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Higher Education in Antebellum Alabama

S. Ray Granade

Ouachita Baptist University, granade@obu.edu

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HIGHER EDUCATION IN ANTEBELLUM ALABAMA

(Publication No.)

Samuel Ray Granade, Ph. D.
The Florida State University, 1972

Major Professor: William Warren Rogers

Historians have shunted higher education aside too long, or written in piecemeal fashion. This is especially true of the era before the Civil War. For information, one must turn to such specialized studies as a school history or an evaluation of denominational, legislative, or financial impact. The Southern scene is no better than the national. Only two state studies exist. Alabama is a microcosm of the whole--there are school histories and some attempts to outline the course of education, but no overview.

This is a case study, and an attempt at least partially to fill the "overview gap." Because similar works are lacking, comparisons to other sections are difficult and tenuous at best. Hopefully such summaries will help quell misconceptions about higher education which have existed too long. Elitist higher education in antebellum Alabama, when viewed with contemporary eyes, becomes a question of semantics. Alabamians considered slaves uneducable laboring machines. The Greek ideal of

democracy had currency, with all above the slave level believed equal. In Alabama, everyone (above the slave level) was potentially college material. Most colleges offered the poor all necessary financial aid. Alabamians provided higher education for rich and poor, male and female. It was necessary to maintain democracy.

Colleges were established throughout the three decades before 1860, with 1830, 1840, and 1855 marking peaks of educational fervor. Arguments exist over the number of college-level schools, ranging from four to twenty-three. Denominational schools were most important, though student bodies were not confined to those of like faith. Each section of the state had male and female institutions, so schools were available to meet population requirements.

Higher education's distribution was increased by military schools and academies. The former, later in time than academies, were as much for technical as military education. Institutions with such departments often held military exercises on weekends, after regular studies. Academies, initially for primary work, developed through two additional stages. Becoming college preparatory like the Latin grammar schools, academies eventually were primarily terminal institutions. At any given time, there were academies at each level, with the "final-stage" schools having, like the military schools, innovative curricula.

Alabama colleges were often experimenting, perhaps

because of their frontier milieu. Curricula showed the spirit best. Science was emphasized, and was the highlight (perhaps because of the discipline's nature). Curricula also reflected financial pressures, as did libraries and apparatus. Lack of funds was the prime debilitating factor. Too many schools competed for money in the same area. The wonder was that all received at least some return for their efforts.

Lack of students also hurt. Students lived a complex life, generally studious but occasionally broken by violent fits. Age-old complaints of illness, discomfort, monotonous food, and unfair teachers gained new expression. Omnipresent pranks and fellowship made school worthwhile. But too few students came, and schools mortgaged their future to solve present problems caused by insufficient fees.

For all its troubles, higher education in antebellum Alabama provided for students an education increasingly adapted to the times, whether the atmosphere was explosive or quiet. Problems similar to ours were handled with solutions from which we could learn. The Civil War ended everything. In 1865 only one male college remained; the rest had perished from fire, pillage, or neglect.

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

HIGHER EDUCATION IN ANTEBELLUM ALABAMA

By
SAMUEL RAY GRANADE

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PREFACE

Higher education in the antebellum South is generally passed over with a few generalizations made and never examined. Though numerous school histories have been written, only two state studies exist--one for North Carolina and one for Tennessee. E. Merton Coulter, in his otherwise excellent College Life in the Old South, makes assumptions which invalidate his work as a South-wide study--assumptions he could not check. A serious overview has yet to be published. Some attention has been paid public education, thanks to impetus from Edgar W. Knight and his followers. As a field for synthesizers, higher education has been ignored too long.

As far as higher education in antebellum Alabama is concerned, there is no overall study. Institutional studies exist for schools which survived to face the twentieth century. Several teachers left autobiographies; many left collections of papers. A few student diaries and letters are likewise available. School records are generally scanty, most having been lost in fires. Spring Hill's records were lost in an 1869 fire; Howard burned thrice during the antebellum period; Judson has been consumed at least an equal number of times since its

founding; and most records of other schools were lost in conflagrations after the Union occupation of the South. A few sketches of Alabama education have been prepared for the national government, but are extremely limited--barely more than outlines. None of them deal with higher education's problems.

Antebellum Alabama's higher education did not originate in a vacuum. The structure was predicated upon theories which originated in the nation's older sections, but the area's frontier milieu shaped actual formation. While the formulators of Alabama's higher education looked to familiar ideas, their planning resulted in a variation, differing subtly from the intended mold. The frontier impressed itself upon social conditions just as the pioneers impressed themselves on the frontier.

This is not a series of institutional histories. Nor is it an attempt to evaluate higher education in antebellum Alabama in light of any present system. The main concern is to picture higher education in the era and estimate its value to its society. Once this picture has become familiar, the impact of outside forces on the structure can be measured. It is a case study, a portrait in time. As such, it should provide the necessary information to end some of the abundant misconceptions.

The first step in any study of the workings of higher education in antebellum Alabama is one of basics. Without adequate financing, for example, the academy and

college structure erected in the state would have been no more than a grinning skeleton, picked clean by financial vultures. The final step is to realize that these basics are only portions of a picture, not isolated entities. Whether male or female colleges, all Alabama schools had certain common problems, common solutions, common joys, and common sorrows. This link joins the academies, military schools and colleges into a unit and gives cohesion to the divergent facets. It is the common denominator in a tale of one state's efforts and reasons for providing what has (in our society) become one of life's necessities. It is the tale of trial and error, of failings for reasons which are amazingly similar to those which plague us today. This alone gives the story "relevance." Simply put, this is a case study, the tale of one state's trial. Unfortunately, there is too little generalized information for many comparisons.

I would like to express my appreciation to a number of people without whom this paper's completion would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible. Dr. William Warren Rogers, who served as my major professor, gave of his time without reservation to help me, even during a year on leave. His suggestions were invaluable. The patience with which he worked and helped me over obstacles will always be remembered. My appreciation of all his efforts is inexpressible. To my committee, I owe a debt of gratitude for their suggestions and their

efforts in helping me meet deadlines. Many librarians aided the search for materials. Those at the University of Alabama, Samford University, the University of North Carolina, and especially the Alabama Department of Archives and History showed a willingness and anxiousness to help with gathering material that beggars description. Other libraries also provided necessary services and information, for which I am grateful.

In addition to these people, there are others who helped in different ways. Mr. Robert Culbertson's willingness to listen to endless problems and hypotheses, and his aid in sorting and analyzing them was as beneficial as his work as a "resident agent." He and all the others who wished they had not asked about the dissertation but patiently listened anyway were a psychological and literary boon. Their questions, though at times as trying as my recitations, helped shape this work. My wife was not only patient and understanding where time and work were concerned, but also aided in this arduous task from the beginning, as research assistant and typist. Wading through my atrocious handwriting and mistakes, she produced a readable rough draft, then the final copy. Mr. Jim Megginson was gracious enough to aid in proofreading, and proved a discerning, careful reader. To these and others too numerous to name I express my deepest appreciation for their aid and encouragement.

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CHAPTER ONE

EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES

Wheels, thousands of them, rolling west by south. Cart wheels, wagon wheels, and even rolling hogsheads moving into the Old Southwest. The Great Migration, that movement of all classes into this newly-opened land, had begun. From the older seaboard states of the South and the new Transappalachian ones as well, came an influx of population such as the infant nation had never seen. For many of these people, the Alabama wilderness was a paradise, full of deer and turkey with the streams full of fish.¹ Contemporary comments note the desire of many residents of the older states to move to that new land. James Graham, of Hillsborough, North Carolina, wrote his friend Thomas Ruffin describing the "Alabama Fever." On August 10, 1817, he wrote:

"You can't conceive of the anxiety and confusion that pervades all ranks of people in this section to remove to the Alabama, numbers have actually sold and many are desirous to sell and hunt a new home in the wide wild

¹Gideon Linsecum, a passer-through in 1810, thus described the future state. Hugh Bailey, John William Walker (Tuscaloosa, 1964), p. 69.

wilderness." Three months later, Graham sped another letter to his correspondent, showing almost a fear of the possible consequences of the madness: "The Alabama Fever rages here with great violence and has carried off vast numbers of our Citizens. I am apprehensive, if it continues to spread as it has done, it will almost depopulate the country . . . Some of our oldest and most wealthy men are offering their possessions for sale and are desirous of moving off to this new country."² In Georgia, according to a popular anecdote of the time, a traveling evangelist stopped in front of a backwoods cabin and asked the man chopping wood there, "My friend, are you on the way to that Good Country?" The native, misunderstanding the pious interest of his interrogator, answered "I started out to go. But I heard that oats was sellin' for five dollars a bushel out thar in Alabama; so I thought I'd stop and make a crop."³

²Quoted in J. G. deRoulhac Hamilton, The Papers of Thomas Ruffin (Raleigh, 1918), I, 194, 198. Graham added "The consequence is that land here is deminishing [sic] in point of value, and the country loseing [sic] many of its most enterprising and respectable inhabitants," to his first comment on the "new country." By November 9, he was more hopeful: "However there is a material difference between offering to sell and actually selling and therefore many will be obliged to relinquish their intentions."

³Louise Manly, History of Judson College (Atlanta, n.d.), p. 7.

Such was the background of antebellum Alabama, and the milieu within which current educational theories were applied to the State. Commenting on an English writer's mention of a conversation with a "native of Alabama," the editor of Niles' Weekly Register pointed up a lesson: "The native must have been a young one," the editor wrote in 1833. "The population of what now is Alabama was less than 10,000 only 23 years ago--though now about 35,000" ⁴

When studying any system of education, especially an inchoate one, the historian must try to discover the originators' objectives. It is in terms of these objectives, both expressed and implied, that the system grew, and its shape was determined by the confines of the minds which formed it. In Alabama, the originators of the state's educational system were all immigrants, all strangers in their own land. Their educational experience had generally been obtained in the older seaboard states, notably Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia. Northern Alabama inhabitants normally traced their migration to Tennessee and Kentucky, and through them to these same seaboard states. And this migration, as had an earlier one from England, involved a question of antecedents.

⁴Niles' Weekly Register, XLIV (April 13, 1833), 100.

Status was a social phenomenon that determined educational attitudes fully as much as did the place of former residence. While historians have largely destroyed the myth of the Cavalier origins of the Southern colonies, at the same time they have largely confirmed part of that myth regarding the settlement of the Old Southwest. While second sons and others left England because of economic distress and ecclesiastical conflicts, emigrants left for the Old Southwest in a fever. Whole towns caught the "Alabama Fever" and moved. Even prosperous planters would sell their land, pack their belongings, and herd slaves and livestock to the new land. With the opening of the area after the War of 1812 the Great Migration began. The population of the future state rapidly increased, as all classes and types of men poured into the fertile, well-watered and well-drained lands. Alabama was a land of promise, a buzzing hive of activity, hidden by the sylvan spaces, a vast expanse of earth which would remain frontier long after statehood.⁵

There were many reasons for the migration to Alabama--soil depletion in the Upper South; the decline in the tobacco industry which coincided with the introduction of short staple cotton into the inland South

⁵For careful studies of this movement into Alabama, see Charles D. Lowery, "The Great Migration to Alabama" (Unpublished thesis, Florida State University);

and an excellent market for the product; improved means of travel and communication; the relinquishment of prime cotton lands by the Indians; and a general period of inflation, speculation, and optimism.⁶ Settlers brought with them the theories of their native states.

Settlers' attitudes and ideas were unquestionably modified by the human environment and by the stresses and pressures of the natural milieu. Human contacts were bound to influence attitudes. Even more effective in modifying ideas, or at least their application, was nature. When faced with the necessity of making new ground produce, immigrants put other considerations aside. Physical and geographical limitations also tended to shape the system which the modified attitudes produced.

Some of the educational ideas of the South, and consequently of Alabama, were similar to those of the North. Alabama's antebellum era fell into that time span characterized by religious domination of education. Colleges were founded upon evangelical zeal and were the agents of denominational expansion with clergymen or

Paul W. Gates, "Private Land Claims in the South," Journal of Southern History, XXII (May, 1956), 183-204; and especially William O. Lynch, "The Westward Flow of Southern Colonists Before 1861," Journal of Southern History, IX (August, 1943), 303-327.

⁶Lowery, "Migration," p. 35.

energetic laymen as presidents and trustees.⁷ The emphasis was upon the classics, the foundation of all knowledge. A strong belief in the cultural values and dignity bestowed upon students by classical studies pervaded the Southland. The lack of any economic demand for "book larnin'" meant that the Southerner might more easily reject the formal studies for some form of vocational training. The South was primarily an agricultural region, at best, a craft society. F. A. P. Barnard, long-time professor at the University of Alabama and later president of Columbia, wrote in 1855 that a craft society with its characteristic apprenticeship system was so permanent a feature of American life that "vocationalism would never intrude itself upon institutions of formal learning." In no uncertain terms, Barnard gave his opinion: "While time lasts, the farmer will be made in the field, the manufacturer in the shop, the merchant in the counting room, the civil engineer in the midst of the actual operation of his science."⁸ In short, the preparation for a vocation would always be found outside the formal educational system. Southerners, then, could easily ignore higher education as valueless, if this line of reasoning were followed.

⁷James T. Adams, ed., Dictionary of American History (New York, 1940), I, 413.

⁸Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York, 1962), p. 338.

for acquiring . . . the framework of education, as well as the more light and drapery accomplishments usually taught in female seminaries of the highest grade."¹⁰

Properly celebrating the patriotic feelings engendered by Independence Day, the Athens Herald of July 4, 1856, carried a similar estimation of a local girls' school:

"The course of study is sufficiently comprehensive for all purposes of useful instruction and ornamental educational culture." All this was done, the paper observed, with a thoroughness "rarely to be met with in similar institutions and excelled by none."¹¹

Such sectional pride reached its ultimate expression in the two decades immediately preceding the Civil War. In 1851, DeBow's Review contained the first in a series of articles entitled "Home Education in the South." These called for the South to maintain schools instead of spending money to have children indoctrinated by Northerners.¹² Alabama was completely attuned to this

¹⁰A. B. Moore, History of Alabama (Tuscaloosa, 1951), p. 323; Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States (New York, 1929), I 390.

¹¹Athens Herald, July 4, 1856.

¹²DeBow's Review, X (1851), 362. See also John S. Ezell, "A Southern Education for Southrons," Journal of Southern History, XVII (March, 1951), 303-327 for fuller treatment.

Southern movement. She had called for such education long before. In 1834, the Mobile Register noted that

The advantages of educating southern youth, in their native climes, to which by birth they are destined to live accustomed, are very perceptible to the reflecting part of the southern people. As they thereby avoid that change of constitution, which subjects them in an increased degree to the diseases peculiar to the South--and an estrangement from the manners of their connexions. While the expenditures incident to excursions to and from, and living at the north, if not saved in part, are at least kept in circulation within the sphere of their associations.¹³

The Dallas Gazette, advocating the Cahaba Academy, chided parents for sending girls away from home "to some school with a big name where they learn but little save to dress fine, dip snuff, and think of sweethearts."¹⁴ The Huntsville Democrat advised parents that "You should no longer send your daughters to the North to complete their education with those who are inimical to our institutions. Here you have every facility, most elegant and commodious buildings, lovely scenery, refined society . . . and a President in every way qualified . . ."¹⁵

Aside from the Southern aspect of sectional pride, the extremely local viewpoint was most important (and

¹³Mobile Register, February 3, 1824.

¹⁴Selma Dallas Gazette, July 8, 1859.

¹⁵Huntsville Democrat, July 27, 1854.

The basic question concerning educational attitudes is why the populace wanted education. What reasons did they give, and how well did they back up these reasons by actions? In short, were they really interested in the life of the mind? In Alabama, differing reasons were given for the quest for learning. Some said the frontiersmen recognized the need for education and wished that advantage for their children. This seems doubtful, if taken as a general rule. Though some may have taken this approach there were without question more cogent reasons. Much of the call for education rested in pride--pride of section or of village. Personal pride played a role in this search for learning, as did desire for economic advancement. There were always those who joined in the general call for ulterior motives.

Sectional pride was perhaps most important as the Civil War approached, though this reason was evident from the very first. Each town wanted a college, each village an academy. Whether boasting of town, county, state, or section, a booster could offer no better selling point and sure sign of progress than a school, especially one of a "high order." Editors constantly commented upon the excellence of some local school, the illustrious teachers, and the great goodness to be gained by enrollees. Even institutions for female education received accolades as having "the most valuable facilities

If the ideas of the Southern mind are actually applied, this would seem their logical conclusion.

But students of the early period tend to agree that college graduates (or at least a large number who had attended college) comprised a considerable portion of the state's earliest settlers. These people almost uniformly expressed the desire for colleges for their children. There were tensions in the settlers' attitudes toward education. Alabama was still frontier, and even those of independent means or with a comfortable living were forced from their normal conservatism into the experimenter mold of the frontiersman. Those with the normally conservative planter image were still frontiersmen, faced with the problems of their neighbors. Alabamians who might have favored "elitist" education under ordinary circumstances were pushed into another position. The normal conservatism of the "planter class" was thwarted by the liberalism of the frontier's leveling influence.⁹ The best way to study antebellum Alabama's attitudes toward education is by discovering what Alabamians said, either in official capacities or privately. By their actions and by their words, one can discover something of their attitudes toward education.

⁹Malcom C. McMillan, "The Alabama Constitution of 1819," Alabama Review, III (October, 1950), 283-284.

even the arguments of extreme Southerners could be taken as boosts for purely local institutions). Arguments for "home education" were most often made when urging patronage for schools in the immediate vicinity, not on a South-wide basis. Governor H. W. Collier's 1850 address to Alabama citizens, in which he advocated utilization of the State University rather than Northern schools, was such an example. Rare indeed were such papers as the Selma Dallas Gazette, which placed even the state above its own region or town.¹⁶ Editors agreed that local institutions were the best available anywhere, or at least equal to any on earth. Events even remotely connected with a local school were lavishly praised, as when the editor of the Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth praised the Howard College student literary magazine and noted that it was "not so trashy" as many such student productions.¹⁷

Education provided pride in an individual as well as in a section, either in the broad or the narrow sense of the word. Such pride could either be in self as the recipient of formal learning, in self for providing it for others, or in others for acquiring it. The motto

¹⁶James B. Sellers, University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa, 1953), I, 174; Selma Dallas Gazette, July 8, 1859. Hereafter, when "University" occurs alone and capitalized, it refers to the University of Alabama.

¹⁷Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, May 10, 1859.

of the Alabama Female Institute in Tuscaloosa--"that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace"--and that of the Centenary Institute at Summerfield (To Educate Woman is to Refine the World) both illustrate these outlooks.¹⁸ Such erudition allowed one to write to a paper, and in one's letter quote Latin. Either one assumed that all had equal facility with Latin, or one enjoyed the snob appeal inherent in such action.¹⁹ Women could say that they did not enjoy reading the evening paper to their husbands or fathers because of political news (something they as women would not be interested in), but they were careful to display their dissatisfaction in public. They were educated, and could read and (presumably) carry on intelligent and "polite" conversations.²⁰

Such pride in self, a proclivity to exhibit knowledge or formal learning as a sign of "culture" and erudition, was one of the ulterior motives for attempts to provide higher education. For politicians, education could provide an excellent campaign issue (though only when linked with some other, more important topic like

¹⁸Moore, Alabama, p. 338.

¹⁹A letter to the Mobile Register, printed in March 13, 1829 issue, ends with the sterling motto Qui Caput Ille Facit.

²⁰See, for example, the Alabama Senate Journal, 1849-1850, p. 32. Comparison of the 1823 and the 1843 messages will bear out observations as to the relative

land, money, pride, or financial aid). For the temperance advocate, locating a school in a town could provide an effective way to secure prohibition there. To others, financial aid to education was an easy source of fraudulently-obtained money. By far the most important ulterior motive for championing education lay in the lucrative nature of the educational establishment.

Education was an important topic in Alabama politics mainly during the first two decades of statehood. The state university's location, the funds from the school lands, and the fact that incorporation was necessary to any school's proper functioning meant that education became deeply enmeshed with government. In the addresses of Alabama's first governors, the value of education is clearly seen. At first, the topic was faithfully and prominently mentioned and given ample coverage. Then internal improvements, banking, and the business of state government began to push mention of learning from consideration. Occasionally a popular topic would give the governor a chance to profit politically, as when the idea of free tuition was presented. The governor would then carefully cover the subject before moving on to more important issues.²¹ The University's location was

importance of education as a topic for gubernatorial investigation.

²¹See the Mobile Register, January 29, 1828

politically important because of the number of places vying for that honor. The measure to position the school took nineteen ballotings, and behind-the-scenes work must have been impressive. Though many consider this the era of statesmen, undoubtedly "log-rolling" was an important principle in the locating process.²²

The most politically important aspect of the University was its connection with the State Bank. Money from the sale of University lands was invested in the Bank as capital. The University was to furnish the initial money, the Bank to pay interest and operating expenses. When the bank failed, the state was liable. But the legislature acted in such a way as to prompt University Trustee Isham W. Garrot to pronounce the debacle an "ungodly robbery" and his cohort Dr. W. S. Wyman to cry "This act is the last attempt of the legislature of Alabama to play the part of the unjust stepmother to an institution solemnly entrusted to its guardianship and protecting care" ²³

The Evergreen Male and Female Academy charter provided legislators with a political hold other than that of finances. This charter and those after it

and March 29, 1833.

²²Alabama Senate Journal, 1827, pp. 101-109.

²³Moore, Alabama, p. 343. Whether or not this

provided that no liquor be sold within one mile of the institution. Temperance advocates could thereby secure their aim without a general law, one which might have been much harder to obtain. For legislators willing to approve such a measure and attach it to other school charters, the provision was an excellent way of endearing themselves to religiously-oriented constituents. This prohibitive act was another reason to support education, at least among some groups of people--it was part of a religious and reforming impetus.²⁴

That many urged the adoption of educational acts for these ulterior motives is unquestionable. One of the main reasons, however, was the institutions' lucrative nature. The Greensboro Beacon, on February 16, 1855, estimated that it cost \$150-200 to educate a son at home, \$600-1,000 if he were sent off. As Greensboro was trying to secure a school, the editor of the paper judged the economic advancement such a coup would produce. With

was fraud in the usual sense (no one absconded with the money), there was an excellent chance for anyone connected with the legislature to profit from his position. There is at least one instance of a legislator securing incorporation for an academy in order to procure a lottery, then abscond with the money. See especially William Garrett, Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama (Atlanta, 1872), pp. 608-609.

²⁴Acts of Alabama, 1830, p. 68; Alabama Senate Journal, 1825, p. 118. Later charters differed on the distance--one to three miles.

eight professors and their families, \$12,000 annually would be added to the town's economy. Two hundred students would bring \$30,000 for board and lodging, \$4,000 for supplies and books, \$5,000 for clothing, professional services and other incidentals, and \$2,500 in expenses for each parental visit. The paper estimated that at least \$53,500 annually would be obtained from the school's location there.²⁵ In Auburn, the proposed Male College began to "lend vitality to the landed and mercantile interests" of the town before it opened. A traveler noted that "there was not an eligible house in the place that was unoccupied" and that real estate was generally held "at higher prices" than before word of the school's opening had been received.²⁶

These were some hidden motives Alabamians had for supporting education. To such people, education was of secondary importance. These were possibly the real beliefs, the unconscious ones. But what of ideals verbally expressed for public (or even private) consumption? The

²⁵Beacon, February 16, 1855, November 11, 1859, and November 18, 1859.

²⁶Tuskegee Republican, April 17, 1859. This is why towns could promise a great deal of money, especially to various sects, to get a college located in their town, (as when Auburn bid \$100,000 "in good subscriptions" for the proposed Methodist school which Greensboro obtained for \$300,000). Wilber D. Perry, A History of Birmingham-Southern College (Nashville, 1931), pp. 11-13.

myths by which these people operated was another matter. For many Alabamians, the myths were theories by which they operated, and upon which the state's entire system of education was predicated. The myth of the educated Cavalier, the Southern gentleman, came into play. The state had to provide advanced education to perpetuate the fiction by which many lived. The individualistic, democratic tradition of the frontier called for education. While the clash of these two traditions might produce tension over whether or not education would be elitist, they joined forces to secure higher education in the state. And while individuals might push for educational institutions because of selfish motives, they might be interested in the life of the mind as well.

A few individuals in the state were without question interested in the intellectual plane of life. Judge Walter Keith Baylor spent many evenings and nights at the University's new observatory discussing astronomy and philosophy with professor F. A. P. Barnard.²⁷ The Alabama Historical Society was begun largely through the efforts of University President Basil Manly, and had a large enrollment from its inception.²⁸ Three Alabamians,

²⁷Garrett, Reminiscences, pp. 223-224.

²⁸T. M. Owen, "Dr. Basil Manly, the Founder of the Alabama Historical Society," Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, IV (1900), 136-9.

Powell, Snow, and Tankersly, were regular contributors to the researches of the American Antiquarian Society.²⁹ Alabama newspapers were full of educational news during the antebellum period, often reprinting information on educational advances. Few editors assumed the publication of a paper without mentioning their devotion to education. Debating societies were established in the various towns as well as at the different schools. Some towns established public libraries, or at least reading rooms (and occasionally both), and traveling lecturers, holding forth on such esoteric topics as chemistry, constantly traveled throughout the state.³⁰

Toasts made on public occasions almost always included a salute to education. At a public dinner given for the governor in 1832, one D. Crawford proposed "The University of Alabama--May she prove the Alma Mater for men about to grapple for immortality with the 'dead heirs of fame'--of men whose enlarged and philosophic patriotism . . . shall embrace the Union." J. H. Owen proposed another to the same institution, a school

²⁹Mobile Register, October 26, 1824. Apparently the men were so well known that first names were never used.

³⁰In Mobile, for example, Dr. William King lectured on chemistry for four months, then left for Tuscaloosa, Montgomery and Marion. Mobile Register, February 11, 20, 27; March 4, 6, 11; April 6, 1829.

"destined to contribute to the greatness and glory of the State."³¹ It would seem that at least some Alabamians were interested in education (or learning), even if only from an antiquarian viewpoint. It is from these men that some idea of the theories behind Alabama's attempts to procure higher education can best be obtained. And these theories concerned every aspect of learning-- discipline, the concept of education, and the worth of the individual.

DeBow's Review, ever a champion of things Southern, carried articles in 1855 and 1860 complaining about the lack of appreciation of a collegiate education. The latter article, written by DeBow in early 1860, pointed out that despite a provision of the University Trustees, only 7 of the allowed 104 had taken advantage of free tuition. The 1855 article, written by an Alabamian, was less specific but more caustic. "There is certainly among our people a strange lack in appreciating the invaluable benefit of that severe mental discipline and introduction to knowledge which a college curriculum affords," he wrote. "Is it that we underrate thorough education?" he queried. Science is important, the author maintained, because of the advances it has made possible. Classical research is likewise significant due to the

³¹Mobile Register, May 14, 1832.

"experience of the past." "What we most greatly need," he concluded, "is a general elevation of sentiment and enlargement of views throughout the entire community."³²

Why have higher education? The 1855 DeBow's Review article gave one answer: every life is enriched by the influence of the classics. Officials and writers interested in government gave another reply. Education, they argued, is necessary to sustain the republican form of government under which the United States operates. The message of the first Governor to the 1819 legislature played upon that theme: "Ignorance and civil liberty are unnatural associates. Where the people are the fountain of authority, it is indispensable . . . that they be capable of discriminating between liberty and licentiousness" He observed that "So important to the advancement of republican principles has the distribution of knowledge been considered, that it is declared in an article of permanent compact between the original states and the people of the territories"³³ In a letter to editor Thaddeus Sandford of the Mobile Register, a correspondent also expressed a similar idea. "Common sense, enlightened by the experience of antecedent ages," he commented, "is the immovable foundation upon

³²DeBow's Review, XVIII (February, 1855), 154; XXVIII (February, 1860), 239.

³³Alabama Senate Journal, 1819, p. 8.

which is reared the inimitable superstructure of our constitutional and democratic government." A more succinct statement of the idea occurred earlier in the letter, when the writer observed that the existence of "our excellent form of Government" depended upon "a wide diffusion of intelligence among the common mass of the people" ³⁴

To early Alabamians, higher education was also important in the development of the individual. Henry Tutwiler, young University professor and important figure in Alabama education, said that education's function was "to prepare young men for the business of life" ³⁵ The Greensboro Beacon believed that colleges were for the "full development, decoration and aggrandizement of the moral man." ³⁶ Editor Sandford's predecessor at the Mobile Register observed that education was "a companion which no misfortune can depress--no crime can destroy--no enemy can alienate--no despotism enslave. At home a friend--abroad an introduction--in solitude a solace, and in society an ornament. It chastens vice--it guides virtue--it gives, at once, grace and government to genius."

³⁴Mobile Register, October 22, 1828.

³⁵Thomas McCorvey, "Henry Tutwiler and the Influence of the University of Virginia on Education in Alabama," Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, V (1906), 100.

³⁶Beacon, February 9, 1855.

educational one. The Methodist Dr. Stephen Olin, for example, advocated Conference support for a college in 1854. "Methodist children are to be found in every sort of seminary in the land," he intoned. Then he clarified "Some have been transplanted into the hot beds of Calvinism, some are trying to grow amidst the chilling winds of abolitionism, while others are smothered amidst the darkness and damps of Catholic convents Is it because as a church we have no Institutions worthy of our patronage? Then let us build them" When the University was mentioned, the lack of morals at public supported institutions was questioned. "State Institutions?" the doctor replied. "And how much better off will we be there? The best repast that many of these afford is a medley of formality and skepticism." Olin considered the matter closed when he made his final statement: "The fact is the soul of a Methodist young man would famish and die in many of these sooner than to be fed upon the husks of Calvinism."⁴⁹

Many reasons were given for sectarian education, just as there had been many for education in general. The Nashville Christian Advocate urged generosity on its readers whenever the question of Methodist education

⁴⁹Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, pp. 7-9, quoting the Minutes of the Alabama Conference, 1854, pp. 31-45.

in education and the development of academies of the Southern variety were almost entirely "local products." In its evolution a typical Alabama academy served the community as grammar school, high school, "prep" school, and junior college. More flexible than the New England Latin grammar schools, and more democratic than far-off colleges, Southern seminaries typified the pragmatism and democracy of the early frontier. Denominational schools also demonstrated these traits. Catholics founded one school in antebellum Alabama, and all the Church's support was funnelled into it. Never a favorite frontier church, that faith neither could nor would compete with Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists in the race to found denominational schools. Presbyterians soon fell behind in the competition, as the two strongest sects forged ahead.

This was the era when each faith believed it had the only true religion. Often its communicants could not bear to see fellow followers suffer in an alien spiritual atmosphere, even if that environment was an

elective system. Trustees of Southern University at Greensboro contemplated that idea before leaving the choice to the faculty (which preferred the "open" system). Sellers, University, I, 151-156; Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 40. Baptists tried a school on the Lancastrian method, which soon failed. Charles D. Johnson, Higher Education of Southern Baptists (Waco, 1955), pp. 147-148.

was a perpetual problem in Southern schools. In a series of letters to the Mobile Register in 1830, a correspondent signing himself "Amicus Veritatus" gave warnings about the soon-to-open state university. Observing that "the people of the Southern States have not a bias in favor of literature," he voiced his concern about the "laxative discipline which abounds at the Southern seminaries." The University of Alabama would have an advantage regarding discipline he remarked, for it would not be dependent upon taxes for funds. Such a vital safeguard would proscribe legislative interference in the school's internal affairs. There would be no call for interference, for students would have to deal directly with the faculty regardless of their families' importance. And the professors, "under no dread" of the legislature, "will be the more able in enforcing the rules of the University with firmness and integrity."⁴⁷

Much of the attitude toward higher education that existed in Alabama before the Civil War came from the Upper South. Alabama experimented with the "eclectic system" of Mr. Jefferson's University and the Lancastrian method of work-study education.⁴⁸ Sectarian interest

(Tuscaloosa, 1954), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁷Mobile Register, October 23, 1830.

⁴⁸The University for a time used the non-classified

female education, it was a necessity where males were concerned. Girls might hide love letters under a stack of inspected mail, hoping to send them undetected; boys were more likely to destroy furniture, shoot at instructors, and fight in the dining hall. The July 4 toast to education--"The lamp that lights the path to Liberty. Let it be kept well trimmed that our Children may never mistake their way"--could easily be taken in an ironical sense. Students were kept "trimmed" whenever possible.⁴³ Henry Tutwiler once stated that "thorough training was of more importance than the mere acquisition of knowledge."⁴⁴ At Athens College, the rules were "simply and strictly maintained."⁴⁵ Tuskegee Female College's President A. A. Lipscomb, believing that humorous and indirect rebukes or appeals to the student's self-respect were better than any system of penalties, advocated discipline that would be "kind and tender, but firm and rigid."⁴⁶

At the University, discipline was a major problem from the school's inception. Riots were occasional occurrences, and professors often took their lives in their hands when they set foot on campus. Lax discipline

⁴³Ibid., July 31, 1830.

⁴⁴Moore, Alabama, p. 337.

⁴⁵Griffin, "Athens," p. 13.

⁴⁶Rhoda C. Ellison, History of Huntingdon College

Baptist, in its April 22, 1853, issue, agreed with Marryat.

If the mother had an education, she could impart some of it to her children, who would grow up to be good citizens.⁴¹

In 1828, the Mobile Register predated the Captain's observation with one of its own: "Oh that the world would awake to the responsibilities of a mother, and that those who hold this relation might be properly qualified by the complete education of the mind and heart, for the influence they hold over the destinies of man." Earlier in the same essay, the author had written that

An intelligent high aiming female, of a well cultivated mind and a pious heart has been known to give a much higher cast of character, attainment and condition, to a large circle of brothers and sisters, than they would otherwise have received. But it is as a mother that a woman has need of all the power which the munificence of her divine Benefactor has endowed her, mature to their highest perfection . . .⁴²

Education for women was to fit them for social contacts and suit them to rear democrats, not clutter their mind with unnecessary information.

One of the keynotes of higher education in Alabama was discipline. Though this element was important in

⁴¹Montgomery South Western Baptist, April 22, 1853.

⁴²Mobile Register, November 24, 1828.

both sexes, should be based upon the same model."³⁹

The motto of the Alabama Female Institute in Tuscaloosa, hoping that the girls would be "polished after the similitude of a palace," took the ornamental idea further. Most institutions for female education in the antebellum period carried out that theory. All courses necessary for a "refined" education were offered. Letters in various papers, even from women, indicated that the ideal of female education was that of a "polished" one, suiting the holder for polite society.

