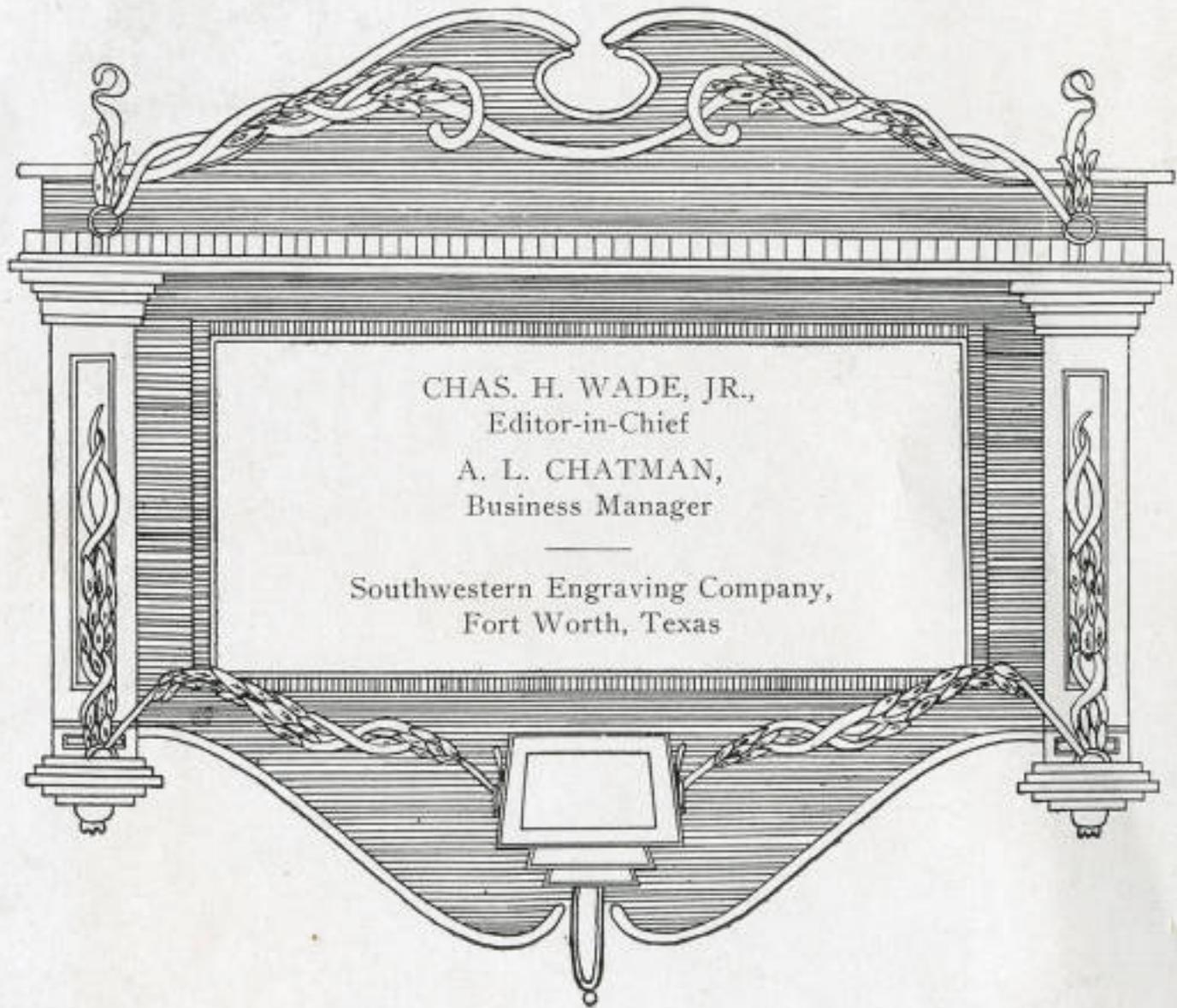




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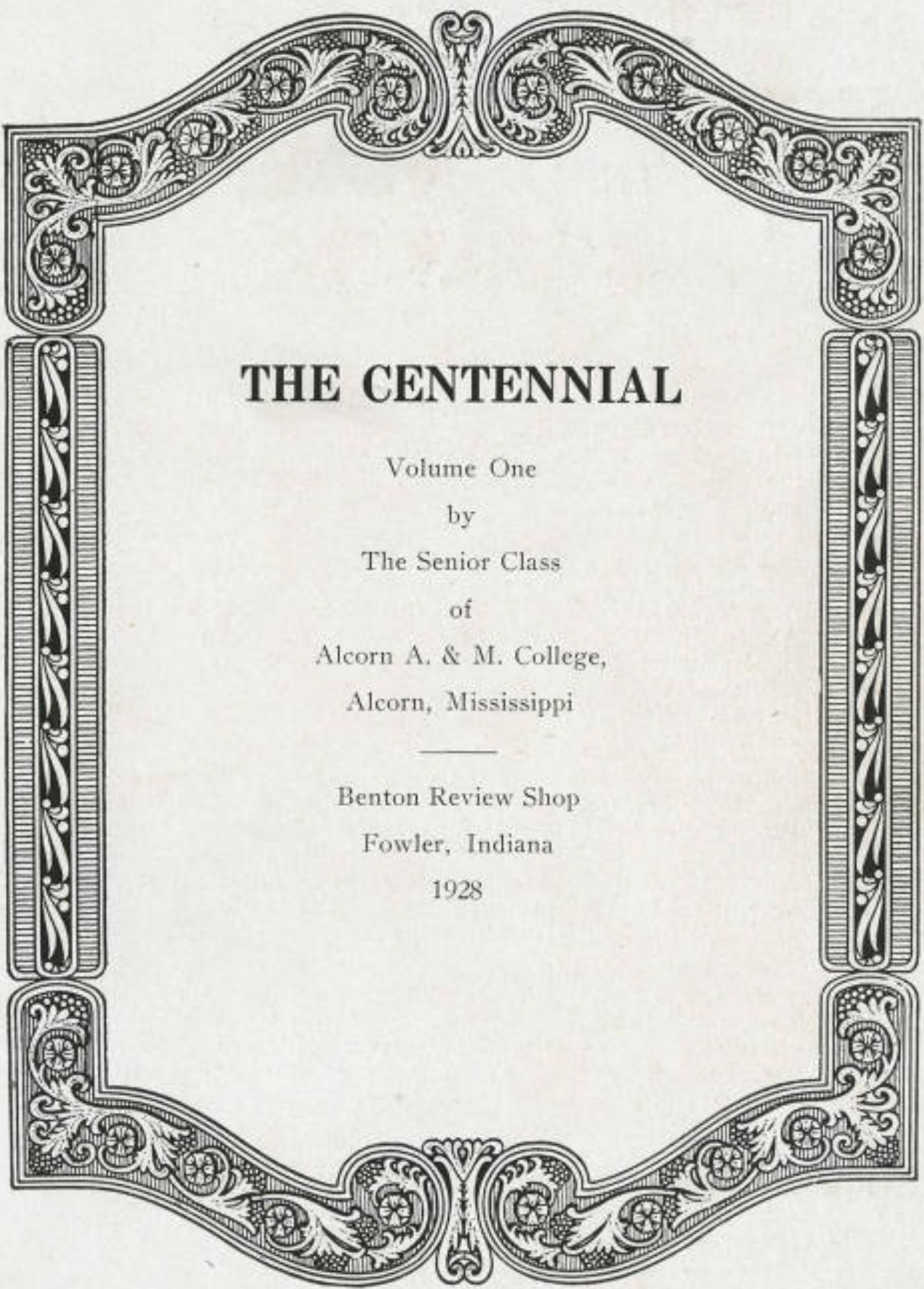


