

Elon College Has History Of Accomplishments Worth Preserving For All Future

By SION M. LYNAM

The Elon college building program is at once the largest and most phenomenally successful which any southern denominational college has yet undertaken. When on January 24th the board of trustees outlined their gigantic program for building and equipping many were free in their expressions of surprise and openly doubted the possibility of its realization. They did not believe that so vast a program could be carried to completion by a college so small as Elon, and yet within less than six months of its creation the program is far toward completion. Doubts have been turned into confidence, and Elon has become one of the best known colleges of the south.

This program grew out of the burning of the Elon college administration building on January 18th. Out of that smouldering mass of ruins which faced students and faculty on that tragic morning it has come. The building program of the college.

On January 18th the administration building was a heap of ashes and smouldering ruins. There was pain in the hearts of students and faculty alike, and there were tears in the voice of President Harper as he faced his students just following the fire and studied even in the shadows of the calamity the high note of confidence and hope which he has made a reality in so short a while. There must be reasons for this rapid recovery of this little denominational college. Pain does not become ecstatic joy nor tears turn songs without a cause. There is no one single man of wealth to whom the success of the program may be directly traced. Two there are who have made large contributions, it is true, but even they could not be said to have made the program the success which it has been. Mr. J. M. Darden of Suffolk, Va., and P. J. Carlton of Richmond have given fifty thousand dollars each to the reconstruction program. The real secret lies deeper yet and its traces are only to be seen in the love and loyalty of the small brotherhood who built and consecrated the college by which they now stand so unflinchingly in its crucial hour.

The Christian church founded Elon college 23 years ago, and dedicated it to a high and holy purpose. That church has stood steadfastly by its college from the hour of its birth, and has lent to it all the strength of a small, but valiant people. They built the building so lately a mass of ruins brick by brick with terrible sacrifice. They built it with sacrifice that most of men would tremble at. Men and women have saved and contributed to its building whose own boys and girls could never hope to obtain a college course. Its first president sold his private car to complete the roof of the burned building that the college might open. It is out of such foundations of love and with such sacrifices that Elon college has grown, and there lies more than half the secret of its marvelous achievements at the present time.

The building program of the college includes seven buildings, five of which it was the intention of the board to build without delay. These buildings include an administration building which the people of Alamance county in which the college is situated are giving as a token of their high appreciation of the work of the college in their midst, a science building which will adequately house the departments of science of the college, and give them space and facilities to function in the largest way possible; an auditorium building, the gift of J. M. Darden of Suffolk, Va., and which will be the most beautiful auditorium building standing on the campus of any college in North Carolina. There will be also a library building, the gift of P. J. Carlton of Richmond, Va., and a religious building.

The administration building, Alameda hall, given by the people of Alamance county to show their appreciation of the fine work of Elon stands at the center of the quadrangle. It is larger than the burned building, and will far more adequately care for the needs of the college. That which impresses one about this building is the source from which it came. It comes to the college from the hearts of the surrounding people, from those who have grown up with the college and who know its work. They know its failings and its achievements, and they appreciate the reality which it has lent to the high purpose to which its founders dedicated it. The true worth of an individual or an institution is the esteem in which the neighbors hold him or it, and the true worth of Elon is amply attested by this gift of a hundred thousand dollar building by its neighbors.

Col. R. L. Holt, long a friend of the college, began the movement, and it was highly approved by the citizens of the county. The excellent example set by Col. Holt and the citizens of Alamance county has done much to aid Elon elsewhere. This fine gift of the county with the two large gifts of individuals has been the whole of the large financial gifts which the college has received. The others have come as gifts for the erection of the first building came by the sacrifices of a loyal people.

Dr. Harper declared, as he faced the students on the morning of the fire that the college was more than its buildings, it was a spirit, and he has gone on declaring and believing this. "I had rather have the spirit of the Elon students on the morning of January 18th, than to have the administration building," he told the people of Burlington and Alamance county, and it is this spirit which the whole church has, and it is such a spirit which causes it to stand so unswervingly behind its college in any stress however terrible.