A corollary to the theory of female education was that women should be so educated as to rear "young republicans." Captain Frederick Marryat--an Englishman successful as a naval officer, novelist, landowner and magazine editor--toured America for eighteen months during 1837 and 1838. Observing the attitude of Americans toward female education, Marryat recorded that "It appears to be almost necessary that a young lady should produce this diploma as a certificate of being qualified to bring up young republicans."⁴⁰ The Montgomery South Western

³⁹Richard W. Griffin, "Athens Academy and College: An Experiment in Women's Education in Alabama," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XX (Spring, 1958), 13, quoting the Catalogue, pp. 11-12.

⁴⁰Captain Frederick Marryat, A Diary in America, (New York, 1839), p. 10.

Without it, he ended, man is "A splendid slave! a reasoning savage! vacillating between the divinity of an intelligence derived from God, and the degradation of passion, participated with brutes."³⁷

Dr. Stephen Olin, a local physician interested in Greensboro's educational advancement, saw the function of college as two-fold--"To develop the latent capacities, to transform the helpless infant into a wise man, fitted to serve God and his generation on earth and enjoy himself in heaven" Another Greensboro resident, A. H. Mitchell, argued for the procurement of a college by saying that such an institution was important for "the cultivation of the intellect, instruction in the arts and sciences, and the various accomplishments of mind and body."³⁸

Most of these statements seem to apply only to male education, but Alabamians were also serious about higher education for their women. Whether that education would be real or ornamental was a topic of much interest. The 1849 Athens College Catalogue stated that "From time immemorial, Female Education has been superficial," but that "We take it for granted, . . . that the education of

³⁷Mobile Register, January 9, 1823.

³⁸Joseph H. Parks and Oliver C. Weaver, Birmingham-Southern College, 1856-1956 (Nashville, 1957), p. 6.

arose. By not administering their estates well while living, the editor feared, many men were "sending themselves and their families to hell."⁵⁰ Others, like Thomas Jefferson Hamilton, a staunch Methodist, contemplated the beneficial results of having a more educated clergy. Though doubting if education would ever be a prerequisite for the ministry, he noted that "the time has come when as a conference we should take higher ground on this subject."⁵¹ Though the establishment of schools strictly for Protestant ministers was in the future, the advantages of having literate men of the cloth was a factor in establishing sectarian schools.

Not all Alabamians were elated over the prospects of having a school nearby. The editor of the Eutaw Whig estimated that the best Methodists could do would be a fourth-rate institution with a "meagre, badly selected library of 3 or 400 volumes, a nondescript Philosophical and Chemical apparatus," administered by "three starved Professors and an inflated tutor."⁵² While others might not agree, and call the new school "a monument worthy of the generous liberality of the Methodists of . . . Alabama,"

⁵⁰Nashville Christian Advocate, March 8, 1855.

⁵¹Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 25.

⁵²Ibid., p. 14, quoting the Whig for March 23, 1855.

many were still not convinced that sectarian schools could be adequately supported and provide the necessary high standards of education.⁵³

The schools at least attempted to provide challenging courses. President William M. Wightman of Southern University in Greensboro explained that "The faculty had intentionally set high scholastic standards" for the new school.⁵⁴ When Dr. Basil Manly resigned the University presidency on April 19, 1855, he reported to the trustees and the legislature: "it has been the steady aim of the undersigned and of that body of able and honest men who have composed the Faculty of this University for the last eighteen years, to raise and maintain a high standard of scholarship." Manly closed his report by observing that "The gratifying consciousness is ours, that we have reared for the University an elevated standard of scholarship . . ."⁵⁵ Unfortunately, none of the early Alabama colleges could be very particular about their standards. There was no system underpinning the structure of higher education in Alabama, and the institutions had to make allowances for that weakness. Each school might

⁵³Tuskegee Republican, April 17, 1859.

⁵⁴Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 43.

⁵⁵Manly Diary, 1847-1857.

take as its aim the promotion of literature, science, morality, and religion, but the realities of the situation often precluded the achievement of that goal. A frontier region, Alabama did not have the surplus money to devote to higher education. The state's population was too widely scattered to make any system of public education feasible, and practically negated the efficiency of Alabama's twenty-three colleges. With no system from which to draw qualified applicants, the institutions for higher education faced an impossible obstacle. Plans were available--the legislature passed a public education law in 1823 and again in 1854. On paper, one historian observed, Alabama's system of education compared favorably with New York's. It was written, however, without the slightest possibility of adaptation to Alabama.⁵⁶

From the actions and expression of Alabamians, it would seem that they lived with slight reference to the feelings they professed. A tiny group were vitally interested in higher education in the state. Most citizens seemed concerned only out of ulterior motives--sectional pride, political goals, and hope of pecuniary gain. Like the others, these people mouthed the catchwords and applauded the designs of the educationally minded.

⁵⁶Moore, Alabama, p. 335. The better academies did produce.

Subscriptions made without thought for the future were left unpaid. Support which might have maintained one truly good college (or university) was of necessity dispersed to such an extent that all were forced to beg for relief from their comparative penury. Due to the geographical limitations imposed by the frontier character of the state, there was no alternative. Arguments for the beneficent effects of education--that it fitted one for life, that it was a necessity in a republican form of government, that it was a good in itself--were made persuasively throughout the antebellum period. But the fact that other matters almost invariably received priority gave the lie to the crowds' acclamations. The arguments were accepted and evidently widely believed. Apparently Alabamians of the antebellum period could not see the disparity between their voiced opinions and the attitudes their actions displayed.

CHAPTER II

ACADEMIES AND MILITARY SCHOOLS

Educational theories in Alabama, modified as they were by a frontier milieu, were first tested in academies. Though some wanted colleges from the time of statehood, it was academies which proved the initial testing ground for educational ideas. Academies and military schools formed a unique class of institutions. Defying classification in customary terms, they were a fluid combination of secondary and higher educational institutions. While forming the base upon which colleges were built, they were at the same time part of higher education. The academy was the most important component of this unique class until the mid-1840's, when increasing North-South tensions and the pressure of the Mexican War brought military schools to the fore. Both the academy and the military school are such an integral part of the history of higher education that familiarity with these institutions is vital. This and the fact that academies and military schools shared common problems and solutions with four-year colleges make at least some understanding of this group imperative.

Alabama's academies were a frontier product, for Alabama was a frontier region in many respects even to mid-century. The Latin grammar schools of the older sections provided preliminary classical education for the small group who sought entrance into northern or European colleges. They were well-equipped to handle this task. But when frontiersmen demanded additional education on what they considered a more practical level, the Latin grammar schools could not meet the challenge. For religious frontiersmen, the classics were to be studied as tools in religion or not at all.¹ Emphasis shifted, and a new criterion for determining practicability was established. A new form developed to meet this specific need--a form with variety and elasticity of program. The hybrid academy and the emerging military school were the result.²

¹Many Alabama educators recognized this tendency, and fought it. One indication of this is the Baccalaureate address to the students at a Howard College commencement. President Samuel S. Sherman spoke upon that occasion of the "claims of the Bible to the rank of a classic." Alabama Baptist, October 23, 1850. Most made the change, however, and helped obtain education suited to the new criterion. One of the best examples of this attitude is Basil Manly's insistence upon the University's granting an honorary master's degree in the practical arts to Alabama manufacturer, Daniel Pratt.

²Newton Edwards and Herman Richey, The School in the American Social Order (Cambridge, 1947), pp. 270-271; Carroll Atkinson and Eugene Maleska, The Story of Education (Philadelphia, 1965), p. 117; W. E. Drake, The American School in Transition (Englewood Cliffs, 1955),

Though originally intended as strictly a "higher" school, the academy evolved into new forms over the years. While not all academies passed through the various stages, and despite the fact that at any one time there were academies for every level of development, the movement in Alabama went through three distinct stages. Though the transitions were not well-marked, one can see the plateaus clearly.

The first step in this developmental process was broadening the curriculum to include all necessary course work from the first grade elementary school to the junior class of college.³ Gradually the elementary level withered; the new form was that of a preparatory school. The original aim of the academy movement had been to heighten the individual's development; now it became primarily a

p. 145. Academies to some extent furnished the variety of courses, but the United States Military Academy at West Point displayed military schools as the natural sources of technical education.

³Earlier historians discounted academies as nothing more than secondary education, and failed to trace this evolution. The most concise studies of the academy movement in Alabama have fallen into this same trap. Neither Joseph H. Johnson in his unpublished 1925 M.A. thesis at the University of Alabama ("The Rise and Growth of the Academy in Alabama Prior to the Civil War") nor Richard W. Massey, Jr.'s more recent (1955) one at Birmingham-Southern ("The Academy Movement in Alabama, 1819-1865, with Special Emphasis on Three Representative Academies") mention this change. Oscar W. Hyatt's The Development of Secondary Education in Alabama Prior to 1920 (Nashville, 1933), points in this direction, though he insists in classifying them in the usual manner.

college preparatory school.⁴

The final transfiguration took place as even the high school level was deleted. The change into this third form involved a shift in accent rather than a mutation of form. Where emphasis had been on preparation for college, it was now on the academy itself. The academy became a terminal school--in short, "the people's college." The pupil could still prepare for college if he so desired, but this was not the academies' sole reason for existence.⁵ Now there was a new goal. The best academies maintained good buildings and fair libraries and laboratories. The classics, modern languages,

⁴Truman Pierce and others, White and Negro Schools in the South (Englewood Cliffs, 1955), pp. 29-30. Often young men advertised for a position as a teacher or tutor saying that they were qualified to prepare students for entrance into any college class. Such was the case in the Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union advertisement of August 25, 1841 and the Selma Free Press, May 22, 1841. Many academies seemed to wish consideration in this second level, as the Oaks Academy indicated in the Huntsville Southern Advocate, June 16, 1859.

⁵Edwards and Richey, School in the American Social Order, p. 430. Dr. W. D. Stephenson's LaFayette Academy in 1849 urged young men preparing for LaGrange College to join other students there. A. A. McGregor, History of LaGrange College (n.p., n.d.), p. 5. A Lowndesboro Male Academy circular stated that the institution would supply a place "where we can educate them [boys] near home, and among their youthful associates, through the trying times of boyhood, and till they can enter well prepared the Junior Class of some College." Milford F. Woodruff Papers, Perkins Library, Durham, North Carolina. These institutions had reached the third level, where educating the college-bound was merely part of the program.

mathematics, history, philosophy, ethics, the fine arts, the sciences, and religion were taught. Self-control, obedience to authority, spirituality, mental discipline, and grace and refinement in conduct were the objectives sought by competent faculties, whose major objective was a "moral, intellectual, physical and polite education."⁶

The distinction between the hybrid academy and the Latin grammar school besides curricula was the attitude of each toward the inclusion of women. Where the grammar school had operated on the principle that only men should be admitted, the academy was fettered by no such assumption. While few academies were co-educational, the female academy (usually known as the seminary) flourished in Alabama.⁷

Many influential figures opined that the female student obtained more education than her male counterpart. Governor H. W. Collier, in an 1850 speech stated that on the whole, girls were taking better advantage of Alabama's educational opportunities than boys.⁸

⁶Moore, Alabama, p. 339.

⁷Edwin E. Slosson, ed., The American Spirit in Education, Vol. XXXIII: Chronicles of America: Series (New Haven, 1921), pp. 112-113, 238-239; Richard E. Gross, Heritage of American Education (Boston, 1962), p. 435; Freeman Butts and Lawrence A. Cremin, A History of Education in American Culture (New York, 1953), p. 261.

⁸Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette, October 9, 1850.

The English Captain Frederick Marryat's observation of the care and attention paid to female education was amply proven in Alabama. John R. Gwathney, a teacher at Green Academy near Huntsville, was in agreement with the Captain, if his 1856 statement is any indication: "There are a great many young ladies in this place and the greatest attention is paid to their education, far more than that of the young men."⁹ Andrew Carrigan, a recent emigrant, confirmed this attitude in a letter to his brother in early April, 1851, concerning the females around his new home. "Some ladies here are perfectly beautiful," he observed. Then he confessed that it was "probably because they have such fine education and good breeding."¹⁰ The Alabama Baptist editor noted interest in female education, only to decry the neglect of male education. "But What of Your Sons?" he cried, echoing Governor Collier. "Can a refined and cultivated woman have a congenial spirit in a dolt, without intelligence beyond a pig pen or a bag of cotton? . . . what we intend is, that while we are giving to our daughters the most liberal advantages, the claims of our sons should not be

⁹Quoted in Clement Eaton, The Growth of Southern Civilization, 1790-1860 (New York, 1961), p. 116.

¹⁰It may have also been due to the fact that spring was having its effect upon the unmarried Andrew. April 20, 1851, Carrigan Family Papers, Perkins Library, Durham, North Carolina.

overlooked." The editorial continued "How many young ladies are now at our female institutions, receiving the best patrimony which their parents will ever be able to apportion them, whose brothers are at home at the plough handles?" He concluded "give your daughters as much education as you will; but do not neglect your sons."¹¹

Latter-day students generally agree with this opinion. Alabama historian Albert B. Moore noticed abundant evidence that "people in those days were serious about educating their daughters as well as their sons."¹² In 1820, the first Alabama legislature passed a bill to establish an academy in every county and three branches for female education in conjunction with the State University.¹³

The reasons for such interest were both practical and philosophical. Captain Marryat gave the reason as it appeared to an outsider. The Montgomery South Western Baptist evidently agreed with the Captain, for in its April 22, 1853, issue, the editor observed that if the mother had an education, she could impart some of it to her children. The mother was therefore, in Marryat's words, "qualified to bring up young republicans." Governor

¹¹Alabama Baptist, November 20, 1850.

¹²Moore, Alabama, p. 338.

¹³Woody, Women's Education, I, 338; Slosson, American Spirit, p. 238.

Collier stated that emphasis was on female education because "the mind of the female is much more ductile than that of the male."¹⁴

These institutions for female edification were generally on the "finishing" school level, or about that of the academy in its second and third stages. As there were few female colleges, most were terminal institutions rather than "prep" schools. Advertisements urged women to send their daughters with the full assurance that they would be "ably instructed in the various branches, both useful and ornamental, of female education."¹⁵ If the advertisements were true representations of the facts, a goodly number of these institutions were academically sound. Historian Clement Eaton claims that a few of them must have been superior to most of the Northern schools for girls. According to the advertisements' claims, Eaton's estimate should be revised upward; all of them must have been superior to such Northern schools.¹⁶

The Methodist Episcopal Female Institute near Athens, a Tennessee Valley town, indicated its own worth in 1845, when it offered the "most valuable facilities for acquiring . . . languages, mathematics and sciences

¹⁴Quoted in Sellers, University, I, 162.

¹⁵Woody, Women's Education, I, 390.

¹⁶Eaton, Southern Civilization, p. 116.

. . . the frame work of education, as well as the light and more drapery accomplishments usually taught in female seminaries of the highest grade. Everything, indeed, . . . for a profound, brilliant and pure education."¹⁷

The Female Institute at Athens advertised in the town paper's July 4, 1856, issue on much the same plan: "The course of study is sufficiently comprehensive for all purposes of useful instruction and ornamental educational culture. The manner of teaching contemplates a thoroughness of acquisition in whatever is taken in hand, rarely to be met with in similar institutions and excelled by none."¹⁸ Even allowing for the ethno-centrism of local writers, it would seem that many female institutes and academies were academically sound. At least one Northern editor agreed that Southern academies and seminaries equaled or surpassed their Northern counterparts. The academies brought increased opportunity for a "sound" education to Alabamians--female as well as male.¹⁹

Every community wanted an academy, every village a college, and this became the battle cry.²⁰ Community pride, hope of profit and a genuine interest in education

¹⁷Quoted in Woody, Women's Education, I, 390.

¹⁸Athens Herald, July 4, 1856.

¹⁹Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, September 3, 1859, quotes a Boston editor.

²⁰Stephen B. Weeks, History of Public School

combined to produce this desire. The state legislature granted life to a multiplicity of these schools without uniform requirements. At first, only a charter, incorporation, and the right to confer upon graduates such honors "as to them may seem expedient" or grant degrees "in the arts and sciences" were requested.²¹ Academies no doubt valued incorporation above almost any other legislative aid. Incorporation was state recognition of their legal rights and assured self regulation. The academies' origin lay in private enterprise and benefaction, and under the control of self-perpetuating boards of trustees they were subject to little outside control. Policymaking was their own concern, and no interference would or needed be tolerated.²² Later, more demands were made. To keep academies from becoming mere business ventures it became necessary for the

Education in Alabama (Washington, 1915), p. 18; Hyatt, Secondary Education in Alabama concurs; Moore, Alabama, p. 347. The multiplicity of these schools, as indicated by nearly any issue of any newspaper (especially near the opening of school) proves these men right.

²¹Weeks, Public School, pp. 20-21; Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 19-20. Some academies were not to grant diplomas and degrees until a trial period had been passed, as was the case with Robinson Institute and Gainesville Female Academy.

²²This situation no doubt increased their strength--it made them adaptable to local conditions rather than strictured by state-wide standardization. Butts and Cremin, Education in American Culture, pp. 196-197; Edgar Knight, Education in the United States (Boston, 1929), p. 374.

most private schools, so the state invariably furnished the necessary arms for training purposes. Military schools were granted most of the privileges extended to academies. In an effort to ensure a thriving academic community, lotteries, tax-exempt lands, and other privileges were pushed upon a not-too reluctant group.³⁰

One reason for the state's willingness to aid military schools was their link to the growing interest in technical education. Some, like that of one Major Dunn in Huntsville, were concerned only with military matters--tactics and the manual of arms. Others combined the regular scholastic course with week-end military training, preparing students for college or jobs, in the best academy tradition.³¹ Military schools always hinted of academic training not available in other institutions. The Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, in an 1859 editorial, loudly asserted this viewpoint. Using West Point as an example, the paper observed that with a system of military academies, Alabama youths could be prepared "not alone

³⁰Weeks, Public School, p. 25; John Hope Franklin, The Militant South (New York, 1956), pp. 160-162; Acts of Alabama, 1845, p. 250; Acts of Alabama, 1851, pp. 387-8, 390; Acts of Alabama, 1853, p. 187; Acts of Alabama, 1855, p. 357; Acts of Alabama, 1857, pp. 95, 275; Acts of Alabama, 1859, pp. 31, 90. The legislature appropriated 971 muskets and six brass six-pounder field pieces for use by thirteen schools, not including the University.

³¹Huntsville Democrat, March 8, 1832; Huntsville Democrat, December 29, 1831.

The rise of academies continued uninterrupted until cut short by the Civil War. In 1840 there were 114 academies with 5,018 students; by 1860 there were 206 with 10,778 pupils. Besides these, unincorporated institutions undoubtedly existed, especially in counties which had no academies tabulated in the census. This was a period when seemingly every town had its academy.²⁸ The 1860 returns showed a marked increase over preceding ones, though not as great as that of the 1840's. By 1858 the academy was being superceded. A new type of school was coming into vogue; and while academies continued to increase, they took second place to military schools.²⁹

As early as 1831, Alabamians exhibited some interest in the military school as an academic and disciplinary institution. These schools usually required more of the state than incorporation and a charter. The purchase of arms demanded too much of an outlay for

1835. A former student wrote Professor Gessner Harrison of the University of Virginia asking for a certificate as he was thinking of opening a school in Tuscaloosa while studying there. Peyton Tutwiler to Gessner Harrison, December 1, 1834, Gessner Harrison Papers, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

²⁸Hyatt, Secondary Education, pp. 33-34. In 1850, there were 166 academies with 380 teachers and 8,290 pupils. U. S. Census, 1850 (Washington, 1853), 414-423.

²⁹U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, An Educational Study of Alabama, Bulletin No. 41 (Washington, 1919), p. 40.

defunct old one. Also, a search of the records does not show the many transitory institutions.²⁶ Men bidding their time often went to some community and opened an academy. Eager to attract paying scholars, these men catered to any whim. Such mediocre establishments were always short-lived. When students became scarce, the ineptness of incompetent management too overbearing, or enough money had been made to enter another pursuit, the master departed, closing the school. A few academies ceased to exist even before buildings were erected.²⁷

²⁶Stuart G. Noble, A History of American Education (New York, 1954), p. 133; Weeks, Public School, p. 20; Acts of Alabama, 1844, pp. 83-5 (Eufaula Male and Female Academy); Acts of Alabama, 1851, p. 366 (Masonic University); and Acts of Alabama, 1853, p. 489 (Alabama Female College) give evidence of name changes and property swaps. Perhaps the two clearest examples are the removal of most of the faculty and students of LaGrange College to Florence and the new school's subsequent incorporation as the Florence Wesleyan University, and the deal between the Valley Creek Academy and the Centenary Institute (later Summerfield College). Throughout the minutes, Centenary trustees spoke of that deal and wondered when the Valley Creek trustees were going to keep their part of the bargain. See Marion E. Lazenby, History of Methodism in Alabama and West Florida (Nashville, 1960), p. 1035; Anson West, History of Methodism in Alabama (Nashville, 1893), pp. 609-617; Summerfield College Trustees Minute Book (1840-1858).

²⁷There are many examples. Young Henry Watson wrote a friend from Greensboro that "few private tutors are wanted" in the state. Two months later he wrote his brother Theodore from Erie, Alabama, that he was teaching a school of 25--something he had not intended to do, but was undertaking because he "could find no other business." March 11, 1831, Henry Watson, Jr. Papers, Perkins Library, Durham, North Carolina. A young man advertised for a position "as a teacher in a private family or as a Clerk in a mercantile concern." Selma Free Press, October 10,

The legislature passed other, non-financial measures to aid schools' efforts to survive. Aimed at keeping students in school, a law passed during the 1828-1829 session exempting teachers and students from military and road-upkeep duties during school sessions. Attempting to insure that enrollees would be studious as well as present, the assembly acted again. Preachers, the pious, and temperance advocates were doubtless overjoyed, for the Evergreen Male and Female Academy charter provided that "no spirits . . . be sold within one mile" of the establishment.²⁵ While stymieing the corrupting influence of spirituous liquors, it also flattened the bankrolls of many merchants.

The number of name changes made tallying academies difficult. Frequently chartering a new institute or academy meant that an old one was assuming a new name, or that the new one was taking over the property of a

²⁵Weeks, Public School, pp. 19, 21; Knight, Education, p. 374; Acts of Alabama, 1839, p. 68; Senate Journal, 1825, p. 118. This provision was attached to most charters after the 1838-1839 session, and many were subsequently amended to include the prohibition. The distance varied (from one to three miles) as did penalties. Fines ranged from \$20 to \$1,000, and thirty to ninety days in jail. The stiffest penalty was imposed by McGhee College near Autauga--ninety days and \$500. Acts of Alabama, 1851, p. 356. Usually half the fines were allotted to the school, half to the county. For two years, 1823-1825, all fines collected in Madison were allotted to Green Academy. See Alabama Senate Journal, 1823, pp. 91, 172; 1825, pp. 47, 153.

legislature to limit first the amount of property which could be held, then annual income.

Allowing these institutions to hold lotteries to supplement building funds while physical plants were in the inchoate stages became common practice. Abuses followed. In the 1832-1833 legislative session, an academy near Statesville in Autauga county was authorized a \$5,000 lottery to raise money for a building fund. After the lottery was held but buildings failed to materialize, it was observed that this academy seemed to have wished incorporation solely to obtain the lottery. Fortunately, such deviousness was the exception.²³

The Franklin Academy of Russellville had its buildings already erected and thriving male and female departments (separate, though under the same management) when it applied for incorporation. As a bonus, the legislature exempted it from taxation. When similar generosity was taken advantage of by other schools, the amount of land which could be held tax-free was limited.²⁴

²³Weeks, Public School, pp. 18-20; Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 15; Knight, Education, p. 374. William Garrett tells the whole story of one such "mischief" in his Reminiscences, pp. 608-9. Alabama newspapers reported another in the Southern Military Academy in 1855. See the Huntsville Southern Advocate, May 30, November 28, 1855.

²⁴Knight, Education, p. 374; Weeks, Public School, p. 19; Acts of Alabama, 1837, p. 32 and Acts of Alabama, 1831-1832, p. 31; Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 15.

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²⁴Knight, Education, p. 374; Weeks, Public School, p. 19; Acts of Alabama, 1837, p. 32 and Acts of Alabama, 1831-1832, p. 31; Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 15.

for service 'in the tented field' but for all the occupations of life, in which the exact sciences in their application to the arts are of the greatest usefulness." Scientific education would be a boon to all the South, an education like "that exact, thorough, scientific training" given at West Point.³²

Initial efforts to found a military school in Alabama occurred near Huntsville. In May, 1831, Colonel Jabez Leftwich advertised his intent to found a military school with terms so reasonable that every male youth should be able to attend. The Huntsville Southern Advocate's May 14 issue noted that with an "opportunity so rare," citizens should "benefit themselves and do the country a service" by appearing and enrolling. Colonel Leftwich fell into disfavor when his school failed to open. The Southern Advocate then supported the proposed scientific and military school announced by M. R. Dudley and Bradley Lowe in October of the same year. Upon its opening on January 2, 1832, the paper praised the instruction as "more agreeable to the youth of our country," and solidly supported the institution.³³

One historian noted Alabama's "feverish interest"

³²Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, October 1, 1859.

³³Huntsville Southern Advocate, May 15, 1831; October 22, 1831; January 21, 1832.

in military education, and that in due time the state led the South in the number of military schools. Alabama's main efforts, he stated, were in state support of private military academies.³⁴ LaGrange and Glenville (in Barbour County) endured financial difficulties from their inception; Glenville even closed its male department in 1845 because of a lack of support. But in February, 1860, the legislature voted one hundred muskets and a field piece to each school and their revival was assured.³⁵

As the election year of 1860 drew near and safety valves were sealed, the South became increasingly interested in military training. The February, 1860 issue of DeBow's Review provided some indication of the tenor of the times: "We are glad to see these institutions [military schools] growing in number all over the South. Military Education is what our sons want, as, in all probability, they will soon be called upon to defend their hearthstones and their Liberties."³⁶ Accordingly, there was a rush to establish military schools or departments. LaGrange College had its charter amended to become LaGrange Military Academy. The state's Quartermaster General was authorized

³⁴Franklin, Militant South, pp. 148-9, 154, 159-160.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 161-2; Acts of Alabama, 1860, p. 90.

³⁶J. D. B. DeBow, "Editorial Miscellany," DeBow's Review, XXVIII (February, 1860), 239.

to furnish the school "one brass field piece, one hundred new regulation muskets and three officers' tents and guard tent, and twenty-one company tents, with all necessary equipments."³⁷

At the request of the trustees and president, the legislature provided a military department for the University. All students were placed under military discipline, and the governor was instructed to furnish the officers necessary rank and "the necessary ordnance, arms, equipment, and munitions" for the school's operation. The United States Secretary of War supplied an officer to introduce the new system to the University--Captain Caleb Huse, a New Englander much opposed to slavery.³⁸

The same year an act passed establishing the Southern Military Academy near Wetumpka. A Superintendent and Commandant of cadets "qualified to give instructions conjointly in the course of studies pursued by the cadets of the United States at West Point, and in such other branches of knowledge as they may deem necessary" were

³⁷Edgar W. Knight, A Documentary History of Education in the South before 1860 (Chapel Hill, 1950), IV, 234-5; Acts of Alabama, 1860, p. 90.

³⁸Marie B. Owen, The Story of Alabama (New York, 1949), II, 428; Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 11. Huse liked it so well that he made Alabama his home and fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War, procuring munitions in Europe. See Caleb Huse, Personal Reminiscences and Unpublished History of His Life.

appointed as colonel and lieutenant colonel respectively. Once chosen by the superintendent, the faculty was to "proscribe a course of studies, select text-books, establish rules and regulations for the government of themselves and the cadets; punish, reprimand, suspend or expel any cadet for misconduct; and fix rates of tuition."³⁹

Except that they were to be governed by the same rules as the students, such a school would be a heaven for autonomously-minded teachers. Rules like these were an important reason for interest in military education. The populace tired of riots and student unrest on Alabama's college campuses. Parents hesitated to send their children to such a den of iniquity as the University, where "the young idea was taught how to shoot" literally as well as figuratively. Believing that strict rules would lead to better discipline and therefore quieter campuses and more education for their children, they cheered military schools.

On January 11, 1861, the legislature voted 61 to 39 in favor of secession from the federal union. Military schools had barely begun operations; they had certainly not had time to improve upon the system of their predecessors, the academies. Although women were naturally

³⁹Acts of Alabama, 1860, p. 130-132; Knight, Documentary History, IV, 233-4.

excluded, the source of students was otherwise much the same for both institutions. Those unable to afford college work were encouraged to attend. The legislature required a few academies to accept a certain number of indigent students in return for their many benefits. So it was with military schools. In 1860, the legislature provided for the military education of two young men from each county. Every court of county commissioners was to select "two indigent young men as State Cadets, who shall be of sound mind, and body, able to read and write correctly, and between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one years." These young men were to go to Glenville or to LaGrange, depending upon the decision of the court. Each cadet was to get not more than \$250 (drawn semi-annually) for each year he attended. He also had to pledge that he would return to his home county upon leaving, to teach school and drill the county militia for the same length of time as he had been a State Cadet.⁴⁰ This generous arrangement provided an excellent opportunity for young men willing to take advantage of it.

From the very beginning the legislature had been generous. It had tried whenever possible to meet the people's needs, encouraging education in every way short of outright monetary grants. The academy and military

⁴⁰Ibid., IV, 231; Acts of Alabama, 1860, p. 91.

school ultimately formed part of the same movement toward a broader education and shared in this aid. Together they comprised an attempt by the state to spread education to a greater percentage of Alabama's population. Despite the later popularity of the military schools, women probably benefited most from this concept of education.

The success of the academy and military school as mediums of education deserves special consideration. The degree of achievement is almost immeasurable, for as late as the mid-1850's much of Alabama was still raw frontier territory. The state, like many of its men, was "on the make." Conditions during most of the antebellum period did not allow the system of public education for which more settled areas were striving. Many Alabamians were too busy to bother (if they bothered at all) with more than the rudiments of education. The legislature's aid to academies and military schools was an attempt to provide the means for as many as wished to obtain some kind of formal knowledge. The educational theory was elitist in that only whites and only those with some interest could obtain formal education. It was "universal" in that white Alabamians tried to supply an education for all whites who wished one--women as well as men.

The network of academies and military schools provided some higher education in the state, though just how much is difficult to ascertain. Academies were

scattered along the range from the elementary level through not-very-good "prep" schools to second-year-college level terminal schools. The general level seems to have been good, but the universality is questionable, especially with the evidence of so much illiteracy in the state.

During the first part of the era, a small group of academies performing high-level work saved the whole structure from mediocrity. The rash of military schools, which resulted as much from a desire for disciplinary measures as from war fever, redeemed the academy method of education in the later years. For many, the ability to remain home for two extra years made completing their education possible. This "prep" school function was most important, for it assured them of the chance to attend a four-year college.

CHAPTER III

ALABAMA'S COLLEGES

In many cases attendance at an academy for two additional years did not prove a blessing. While schools often boasted that they could prepare students for junior level work, for many it was just a boast. Students were often "conditioned" upon their arrival at a four-year school--their admittance was approved upon the condition that they make up deficiencies before assuming regular standing. Such was the argument for colleges, which form the next step in the evolution of higher education in antebellum Alabama. As with academies, an overview of the colleges' development is a prerequisite to any study of their functioning. A brief look at the establishment and development of each of the state's major colleges is in order.

The number of antebellum Alabama colleges has always been questioned. Contemporaries placed the number from two to five; later writers claimed from four to twenty-three. As with academies, titles signified little.¹

¹DeBow's Review, XVIII (January, 1855), 28, places the number at "two perhaps three," though the University

Out of the mass of schools chartered by the legislature, three distinct "waves" emerged. The push in founding antebellum colleges peaked in 1830-31, 1839-42, and 1854-56. These waves produced the colleges which served the state most consistently. Tuskegee Female College (1854) and the East Alabama Male College (1856) at Auburn formed the basis of later institutions, but their impact upon antebellum higher education was slight. The same seems true of most other schools founded in the fifties. Only their number helped, for it meant that more students, aided by shorter distances to travel, could attend.

The major colleges were, with but one exception, denominationally founded and supported. LaGrange College, which opened in January, 1830, was a Methodist endeavor, as was Southern University, founded in 1856. Spring Hill, in Mobile, though housed in temporary quarters, began under

and Howard are the only two mentioned. Ibid., X (April, 1851), 477, lists five--the University (9 teachers, 92 students), LaGrange (6 teachers, 76 students), Spring Hill (12 teachers, 70 students), Howard (6 teachers, 40 students), and Oakland (6 teachers, 64 students). One theological school (Baptist at Marion, 2 teachers, 10 students) and one law school (University, 1 teacher, no students) are also listed. Donald G. Tewksbury, in his Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War (New York, 1932), p. 28, states that twenty-three were founded but includes no female colleges. Rhoda C. Ellison (Huntingdon, p. 2) asserts that seventeen were founded with eight remaining (University, Spring Hill, Judson, Howard, Athens, Huntingdon, Birmingham-Southern, and Auburn). The census reports five in 1850, seventeen in 1860; Boyd, Alabama in the Fifties, p. 188, reports twelve in 1858, with a total enrollment of about 1,450, though six others "could be called colleges."

Catholic auspices in the summer of 1830. Almost a year later, in April, 1831, the exception to the denominational pattern opened as the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Judson College, in Marion, became operational during the early months of 1839. Two years later Howard College, also in Marion, began instruction as had Judson--under Baptist guidance.²

Colleges were established which despite impressive prospectii, were evidently no more than academies. Mobile College was chartered by the legislature with the stipulation that it could grant degrees only after sufficiently satisfying the University's President and Trustees of the University of Alabama that such a collegiate course was pursued "as will justify the conferring of such degrees."³ North Alabama College, chartered in the 1851-52 legislative session, was to have professorships of agriculture, civil engineering, and "the mechanic or fine arts" as well as departments of law, medicine, and theology.⁴

Of the various secular organizations, Masons were probably most actively concerned with education. During

²Department of the Interior, Educational Study, p. 41.

³Weeks, Public School, p. 20.

⁴Woody, Women's Education, I, 22; Acts of Alabama, 1851, p. 356.

the seven years prior to 1854, that fraternal order averaged establishing a school yearly in Alabama. One of these, the Central Masonic Institute of the State of Alabama (1848), became the Masonic University of Alabama in 1852.⁵ Outside the work done by organized groups, little was accomplished, despite the occasional formation of a school by individuals or small groups. Norman Pinney, founder of the Collegiate Institute in Mobile, was one such individual.⁶ In 1854, the Tuskegee Female College was chartered at the request of a "group of public-spirited men and women." The Montevallo Male Institute came into existence in much the same way.⁷ These accomplishments were clearly exceptions.

