correspondent from Daingerfield wrote to the *Banner of Peace* in March 1860 that "our school ... is flourishing. There have some one hundred and twenty-five entered school; and we have a good set of boys." Near the end of the spring session of 1861 – the last normal year of operation for the college – President Beeson reported that 134 students had attended "this year." But by the fall of 1861, only the preparatory department was still in session."

No breakdown in enrollment figures was ever reported for the preparatory department and the collegiate department. Taking into account the general unavailability of anything beyond basic education on the frontier, one may assume that – in the early years, at least – most of the enrollment was in the preparatory department. The first commencement for the awarding of college degrees was not held until June 1857. After that, a greater percentage of the total enrollment could be found in the collegiate department. Considering its location on the edge of the frontier, Chapel Hill College's enrollment in its first decade was respectable.

Financial reports for the college are as elusive as enrollment statistics. There was much talk about the need to raise money, but successful efforts were not frequently reported. Texas Synod, at its fall 1850 meeting, passed a resolution praising Marshall Presbytery for planning a college at Daingerfield and asked "the members of Synod [to] do all they can to promote it and act as soliciting agents for said institution." A year later, when Marshall Presbytery petitioned Texas Synod to take over the college because it "cannot be sustained without great expense," the synod declined. The best the members of synod could offer was a recommendation "that all the Presbyteries under the care of this Synod suspend operations of this kind and endeavor to contribute by their means and influence to the endowment of said College at Daingerfield." 19

The college agent's "onerous and responsible duties" – as General Agent Zinn described them in a communication to the *Texas Presbyterian* – includ-

ed traveling to promote enrollment and contributions. He announced an itinerary in June 1852 that included Clarksville, Paris, Bonham, Sherman, Preston, southwestern Arkansas, "and perhaps Louisiana," that might be completed by early or mid-July. Reporting after his return, Zinn was slightly disappointed: "Owing to the great pressure and embarrassed condition of the country, consequent upon a failure in crops last year, I did not obtain as much means as I had anticipated." He did, however, make some "agreeable acquaintances" and hoped for better results in the future from the "many brethren and friends, who would willingly assist us if they had the means." 201

Leaders of church colleges in Texas repeatedly tried to secure cash or land from the legislature to finance their schools. Daniel Baker of Austin College had a plan for statewide aid to denominational schools and took the lead in presenting educational bills to the legislature. In 1852 he asked the legislature to provide a \$25,000 endowment to certain colleges by purchasing fifty scholarships of \$500 each, but the bill did not pass. In the same year, Chapel Hill asked the legislature for two leagues of land, a request that was similarly rejected. One or both of these failed requests may be what Zinn had on his mind when he wrote to the "friends of Chapel Hill College" that "we appealed to the powers that be, for aid to build up our infant College. Our prayers were not heard. Therefore, brethren, we must look to ourselves for aid." Three years later, Chapel Hill joined other institutions in asking for grants of public land from the legislature – again with no success.²¹

Lack of state support did not keep the trustees from being able to report, in the summer of 1854, that the college was free of debt and holding available funds in the amount of \$1,000. Fund raising was also underway at that time to purchase scientific apparatus for the school. In 1855, the college was reported to be "in a prosperous condition," with no debt, "some eleven hundred dollars of town lots yet to dispose of and a considerable amount of means on hand with which to purchase a chemical and philosophical apparatus." The next year the trustees promoted a plan to raise endowment funds by selling scholarships. Under that plan, five years of tuition could be purchased for \$125. The next year, Marshall Presbytery suggested to the Board of Trustees – through the synod – that an agent be hired specifically to travel throughout the bounds of the synod and "endeavor to raise Endowment funds." The Rev. G.A. Flowers, Jr., was appointed to that position during the 1857 meeting of synod.²²

In 1857 the trustees reported that the college was still debt-free and had \$2,000 on hand, as well as town lots, land, and notes, all of which were designated for the endowment. Also, money and subscriptions amounting to \$615 were on hand for the purchase of more apparatus – \$318 had already been spent for that purpose. The report for 1858 was even more encouraging: \$8,000 of the proposed \$20,000 endowment had been raised, and Flowers had "traveled over but a small part of the synod." Texas Synod was delighted and urged the trustees to "spare no pains" to complete the endowment. The next year the endowment grew to \$12,000. The synod's Committee on Education asked, "Can we not raise the balance of Eight Thousand Dollars during the

next synodical year?" W.E. Beeson reported that \$4,400 was raised during the meeting of synod for the endowment fund.21