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THE CENTENNIAL

Volume One

by

The Senior Class

of

Alcorn A. & M. College,

Alcorn, Mississippi



Benton Review Shop

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OAKLAND COLLEGE

This fine school was located in the neighborhood of Rodney. It was in a beautiful place, but of course altogether in the interior. It was five miles from the Mississippi River at Rodney and since that day there has been a diversity of views respecting the proper location not only of Oakland College but of churches, schoolhouses and all or any other thing of general use to the community. It has been no uncommon thing for persons unacquainted with the circumstances of the case to exclaim as they approach Oakland in its quiet retreat:

"What better proof could there be of incompetency of the founders of Oakland College for such an undertaking than the fact of their placing it where no sensible and judicious man could ever have thought of locating an institution designed for public benefit?"

And yet it is believed to be susceptible of easy demonstration that in many important respects it was not only a very desirable and eligible location but absolutely the only practicable place in all the territory where the founders of the college could have been successful in their undertakings.

The following brief sketch of the early history of college education in Mississippi and Louisiana will prepare the way for setting forth the origin and progress of the institution and show by what principles and motives its founders were actuated.

The sketch is from the pen of Rev. Benjamin Chase, who arrived in this part of our territory at New Orleans on the 17th of December, 1817, one week after Mississippi was admitted into the Union as a state.

* * * * *

In the midst of all these failures there was one ray of hope. It was born in the heart of the Presbytery of Mississippi. In the minds of some of these men there was formed the vision of a coming institution, which in some way or other in a way they did not know should be organized and meet the needs of the rising generation. Gradually that vision developed into a blessed reality and in due time Oakland College was born. The very name brings up a thousand memories. No institution in the state of Mississippi or anywhere else perhaps ever wrought itself so deeply in the love of the people as did Oakland College. It was established by a body of faithful men. They watered it with their prayers and their tears and poured their money into its lap. They loved and cherished it all their lives. During its marvelous career as many as 2,000 pupils sat in its halls. Some of the cleanest and purest men of the State of Mississippi were nourished and fed there under the oak trees.

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It had a beautiful life of nearly forty years and out of its ashes two splendid institutions grew up; Alcorn College for the colored people of the state and Chamberlain Hunt Academy at Port Gibson.

The whole story is tender and poetic. The need of a high grade college had been felt a long time. The schools in the north were too far away. The Seminary at Princeton and other divinity schools were almost out of our reach. If the Presbyterian church in the Synod of Mississippi was to make real progress, they were bound to have an institution of learning. So the plan of having such a school and adding to it a theological department was in the minds of our leading men for several years.

At the spring meeting of Presbytery in 1829 a committee of correspondence was appointed and a convention of ministers, merchants, professional men and planters was called.

In the meantime Presbytery met again in the fall of the year at Pinckneyville, where a good deal more thinking was done. The Presbytery met in convention at Bethel church, Claiborne County, January 14, 1830, and worked together six days and encouraged themselves to establish an institution to embrace the branches taught in the colleges of our country with a preparatory department and a theological professorship or seminary.

Three parishes of Louisiana were represented in the convention. The Presbytery met in April, 1830, and endorsed the views of the convention, appointed trustees, elected a president and fixed the site of the school two miles from Bethel church and five miles east of Rodney.

On July 30, the trustees with their servants met on the ground and clearing away the timber laid the foundations of Oakland College.

The Synod of Mississippi later on declared that "it was pleased to hear that in the Presbytery of Mississippi a college had been established under the direction of the Presbytery; that about \$26,000 had already been subscribed for it and that a person well qualified in the opinion of the Presbytery to manage such an institution had been providentially cast among them, whose labors they have secured for this object."

The above stated schedule is a general sketch of the organization of Oakland College.

But we must go into detail and speak more minutely of this great fundamental scheme of the Presbyterian church in Mississippi.

This will show the providence of God and his people as co-laborers with God.

The first important step was at the spring meeting of the Presbytery at Baton Rouge. This was in April 1829. At this meeting the theme of the most earnest discussion in public and private was the lamentable scarcity of ministers, teachers, schools and colleges.

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The fact was patent that a large portion of the territory within our bounds was missionary ground, our ministers and teachers few in number, and no encouraging prospect of either raising up others ourselves or of obtaining them from abroad; and most of our ministers were subsisting on such scanty salaries that they were unable to do anything for the general good of the community beyond the discharge of their own personal duties. In their poverty they had organized an Educational Society, each member paying three dollars per annum "to aid poor and pious young men in preparing for the gospel ministry."