The University was probably the main recipient of "prep school" products. When the legislature considered locating this state institution, it pondered the feasibility of Athens or some adjacent location in Limestone County; Township 17, Range 18 in Autauga County; Wilson's Hill in Shelby County; Gage's Place in Perry County; and another location near Tuscaloosa. After due consideration, the trustees recommended that "in order to minimize sectional

⁵Weeks, Public School, p. 22; Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 37.

⁶Caldwell Delaney, The Story of Mobile (Mobile, 1962), p. 82. The school was familiarly known as "Old Blue College."

⁷Acts of Alabama, 1853, p. 396; 1857, p. 88;

jealousy, the University be placed as near the center of the state as health and convenience will permit."⁸ On December 29, 1827, the legislature selected Tuscaloosa. On March 22 of the next year, the trustees chose a level plateau near Marr's Spring about a mile and a quarter east of the County Courthouse.⁹

As soon as the geographical decision had been made, the trustees authorized the expenditure of \$1,250 for an adjacent fifty-acre tract owned by James Paul. The purchase was deemed necessary on two counts: "to prevent immoral persons from settling," and because of "the superior quality of clay for making bricks for the buildings and the quality of wood thereon which could be spared for burning them." Two days later (March 24) the architect, Captain William Nichols, and the building committee presented

Owen, Alabama, II, 502, 454.

⁸Sellers, University, I, 28-9. It was deemed inexpedient to locate the school "at any extremity" when a central location was procurable. Alabama Senate Journal, 1825, p. 135. These were the only serious contenders for the honor and the only ones named in the Trustees' report in 1822 (Alabama Senate Journal, 1822, p. 104-5), though others were discussed. The report was submitted in late December, 1822, but voting did not take place until 1827. Thirteen locations were suggested and nineteen ballots required to select one. "Davis" Place in Autauga County was the front runner for fourteen ballots, coming within seven votes of the required majority on the twelfth. Alabama Senate Journal, 1827, pp. 101-9.

⁹Willis G. Clark, History of Education in Alabama, 1702-1889 (Washington, 1889), p. 36; McCorvey, "Tutwiler," pp. 83-4.

estimates on two blocks of dormitories, one of professors' homes, a chemical laboratory, and lecture rooms patterned somewhat after the University of Virginia.¹⁰

The University rested on an ample site--eighty acres on both sides of the Huntsville road. The southern portion was enclosed and partly occupied by a vineyard and fruit trees, which were to be the basis of an experimental farm.¹¹ The northern part contained an estimated \$56,000 worth of buildings. Like the conception of the new University, the buildings were native products.

Constantine Perkins, a local landowner interested in the venture's success, donated sandstone from his Warrior River land. Bricks were made on the spot. Lumber was individually selected from the University's land and cut and shaped by hand. The labor was slave, except for such skilled workmen as the stonemasons, who were trained artisans of Scotch descent.¹²

First University President Dr. Alva Woods was inaugurated on April 12, 1831. At eleven o'clock that morning, following his address stressing "the importance

¹⁰Ibid.; Sellers, University, I, 30.

¹¹Owen, Alabama, II, 423.

¹²Sellers, University, I, 32. In 1828, the trustees bought a Negro slave, Ben, to plant trees and keep up the fences. He was sold with a horse, which had also apparently been needed in the construction work. Separate contracts were let for each phase of work.

of learning and knowledge to the safety, liberty, prosperity, and moral and religious improvement of man," Dr. Woods was sworn in. Six days later, the institution's open doors greeted thirty-five boys.¹³ These first students moved in as they could, bringing with them the frontier's earnestness and unruliness. Their arrival and preparations for college life clearly indicated the difficulty of travel to and from school and, for many, the invariable skimping once the trip was made. As a recent writer described the scene:

Tuscaloosa was a new town, practically on the frontier. There were no railroads. Some of the students came by stagecoach; some, bringing personal slaves with them, drove up in stately family carriages; some came by oxcart; and others . . . on foot over dusty roads. Sons of the richer planters had pockets well lined with money for tuition and college expenses. Less fortunate boys brought hams and other farm produce to offset their college bills.¹⁴

It is highly doubtful that the arduous trip was unproductive even for the most unprepared. Although examining faculty members were instructed to admit only those over fourteen years of age who exhibited "an acquaintance with English

¹³Ibid., I, 4, 31; Owen, Alabama, II, 424; Knight, Documentary History, III, 3; McCorvey, "Tutwiler," p. 96.

¹⁴Sellers, University, I, 5, 38.

grammar, a knowledge of arithmetic and geography, an ability to commence the reading of higher Greek and Latin authors, and testimonials of good character," it was an inescapable fact that the University "could not be too particular about its academic standards."¹⁵

The University seemingly was on a par with most of the first state universities, which were "small, politically controlled, afflicted with violent denominational controversies, poorly supported by the States, much like the church colleges about them in character and often inferior to them in quality."¹⁶ Actually, the University ranked relatively high among contemporary institutions.¹⁷ It gradually assumed membership in the community of higher education, as is evidenced by requests for cooperation and offers of assistance from other institutions.¹⁸

¹⁵Ibid., I, 116, 118; These were the standards advertised in the catalogue and newspapers throughout the period. See for example the catalogues and Manly Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

¹⁶Ellwood P. Cubberley, An Introduction to the Study of Education (Cambridge, 1925), p. 358.

¹⁷Edward and Richey, School in American Social Order, p. 432.

¹⁸Sellers, University, I, 87. Aid came from the observatory in Washington, when a copy of all observations was offered. The Smithsonian requested that the University keep a meteorological journal and forward a copy to the Institute.

Cognizance was taken of great exertions "to purchase a respectable library and philosophical apparatus, and in point of professorships and other appointments, to place it on a footing with the most respectable institutions of the kind."¹⁹ The consensus seemed to be that those "great exertions" produced excellent results.

Throughout the antebellum period the University struggled against formidable odds. A fight against poverty and for scholastic progress, an enlarged physical plant, sound scholarship on the part of the faculty, experimentation with educational systems, and stern discipline were the characteristics.²⁰ No matter how good the school, the lack of students was a problem. In an address on October 9, 1850, Governor H. W. Collier publicly deplored the University's lack of patronage. He asked that citizens send their sons to the University instead of "distant schools whose standards are by no means better."²¹

"Home folks" comprised a student body majority.

In 1837, out of a total enrollment of 101, there were only

¹⁹Knight, Documentary History, IV, 294. See Manly Letterbooks, Gorgas Library, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

²⁰Moore, Alabama, p. 344.

²¹See the Greensboro Alabama Beacon, October 19, 1850; Sellers, University, I, 174. The address was printed in most of the state's newspapers, which commented at length upon it.

Church, was a member of the University Trustees when he met northern educator Milo P. Jewett. Learning that Jewett was scouring the South for a good girls' school location, King invited him to Marion. In December of the same year, 1838, the visit was made. Immediately the decision was made to open a Baptist school in Marion, and a large wooden building near Siloam was procured for a nominal sum. On January 7, 1839, the school opened with nine pupils, Mr. Jewett, his wife, two assistant teachers, and a board of trustees headed by General King.³⁸ The school's historian has written:

In October carriages and wagons traversed the highways leading into Marion from east, south and west, bringing the beautiful daughters of the wealthy planters to school It soon attained so high a reputation for thorough work, cultivation of a fine religious character, and training in elegant manners, that it . . . was soon the most flourishing institution for girls in the South.³⁹

Within a year, the enrollment had increased to ninety-four. Not all were collegians, for two other departments existed--primary and preparatory. In 1841, the legislature incorporated the Judson Female Institute

³⁸Manly, Judson, p. 7; Johnson, Education of Baptists, p. 140.

³⁹Manly, Judson, p. 14. Despite the fact that Baptists had "resolved to establish an institute for young ladies," three of these first nine students were boys, p. 31. Manly's statement is, of course excessive.

house with funds they did not have. While their step forward in faith might have succeeded under different circumstances, the depression of 1837 caught the school short and it closed.³⁶

Various associations within the Baptist State Convention recognized the need for educational facilities and many made abortive attempts to fill it. The East Alabama Female College in Tuskegee was open and operating by 1852 (although already \$5,000 in the red) when it was chartered. The Muscle Shoals Association appointed trustees for a female institute at Moulton, which received legal life the same year. The Coosa Association at its 1851 meeting appointed an executive committee to erect a school "of high character for the education of males" within the association.³⁷ The greatest success in such endeavors was secured in Marion. From this one town grew two of the state's main schools, Judson Female Institute and Howard College.

General Edwin D. King, a wealthy planter-businessman and influential member of Marion's Siloam Baptist

³⁶Alabama Baptist State Convention Minutes, 1837, pp. 8-9; 1838, p. 4. Hereafter referred to as ABC Minutes. The story begins in the 1834 minutes. Walter B. Posey, "The Early Baptist Church in the Lower Southwest," Journal of Southern History, X (February, 1944), 171; Knight, Documentary History, IV, 121.

³⁷Ibid., IV, 398-9; Acts of Alabama, 1851, pp. 372, 375.

One educational fad of that United States era was the manual labor school. Little endowment was necessary for such schools; fertile soil and a convenient market for surplus products seemed insurance against failure. The manual labor plan was the first adopted by Alabama Baptists trying to aid indigent young men called to the ministry.³⁴ In 1833 Baptists decided to found an Alabama college, and within the year a 355-acre farm was purchased near Greensboro. It was to achieve two basic functions: work would theoretically produce money enough to pay tuition and all or part of indigent students' board, and would prove vocationally valuable in Alabama or any other predominantly rural state. The Alabama Institute of Literature and Industry began operation in 1835 with fifty ministerial students. Four years later the school was abandoned because, as Nathaniel Hawthorne discovered, the nature of farm work and of academic study precluded efficiency in either when pursued simultaneously.³⁵ The first year's crop was only seven hundred bushels of corn and one hundred fifty bushels of potatoes. Unfortunately, school officials built two dormitories and a professors'

1842-1902," Howard College Bulletin, LXXV (October, 1927), p. 7. One indication of this importance is the choice of "Judson" as the name for a Baptist girls' school.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 7-8.

³⁵Johnson, Education of Baptists, pp. 147-8.

which was open to all, regardless of creed.²⁹ LaGrange College, a Methodist institution, de-emphasized theology in its curriculum, functioning purely as a literary and scientific institution. Both were apparently amazingly open-minded, considering strong denominational prejudices.³⁰ Perhaps tolerance was due to the essentially religious and moral Scotch-Irish ideal of education--an education for every man--though it may have been merely the frontier's democratizing influence.³¹

As America entered the nineteenth century, Methodists and Baptists began capturing the frontier from the Presbyterians.³² The genesis of Baptist schools in Alabama can only be explained in light of this and of the great missionary movement which stirred that sect in the early 1800's. In 1813 Baptist missionary Luther Rice, who sparked the great missionary surge, returned from India convinced that ignorance was the greatest single enemy to foreign missions and denominational progress. Schools to educate Baptist leaders seemed "the most effective way to promote the cause of missions."³³

²⁹Michael Kenny, Catholic Culture in Alabama (New York, 1931), pp. 53, 72, 96-7.

³⁰Perry, Birmingham-Southern, p. 10.

³¹James M. Dabbs, Who Speaks for the South? (New York, 1964), p. 89.

³²Ibid., p. 90.

³³Mitchell B. Garrett, "Sixty Years of Howard College

education in the state, wielding a powerful influence throughout the antebellum period. The situation in Alabama was in accordance with the theory and practice of the day. Even though national consciousness and pride and taxable property increased the trend toward state-supported schools, the various sects dominated higher education. Of the 246 colleges of national significance founded before the end of 1860, only 17 were state institutions.²⁷ Following the expanding frontier westward, each denomination sought to disseminate its "truth." One practical method was to establish academies and colleges. Whether because of pure sectarian pride, a genuine interest in the educational process, or a combination of the two, church schools sprouted like weeds.²⁸

Alabama seems to have been more tolerant than some more settled states. Perhaps it was a matter of pragmatism. Whatever the reason, even the most sectarian schools were open to those of other persuasions. In 1835 the state legislature chartered Catholic Spring Hill College,

James remarked in 1846: "Then what joy, yea what transforming ecstasy will accompany the thought of being free from the restraints of College life." (May 20, 1846). Lide-Coker Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina.

²⁷Cubberley, Introduction, pp. 7-8, 358.

²⁸Edward D. Eddy, Colleges for Our Land and Time (New York, 1957), p. 3; Tewksbury, Founding, pp. 1-8, 22-3, 56-8, 66-8; Griffith, Alabama, p. 141.

adolescents' frontier heritage, a rebellion against strict rules was a surety. Frequent clashes implied that students paid more attention to their brawls than their studies.²⁵

Full-scale riots erupted in 1834 and 1837. The 1834 riot, described by C. C. Clay, Jr., in a letter to his father, began at 9 o'clock on a Saturday night. Ten students threw bricks and a bottle at one of the faculty, then armed themselves with pistols and clubs. A pistol was fired at an unfortunate tutor, who made a hasty exit through a nearby window. When Dr. Wallis, another professor, attempted to quiet the group (which now numbered twenty), he faced cocked pistols. About 1 a.m. the disturbance ended. Young Clay observed, "I would not risk my life in Dr. Woods' situation for his salary [sic] for I believe that there are students in colledge [sic] who would shoot him if they did not fear the laws of the land." Often pistols were fired "from dark to midnight," a situation that Clay predicted would "injure the colledge [sic] very materially thro' out the union."²⁶

Alabama's denominational schools helped further

²⁵Ibid., I, 225; Tewksbury, Founding, p. 27.

²⁶February 24, 1834, C. C. Clay Papers. After the 1837 riot, all the faculty save one resigned. If evidence of the restiveness which led to riots is needed, the letter of James A. Fountaine to Hannah Coker should provide it. An 18-year-old University Junior, young

four boys enrolled from Mississippi, two from North Carolina, and one from South Carolina, a fairly typical distribution.²² Though the enrollment was generally about 100 (95 the first year), there were only 370 graduates during the University's first three decades. The 26 in 1859 comprised the largest graduating class.²³

Despite a fine record and promise of future contribution, the University's chief contemporary reputation was that of a trouble spot "where unruly and destructive boys, brandishing dirks and pistols, rode roughshod over their mentors, outraged the townfolk, and made University life a continuous, disgraceful brawl."²⁴ The reputation was probably never wholly deserved, but discipline was the paramount problem. Riots, one of the main supports of the dubious reputation, were not unknown. The fundamental problem evidently was the rules themselves, which rigidly governed every minute of campus life. When youth's high spirits and the urge to fight and roister and get into mischief was coupled with these

²²Ibid., I, 115.

²³Ibid., I, 116; Griffith, Alabama, p. 136.

²⁴Sellers, University, I, 197. To some extent this rowdiness was true of all the schools, but none seem to have had as much trouble as the University. Bolling Hall Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, and C. C. Clay Papers, Perkins Library, Durham, North Carolina and newspapers like the Independent Monitor point this out.

with "full power to confer diplomas on pupils formally completing the course of study."⁴⁰ Until 1843, legal title was vested in General King, the trustees, and the Cahaba Baptist Association. In November, 1842, General King gave his interest to the Alabama Baptist Convention, meeting in Montgomery. On November 6, 1843, the entire property was deeded to the Convention with the stipulation that should it dissolve, the land would revert to the Cahaba Association.⁴¹

Judson was as much a frontier product as the University. As frontier ideas and ideals had shaped the University's destiny and the soil its exterior, so it was with Judson. An architect trustee drew up the blue-prints and supervised construction. Besides advancing needed money, others put their own Negroes to work, fired the brick for the building, and constructed an edifice "large and elegant for the times."⁴² The Convention acquired a booming school, with a capacity of about two hundred fifty pupils ("one-half of them boarders" and "most of the rooms having four young ladies only in each").

⁴⁰Ibid.; Griffith, Alabama, p. 142; Owen, Alabama, II, 498.

⁴¹Manly, Judson, pp. 14, 34; Johnson, Education of Baptists, p. 140. ABC Minutes, 1842, pp. 4, 7, 15; 1843, p. 6.

⁴²Manly, Judson, p. 14.

Within ten years the two hundred mark had been passed and capacity crowds were seeking admittance.⁴³

Judson's objective, according to an early writer, was to awaken the mind, cultivate the heart, improve the manners, and form habits of order, industry, economy, and simplicity in the girls. A useful Judson education, one of the first school officials stated, would "furnish the head, improve the heart, refine the taste, and polish the manners of every pupil . . ."⁴⁴ A consistency between theory and practice, which even led to some coeducational classes, enhanced Judson's reputation. The fact that "habits of system, order, industry, economy, and punctuality" were fundamental components of a Judson education has been listed as a prime cause of the institution's prosperity.⁴⁵ A reputation for thoroughness in "all branches of education" (especially such ornamental ones as music and art) attracted a large patronage, no doubt

⁴³Ibid., pp. 17, 20. Enrollment held at about 120 girls during the first half of the 1840's, but rose to about 150 by 1845. Elizabeth Fountaine to Hannah Coker, April 10, 1841; December 18, 1841; March 4, 1843; James Fountaine to Hannah Coker, January 10, 1845, Lide-Coker Papers; ABC Minutes, 1853, p. 13.

⁴⁴Manly, Judson, pp. 10, 32.

⁴⁵Griffith, Alabama, p. 143; Garrett, "Howard," p. 33. The unusually large classes in chemistry, natural philosophy and physiology took lectures at nearby Howard College in the 1840's and 1850's. This was a practice followed by female schools whenever possible; Alabama Female Athenaeum received the same service from the University.

also impressed by the school's "permanence." Parents and guardians regardless of religious preference sent their children from every part of the old Southwest. Judson became "the best known and most popular female seminary in the Southwest." It was a finishing school with a diploma "highly esteemed because it was not easily obtained."⁴⁶ Consequently, though the unhealthy hot months of August and September were spent with parents, the winter months, "the golden season of study," saw girls flock into Marion.⁴⁷

Not only did Marion Baptists wish to educate the gentler sex; a male companion institute (which would add to Judson's attractiveness by providing male companionship, even in the coeducational primary and preparatory levels) was contemplated. The failure of the manual labor school at Greensboro left state leaders in a quandary. Advocates of such schools held that ordinary education made students' minds "effeminate, imperiled morals, fostered laziness, and was undemocratic." As a disciplinary measure "to teach the sons of planters how to labor with their hands" the system had been applauded.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Griffith, Alabama, p. 143; Manly, Judson, pp. 34, 38; Elizabeth Fountaine to Hannah Coker, March 4, 1843; Eli H. Lide to Hannah Coker, July 16, 1840, Lide-Coker Papers.

⁴⁷Alabama Baptist, January 6, 1844.

⁴⁸Robert W. Howard (ed.), This Is the South (New York, 1959), p. 77; Garrett, "Howard," p. 12; ABC Minutes, 1837, p. 8.

Yet selling the Greensboro land to liquidate a \$7,000 debt left Baptists without a school to educate future ministers.⁴⁹

Churches desperately needed a better-educated ministry. There was concern that young men were compelled to leave the South if the need was to be met. In 1841, the Baptist State Convention resolved to establish and endow a college or university of "high character" and maintain a theological department in conjunction with it. At a special session the same year, the Alabama legislature chartered Howard College and allowed it to grant degrees in the arts and sciences.⁵⁰ On January 3, 1842, the school opened to receive the nine boys (eight from Marion, one from Montgomery) who came for their schooling to the pleasant village of twelve hundred that was Marion. Within a year, the enrollment had reached seventy-seven, partly because of the Presbyterian Manual Labor Institute's failure, from which Howard's President S. S. Sherman obtained students as well as apparatus.⁵¹

Marion Baptists' donation of land purchased for a male college paid dividends.⁵² A Theological Department,

⁴⁹Owen, Alabama, II, 492.

⁵⁰Johnson, Education of Baptists, pp. 147-8; Weeks, Public Education, p. 21; ABC Minutes, 1841, pp. 3-6.

⁵¹Garrett, "Howard," pp. 18, 22-3; Johnson, Education of Baptists, p. 148.

⁵²Garrett, "Howard," p. 19.

distinct in its operations and funds from Howard College, was added in late 1842. A permanent fund of \$20,000 was raised in addition to \$15,000 for buildings, apparatus, and other equipment. By the third year's end, the endowment had reached \$20,000, and the school possessed \$8,000 worth of scientific equipment and a 1,400 volume library.⁵³

Having outgrown the frame building Judson had used to launch its educational career and survived one fire, the school moved in September, 1846 into a new four-story brick building.⁵⁴ The college continued to grow in its new location, and 1854 began with brighter prospects than ever. The facilities were excellent, and it was observed that there were more students, seemingly older and better prepared than usual for college work. Unfortunately, catastrophe blighted the promising season. The new building's two top floors were dormitory rooms while the bottom two contained the chapel, laboratory, library, recitation rooms and professors' offices. There were no fire escapes--only interior staircases. On October 15, between midnight and one o'clock, Howard

⁵³Ibid., pp. 23, 26; Johnson, Education of Baptists, p. 149. Unfortunately, the first seven theological students could not make the grade. ABC Minutes, 1844, pp. 5-8; 1845, pp. 7-9.

⁵⁴Ibid., 1846, pp. 10-12; 1847, pp. 7-8; Griffith, Alabama, p. 142; Garrett, "Howard," p. 28. The fire had been in 1844, set by an arsonist according to rumor. James Fountaine to Hannah Coker, May 14, 1844, Lide-Coker Papers.

College burned.

A local paper reported the tragedy: "So rapid were the flames in their progress that scarcely anything could be saved, and Books, Apparatus and Laboratory, together with all things pertaining to the edifice, save the College notes, now lie a heap of smoldering ruins."⁵⁵ Largely due to the efforts of the college slave, Harry, only one life was lost. Instead of saving himself, Harry went to each door and wakened the boys inside. The errand completed, flames forced him to jump from a hall window. Harry died as a result of injuries sustained in the leap. Physical damage was estimated at from \$15,000 to \$20,000, not counting the libraries of the college literary societies, and professors and president, all of which vanished in the conflagration.⁵⁶

Marion citizens subscribed \$6,000 that night toward rebuilding the college. Two days later the town-folk had raised \$8,000 and \$2,200 more was promised by individuals of the Cahaba Association. On October 18,

⁵⁵See Garrett, "Howard," pp. 28, 42, 44; B. F. Riley, Makers and Romance of Alabama History (n.p., n.d.), pp. 594-7; ABC Minutes, 1854, pp. 18-22; 1855, pp. 19-20.

⁵⁶Ibid.; Garrett, "Howard," pp. 42, 45. Harry was buried in the public (white) cemetery at Marion. Over his grave was erected, by the joint contribution of the officers and students of the college and members of the State Convention, a "neat and handsome obelisk." Ibid., p. 49.

recitations were resumed in the town hall and the basement of Siloam Church. Growth was steady, though slow, and 1858 saw a new high in enrollment (145 students).⁵⁷ Howard continued to educate young men, having been "founded by the Baptist State Convention for the sons of the planters, as the Judson was for their daughters."⁵⁸ A student of Howard's early days succinctly evaluated the academic status of the school: "Measured by the standards of the present day, Howard was not yet a great institution; but in that day and generation Howard suffered very little by comparison with the University of Alabama."⁵⁹

The other major denomination in antebellum Alabama, Methodism, attempted to match the Baptists school for school in the race to propagate the "true" version of Christianity. At first, Alabama Methodists supported an organ of the Tennessee Conference, Athens College for Young Women, but in 1829, the Methodists located LaGrange College in the town of the same name.⁶⁰ On January 11, 1830, Alabama's first college opened. It was incorporated eight days later. The only real restraint placed on it by the tolerant legislature was the prohibition against

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 43-4; Johnson, Education of Baptists, pp. 22-3; ABC Minutes, 1858, pp. 22-23.

⁵⁸Manly, Judson, p. 38.

⁵⁹Garrett, "Howard," p. 30.

⁶⁰Owen, Alabama, II, 521.

adopting "any system of education which shall provide for the inculcation of the peculiar tenets or doctrines of any religious denomination whatever."⁶¹

The school grew steadily and seemed a profitable undertaking; by 1851 LaGrange had 225 students and an endowment of \$50,000. But in 1855 the college moved to Florence and became Florence Wesleyan University. The city had offered the Methodists new buildings and \$20,000 to move. Because of heavy indebtedness, the Methodists sold the old campus buildings and charter, moved, and obtained a new charter. A short time after the relocation, the Methodists donated the new school to the state.⁶²

In 1839, heartened by LaGrange's decade of growth, Methodists established Centenary Institute at Valley Creek in Dallas County. In 1842 the school opened, struggling for survival from the first. With Methodist aid and a name change (to Summerfield College) it managed to remain open for 16 years.⁶³ Despite Summerfield College's disheartening progress, Methodists decided to risk another educational endeavor. In 1854 a committee was appointed to select a site and obtain money to found and maintain

⁶¹Weeks, Public School, p. 19; Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 37.

⁶²Acts of Alabama, 1855, p. 207; Perry, Birmingham-Southern, p. 10; West, Methodism, p. 629.

⁶³Ibid., p. 11. The school could not grant degrees until 1845. Acts of Alabama, 1844, p. 14.

a new establishment. The Conference's 1854 Talladega session decided to found a male college. The criterion for selecting a site was money. It was agreed that whatever place offered \$100,000 "in good subscriptions" should have the school. Auburn bid the necessary sum; Greensboro dispatched three men to the conference with a promise of \$300,000 and power to raise the bid if necessary. After three days, Greensboro, located in Black Belt Hale County, was chosen.⁶⁴

As a result of this action, two new schools were formed--one at Auburn (in East Alabama's Lee County) and one at Greensboro. After losing their bid for the new institution, the Auburnites applied for Methodist aid to found still another school. Following a stormy debate, the request was granted. The East Alabama Male College charter was passed, vetoed, then repassed by the Legislature on February 1, 1856. The first session began October 1, 1859.

⁶⁴Perry, Birmingham-Southern, pp. 11-13. The Greensboro Beacon, March 23, 1855, proclaimed that the University did not deserve support--for thirty-four years it had failed to "measure up to public expectations." Within three months the Beacon was in a newspaper battle with the Auburn Gazette over the proposed Methodist school. The Gazette termed Greensboro a sickly prairie accessible only by bad roads while pointing to Auburn's own healthy climate and railroad connection (which, according to the New Orleans Christian Advocate was worth "half an Endowment."). Though not refuting the health issue, the Beacon observed that railroads brought "adventurers, loafers, pickpockets, and rowdies." Beacon, June 8, 15, 1855. Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, pp. 14, 15.

Enjoying a prosperous career until suspending operation in 1862, it then became state property, as had Florence Wesleyan University.⁶⁵

The main school to issue out of the Conference meeting in Talladega was incorporated January 25, 1856, as Southern University. Southern shared East Alabama Male College's fate in its attempt to procure a charter. Despite legislative approval, the charter was vetoed by Governor John A. Winston on the grounds that the provision prohibiting the sale of liquor within five miles of the campus should be replaced by a general law. An unsympathetic legislature refused to pass the general prohibition but overrode the veto. A site near Greensboro was purchased and the cornerstone laid on June 11, 1856, by the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Alabama Masons.⁶⁶ On October 3, 1859, Southern University opened with about fifty students, who came to a school with assets of approximately \$320,000. At the end of that school year on July 4, 1860, the first Southern University Commencement was held and two young men honored.⁶⁷ The school continued

⁶⁵Acts of Alabama, 1855, p. 212; Owen, Alabama, II, 446; Perry, Birmingham-Southern, p. 10.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 13-14; Acts of Alabama, 1855, p. 219; Owen, Alabama, II, 509.

⁶⁷Perry, Birmingham-Southern, pp. 18, 20. A constant lack of funds delayed the opening until 1859. Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 30.

to flourish between that graduation and the faculty and students' desertion to enter the Confederate Army.

The Catholic Church did not follow the other denominations' plan of educational attack on ignorance. Catholics concentrated on one institution and tried to make it the best possible rather than support three or four schools. The Catholics had been attempting to establish a school in Alabama since Sieur de Bienville's governorship in the first half of the 1700's. A century later the first Bishop of Mobile, Michael Portier, decided that this dream should be realized. He invested his major resources--five priests, five seminarists and twenty-five thousand francs--in a college. When city fathers offered him 350 acres of land as a gift, he chose Spring Hill. While close to Mobile, it was far enough away to provide the necessary seclusion. The investment, coupled with all Portier could borrow, served as the platform from which the leap of faith was taken.⁶⁸

On July 4, 1830, Bishop Portier laid the cornerstone of his college. The school occupied the summit of a hill six miles west of the city between two streams running east to the Bay on either side of Mobile.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Roy W. Vollenweider, "Spring Hill College: The Early Days," Alabama Review, VII (April, 1954), 129; Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 55.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 7; Owen, Alabama, II, 526.

While work was being done on the hilltop school, classes met in the De Angelis Hotel below. Classes nominally began in May before the cornerstone was laid, but the college did not achieve full operation until the fall of 1831. Fifty to a hundred students entered the new building, formed like those of other Alabama schools from native wood and clay by slave labor.⁷⁰

Spring Hill was chartered on January 9, 1836, but it was another four years before the Pope sanctioned it.⁷¹ Bishop Portier sought an order to assume responsibility for the school and free his priests for their regular work. The French Fathers of Mercy were finally persuaded to operate Spring Hill and on December 8, 1840, began their brief tenure. At their insistence Pope Gregory XVI allowed the school to grant theological degrees. Armed with this power, the Fathers of Mercy began their first classes on January 13. Unfortunately, they were missionaries, not teachers. Realizing that teachers make such institutions work, they relinquished ownership and proprietary rights to Spring Hill the next year.⁷²

Two years later the Eudist Fathers of Rennes, France,

⁷⁰Ibid.; Vollenweider, "Spring Hill," pp. 129-30; Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 64.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 44; Vollenweider, "Spring Hill," p. 130.

⁷²Ibid., p. 131; Kenny, Catholic Culture, pp. 103, 105.

offered their services. In the fall of 1844 they began, but by March, 1845, for reasons unknown, they too decided to forego the honor of operating the college.⁷³ Understandably unhappy and evidently worried over the transitory nature of his recent faculties, Bishop Portier closed the school until it could be reopened under more favorable circumstances. Between the lapse of the Fathers of Mercy's direction and the Eudists' succession to control, Spring Hill had operated without an official president or faculty.⁷⁴ After the demise of Eudist rule, Portier seemed determined that such a condition should not be imposed upon the school again.

In choosing the next managers of his pet establishment, Portier exercised discretion. Jesuits seemed the perfect choice, for since they were about to be excluded from Lyons, France, a number were available. After much haggling, a set of conditions was approved. The Jesuits were to take over the school and twenty acres of land, pay full value for the furniture and movables, and supply free tuition and board to one seminarist for every ten lay students up to a maximum of twelve. For any over this number, the annual charge could only be \$100. In return, Bishop Portier was to cede the school to the

⁷³Ibid., pp. 108-9.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 107, 110.

Jesuits and lend them (for two years only) the chapel ornaments, the "physical cabinet" and the library.⁷⁵ After arriving at Mobile in January, 1847, the Jesuits attempted to modify the agreement. Successful negotiations secured an additional hundred acres and a reduction to ten tuition-free seminarians. In addition, all seminarians above the stated ten paid regular fees unless employed by the college. The agreement also ceded the movables, physical cabinet, library, and chapel ornaments and furnishings to the Society of Jesus.⁷⁶

Spring Hill was without doubt the most cosmopolitan early Alabama school. Many students came from Louisiana, the West Indies, and Mexico. Its effect was international:

Many of these boys were from wealthy and powerful French and Spanish families, and their attendance at the college made Mobile one of the best-known cities of the United States to Latin Americans. It is said that at one time a majority of the members of the Supreme Court of Mexico were alumni of Spring Hill College.⁷⁷

The first graduating class (in 1837) listed Stephen R. Mallory of Trinidad, West Indies--later Confederate Secretary of the Navy--as one of the four honorees. In 1847, Ireland, Cuba, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts,

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 130, 136.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 133.

⁷⁷Delaney, Mobile, p. 82.

Texas, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana and Alabama were represented in Spring Hill's student body.⁷⁸

Following the vogue, the school was operated largely on a modified manual labor scheme after 1837. All able-bodied students performed one day's farm work each week. The Jesuits were farmers, dairymen, laundrymen, plowers, mowers, reapers, brickmakers, bricklayers, carpenters, cooks, bakers, tailors, shoemakers, nurses, and doctors. The school was almost completely self-sufficient, with teachers setting the example for their young charges.⁷⁹ And young their charges were; at the end of the first year, there were few boys over twelve years old. It seems that Spring Hill began its existence primarily as an academy type institution, then followed the same general pattern of evolution into a terminal institution.

It is clear that in Alabama, as elsewhere, denominational colleges were more important than the state university. While drawing a few students, the University suffered from its reputation as a trouble spot. Repelled, many prospective patrons helped foster the growth of the denominational schools. This led to a dispersion of the support which might have built one superior school. In

⁷⁸Kenny, Catholic Culture, pp. 98, 139, 153.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 134, 176.

1858, Alabama supported twelve colleges with a total enrollment of 1,450 students.⁸⁰ Besides the University, there were only four other schools which "did work of high quality" according to historian A. B. Moore--LaGrange, Howard, Judson, and Spring Hill. Those schools maintained strong faculties and respectable laboratories and libraries. Their course of instruction, except for those leading to the ministry, "conformed to the general college curriculum of the time."⁸¹

After gaining an understanding of educational theories, the academy movement, and the establishment and development of colleges, the day-to-day operations are all that are lacking for one to gain insight into higher education in antebellum Alabama. One of the major problems of daily operation was finances.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 79; William B. Hesseltine, The South in American History (Englewood Cliffs, 1960), p. 214.

⁸¹Moore, Alabama, p. 344.

CHAPTER IV

THE QUEST FOR FUNDS

Besides students, the major concern of early Alabama colleges was finances. Appeals were made to every source which might provide money or something readily convertible. First the state government, then Congress was petitioned for funds. With little expected from either body (but a good deal gained), schools soon turned to individuals. Few escaped the deluge of requests for money. Attempts were made to collect from a large number of small contributors as well as from the rich.