Trustees of the college were so encouraged by its financial condition during these years that they made plans for a new building. The trustees' report to synod in 1857 described it as measuring sixty feet long and thirty-five feet wide, two stories high, containing six recitation rooms and a chapel, and projected to cost \$3,000. The building was still under construction a year later, but the trustees were promising that "the building will be a substantial brick building." In a report he made in the spring of 1861 to the denominational Board of Education, Beeson described the building this way: "a substantial brick edifice, with four recitation rooms, a chapel, a laboratory, and library room, worth about \$7,000; apparatus cost \$800; library five hundred volumes, worth \$1,000; endowment already raised, \$2,000. Which makes Chapel Hill worth \$30,000."²⁴

Although the college continued to be free of debt, the endowment had not grown in any significant way by the time of the 1860 report to synod. On the other hand, equipment for science classes and the library had been added. Once again, the synod urged the trustees to "take such measures as will speedily increase" the endowment fund, the library, and the scientific equipment. The timing was wrong, however, because those who were inclined to support education became preoccupied with national developments. "Owing to the distracted state of our country, there is a gloom hanging around all the schools within your bounds," the synod's Committee on Education reported at the annual meeting in October 1861.²⁵

Even before the first session of classes opened, Marshall Presbytery had petitioned Texas Synod – in the fall of 1851 – to assume oversight of Chapel Hill College. The synod responded by praising Marshall Presbytery's "laudable zeal in the cause of Education" but refused to consider the request directly. In 1853 the synod's Committee on Education pointed out that Chapel Hill College was the only Cumberland Presbyterian institution in the bounds of the synod and resolved that it was "the duty of the ministers and members" to give to the college "those means and that patronage and influence necessary to make it a school of a high order." In 1854 Chapel Hill College, with no debt and a small reserve fund, was once again offered by Marshall Presbytery to Texas Synod. This time the offer was accepted and synod agreed to ask the next Texas Legislature "to have the charter so amended as to place said College in the same relation to Texas Synod that it now sustains to Marshall Presbytery." The trustees reported to the August 1856 meeting of Texas Synod that the charter had been amended as directed. 26

A month or two before Texas Synod met in 1854 and accepted responsibility for the college, an argument about the location of Chapel Hill College flared up again in the pages of the *Texas Presbyterian*. A.J. McGown, the editor, wanted Cumberland Presbyterians in Texas to select one institution and furnish it strong support through a large endowment. Two of his correspondents from Marshall Presbytery, S.R. Chadick and Solomon Awalt, a pastor in

Upshur County, took offense at McGown's implication that Chapel Hill should not be the chosen institution. Awalt pointed out that Chapel Hill was "rising very fast – already giving light to four presbyteries – for we have students from four presbyteries." McGown countered with the argument that even the members of its supporting presbytery did not like the present location: "We have heard some of the best friends of the church say that it was not a suitable location and that a much better one might be selected. Those brethren are members of the Marshall Presbytery."²⁷

The appointment of William E. Beeson to the first faculty of Chapel Hill College was, without a doubt, the most important academic decision the trustees ever made. One of the first students to enter the college later wrote that "there may have been other men in our church at the time Dr. Beeson came to Texas who could have filled his place in the varied relations he sustained to society here, but none of his old students believe it." Although Beeson was originally only appointed professor of ancient languages, he later became president of Chapel Hill College as well. With the exception of time spent in the army during the Civil War, he continued to serve in those combined positions until 1869, when he became the first president of Trinity University, a new Cumberland Presbyterian school in Tehuacana, Limestone County. Beeson was born in Virginia, but he was living in Kentucky when he became a candidate for the ministry. He attended Cumberland College in Princeton, Kentucky, in 1842, and after his ordination in 1845 he graduated from Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee. He was teaching school in Kentucky when he received the call to come to Texas.28