Grieved at the thought of such a dependence it was agreed to make our condition the subject of devout and earnest prayer for divine direction and aid until the fall meeting of Presbytery.

The Synod of Mississippi at a meeting in 1843 at Yazoo City put a great deal of emphasis on this meeting of the Presbytery of Mississippi at Baton Rouge. Noting its importance, the Synod prepared a circular letter concerning the history and status of Oakland College at that time. This letter was to be sent to all the churches within the bounds of the Synod that they might have proper knowledge of the condition of Oakland College, the reasons for its organization, its needs, its battles, its state of finances and other matters of interest.

This letter was exceedingly interesting. It sheds light on the paramount reasons for organizing this great school. In this letter the Synod says:

"In 1829 the Presbytery of Mississippi met at Baton Rouge and at one juncture during the meeting they sat as a "Committee of the whole." All parliamentary rules being suspended they had a free discussion of the situation throughout the Synod referring to educational matters.

Some startling facts were brought to view. One was, that although the gospel had been preached throughout the bounds of the Presbytery for thirty-one years and that many churches had been organized, yet not a single young man during all this period had ever been brought into the ministry of the gospel. The gospel had been preached and churches had been organized by ministers who had come from other sections, and that there was not a single native young man from all their bounds that was now in preparation for the ministry, and, farther, that not even one had expressed a desire for it.

It can easily be imagined how facts like these should create surprise and even consternation. The Presbytery of Mississippi at that time embraced the states of Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas.

Another fact was that there was not at that time a single college prepared to give a regular collegiate education anywhere in all our bounds embracing those three states; the population of which was at that time about 200,000; stretching over a territory of 145,000 square miles. This territory





embraced such cities as New Orleans, Vicksburg, Jackson, Columbus, Baton Rouge, and other smaller cities and towns.

The states of Louisiana and Mississippi through their legislatures had put forth great efforts and had appropriated much money, had donated lands to establish and maintain institutions for the higher learning; that the Federal Government, different corporations and individuals had also made great exertions to bring into existence colleges and schools for the higher education. Yet not a single young man was known to have graduated from any of these states. All these efforts, very laudable indeed, had accomplished comparatively nothing.

Again they discovered that the religious communities in the states had as yet done nothing to advance the cause of education. Individuals had done something in this line but the church as an organization had done nothing. This was indeed a deplorable condition. It was more discouraging to our Christian people than commonly occurs even in heathen lands.

In November of the same year the Presbytery met at Pinckneyville. The spirit of the meeting at Baton Rouge had not abated but had rather grown stronger. The Presbytery was deeply stirred. They could see clearly that this state of things could not be endured. If they had to import ministers from other sections of the land, the church would sooner or later die out entirely, and so as never before, and perhaps we might say never since was Presbytery so stirred. With great deliberation and earnest prayer they resolved to take a step forward.

After thorough consideration, they appointed a committee to consider and digest, and report to the Presbytery at another meeting some suitable course of action.

After much prayerful reflection and free consultation with many citizens and members of different churches in various parts of Louisiana and Mississippi, they decided to meet again on the 14th of January, 1830.

The Committee went to work immediately and at the time specified the Presbytery met at Bethel church, not as a church court, but as individuals in the form of an educational society.

These members of the Presbytery with the greatest unanimity adopted the able report of the committee appointed in November.

The report was presented by Benjamin Chase.

After the meeting was opened and prayer offered the following paper was presented, viz:

"The committee appointed in behalf of the Educational Society of Mississippi Presbytery to draft a plan for enlarging its operations submit the following report.

"In view of the interesting circumstances under which we live, your



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committee was deeply impressed with the importance assigned them of pointing out some way in which the energies of our society can be more extensively employed in promoting the best interests of our community and advancing the gospel of Christ among us. When we reflect that in a short time those, who are now discharging the duties of life, will be slumbering in the grave and succeeded by the youth, who are now advancing to maturity, the question naturally arises, are those youths, an adequate number of them, in proper training for the responsible duties, which, by the providence of God, must soon devolve upon them? This inquiry prompts us to survey the field around us as well as the prospect before us.

"In contemplating the scene around us, we find our situation one of peculiar interest and in several respects almost entirely separated from other Christian communities. Our Presbytery, comprehending the states of Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas, lies in the southwest corner of Protestant America where we have the Gulf of Mexico on the south, a Papal government on the west, savage tribes on the north, and new settlements on the east and elsewhere in a great measure destitute of schools and the means of grace, and calling on us for help.

"Within our bounds is a population of about half a million souls; and for the promotion of their salvation we have but fifteen ministers, our Episcopal brethren but five, and if our Methodist and Baptist brethren had even ten times as many more, there must then remain more than 300,000 of our population destitute of the preached gospel and of any to direct them to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. This is a sketch of the scene around us.

"And the prospect before us is equally cheerless. We have deplored our condition and in our public and private devotions prayed the Lord of the Harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest, have made known our desolations and from time to time sought relief from our more highly favored northern brethren, who in return have tendered us their sympathies and say they have remembered us in their exertions; but in seven years have furnished us with only five fellow laborers to aid in breaking the bread of life to our 300,000 souls, who are perishing for the lack of it—'and what are they among so many?'

"In answer to our repeated and earnest solicitations for help, they tell us our climate and other circumstances present obstacles which preclude the hope of their ever being able to afford us adequate relief. Such is briefly the prospect before us.

"Thousands of our inhabitants are hastening to eternity with no one to warn them of their doom or, if perceived, to point out their remedy. And when we add to this the fact that our number, already small, is annually diminished by deaths and removals, we think circumstances like these should

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lead to a careful investigation whether we ourselves have done or are doing all that duty demands. What have we done?

"We have implored help from God and sought aid from man; but have we put our own hands to the work and labored according to the ability which God has given us to provide for our own necessities? This we dare not assert.

