

THE HISTORY OF FLORAL COLLEGE.

By Miss Cora John.

Very little had been done in North Carolina for education before 1840. Before that time there were no public schools, few private schools and academies and very few colleges. Dr. Calvin H. Wiley reported as follows for 1840:

No. male colleges in the State... 3
No. female colleges in the State... 1
No. academies and select schools 141
No. primary schools... 632

The male colleges were the university, chartered 1789; Davidson, 1838; and Wake Forest, 1838. The female college was the Greensboro Female College (now the Greensboro College for Women), chartered in 1838, but not opened till 1847. The academies and select schools were scattered all over the State. Salem Female Academy was the best-known girl's school.

Thus we see that in 1840 there was not a single woman's college in operation in North Carolina, and only one south of the Potomac river—Wesleyan Female College at Macon, Georgia, which was chartered in 1836. It is claimed that Salem College was in operation at that time, but it was not chartered as a college till 1866.

The people of the State were beginning to realize the need of higher education for women. Some of the friends of education were urging that women teachers were best for primary schools. The State did nothing, however, and the burden fell on the various denominations of the State. The Methodists were planning to meet the demand in the establishment of Greensboro Female College, but their college had not yet been built.

The Presbyterians were the next denomination to put forth an effort along this line. They could send their sons to be educated, but they had no place to send their daughters.

Robeson county, which had always been a promoter of education, was the first county to realize this need enough to take action. It had, at this time, the following schools within its borders: Lumberton Academy, chartered 1793; Raft Swamp Academy, 1793; Mt. Clio Academy, 1806; Zion Parnassus Academy, 1808; and Pine Grove Academy, 1833.

John Gilchrist, one of the early promoters of education in that county, wanted to establish a female college near Centre church, in one of the Presbyterian sections of the county. Mr. Gilchrist was a graduate of the University, having received the A. B. degree in 1809 and the A. M. degree in 1812. He was a lawyer by profession and one of the prime movers in the establishment of such a college as I have just mentioned.

About the year 1840 he began to secure stock for the establishment of such a college, which he named Floral College. Early in the next session of the Legislature the bill was presented and passed, January 11th, 1841, for the establishment of Floral College in Robeson county.

The Laws of 1841-1842 give the charter as follows:

"An act to establish a female literary institution, in the county of Robeson.

"Whereas, several persons have associated themselves together for the purpose of establishing a female literary institution, near Centre church, in the county of Robeson, and having subscribed to stock for the purpose aforesaid; therefore, Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same That Rev. John R. McIntosh, Dr. Angus D. McLean and others, who are for the purpose aforesaid, be and they are hereby constituted a body corporate, by the name and style of 'Floral College' and by that name shall have perpetual succession, and a common seal, be able and capable to sue and be sued, to plead and be pleaded either in law or equity, and to acquire, receive, hold, possess, enjoy and sell, both real and personal property.

Sec. 2. Be it further enacted, That all articles of association agreed to, and adopted by the stockholders aforesaid, are hereby incorporated into this charter as a part thereof; and if, at any time, the company should be desirous of increasing their capital for the purpose contemplated by this charter, the same may be done at any general meeting of the stockholders, provided the aggregate capital shall not exceed fifteen thousand dollars.

"Sec. 3. Be it further enacted, That a president and fifteen trustees shall be annually chosen by the stockholders, to hold the appointment for one year, nine of whom shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the institution.

"Sec. 4. Be it further enacted, That the president and fifteen trustees, or a majority of them, are hereby authorized and empowered to make, ordain, and establish such bylaws and regulations for the government of said college, and for the preservation of order and good morals, as to them may seem expedient, and necessary, subject, however, to the control of the stockholders; provided, such bylaws and regulations shall in no instance be repugnant to the Laws and Constitution of the State, and of the United States, and that in meeting of the stockholders, a majority, at least, of the stock shall be represented, and that as many as fifty acres of land, owned by the company and appropriated to the buildings and other objects of the institution, shall be exempt from taxation.

"Sec. 5. Be it further enacted, That the president and trustees, with the faculty, shall have power to confer degrees or testimonials of merit on such as by their literary acquisition may deserve the honors of the institution—(Ratified the 11th day of January, 1841.)"