Stokely R. Chadick was the only person other than Beeson to accept one of the original four faculty positions at Chapel Hill College. He was born in Overton County, Tennessee, and spent his early years in northern Alabama. Chadick's education was limited to spelling and basic arithmetic - he never even studied a first reader – until he was nearly twenty-two years of age. After finally spending a full term in a village school, he became a candidate for the ministry in 1842. There followed a period of alternating terms as a student of more advanced classes and as a teacher of primary classes. After he was ordained in 1844, Chadick was finally able to attend Cumberland University in 1845. He married Martha Fisher in 1847 and moved to Texas in 1849. where he preached in Cass County and taught school in Jefferson. In 1851, he met a committee of the Board of Trustees "at a camp-meeting near Mt. Vernon," where they offered him the appointment "to take charge of and open up said college as soon as the house should be completed." Chadick remained as principal of the preparatory department until August 1856, when he presented his resignation to Texas Synod and moved to Coffeeville, Upshur County, to establish a school there.29

The "Course of Instruction" for both the preparatory department and the college proper was published late in the Spring of 1852.30 It was probably the work of Beeson and Chadick, since the charter delegated responsibility for "prescribing the course of studies to be pursued by the students" to the faculty and they were the only two faculty members who had arrived. The colle-

giate year was divided into two sessions of five months each. The first term began on the first Monday in February and the second on the first Monday in September. The Preparatory Department had three class levels. The first class studied orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and English grammar, while the second continued with arithmetic and began Greek and Latin grammars, along with some of the Latin classics. The third class continued with Greek and Latin, covering some classics in both languages, and added the first lessons in algebra. Tuition for this program was to be "from \$8 to \$16" per session. Any student who completed these three classes should have been well-prepared in Latin and Greek to begin the college course.

The college program was divided into four classes and was typical of the program of instruction of most colleges of that era. It emphasized Greek, Latin, mathematics, and science. All students took the same classes to complete each year's work. Freshman spent most of their time on Greek and Latin; they also studied algebra and plane geometry, as well as a little history and declamation. As sophomores, students continued to spend considerable time reading Greek and Latin classics but also studied surveying, mensuration, and navigation, as well as plane and spherical trigonometry and analytical geometry. They continued with the study of history and declamation.

By their junior year students were beginning to spend less time on the Greek and Latin classics and more time on scientific subjects, such as natural philosophy, chemistry, and geology. Integral and differential calculus were added to the mathematics curriculum. New types of courses were introduced at this level: rhetoric, logic, and the law of nations. In their senior year, students continued with some work on Greek and Latin classics, but a variety of other courses were introduced. Astronomy and mineralogy finally appeared in the curriculum, as did political economy, civil engineering, and a course called "Evidences of Christianity." The tuition for the college program was \$20.00 per session in 1852.

The amount of mathematics and science appearing in the college program shows how essential it was for a college to have a strong instructor in those areas. At first, Chapel Hill College had difficulty filling that position. The trustees' first choice, the Rev. J.W. McDowell, apparently did not respond to the offer. Although A. Freeman was listed as professor of mathematics in a college announcement published in early 1853, Chadick probably taught many of these classes – he was asking for donations to buy scientific apparatus in the spring of 1853. The problem of the missing professor was solved when Samuel Thomas Anderson joined the faculty to teach mathematics, probably for the beginning of the 1855 fall session. A native of Tennessee, an ordained Cumberland Presbyterian minister, and a graduate of Cumberland University. Anderson was still in his twenties when he arrived to teach at Chapel Hill.³³

Anderson resigned in 1859 and moved to Mississippi to take up an appointment at the Oxford Female College. He was immediately replaced as professor of mathematics by Samuel M. Ward, whose appointment was con-

firmed by Texas Synod in August 1859. Two years earlier, Ward had been one of the first two students to be granted the Bachelor of Arts degree from Chapel Hill College and was younger than some of his students when he began teaching at the college. Except for a few months in the army during the Civil War, Ward continued to teach at Chapel Hill until 1867, when he moved to Jefferson to start a private academy.³²