"In view of our widespread desolations, let us inquire what are we now doing, either to supply our present wants or the generations which will succeed us? We are educating two young men, more than a thousand miles distant from us, who, we hope, will return at some future day and afford us their labors, and this is all that we are doing in this way to extend the blessings of salvation to the thousands now destitute or to provide for those who shall live after us. It is a melancholy and painful truth that we have not one minister, licentiate or candidate for the gospel ministry, who is either a native of this part of our country or has been educated amongst us, nor have we an institution at which a youth of piety can be prepared to become a preacher of the gospel. If the bounties of providence had not been poured forth into our hands in such rich profusion, our apathy would be less criminal. But scarcely a year passes without liberal contributions being made within our bounds and churches to different benevolent institutions around us, whose claims are presented by those who are before us in the business of doing good. And seldom do our people withhold from any object, which they believe deserving of public patronage. And where are these wants more pressing than ours? or a cause more deserving the hearty co-operation of every Christian and philanthropist? Surely we cannot be in the path of duty while bestowing our bounties on distant objects and neglecting our own necessities and only pleading for others to come and do for us what, with the blessing of God, we have the means of accomplishing for ourselves.

"But dark and cheerless as our prospects hitherto have been, we are encouraged to hope the day is near when we shall in some measure wake to a sense of our duty from the fact that at our last spring meeting of Presbytery, between \$50,000 and \$60,000 were reported to have been contributed within our bounds during the year previous for the erection of churches, establishment of schools and other objects designed to promote this general welfare of our community.

"But while we regard this as a pleasing indication of brighter days we must not forget that these schools look no farther than to the temporal welfare of society and hold out no inducement to multiply churches, which must stand neglected for want of pious and intelligent ministers to officiate in them. These cannot be obtained from abroad nor are we able at present to furnish them at home.

"Our schools, yet few in number, embrace only the elementary branches

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of education and contain no provision for our want of a preached gospel. All our youth, who are educated for professional men, are sent abroad for that purpose at a greatly increased expense, annually draining from our two states many thousands of dollars, which might and should be expended amongst us for that object.

"But this is not the greatest evil. It is only the sons of the affluent who can thus be educated abroad, and from them we have little reason to expect many will come forth as ambassadors for Christ. We have therefore no just ground of hope that our churches can be supplied or our inhabitants furnished with a pious and enlightened ministry adequate to their wants until we make provision for educating them here on such terms that all suitable and pious youths, who desire to be useful in teaching men the way of salvation may be brought forward and qualified here for that important work.

"How long then shall we delay entering upon this duty when every year is increasing the evil and bearing multitudes away into eternity unreconciled to God!

"Shall we wait till our people become weary in giving to distant objects before we attempt to relieve ourselves?

"We think our present necessities demand, and that the past liberality of our citizens justifies the attempt to establish now an institution among us at which, with the blessing of God, our youth may be fitted for the various duties of church and state, which must soon devolve upon them. Your committee therefore begs leave to recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

"Resolved, That it is expedient to establish and endow an Institution of Learning now within our bounds, which, when complete, shall embrace the usual branches of Science and Literature taught in the Colleges of our country, together with Preparatory English and Grammar School and a Theological Professorship or Seminary.

"All of which is respectfully submitted.

BENJAMIN CHASE, Chairman.

Bethel Church, Jan. 4, 1830."

We can readily understand the fervent travail of spirit under which these men worked during that period. The committee itself, with Benjamin Chase as Chairman, gave themselves to it unstintedly and they did monumental work. The example of these men furnishes something good as a pattern for the labors of all Presbyterian people throughout our history. They bore some resemblance to the zeal of the Westminster Assembly. They had nothing to distract their minds, no railroad trains, no automobiles, no tele-





phones or telegraph wires. They sat in the quiet corners of the old church, perhaps in groups in the neighboring homes and wrought for the coming years.

The convention at Bethel was composed of men from different parts of the country; from the parishes of East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana and West Feliciana, Louisiana; from Amite, Wilkinson, Adams, Jefferson, Claiborne, Warren, Hinds and Madison Counties, Mississippi, who remained in session six days, three of which were occupied in discussing the resolution in the foregoing chapter, which was finally adopted without a dissenting voice; and by way of testing the feelings of the assembly, a subscription was opened for funds with which to commence the enterprise, and \$12,500 contributed.

All agreed it was not advisable to locate the institution far in the interior, and various places were proposed for sites, which were divided into four districts, on each of which a committee was appointed to examine its claims, viz:

1. The parishes of East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana and West Feliciana, La.
2. The counties of Amite, Wilkinson, and Franklin, Mississippi.
3. Adams and Jefferson Counties, Mississippi.
4. Claiborne, Warren and Hinds Counties, Mississippi.

Each committee was furnished with the following instructions:

1. Seek an elevated and healthy situation in a moral neighborhood, not only free from tippling houses and other temptations to vice, but opposed to the admission of such places into their vicinity.
2. Near enough to the Mississippi River to be easy of access by water and sufficiently remote to be exempt from swamp atmosphere.
3. Ascertain what amount of funds can be obtained in that location for the purchase of a site, erection of buildings, etc., and whether the same would be contributed if another location should be preferred.

A committee was also appointed to prepare a Constitution. All these reports were ordered to be presented to the Mississippi Presbytery at their next spring meeting.

In April, 1830, Presbytery met and received the reports on the various sites proposed, amount of funds subscribed, etc., and on finding more of the demands answered in Claiborne County, Mississippi, and the larger amount of funds contributed there than elsewhere, they decided that the Institution should be located within three miles of Bethel church, which was a pleasant and moral neighborhood, five miles from Rodney, situated at the base of the Petit Gulf Hills, where the river comes from the west at right angles





with the bluffs and of course has no swamp atmosphere to render it unhealthy.

A constitution was presented, which after amendment was adopted. A Board of Trustees was appointed and Rev. Jeremiah Chamberlain, D. D., appointed President.

Two weeks after, (May 14th) he opened a school near Bethel church with three pupils who accompanied him from Jackson, Louisiana; and a few days after was joined by seven others from the same place.

In the following month, Mr. John Chamberlain, Professor of Mathematics from Jackson, was associated with him as Assistant and they soon had thirty students.