Soon after the charter of Floral College was granted, the stockholders met and elected John Gilchrist the largest stockholder, as president of the board of trustees of the college. The other trustees were Daniel McLean, Dr. John Mallett, Malcomb Smith, Peter M. Fachin, Rev. Archibald McQueen, Col. John M. Neill, Col. John C. McLean, Dr. Angus D. McLean, W. A. Sellers, Peter A. McEachin, Malcomb Purcell, and four others whose names I have been unable to obtain. This was an able body of men, five of them having graduated from the University. At once they began making plans for opening the college.

The college was located in a large grove right near the historic old Centre church in Robeson county. It was on the east side of the Lumber river about four miles northwest of Maxton. It was opened in June 1841, after its charter had been granted in January, with Rev. John R. McIntosh as its first president. Mr. McIntosh was at this time pastor of Centre church. He was a thorough instructor and an excellent preacher. He is given by Mr. Melman in the list of best teachers in the State between 1825 and 1850.

Mr. McIntosh and the trustees of the college selected the assistants with great care. These were Mrs. C. M. McIntosh, Miss Elizabeth Jewett, Prof. John C. Southerland, Miss Wilson, and others, including Miss Miller of New York as teacher of mathematics, and Miss Drew of Norfolk, Va., as directress of the music department. Mr. and Mrs. Bethea were put in charge of Stewart's Hall, the building they used as a dormitory.

At first the college encountered many difficulties, for want of experience and means but in a very few years it far surpassed the most sanguine hopes of its friends. The equipment of the college in 1848 would seem very meagre to us today but in those days it was considered good. The catalog of that year gives the following: "It is now furnished with many helps of imparting instruction, such as Pelton's Outline Maps, astronomical charts, globes and a well-selected chemical and philosophical apparatus." It adds further: "With all these helps and an able and experienced faculty, the founders of the institution now hope to afford their daughters as complete and thorough an education, both literary and ornamental, as can be obtained anywhere, and at a comparative moderate expense."

The first class, consisting of eight members, graduated in 1843. Two of these were from Richmond and six from Robeson county. In 1844 there were five in the class, including one from South Carolina; 8 in the class of 1845; 13 in 1846; 14 in 1847; and sixteen in 1848. Thus the numbers increased and the influence of the college became greater and greater. Previous to 1848 there had been one graduate from Mississippi, several from South Carolina and quite a number from various sections of North Carolina.

The catalogue of 1848 gives sixty-four students from North Carolina, the farthest west being from Concord, and the farthest east from Wilmington; twenty-four from South Carolina; three from Alabama; and one from Florida.

The college grew and continued with few changes at first. Previous to 1848, Rev. F. W. Plassman had been made director of the music department. Rev. John R. McIntosh or fifteen years, when he was succeeded by Rev. Daniel Johnson. Mr. Johnson was a native Robesonian, having been born near St. Paul. He was well educated and a good teacher. He graduated at a college in Schenectady, New York, and for several years taught in the Donaldson Academy at Fayetteville. About 1855 he took charge of Floral College and continued as its president until the outbreak of the Civil War, when the work of this college, like that of many others, had to be suspended.

Funds for carrying on the work of the college came from various sources—individuals, the church, students, and other sources. In 1849 a law was passed by the General Assembly of the State, fining all persons ten dollars for each offense of selling any liquors within three miles of Floral College. The money received from such fines was given to the college and applied as the trustees directed. In 1852 the Library Board of the State gave \$2,000 to the college and it is reasonable to suppose that funds were received from this source from time to time.

The expenses per session of a student were as follows in 1841: Preparatory department... \$ 6.00
Sophomore class... 10.00
Junior and senior classes... 12.00
Extras Per Session:
Music on piano forte... 15.00
Use of instrument... 2.00
Vocal music... 2.00
French... 5.00
Embroidery... 3.00
Shell and wax work each... 5.00
(Materials to be paid for by pupils.)
Board, including washing and bedding, seven dollars per month; room rent, twenty-five cents per session; wood, lights, books, and stationery are to be paid for by the students.

During the period previous to the war the work done at Floral was all ways thorough and of a high grade.