Possibly because Southerners looked upon education as a personal and local affair, their general approach was not constant demands on public funds. A few states used lotteries, tavern licenses, marriage licenses, dog taxes, banking taxes, fines for violations of the law, and property taxes for money to aid education.¹ Some

¹Alexander Peterson, A Hundred Years of Education (London, 1952), p. 42; Cubberley, Introduction, p. 413. Usually fines allotted by Alabama to schools were connected with illegal liquor. Most of the money went to academies, generally on a 50-50 basis with the county involved. See Acts of Alabama, 1851, p. 378; 1853, pp. 379, 420, 488, for examples.

states even used the money obtained to aid education!

This was the general pattern--a pittance, and nothing more.

Though the usual method was to let schools fend for themselves, the Alabama legislature pursued a different policy. In 1816, the territorial assembly appropriated \$1,000 for an equally-divided gift to the first two academies--St. Stephens and Green Academies.² In the second session, Huntsville and St. Stephens banks were allowed to increase their capital stock by auctioning shares. Ten per cent of all profits was divided among the shareholders, the rest given to the two academies.³ These two instances of state aid proved harbingers of the future.

The state's financial aid to education took two special forms. Exemption from taxation and loans of state property provided some aid; the allocation of money from fines to school treasuries and provisions for lotteries were more positive help. Though inconsistent in its attempts, the Alabama legislature's aim seemed to be genuine aid to higher education. Hindrances were usually blunders by well-intentioned advocates--errors which were no less

²Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 4; Weeks, Public School, p. 23; E. C. Betts, Early History of Huntsville (Montgomery, 1916), p. 39; Statutes of Mississippi Territory, 1816, p. 453.

³Pickett, Alabama, p. 634; Betts, Huntsville, p. 39. The academies got \$2,000 each from the transaction. Huntsville Alabama Republican, November 10, 1820; Weeks, Public School, p. 18.

disastrous for being unintentional.

One type of aid for higher education appeared in the first state constitution. There, Alabama provided for a "fund for the exclusive support of a State University . . .; and it shall be the duty of the general assembly to provide effectual means for the improvement and permanent security of the funds and endowments of such institutions."⁴ The legislature's constant struggle to perform its outlined duty involved a tangled story of financial battles and mutual recriminations between assembly and University. The \$50,000 set aside for "necessary buildings" at a special legislative session pleased University trustees.⁵ The main problem came from a federal government gift and from the state bank.

The Enabling Act Congress passed in 1817 for the Alabama Territory provided that the "section numbered sixteen in every township . . . shall be granted to the inhabitants of such townships for the use of schools," and that one township should be reserved "for the use of a seminary of learning."⁶ A great deal of land was thus

⁴Knight, Documentary History, III, 137.

⁵Ibid., III, 195; Owen, Alabama, II, 423.

⁶Moore, Alabama, p. 321; Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America, III, 491. One had been reserved when Alabama became a territory--Ibid., III, 467--making a total of two townships.

secured. Alabama received title to seventy-two sixteenth sections, a total of 46,080 acres.⁷ Judiciously selected, these lands included some of the most fertile acreage in the state. The Tennessee River Valley, the expanse along the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers, and the Black Belt contributed their share to education.

Provisions were made for first the leasing, then the outright sale of University lands.⁸ In January, 1826, three people from each judicial district were selected by a joint vote of both houses and directed to divide the land into three classifications. For top quality land, the existing \$17 minimum per acre was retained, but land in the two lower-grade classifications could be sold for \$12 and \$8 respectively. Times were good in the 1820's and land sales forged steadily ahead.⁹ By 1828, the University's fund had grown to \$285,000.¹⁰

⁷Pickett, Alabama, p. 660; Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 41; Joel C. DuBose, Alabama History (Richmond, 1908), p. 114.

⁸For bills pertaining to leasing, most dealing with individual cases, see Alabama Senate Journal, 1819, pp. 51, 130; 1822, pp. 156, 157; 1824, pp. 57, 123; 1823, pp. 21, 110; 1826, pp. 69, 100. For those concerned with sales see Alabama Senate Journal, 1821, pp. 52, 101, 105; 1823, pp. 149, 158, 166; 1826, pp. 126, 141, 154. After the mid-1820's such legislative action was the result of individual petitions. Alabama Senate Journal, 1827, pp. 36, 43.

⁹Sellers, University, I, 15-16; Alabama Senate Journal, 1824, p. 95; 1826, pp. 133, 149; 1825, pp. 78, 132.

¹⁰T. P. Abernethy, The Formative Period in Alabama,

the case with private schools. Judson and Howard requested Alabama Baptist Convention aid in gathering an endowment. Methodist schools did the same with the Alabama Conference, as did the Presbyterian academies with the Synod.³⁵ Yet for private schools, the main source of funds was not the denomination to which they owed allegiance. They depended more upon another source--the beneficence of interested parties.

Institutions with "college" appended to their names depended upon many appeals to patrons. Tuskegee Female College garnered \$26,000 in subscriptions from Macon and neighboring counties. In 1857, another drive raised the fund to \$30,000. The goal was an additional \$35,000 for dormitories.³⁶ Marion Female Seminary sold stock in an attempt to raise endowment. Alabama Central Female College at Tuscaloosa did the same after forming a syndicate.³⁷ Estimating that \$10,600 would be needed, Lowndesboro Academy

request was for more students. Alabama Baptist, July 24, 1854; A. B. Meek, The Southwest; Its History, Character, and Prospects, (Tuscaloosa, 1840), pp. 7, 25.

³⁵Each school submitted a yearly report, usually abstracted in the local papers.

³⁶Ellison, Huntingdon, pp. 5, 22; Lazenby, March, p. 1050; West, Methodism, p. 729.

³⁷Minnie R. Darden, "History of Marion, Alabama, 1817-1940," (Unpublished Thesis, University of Alabama), p. 17; Marshall, Presbyterian, p. 1466; Blandin, Women, p. 104.

financially independent. Many academies tried lotteries, but most colleges indulged in other methods to raise permanent endowment.³² Early in 1850, the problem was succinctly put by A. W. Chambliss, editor of the Alabama Baptist. Noting that tuition was higher in female than in male colleges, he concluded that "the smallness of tuition fees . . . renders a heavy endowment indispensably necessary."³³ Each school sought endowment, though the idea did not catch on until about 1850. Before then, schools relied upon subscriptions whenever money was needed. But they had seen the public tire of repeated calls for funds.

The University was a special case. Here the call was to the legislature rather than the populace at large. The Trustees pleaded with the legislature to restore the University Fund, so that improvements could be made. The only other call was upon faithful alumni.³⁴ Such was not

³²See the Alabama Senate Journal, 1821, pp. 94, 100 (for Montgomery); 1824, pp. 49, 127 (for Baldwin County); 1825, pp. 109, 130 (for Montgomery); 1827, pp. 83, 86 (for Henry County); 1854, p. 425 (for Southern Military Academy); Garrett, Reminiscences, pp. 608-9 and the Huntsville Southern Advocate, May 30, November 28, 1855 give some lottery results. Tickets were sold, with all money above prizes being profit.

³³Alabama Baptist, March 13, 1850.

³⁴Such reports were often aired in newspapers. See for example the Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, January 6, 1848; Florence Gazette, December 7, 1859; Huntsville Democrat, September 14, 1854. The main

inspire contributors. Potential donors were told that grants to Alabama's colleges would promote the spread of progress, social unity and order, and even that they would help spread true religion in the state.³¹

Contributions were sought for buildings, operating expenses, and such mundane problems as more library books, apparatus, a new school bell, or even fencing the campus. Perennially short of funds, schools requested subscriptions whenever they faced extraordinary expense. First, the call for money would go out. Then agents would cover the state (often for several causes at the same time). Money was collected in all forms--cash, bonds, promissory notes which would only be valid when a certain amount had already been pledged, and notes contingent upon the weather and crops. Funds arrived from large contributors and small, living and dead. Yet the problem remained. Money was scarce, whatever the amount collected. So many schools called for funds, it is amazing that each got so much.

The primary need for money was endowment. Alabama schools fervently hoped and plead for funds to make them

³¹Garrett, "Howard," p. 19; Merle Curti and Roderick Nash, Philanthropy In the Shaping of American Higher Education (New Brunswick, 1965), p. 53; Knight, Documentary History, IV, 330-1. This argument was used to promote all levels of education, as James Mallory observed when he preserved the speaker's advocacy of a proposed male high school as "in aid of the cause of religion and good morals." March 28, 1852. Mallory Journals, Harwell G. Davis Library, Birmingham, Alabama.

1854 created an effective state superintendency to oversee school funds. The officer proved a zealous watchdog. The next year a sympathetic champion of Southern education, DeBow's Review, could call Alabama's school fund one "excelled by but three" Southern states.²⁹

The assembly no doubt assumed (and rightly so, judging from their proliferation) that academies needed most of the available aid.³⁰ Aside from the University, Alabama's colleges were largely dependent upon private donations. In their search for funds, Alabama's institutions of higher learning contacted anyone from whom they could expect help. Generally, subscriptions "secured by notes or sealed bonds," which were nothing more than glorified "I. O. U.'s," were the standard contributions.

Arguments of every description were used to

1825, pp. 47, 153. See footnote 1.

²⁹Rush Welter, Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America (New York, 1962), p. 131; DeBow's Review XVIII (January, 1855), 21. Both Welter and DeBow point to Alabama as a leader among the Southern states, but the distinction seems, at best, a dubious honor.

³⁰Most state aid went to academies. Approval to borrow money, accept gifts (up to \$100,000), and even sell stock (at from \$25 to \$100 per share) was given largely to academies. Endowments were sanctioned but generally expenditure was limited to the interest alone. LaGrange College, long a favorite with the legislature, was voted a \$9,488.38 loan on mortgage or personal security at six per cent for ten years. Acts of Alabama, 1853, p. 189. Such monetary aid was rare where denominational schools were concerned.

invested and lost.²⁵

The final outcome was a pathetic spectacle. The legislature had deprived the state of an economically and culturally elevating factor in its shoddy attempt to obviate itself of any blame for failure. The University trustees' 1859 report showed that land sales had brought the University \$441,451.93. According to the report, "had the original price of seventeen dollars an acre been received, the total would have been almost twice as large."²⁶ Joel Riggs, state comptroller in 1851, summed it up concisely when he stated that "perhaps of all trust funds none had been so greatly mismanaged as the school funds of Alabama."²⁷

Although well-meaning legislators bungled the job of caring for the University fund, they were luckier with other attempts to aid higher education. Lotteries were universally popular and widely used. Occasionally fines and forfeitures were diverted to the use of a needy school.²⁸ Profiting by earlier misfortunes, the state in

²⁵Moore, Alabama, p. 324.

²⁶Sellers, University, I, 22.

²⁷Moore, Alabama, p. 325; William Garrett gives an insider's version of the whole University land and fund affair, though it is spread throughout his Reminiscences and must be dredged out.

²⁸Alabama Senate Journal, 1823, pp. 91, 172. This was repealed two years later. Alabama Senate Journal,

years, the state bank had failed, carrying all hope of respite with it.²¹ Seeking redress, the trustees continually reminded the general assembly that its legislation on behalf of University land purchasers had deprived the school of funds greatly in excess of the indebtedness.²²

Finally, in 1838, a committee was appointed to investigate, negotiate with the school, and report back to the legislature. Its report showed a bank debt of approximately \$100,000, while the University's loss due to relief laws was \$255,745.73. As the large debt was hindering "many very valuable and necessary improvements," the committee recommended liquidation of the mutual indebtedness. The legislature magnanimously agreed.²³ In addition, it declared the University fund to be \$250,000, "the punctual payment of the interest on which, at the rate of six per cent, per annum, the faith and credit of the State was forever pledged."²⁴ By this proclamation and the March 6, 1838 act, the state shifted from itself to the taxpayers the burden of providing the annual interest on a paper fund, the principle of which had been

²¹Sellers, University, I, 23; Griffith, Alabama, p. 132; Moore, Alabama, p. 323.

²²Sellers, University, I, 24.

²³Ibid., I, 25; Acts of Alabama, 1838, pp. 137-8.

²⁴Ibid., Owen, Alabama, II, 426.

generally would not aid the University.¹⁸

It seemed that Alabama might benefit from the Distribution Fund, created in 1841 by Congress for internal improvements. When a fight over the Fund arose, an editor commented that while Alabama had 22,592 illiterates over the age of twenty-one, her "wise-education-loving Locofoco Legislature, refused to receive her portion of the Distribution fund."¹⁹ After some not-too-gentle persuasion, the general assembly accepted Alabama's share of the "National Surplus Revenue" (\$669,086.78), earmarked it for education, then deposited it in the State Bank.²⁰

Even with this money in the bank, the University constantly overdrew its account and went deeper in debt. The situation worsened when school funds were lost in that financial debacle, the Panic of 1837. Within ten

¹⁸Cahawba Press and Alabama Intelligencer, January 7, 1822. The legislature placed its emphasis on people rather than protecting the funds earmarked for education. A sympathetic legislature passed numerous relief bills--see Alabama Senate Journal, 1820, pp. 68, 80; 1825, p. 80; 1827, pp. 43, 110. There were notices warning that debts to the University must be paid. The warning often cautioned that violators would be sued. See the Tuscumbia North Alabamian, February 28, 1835. It was a different matter with private schools. In Florence Synodical Female College's incorporation, court action was specifically approved as a method of securing bad debts. Acts of Alabama, 1854, p. 354.

¹⁹Athens Alabama Statesman, February 10, 1842.

²⁰Moore, Alabama, p. 323.

declining. And while University land prices remained stable, the federal government reduced its prices to \$2.50 an acre, making it impossible for the University to receive maximum benefit from its land.¹⁵ A committee of trustees in 1833 reported a tangle of carelessness and incompetence which had been growing for ten years. No one could discover which lands had been sold, which remained in the school's possession, and what debts were still outstanding.¹⁶ This financial tangle alone did not stop the University from realizing the fullest return from land sales: the state government itself seemed determined to reduce the possibility of the school's economic independence. In 1834, the legislature appointed a committee to appraise lands sold for \$17 per acre, then declared forfeit for debt. They decided that certificate holders who had been thus mistreated should be allowed to retrieve the land at the new markdown value. Many took advantage of this opportunity, causing the University considerable losses.¹⁷ Often subscriptions went unpaid and officials resorted to threats of legal reprisals, threats with which the state

¹⁵Ibid., I, 16; Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America, V, 261, lists \$2.50. Sellers obtained his information from Trustee records, which say \$3.50.

¹⁶Huntsville Southern Advocate, September 23, 1833.

¹⁷Sellers, University, I, 21.

All purchases had to be paid for in gold and silver. To make the use of checks, notes, drafts, bonds, and paper money possible, the state legislature established a state bank. On December 20, 1823, the bank was chartered, with branches in Montgomery, Mobile, and Huntsville.¹¹

In the charter, the general assembly decreed that proceeds from University land sales be deposited in the bank. From these funds \$100,000 became part of the institution's capital. In return for their investment, University trustees received stock bearing six per cent interest.

The amount of money which could be invested was limited, and proved a source of contention for several years.¹²

Some University land had sold during the booming 1820's for \$60 an acre, but by 1834, 42,539 acres still remained unsold.¹³ In 1833, the legislature had realized the problem and permitted the trustees to invest up to a \$300,000 investment in the state bank.¹⁴

Another difficulty followed the solution of the investment problem. In the 1830's, cotton prices were

1815-1828 (Tuscaloosa, 1965), p. 157.

¹¹Alabama Senate Journal, 1823, p. 111.

¹²Ibid., 1826, pp. 142, 156; 1823, p. 95; 1825, p. 132; Sellers, University, I, 22; Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 34.

¹³Ibid., p. 41; DuBose, Alabama, p. 114.

¹⁴Sellers, University, I, 23; Acts of Alabama, 1833, pp. 60-1.

followed the same course of action.³⁸ Such partially successful moves were necessary because the subscription system had proved faulty.

It was thought that subscribers would feel some spirit of pride and responsibility in the school to which they pledged money. The attitude should have been that evidenced by a patron writing the Huntsville Democrat editor: "Being a subscriber to the Institute, we felt a kind of identity with its interests, so that a failure would necessarily involve a series of feelings which naturally follow the defalcation of a splendid enterprise."³⁹ Yet this was not always the case. Some schools found, as did Huntsville's Bascom Female Institute, that expected voluntary contributions did not always materialize.⁴⁰

Agents were well aware of the problem in collecting money for schools. James H. DeVotie, Howard College agent for 14 months, noted that tight money and poor crops made times bad for contributions. Yet during his tenure, he traveled about 5000 miles for just over \$40,000 in subscriptions, while "getting previous obligations in note

³⁸See the H. V. Wooten Diary, entries for January 5, February 16, 1850; March 10, 1851.

³⁹January 22, 1842.

⁴⁰Only about \$10,000 in subscriptions was secured, much of that doubtful. \$3,500 had already been spent, and plans called for a total of \$50,000. See West, Methodism, p. 658.

form" and "making conditional notes available and productive at the present." He also collected funds due "on former obligations."⁴¹ Circulars were often sent in hopes that such personal travels would prove unnecessary.⁴² Yet, as a correspondent wrote DeVotie from Lebanon, Alabama: "They are ready too to believe every tale of speculation and fraud practised by money agents, and are therefore afraid to entrust their money to any one no matter what their character for integrity and piety might be."⁴³

Personal travels remained essential.

There were simply too many school agents attempting to gather funds from the same people. It was estimated that to support six professors at LaGrange, agents had to procure \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year.⁴⁴ This amount, multiplied by the number of schools and professors involved, indicates the problem's magnitude. Yet endowment remained the goal. Southern University had an endowment estimated at \$300,000; LaGrange received \$20,000 and a complement of

⁴¹Over a 2 1/2 year period. DeVotie Papers, SC 4:3, Samford University.

⁴²One of the best examples of the circulars is that of Z. G. Henderson, Howard agent in 1857, preserved in the Manly Papers, Furman University. The Huntsville Democrat of November 22, 1832, printed a similar circular for LaGrange.

⁴³Livie W. Lawler to James H. DeVotie, September 10, 1843. DeVotie Papers, Samford University.

⁴⁴Richard H. Rivers, The Life of Robert Paine (Nashville, 1884), p. 66.

new buildings when it moved to Florence as Florence Wesleyan University.⁴⁵ But subscriptions were relied upon for more mundane matters, for endowments never reached the necessary proportions. Especially early in the era, schools had to rely upon private subscriptions to keep operating.

The "necessities of life" differed from school to school. Howard's president, Samuel S. Sherman, trundled a wheelbarrow through Marion's streets to gather much-needed library books. Contributions were sought for a new school bell.⁴⁶ The ladies of the Siloam Church Society employed a German gardener in 1849 to lay out Judson's walks and plant oaks and cedars on the lawn.⁴⁷ Dr. and Mrs. Barron, wealthy Marion residents, lodged and boarded President Jewett and his wife for two years, and gave them the \$800 due in Ohio for the carriage and horses that brought them to Alabama.⁴⁸ At LaGrange, agents were commissioned in 1830 to collect for a library,

⁴⁵West, Methodism, p. 628-9; Greensboro Alabama Beacon, February 23, 1855. \$40,000 was subscribed by five men.

⁴⁶The subscription list for the new bell is preserved in the DeVotie Papers, Samford University.

⁴⁷Darden, "Marion," p. 22.

⁴⁸From a commencement sermon by Charles Manly, whose father Basil was instrumental in getting Jewett to Marion. Manly Papers, Furman University. The Barrons also boarded the two assistants for a year.

"Chemical and Philosophical Apparatus, Minerals, and Natural Curiosities."⁴⁹

While some might think that schools were "money making machines," as one mother wrote her son, this was only wishful thinking.⁵⁰ Collections took every form. Land, a favorite commodity, could be sold for money to be used at the school's discretion.⁵¹ But it could often be put to better use. Academies were built on land donated by Dr. Stephens M. Ingersoll in Summersville, by one Sims in Tuscaloosa, and by Robert Beaty of Athens.⁵² Buildings were often accepted, as in the case of the LaGrange removal and the University Trustees leasing the old State Capitol building to Alabama Central Female College.⁵³ Bishop Soule and Bishop Andrew, Methodist officials, gave books for the fledgling library at

⁴⁹Huntsville Democrat, June 24, 1830.

⁵⁰M. E. Thompson to her son, December 4, 1859. Benson-Thompson Family Papers, Duke University. The Greensboro Alabama Beacon indicated much the same feeling in its August 20, 1852 issue and again on July 28, 1854. The editor observed that schools were "private enterprises, undertaken and conducted . . . to make money." That was, he noted, "the real object of those engaged in teaching."

⁵¹Such was the case with some lands advertised in the Selma Free Press, September 26, 1835.

⁵²Robert Hardaway Book, p. 5; Blandin, Women, p. 72; Griffin, Athens, p. 8.

⁵³See the Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, July 23, 1857, July 29, 1858.

Southern University; Bishop Paine, later president of LaGrange, gave 1000 acres; John W. S. Napier offered 5,780 acres; and Col. John Erwin followed suit with a large tract of land.⁵⁴

The school tried many methods of inspiring contributors. In an effort to meet present needs while forgetting the future, scholarships were offered in return for immediate payment. A substantial savings could be effected by those with money in hand. Yet scholarships had the practical effect of reducing income from tuition in the future. Howard College deferred payment on subscriptions over \$100 for three years from the date of agreement.⁵⁵ Any person or group subscribing \$1,000 was entitled to a "permanent scholarship." Those promising \$500 received a scholarship to send one person through the whole preparatory and collegiate course or two people through four years of college. Ministers were encouraged

⁵⁴Daniel P. Christenberry, Semi-Centennial History of Southern University (Greensboro, 1908), p. 20.

⁵⁵Ibid., 334; Garrett, "Howard," pp. 23-24. At the end of 1849, the system of scholarships was revised. \$100 gave a single scholarship; \$250 was good for a permanent scholarship if paid by a minister or church (others paid \$500). The plan was to go into effect only when \$30,000 worth of scholarships were sold; when \$50,000 had been collected, subscribers under the old system would have the same privileges as those under the new. Alabama Baptist, December 12, 1849, reporting a Convention decision.

to give \$500 by the promise of a "permanent scholarship."⁵⁶

LaGrange tried the same approach in 1854, when the trustees offered 750 scholarships, each running 20 years, for \$100 each. Payment was made in four installments, with the interest (computed at 8 per cent) paid annually.⁵⁷

Athens Academy was probably most successful in obtaining promised money. Judge Daniel Coleman, Trustee Chairman, assumed the job of collecting. Commenting on the remarkably proficient judge, a writer for the Athens Post remembered some years later that Coleman "made it part of his business at all his courts to bring the matter before his friends, and I believe always successfully."⁵⁸

At all schools (except possibly the University), endowment, buildings, salaries, and operating expenses depended largely upon generous contributors. Programs mainly depended on a solid base of small contributors, but occasionally there were people who, before or after death, contributed large sums to education. At Greensboro,

⁵⁶Ibid., 61; Knight, Documentary History, IV, 338. Southern used the same idea in its attempt to raise money. Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 27.

⁵⁷Huntsville Democrat, July 13, 1854. The operation of the scheme was contingent upon the "full sale of the scholarships."

⁵⁸Griffin, "Athens," p. 10, quoting the Post of April 24, 1869.

several men endorsed \$100,000 for buildings at Southern, while L. Q. C. de Yampert gave \$25,000 to endow a new chair of Bible Literature and John W. S. Napier donated 5,780 acres of land.⁵⁹ Dr. and Mrs. Barron paid the first year and a half's rent for Judson's building.⁶⁰ Jere H. Brown, wealthy Sumter County planter, gave his note for \$25,000 toward endowing a new chair of theology at Howard.⁶¹ Huntsville Judge John McKinley offered Athens citizens a large tract of land provided they would "build a suitable school house, employ a competent teacher, and establish a respectable Female Academy."⁶²

Often people interested in higher education provided assistance in their will. William B. Bibb bequeathed real estate to the Coosa Academy.⁶³ A widow, Mrs. Sarah A. Thompson, heeded the injunction of the Nashville Christian Advocate, which exhorted

⁵⁹Perry, Birmingham-Southern, pp. 19, 14; Christenberry, Southern, p. 19; Greensboro Alabama Beacon, February 23, 1855. De Yampert, who owned 245 slaves in 1855, was the largest slaveholder in Perry County, Alabama, at that time. Weymouth T. Jordan, Hugh Davis and His Alabama Plantation (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1948), p. 22.

⁶⁰Manly, Judson, p. 9.

⁶¹Garrett, "Howard," p. 59; Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, September 6, 1859.

⁶²Griffin, "Athens," p. 7, quoting reminiscences from the Post of May 16, 1867, and April 3, 1869.

⁶³Alabama Senate Journal, 1825, p. 42.

Methodist to care for their estates while living rather than send "themselves and their families to hell!"

Mrs. Thompson's will left \$16,000 to the Alabama Conference--\$4,000 to Tuscaloosa Female College, \$5,000 to Tuskegee Female College, and \$7,000 to Centenary Institute.⁶⁴

Probably the largest individual donation came posthumously from Major M. A. Browder of Eufaula. In his will, Browder stipulated that \$100,000 of his estate be put in trust for Glennville Collegiate and Military Institute. The interest was to pay professors' salaries and help educate indigent citizens.⁶⁵

Groups as well as individuals aided Alabama's attempts at higher education. In 1835, Livingston citizens began a fund to erect a local school. Sims Female Academy in Huntsville was founded in much the same way--it was the townspeople's wish "to give their friends an opportunity of educating their youths where their morals and principles would not be ruined by bad examples and erroneous sentiments."⁶⁶ With its three schools, Marion was a center of education in Alabama in 1842. Howard and Judson owed their founding and continued existence

⁶⁴March 8, 1855; Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 13; Ellison, Huntingdon, p. 40.

⁶⁵Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, August 23, 1859.

⁶⁶Yeatman Collection, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery; West Methodism, p. 428.

to the city. Within a ten year period (1839-1849), Marion Baptists gave Howard and Judson \$60,000.⁶⁷ The citizenry gave Howard \$4,500 to purchase a preparatory department building, and the ladies of Montgomery and Marion raised money for a badly-needed library.⁶⁸ In the summer of 1859, Marion ladies once more began a drive, this time to fence and beautify Howard's campus. Between \$1,200 and \$1,500 was raised, \$500 of which came from an ice cream and strawberry supper at Siloam Baptist Church.⁶⁹

A more indirect form of state aid, such as the law of January 21, 1831, which exempted all academies from taxation, also existed.⁷⁰ The University was exempt from taxation, and all its "officers, servants and students" were "exempt from taxes, serving on juries, working on roads, and ordinary military duty."⁷¹ Additional state aid appeared in large and small matters.

⁶⁷Jordan, Hugh Davis, p. 11; Manly, Judson, pp. 33, 39; Johnson, Education of Baptists, p. 141.

⁶⁸Griffith, Alabama, p. 141; Garrett, "Howard," p. 54.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 58; Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, May 10, 1859.

⁷⁰Woody, Women's Education, I, 338; Acts of Alabama, 1831, p. 117.

⁷¹Knight, Documentary History, III, 190; Teachers and students throughout the state had been exempted from military duty by an act of 1825. Alabama Senate Journal, 1825, p. 118.

The 1851-1852 legislature deeded the old State Capitol in Tuscaloosa to the University trustees and all furniture was moved to the school.⁷² In 1858, the legislature gave the University all apparatus and chemicals used in the recently completed State Geological Survey as well as the specimens (minerals, rocks and soils) collected.⁷³ Government at the local level often entered the aid race, as when Mobile offered 380 acres to Bishop Portier (if he would pay the \$400 tax on it).⁷⁴

Despite aid from various sources, schools barely remained solvent. For the school year 1832-33, the University's income was \$15,358.54 (\$12,958.54 interest on \$215,977.36 plus \$2,400 from student fees). Disbursements amounted to \$16,740. By 1858 the Trustees reported expenditures of \$29,292.90. The next year outlay had risen to \$33,762.55. In both years officials attempted to balance the budget with an income of only \$18,500 (\$3,500 of it from tuition).⁷⁵ From 1848 to 1860 the University received only \$15,000 yearly on an investment of more than \$400,000.⁷⁶ At one point University

⁷²Owen, Alabama, II, 427.

⁷³Acts of Alabama, 1857, p. 284.

⁷⁴Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 501.

⁷⁵DeBow's Review, XXVIII (February, 1860), 239.

⁷⁶Sellers, University, I, 26-7.

disbursements exceeded legislative appropriations and the entire income fund by \$26,890.⁷⁷

Not only the University suffered from lack of funds. The Baptist Manual Labor Institute in Greensboro was sold in 1837 to pay a \$7,000 debt. With \$2,000 and a first-hand knowledge of deficit spending, the Alabama Baptist State Convention decided to be more careful of their debts.⁷⁸ When Howard College was established, operation could begin as soon as a permanent fund of \$50,000 had been raised, but in no case were debts over the amount subscribed to be incurred.⁷⁹ If all scholars had been paying full tuition, matters would not have been bad. Unfortunately, by the 1850's scholarships and beneficiaries had halved tuition income from the \$4,000 which could have been obtained in the 1852-53 session. Tuition and endowment interest totalled \$6,000, but with salaries at \$6,500 and operating expenses still to be met, one year's deficit operation was certain. When the final reckoning was taken, Howard was working with a \$1,000 deficit. State Baptists did not respond to Howard's needs as did local citizens. Consequently times remained hard

⁷⁷Ibid., 23.

⁷⁸ABC Minutes, 1838, pp. 4, 7; 1859, p. 9; Garrett, "Howard," pp. 15-16.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 20. ABC Minutes, 1842, pp. 11-13.

for the school.⁸⁰

As for the academies, their lot was a difficult one too. Their trustees attempted to make fees cover school plant upkeep and salaries. Though somewhat better at meeting their financial responsibilities than were colleges, academies too had a difficult time.⁸¹

Throughout the antebellum period, money was a constant problem for Alabama's schools. For the University, the state government was as much a hindrance as an over-zealous watchdog. The legislature faced conflicting ideals. Though the assembly did not wish to control a system directly, or even set one up in this heyday of laissez-faire, the state nonetheless had certain desires to impose upon the schools. Legislators wanted to set their impress without paying the price. Some laws caused difficulties for many schools; others were "commonsensical" safeguards against future problems. Despite the state's seeming reluctance to deal with the problem of education, the legislation's cumulative effect was greater than might be expected. The state's actions bespoke a genuine interest

⁸⁰Garrett, "Howard," pp. 27, 65.

⁸¹Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 29. Even legislative aid did not provide sufficient income in many cases. Despite approval to accept gifts, sell shares of stock, and even accept posthumous endowments as in the case of Pickens Academy (Acts of Alabama, 1859, p. 323), money was too scarce in these institutions.

in higher education.

Whether individual contributors meant well but were unable to meet payment on their notes or just neglected to do so, the result was always the same--tight times for Alabama schools. As no one system could be counted on to produce ample funds, even when money seemed over-abundant these schools lacked enough. This scarcity of funds retarded development in such areas as libraries, for money was needed for more pressing matters. Even state action could not alleviate the problem. Fortunately, members of the various faculties remained at their place and the schools usually continued to operate. Without doubt, however, the lack of money seriously retarded the schools' capabilities to reach their full potential. It also influenced their operation, the curriculum perhaps most. Whether cutting courses from lack of funds or moving toward a more practical offering in an attempt to woo frontier supporters, the schools demonstrated the power of the purse over curricula.⁸²

⁸²Curti and Nash, Philanthropy, bring out this point admirably. See especially pp. 51, 60.

CHAPTER V

CURRICULA

The power of the purse over curricula was indeed great. Curricula, public examinations, commencement exercises, and reports to parents reflected the schools' quest for funds. Of these, the curricula showed the impress of money most clearly. Curricula took several forms in antebellum Alabama. First, there was the general curriculum, that basic clutch of subjects shared by all colleges. At several schools this unit was augmented by special courses, generally scientific ones. Finally, there were special departments or schools, sometimes linked in a university arrangement but often totally separate, independent entities. Theology, law, teacher training, and medicine were generally treated in this fashion.

The tendency was to provide education to meet the state's needs, and attempts to establish special schools followed the trend. This was evident in attempts to train much-needed teachers, doctors, and lawyers, and in the manual labor movement and courses in the new sciences. The trend toward technical training was mainly evidenced by the handful of schools founded upon such principles--

military schools, the manual labor institutes in Perry County and in Greensboro, Central Southern Mechanical and Literary Institute in Coosa County, Mobile Mechanical Institute, and Commercial College of Montgomery. Such special departments for technical training as the agriculture and civil engineering sections of Huntsville's North Alabama College were present.¹ Howard College's Department of Chemistry showed the effect of new scientific thought when it stated that "any young gentleman who desires to prepare himself to become a complete and thorough farmer may find helps in this Institution which can be found in no other College in the South with which the Board is acquainted."²

Southern University was the most energetic in incorporating special schools into a university-type structure. Departments of Law, Medicine, and Theology were included, and men were graduated from the latter two during the antebellum period.³ Though Howard and Spring Hill contained schools of theology, Southern was more advanced in this respect than any school in the state. Perhaps the first of these courses was teacher training.

¹Moore, Alabama, p. 348.

²Garrett, "Howard," p. 40.

³Perry, Birmingham-Southern, p. 22.

The Methodists became first in teacher education by establishing Alabama's first college. Once LaGrange existed, the mere fact of an education beyond academy level helped raise the "knowledge level" for teachers, even without formal teacher training. This was not enough. Establishment of a "normal department" at the University was attempted in December 1843. Each county was to send one student tuition-free; others paid the \$30 yearly fee. Though taking the same courses, the two groups were separated. That the "teacher students" pledged their "bona fide intention" to teach in Alabama schools aided this segregation. Accordingly, the 1844 catalogue listed a three-year course of study designed for future teachers. Due to a lack of response, the 1845 catalogue held no such announcement.⁴ The Normal Institute (founded in Montgomery in 1854), the institution of teacher training added to Barton Academy (Mobile) in 1855, and the Octavia Walton Le Vart Normal College for Young Ladies (Dadeville,

⁴Sellers, University, I, 159. The catalogues are in the Alabama Collection, University of Alabama Library, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Often University officers would promote their students in an attempt to get better qualified teachers in the school. Certificates were issued to teachers who sent superior pupils to matriculate in an attempt to inspire lower-level teachers. These steps were taken in addition to the more positive approach of a normal department, but to no avail. Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, July 7, 1858; Alabama Baptist, June 5, 1850; Manly Letterbook, 1836-1846, p. 332.