During the summer, Mr. Robert Cochrane of that neighborhood, presented the trustees with a deed to the tract of woodland (chiefly oak) containing 250 acres, on which was the most eligible site for a college that was known to the friends of the enterprise, and there the Institution was located.

In December, a Charter was obtained from the Legislature of Mississippi, of which the following is a copy:

"An Act

"To incorporate the Board of Trustees of the Institution of Learning under the care of the Mississippi Presbytery.

"Section 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Mississippi, in General Assembly convened: That Doctor Rush Nutt, David Hunt, James McGill, Thomas Freeland, Matthew Bolls, Smith C. Daniel, John Snodgrass, William Carpenter, Isaac Ross, Pierce Noland, and Charles Lee be, and they are hereby incorporated and made a body corporate and politic by the name of "The Board of Trustees of the Institution of Learning under the care of Mississippi Presbytery, which may hereafter be changed by the direction of the Board; and the Board of Trustees aforesaid shall have perpetual succession according to the Constitution already adopted by the aforesaid Institution; and may have a common seal which they may alter at will; and may purchase and receive by gift or device, lands, tenements, real estate of any kind, and hold the same in fee simple, or less estate; the annual income and profits whereof shall not exceed the value of ten thousand dollars; and the said Board of Trustees is hereby enabled to take and receive subscriptions of charitably disposed persons and may take any personal estate in succession; and all donations to the Institution either by subscription, legacy or otherwise (excepting such as shall be differently appropriated by the donor) shall make a part of, or be put into the capital stock of the Institution which shall be put out on good interest, on good security, or otherwise improved to the best advantage and the income or profits applied to the support of the Institution.





Sec. 2. And be it further enacted that the said Board of Trustees shall choose a secretary and treasurer and the present constitution of said institution shall not be altered unless in the manner therein pointed out, and no alteration shall ever be made repugnant to the Constitution of the State.

Sec. 3. And be it further enacted that the Board shall make provision for instruction to be given in the English language, in the Latin and Greek languages, in Mathematics and in the Arts and Sciences and such other branches of literature as may be within their means; in order to prepare young men for business or any of the learned professions; and shall have power to confer such Degrees and grant such certificates or Diplomas as are annually given by the Colleges or Universitites in the United States.

Sec. 4. And be it further enacted that the Board of Trustees shall have full power to attach to the Institution a school for the education of young females, which shall be endowed and supported by funds contributed especially for this purpose.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, that the Board of Trustees aforesaid, may at all times under the name, style and title aforesaid, sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, appear, prosecute and defend to final judgment and execution; and may appoint an agent or agents to prosecute and defend suits with power of substitution; and it shall be lawful for the said Board of Trustees to make sale of any estate or personal property given or purchased, or in any other way or right accruing to them in their corporate capacity, and convey the same by deed or other legal instrument duly executed; and when the property to be conveyed is real estate under the hand of the Treasurer and the seal of the Institution; provided that this section shall not be construed to affect the purchase of real estate already made in any other than sanction it.

Sec. 6. And be it further enacted that Thomas Freeland be and is hereby authorized to give ten days' notice in writing to all the members and appoint the time and place of the first meeting of the Board under this act of incorporation.

GIRARD C. BRANDON,
Governor of the State of Mississippi.
Approved Dec. 3rd, 1830."

It will be perceived that the Charter calls it The Institution of Learning, under the care of the Mississippi Presbytery, with permission to change it at discretion.

On February 4th, 1832, the Presbytery gave it the name of "Oakland College" because situated in that delightful grove.

Thus the College originated and was established where it now is, not merely because the location was pleasant, healthy and remote from tempta-





tions of vice, but because the funds were contributed exclusively for the place, and Presbytery had none with which to build elsewhere if they had desired to do so.

That the members of Presbytery might not be unnecessarily called from their more appropriate work of the ministry, all financial business, such receiving and disbursing funds, erecting buildings, etc., was committed to the Trustees; Presbytery reserving to themselves the appointment of the offices, fixing the course of study and general supervision of the College in accordance with the tenure of the Charter.

On July 2nd, 1830, the Board of Trustees and several gentlemen of the neighborhood met on the college ground and after determining the site for the first six cottages to be immediately erected, the president cut down the first tree upon the premises and a short time after, with his own hands erected for himself a cottage on the spot where the two-story brick building now stands.

The school continued at Bethel church until the close of 1830, and on the fourth of January, 1831, was removed to the college grounds where the six cottages were in an unfinished state, the President occupying the one built by himself.

In March they had sixty-five students; two in the Sophomore class, five in the Freshman, and the remainder in the Classical and English schools.

The house for the Preparatory department and the Professor's house were being built that year and in autumn a steward was appointed who was permitted to occupy the basement of the wing of the Professor's house temporarily as a refectory.

In 1832 the subscriptions to the permanent fund were reported to Presbytery to be \$26,048, nearly \$10,000 of which were subscribed by the ministerial members of Presbytery, payable in annual installments of \$100.00 each, a portion of which from their poverty was never realized.

In 1833 the first class was graduated, consisting of one member, James W. Smylie of Amite County, Mississippi; his classmate, William Montgomery, Jr., being removed by death about three weeks prior to commencement. Mr. Smylie is believed to be the first native citizen of Mississippi, who received the degree of A. B. in his own state; and was probably the first instance in the United States of one being called so early in life as he was (34 years) to fill the honorable station of Vice Chancellor, which duties he discharged with marked ability and general satisfaction.

Seven other cottages were erected during that year, two assistant teachers employed for the English and Classical schools and the whole number of students, now numbered about one hundred.

In 1834, a professor of Ancient Language was appointed, the President's house erected, also one for the steward nearly completed, and in conformity



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with the original design of Presbytery to aid poor and pious young men in preparing for the gospel ministry a subscription of \$13,000 was obtained, payable in ten annual installments of \$100 each, most of which was subsequently lost in the general ruin of a commercial crisis, which left many of those subscribers in a perilous condition.

The careful reader should take notice of the different steps in the organization of our old college which were taken successively.