Little seems to have been recorded about student life at Chapel Hill College. With a three-level preparatory program and four college classes, the school did enroll students of varying ages and likely with varying degrees of motivation. Keeping order was probably a challenge. The Chapel Hill discipline policy has not been found, but it is likely that it resembled the one at Cumberland University - where both of the first two faculty members had recently attended. The 1848 discipline policy at Cumberland University stated: "[Discipline] shall be strict and without partiality. It is considered better to lose students occasionally, by the enforcement of the laws against immorality and indolence, than to contaminate good students by the example of the vicious and lazy. Intemperance and vice will not be permitted on any account. The students who cannot be reformed will be removed." An additional policy statement concerning expenses emphasized other aspects of behavior expected of students - and of their parents: "There may be more or less [expense], according to the course taken by the parents and guardians, in enforcing economy in dress and other things. As fine dressing and other extravagances are incompatible with hard study, plainness and economy should be rigidly enjoined. ... As a general rule, those who spend [the] least money get [the] most knowledge." As the statement concluded, "Trustees and Faculty can only advise, it is with the good sense of the students, and the firmness and wisdom of parents to apply the remedy."33

There was no college-owned housing for students, so those from other towns boarded with local citizens. The first announcement for the college promised that "board can be had in good houses, prepared for that purpose, at \$8 per month." Later advertisements the same year quoted board "including light, fuel, and washing" at the same amount. By 1860 prices had risen. That year board could "be had in the best families at ten dollars per month, in advance, or a note bearing ten per cent interest." In 1861, when Beeson reported expenses of ministerial students to the denominational Board of Education, he listed the houses at which the nine students were boarding. He and his wife were boarding two; another faculty member, J.A. Ward, and his wife were keeping one. Four of the other families boarding ministerial students were connected with the board of trustees.³⁴

Once students arrived in Daingerfield to attend school, they did not find it easy to leave. Travel in East Texas in the 1850s was not easy for anyone, so the isolation of Daingerfield was not unique. The Clarksville newspaper noted in early 1854 that work was underway on a road that would make a stage route possible between Marshall and Clarksville. By late 1857, it was possible to travel from Marshall to Clarksville on the Forest Mail Stage Line

with stops in Jefferson, Daingerfield, and Mount Pleasant. The Marshall to Daingerfield section cost \$5; with a 4:00 a.m. departure it was possible to make the trip in approximately twenty-four hours. That ticket price rose to \$6.50 by the summer of 1860 "owing to the unprecedented scarcity of forage through this section of country." By the end of 1864, the Marshall-to-Clarks-ville stage stopped only in Jefferson.³⁵

Because Chapel Hill College was a denominational school, one would expect to find that religion was emphasized in student life. No evidence has survived to indicate whether there were regular chapel services or periods of Bible study. The brick building constructed in the late 1850s did have a chapel, but it may have been used as often by the Daingerfield Cumberland Presbyterian Church – which did not have a building of its own – as by the students. There are indications, however, that the students' religious lives were integrated with that of the town; names of some of the students may be found on the membership roll of the Daingerfield church. Ministerial students were particularly likely to be involved in the congregation's activities. In February 1858, the Daingerfield church appointed J.A. Ward and A.M. Johnson, both ministerial students, "to preach to the colored people of the Daingerfield congregation" on alternating weekends.³⁶

The presence of ministerial students within a college's student body was often considered "to exercise a salutary influence upon nearly all who might, under other circumstances, be more irregular and loose in their habits." In spite of their presumed influence, the number of ministerial students at Chapel Hill was probably never a large percentage of the total enrollment. In December 1860, when overall enrollment was at least 100, there were ten students preparing for the ministry. Only nine ministerial students were named in a report to the denominational Board of Education in the Spring of 1861, which was probably the peak year for Chapel Hill College enrollment.³⁷

In the decades before the Civil War, when college programs were highly structured and no provisions existed in the curriculum for individual interests, the literary society became an important part of the students' intellectual and social life. "It would be difficult to overestimate the prominence and influence of literary societies in the colleges of the Old South," according to one historian of higher education. These societies were organized by students exercising their own initiative and without any supervision from the faculty. Colleges typically had two societies, although sometimes there would be one or two additional societies for students who had special professional goals, such as law, medicine, or the ministry. Membership was considered a great honor and was obtained by invitation only.³⁸