On November 14, 1859, the school opened in a rented building with 111 students. The faculty, headed by Nott, was composed of nine doctors "of extensive education and background."¹⁶ The next year enrollment increased to 120. In 1861, the first class was graduated from an institution "considered the most commodious and elegant institution devoted to medical teaching in the South."¹⁷ The college prospered, and a student of the era later recorded that it prevented young men from attending the University of Pennsylvania as they once had.¹⁸

Mobile's school was not the first Alabama medical institution. That honor belonged to the Grafenberg Medical Institute in Tallapoosa County, operated by Dr. Philip M. Shepard, a Georgian who had moved to Dudleyville (about one mile north of Dadeville). On February 7, 1852, the state legislature chartered Dr. Shepard's project for ten years. The school's property was limited to \$25,000, and reports were required by the legislature twice yearly. The granted power compensated

¹⁶Hamilton, Mobile, p. 258; Huntsville Southern Advocate, April 7, 1859. The Southern Advocate reported the initial enrollment as "over 50" on December 14. Moore, Alabama, p. 345; Holley, "Medical Education," pp. 251-2.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 252; Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, March 15, 1860.

¹⁸William E. Dodd, The Cotton Kingdom (New Haven, 1919), p. 113.

private individuals pushed for a medical college. Thanks largely to the efforts of Dr. Josiah Clark Nott and five other Mobile physicians, the legislature rechartered the school in 1859, incorporated it on January 30, 1860, and appropriated \$50,000 for it. The general assembly stipulated that the school land's property value could not exceed \$100,000 and that the school must accept one student per county tuition-free. Mobile citizens more than matched the state funds and sent Dr. Nott to Europe to "select the more recent apparatus and appliances" for the new school.¹⁴ Mobilians were enthusiastic about the school. Most of the state's inhabitants agreed, if the report from the Selma Dallas Gazette was any indication: "Dr. Nott is now in Europe selecting a museum for the college which . . . is to be one of the best, if not the best, in the United States."¹⁵

¹⁴Ibid., 1859, pp. 348-349; Holley, "Medical Education," p. 251; Moore, Alabama, p. 245. Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, April 9, 1859; Huntsville Southern Advocate, April 7, 1859. Nott in 1848 advanced the theory that the mosquito transmitted yellow fever.

¹⁵Griffith, Alabama, p. 146. Other "neutral" papers likewise reported approvingly--see especially Huntsville Southern Advocate, October 18, December 14, 1859, and Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, July 30, 1859. Not everyone was overjoyed over the idea. One Mobile paper gave in only when convinced that the school was necessary. Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, June 9, 1859. Some believed the school to be the only good to come from the periodic epidemics which struck the town. Hamilton, Mobile, p. 257.

Attempts, some successful, were made to meet the need. The state legislature proposed a system of medical schools throughout the state, nominally under University control. The Alabama Medical University, finally located at Wetumpka, was authorized in 1844 to grant degrees after "two full courses of lectures."¹¹ With the organization of the Alabama Medical Association in 1846, the drive for a medical school received new impetus. The Medical College of the State of Alabama was chartered in 1849 with the understanding that it would be located in Montgomery. Both attempts failed.¹² When the projected Montgomery school collapsed, the matter was dropped for about five years, then reopened.

In early 1856, against Governor John Winston's advice and over his veto, the legislature chartered another medical school. As no money was appropriated, the matter languished for several years.¹³ This time

¹¹Weeks, Public School, p. 21; Acts of Alabama, 1844, pp. 132-3. One full course at "said college" and one at "some respectable Medical College or University" was also acceptable, but only after a term of private instruction.

¹²Weeks, Public School, p. 22. In its 1857 meeting, the Alabama Medical Association did pass three resolutions in support of the proposed Mobile medical school. Their support remained at this essentially non-productive level. See Huntsville Southern Advocate, March 19, 1857.

¹³Ibid., p. 23; Griffith, Alabama, p. 146; Holley, "Medical Education," p. 251; Acts of Alabama, 1855, p. 252.

he wag wrote that "physicians are the nutcrackers used
y angels to get our souls out of the shells which surround
hem," they were considered a necessity by most people.⁹

That some youngsters entered the profession and despite
all opposition, took good Alabama money elsewhere for their
training was sufficient reason for Alabamians to complain.

An editorial in the Selma Dallas Gazette in 1859 expressed
this feeling:

At the very lowest estimate, more than
\$250,000 are annually taken from Alabama
by medical students, and spent in enrich-
ing other communities--for the most part
northern cities. It surely would be
better policy, and better economy, to
provide means of instruction within our
own borders and to allow our own citizens
to reap the benefits of this large and
progressively increasing sum, so that if
any institution of this kind is worthy
of 'State aid,' this is the one.¹⁰

Profession in the Lower South, 1845-1860," The Journal of
Southern History, X (November, 1944), 441-2. An early
doctor in Lowndesboro mentioned taking one student in
1840 and another in 1846. H. V. Wooten Diary, January 9,
February 22, 1840; July 20, 1846, Alabama Department of
Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. Often such
study was a prelude to formal coursework--See B. F. Riley,
History of Conecuh County, Alabama (Columbus, 1881),
pp. 162, 200-201 for two examples.

⁹Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, June 2, 1859.

¹⁰Quoted in Griffith, Alabama, p. 147; the
Huntsville Southern Advocate agreed on September 14,
1859--"There is no reason why \$500,000 should be annually
expended by young men attending Medical Schools in the
North, when each State can afford all necessary facilities
for thorough instruction in the diseases peculiar to this
climate." The paper had previously estimated that 300
students attended medical school elsewhere.

1860), tried to meet Alabama's need for better teachers.

Unfortunately, none of them prospered.⁵

Attempts to provide legal education met with little more success. In the same year University Trustees consented to a normal department and added a law school to the University curriculum. The lone professor was to "confer with the judges of the state supreme court in planning his lectures and instruction and in choosing his textbooks." University funds were not to be used for the new department. In the 1846 catalogue law was listed with the regular courses.⁶ One Ben F. Porter was hired as instructor, and throughout the year he waited for students who never appeared. Once again, because of apathy, a special department for advanced education was deleted from the University curriculum.⁷

The fight for Alabama-educated doctors probably succeeded better than any other except for preachers. Prospective physicians read under a local doctor or went out of state to study; Augusta, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and New York received most of these scholars.⁸ Although

⁵Moore, Alabama, pp. 348-349; Hyatt, Secondary Education, pp. 34-35; Acts of Alabama, 1859, p. 340. The Le Vert school was the only one chartered.

⁶Sellers, University, I, 160. See University of Alabama catalogues for 1846 and 1847.

⁷Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 60.

⁸Martha C. Mitchell, "Health and the Medical

for these inconveniences. The school could

grant diplomas, confer degrees and licenses upon all persons, who, on examination by said professors and trustees, shall be found proficient in all the branches of medical sciences as taught in the present day, entitling said graduates to all the honors, privileges, and immunities usually conferred by the most approved colleges in the United States.¹⁹

For \$135 or \$145 a term, a student could enroll and receive his diploma after two terms. The state appropriated no money, and desultory regulation presented few problems about teaching methods or admittances--as evidenced by Dr. Shepard's daughter, Louisa, attending her father's school and being the first woman to receive the Doctor of Medicine degree from a Southern school.²⁰

The lack of state regulation also led to questionable practices. The Institute's building was an inadequate two-story structure with limited anatomical apparatus and library for visual aids and study; about two hundred yards to the rear was a small room for dissecting. Cadavers were procured in various ways. A slave hanged for murdering

¹⁹Acts of Alabama, 1851, p. 260.

²⁰Holley, "Medical Education," pp. 249-250. By 1856, fees had dropped to \$50 for the summer session (plus \$12.50 per month for board) and \$100 for the winter session (with \$14 a month for board). One course of 5 months, "eligible to graduate," called for a sum "not exceeding \$200." Huntsville Democrat, June 26, 1856.

his master served on the table under the knife. Bodies were shipped from New Orleans in barrels. It was rumored the Negro graves were robbed. Jake, a favorite slave of Dadeville resident Robert Gillian, died while body procurement activities were at the peak. Gillian filled the grave with large stones vowing that "the devil's apprentice" would not desecrate Jake's final resting place. When Dr. Shepard became infected while dissecting a specimen and died, the school closed never to reopen. The fifty doctors who were graduated were Shepard's lasting contribution to Alabama medical instruction; diplomas issued by his school were "fully recognized" by the state's medical boards.²¹

Another opportunity for special education has often been completely disregarded by historians. Alabama was not alone in the movement; all of the Southern states established schools for the blind. Textbooks, books of fables, and histories were published in Braille.²² Not only did Alabama provide for the education of the blind, but also for the deaf and dumb. In 1852, the legislature

²¹Medical boards and societies were established all over the state by legislative action. The students noted the "good supply of subjects, both for Anatomical investigations and Surgical operations, many of which are performed on the living by Dr. Shepard." Ibid. Owen, Alabama, II, 442.

²²Eaton, Southern Civilization, p. 288.

organized an institute for deaf mutes at Robinson Springs in Elmore County. Unfortunately, little was accomplished until 1860, when the governor and the state superintendent of education authorized the Alabama Deaf and Dumb Asylum at Talladega.²³

These areas of special education were necessary and important. Yet none of them were really closely involved with the everyday affairs of Alabama colleges, and while important, they should not obscure the normal curricula.

E. P. Cubberley, student of education, summed up the typical college curriculum before the 1850's as the classical course, based on Greek, Latin, and mathematics and leading to the B. A. degree. Though primarily intended for ministers until 1800, courses did not change with the times. Greek, Latin, Hebrew, mathematics, oratory, general history, and some science were studied the first three years of college; ethics, philosophy, "Christian evidences, and religion comprised the final year."²⁴ One writer notes that physics, chemistry, and mineralogy had been added in

²³Moore, Alabama, p. 345; Acts of Alabama, 1851, pp. 19-21; 1858, pp. 349-51. The Talladega institution became popularly known as the Alabama School for the Deaf and Dumb, regardless of its official designation. Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, June 30, 1859.

²⁴Cubberley, Introduction, pp. 357, 359. Eddy agrees that philosophy, theology, the dead languages and mathematics were the only available studies. Eddy, Colleges for Our Time, p. 3.

a few exceptional institutions.²⁵ It is interesting to see how Alabama's schools fitted into these masterpieces of generality.

The classics were clearly the curriculum's backbone in Alabama schools. Failures in the mathematic or scientific departments rarely caused expulsion from school without a low standing or failure in the classical department, the University's President Basil Manly held. Most agreed with him, but education in Alabama's institutions extended beyond emphasis on the classics. The University offered surveying, chemistry, astronomy, mineralogy, geology, and civil engineering.²⁶ Howard had modern languages as well as "learned" ones (as did the University and Judson) and joined the University in its offerings. In addition, botany, hydrostatics, "Pneumatics and Acoustics" were joined with electricity, magnetism, and optics in the college course.²⁷ As Howard and the University had telescopes, astronomy courses could by no means be considered "book-science."

²⁵Edwards and Richey, School in American Social Order, pp. 278-9.

²⁶Sellers, University, I, 147, 149; Griffith, Alabama, p. 136.

²⁷"Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Howard College," 1855, [p. 4]. Hereafter referred to as Howard Catalogue.

Course selection varied. Howard had three systems of study, each of different length. The regular program was the four-year classical study. A scientific branch was a year shorter and replaced Greek and the classics with technical courses. The theological course was flexible: theological students studied in the classical department simultaneously, and the faculty determined individual schedules.²⁸ Spring Hill had a six-year program--compact version of the eight years necessary for high school and college--demanding three years in the preparatory, three in the collegiate section. Soon the system was changed for those who wished a more abbreviated schedule. One year of "prep school" could be followed by either five years of the old schedule or three of "commercial" studies.²⁹

Probably the University departed most drastically from accepted organization. In July, 1852, a study of the differences between the usual course and the University of Virginia's "eclectic" system was ordered. By 1854, the University was prepared to "give instruction to all who chose to demand it, and that it should give them whatever instruction they chose to demand, so that the students

²⁸Garrett, "Howard," p. 57.

²⁹Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 143; Vollenweider, "Spring Hill," pp. 132-3.

should study what they chose, all that they chose, and nothing but what they chose." "Arrant nonsense," commented Professor F. A. P. Barnard, but few paid him any heed. Course offerings were substantially unchanged, so everyone was fairly happy with the new curriculum.³⁰ President Garland complained that it had lowered scholarship, then praised it: "In honourable bearing and in polite intercourse with their instructors, the conduct of the students has been more commendable than it formerly was."³¹

In 1857, three years "without marked improvement in the morals or scholarship of the students, and without adding to the number of students" clearly indicated an imperative for change. Next year the classless system was reinstated in a reworked form.³² Each student studied in three of eight new departments--moral and mental science; logic, rhetoric and oratory; Latin, Greek, Modern Languages; pure mathematics; natural philosophy; astronomy; chemistry; and mineralogy and geology. Each department had three internal divisions--Junior, Intermediate, and Senior. After completing all three divisions in his chosen three departments, a student was graduated from

³⁰Sellers, University, I, 153.

³¹Ibid., I, 156. Perhaps Alabama was becoming more civilized. Clark, Education in Alabama, pp. 84-5.

³²Ibid., pp. 75-6; Sellers, University, I, 155.

the University.³³ The change remained an experiment. In 1860 the military system was instituted at the University, abolishing the forms which had preceded it.

Southern, Judson, LaGrange, and Spring Hill maintained the ordinary curriculum found throughout the South (with the exception of Spring Hill's summer school).³⁴

Although curricula do not necessarily denote the quality of education, Howard and the University were two outstanding colleges in this respect. Howard's course offerings, especially agricultural chemistry, put it in that category.³⁵ At the University, it was the same department, for F. A. P. Barnard introduced the first course in organic chemistry in any Southern university and possibly the first offered as a distinct subject anywhere in the United States.³⁶

Upper level academies supplied many curriculum innovations, especially those which, like Somerville

³³Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 84. The student could study in only three of the eight departments.

³⁴Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 62. Some indication of this may be found in the Henri Masson Book, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and the James Story Diary, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

³⁵Garrett, "Howard," p. 40.

³⁶Sellers, University, I, 70.

Male Academy, advertised courses "preparatory to admission into whatever College the pupil may design entering" and promising instruction "in any branch of Education usually taught in Colleges."³⁷ Generally they added college level courses to their lower level courses, especially higher mathematics and the sciences. At times academies took advantage of nearby colleges to provide these studies.³⁸ "Practical education" was the most important facet of high-level academy instruction. President Basil Manly might attempt to push the University in this direction by offering an honorary Master in the Mechanic and Useful Arts to Daniel Pratt, but the trustees were slow in following his lead. A few courses were established, but practical education remained largely the province of the academies.³⁹

When Somerville Male Academy noted that it was "intended as an institution where young men may be

³⁷Huntsville Democrat, December 30, 1835.

³⁸Alabama Female Institute was a good example, with the University. Judson did the same with Howard.

³⁹Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, May 11, 1842, contains a letter from "Georgius" calling for a study of agricultural chemistry. See Commencement Sermon, Manly Collection, Furman University; Henry Collier to Matthew P. Blue, October 6, 1854, Blue Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, August 6, 1859; Manly Letterbook, 1847-1857, pp. 14, 51. A look at the yearly University catalogues indicate the slow addition of such courses.

prepared for college, or for professional study, or where they may receive a thorough and practical education, which will fit them for active business life," it upheld the "practical education" tradition.⁴⁰ As early as 1835, Selma Academy offered "Book Keeping (particularly adapted for the business of this country)."⁴¹ Greene Academy added a "practical scientific school" in 1856. Designed to give students a practical knowledge of science, it was taught by Jacob Schmitt and Larkin W. Echols, trained at German universities and West Point respectively. Echols's education emphasized the role of the military schools in the practical side of education in Alabama.⁴² Whether military school, academy, or college, course offerings were governed by the number of sessions per year.

The typical college year within which the curriculum existed consisted of a ten-month session with vacation from mid-July until the first of October. About 1850, the two-term year came into favor and became standard.⁴³ The University shuffled the vacation period

⁴⁰Huntsville Democrat, December 21, 1854.

⁴¹Selma Free Press, August 29, 1835.

⁴²Huntsville Southern Advocate, August 21, 1856.
See Chapter II for a more complete discussion of this.

⁴³Hyatt, Secondary Education, p. 32. Most schools advertised in state newspapers, and ads appeared

but shortly reverted to the standard. Christmas holidays were stifled after 1844 with the statement that "the Christmas holidays . . . exert a very unfavorable influence on the regular, studious, and moral habits of the students . . ."⁴⁴ The student day, beginning with the first class at six a.m. before breakfast (except for Seniors, who had their first class at nine immediately after breakfast) continued to be part of the standard curriculum in Alabama.⁴⁵

The division of classes was not as universal as the session length. Judson had three departments (the primary and preparatory being coeducational) and five college level classes--Sub-Junior, Junior, Middle, Sub-Senior, and Senior.⁴⁶ Howard went on a regular schedule in 1846 with only three classes--Freshman, Sophomore, and

in a group about the end of June to announce commencement, and late September to remind parents and prospective students of the opening date. Often diaries mentioned the event--Wooten Diary, June 9, 1845; James Mallory Journals.

⁴⁴Sellers, University, I, 139. It is interesting to note the qualities attributed to students when they were about to be deprived of their Christmas holidays. At Southern, a riot occurred when the students were deprived of these holidays. They were promptly reinstated.

⁴⁵Ibid., I, 148. At Greenville Male and Female Academy, the school day was 7 hours in summer, 6 in winter. This was a typical academy arrangement not shared by the schools more oriented to resident students.

⁴⁶Manly, Judson, pp. 17, 39.

Junior. The next year a Senior level was added. Other schools, with the possible exception of Spring Hill, were on the regular four-class structure by the 1850's.⁴⁷

Standing in relation to these classes was determined by the examinations which plagued a student's career.

Examinations punctuated the sessions and were clearly influenced by their milieu. Public speaking was especially important in the frontier antebellum South, for often illiteracy was the rule. Such emphasis survived in the college form of examination. In most Alabama schools, students took a mass oral examination yearly.⁴⁸

The idea of mass examination, held publicly and usually at commencement, became so strong that they were held at the Alabama School for the Deaf and Dumb at Talladega.⁴⁹

The whole system of examinations indicates what had to be endured.

Apparently typical were Spring Hill's daily examinations (though the system of rewards and punishments varied from school to school). On the second and fourth Wednesdays each month, Spring Hill students were examined orally. One mistake brought a reprimand; three failures

⁴⁷Griffith, Alabama, p. 142; Garrett, "Howard," p. 28.

⁴⁸Perry, Birmingham-Southern, p. 15.

⁴⁹Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, June 30, 1859.

forfeited recreation; four failures meant a letter to the parents advising the student's withdrawal. Lest such punishments prove too stiff, good students were rewarded with "satisfecits," each cancelling out one bad mark. The University also used monthly exams, but discarded them in 1850 when it established written examinations. Selma Academy continued tests on the last Friday of each month.⁵⁰ At Howard, occasional Fridays saw such performances, and semisessional examinations were held just before Christmas to prepare students for final examinations. Howard did not make weekly exams a constant matter, as Athens College did.⁵¹

The dread of daily assignments and recitations paled in comparison to the very thought of the final public examinations.⁵² Students and their parents were

⁵⁰Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 72; Owen, Alabama, II, 426; Selma Free Press, September 5, 1835.

⁵¹Garrett, "Howard," p. 37.

⁵²Sellers, University, I, 166. Though James Fountaine played the man in his letters to his aunt, his sister Elizabeth poured out her dread to that sympathetic ear. On April 10, 1841, the freshman wrote Hannah that "The examination is ten weeks off. I dread it very much." Her May 21, 1842 letter showed less fear of the exam which was only five weeks away, though she worried about being prepared "to stand a good examination." March 4, 1843 saw "Lizzie" scared again--"It frightens me to talk about it," she confided to her aunt. Lide-Coker Papers. Examinations at LaGrange were taken on an even keel by the Pruit brothers (both rather poor students) as they indicated in their letters home. Wyche-Otey Collection, Southern Historical

prepared for these examinations by a system of reports, listing academic grades, demerits for unbecoming conduct, and class standing. Yet progress reports could not remove student apprehension about the events. Students were required to "sustain" good examinations and in their Senior year were publicly checked on all their college studies. The faculty was usually empowered to withhold the degree if any deficiency appeared.⁵³ The University used the American and English systems (oral and written) until 1853, when written exams were abolished due to the impossibility of isolating a student enough to prohibit cheating. From then on, the orals assumed even greater importance.⁵⁴ Not only did the student's degree or

Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Bolling and Crenshaw Hall looked upon exams with dread, positive that they would receive low marks because of teacher prejudice. Bolling Hall Collection, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

⁵³Sellers, University, I, 172; Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette, July 30, 1851; Gainesville Independent, July 28, 1860. Some reports are extant, as in the Devotie Papers, or are attested in letters, as in the Benson-Thompson Family Papers, Perkins Library, Durham, North Carolina. Often the reports did not reflect the student's real progress ("Joes [sic] reports were always flatering [sic]. How could I believe it?" M. E. Thompson to "My Dear Son" at the University December 4, 1859, Benson-Thompson Family Papers). All too often it was accurate, and called for some parental condolence or scolding ("Now do not feel discouraged it is not too late to take a high stand in all your studies," Mrs. Thompson wrote her son after a bad report just before sternly rebuking his bad study habits. Ibid.).

⁵⁴Sellers, University, I, 217, 167; Montgomery

advancement depend upon his proficiency; the disgrace attendant upon failure was terrible.

Commencement was usually in mid-July when the dust and heat were almost unbearable. Despite inconveniences, crowds flocked to the public examinations.⁵⁵ Invariably the exercises were lengthy. By 1852 the University required five days for meetings, assemblies, orations, and social gatherings so that none overlapped. Everyone wanted recognition, even non-University organizations, as in 1850, when the newly organized Alabama Historical Society was on the program.⁵⁶ Judson's

Advertiser and State Gazette, July 31, 1850; Gainesville Independent, August 1, 1857.

⁵⁵Sellers, University, I, 196. Examinations were liberally advertised in the newspapers. In 1859 an extra car was added to the train between Selma and Marion (Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, June 30, 1859). Only two days earlier the editor of the town's leading newspaper had commented on the number of strangers in town for the affair (Ibid., June 28, 1859). Hucksters took advantage of such gatherings, as James Fountaine noted in 1845 when he wrote his aunt of the large number of "Ventriloquists, Necromancers and various other kinds of money gleaners" who continually exhibited in Marion. James Fountaine to Hannah Coker, January 10, 1845. Lide-Coker Papers.

⁵⁶Sellers, University, I, 192; Alabama Baptist, July 25, 1849. James M. Van Hoose, appointed secretary of the Society in 1854, recalled the well-received address delivered at the 1858 exercises. (James M. Van Hoose, "The Alabama Historical Society--Reminiscences of Fifty Years," Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, IV [1900], 119, 121.) Dr. Joshua Foster recalled President Basil Manly's efforts on behalf of the Society. When speaking of the forty-six charter members, he noted that Manly, Professor L. C. Garland and Professor

commencement program was equally elaborate. There a week was devoted to the final examinations held during the day in chapel with concerts and graduating exercises evenings at the church. Spare time was taken up with dining, riding, driving, partying, and reception-going.⁵⁷ At Spring Hill exhibitions only lasted two days, from nine in the morning until sundown.⁵⁸ Tuskegee Female College examinations were held privately before a committee of townspeople, with the commencement exercises forming an elaborate, five-day pageant. Though academies and female schools generally concluded their commencement activities after a few days, several extended operations as much as a week.⁵⁹

Michael Toumey were among them. No doubt it was Manly's attempt to foster the new society which led to its inclusion in the exercises. Foster, "Fifty Years," p. 109.

⁵⁷Manly, Judson, pp. 25, 29. The Judson colors gradually evolved out of the custom of the girls wearing white one day, pink the next, during the entire week. Not only were these two of three colors they were required to wear, but they were the coolest. Parties were an integral part of the process at Southern, too. See Parks, Birmingham-Southern, p. 47.

⁵⁸Vollenweider, "Spring Hill," p. 134.

⁵⁹Ellison, Huntingdon, pp. 31-33; Selma Free Press, June 30, December 8, 1838; Huntsville Democrat, January 3, 10, 1833, July 8, 20, 1830, August 7, 1831; Huntsville Southern Advocate, June 6, 1860. Huntsville Female Seminary took 8 days for commencement. At Huntsville Female College, an editor noted, commencement had been going on for several days and was "yet in progress." Huntsville Southern Advocate, June 10, 1858.

Commencement exercises and concurrent public examinations were extravaganzas, open to the public in an attempt to stir interest in education generally and the school in particular. They were superb pieces of showmanship, orchestrated to perfection. The exercises acquainted spectators with the college curriculum and exposed many to knowledge which might otherwise have been inaccessible. Especially apt at producing colorful closing exercises were schools like the Huntsville Female Seminary, which advertised reason rather than memory as the key to its public examinations. The pageant element took on almost a carnival atmosphere at times, especially when prizes were awarded.⁶⁰ It was like a camp meeting, for it offered isolated people a chance to convene in the name of some good cause.

If the extravaganzas were successful, additional funds might be garnered, funds to improve the facilities or the program. Such funds would in a fashion determine the student's application to his studies--and so decide the curriculum's efficacy. Additional income could be used on faculty and apparatus. So any consideration of curricula should be tempered by consideration of controlling factors--the faculty and its tools.

⁶⁰Huntsville Democrat, January 10, 1833. Most schools used prizes, though none did so consistently. Probably the most "showy" prize was Huntsville Female College's \$500 Turner Prize Medal.

CHAPTER VI

THE FACULTY AND THEIR TOOLS

Important as were the various curricula and the examinations which tested them, the faculty determined a program's efficacy. When hampered by poor facilities or inadequate apparatus, professors could not function properly. Though invariably chosen with care, professors worked within their school's limitations. In this manner, teachers determined the quality of Alabama colleges. Trustees, aware of the importance of a competent and well-equipped staff, tried to provide competency and equipment.

There were many criteria for judging competency, but two seemed outstanding in antebellum schools. First, there was the obvious desire for educated men--those with "distinguished reputations" which could be flouted in newspaper advertisements. Equally important was an acceptable character, for these men were to be entrusted with the state's youth. While the faculty presided over the end of innocence as students approached maturity, it was assumed that the pedagogues would be agents of instruction rather than corruption. As with any location, Alabama attracted its share of poor or mediocre

teachers. Yet it also hired a fair share of outstanding men for the numerous schools in the state. It would be absurd to claim a consistently outstanding faculty for the state at large--or even for any one institution. Despite what would have to be judged an "average" teacher situation, antebellum Alabama did produce some outstanding men who later achieved eminence in teaching, preaching, or medicine.

The first step in outfitting Alabama schools was generally to discover competent teachers, with inquiring, restless minds. The University trustees appointed former Huntsville Mayor James G. Birney to secure a president and four professors from leading American colleges in the older states.¹ His choices were from Vermont, New York, Maryland, and Virginia: "mature men, with honorable experience behind them" except for the twenty-four year-old Virginian Henry Tutwiler.²

¹Betty Fladeland, James Gillespie Birney (Ithaca, 1956), pp 43-8; William Birney, James G. Birney and His Times (New York, 1890), pp. 91-5. Birney's itinerary is extant, some of it recorded by his son.

²Sellers, University, I, 43. Though "scarcely more than a boy," as one of his students remembered him, Tutwiler was nonetheless a scholar. The first to receive the Master of Arts from the University of Virginia, he was "the peer in point of scholarship of any man in the South." Despite his appearance--"a delicate stripling of a youth, . . . as timid and modest as a woman"--one author has called Tutwiler "a whole faculty within himself." While the glowing praise might be overstated, it is interesting that he was one of the

The University's faculty was energetic, but tended to focus more on student deportment than theory and practice of education.³ "What the professors lacked in finesse they made up for in diligence," one writer has remarked, and it was partially due to their disciplinary diligence that students rebelled so readily.⁴

As for teaching abilities, the University's professors were a seeming paradox. Though all presidents claimed the title "Doctor," the only Ph.D. was held by geology professor John W. Mallet from the University of Gottingen. Most faculty had Masters of Arts, an easily obtainable degree--the University often conferred one on deficient faculty members.⁵ Governor Henry W. Collier, though a biased source, voiced the general opinion of the University's faculty when he spoke of their "morality, learning and faithfulness" in an 1859 speech. "They are altogether competent," he noted, "to impart education

few faculty members who never had trouble with students. And he evidently was not far behind his fellows in scholarship. Thomas S. Forbes, "John Murray Forbes's Horseback Trip to Alabama in 1831," Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, IV (1902), 448; McCorvey, "Tutwiler," p. 88; Riley, Alabama, p. 137; Anne Easby-Smith, William Russell Smith of Alabama (Philadelphia, 1931), p. 21.

³Sellers, University, I, 163, 197.

⁴Ibid., I, 203-4; Clark, Education in Alabama, pp. 59-60.

⁵Sellers, University, I, 85.

quite as extensive and thorough as can be obtained within the time usually allotted to a collegiate course, either in the North or South."⁶

Disciplinary problems, room visitations, daily compulsory chapel, and daily (or oftener) faculty meetings were time-consuming. The assumption was that any well-educated man should be able to teach whatever was needed in an emergency.⁷ When the duties this idea involved (and the extra teaching it often entailed) were added to the routine, a different picture emerged. The difference in the evaluation lies in whether a judgment is based on a superficial examination of degrees or upon the amount of work involved.

The most conclusive proof of the faculty's value was shown in the accomplishments of its members. Near the end of the era the Greensboro Beacon spoke of a faculty it was sure would compare favorably with that of any college in the country. Basil Manly, Sr., University president for most of the era, was noted for "wide mental development" and equally excellent control of classroom and school. Manly, in the words of an admirer, "stimulated perfect confidence, restored discipline of a

⁶Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette,
October 9, 1859.

⁷Sellers, University, I, 54, 74.

1857, and no attempt was made by officials to change them.¹⁶

Reasons for faculty tenure at the University can be narrowed to a handful. Despite his other duties, the actual number of classes a professor met daily was either two or three. A measure of academic freedom was insured by a law of 1821. One year later the legislature exempted faculty members from taxation. Two considerations which probably made teachers most willing to accept a post were confidence that their new positions would be permanent and the housing situation. In 1837, the trustees provided "a dwelling house and grounds attached thereto" for the faculty. With such provision, whatever salary was offered was sure to go much farther. And of course there was the Southern inducement of a milder climate--a boon to many prospects.¹⁷

¹⁶Sellers, University, I, 92, 95; Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 55; Owen, Alabama, II, 424. Southern paid the best salaries. Each professor was to receive the income from \$25,000 in endowment (figured at about eight per cent), as well as enough from student fees to raise the total to \$2,500. The President received \$500 more. Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 28. Though officials did little, professors tried, with some help from the newspapers. The 1842 retrenchment was deemed unwise by the Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, and it aided faculty efforts. December 21, 1842; January 4, 11, 1843. The 1857 increase was merely a return to the former level (though there was some grumbling about fringe benefits). Ibid., July 23, 1857. As the paper pointed out, salary supplements to \$300 could be had for "nominal service" as librarian. January 29, February 19, 1859.

¹⁷Sellers, University, I, 55, 88, 95. President Wightman came to Southern partly because of the healthy

problem, as he wrote his friend J. C. Furman in 1837--"If we had older men and riper scholars, we would use them gladly, but as we have not, we must be content to use the best we have." Yet he did secure some outstanding talent. Mostly such talent was in the sciences, perhaps because of changes in the field during the period as well as Manly's readiness to innovate.¹⁵

What made teachers anxious to come to this infant institution? There were definitely such "hardships and inconveniences" to be endured as a heavy work load. The salary's ampleness depended upon the times. When the school first opened, the president got \$3,000 (if he taught in addition to his administrative duties), professors "not less" than \$2,000 (though it was actually \$1,500 with fees expected to make up the difference) and tutors \$1,000. In 1842, these modest stipends were cut. The president was then paid \$2,000, professors \$1,700, and tutors \$800 per year. Here the salaries stayed until

Papers, Duke University. Longfellow recommended a friend for the job with a "good climate and two thousand dollars a year." Letter to his father, August 2, 1839, quoted in Samuel Longfellow, Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Boston, 1891), I, 341.

¹⁵Manly to J. C. Furman, August 2, 1837, Manly Collection, Furman. Manly did institute new courses whenever possible because of his belief in "scientific" education. Most of the changes appear in his diary-letterbook, as the 1848 addition of Botany and Conchology. Manly Letterbook, 1847-1857, p. 51.

That some excellence was recognized outside the state is evident. It was reported that Robert Dale Owen, one of America's foremost geologists, was "sorely disappointed" when he failed to obtain a chair at the University in 1847.¹³ Men were constantly seeking positions at the University. Hopefuls begged those with "pull" to aid them in their search. There were those, like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who could write "I had yesterday the offer of a professorship at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. I declined . . .," but they were generally well-established men who had no desire for a warmer climate or the University's pay.¹⁴ President Manly recognized the

suspended an eight-inch lead globe from the dome of the vacant State-House to demonstrate the earth's rotation by means of a pendulum. His roving mind became interested in photography, with which he made a number of experiments. Yet Barnard is rarely mentioned in Manly's letterbook except for his shortcomings. In writing to one John Wiley about a debt, Manly observed that as secretary of the faculty, Barnard had mixed his own affairs with those of the University. Perhaps Barnard's greatest failure was heralded in capital letters--BARNARD DRUNK. "This, taken in connexion with his recent inattention to business & loss of literary pride satisfies me that he will not do," Manly concluded. Manly Letterbook, 1847-1857, pp. 34, 112.

¹³Dodd, Cotton Kingdom, p. 113.

¹⁴One of the best examples of job-hunters is Samuel M. Meek, whose brother A. B. Meek wrote Governor Collier, President Manly and F. A. P. Barnard, all on July 7, 1851. A. B. Meek Collection, Alabama Department of Archives and History. Another is Henry Watson, Jr., whose letter from President Woods and Secretary of the Trustees George Starr in 1832 are as eloquent as his journal in chronicling his disappointing attempt. Watson

geological specimens.¹⁰ Dr. John Mallet, another of Manly's discoveries, was the outstanding scientist of the early period. An excellent chemist, Mallet made the first exact atomic weight determination in America.¹¹ Manly's most famous addition to the University was F. A. P. Barnard, affectionately called by students (when his back was turned) "Old Fap." The man with the restless mind and great thirst, who became president of Columbia after a brief sojourn in Mississippi, perhaps has his reputation because of later greatness. Yet he would take time to discuss astronomy with the townsfolk when they visited his brainchild, the Observatory. Barnard could also lecture with great understanding in physics and astronomy (his fields) or on the history of China, India, and Egypt.¹²

¹⁰Huntsville Democrat, December 11, 1844; introduction to commencement sermon by Charles Manly, Manly Papers, University of Alabama; Birmingham Age-Herald, September 8, 1912; Michael Tuomey Collection, Alabama Department of Archives and History; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, April 9, 1857. In 1854, Tuomey resigned when the state appropriated \$10,000 for his work. He continued nonetheless to lecture at the University gratuitously. Manly to "My Dear Children," April 18, 1854, Manly Papers, University of Alabama.