First. We have the regular meeting of the Presbytery at Baton Rouge in April, 1829.

Second. The regular fall meeting of Presbytery at Pinckneyville, Miss.

Third. The unofficial meeting of Presbytery as a convention at Bethel church, Jan. 14th, 1830.

Fifth. The act of incorporation by the civil authority, Dec. 3rd, 1830.

During this period of thirty-one years beginning with May 1830, Oakland College graduated about 200 young men. This list of graduates comprised from 15 to 20 Presbyterian preachers and some Baptist brethren.

It will awaken again the tenderest interest when you read the names of some of these ministers, to-wit:

Rev. John A. Smylie
Rev. S. M. Montgomery
Rev. W. L. Patterson
Rev. Richmond McInnis
Rev. Benjamin Wayne
Rev. Robert Price
Rev. M. B. Shaw

Rev. Whitfield Buie
Rev. Henry McDonald
Rev. Daniel McNair
Rev. Joshua T. Russell
Rev. Thomas R. Markham
Rev. Hilary Mosely

In addition to these, there were men of high rank in the medical profession as well as in law and civil government.

But think of 200 college graduates reared up under the teachings of such men as had supervision at Oakland College; and the influence of the school was incalculable.

Besides these graduates there were as many as 2,000 students that passed through its halls and were influenced by its teachings and when you think of this you will say again "Influence incalculable."

The first class graduated in 1833. The two members of that class were James Smylie and William Montgomery. These two young men, as was fitting, sons of the old pioneers, were the members of this first graduating class. William Montgomery having died a little before commencement, James K. Smylie graduated alone.

In a few years after the organization some faithful friend whose name is unknown donated to the college \$20,000 for the endowment of a theological chair, and the first teacher in Theology was Rev. Samuel Beach Jones.





The following points are matters of interest.

The college was transferred to the Synod in 1839. It greatly prospered till 1837. There was a campus of 250 acres, of fine gulf hill land. At a very early date subscriptions for the college amounted to \$3,178. Contractors for buildings had been entered into for \$3,548. The endowment fund reached a sum of \$26,048, of which amount nine ministers gave \$9,000. These subscriptions were received during the years from 1830-1832. In 1837 the college had over one hundred students and subscription for an endowment fund of \$76,000.

From the catalogues issued during the life of the college we find that it was classical to the highest degree. It ought to stimulate the boys and girls of the present day to see the studies which engaged the attention of the early students, there in that sacred spot under the oak trees.

Here is a schedule of the four classes and their studies:

Freshman:

Andrews and Stoddard's Latin Grammar.
Sallust's Conspiracy of Cataline.
Cicero's Orations Against Cataline.
Zenophon's Anabasis.
The Odes of Horace.
Latin Prose Composition. Arnold.
Herodotus.
Algebra.
Geometry. Five Books.

Junior:

Ars Poetica. (Horace.)
Thucydides.
Juvenal; Greek Tragedy.
Analytical Geometry.
Rhetoric, Botany.
Calculus, Logic.
Chemistry, Inorganic.
Chemistry, Organic.
Mineralogy; Natural Theology.
Geology.

Sophomore:

Odes of Horace. (Completed.)
Classical Mythology and Roman Antiquities.
Homer's Illiad.
Arnold's Prose Composition. (Latin.)
Satires and Epistles of Horace.
Tacitus; Germania and Agricola.
Thucydides.
Latin Prose Composition. Arnold.
Geometry. (Completed.)
History; Rhetoric.
Plane Trigonometry.
Spherical Trigonometry; Surveying.

Senior:

Cicero de Officiis.
Cicero de Oratore.
Plato's Gorgias.
Natural Philosophy.
Astronomy.
Political Economy, Zoology.
Evidences of Christianity.
Mental Philosophy.
Moral Philosophy.

Anyone that understands a college curriculum will recognize this as a first class course in every sense of the word. Indeed no college through all the land had higher grades of study than those pursued at Oakland College. The teachers were first class competent instructors and they were not overwhelmed with too many students. One hundred college students was the average attendance. Out side of this was a preparatory course which was





likewise of high order, and for over thirty years Oakland College shone like a radiant light for all sections of our country.

We see from the Oakland catalogue of 1851 a resume of the classes:

Seniors	16	Preparatory—Class 1	15
Juniors	19	Class 2.	18
Sophomores	26	Class 3.	12
Freshmen	23	English	26
	84	Mathematics	22
			93
Total	177		

For the studies of that session, they had:

Latin, Greek, Mathematics,
 English and Rhetoric, History, Astronomy, Geography, Chemistry,
 Hebrew and Greek Testament, Navigation, Mental, Moral and Natural Philosophy.

Besides this they had a Bible course and church attendance required every Sunday.

For the session of 1860-61, we have the following names in the Faculty:

William L. Breckenridge...President, Prof. of Mental and Moral Philosophy
 William Logan Baird.....Prof. of Mathematics
 George Little.....Prof. of Natural Sciences
 Joseph Calvin.....Prof. of Greek
 W. G. Richardson.....Prof. of Latin and Modern Languages
 Robert Price.....Prof. of Belles-Lettres and History
 J. H. Black.....Principal, Preparatory Department

Here we lay down our pen for a while.

Up to 1847 Oakland College was very prosperous. It was bright and young. Splendid prospects lay ahead. But before they knew what was coming, disaster fell upon them. The terrible money panic of 1837 brought thousands of men to bankruptcy. In many a case the labors of a lifetime were lost in a moment. Our Oakland College men with great energy and zeal had received subscriptions from many faithful patrons which amounted to nearly \$100,000. The whole of it was lost in the financial crash and all the hard work was lost. They had it all to do over again and for ten years they struggled under the consequence and depression of the times. The fine donation for the theological chair was lost. But the College was getting upon its feet again through the untiring energies of a few faithful friends of the college when Dr. Chamberlain was killed. For ten years the college suffered from this blow but was looking up again when the Civil War broke out. The sons of Oak-

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...CENTENNIAL...

1928

land College enlisted in the army, David Hunt, the most liberal patron that any college in our land ever had, died in the early days of the great struggle.