The laws of the college provided that "a sufficiency of competent instruction must be given in every department." They further provided that "the deportment and scholarship of each young lady, and her punctuality in attending all the exercises of the college, shall be carefully recorded by the faculty, and a report sent to her parent or guardian at the close of each quarter and session."

The college year consisted of two sessions of five months each, commencing the first of July and January and closing the last of May and November.

There were three regular classes and a preparatory department in the college. The work done in these various classes was as follows in 1848:

Preparatory—Spelling, reading, the five fundamental rules in arithmetic, a general knowledge of English grammar, and geography.

Sophomore Class—First Session: English grammar (Brown's Large), geography (Mitchell's) (completed), history of the United States (Goodrich's), arithmetic (Smith's); second session: arithmetic (completed), history of England (Goodrich's) botany (Mrs. Phelps), algebra (completed).

Junior Class—first session: algebra, (completed), history of Greece, astronomy (Burrett's Geography of the Heavens), natural history, rhetoric (Blarr's), geometry (Davie's completed); second session: history of Rome, Botany (Mrs. Lincoln's), natural philosophy, chemistry (including every branch of it, especially Liebig's Agricultural Chemistry), logic, geometry (Davie's).

Senior Class—first session: mineralogy, geology, intellectual philosophy, trigonometry, physiology (Combs), second session, moral philosophy (Abercrombie's), evidences of christianity, political economy, review of the whole.

Spelling, reading, writing daily and composition every two weeks throughout the whole course. The study of the Scriptures was made a prominent part of the course. Latin and Greek were taught when desired. Extra courses were given in instrumental music, drawing, painting, wax and shell work, embroidery, French, and vocal music.

A curriculum like this would not be considered very high now, but at that time there was no other for a female school in North Carolina as high. The standard of the college was raised considerable between 1848 and the outbreak of the civil war, but I have been unable to find to what extent it was raised. Instruction was thorough along all lines. Each student who applied for admission to the college was carefully examined and put into the class which she was prepared to enter. No student was allowed to advance to a higher class unless the studies of the preceding class had been approved. At the close of each session the examinations were held publicly, and the senior class in addition to the studies of the session, were required to be examined, before graduation, on the whole course, in the presence of the trustees, or their committee, and their parents or guardians. When the prescribed course of studies was completed and satisfactory examination had been given, the students were given their diplomas (paying two dollars and a half for them before delivery) on the last Thursday in May.

Commencements were held annually in May, and were among the most enjoyable occasions of that section of the State. They were very unique, but characteristic of the time. The large halls were handsomely decorated in cedar and smilax; the rostrum was richly adorned with handsome paintings, bead work, and embroidery, made by the students in their school work. The board of trustees occupied a prominent place on the rostrum. The examinations were held in the morning and continued for three days. The questions were propounded by the trustees. These men were the critical judges of the girls trying efforts and each girl was wondering how she could answer the difficult questions propounded by them. They worked difficult examinations on the long blackboards, recited history and philosophy by chapters, explained chemistry with apparatus, pointed out on a huge globe the movements of the stars in astronomy and recited botany. Then music like "Ben Bolt" and "Two Merry Girls" broke the strain. This sounds ludicrous to us but it was done, and was characteristic of the time. On the morning of the last day the diplomas and prizes were presented with appropriate eloquence. On these occasions some noted orator or divine was present to deliver an oration. Men like Hon. J.G. Blue, father of the illustrious Victor Blue and Rev. Mr. Wilson, father of President Wilson, and others were among those who were present on these occasions. One oration that Mr. Blue delivered on "The Influence of Woman" has been well remembered by those who were present. It is said that President Wilson, then a youth of about 15 years, accompanied his father on his visit to the college in 1873, but I have been unable to get the statement verified.

Large crowds from Robeson and adjoining counties attended the commencement exercises. Dinner was carried in profusion by the country people and served in the beautiful grove and the multitudes abundantly fed.

During commencement, the afternoons, except one, were given to the students to do what they pleased. On that afternoon which was not given to them (Continued on page three.)

NOTICE OF SALE.