¹¹Mallet's paper was "Redetermination of the Atomic Weight of Lithium," American Journal of Science and Arts, XXII (November, 1856), 349-356.

¹²Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union, September 22, October 13, 20, 1841; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, July 30, 1857; John Fulton, Memoirs of Frederick A. P. Barnard (New York, 1896), pp. 89-90. Barnard was active politically, serving as editor of a Tuscaloosa paper for a time and contributing articles to several others. Some of his experiments drew the public, as when he

firm but conciliatory character, enlarged the faculty, widened the courses of instruction, and gave shape and form to a real university life."⁸ But perhaps Manly's greatest contribution was the faculty he assembled.

Henry Tutwiler had left the University, as he wrote his University of Virginia mentor, Gessner Harrison, to find some peace.⁹ Professor Brumby, who alone of Tutwiler's colleagues on the first faculty remained when Manly arrived, was a noted scientific pioneer. Brumby called for the state's first geological survey. His successors were to prove equally competent. Manly discovered the brilliant Irishman Michael Tuomey, and brought him as Professor of Geology and Mineralogy. For six years, Tuomey also served (without pay) as state geologist and carried out Brumby's projected survey. From his arrival in 1847 to his death a decade later, Tuomey lectured faithfully at the University, also ensuring that it secured

⁸Greensboro Beacon, January 14, 1859; Harold Wilson, "Basil Manly, Apologist for Slavocracy," Alabama Review, XV (January, 1962), 38; Owen, "Manly," p. 126. Manly was also active in affairs outside the school, such as the Alabama Historical Society, Baptist work on local, state and sectional levels, and lectures to groups such as the Tuscaloosa Lyceum (as when he lectured on the bee). Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union, September 1, 11, 1841.

⁹Tutwiler's extensive correspondence from the University, Baptist Manual Labor School and his own school (Greene Springs Academy) are in the Gessner Harrison Papers, University of Virginia.

While possibly not up to University standards, Alabama's private schools had adequate instructors. As at the University, many came from the North, for the South had not begun to furnish numerous teachers.¹⁸ Southern, blessed with a good endowment, had the salaries to lure excellent teachers to Greensboro. As one interested party wrote, "It is intended to furnish a faculty of the best talents that the country can supply. The highest salary can be given with such an endowment added to the proceeds of the tuition."¹⁹ As if the pay were not enough, Professor Edward Wadsworth reported to Conference in 1860 that because some professorships were "more laborious than others" despite equal pay, some plan "to equalize the labor by assisting one another" was to be adopted.²⁰ Southern's

climate. William M. Wightman to his wife, January 28, 1859. William May Wightman Papers, Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina. John Darby had gone to East Alabama Male College for the same reason. "Auburn: Laying the Cornerstone," Alabama Historical Quarterly, XVIII (1956), 169-70.

¹⁸Manly, Judson, p. 17; Alabama Baptist, January 30, 1850, commenting on a new Judson music professor from Hartford, Connecticut.

¹⁹E. N. Levert to "My Dear Bro.," December 19, 1855. Levert Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

²⁰Some did not consider the pay enough, as the Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor plainly opined when it believed that President Garland might be lured from the University to Southern. June 25, 1857. Christenberry, Southern, p. 23. Wadsworth also emphasized the trustees' policy of selecting "men of broad and liberal education rather than mere specialists."

best faculty members were undoubtedly Wadsworth, Professor Thomas Lupton (Chemistry), and the President, William M. Wightman. But Southern's faculty really began functioning too late in the decade to have a real impact upon higher education.²¹

The same approach to professors was taken by East Alabama Male College, but there it was taken of necessity. The trustees, after having difficulty getting a firm commitment from interested parties, wrote one Dr. W. A. Smith. The corresponding secretary was "to intimate to him that his salary can be raised and request him to make a direct proposal." Finally salaries were set at \$2500 for the President, \$1750 for the professors-- figures to be raised to \$3000 and \$2000 respectively, should tuition justify it.²² East Alabama Male College, like Southern, began operations too late to have much impact. Two men who were well above average were

²¹Christenberry, Southern, pp. 23-4, 108; John G. Harris Diary, November 28, December 19, 1859, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Lupton studied in Europe. Professor O. F. Casey, one student remembered, could quote page after page from Virgil--an achievement in a day when memorization was at a premium.

²²Minutes of the Trustees, East Alabama Male College, December 10, 1856, November 4, 1857, July 15, 1858, and July 8, 1861, Alabama Department of Archives and History. The initial salary scale was \$2250 and \$1500. After the first year, the scale was dropped to \$1574 and \$1100.

President William J. Sassnett and Professor John Darby, a former fuller's apprentice who had studied at the mill and William College and taught at (or headed) several schools before becoming Professor of Natural Science at the Auburn school.

Difficulty of evaluation does not apply so readily to the faculties of Judson, Howard, or LaGrange. Judson was a special case, for it was for females. Several teachers were women recruited from positions as private teachers or from subscription schools.²³ Of the faculty, only the President and founder, Milo P. Jewett seemed in any way outstanding.

The story was somewhat different at Howard and LaGrange. At Howard once again the man at the top, President S. S. Sherman, was most outstanding; but there were also others. Many Alabama Baptist leaders taught there, but were outstanding more for denominational leadership than for teaching. Such was not the case with the most outstanding, Professor Thomas F. Curtis, the man President Manly described as one of the rare individuals occupying "the very post for which he is exactly fitted."²⁴

²³Elizabeth Fountain to Caleb Coker, November 25, 1844. Lide-Coker Papers, Columbia, South Carolina. In 1841, 5 of the 7 teachers were such women. Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union, December 21, 1841. The girls adored Jewett, as Fountain's letter attests.

²⁴T. F. Curtis to Basil Manly, February 28,

LaGrange had some men, like Colonel Cobb, head of the military department in later years, who were far from fitted for their post. Yet the school was fortunate in sharing some excellent men with other Alabama schools. Henry Tutwiler, perhaps the most outstanding teacher in antebellum Alabama, taught there for a season. Two of the first faculty went from LaGrange to the University-- William Hudson, who sojourned a year between his schooling at Yale and a professorship at the University, and Edward Sims, a Master of Arts from the University of North Carolina who stayed for a decade. One outstanding faculty member, Edward Wadsworth, left for Southern after eight years. President Robert Paine, while perhaps not a great scholar, seemed to have the compassion and understanding LaGrange boys needed.²⁵

In all Alabama schools, the faculty was exhorted to services beyond those commanded by their salaries. There was a hint of pressure to be involved in community affairs as well as scholarly activities, to express oneself with pen, and generally to preach if they were ordained (as many were).²⁶ Yet the student was not neglected.

March 1, 1849; Manly to James C. Furman, February 15, 1852. Manly Papers, Furman.

²⁵McGregor, LaGrange [p. 17]; West, Methodism, pp. 437, 626; Rivers, Paine, p. 44.

²⁶Letters to newspapers, magazines and journals

Student estimations of the faculty were often based upon a professor's understanding nature. A few might believe professors unfair, or use this as an excuse in letters home.²⁷ Yet generally the faculties were considered human. "Old Bob" Paine, as the boys called LaGrange's President, endeared himself to a new arrival when he observed that "Boys will be boys; we do not expect them to be saints." Professors like the University's Pratt, who could laugh with his class when a tobacco-chewing student appropriated his spittoon, were especially appreciated. When President Garland loaned a student \$31, then made arrangements for the destitute scholar to "serve me and save money" without sacrificing his education, he made a life-long friend. And Professor William Vaughn's admission to a student borrowing money that he had completed college the same way brought teacher and student closer together. Despite all such predictable evidences, a prime consideration for many students in making their final judgment was whether

were acceptable--Michael Tuomey to John P. Barratt, April 4, 1850. John P. Barratt Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina. The University's faculty was active in the Alabama Historical Society, and President A. A. Lipscomb of Tuskegee Female College contributed regularly to Harper's Magazine. The Tuscaloosa Lyceum was another example.

²⁷Crenshaw Hall is perhaps the best--or worst--example of such letters. See Bolling Hall Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

or not examinations could be adjusted to stagecoach schedules.²⁸

Professors might be handicapped by inter-faculty strife, or by students' low opinion.²⁹ But apparatus and libraries were important aids which often determined how much a student learned, for they contributed to a professor's effectiveness, regardless of his competency.

Though controlled by money, the apparatus and libraries in antebellum Alabama schools were amazingly well-provisioned. Only occasionally was there a case such as that at LaGrange, where during the first year there was no apparatus. Sometimes a school would get lucky, as Howard did, when the Presbyterian manual labor school near town failed. Then President Sherman was able to procure "the apparatus which cost in London five thousand dollars for one thousand, five hundred." Such luck was often necessary, considering the cost of equipment.³⁰

²⁸Rivers, Paine, p. 44; John Massey, Reminiscences (Nashville, 1916), pp. 117-8, 126, 110-111; Sellers, University, I, 141.

²⁹Sarah A. Gayle Diary, Bayne-Gayle Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Hereafter referred to as Gayle Diary. March 24, 1833, December 1, 1834; Basil Manly to "My Dear Son," July 14, 1857, Manly Collection, University of Alabama.

³⁰West, Methodism, p. 433. By the Civil War, LaGrange had secured the usual chemical and philosophical apparatus and cabinet of minerals. McGregor, LaGrange, [p. 12]. Samuel S. Sherman, Autobiography, p. 52.

Even though they were costly, there seems an appalling lack of information about the status of libraries and apparatus. One uninformed writer, commenting on the scientific studies pursued by antebellum schools in general, stated that as late as 1850 "not a single college had a laboratory, or anything like a laboratory, in its physical plant." Both Howard and the University had laboratories by this time, and Southern possessed chemical apparatus purchased in Europe when it began operation.¹³ If the equipment listed was used conscientiously, Alabama's schools had ample apparatus for instruction. Generally "Standard" teaching aids were in use. The "Theodite [sic], Compass, Chain, Levelling Staves, etc." of Howard's Mathematics Department seems to have been a usual group of accouterments, as was the "Cabinet," which contained minerals and "geological specimens."³² Judson advertised

³¹Eddy, Colleges for our Time, p. 4; Perry, Birmingham-Southern, p. 19; Owen, Alabama, II, 424; Garrett, "Howard," p. 41. The purchase of equipment in Europe seemed standard procedure by the 1850's. As Southern's Professor N. T. Lupton wrote from France and Germany while buying \$1500 worth of equipment--"purchasing only the best from the best manufacturers; and at prices at least 30 per cent less than the same would cost in New York or Boston." Greensboro Alabama Beacon, May 13, 1859; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, October 1, 1859.

³²Ibid. The mathematical equipment was used to study surveying. The University had the best "cabinet" because of the State Legislature's gift of equipment and specimens after the Geological Survey. In 1841 Professor R. T. Brumby wrote from the University that the collection purchased from "Mr. Nuthall, and Mr. Sowerby of London"

"Globes, Maps, Geometrical Solids, a Planetarium Tellurim, an Electrical Machine, Air Pump, etc." Generally, the schools seem to have had and made use of all these aids. Yet there was never complete satisfaction with the situation. At the end of 1859, the University trustees reported the need of \$1000 for the philosophical apparatus.³³

Most early schools had other important instruments or group of aids. Judson, with one hundred pupils studying music, had "one Harp, fourteen pianos, and a variety of other instruments" in the 1850's.³⁴ Howard and the University had good telescopes, an extreme rarity. After Howard burned in 1854, the ladies of Marion decided that the school needed a telescope. They first raised \$460. The gift proved insufficient, but by May 21, 1857, a six-inch refractor telescope with an eight foot, five and

consisted mainly of minerals from Europe, Asia, Africa and New England, with a few from Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic islands, Middle, Southwestern and Western states and territories. But few were from Alabama until the legislature's gift. Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union, January 27, 1841. Occasionally the equipment was merely on loan, as when W. G. C. Price lent East Alabama Male College his mineral collection for so long as they needed it. Minutes of the Trustees, October 4, 1859.

³³Manly, Judson, p. 10; Huntsville Southern Advocate, December 28, 1859. Though not much by today's standards, such equipment was impressive in school advertisements.

³⁴Griffith, Alabama, p. 143. Among the "other instruments" were a number of pianos which had shrunk to six strings, and been renamed (guitars).

one-half inch focal length and a \$1,000 price tag arrived-- the ladies had raised the entire amount. Howard could then boast "a good telescope, Orrery, Globes, Circle, Transit, and all other such instruments." At the University, F. A. P. Barnard was largely responsible for the acquisition of the Observatory, which by 1850 was considered one of the country's best.³⁵ Barnard had acquired this reputation by purchasing \$2,800 worth of astronomical equipment and persuading the school to house the apparatus in a brick edifice. The transit-circle was constructed by Simms of London, and could be read in single seconds by means of four microscopes. The telescope itself had a five foot focal length. Mounted on an eighteen-foot revolving dome it was turned by a clock with "mensural compensation," built by Molyneux of London.³⁶

While the University had such novelties as a natural history museum "complete with curator," no school

³⁵Garrett, "Howard," pp. 41, 52-3; Howard Catalogue, 1856, p. 4; Sellers, University, I, 35. Only Washington and Cincinnati were said to have better ones. Huntsville Democrat, March 14, 1850.

³⁶Owen, Alabama, II, 425. The Observatory gained such notice that on a Johnson and Browning map of Georgia and Alabama, printed in New York in 1861, a vignette of it appeared. The state requested "two or three midshipmen" from the Secretary of Navy to "aid in the necessary observations" because of "their inability to make observations for the promotion of science." Huntsville Democrat, March 14, 1850.

could confine its attention solely to such elevated instruments.³⁷ Visitors scrutinizing Howard's activities during the period stated that as the lowly blackboard was "the most useful article of apparatus . . . ever introduced into the schoolroom," they were glad to see "four large ones in pretty constant use."³⁸ Problems of an even more mundane nature occasionally troubled University trustees. Such apparatus as window blinds, lightening rods and "privvys" were topics of discussion at board meetings. In 1831, when the first students arrived, the University needed \$6,000 worth of "window blinds for the professors' houses, recitation rooms and laboratories; grates for burning coal in the University buildings; barns, stables, and carriage houses; a well with a pump; shelves and cases; fencing materials; one hundred cherry trees to protect the house, and two privvys for students."³⁹

As for libraries, Alabama's schools were deficient. Oratory was the order of the day, and the library had limited appeal for men not essentially of a reflective turn of mind. As time passed, chauvanistic teachers faced the additional difficulty of finding textbooks

³⁷Sellers, University, I, 52.

³⁸Garrett, "Howard," p. 35.

³⁹Sellers, University, I, 36.

not "inimical to their [Southern] institutions . . ."40
Consequently, school libraries were carefully cultivated.
Public libraries were scarce--Huntsville and Montgomery
had one each--and except for these sources, books were
largely bought or borrowed from individuals. The 1850
census showed five college libraries with 7,500 volumes
among them.⁴¹ Most if not all of the catalogues proudly
proclaimed a library's existence but did not mention
the number of volumes its shelves contained.

Books could be bought or accepted from generous
donors, and Alabama colleges grew by both methods. At
the University, the trustees ordered the president to
employ librarian William McMillian and list the necessary
books for a library adequate for one hundred students. The
list was sent to David Woodruff of Tuscaloosa, Lowar and
Hogan of Philadelphia, C. O. G. Carrill of New York, and
such other booksellers in New York, Philadelphia, or
Boston as the president should see fit. These concerns

⁴⁰Lester J. Cappon, "The Provincial South,"
The Journal of Southern History, XVI (February, 1950,
15; Boyd, *Alabama*, p. 137. Often notices were placed in
the newspapers by booksellers advertising "Southern"
editions. "Home Education in the South," *DeBow's Review*,
X (1851), 362, gives an original indication of the move-
ment. For further treatment see Ezell, "Southern Education,"
pp. 303-327.

⁴¹Abernethy, *Formative Period*, p. 164; U. S.
7th Census, 1850, pp. 414-423.

and individuals bid on the whole list (delivered safely to Tuscaloosa), and the president made a contract. \$6,000 was appropriated for this investment in education.⁴²

Not all the University's books were purchased.

By 1838, the school was a depository for all American and foreign government documents. In 1836, the British government donated two boxes of books, which arrived with a freight charge of \$12.75. Another gift of ten books arrived in 1839. Massachusetts and the federal government both donated books and documents. What was no doubt the most unusual tentative contribution came from one Ebenezer Henderson of Greenbank House, St. Helens, near Liverpool, England. That gentleman made the first attempt in the school's history to buy an honorary degree. He offered a collection of books, most of his own authorship, in exchange for the honorary degree of LL.D. "and tendering certificates." The trustees decided to await arrival and examination of the books before proceeding with the matter, and so informed Henderson. The subject was not pursued.⁴³

⁴²Knight, Documentary History, III, 235; Griffith, Alabama, p. 134. The sum of \$20,000 had been appropriated "to purchase a library and philosophical and chemical apparatus" when the school first opened, but little of the money had been used for books. McCorvey, "Tutwiler," p. 94.

⁴³Sellers, University, I, 111-2; Manly Letterbook, 1834-46, pp. 1-5, 214, University of Alabama. By the mid-1850's books were coming "chiefly from the United States

The University had a fairly adequate library, despite frequent faculty complaints to the contrary. In 1842, four thousand volumes were in the library, and by 1847, 4,231 books were catalogued by author and title. In 1858, there were "about seven thousand volumes" with an estimated four thousand in the two literary societies.⁴⁴ At first, there was a special fund for such periodicals as the Quarterly Review, Boston Quarterly Register, Southern Educational Journal, New Englander, and Commercial Review. After 1839, money for such purchases came from the regular fund.⁴⁵

After expending the original \$6,000, \$400 a year was appropriated for the library's increase and improvement (cut to \$200 for the years 1836-1842). Even before the

Government, Smithsonian Institute and members of Congress. A few have come from individuals." Ibid., 1847-57, p. 307. The library of the Alabama Historical Society was also housed at the University librarian John Snow remembered. John Snow, "The Alabama Historical Society--Reminiscences of Fifty Years," Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society 1899-1903, IV (1900), 123.

⁴⁴Sellers, University, I, 109; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, November 18, 1858; Clark, Education, p. 55; Oran Roberts, Reminiscences, p. 9. The University Catalogue for 1851 boasted of about 5000 volumes and a 260-page "descriptive catalogue." President Manly mentioned such matters to the trustees, especially stressing them in his yearly reports. Manly Letterbook, 1849-57, pp. 57-8, 145-156, 207, 257, University of Alabama.

⁴⁵Manly Letterbook, 1834-1846, pp. 1-5, 164, University of Alabama; Sellers, University, I, 110.

decrease in funds, cutbacks were necessary to secure the best distribution of available money. William McMillian was deposed as librarian and replaced by a succession of needy students.⁴⁶ The savings would probably have gone further had better precautions been taken. Though stacks were closed and neither rare books nor textbook translations could be checked out, books were frequently lost, stolen, or damaged. The restriction of library hours in 1843 to Wednesday and Thursday afternoons did not alleviate the situation. A system of applying for a book Wednesday and picking it up Thursday was as ineffectual as the imposition of fines. Not until the library moved into an especially designed building was the problem solved.⁴⁷

The story of Howard's library is one of gifts.

⁴⁶Ibid., I, 104, 109-10. Oran Roberts remembered his stint as librarian while a senior in 1835-6. Roberts, Reminiscences, p. 19. Eventually faculty members were given the job despite complaints that it was simply a stunt to increase a professor's salary at the expense of needy students who had previously held the post. Brumby was librarian in 1837, S. S. Sherman in 1838. Not until 1852 was there another full-time librarian. See Manly Letterbooks, 1834-46, pp. 5, 164; 1847-57, p. 307, University of Alabama.

⁴⁷Sellers, University, I, 98, 103-4, 105. In 1848, books were damaged when students climbed the lightning rod one night and entered the library. Iron bars were put across all windows. By 1851 the bookcases had been covered with a lattice-work of wire. Manly Letterbook, 1847-1857, p. 268. The erection of "a semi-circular railing; admitting students within the room, but barring access to the book cases" had proved abortive as a stop-gap measure as early as 1840. Manly Letterbook, 1834-1846, p. 164, University of Alabama

In 1851, the trustees reported that no money had been spent on the library, as "other wants which could not be postponed, have been so numerous and so urgent, that this has not received its proper share of attention."⁴⁸ As a beginning, Dr. Sherman rolled a wheelbarrow through the streets of Marion asking for books. The addition of the 324-volume collection of the defunct manual labor school at Greensboro brought the total to a thousand volumes.⁴⁹ Despite contributions by the ladies of Montgomery and Marion, Howard's collection remained about one thousand volumes throughout the antebellum period. Had the whole library been carefully selected (which it had not), it would still have been inadequate for a college's needs. Such pleas as that of Howard's T. F. Curtis, who called for contributions for "the formation of a Theological Library here," were too often not heeded. Only the libraries of the two literary societies (about 600 volumes each) alleviated the situation.⁵⁰

Literary society libraries were extremely important in antebellum schools, especially to society members.

⁴⁸Garrett, "Howard," p. 38; ABC Minutes, 1851, p. 13.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 23, 25; Sherman, Autobiography, p. 52.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 38, 54; Alabama Baptist, April 30, 1850. A list of books to buy and their prices is extant in the DeVotie Papers, Samford University, 4:4.

When most of the faculty and students moved from LaGrange to Florence Wesleyan, the LaFayette Literary Society's library was left behind. Some members hired several wagons for a night foray. Returning to LaGrange, they loaded the library, carpet and furniture and fled. A hasty pursuit caught the culprits in South Florence. The wagons' loads were attached by the LaGrange Trustees, who won their case in court. The prize was well worth the effort, for the LaFayettes had a library equal that of their rival society, the Dialecticals--1500-1600 volumes.⁵¹

Evidently the position of librarian was one of some power. Story, in his diary of life at Southern, often spoke of his tenure as librarian for the Belles Lettres Society.⁵² But purchasing books required money. Some were acquired as gifts, but assessments and fines provided the necessary amounts. In 1842, Basil Manly, Jr., admitted to his fellow Philomathians that though "not an Institution got up for the purpose of relieving young men

⁵¹McGregor, LaGrange, [p. 16]. The books returned in a "damaged condition." Barnard, "LaGrange," p. 16. The libraries were open each Saturday at 1 p.m. A book's number was entered in the librarian's ledger, and the borrowing student had 2 weeks within which to return it. McGregor, LaGrange, [p. 81].

⁵²Story Diary, April 30, May 3, 10, 1860, Alabama Department of Archives and History. Arranging books was "very tedious but interesting," even when cataloguing such gifts as Little Daughters of the Cross from one Russell.

of their surplus pocket money," it "answers that end nearly as well as if it had been founded with that sole design." So calls went out to former members, now out of school and presumably in better financial situations. Such was the University's Eurosophics' plea to "all who have ever belonged to the Society to send on contributions to the Treasurer, to be expended in the purchase of books."⁵³ In 1858, a local paper estimated the literary societies' holdings at about 5000 volumes.⁵⁴

Besides the University, which had "one of the finest libraries in the whole South" by the 1860's, Spring Hill probably had the largest library in Alabama.⁵⁵ In some respects it was equal (if not superior) to that found in "any college in the Union," especially in philosophy and theology. Cardinal Fesch's donation of a rather complete philosophical and theological library assured this.⁵⁶

⁵³Basil Manly, Jr., "First Draught of a Speech before the Philomathic Society of the University of Alabama, April 30, 1842," Manly Collection, Furman; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, April 30, 1859.

⁵⁴Ibid., May 6, 1858.

⁵⁵Sellers, University, I, 285; Thomas P. Clinton, "The Military Operations of General John T. Croxton in West Alabama," Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, IV (1902), 456-7.

⁵⁶Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 43.

Certain groups and individuals provided scholarships, sometimes for specific individuals. John Crosby, a Conecuh county man, sent a student through the theological course at Howard. The Salem Baptist Association sent a Brother Davis through the Collegiate and Theological courses at Howard.⁷⁴ John G. Barr was sent to the University by a Tuscaloosa tailor, Daniel M. Boyd. Massey well remembered his first year at the University, when his enrollment cost \$31 more than he had. At 25, Massey was able to make a living without the education, but was determined to have it. Dr. Garland personally loaned him the money and provided work for him.⁷⁵ Such cases of aid to individuals seem rare, especially when spread over 30 years. But there are enough to give the impression of other, unrecorded acts of charity toward indigent students. In addition to such "private" aid, there was a fair amount of institutionalized support.

Antebellum schools anticipated the problem of indigent students and provided for them. In many schools, the provision was one of necessity, for they had sold

⁷⁴Riley, Conecuh, p. 131; Alabama Baptist, October 14, 1853. The Association provided for two others, and was held up as an example for others to emulate.

⁷⁵Garrett, Public Men, p. 708; Massey, Reminiscences, pp. 100-101.

students paid with great difficulty; others were unable to afford these prices.

There were several methods of dealing with the problems of payment. One might follow the example of Robert and Will Pruit, students at LaGrange 1859-1860, who survived by getting boxes of food, clothing, newspapers and stamps (and occasionally "pocket change") from home.⁷² If one were lucky, one might live with relatives, a course which might prove unpleasant. And one might work, as at the manual labor schools. But there were better ways, some of which called for luck.⁷³

1847, [p. 9]; Sellers, University, I, 130; Alabama Baptist, June 5, April 3, 1850; Florence Gazette, July 27, 1859. The Greensboro Beacon estimated \$150-\$200 only if the son were educated near home. To send him off to college would cost \$600-\$1,000. February 11, 1855.

⁷²R. W. Pruit to "Dear Mother and Pa," March 9, August 15, 1860. Wyche-Otey Papers, University of North Carolina. Robert was very insistent that his mother not forget "some of Mr. Strthess Indian peaches" or "the old ham" under "any circumstances."

⁷³Professor L. C. Garland of the University wrote his wife that his mother had committed the Garlands to board a nephew, Hugh. Garland's brother had written of "his inability to send with him money enough to pay his board in advance. Of course he is to board with us." Considering the financial burden and imposition, Garland noted, "My feelings are to refuse to board him, and this I should certainly do, if my mother was not going out to live with us." Then he relented--"I must endure this imposition . . . for her sake"--and begged his wife to "submit to it as cheerfully as possible." September 11, 1851. Burwell B. Lewis Collection, Perkins Library, Durham, North Carolina.

Aside from such charges, outside costs were low. Few schools had fees, though Spring Hill and Judson were exceptions. Spring Hill's deviation was a small one. Tuition covered board, washing, mending, lodging, books, stationery, and "whatever else pertains to their studies." A charge was levied for study in the Fine Arts department, fencing, vacations spent at school (\$30), and entrance (\$10).⁶⁹ At Judson, fees were attached to almost everything. An additional \$25 was required for studying piano or guitar, and it cost \$5 to use the instruments. Ornamental needlework was \$15, as were drawing and painting. French, German and Italian could each or all be studied for \$20; Latin, Greek and Hebrew each cost an extra \$10. If a student learned "transferring, Shell and Wax work," the cost was \$1 per lesson.⁷⁰

Many schools provided an estimate of a student's total yearly bill. Florence Wesleyan University advertised \$150-\$200, the University \$180-\$200. Howard estimated \$175-\$200, Judson \$200. Though it cost a young lady pursuing English studies and "music on the piano" about \$240 a year, "A young man with \$200 in his pocket could . . . cover the essentials of his college life."⁷¹ Some

⁶⁹Kenny, Catholic Culture, pp. 70, 143.

⁷⁰Alabama Baptist, January 6, 1844. Such charges were common at finishing schools.

⁷¹Griffith, Alabama, p. 143; Howard Catalogue,

fastening as he may see fit."⁶⁵ Judson provided bedding with the room. Fuel, lights, and washing were extra, and the luxury of a feather bed could be revelled in "at a slight extra charge."⁶⁶ Students at Spring Hill had to furnish more than undergraduates at other colleges. Not only did they supply their clothes and linens, but each had to furnish a bedstead, mattress, pillow, washbowl and stand, silver spoon, and fork as well (for \$8, bedding was furnished, mosquito bar included).⁶⁷ At LaGrange, too, students furnished bed and furniture, as well as the usual fuel and candles. Generally these charges ran about \$2-\$3 for whatever the school provided.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Howard Catalogue, 1858, [p. 7]; Sellers, University, I, 37; Garrett, "Howard," p. 57; Alabama Baptist, April 3, 1850; Books were estimated at \$5-\$10 a year. As Crenshaw Hall found, that cost could be decreased by loans from the home library--Crenshaw to "Dear Father," October, 1857. Bolling Hall Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History. The student could also "skimp"--"We furnished our room with rather cheap furniture--hard shuck mattresses, scanty cover, plain water buckets, tin wash pans, tin candlesticks and star chandles [sic]." Massey, Reminiscences, p. 100.

⁶⁶Manly, Judson, p. 17; Owen, Alabama, II, 498.

⁶⁷Kenny, Catholic Culture, pp. 70, 143.

⁶⁸Barnard, "LaGrange," p. 13. This was during the 8 years of higher prices. Except for that time, incidentals cost \$4; "diet," bedding, washing and fire-wood were included under "board," an arrangement which saved the student \$6 a year. At East Alabama Male College, "contingent expenses" followed the rise of tuition--\$1.50 the first session, \$2.50 the second. Minutes of the Trustees, East Alabama Male College, July 13, 1859.

Although room and board were expensive (and with tuition accounted for most of a student's bill), other expenses added up. "Incidentals" became increasingly expensive, for often schools emulated the University. Originally tuition, room rent, servant hire, use of the library and fuel cost \$52 a year there. Soon fuel was dropped from the list and became (at the going rate plus a 10 per cent service charge) another "incidental."⁶⁴

Incidentals were the student's bane. The list of materials steadily lengthened and the cost rose. At Howard, washing (\$1.50 per month) and the expense of "wood and light," came out of the student's pocket. At the University each student supplied a lock and "such other

University of Alabama; Sellers, University, I, 130; Barnard, "LaGrange," p. 13; circular to Mr. J. W. Pruit, June 6, 1860, Wyche-Otey Papers, University of North Carolina, Huntsville Democrat, September 8, 1831; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, August 17, 1847. These figures are for school-supplied facilities. Room and board was generally available in town and was sometimes necessary. Southern had no dormitories, a lack supplied by W. J. McDonald, who built a forty-room house across the street from the campus. Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 35. James Fontaine boarded in Marion during his stay at Howard. James Fontaine to Hannah Coker, January 10, 1845, Lide-Coker Papers, Caroliniana Library. Bolling and Crenshaw Hall often complained of the price of their existence at the University to their mother and father. See letters October 6, 7, 9, 20, 1857, Bolling Hall Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History. LaGrange needs were also met by "outsiders"--see the Huntsville Democrat, January 5, 1832, January 3, 1833, February 21, 1856.

⁶⁴Sellers, University, I, 41.

it charged \$20 the first session, \$30 the next.⁶² On the surface, such figures seem to indicate that college life was not so expensive, and should have brought in barely enough to keep the schools open. But tuition was generally not the major item in the list of student expenses.

Without doubt room and board were the largest single student costs. The Baptist manual labor school charged \$100 a year; at the University it was \$15 a month (up from an initial \$80 per year). Board at Judson was \$9 per month. LaGrange changed these rates as it had its tuition, and in the same manner-\$80 a year was raised to \$10 per month, then reduced again. At Howard, there was an option. A student could room for \$2 to \$5 and board for \$12 to \$13 a month with "the most respectable families in town," or room at school and board abroad. Occasionally the University likewise allowed students to board abroad (a necessity with the abolition of the Steward's Hall). By 1847, local newspapers advertised the willingness of some families to provide board for \$8 to \$11 a month.⁶³

⁶²With the exception of the Baptist manual labor school, all tuition charges are for a 5-month session. The yearly rate would therefore be double the listed amount. Rates were listed not only in the catalogues, but also in newspaper advertisements. For specific references, see citations for room and board.

⁶³Knight, Documentary History, IV, 121; Minutes of the Trustees, East Alabama Male College, July 13, 1859, Alabama Department of Archives and History; Alabama Baptist, January 6, 1844, April 3, 1850; Catalogues of Howard,

decrease education costs.⁵⁹ At Judson, students could visit town only once a month. All purchases had to be approved by the accompanying teacher, but only fifty cents a month was allowed for pocket money. Spring Hill's rule that students give the President their pocket change for disbursement may have seemed unfair, but again the element of parental (or parent-like) control was provided.⁶⁰ Despite attempts to save students' money, payment of tuition and fees in advance could be a prohibitive factor.⁶¹

Tuition depended upon the school and level of study. At the Baptist manual labor school at Greensboro, tuition was \$32. Howard cost students \$12 to \$16 in the preparatory department, \$25 in the advanced. At the University, the only "regular College charge" was \$15. Judson's preparatory department tuition was the same as Howard's; the advanced was \$5 less. LaGrange was one of the few schools to make major rate adjustments. Until the 1843-4 session, tuition was \$10. That year, it became \$25. The change lasted only 8 years, for in 1851 the charge was reduced to the former rate. East Alabama Male College at Auburn seemingly took lessons from LaGrange, for

⁵⁹Howard Catalogue, 1855, [p. 6].

⁶⁰Darden, Marion, pp. 23-4; Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 70.

⁶¹Howard Catalogue, 1855, [p. 8]. Most schools joined Howard in this procedure.

Southern's library likewise grew by gifts. Bishops Soule and Andrew made valuable book contributions to begin a library. During the first year, about \$1250 was spent for 1000 books (mostly standard works) and "two foreign scientific journals."⁵⁷ LaGrange had no library its first year, though the faculty appointed committees to collect one. The next year, the Trustees called for a permanent fund "to obtain the needful books for a library."⁵⁸ Apart from Spring Hill and the University, college libraries in antebellum Alabama were certainly deficient. This joined with the comparative lack of public and individual libraries to lower the quality of education. The problem was heightened by the rise of sectionalism and subsequent lack of faith in Northern books. And there was always the problem of funds. Though some of the necessary funds could come from student fees, a school could not afford to have tuition too high.