In the meantime, John N. Waddel, one of the greatest teachers in the South, was at the head of the State University. The railroad from New Orleans straight through Mississippi from South to North was built, and Oakland College was away down on one side five miles from Rodney. Here was a combination of providences which could not be overcome by human effort.

When the Civil War closed the debts which had accumulated were resting as a heavy burden upon the schools. The students from Mississippi and elsewhere went to the University at Oxford and there was no patronage sufficient to justify any more effort at Oakland College.

The Synod of Mississippi met and the problem before it was Oakland College. This was the theme for two or three successive meetings of the Synod.

In the meantime Governor Alcorn was facing a great difficulty in the matter of schools for the blacks. And in order to harmonize all parties and factions he made a proposition to the Synod of Mississippi to buy out all that was left of Oakland College. This proposition came at the very point of time that well nigh stamped it as the providence of God.

So the old college buildings and grounds were bought by the State of Mississippi, through Governor Alcorn, to be used for an institution for the Negroes. The Synod received payment in full, and, while it caused the deepest grief among the old friends and patrons of the school, it was clearly the thing that should have been done. This purchase by the State put into the hands of the Synod enough money to pay off every debt. Every person to whom the college owed a dollar was paid off, even the cooks and the washer women, and it passed over to the State entirely free from debt.

The name Oakland was changed to Alcorn University and afterwards to Alcorn College.

All that was left of the money received from the sale of the Oakland College buildings after paying all the debts was turned over to the Presbytery of Mississippi and the old Presbytery used it for organizing Chamberlain Hunt Academy, thus perpetuating two of the names of Oakland's best friends.

This Academy was located at Port Gibson by the Presbytery in 1877. The Academy has had much easier sailing than its venerable mother on the Gulf hills near Rodney. So the labors of the ancient fathers in our pioneer days are continued in the descendants of 2000 young men and women who studied in the halls of old Oakland. They live also in the splendid





Academy at Port Gibson and in Alcorn University, which for nearly fifty years has been liberally supported by the State of Mississippi.

God lives and God reigns.

OAKLAND COLLEGE SUMMARY

A College for the Presbytery first publicly discussed at Baton Rouge, April, 1829.

Subject discussed by Presbytery in Convention, January, 1830.

Resolution to establish a college adopted by Presbytery in April, 1830.

Board of Trustees appointed and Jeremiah Chamberlain made President, April, 1830.

Donation of 250 acres of land for proposed College by Robert Cochrane, summer, 1830.

On this land first tree felled and ground broken, July 2, 1830.

College opened at Wooly's Mound, May 14, 1830, with three pupils; followed shortly by seven more and by September increased to 32.

College chartered by State of Mississippi, December 3, 1830.

John Chamberlain, Professor of Mathematics at Oakland twenty years.

The College used Bethel Church for its exercises until January 4, 1831, when it moved to the Oakland College grounds proper.

Donation of \$20,000 to Chair of Theology in 1837, donor not known.

First teacher in Theology, Rev. Samuel Beach Jones.

First graduate of College James M. Smylie, in 1833.

College transferred to Synod of Mississippi 1839.

First subscriptions for endowment fund amounted to \$26,048. These subscriptions had increased to \$76,000 in 1837 but were all lost in the financial crash of that year.

Oakland College did active service for 31 years, to wit, from 1830 to 1861, during which period 2,000 students had been in attendance, 200 had graduated, among whom were 17 Presbyterian ministers and several Baptist ministers.

Formally dissolved and buildings sold to the State of Mississippi in January, 1872.

OAKLAND COLLEGE CONCLUDED

We have followed Oakland College through all of its pathetic career. It began like the handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountain. But it developed and grew strong. For thirty years its fruits waved like Lebanon. Its value can never be calculated in this world. Its influence goes across the continent and over all the seas, and it will forever shine as the brightest star in the diadem of the Presbyterian church. Its path was by

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no means a smooth one. It had many splendid patrons, who helped it in every way. They gave their sons and their money and the benefit of their constant presence. They were ready to echo the cry of hundreds "Oakland College must live." But it was impossible for the money investments of the College to remain stable when the finances of the whole state were unstable. It has not indeed been very long since in our own day, that banks all over the country toppled over and were wrecked, north and south, and in that early day all conditions favored an occasional bankruptcy.

In addition, there were some saddening cases of discipline in the college which could not possibly be avoided and these cases always left a sore place. It passed through the preliminary stages of the great outbreak which resulted in the civil war. Political antagonisms were at fever heat and the people in our great republic had not learned the vital lessons of toleration. But through the perseverance of these noble men, the college fought a brave battle and the vital principles which were embodied in it have never been quenched. By it the whole community and the Presbyterian church and the State of Mississippi were wonderfully developed.

As we turn away from the sacred grounds and classic buildings of the old school, let us see first a list of the names of noble men that stood together and worked together in its long struggle.

Her Presidents

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Jeremiah Chamberlain | 4. William L. Breckinridge |
| 2. Robert L. Stanton | 5. Joseph Calvin |
| 3. James Purviance | 6. G. S. Roudebush |

Her Professors

John Chamberlain	A. B. Lawrence	J. E. Wheeler
Joshua Russell	John H. Savage	W. F. V. Bartlett
Samuel V. Marshall	Samuel Black	Robert Price
Samuel Beach Jones	James Black	George Little
John R. Hutchison	W. D. Moore	W. L. Baird
Joseph Stevens	Robert Patterson	W. G. Richardson
J. H. Van Court	J. E. C. Doremus	Thomas Henderson
		George M. Edgar

Directors (Ministers)

Zebulon Butler	James Smylie	William Montgomery
Benjamin Chase	Leroy J. Halsey	Benj. H. Williams
John H. Grey	Isaac J. Henderson	Joseph B. Stratton
	Thomas A. Ogden	

Directors (Not Ministers)

David Hunt	Israel Spencer	Wm. R. McAlpin
William Young	Smith C. Daniel	James Watson
James McGill	John Snodgrass	Dr. Charles B. New
Thos. Henderson	Dr. John Kerr	James Archer





J. E. Broughton
Thomas Freeland
Isaac Ross
Dr. Rush Nutt
John Murdock

Pierce Noland
G. H. Wilcox
Matthew Bolls
William Bisland
Horatio Spencer

George Noland
Abijah Hunt
Samuel H. Lambdin
William Silliman

Summing up the whole we have: Presidents, 6; Trustees, 36; Alumni, 200; Professors, 22; Ministers educated, 17; Students, 2,000.