In 1861, Chapel Hill College had three literary societies: the Philosophian Society, the Beesonian Society, and the Irvingtonian Society. All three planned to present outside speakers for the 1861 commencement exercises. In the Spring of 1861, the members of the Philosophian Debating Society published a resolution "expressive of their feelings of grief at the death" of a colleague, a ministerial student. Otherwise, little is known about the Chapel Hill

societies. The typical activities of a literary society in other colleges included organizing debates among its members about current political issues, providing libraries of popular and current materials for their use, and sponsoring speakers for commencement. The Chapel Hill societies obviously sponsored speakers and probably organized many debates, but it is doubtful that any of the three existed long enough (or had adequate income from membership dues) to develop a their own libraries.³⁹

Commencements were major social events in the pre-Civil War college. Even the end-of-term examinations held by preparatory schools, academies, and similar institutions were public events. The commencement exercises held at Chapel Hill College in 1857 were the first at which degrees were awarded. The commencement began on Monday, June 22, and closed on Friday, June 26, with the presentation of Bachelor of Arts degrees to Samuel M. Ward and William B. Ward "in [the] presence of a large and interested crowd." Dr. Thomas B. Wilson, pastor of the Marshall Cumberland Presbyterian Church, as well as an experienced school administrator and teacher, was the main speaker, and provided his evaluation of the event. "It has been my privilege," he wrote, "to witness many examinations in other institutions of learning and sometimes to have participated in propounding questions, and I can say without the fear of contradiction, that I never heard classes do better, especially in advanced Mathematics and Languages." 40

An unnamed "Observer" from Jefferson, Texas, attended the commencement exercises out of curiosity and came away impressed. "It has been my fortune to be present at commencement occasions of other schools, whose age had given them a wide reputation, but I have never yet, in any College seen a more profound knowledge of the exercises, a more intimate acquaintance with the mystic labyrinths of science, nor riper scholarship." He also acquired a favorable impression of Daingerfield, because "none of the allurements which beguile the generous student in more populous towns, are seen." The citizens of Daingerfield "are noted for their strict morality." The orations by the two young men receiving degrees "showed that they had not merely gone through the course of study, in order to get out into the world—they had not loitered in vain amid the shady groves of Academus." Dr. Wilson's speech was also praised as "a masterly effort." "

The student point of view concerning commencement exercises comes through in a letter Thomas H. Craig wrote to his parents early in June 1859: "Well, Pa, the examination is close at hand, and it makes me tremble to think about it." He was, however, eager to see his father and brother-in-law "upon that occasion, although I expect you will find out that I have not spent the precious moments which have been allotted to me, for my improvement." "Nevertheless," he wrote, "come anyhow." Craig then provided a quick overview of the commencement schedule: "We will have a chemical exhibition Wednesday night, there will be two or three speeches Thursday night." The major event, from Craig's point of view, would occur on Friday night, when "Mrs. Beeson will give a concert, oh: I anticipate a happy time for I will

have the pleasure of singing with some of the fair sex."42

The 1861 commencement was canceled because of the Civil War. although it had been planned and the names of speakers had been published. Addresses were expected from the following: the Rev. Thomas B. Wilson, D.D., to the Theological Class; the Rev. William C. Dunlap, to the Irvingtonian Society; the Rev. Aaron Grigsby, D.D., to the Senior Class; the Rev. N.P. Modrall, to the Philosophian Society; and the Rev. Albert G. Burrow, A.M., to the Beesonian Society. Wilson was pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Marshall, Texas, and Dunlap was the popular pastor of the Old School Presbyterian Church in the same town. Grigsby was at that time - but not much longer - pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Jefferson, Modrall (pastor of the church in Corsicana) was probably invited to speak because his son, W.B. Modrall, was a member of the Philosophian Society. Burrow, the son of Dr. Reuben Burrow - at that time head of the Theology Department of Bethel College, a Cumberland Presbyterian school in Tennessee - had recently moved to Texas. "To those coming addresses," wrote J.A. Ward, "we look with great anxiety." He might have been more anxious if he had known that one of the proposed speakers, Aaron Grigsby, was soon to be forced out of his pastorate and his community for voicing abolitionist sentiments.43