The cost of education could determine an academic institution's effectiveness. Such provisions as Howard's forbidding students to contract debts in Marion "without the express permission of Parents or Guardians" helped

⁵⁷Christenberry, Southern, p. 19; Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 45. By the second year, Southern had a library of 4400 volumes. Greensboro Alabama Beacon, August 18, 1859.

⁵⁸Huntsville Democrat, June 24, 1830, November 3, 1831.

scholarships, ransoming their future for the present use of funds. Such scholarships halved the cost of tuition and were a boon to students whatever their effects upon the schools. Howard and LaGrange were probably the best examples of this aid. In addition, most denominational schools provided for ministerial students and ministers' children.⁷⁶ There was also some state-provided aid. In December, 1842, the legislature decided to admit a free student per county to the University (upon receiving proof of his "narrow circumstances" and preparation to enter a regular class). In 1853, special scholarships were established for theological students, possibly in hopes of luring students from denominational schools. Aid to indigent students was increased in 1858, when the legislature upped scholarships from one to three per county. Often the legislature wrote such aid into the school charter, as it did with the Medical College at Mobile and the various state military schools.⁷⁷ Generally individual

⁷⁶Howard furnished free room and tuition. Garrett, "Howard," p. 57; undated letter from Basil Manly to an unnamed young man desiring a ministerial education. Manly Papers, University of North Carolina. See also Alabama Baptist, September 4, 1854.

⁷⁷Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 55; Greensboro Beacon, August 13, 1858; Florence Gazette, October 22, 1858; Sellers, University, I, 120-1. Governor Gayle urged students to take advantage of it. (Alabama Senate Journal, 1833, p. 6-22), but they generally did not. (DeBow's Review, XXVIII [February, 1860], 239). Acts of Alabama, 1859, p. 349. The aid to LaGrange cadets was \$113.50 per man--which

schools took care of their own in some fashion, despite state decisions. It may have been no more than East Alabama Male College's deferred payment plan, but there was some provision.⁷⁸

Students often needed such aid. Though expenses were not prohibitive, if a school recognized its duty to provide for its students, some aid was necessary. And a school needed the maximum number of students in the race for the prestige given by a large student body as well as for income. Even students on scholarships brought income to the school. Someone paid the scholarships initially. And every student who graduated was a potential donor, either directly, or through the children for whose education he would pay when they attended his alma mater. So it was to the school's advantage to have these scholarships. It was even more to the student's advantage, for only if the price were paid could he hear the faculty and use the facilities--only then could he enjoy the pleasures of student life for a season.

paid tuition, board, washing, fuel and lights. McGregor, LaGrange, [p. 18].

⁷⁸Minutes of the Trustees, East Alabama Male College, October 4, 1859. By this plan, indigents gave their note for their schooling, paid it after graduation.

CHAPTER VII

STUDENT LIFE

Once a student managed to find money for school, he could learn from professors and make use of the apparatus. Though fairly studious, pupils suffered from an adverse heritage--the frontier's independent spirit, their parents' spirit of rebellion against federal authority, and the accustomed authority given masters in a slave society. While most made pretenses of scholarship, all students believed in the efficacy of fun. Then as now there were abundant pranks and larks. Above all, students were human, subject to the joys and sorrows of others, worrying over examinations, grades, food, and their health, but not letting problems (or rules) obstruct their general exuberance.

Regulations were in abundance, strict, and increasingly enforced. Evidently the University had the strictest and most. Initially, ordinances were few and simple. Students were not to whisper, read, or "make any manner of disturbance" during a lecture, recitation or devotional exercise. Neither could they use a textbook, except when required by the professor or in the language department. Besides refraining from "usual

exercises and diversions" on the Sabbath, these were the only rules.¹ The list gradually lengthened until within a decade, it had to be subdivided into "high offenses" and misdemeanors. Eventually the rule book read like a catalogue of pranks, a catalogue students heard each year as the session opened. The worst offenses were summed up as "any flagrant immorality against the laws of God and man." After this statement, the rule book detailed the University version of the laws of man.

Possession or use of any intoxicants, having gunpowder or a deadly weapon, being even remotely involved in a duel, gambling, indecency, or obscenity in "language, dress or behavior," associating with any "prohibited person," involvement with any sort of unauthorized illumination, riotous and noisy behavior, "gross disrespect to any officer of the University," and "obstructing the officers in the discharge of their duties" or disobeying the "sentence of the Faculty" were heinous crimes.² Keeping a horse, servant, or dog, or attempting to bring a female or servant

¹Knight, Documentary History, III, 246. The increase in restrictions began that school year, when the trustees decreed that any student attending the theatre, circus, race track or any public dancing party would be "solemnly admonished" for the first offense and suspended if the offense was repeated. McCorvey, "Tutwiler," 83.

²Sellers, University, I, 199.

into the college building were likewise frowned upon.³

Misdemeanors were rules which every boy hoped to break. Absence from one's room or section after nine p.m. without permission, attendance at "any public amusement, or show, or exhibition," throwing water or "any kind of dirt or rubbish" from the windows, or collecting in groups during study hours were some of the detailed list of crimes which spurred the imagination of bored students sitting on hard chapel benches their first morning at the University.⁴ The most popular infractions were those for which students were frequently admonished--playing music, moving furniture or firing pistols in the rooms during study hours, carrying beds across the campus, and congregating for rock-throwing parties.⁵

Despite the rules, classes were evidently "heaven" for students and the opposite for harried professors. At times nothing was effective in maintaining order. Regardless of the regimen, students managed to enliven classrooms by

³Knight, Documentary History III, 260-261. There were occasional problems with boys taking females into the dorms--Manly Letterbook, 1834-47, p. 360.

⁴Sellers, University, I, 198.

⁵Ibid., 218; Bolling Hall to "Dear Father," October 17, 1857, Bolling Hall Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

prompting, throwing paper balls, playing tricks on another student, sleeping . . . , using texts, cracking and eating pindars, eating peas, . . . scribbling and passing notes, boxing, reading newspapers, handling bottles around and talking, knocking on bench, drawing pictures on blackboard, lying down on bench, cutting bench with knife, whistling, spitting on floor, going to fire during recitation, laughing, disturbing class with a wasp, shooting chalk, pretending to fall from seat, whispering and gesturing in imitation of student, and taking the professor's hat on a rainy morning.⁶

The first faculty determined that the new University would not be an example of the "laxative discipline which abounds in southern seminaries." Ironically, such determination bred the opposite results; in attempting to avoid laxness, faculty members defined standards of conduct too high for these first students. Youngsters fresh from the freedom of the fields would not live up to approximately the same standards of conduct Harvard College had obtained.⁷ The Northeast was old enough to have a measure of culture and maturity--Alabama was not. Alabama was still largely frontier, even in the 1850's, and needed longer to mature before she could hope to match Harvard's standards.

Not content with the old laws' operation, in 1838 the faculty drew up new ones. An 1837 riot, after which

⁶Sellers, University, I, 163-164.

⁷Ibid., 56; Huntsville Southern Advocate, October 23, 1830.

most of the students (including the whole Senior class) were suspended or dismissed, was one of the reasons.⁸

Section six and eight of the 1838 code contained "exculpation" provisions--the student declared his innocence of suspected misdeeds or was adjudged guilty by his own confession (refusal to assert innocence was equated with guilt). Unfortunately, rigid enforcement of these laws did not end student outbreaks.⁹

The worst results of the rules change were riots in 1840 and 1842. On March 19, 1840, the Rotunda (which was also the chapel) was in a state of disarray. Placards of an "inflammatory nature" were displayed throughout the main room, the floor of which was littered with fragments of a Bible taken from the desk and shredded. Shortly thereafter a professor's room was "invaded" and several "valuable articles" taken. The exculpation law was enforced and nine students suspended (though they denied taking part in the atrocity). Believing the expulsion unfair, the students rioted.¹⁰

Two years and ten days later, firearms were discharged all over campus, "low and exceedingly blasphemous

⁸Owen, Alabama, II, 425; Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 43.

⁹Ibid., p. 48; Owen, Alabama, II, 425.

¹⁰Clark, Education in Alabama, pp. 51-52.

language" was used, and other types of disorderly conduct were rampant. On the following night the unrest spilled over campus confines as far as the Alabama Athenaeum, a female seminary. A mob of students and other persons assembled outside the girls' dormitory and "insulted and alarmed the inmates with boisterous shouts, profane language, and the discharge of firearms." Exculpation was again invoked. Twenty-seven students who affirmed their innocence remained; two who admitted their guilt and forty-eight who refused to answer were suspended. A third riot in 1845 and a fourth in 1848 again tested the exculpation law, which failed.¹¹

The fine prospects promised by the University's opening were soon marred by disorderly conduct. Within five years students had forced the faculty's resignation, for neither side resorted to "the milder system of moral suasion."¹² Relations varied from armed truce to open warfare. Certain undergraduates, convinced that rules were "made to be broken," sought diligently to help them

¹¹Ibid., p. 53; Owen, Alabama, II, 426. There was no proof that the young ladies felt anything other than excitement over the incident, but officials were sure that they had been insulted and alarmed. Neither was there proof that the University students rather than others in the mob had committed the indiscretions (except against the two who confessed).

¹²Garrett, "Howard," p. 5.

fulfill the function of their creation.¹³ Even during "quiet" periods, tension was evident. While professors seldom resorted to corporal punishment, students were more physical in their demonstrations. President Basil Manly recorded that during January, 1841, "A low and dissolute fellow, by the name of Capers, on being excluded for his vices and contempt of the laws, attempted to insult me and the Steward by pulling our noses."¹⁴

Surprising leniency was shown in the rare cases of unintentional accidents, as on July 4, 1849, when several University students celebrated by going swimming. Inadvertently (or with premediated mischief), these swimmers "exposed themselves in a position where they could be observed by some ladies who were upon the bank." After a full investigation and report of the incident, the faculty decided that there was no evidence of "intentional impropriety." The boys were cautioned, then excused.¹⁵

Profanity was sometimes viewed as an accident. Powder-key tempers flared at a spark. The richest oaths of frontier vocabulary rolled off angry tongues with

¹³Sellers, University, I, 58, 124.

¹⁴Ibid., 207. "Mine was unfortunately so short that the fellow could not get hold of it fairly, and therefore no harm was done," the President concluded. Manly Letterbook, 1834-47, p. 67.

¹⁵Sellers, University, I, 227, 143.

practiced ease, mixing with hasty actions. No one knew whether the boys were freer with their profanity or the men around whom they grew up. Such environmental traits were taken into account, for profanity and blasphemy were not punished per se--they only added to the seriousness of actions they accompanied.¹⁶

The University did not have the only discipline problems, merely the most evident. Spring Hill prohibited note passing, and "frowned upon" disputes, roughness, coarse expressions, insults, "particular friendships, whispering groups," and conversations opposed to either religion or good morals.¹⁷ Howard, LaGrange, and Southern had similarly strict rules, as may be seen in a comparison of their catalogues.

Girls' schools had different but equally harsh regulations. At Judson, for example, a "prompt and cheerful obedience to the laws" was always expected. Appeals were made to reason and conscience to provide the "discharge of duty." Only those "happy in observing wise and wholesome regulations" could stay. The wholesomeness of the regulations might be questioned, but not the strictness. Books, magazines, and newspapers had to be approved by the Principal. Any acceptance of flowers,

¹⁶Ibid., 239.

¹⁷Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 72.

memento, token of regard or "verbal communication" from a single man was rewarded by expulsion. Students were not to leave campus or receive visitors.¹⁸

Detection and punishment of violations were similar everywhere. Most infractions involved leaving behind evidence. But students worried more about faculty espionage systems than evidence. At the University, the system functioned exceptionally well (much to the consternation of the students). Warfield C. Richardson, Class of 1843, commented on spies and informers and the alacrity with which the average faculty member listened to tattletales.¹⁹ The University's favorite punishment was suspension or dismissal. Spring Hill officials, disliking suspension, had a more involved system. Recreation was often denied rule-breakers. For theft, first offenders carried a sign marked "thief"; being caught twice brought dismissal.²⁰

While the lack of major difficulty was due to the "prudence, wisdom, and decision" of a firm but kind

¹⁸Catalogue of the Trustees, Instructors and Students of the Judson Female Institute, 1850, pp. 15-16, 1852, p. 20, 1853, p. 19, 1851, pp. 17-18. Hereafter referred to as Judson Catalogue.

¹⁹Moore, Alabama, p. 344; Sellers, University, I, 73.

²⁰Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 72.

faculty, problems were blamed upon students.²¹ The blame could not be so parcelled out--part lay with the faculty, part with the student. Some difficulty arose from the students' frontier experiences; another portion must be laid at the feet of their parents.

Antebellum students were accustomed to the sunshine of extensive fields and the "liberty-breathing winds" of the forests around their homes. Strict rules made the students' position much worse.²² A North Carolinian teaching in Alabama wrote:

While at home they have been accustomed to pass their time in ease and amusement The confinement of the schoolroom, the demand of close application to uninteresting studies, the stern obligation of performing a regular task, and the privations of a boarding house must go hard with a boy after being accustomed to ramble about his father's plantation, with dogs at his heels and a gun or fishing-rod on his shoulder until he is tired, and then to return to the house, open his mother's pantry, and there fish with more success among jars of sweetmeats and jellies Would he consider it a very serious misfortune if for inattention to his books or some youthful prank he should be sent

²¹Garrett, "Howard," p. 58.

²²Thomas C. McCorvey, Alabama Historical Sketches (Charlottesville, 1960), p. 22. A good example of this influence is found in the student's own words. R. W. Pruitt wrote his mother from LaGrange "I miss my gun and dogs very much . . .," at the same time his brother wrote of his fishing expedition. March, April, 20, 1860. Wyche-Dee Collection, Chapel Hill. The Story Diary (May 10, 1860) presents the same tale.

home to the scene of his former amusements?
. . . He may a little dread the first
interview; but he knows that after a good
scolding, his time will pass as pleasantly
as before.²³

Perhaps parents were partially to blame for the
students' attitude. Often over-indulgent, prosperous
parents pampered their children with personal slaves,
extravagant wardrobes, unlimited credit, and extensive
collections of "dirks, pistols, bowie knives, and swords."²⁴

The main problem with parents concerned their attitudes.
From about the University's founding, these men were
searching a political context for the key to maintaining
minority rights. Sectionalism was becoming the dominant
force in Southern thought, and the spirit of defiance was
everywhere. Men disobeying what seemed to some a "higher
Law" were not the best teachers from whom to learn lessons
in submission to authority.²⁵

Whatever the cause, there were problems between
students and teachers. As long as trouble was confined
to the campus, reputations were not endangered. This

²³U. B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (New York, 1929), p. 358.

²⁴Sellers, University, I, 226; Owen, "Manly,"
p. 129. See the Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union, August 9,
1837 for the townsfolk's reaction to the situation.

²⁵Sellers, University, I, 226.

as particularly true of the University, for too often students looked upon town as "a free field for adventure."²⁶

What was the life of these students? Were all ruffians, spending their time carousing (as some believed)? The means of insight is the schedules and activities governing the general routine of life.

A student's schedule at any Alabama school was much the same. Opening day was usually deferred until mid-October for fear of yellow fever. The session was ten months, divided into two equal terms. Often one week was given for Christmas.²⁷

The days (except Sunday) ran largely according to the same time scheme. Students rose at five o'clock (sunrise or earlier depending on the time of year). The faculty controlled the schedule by ringing the morning bell and (at the University) spent considerable time tinkering with that schedule. Usually the faculty decreed morning prayers before breakfast; at Judson, one hour of study came first.²⁸ Classes, generally two

²⁶Ibid., 243.

²⁷Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 138; Garrett, "Howard," p. 34. Both the University and Southern attempted to curtail Christmas holidays. At Southern, a riot was the result, the first year when the holiday was only a day long. Story Diary, January 17, 1860, Montgomery, Alabama.

²⁸Sellers, University, I, 130-131; Manly,

hours long, ran most of the day, and there was no absence without written permission. The first class was at nine, and at two hour intervals the bell would signal class changes. Each class had three recitations daily except Saturday.²⁹

The meal schedule and food served was as important to students as the classes, but little information in this area remains. Occasionally students broke the routine with a picnic (at times complete with female companionship). There were even occasional invitations to dine in the home of some local family or friend, but these invitations and food boxes from home were exceptions to the rule.³⁰ The general approach was to have students board at school or with families. Though Southern had no Steward's Department, as these were known, and the

Judson, p. 18; Judson Catalogue, 1850, p. 16; Harriet Stapp to "Dear Brother," April 3, 1857, Joseph D. Stapp Papers, Perkins Library, Durham, North Carolina.

²⁹Sellers, University, I, 130; Knight, Documentary History, III, 245. There was only one on Saturday, the usual day for debating society meetings. Perhaps the length of class was one reason for student restlessness.

³⁰Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, April 22, 1858; Story Diary, February 23, 1860, Montgomery, Alabama; Wyche-Otey Collection, Chapel Hill. There were problems with boarding in town, one of which M. E. Thompson noted when writing her son at the University: "Your boarding house is far from college. Yet you must have your regular meals." April 29, 1860. Benson-Thompson Family Papers, Durham, North Carolina.

University ended its attempts in this direction, other Alabama schools maintained school-connected facilities. LaGrange had no trouble, and in the estimation of some writers had consistently high standards. Problems occurred only when monotony set in, or when midnight requisitions depleted the steward's stores.³¹ One Judson alumna wrote that fifteen minutes was allotted for the noon meal, except when dessert added an extra five minutes. Breakfast was a big meal, with butter and molasses served on waffles, "battercakes, or egg-bread." The food was well-prepared and not monotonous. Desserts were rice-pudding, fritters or watermelon (in the summer). Waste-fulness was a cardinal sin, and all that was taken had to be eaten.³²

³¹Too much goose led to the "Goose Rebellion" at LaGrange, where the cadets refused to turn their plates over and accept the rations. All sat still and refused to eat. The theft of food was also a problem, though rarely carried to the extent three LaGrange boys took. The steward's hens roosted in a large tree near the dining hall. One boy would climb the tree periodically and pass the sleeping fowls to his two accomplices below. Steward Felton ended the forays when his approach scared off the two on the ground without disturbing the one in the bush. He accepted enough chickens for breakfast, then called the boy down. Felton let him go, upon a promise of no more visits to the roost. McGregor, LaGrange, pp. 36-7.

³²Manly, Judson, p. 22. Tuskegee Female College had such delicacies as oysters, "sponge cake," tea cakes and gingerbread, Ellison, Huntingdon, p. 24.

Good food seems to have been the rule and may account for the limitation on time spent in the dining area. There were other reasons for the rule. A good place to plot because of relaxed supervision, Steward's Hall at the University was a center of student violence. Fights took place where food, dishes, and cutlery could join fists, knives, and pistols in the melees. Often the rampage started when someone threw too-hard biscuits at a waiter's back. When the waiter whirled, everyone was busily absorbed in transferring food from plate to mouth. Students who liked hard biscuits or were ready for a fight then returned the fire as the waiter hastily vanished. Soon the air would be heavy with hard biscuits.³³

Faculty members tried to guard against such action by enforcing supervised study. At Judson and other schools (except the University), two or three hours each night were spent under a professor's watchful eye.³⁴ Free time was almost nonexistent. At the University, study hours were nine a.m. to one, two p.m. until evening prayers, and seven p.m. until bedtime. Unless in class, as the rulebook said, "every student will be expected and required to be in his room quietly pursuing his studies."

³³Sellers, University, I, 128, 232; Roberts, Reminiscences, p. 13.

³⁴Manly, Judson, p. 18.

The only exception to study hours was between nine and ten p.m., when students could play musical instruments in their own rooms.³⁵ If E. B. Thompson was typical, the exception was well-used. As he wrote "Dear Nealie" in 1860, his accordion and fiddle preceded him home. His admonition to play his instruments was followed by a seeming afterthought, prompted no doubt by room- or hall-mate: "I'll bet before two days you will wish you had never heard it."³⁶

Unless kept awake by music or noise, bed-time was a welcome release from the day's activity. Lights out was universally imposed. At Judson, ten o'clock would bring the call. The governess would tap on each door, say "good night," then retire herself. A Howard student in 1854 mentioned nine o'clock as bedtime, though even in October doors between rooms and the hall were left open and the windows up.³⁷

³⁵Knight, Documentary History, III, 261; Sellers, University, I, 123. Almost all schools viewed missing class as a heinous crime. At Southern, it was worse to miss class than skip church or chapel exercises. Parks and Weaver, Birmingham-Southern, p. 43. In the mid-1850's, Bolling Hall wrote his father that despite an attack of measles, he had not missed a single class at the University (though in such cases students were not required to attend classes). January 27, October 9, 1857, Bolling Hall Papers, Montgomery, Alabama.

³⁶Benson-Thompson Family Papers, Durham, North Carolina.

³⁷Manly, Judson, p. 23; Garrett, "Howard," p. 45.

There was much unpleasantness for antebellum students to face. Students had to furnish the comforts of home for their dormitory rooms. Except at the University and Spring Hill, most essentials were furnished; these schools provided only fireplace grates and window shades.³⁸ Despite the austerity of the surroundings, probably the worst unpleasantness concerned illness.

Maintaining students' health was generally not the faculty's responsibility. Disease, feared in early Alabama, often visited students. The epidemics which plagued the state did not bypass the schools--in 1857, three students died in a spring epidemic at Tuskegee Female College; four others died in an 1853 typhoid pneumonia epidemic at the University; in 1850, a small-pox panic closed LaGrange for a month.³⁹ There were occasional deaths from other causes, as when John Bishop died at Howard from "sickness of considerable standing," and Frank Farley at the University from "an acute attack of rheumatism and overtaxing a constitution not naturally strong." One class at the University had eight members die between the class's formation and its graduation.⁴⁰

³⁸Sellers, University, I, 121. See the section on student costs for what Spring Hill students had to furnish.

³⁹Ibid., 127; Ellison, Huntingdon, p. 28; Barnard, "LaGrange," p. 16.

⁴⁰Alabama Baptist, May 1, 1850; Massey, Reminiscences,

Expert care was a rarity; students generally nursed themselves in their rooms or submitted to a roommate's ministrations. LaGrange had a hospital, as W. G. Pruitt wrote his mother upon his release from a short stay there, but such accommodations were rare.⁴¹ Less inviting arrangements occasionally had to be made for the ill. As early as 1839, the University trustees decided that due to the difficulty of transportation and inadequate embalming processes, a burying ground was necessary.⁴²

With such problems of health, it is easy to understand parents' anguish in those days of slow communication. No wonder most letters home contained a rather full description of health and/or reassurances of well-being. The letters of C. C. Clay, Sr. to his son at the University are excellent examples of one parent's concern for the physical well-being of his offspring. Upon hearing from young Clay after a cholera epidemic, the father wrote that

p. 106; Huntsville Southern Advocate, June 13, 1855.

⁴¹April 7, June 2, 1860. Wyche-Otey Collection, Chapel Hill. Bolling Hall's bout with measles at the University demonstrates the problem there. See January 27, 1857; March 4, 1858. Crenshaw, Bolling's brother, had to be nursed most of early October, 1857. From Bolling's letters, the illness was widespread. October 6, 7, 1857. Bolling Hall Papers, Montgomery, Alabama.

⁴²Sellers, University, I, 91. The only grave was occupied first by Samuel James. After his disinterment and removal, William Crawford (victim of the 1844 typhus epidemic) took his place.

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Pampered literary societies caused the University anguish. In 1853 the Erosopic and Philomathic societies were granted meeting rooms in new Madison Hall. The faculty had evidently forgotten the 1837 Philomathic Society scandal concerning James G. Birney, the noted

⁵⁵"First Draught of a Speech before the Philomathic Society of the University of Alabama, April 30, 1842," Manly Collection, Furman University.

⁵⁶McGregor, LaGrange, pp. 80-83; Roberts, Reminiscences, p. 19; Bolling Hall to "Dear Father," October 17, 1857, February 24, 1858. An 1858 topic was secession.

rule.⁵²

Extracurricular activities, though not provided, sprang up in each school. Most planners had conceived of student life as a world inside campus confines with every waking minute scheduled.⁵³ Despite these attitudes, literary societies were organized. Reasons for their organization were legion: to cultivate "those faculties of the mind uneducated by collegiate studies" and pursue "general reading for securing liberal and intelligent view." The Hon. A. B. Meek, speaking to the University's Philomathics, called it "purely practical," a preparation for "the positions you are to occupy in life."⁵⁴ Basil Manly, Jr. said much the same to his fellow Philomathics in 1842. Meetings were to improve "intellectual facilities, to acquire a power of quickly arranging our thoughts in a lucid manner, and readily and concisely expressing them in appropriate words." Preparation for "our proper stations" was important, for knowledge, the ability to conduct legislative business and "control and guide the fluctuating passions of multitudes by our words" were the keys to power. As Manly summed it up, the literary society's object was "Mental Improvement and the Cultivation of the

⁵²Sellers, University, I, 138.

⁵³Ibid., 175.

⁵⁴A. B. Meek, South West, p. 6.

etrimental to the proper working of the distinctive collegiate process." Contact with the outside world and practice of its niceties should take place in the "natural atmosphere of family life, under the control and guidance of parents," and school officials believed vacations offered adequate opportunity for such activities. Although not as isolated as Spring Hill, most schools were also barred from undue outside influence.⁵⁰

Such fortuitous circumstances as at Howard, where Judson girls attended lectures on chemistry, natural philosophy, and physiology, were few indeed. Students took all possible advantage of these situations.⁵¹ Most opportunities were encountered in well-chaperoned, carefully-arranged public functions. Since chances to meet girls were few, public dancing parties in Tuscaloosa were well-attended by University boys despite a contrary

⁵⁰Kenny, Catholic Culture, pp. 71-72. No one could visit Spring Hill except on holidays and no one could leave over once a month without special faculty permission.

⁵¹Garrett, "Howard," p. 35. At Judson there were occasionally private parties, though rarely with boys. (Elizabeth Fountaine to Hannah Coker, December 18, 1841.) Howard boys often secured female companionship at private homes where they lived after one boarding house closed. Though the odds were against one swain, he was content to be "cheered by the sweetest notes of the Piano from the fingers of Miss Ann Lockhart with whose father we now board . . ." James Fountaine to Hannah Coker, January 10, 1845. Lide-Coker Papers, Columbia, South Carolina.

White Muslin. Each pupil will require two green dresses, and four pink, and two white," All jewelry, even ear- and finger-rings, was prohibited to remove "every temptation to extravagance." In an effort to add a touch of individuality and coquetry to their clothes, Judson girls continued to adorn themselves with unobtrusive finery. To preserve the uniform's severe simplicity, an 1849 rule forbade "inserting, edgings, or any trimmings whatever." In 1852, three dark green worsted dresses and a brown linen summer one were added to the students' wardrobe, with a renewed prohibition against adornment.⁴⁸

Typical attire for the young man stepping out in high style was pictured by one of Alabama's early settlers:

Blue cloth coats with metal buttons and swallow tails, and vests sometimes embroidered on the edges. The pants were tight about the hips and knees and loose below--of cloth in the winter and linen drill in the summer The boots sometimes had brass heels which were highly polished The hats were stovepipe.⁴⁹

The typical dandy cut quite a social figure. But at school, occasions for such apparel were usually rare. Social activities outside school were rigidly barred as "positively

⁴⁸Manly, Judson, pp. 18-19; "No Neck Ribbons are tolerated" was appended to the interdict against "All Jewelry, of every description." Judson Catalogue, 1851, pp. 18-19, 1852, p. 21.

⁴⁹Saunders, Early Settlers, p. 46.

ilt buttons in front, and six buttons behind; a black, narrowbrimmed hat and stock.⁴⁵ Originally only for public occasions, uniforms became the required dress at school and within a five-mile radius of the institution. Students disregarded the odious rule whenever possible. In 1843, the regulation was abolished. Not content with their victory, students petitioned for a reinstatement of the rule in 1847 but were ignored.⁴⁶

At Spring Hill the same type uniform was required from its founding. Black or dark blue coat and pants in winter (white in summer) formed the basic ensemble. Assuming that the summer uniform would see more use, "four pair of summer pantaloons" and "two summer frock coats" were required.⁴⁷

Judson required dresses instead of trousers as the basic garment, but the rules were no less precise: "For winter, it is Green Merino; for summer, Pink Calico, small figure, for ordinary use, and White Muslin for Sabbaths. Bonnet, a Straw Hood, in winter trimmed with green: in summer with pink. Aprons, Blue Checks and

⁴⁵Sellers, University, I, 134, 153; Clark, Education in Alabama, p. 50; Owen, Alabama, II, 425.

⁴⁶Sellers, University, I, 134. Probably the fact that none of the petitioners had worn a uniform as a collegian made the faculty refuse.

⁴⁷Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 144.

"The relief from apprehension and the pain of uncertainty was very acceptable to me . . . to your mother it was, perhaps, more than acceptable." Earlier he had told his son "you always have something to write, which interests me, when you are able to say--your health is good, that no misfortune has befallen you." The statement "we are well and hope this will find you the same" was not an idle one.⁴³

All was not unpleasant for students. While the rooms may have been bare before belongings were assembled, heat and cleaning were not objects of concern. Firebuilding, sweeping, bedmaking and shoeshining (on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons) were relegated to University servants. In 1850, a University slave, Sam, set up a student barber shop in Washington Hall's cellar.⁴⁴

The restriction which made early students, especially dandies, most unhappy was academic garb. At the University academic robes had early been required for public occasions but were replaced in 1839 by a faculty-established uniform-- a dark blue, singlebreasted frock coat with standing collar, ornamented on each side with a gilt star, a single row of

⁴³C. C. Clay, Sr. to C. C. Clay, June 24, 1833; December 15, 1832. Clay Papers, Durham, North Carolina.

⁴⁴Sellers, University, I, 122, 41. This was not the case at Judson, where, while servants made the fires each morning, the girls had to do their own cleaning. Manly, Judson, p. 21.

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abolitionist. Though he had been made an honorary member for work selecting the University's first faculty, strong pro-slavery sentiment made prompt action imperative. Every Alabama paper published the notice that Birney had (rather conveniently) been expelled from membership in 1836 because of "His espousal and endeavors to propagate opinions which militate and are at direct variance with the rights of the South, the peace of society and the perpetuity of our government."⁵⁷

While membership in organizations not directly part of the college was always discouraged (and often forbidden), such groups thrived.⁵⁸ Each school had several secret societies, at least one of which generally caused trouble. At LaGrange, the good reputation of the Amae, Kuklos Adelphon and Philomathian was spoiled by the "B's" (popularly called the "Bad Boys"). At the University it was the Kori Crucian, which periodically held noisy "parades" around campus. The troublesome few at times made life unhappy for all.⁵⁹ In November, 1852, the University faculty appealed to secret societies

⁵⁷Sellers, University, I, 35, 179; Jacksonville Republican, November 16, 1837; Huntsville Democrat, November 7, 1837.

⁵⁸Sellers, University, I, 185.

⁵⁹McGregor, LaGrange, pp. 82-3; Manly Letterbook, 1834-47, p. 370.

"flourishing at the expense of the literary societies," to disband. Even Phi Beta Kappa had difficulty getting on campus and was illegitimate for a short time. Only the campus chapter of the Sons of Temperance, organized in October, 1848, received a warm welcome from a faculty which hoped it would alleviate "one of the most troublesome problems of college life."⁶⁰

Another literary extracurricular activity was the student magazine. Such endeavors flourished at several schools. The Seminarian, "devoted to Education, Literature and Science; and the attainments of the Educators in these departments" was published by the students and faculty at Central Seminary, near Selma. At Summerfield College, the semi-monthly Centinary Casket was published by three faculty members assisted by the Senior class. For \$1 a year, readers could learn of "General literature and miscellaneous matters." Howard's magazine was a bargain, a Marion editor noted. Though \$1 per year in advance, the issues were "not so trashy" as usual college magazines.⁶¹

Despite careful faculty supervision, students

⁶⁰Sellers, University, I, 182-183, 186. Two students had to be expelled for drunkenness in 1845. Manly Letterbook, 1844-47, p. 221.

⁶¹Selma Free Press, May 22, 1841; Greensboro Alabama Beacon, February 26, 1858; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, April 8, 1858; Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, May 10, 1859.

evaded responsibilities for amusements. Though the South placed great emphasis on riding and hunting, physical exercise was considered unessential by most education officials. There were exceptions, such as LaGrange "gymnastic exercises." The University, where students were sometimes mystified by demerits for "sport," was more typical. Occasionally diversions were just that, as when two students chased a rabbit around campus or when two others were caught playing "Mumble the Peg." Generally it was a more innocent activity, as one young man found upon questioning a faculty member. He learned he had been "playing during study hours in front of Franklin Hall." Pressing the issue further, the boy discovered the exact reason for his penalty--swinging on the limb of a cedar tree.⁶²

Most students were willing to accept such a regulation if it applied to manual labor. At early Spring Hill, student "recreation" consisted of chopping trees, clearing ground, and digging and embanking a lake. Among these students as among those at Greensboro's Baptist manual labor school, there was a long list of "invalids" each afternoon.⁶³

⁶²McGregor, LaGrange, p. 39; Sellers, University, I, 135.

⁶³Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 62; Garrett, "Howard," p. 12.

A favorite Judson pastime was cheating on letter-writing. Allowed to visit town only once a month, and then limited to a financial outlay of fifty cents, the girls needed something to fill the time. Rules required them to write a letter every other Saturday, but no more than one a week without a special permit. She was like "a scorpion girt by fire" one girl wrote. Unhappy that everyone scolded her if they did not all receive a letter each week, Ella Smith advised her brother that such correspondence was impossible. "I do not like the restriction to one letter a week," she observed.⁶⁴ The girls circumvented this rule whenever possible, finally settling on a suitable scheme. Letter-writing was done in the schoolroom, where the governess checked and corrected all letters. Frequently when the governess was distracted or would leave for a few minutes, loveletters slipped into the inspected pile. At Spring Hill, students wrote their parents monthly, but none were censored. Parents got childrens' grades twice a semester, and this was one of the perennial letter topics.⁶⁵ Letters from Spring Hill were much like those from other schools. Huge

⁶⁴Manly, Judson, p. 18; Judson Catalogue, 1850, p. 16; February 13, 1863, Washington M. Smith Letters, Durham, North Carolina.

