

UNION PINES

(Continued)

ing was constructed in accordance with the latest ideas in proper lighting, ventilation, and heating, even to the direction in which the building was to face with regard to the sun. The shops were equipped with machines, including lathes, designed and made on the premises mainly from material cannibalized from burned sawmills. Every student and teacher was required to attend his or her church on the Sabbath, the rest attended Union Church in a body.

This school represented a most ambitious beginning which was planned to encompass, besides the latest in school plant, a model farm, dairy, orchard and apiary, and also an organization through which "Prof. John E.," as he was affectionately called, sought to import speakers to bring to the nearby farmers the latest information on new crops, fertilizers and methods of farming.

This last item, though carried out with the greatest sincerity, mitigated against him when he was defeated by one vote for the presidency of North Carolina A. & M. College in Raleigh. This was because its board members misunderstood his intent of developing a school which would feed directly into A. & M. and thought that he was setting up its competitor. The boys received military instruction using the latest model rifles and tactics as taught by Upton.

Union Home School occupied the front part of a considerable tract of ground, opposite to and across the Pee Dee Road from the Old Union Presbyterian Church. The Fourth and present church building was built in 1880-1881 during the early years of this school. The school building faced the Church with a paling fence across before it and with cottages in the form of a hollow U in back with the well house in the center of the U.

The cottages were for the boarding students who were too far away to go home at night. Each cottage did its own house-keeping and cooking besides studying and thus learned self sufficiency. There was a line through the middle of the quadrangle, that divided the cottages into two halves. The half on the north side, on the side of the Great Wagon Road from Carthage to Fayetteville (Old Cross Creek), was for the boys and the other side for the girls. The rules of conduct were very strict and prohibited either sex from crossing this line except under supervised conditions. Students came to this school to learn, not because they were compelled to do so by law.

As a result of this stern but understanding and gifted training, graduates from this school were admitted to any college or university in North Carolina with no more formality than showing their certificate of graduation. Regularly they carried off the highest honors in Latin, Greek and mathematics. Many glowing recommendations of this academy, as it was sometimes called, appeared in the press and university bulletins.

Unfortunately, four disasters plagued and numbed the soul of one of North Carolina's foremost educators, a man who is now known to have been at least 50 years ahead of his time and thus much misunderstood. First, his wife, whom he had assisted through Peace Institute in Raleigh prior to their marriage, died several years after the birth of their first child, Evander Francis Kelly, known to many as Frank. Secondly the Union School building burned in 1895 as a result of careless housekeeping in strict disobedience of Professor Kelley's instructions. Thirdly, these school doors were finally closed in 1902, in a time of great national financial distress when money seemed more important, unfortunately, to some than sound schooling. Fourth and finally, the loss of the presidency of A. & M. by the seeming defection of one considered a close friend and advocate, who had written of his work most highly, blunted the drive of one who had been the guiding light of another of North Carolina's leading educators, Charles Duncan McIver, the founder of the Woman's College in Greensboro, now a branch of the University of North Carolina.

Most fortunately for the young people of the Old North State, a new school carrying on the traditions of the old Union Home School, has been built across the Carthage-Vass road from the Old Union Presbyterian Church and the former Union Home School grounds. Its name also carries on the greatness of its predecessor.

A display of artifacts and documents from Union Home School, many removed during the height of the fire, was placed on loan at Union Pines to symbolize the continuation of the greatness of the educational center at Victor, North Carolina, as this community was known then, with the establishment of the Union Pines High School.

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