Under and by virtue of a judgment of the Superior Court of Robeson county rendered at the June term, 1913, in the special proceeding entitled J. Ed. Tyson, et al. vs. Della Williamson, et al., the same being No. 567 upon the special proceeding docket of said court, the undersigned commissioners will, on Monday, the 21st day of July 1913, at 12 o'clock, m., at the court house door in Lumberton Robeson county, North Carolina, offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash, that certain tracts of land lying and being in Wishart's township and Lumberton township, Robeson county, North Carolina, described as follows, to-wit:

First Tract: On the west side of the Big Swamp, beginning at a stake by a white oak and short straw pine at the edge of the Big Swamp, the dividing corner between Uriah Pitman and William Pitman and runs south 52 west 21.75 chains to a stake U. Pitman's corner of a 15 acre survey, excepted by said U. Pitman's deed; thence along the said U. Pitman's line north 45 west 63.30 chains to U. Pitman's corner; thence the other line north 32 E. 10.25 chains to the Whiteville road; thence along the said road northwestwardly 31.25 chains to Willis Taylor's corner in said road; thence along said Taylor's line south 3.50 chains to his corner, a lightwood stump, known as the corner of Buck Ridge tract; thence west 9 chains to a stake in the line of the Buck Ridge tract; thence south 14 west along the line of Lemuel Taylor's 33 chains to said Taylor's corner; thence along said Taylor's other line south 62 west 4 chains to a stake by a maple at the east edge of Long Branch; thence down the east edge of said branch to the line of a 169 acre survey; thence along that line South 12-80 chains to F. Lennon's line; thence along his line south 52 east 20.50 chains to a stake in said line; thence east 26.97 chains; thence north 35, East 31.97 chains; thence north 55 west 48.80 chains; thence south 35 west 3.17; thence north 55 west 3.17 chains; thence direct to the beginning, containing 584 acres.

Second Tract: Beginning at the corner of Lot No. 1, at the center of the C. C. R. R. in the middle of a slash and runs along said railroad with the line of Lot No. 1, North 67 west about 19 chains to a stake the corner of lot No. 1; thence along the original line north 20, east 10.16 chains to a stake by a post oak, B. C. Todd's corner; thence along his line south 70, east 22.50 chains, to a stake in the middle of said slash; thence up the middle of said slash to the beginning, containing 19 acres and being more particularly described in partition proceedings recorded in Book T T T, page 455 et seq. in the office of the Register of Deeds of Robeson county.

Third Tract: In the town of Lumberton. Beginning at a stake the southwest corner of R. E. L. Prevatt (formerly the Ella Floyd corner) and runs along the east edge of Cedar street south 97-1-2 feet to the corner of J. A. Bethea's lot; thence east with the line of J. A. Bethea 163 feet to the line of John Redmond's lot; thence with Redmond's line north 97-1-2 feet to the corner of R. E. L. Prevatt's lot; thence with the line of his lot west 163 feet to the beginning and being the same lot conveyed by W. F. French, Commissioner to Rosilla Pitman as fully set out and described in book R R R, page 560, in the office of the register of deeds of Robeson county, and afterwards conveyed by Rosilla Pitman to W. E. Pitman as will appear in the records of the office of the Register of Deeds of Robeson county.

This 20th day of June, 1913.
E. M. BRITT,
ROBERT E. LEE,
Commissioners.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE.

Having qualified as executor of the last will and testament of Charity Townsend, deceased, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to present same to me, or to my attorneys, Johnson & Johnson, on or before the 10th day of June, 1914, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate settlement with the undersigned executor.

This 7th day of June, 1913.

C. M. TOWNSEND,
Executor of Charity Townsend.
JOHNSON & JOHNSON,
686M Atty's for Executor.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE.

Having qualified as administrator of Wiley Oxendine, lately deceased, this is to notify all persons having claims against said deceased to present same to me or my attorneys, Johnson & Johnson, on or before the 10th day of June, 1914, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned administrator.

This the 7th day of June, 1913.

B. J. OXENDINE,
Adm'r. of Wiley Oxendine deceased.
JOHNSON & JOHNSON,
696M. Atty's for Administrator.

Ad. Wisdom

If Wisdom's ways you wisely seek
Five things observe with care
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Of what you advertise now
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—With apologies to the forgotten poet—
He never advertised
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