⁶⁵Manly, Judson, pp. 23, 45; Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 70. Athens College sent grades quarterly. Griffin, "Athens," p. 14.

quantities of paper were used by students worried over grades and difficulties with unmerciful professors.⁶⁶

As the Judson love-letters indicate, part of college life was pleasure oriented. Often the pranks of this early period demonstrated individualistic earmarks of frontier life. A Fourth of July celebration was noted by Sara Haynesworth Gayle after an 1833 visit to the University. After "drunken extravagances" at dinner, a number of students busily occupied themselves with "the shaving of horses' tails, and tying balls dipped in brimstone, and set on fire, to those of the professors' harmless dogs and philosophic geese." Often high spirits found expression in harmless pranks--the disappearance of the Bible from the Rotunda and doorknobs from the classrooms.⁶⁷

Such pranks were often performed in line with that inevitable college ritual, hazing. As Oran Roberts recalled, all had to have their "metal tried." About a month after arriving at the University, Roberts retired

⁶⁶Sellers, University, I, 165. Letters from Howard, Judson and the University attest to this--Clay letters, Bolling Hall letters and James Fontaine letters from the University; Elizabeth Fontaine letters from Judson; and James Fontaine letters from Howard. Elizabeth, for example, spent much of her time confirming and/or denying that she was homesick. Interspersed with her comments about how hard her studies were and how she dreaded exams were snatches of school gossip and digressions about religion and boring parties.

⁶⁷Gayle Diary, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

one night after studying late. Visitors arrived before sleep. The door to his room opened to admit two tall objects, covered with white sheets. Mumbling, calling him, they advanced. Springing up, Roberts threw one to the floor, caught the other by the shirtfront. Only after his two schoolmates had placated him did he sullenly return to bed.⁶⁸

Perhaps the most drastic prank was played on a young University freshman named Bowden. Two young men entered Bowden's room one night during study hours and engaged in a mock struggle. An apparently fatal wound from a sword cane brought one of the two, bloody, to the floor while the other fled. When others entered, the "dying" student proclaimed Bowden his assassin. Students took Bowden into custody, supposedly sending others for the Sheriff. Bowden's "guards" persuaded him that his only safety lay in flight. The joke went too far, for Bowden was convinced. Two weeks later he reappeared with his father for a council with the President. Armed with two pistols, he had returned to redeem himself.⁶⁹

Pranks were not always confined to campus. Often it was difficult to laugh once they were over. At Howard

⁶⁸Sellers, University, I, 134; Roberts, Reminiscences, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 10-12.

some boys decided to play an April Fool joke on all Marion. Setting fire to an old lime house near the college, they shouted the alarm. As townspeople converged on the campus to witness the disaster and save what or whom they could, they were met by cries of "April Fool." Although relieved, the townsfolk found it hard to laugh after such a scare. Memories of two disastrous Howard fires were too vivid.⁷⁰

Not all exuberance proved so destructive or difficult to appreciate. In January, 1851, the University's Junior class finished an integral calculus examination. Accompanied by music, about fifty students marched to Professor L. C. Garland's home, where a funeral oration was delivered and a grave dug. With great solemnity the students produced a textbook and reverently laid it to rest. After funeral gun salutes, the crowd mournfully marched away, leaving no evidence of their visit save a small hillock surmounted by a headboard.⁷¹

A similarly ingenious stunt occurred at Spring Hill. One evening the students gathered around the visiting founder, Bishop Portier, calling "Deo Gratias"--for a holiday. Thinking to outwit them, the Bishop promised to consider it and decide in the morning. Knowing that Portier was to leave before morning assembly, some seniors

⁷⁰Marion, Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, April 2, 1859.

⁷¹Sellers, University, I, 240.

decided on a subterfuge of their own. When the Bishop appeared at the stables next morning ready to depart, he was informed of his buggy's disappearance. A search revealed the buggy (intact) on the third floor of a building. The perpetrators were discovered and brought before Portier. Enjoying the originality of the prank, he called out "Deo Gratias." As soon as the culprits returned the buggy to the road, the Bishop drove off, leaving them to enjoy the holiday.⁷²

Such "buggy pranks" were evidently in vogue, for a similar episode occurred at LaGrange. Several boys decided to quietly draw Dr. Paine's carriage to the foot of the mountain and leave it. Paine, unlike Portier, was forewarned. Shrouded in a black cloak, he sat in his vehicle on the night appointed. The clandestine visitors arrived, but no word was spoken until the carriage was a safe distance from the school. Then directions were reviewed and the descent made. At the first rest, Paine lifted a curtain. Thanking each boy by name for the evening ride, he suggested a return instead of going farther. The strange team quietly and fearfully toiled up the ascent and returned to the carriage house. After thanking them again and bidding them good night, Paine allowed the boys

⁷²Kenny, Catholic Culture, p. 90.

to go. As at Spring Hill, no punishment followed. No doubt the understanding President considered the toil, fear, and pangs of conscience enough.⁷³

The exuberance which led to such antics sometimes had disastrous results. High spirits often touched off hair-trigger tempers, and fights, brawls, or riots resulted. Duels were not uncommon. One duel almost took place at the University when Edward Baptist challenged fellow student Killough. As the challenged party, Killough set the terms. The two were to enter a classroom after dark, naked and armed with Bowie knives, and fight to the death. The younger and weaker challenger preferred reporting the incident (privately) to President Manly and accepting dismissal to accepting the consequences of his challenge.⁷⁴

Most serious violence seemingly took place at the University. Fights which ended in shooting or stabbing were frequent. In general, faculty discussions displayed primary concern over possible destruction of school property by hyperactive youth.⁷⁵ Accordingly, they extended prohibitions against "deadly weapons"--in 1853 they decreed that a small fire shovel and poker be

⁷³McGregor, LaGrange, p. 13.

⁷⁴Manly Letterbook, 1847-57, p. 215.

⁷⁵Sellers, University, I, 228, 231, 233.

utilized in the students' rooms and banned "large spades and shovels." When Steward's Hall became a constant battleground with "biscuits flying and heads getting cracked and general disorder rampant," the faculty agreed that at least one of their number should eat there and keep some semblance of order--an assignment understandably not a coveted one.⁷⁶ Apparently the thought of abandoning the lethal biscuits or at least securing a new cook occurred to no one.

There were other problems with students. Cheating was an omnipresent difficulty at the University. Card-playing and the gambling which often accompanied the games plagued faculty members throughout the period. Gambling became such a problem in 1835 that the professors agreed to alternate visiting Tuscaloosa locations where students might gather to gamble.⁷⁷

Another problem persisted even after the legislature passed a general act forbidding the sale or free distribution

⁷⁶Ibid., 228, 62, 128. In 1848, a faculty member had been "violently assailed while performing police duty." Manly Letterbook, 1847-57, p. 53.

⁷⁷Sellers, University, I, 217, 220, 247; Tuscaloosa Monitor, October 14, 1858; Tuscaloosa Flag of the Union, October 3, 1835. Gambling caused many problems, one of which was theft. Bolling and Crenshaw Hall at the University and the Pruitt brothers at LaGrange both reported such incidents. Bolling Hall to "Dear Mother," March 4, 1858, Bolling Hall Papers, Montgomery, Alabama.

of liquor to students at any academy or school. Fines from \$50 to \$500 could be imposed upon those who disregarded this law. Tuscaloosa merchants continued a thriving student trade in all of the town's five taverns, a traffic which accounted for much of the town-gown trouble.⁷⁸

Denominational schools were not immune to the effects of "demon rum." In a letter to the Selma Sentinel, a Howard student charged that the Perry County Grand Jury solely occupied its time investigating possible sellers of liquor to Howard students. Spring Hill also faced the question of student drinking. Though no Sons of Temperance Chapter was organized, there was a visit in 1850 from Father Matthew, "Apostle of Temperance."⁷⁹

Such was student life in antebellum Alabama.

Schools often had conduct problems and were generally reputed to be trouble spots. A small minority of students provided the reputation, for the typical student lived plainly, worked hard, and enjoyed simple pleasures. He sought an education which perhaps fell short of Eastern standards but was no disgrace to the day and setting in

⁷⁸Weeks, Public School, p. 22; Sellers, University, I, 244, 247; Rhoda C. Ellison, "Early Alabama Interest in Southern Writers," Alabama Review, I, (April, 1948), 105.

⁷⁹Marion Tri-Weekly Commonwealth, May 5, 1859; Carroll, Catholic, p. 298.

which he lived.⁸⁰ Generally, discipline of the mind more than of the body marked the typical student. Ostentatious dress reflected a desire to be considered cultured, as did efforts to obtain an education. The life of Alabama faculties and students was similar to modern man's in its essential humanness. The same thing inspired them with fear or hope. The student was apt to be high-spirited--he could hardly have been otherwise in a state that was recently settled--and his culture was that of a frontier people. The young scholar also had his natural tendency to violent action piqued by stories of unrest in Europe and increasing political tension. The infection of emotions and the ingrained debater's instinct that his side is the right side helped such "trivial" matters as two-hour classes make the student restive under strict control. Little wonder the student proved restive under strict control. His age was, on the average, less than that of today's college student. His youth, the freedom-loving spirit of the frontier, and the acceptance of his parents' hostile attitudes toward centralized governmental authority combined to help instill in him a rebellious spirit. Though drawn at the other schools, the fine line between control and oppression was absent at the University. The rules were often too strictly enforced, with trouble the result.

⁸⁰Sellers, University, I, 144. The University had the worst reputation.

CHAPTER VIII

END OF AN ERA

The Civil War marked the end of an educational as well as of a societal era. The conflict demanded payment from Alabama colleges in students, facilities and income--Spring Hill was the only male college to continue operating throughout the war. A remote, private school with a regular food supply, Spring Hill survived because it retained an adequate number of enrollees. About 30 New Orleans refugees spent the war in school. Spring Hill, like female schools, was also looked upon as an asylum. One writer noted that "Many youths were sent by their parents to the college to prevent their being drafted into the army."¹ Even Spring Hill and the female schools that continued to function did so under extreme hardship. Girls were useless as troops, and school often served as their refugee station or asylum.²

Despite its fortunate position, Spring Hill's

¹Raymond H. Schmandt and Josephine H. Schulte, ed., "Spring Hill College Diary, 1860-1865," Alabama Review, XV (July, 1962), 213; Mary Austin Carroll, A Catholic History of Alabama and the Floridas (New York, 1908), I, 325-6.

²Manly, Judson, p. 51.

enrollment was devastated. Two military companies were formed, and several Jesuits volunteered as chaplains. At one point all members of the college enlisted in the 89th Alabama, only to be furloughed. The blockade cut Spring Hill's communications with Europe and New Orleans, depriving the school of students. Several boys were withdrawn when parents feared an invasion of Mobile. Preparatory work was Spring Hill's real salvation, for these pupils were too young to enlist.³

Most Alabama colleges lost students early in the war. Volunteers left one unreal world for another, blithely going to war as if to a picnic. Some schools adopted military departments in an effort to remain open. "It struck some of the old students as a most incongruous thing in a University which stood for the humanities and high culture," remembered John Massey.⁴ Upon hearing President Garland's contention that the University cadets were "just as much in the Confederate service as any volunteer company in the state," J. B. Mitchell wrote his father "This assertion you know is false." Of Garland's efforts to convince the Governor that cadets leaving without permission should be published as deserters, Mitchell sneered "He must indeed think Judge

³Carroll, Catholic, I, 325-6.

⁴Massey, Reminiscences, p. 139.

Shorter a great fool." Then came the plea to let the scholar turn soldier.⁵ Howard's Board of Trustees advised the State Convention to add a military department to the school as an item "peculiarly attractive to Southern youth" and one which would help them resist pressure to join the army.⁶

The efforts of Alabama schools were in vain. The students' desire to enlist proved too strong. Story's diary of life at Southern depicts the effect most clearly. In January, 1861, he noted that "During the last three weeks fifteen students have gone home and others are contemplating it." Through early May, he chronicled his friends' departures. Finally he observed "Our college is not very flourishing. Students are leaving most every week. I do not think it will survive long, unless the times change." The times remained unchanged, and the exodus continued. In October, he finally noted the organization of a military department.⁷

⁵J. B. Mitchell to "Dear Father" from the University of Alabama, February 2, [1862]. Mitchell Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

⁶ABC Minutes, 1861, pp. 13-14, 15.

⁷Story Diary, January 29, May 5, October 11, 1861. A Professor Gatch organized a company of students to teach them military tactics. In mid-May, 2 months after its organization, Story joined, "very pleased with drilling." By June 7, he had quit "on account of causing headache." April 19, May 16, June 7, 1861.

Nothing proved effective in keeping students. Some forced their own expulsion. James A. McKinstry's father refused to let him resign or leave LaGrange. Refusing to accept defeat, McKinstry accumulated enough demerits to be expelled.⁸ J. B. Mitchell asked his father to request that the son be dismissed from the University and permitted to drill a company. Another ploy, the resourceful Mitchell suggested, would be to send no more money "and allow me to plead want of funds."

E. B. Thompson decided that the best ruse was to resign for reasons of health. Preparing his mother for the idea, he complained of several illnesses and a want of exercise before springing the thought on her.⁹ The most popular method was simply to enlist. Even those schools which survived the first year or two of war faced this continuing problem.

Howard lost the most men initially. Crop failures denied some sons the funds to enroll that fall, so only 62 registered initially. Within the year 42 of the scholars were in Confederate service. Two tutors led a number to recruiting stations, to be followed shortly

⁸McKinstry talked the plan over with a friend before attempting it. McGregor, LaGrange, p. 38.

⁹J. B. Mitchell to "Dear Father," February 2 [1862]. Mitchell Papers; E. B. Thompson to "Dear Mother," from the University of Alabama, February 23, 1862. Benson-Thompson Papers.

by a professor. Not to be left behind in the race for rank and patriotic display, President Tailbird formed a student company and offered its services. By 1862, 2 professors and 17 collegiates were all that remained. With a majority of the students serving with Colonel Tailbird in the 41st Alabama, only the Preparatory Department's 24 "Sub-Freshmen" justified continued operation.¹⁰ Other schools retained students longer.

LaGrange and the University had students until fairly late in the war. In early 1865, the University cadets fought Union troops advancing from Northport, then retreated to Marion and disbanded. The University supplied the Confederacy with 825 men. Students and men whose children would have attended were decimated by war. Casualties were high: 172 never returned--110 were killed, 58 "died in service," and 4 succumbed to the rigors of military prison.¹¹ Even those who returned faced the task of rebuilding economically. The loss in manpower was compounded by the loss of property and wealth--losses colleges shared.

Southern's faculty remained for a time--without salary or students. Soon, only the building was left, a

¹⁰ABC Minutes, 1861, p. 15; 1862, p. 12; Garrett, "Howard," pp. 56, 59, 72; Johnson, Higher Education, p. 151.

¹¹Sellers, University, I, 288; Owen, Alabama, II, 429.

hiding place for refugees and deserters.¹² On May 20, 1863, the Military Department's Medical Director requisitioned Howard's buildings for a Confederate hospital. Later Union forces took possession of the facilities as shelter for newly-freed slaves. At least Howard and Southern had their buildings.¹³ LaGrange, Florence Wesleyan, and the University were not so lucky. By war's end, these campuses had been reduced to charred rubble. LaGrange was burned by a special detachment sent to the hilltop for that purpose. A few stones among the briars and honeysuckle were all that remained when stillness reigned at Appomattox.¹⁴ When General John T. Croxton's troops left the University campus at the end of a smoke-palled day, only the Observatory, President's Mansion, one house, and one small building remained. Of the state's best college library, only General Croxton's memento copy of the Koran escaped the flames. Over \$300,000 damage was done.¹⁵

Lost assets could not be replaced. Alabama colleges lost wealth as well as property. Cash on hand was exchanged

¹²Ibid., p. 509; Perry, Birmingham-Southern, p. 21.

¹³Garrett, "Howard," p. 73; Johnson, Higher Education, p. 151; ABC Minutes, 1863, p. 16.

¹⁴McGregor, LaGrange, p. 89.

¹⁵Owen, Alabama, II, 429.

for Confederate tender or invested in Confederate bonds. Payment on debts owed the schools was likewise Confederate. Inflation toward the war's end wiped out reserves, so that the great antebellum endowment drives proved vain.¹⁶ Alabama colleges began the new era as they had begun the previous one--insolvent.

What were the earmarks of that earlier era?

Early Alabamians could have ignored higher education in the rush for land and wealth, but they did not. Reasons for their interest were legion--many were college graduates themselves, or products of an informed environment. Religion which relied upon the Bible needed educated laymen and ministers. Personal, local, or sectional pride called for higher education. Such ulterior motives as the display of self in a good light, garnering money from schools, or using education as an election issue were present. Education insured the continuance of republican government, Alabamians believed. Many of these ideas were brought from the older states, but a number of forces formed mutations of the original. Religious domination and insistence upon the classics were two verities of higher education tempered by paradoxes or compromises with reality. Religious colleges

¹⁶Garrett, "Howard," pp. 56, 59, 70; Perry, Birmingham-Southern, p. 21. Some funds were invested in railroad stock and disappeared in the smoke of fires which heated the iron rails prior to bending and twisting.

did not restrict faculty or student body to their sect, and reliance upon the classics was undercut by scientific, business, and literary courses.

Academies and military schools often led the way in these innovations. Imported from the older areas, academies clearly indicated the mutations in form and theory. In Alabama, academies went through three plateaus of development. Beginning as primary and secondary schools, they became college preparatory and finally terminal institutions offering work through the first two years of college. While few, if any, went through all three levels, and while at any one time there were academies for each level, such was the general development. By the late 1850's, academies were losing ground to military schools. Military academies were products of a desire for better discipline and technical education, but more and more they offered education of a purely military nature. Academies and military schools pioneered such devices as state aid, direct and indirect, to schools, and various systems of aid to indigent students. Female education, championed by the academy movement, formed the basis of the argument for broadened higher education. The ability to remain at home for the two extra years made completing their education possible for many aspiring students.

Alabama colleges were established in three "waves"-- 1830, 1840, and 1855. Unlike Catholics, who concentrated

on Spring Hill, Baptists and Methodists founded a multiplicity of schools. The denominational schools were clearly most important, but there were too many of them for the number of students--an evil fostered by the state's frontier status and transportation problems. Educationally, the result would probably have been better had support been concentrated in the University, LaGrange, Spring Hill, Judson, and Tuskegee Female College. Alabamians could possibly have built these into superior schools instead of dribbling money out to a proliferation of mediocre ones. The question then would have been meeting the state's transportation needs.

Inadequate financing was an outstanding earmark of higher education in antebellum Alabama. From the first there was state aid, either direct or indirect. The University, which should have been the best-financed institution in the state, suffered from the federal government's price-cutting and from the State Bank's failure. Here the story was largely a shoddy legislative attempt to avoid responsibility. While academies used lotteries, few colleges indulged. Using many arguments, they appealed to private contributors to give money to spread progress, social unity and order, and the true religion. Subscriptions were used for all manner of expenses because endowments never reached satisfactory levels. Any contribution was welcome, from any group or individual. Land, buildings,

schools was culminated by the system and state superintendency created in 1854.²¹ Most important of all was acceptance of the eclectic system.

Selectivity was a good method for schools to adopt, for such a selective nature characterized the state. The University's modified plan was closest to the Virginia original, but the borrowing went deeper than that. Jefferson's conception of a university system was attempted by the University, Southern, Florence Wesleyan, and North Alabama College. Attempts to make Mobile Medical College an adjunct of the University and affix to it departments of law and "normal education" were part of the procedure.

One historian has observed that increasing acceptance of science's importance prompted the adoption of Jefferson's system.²² Here too, Alabama moved in the vanguard (or at least joined battle on contested ground on the side history chose to vindicate). Agricultural chemistry and engineering--practical manifestations of the "pure sciences" which were also taught--were common among the better colleges in antebellum Alabama. The strength of the University's faculty in such utilitarian

²¹McCorvey details the Jeffersonian influence quite well. See also Richard Beale Davis, Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia 1790-1830 (Chapel Hill, 1964), p. 63.

²²Roy J. Honeywell, The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1964), p. 132.

facts which loom large to later judges, were often ignored. Foremost among these was the state's progressive nature.

Alabama was in the vanguard of educational advances. Often caught up in popular acceptance of a fad, such as the manual labor system, Alabamians accepted the risk in an attempt to provide higher education in the state. Manual labor schools were inexpensive for investors and students. More of them could therefore be built, and more students could afford to go. Military schools, largely a Southern rather than national fad, were likewise adopted for various reasons, some of them reform-oriented. While academies provided the impetus for curricula changes, military schools initially were the medium of technical training. Desire for a disciplinary agency and the Southerner's martial spirit perhaps obviated this reason. Yet such manifestation of reform fervor was a factor. Perhaps the best example of educational progressiveness was the reaction to Jeffersonian educational thought.

Thomas Jefferson's effect upon Alabama education was as profound as his effect upon the rest of the nation. The idea of an educational system was accepted, as was the belief that it must be established from the top down. Colleges were supported later by academies and "higher schools." The movement toward free public

Careful comparisons lend some validity to the pronouncements.

Despite scholarship levels which initially slogged through the Slough of Despair, they did not remain low forever. Upon assuming the University Presidency, Basil Manly instituted stricter measures. Though many students were demoted, Manly pronounced the overall effect good.¹⁸ Elizabeth Fontaine's confidence to her aunt that even Howard President S. S. Sherman had advised her brother James to transfer to the University meant only one thing: young James faced academic troubles which could only be solved by the move.¹⁹

Equipment, facilities, and faculty were strong points of pride for education-minded Alabamians. The University's telescope, surpassed by only two others, and Howard's which was adjudged eighth (by interested parties) were highly regarded. Mallet's atomic weight determination was an achievement that intellectuals in the state admired and respected.²⁰ Yet the real strengths, the

¹⁸Sellers, University, I, 147, 149.

¹⁹"Brother has been advised by a great many of his friends--by Mr. Sherman himself--to leave Marion as he could not get a diploma there--and go to Tuskalooosa . . .," she wrote. A year later she gave the results of good counsel--"We heard from brother last week, he was wild-- He expects to graduate in May." Elizabeth Fountaine to Hannah Coker, December 8, 1845; November 17, 1846. Lide-Coker Papers.

²⁰Congressional Globe, XXI (February 14, 1860), 364; ABC Minutes, 1857, p. 9.

clothing regulations and the quality of food. Strict schedules were the rule, regardless of the institution, and the existence of literary societies as the major form of extra-curricula activity was never questioned.

These were the earmarks of higher education in antebellum Alabama. How was this education regarded within and outside the state? Throughout the era native sons migrated to other schools. Lack of support was a common complaint of colleges and their supporters. Yet even the educationally exiled praised education "back home." At various times, students or professors compared Alabama schools (usually the University) with older standards--the University of Virginia or of North Carolina.¹⁷ Their comments, as well as the success of students who transferred out, spoke well of Alabama schools. Although undoubtedly most of the public praises of Alabama education were couched in glowing terms from habit or convention,

¹⁷Henry Tutwiler constantly did this in letters to his University of Virginia mentor, Gessner Harrison. September 19, 1833; February 20, June 25, 1835; June 14, November 15, 1837. Gessner Harrison Papers. Others followed suit, especially as "home education" became an argument. See the Greensboro Beacon, October 19, 1850; Alabama Baptist, December 4, 1850; Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor, August 17, 1847; Huntsville Southern Advocate, October 29, 1857; Henry Collier to M. P. Blue, August 5, 1854. M. P. Blue Collection, Alabama Department of Archives and History. The newspaper debate over the state of the University, which flourished in 1859, often drew in this aspect of the argument.

faculty was distinguished. Generally the science professors were outstanding, perhaps because of the nature of the discipline at that point in time. Though libraries were usually not first-rate they were generally adequate, especially when supplemented by literary society holdings. Apparatus was adequate at several schools, outstanding at Howard and the University. To use apparatus and learn from a faculty, a student paid a tuition dependent upon the school and level of study. For collegians, it was usually \$250 a year. Incidentals and outside costs raised prices, but not much. Private aid and scholarships helped the situation, but state aid and scholarships were more effective.

The life of a student in antebellum Alabama differed somewhat between schools. Seemingly most boisterous at the University, students were better behaved elsewhere. No pattern appears in student violence. Influenced by parents' attitudes, by their milieu, by political unrest at home and abroad, students often proved restless. Too often severely disciplined (even a mule resented being beaten), students were not treated as the blossoming intellectuals they were touted to be. A combination of these forces produced violent reactions. For all their excellence, the University faculty seemingly lacked the understanding given students elsewhere. Treatment for illness also varied between schools, as did

and books were as acceptable as money, whether it came from large contributors or small, living or dead. Despite numerous donations, Alabama's many schools barely stayed solvent. Too many schools sought money from the same source.

Money's impact was most clearly demonstrated in curricula. The classics were joined by special courses and departments, as Alabama schools tried to meet the state's educational needs. Generally bound inside two-term, ten-month sessions, a school's curriculum was tested daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. Class standing and advancement were largely determined by the final tests, mass oral examinations held publicly at commencement. Commencement exercises, conducted when a majority of the rural populace could attend, were extravaganzas. Held with a carnival atmosphere, they served a serious function. Like a camp meeting, commencements were good reasons to gather. They also provided information about schools and knowledge to which the audience might not otherwise be exposed. Far from being expensive frills, successful presentations could garner more funds for the school.

In providing for a school, faculty and apparatus were the first "purchases." Meetings could be held in temporary quarters, but teachers and equipment were immediate necessities. Alabama schools were generally blessed with one or two excellent faculty members, but with the possible exception of the University, no

fields demonstrates this supposition.

The end result is a picture of attempts at progressive education, filtered somewhat by the antebellum milieu. Alabama higher education, whether reluctantly or not, moved to the tune of the national reform fervor. Though shutting out cries for an end to human bondage, Alabamians joined other reformers in attempts to promote orthodoxy--better education, the chaining of Demon Rum, and better treatment for those imprisoned by the law, their own mental limits, or physical handicaps.

The reformers provided at least a paper system of education by 1854. Technical education, the darling of educators as well as pragmatic "Southwesterners," was provided by military schools, some academies, and some colleges. Very clear-cut adaptations to the "realities" occurred. Business education and three-year college courses were offered with increasing frequency. A certificate of completion or Bachelor of Science was given to those completing the abbreviated schedule. Men and women who desired a college education without the drudgery of languages were accommodated, and schools encouraged "short-timers." Students were welcomed whether they came for one or all seasons.²³

Part of this adaptation was a concession to the

²³ABC Minutes, 1846, p. 11; 1848, p. 10; 1853, p. 15.

need for funds. Without adequate financing, the state's academy and college structure would have been no more than a grinning skeleton, picked clean by financial vultures. To escape such a fate, colleges accepted the milieu's demands. Subscriptions, endowment drives, and offerings of various types of financial support were avidly sought and eagerly accepted. Lack of funds was always a problem, one compounded by the state's frontier character.

Residents recognized nature's effect upon educational institutions. Even as late as 1850, the state was young and growing. As Baptists noted, the time to strike was while the state was "young as it is now," before "things will have become old, settled and fixed," before it proved "forever too late to repair our course."²⁴ Funds were difficult to procure because "The persons who have given notes . . . are residing at points in the State distant from each other . . ."²⁵ Frequently inclement weather made roads impassable, further isolating areas from each other. Such physical isolation promoted sectionalism within the state and combined with religious prejudice to help produce a multiplicity of schools.²⁶ The frontier likewise led to other problems, especially

²⁴Ibid., 1850, pp. 21-2.

²⁵Ibid., 1852, p. 21.

²⁶Ibid., 1857, p. 14; 1859, p. 24; 1860, p. 21.

discipline.

Of all problems facing antebellum Alabama schools, discipline was the worst for many. Frontier influence was duly noted by contemporaries, but obviously there were other factors. Many students received newspapers which conscientiously reported the European revolutions of 1830, 1840, and 1848. Kossuth, Hungarian freedom-fighter who captured America's imagination, visited Alabama during his 1850 tour. European unrest must have affected the obedience of Alabama students.²⁷ Political and economic unrest likewise encouraged student unrest, as did strictly local issues--long classes, a bad teacher, or a night at the grogshop. Like discipline, other difficulties had multiple causes. The picture of higher education in antebellum Alabama reflects the results of many forces simultaneously converging at one point.

Kaleidoscopic is perhaps the best description of the view. Always there are paradoxes. Men "at the top"

²⁷Students often mentioned their newspaper subscriptions in letters home. Kossuth visited Alabama in his tour through America, and received a mixed reception. See Judy Etemadi, "Buckstering for Dollars and Hurrahs: An Account of Louis Kossuth's Tour Through the United States, 1851-1852," Unpublished M. A. thesis, Florida State University, 1970; William Warren Rogers, "Kossuth's Visit to Alabama," Alabama Review, XVIII (April, 1964), 113-122.

were reformers and adventurers rather than conservatives. Quality education was hampered by sectarian prejudices and the numerous institutions which jealousy and rivalry produced. Yet the rivalry was responsible for enduring, important institutions, and because of the frontier's impress--especially poor transportation--the number of schools was necessary to afford higher education throughout the state. The nature of these paradoxes and their complexity has fostered misconceptions about higher education in antebellum Alabama. Fostered more by lack of information than false facts, the misconceptions are felicitously repeated by historians who accept them unquestioningly. One of the most over-worked of these is the belief in an "elitist" theory of Southern education.

Prompted especially by "moonlight and magnolia" writers basking in sentimentality and copiously weeping for a lost genteel way of life, Southern elitist educational theory has long been used. One of the first difficulties is accounting for the public education drive which Dabney, Knight and others have so ably chronicled. Blacks should not be considered, for North and South they were generally regarded (at best) as dumb animals without educable minds. Certainly they were not worth any concerted, wholesale efforts. But whites--male and female--were another story.

The words in favor of mass education were numerous.

Alabama Baptists clearly believed in a sort of universal higher education. Primary concern in 1843 may have been with ministers--"It is true that neither time nor means will permit a majority of them to receive a full collegiate course, but the most important branches in such a course should be placed within the reach of all." But three years later, when Howard's courses were extended over the whole range of college offerings, the Trustees noted one reason for the change--"Many, whose circumstances or plans for the future render a classical course inexpedient, are desirous of obtaining a good English education."²⁸ Young men desiring training as "a complete and thorough farmer," or those who wished to enter "the ordinary avocations of private life" were fit seekers of higher education.²⁹ It was at least arguable that an educated ministry was necessary because of the elevated level of education in the state. Since more people were seeking an education, the churches should supply religiously oriented higher education to train the heart as well as the head. As young men were interested in "the various departments of society, schools should make provision for them."³⁰

²⁸ABC Minutes, 1843, p. 7; 1846, p. 12.

²⁹Ibid., 1852, p. 22.

³⁰Ibid., 1855, p. 23; 1857, p. 16; 1858, p. 18.

The words were brave, but the basic question was one of action. Though attempts to provide the means often faltered, Alabamians in this instance tried to fit deeds to professions. An amazing number of schools were established. While part of the movement may be laid to sectional or religious jealousy and competition, another part is equally important. Each denomination assumed that other denominations would provide for its own communicants--all of them. So each sought to establish enough colleges to take care of the need. Yet the situation's realities precluded religious restrictions on admission, thereby further broadening the concept of mass higher education. With facilities available, the remaining difficulty was with funds to meet the costs of higher education.

Students who needed money for schooling could look to a number of sources. State aid was indirectly available. State scholarships were available at a number of schools. State benefits helped Alabama colleges operate with reasonable tuition levels.³¹

³¹Alabama Baptists testified to the importance of state help when in 1856 they boasted of operating Howard without "the aid of the strong arm of the Government." ABC Minutes, 1845, p. 8. Methodists, likewise, though more indirectly, attested to governmental power when they donated their colleges to the state.

Despite this generosity, the state was not the only source of aid. Schools provided scholarships and various groups and individuals provided resources for needy scholars. Many Alabamians suited deeds to words, demonstrating their ability in betting parlance, to "put their money where their mouth was."

Statistics like these do not uphold the ideal of elitist education. Yet neither do they demonstrate actual mass education. Twenty-three colleges in Alabama would have had only slightly more than 100 students per year each. Most of the excess would have been enrolled in preparatory departments rather than collegiate courses. The total output for a year, when all were operating at capacity, would then have been about 2300 students. When the number of young men and ladies pursuing college work in high-level academies is added, the total for a good year would have been roughly 3000. Only a few years were so good, however, for many Alabama colleges were established in the latter half of the 1850's. For mass higher education, one has to look to the present. But even the cynical observer will have to admit that by the Civil War the trend was in that direction.

Historians writing of the Old South have often spoken of the importance of the Greek ideal. Yet they have largely ignored the impact of this ideal on higher education. Democracy was the exalted ideal, and for

such a form of government to work the whole populace had to be educated. Education was for the masses, for Southern life was to recreate Greece's Golden Age. All were to be leaders, supported by drones who would do the necessary work. The drudges were black, uneducable animals. As much property as cows or horses or other animals of production, slaves were not educated--simply taught to work as a horse is trained to canter or a yoke of oxen to pull together. Although the perspective of time makes historical evaluations simpler, and presumably sounder, and while interpretation is a historian's duty, it is unwise to impose modern philosophies upon this scene as criteria for judgment. Using the standards of the times, higher education was a necessity for the whole white populace, to produce a race to rival ancient Greece.

There was no "typical" Alabama institution. Professor E. Merton Coulter's insightful conceptions about college life in the Old South are subject to some qualification.³² Too many differences existed to call some school typical of the geographical unit called Alabama, let alone the South. First, the area was not a monolithic unit. Differences in age and influence produced societal

³²College Life in the Old South (Athens, 1951), pp. xi-xii. Coulter's belief that "To know what college life was like in the Old South is to know truly what took place at a typical Southern college" is clearly stated in the preface.

differences. Second, just as the "normal" human being does not exist, "typical" colleges are a myth. Though some similarities were present, the differences were often more important. Wide gradations in the amount of violence on a campus, in the level of work, in the inventiveness and willingness to experiment, and in the relation of faculty and students were always present. Perhaps the only assumption which can consistently be made about higher education in antebellum Alabama is that the colleges reflected the needs and mood of their time and place. Sometimes from conviction, more often from direct or indirect coercion, the state accepted and sometimes provided educational reforms. And though there were times of disillusionment and an almost constant pressure for change, Alabamians seemed proud and approbative of their colleges. They certainly, despite some debate on the topic, felt a need for higher education and tried to provide it for the whole state.

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VITA

Name: SAMUEL RAY GRANADE

Place of Birth: Maxwell A. F. B. (Montgomery), Alabama

Date of Birth: April 4, 1945

Education: B. A. with Honors, Samford University,
Birmingham, Alabama

History - major

English - minor

M. A., Florida State University,
Tallahassee, Florida

Honors: OMICRON DELTA KAPPA, PHI ALPHA THETA,
PI GAMMA MU, KAPPA PHI KAPPA,
PHI KAPPA PHI, Who's Who In American
Colleges and Universities, 1966-67.

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s.n., 1972.