Beginning in August 1857, Texas Synod started appointing examining committees to attend the Chapel Hill College Commencement exercises. The first, appointed to attend in June 1858, included five ministers from the synod, at least three of whom were experienced teachers. The next year, the examining committee membership was increased in number to fourteen and expanded to include two or three prominent laymen. By 1859, the list had reached nineteen appointees – ten ministers and nine laymen, most of whom were listed with honorary titles indicating they were lawyers, judges, or state representatives. In 1860, the examining committee was once again limited to eleven ministers, at least three of whom – T.B. Wilson, A. Grigsby, and C.J. Bradley – had served each year.⁴⁴

"Our College exercises were suspended 15th May, owing to the great excitement," J.A. Ward reported to the *Banner of Peace* in the Summer of 1861. The president of the college and many of the students enrolled in the army. The same publication reported in the fall that "President Beeson, of Daingerfield, Texas, is making up a company for immediate service in the war." The Daingerfield church's session minutes noted, on November 18, 1861, "Rev. W.E. Beeson having gone in the service of his Country: in the Army: on motion we employ Bro. J.A. Ward as pastor of the Church for the unexpired term of Bro. Beeson upon the same terms." Beeson served as a lieutenant colonel in the 9th Texas Infantry commanded by Samuel Bell Maxey, once an examining committee member at Chapel Hill. On October 17, 1864, while back in Daingerfield briefly, Beeson moderated a church session, and in January 1866 he resumed his former duties with the church.

The October 1861 minutes of Texas Synod reported discouraging news of

Chapel Hill College. Both the examining committee and the committee to raise the endowment reported non-compliance. (There had, of course, been no commencement to attend and, with the war in progress, no money to spare). The overall assessment of education that year was that "owing to the distracted state of our country, there is a gloom hanging around all the schools within your bounds." Yet the members of the synod believed that "the friends of education will again rally and nobly unite their energies for the enlightenment of our youth." Chapel Hill College was reported to have "opened its session on the last collegiate year with better prospects than it ever before entered upon a new session." The school had "kept up a lively interest among its classes until your state was reported to be invaded, at which time the President dismissed all the classes, except the Preparatory Department." J.A. Ward was presiding over that department, and those classes were still in session.⁴⁶

In October 1862, the synod's Committee on Education made a short and non-specific report, promising that "when this calamitous war shall have spent its fury, our educational interest will revive its wonted and merited attention." In August 1863 no report was received from the trustees, and the synod committee could only "give the general idea that the school is maintaining its organization. There are two teachers constantly employed in the college." The two teachers were probably J.A. Ward, who had continued the preparatory department, and S.M. Ward, whose physical condition had caused him to return after a few months of army service. No Committee on Education was even appointed by Texas Synod in 1864 and, by the time synod met again in August 1865, the war was over. That year the committee was "happy to say that Chapel Hill College ... is yet living" - but just barely.47 It was true that "through the energy and noble zeal of her faculty" class sessions had been continued on a regular basis; "yet the patronage has been small, not large enough to require the services of the whole faculty during the dark days through which we humbly trust, the Institution has now passed." The committee optimistically reported that the Endowment Fund still had \$7,000 or \$8,000 dollars in notes "which we believe will be paid." The building was reported to be in a dilapidated condition, but necessary repairs were expected to be made soon, so that the building could "again present its former beautiful appearance." The next year a report was received that friends in and around Daingerfield had raised \$1,000 "to repair the College buildings."48

Many citizens of Texas were anxious to see life return to normal as quickly as possible, and the reopening of schools and colleges was considered significant progress toward that goal. One of the state's newspapers announced with pleasure "that there are efforts on foot for the revival and restoration" of Chapel Hill College. The trustees, President Beeson, and Professor S.M. Ward were praised for their work on behalf of the college. The school was said to be "progressing with a good degree of success." The editor noted that the college "has ranked among the first theological schools of the State, and we hope to see it speedily resume its former prosperity and usefulness." After attending the 1867 examinations, one pre-war graduate reported that he had met, during the exercises, "many friends of this educational interest, planted

some fifteen years since by our Church in this far-off West, who speak freely and hopefully of the prospects of this institution of learning."49

By 1867, discussions were underway among the Cumberland Presbyterian Synods in Texas about the need to concentrate educational efforts on one college or university, to be centrally located and to be generously supported by all the synods. These discussions eventually led to the establishment of Trinity University in Tehuacana, Limestone County, in 1869. Trinity was sponsored by the three Cumberland Presbyterian Synods – Brazos Synod, Colorado Synod, and Texas Synod. Each voted to withdraw support from schools they had previously sponsored, which led to Marshall Presbytery assuming control once again of Chapel Hill College.