It is notable that, in spite of the fact that the building which housed nearly the whole of the equipment of the college as well as the study halls of the college, lay in ruins, not one student left the campus because of it. They stood by their college in the darkness as they had stood by it in the shining glory of its late successful football season. They carried into their work the same sort of spirit which they had carried into their play, and which had made them winners in contests against teams which surpassed them in strength.

The science hall, and the auditorium building, (the Whitley Memorial building which Mr. Darden has given the college) will stand at the two southern corners of the quadrangle. Both of these buildings are now being erected, and construction is being pushed rapidly forward. The buildings of the quadrangle will all be of similar design, and will carry out a complete design.

The science hall will house the science departments of the college.

Physics, chemistry, geology, and biology will find a place in the building. The building is being so constructed that laboratories and class rooms will be united, this will greatly facilitate the teaching of the sciences, since it will allow demonstrations during recitations which was not possible before in so large a way. The best science buildings all over the country have been studied, and the best points have been incorporated in the new science building at Elon. The professors of the various departments will occupy after a careful study of the needs of their departments. This arrangement will give Elon one of the most up-to-date science buildings in the state.

The auditorium building will have a capacity of one thousand seats, and will house the large music department of the college. Much stress is laid on the music department and adequate facilities are to be furnished in the new building. Studios and practice rooms have been carefully planned for convenience and the best work.

On the north of the quadrangle will stand the library, (the Carlton Memorial building) and the Religious Building. The Carlton Memorial building is to have a capacity of one hundred thousand volumes, and reading rooms adequate for a much enlarged student body are to be equipped. Every library need has been carefully studied in the drawing of the plans for the Carlton building, and no feature which would add to the efficiency of the building has been omitted.

The religious activities building will have a distinctive feature. For two years the religious organizations of the college have been correlated and so co-ordinated as to achieve the greatest results with the least use of time and energy. The religious education program which the organization has already put on, causes those in charge of the work to feel there are great possibilities for the movement. The religious activities building will care for these needs. It will provide space and equipment for the entire religious education program.

The leaders in religious education in the United States and Canada have been consulted in the drawing of the plans, and they have highly approved the scheme. So far no college in America has just such a building, and the idea is original with the Elon religious education department.

The work of the religious activities organization has served as a laboratory of religious education for the past two years, and the new building will make the religious education department one of the leading departments of the kind in America. It will be able to successfully give laboratory work in connection with the study, and will give to the church leaders equal to the task of facing the great need of the church at the present time.

The other two buildings included in the architects plan are dormitories, and will be constructed as they are needed to care for the student body. The whole program includes a large expenditure of money. That which is

to be completed at the present time will cost three hundred thousand dollars, and an equal amount will be added to the endowment fund of the college. A large part of this money has already been subscribed, and payments are being made rapidly so that the college can pay as it goes in the construction of the buildings.

The construction is in the hands of J. W. Stout and company of Sanford, N.C. The contractors express a confident hope of completing at least two of the new buildings by the opening of the fall term of the college, and others will rapidly follow.

Dr. W. A. Harper, Elon's well known president, has given himself unreservedly to the great program which the board of trustees has outlined, and is bending every energy to its success. A large share of the success which the program has attained is due to his untiring efforts, and the fine way in which he has managed the campaign.

While church and state marvel at the unparalleled achievement of this small denominational college, there is a confident assurance in the hearts of those who are guiding its destiny that the success of the program is a certainty. They feel that all which has gone before but presages a brighter day of usefulness to the church which supports it to the county and state within whose borders it stands, and to the nation and the world is breaking in a resplendent dawn. They know that this new day brings to it new tasks, and they have dedicated themselves anew to the high and holy purpose on which the founders built the college thirty-three years ago. They will go on building men and women with stalwart Christian character, competent to lead in civic and religious growth in any community in which they live.

Its record in the past has justified this expectation, and the improved facilities which have arisen from the ruins of the building which cost so much of sacrifice makes certain that possibilities which await the coming Elon. An atmosphere of joy and prosperity prevades the campus, the community and the church. Where there were on January 18th are songs today, and despite the dread lines on the face of the president, lines which have come in the past few months, there is joy in his heart. He will not mind these, if the years will make his dream of a larger and more serviceable Elon a reality.

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