All this during thirty-six years of toil and battle. Surely this is a splendid record.

The spirit of education which was fostered at Oakland College for all these years has sprung up in the schools of the present day, to-wit: Chamberlain Hunt Academy, Synodical College at Holly Springs, Chickasaw College, French Camp Academy, Belhaven College.

When we see all these schools around us and remember how they have sprung up out of the hearts of the people, we at once go back to the old school on the Gulf hills of Rodney. We think of the unstinted gifts of the people; of the arduous labor of their leaders. Unto death they carried their zeal and all the sons of Mississippi should rise up and call them blessed.

STEPS LEADING TO THE SALE OF OAKLAND COLLEGE

There were many facts that led to the decline and final sale of Oakland College. When the College was located, it was in the right place, close up to the Mississippi River, which was the main highway of travel; close to the heart of the country from which its patronage was to be drawn, away from the usual sources of sickness and the fevers which spread through the South. The place actually chosen was ideal.

But the Civil War came on and the property of the people was swept away. The fine endowment, which was given for its support, was scattered like the clouds before the wind. The old and wealthy supporters of the institution had passed away and a new generation had come to the front. Everybody revered and loved the name of Oakland College but the above facts were stubborn things. Next, a line of railroads, now known as the Illinois Central Railroad, from New Orleans to Chicago, passed through the central part of Mississippi from north to south. It almost destroyed travel by steamboat. Freight and passengers would uniformly take the speedier route. It could not be expected that young men from the eastern counties of the state would travel over the long stretch of country to come to Oakland. Besides, the University of Mississippi had been established at Oxford.

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and was supported by the state, and was independent of any endowment. Then, too, John N. Waddel, the nestor of teachers in the South, descended from a race of teachers, was Chancellor of the State University. He was also a Presbyterian of the finest type and skillful in the management of young men. Along about this time the University of Mississippi was offering free tuition to all the boys of Mississippi.

Oakland College at this time was also heavily in debt and her friends stood watchfully waiting for what would come to pass.

Mr. Alcorn was Governor of the State of Mississippi and he was doing what he could to prevent the threatened mixing of the races at the State University. Something had to be done to meet this issue. The Negroes were largely in the majority in the river counties. As a matter of fact, not long after this time the river counties of the state were formed into a Congressional District, which was known in political circles as the "Shoestring District." It seemed to be the public policy to turn this part of the state over to the control of the blacks. Oakland College was in this district.

So it came to pass in the providence of God that the authorities of Oakland College being pressed beyond measure by some outstanding debts and suffering from want of patronage were getting ready to sell out and move to another place; and Governor Alcorn was getting ready to buy a suitable place to establish a college for the colored race. It was a strange conjuncture of providence. We are therefore not surprised at the following action of the Synod.

At a meeting of the Synod bearing date of December 6, 1871, the following statement was made: "The Synod of Mississippi having been informed by the Board of Trustees of Oakland College of unavoidable circumstances, which compel the sale of the premises, are constrained with profound regret to authorize and direct the sale thereof."

The committee on Oakland College presented their report, which was received and adopted and is as follows:

"The Board of Trustees of Oakland College respectfully report to Synod that the college in the preparatory department and in the Freshman and Sophomore classes was opened during the past year. * * * *"

"The Board would also add that in view of a large debt pressing against the college and the apparent impossibility of reviving it in its present location, as an educational establishment, they have concluded to dispose by sale of the college grounds and buildings.

"Negotiations are now pending for the sale of this property, a proposition having been made by the Board to a committee appointed by the state to purchase it.

"This proposition, offering to sell the college for the sum of \$40,000





(\$30,000 in cash, \$5,000 in twelve months and \$5,000 in 24 months) has been accepted by the state committee, subject however to the approval of the Governor."

W. F. V. Bartlett, Chairman.

This report was submitted to a committee, which later on reported as follows:

"The committee, to whom the report of the Trustees of Oakland College was referred, would report that we have examined the same and we recommend the approval of the report as read to Synod. The sale of the property, having been directed by a previous unanimous vote of the Synod, that part of their report touching said sale is submitted as a part of their report so that it may be recorded as follows:

"That in view of a large debt pressing against the College and the apparent impossibility of reviving it in its present location as an educational establishment they have concluded to dispose by sale of the grounds and buildings. Negotiations are now pending for the sale of the property, a proposition having been made by the Board to a Committee appointed by the state to purchase it, offering to sell the college for \$40,000 (\$30,000 in cash, \$5,000 in twelve months and \$5,000 in twenty-four months), which proposition has been accepted by the State Committee subject to the approval of the Governor. Your committee recommends the election of the following trustees:

Rev. Robert Price
Rev. John Hunter, D. D.
Rev. A. H. Barkely

Rev. C. M. Atkinson
Thomas E. Helm
James Archer."

The standing committee on Oakland College having been appointed, in due time made its report.

Aberdeen, Mississippi, November, 1872.

"The Committee on Oakland College, to whom was referred the above report of the Board of Trustees of that Institution, would respectfully recommend that said report be approved and spread on the Minutes of Synod as containing an exhibit of the sale, settlement of claims and present assets of present Institution.

"We recommend also that the Board of Trustees obtain legal opinion

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as to the remaining assets of the Institution and the exact measure and control, which the Synod has over them, with instructions to report at the next meeting of Synod.

"That the Board of Trustees be directed to make suitable investments of funds on hand and funds to accrue, the Committee being subject to the call of the Board of Trustees at next meeting of Synod; all of which is respectfully submitted.

S. R. Friarson, Chairman;
R. Q. Mallard,
S. S. Brown,
J. F. Chester,
J. M. Johnston,

Committee.