Meanwhile, in the summer of 1867, J.A. Ward reported on the examinations for the session just completed and sounded nostalgic, as if writing about a school that had once existed but was no more. The examinations were impressive, of course; but even the examination of those "who solved with the most precise accuracy the most intricate and abstruse problems in advanced Mathematics" led him to comment: "It was pleasant, indeed, and we seemed to live the past again." Then came "a list of fine compositions, which, indeed, would have given credit to more experienced and better developed minds" – which he found "falling so tenderly upon the ear, that we were in the flowery gardens of the past." After the closing concert "of the sweetest pieces of music," led again by Mrs. Beeson, Ward figuratively walked down the halls with the dispersing crowd. "Lost amid the scenes and prospects of other days, he lives again."

After the war, Chapel Hill College suffered for some of the same reasons that other small church colleges in the South did. A feeling of gloom prevailed, as J.A. Ward indicated, because of the students who would never return, but there were other causes for pessimism as well. The pool of prospective students for the higher classes was much smaller than it had been before the war. Some of those former students who had fought in the war probably had little inclination to return to the classroom even if they could have afforded the tuition. Parents of younger students also had little money to spare for tuition. Long-time friends of education, and of Chapel Hill College in particular, had little spare cash for contributions. The future was not bright.

Texas Synod, as it became deeply involved with the other synods in planning the establishment of Trinity University, had little energy to expend on Chapel Hill College. Synod minutes from 1867 on are filled with discussions of where the new institution will be located and how it will be financed. In 1867, the Committee on Education reported that support for Chapel Hill "has been astonishing ... for the times." Even so, the report implied that Chapel Hill should be operated as an institution "preparatory to a school or schools of a higher order." In November 1869, the Committee on Education of Texas Synod reported that "your committee think [Chapel Hill] should be continued as a Synodical School," but did not make a specific recommendation to that effect. By the time of this synod meeting, W.E. Beeson had resigned from his

duties at the Daingerfield Cumberland Presbyterian Church and had gone—or was preparing to go—to Tehuacana to begin his duties as the first president of Trinity University. Sometime in 1870, the responsibility for the support of Chapel Hill College was returned to Marshall Presbytery, and the Rev. W.M. Allen became the head of the school.⁵¹

Walker Montecure Allen was as extraordinary an educator as Beeson had been. He was born in northern Alabama, orphaned at a young age, and reared by his grandparents and various uncles. He moved from Alabama to Tennessee. then briefly to Nacogdoches in 1834, when he was about fifteen years of age before settling in Mississippi with relatives. Having had no time for school, he could only read and write when he was sent back to Tennessee to live with another uncle. There he became a Cumberland Presbyterian and began to study with various ministers, although his formal schooling likely lasted a little less than twelve months. He became a candidate for the ministry and followed the course for ordination by studying on his own, becoming proficient in English grammar and composition. Obviously a man of great intellectual capability, Allen taught himself Greek, mathematics, philosophy, Hebrew, and literature. After his ordination he served pastorates in Mississippi, Texas, and Louisiana. His lack of formal academic credentials was no handicap, as Allen published many articles in denominational papers and several books. According to S.R. Chadick, he was "a fine scholar, a trenchant writer, a gifted speaker, invincible in logic and powerful in argument."52

Although Allen was elected president of Chapel Hill in the summer of 1870, he did not arrive to begin his work until January 9, 1871. He resigned in February 1872 to accept an appointment as superintendent of the public free schools of Center, Shelby County, Texas, where he had previously served as a pastor. Allen's brief tenure at Chapel Hill was likely due to "the pressure and interference of the free-school laws of Texas, just then beginning to become effective and almost threatening ruin to all such schools [as Chapel Hill]." Allen was apparently the last person to operate a Cumberland Presbyterian school in Daingerfield. The college building, according to local legend, was used by the Daingerfield Cumberland Presbyterian Church until about 1880, when it was dismantled and the bricks were sold. Thus ended this experiment with higher education on the frontier of East Texas.⁵³

NOTES

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