

ROANOKE BIBLE COLLEGE:
THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

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William Albert Griffin

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Chapter 1

HISTORICAL MILIEU FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COLLEGE

Although Roanoke Bible College officially began in September, 1948, its history began long before that natal day. Hence, no understanding of the college can be gained until one has first traced that current of men and events that led to Monday, September 13, 1948, when the first school year began.

In order to trace this current, one starts with the introduction of the principles of the Restoration Movement into eastern North Carolina and follows this through the growth among the Baptists and eventually into the vigorous Roanoke District of the Churches of Christ.

The current continues with the establishment of Atlantic Christian College for the training of a leadership. Liberalism wrested this school from Bible-believing Christians and also brought division within the ranks of the Roanoke District. In that majority of congregations that stayed with the Roanoke District, a scarcity of preachers developed; several attempts were made to fill this need with preacher-training schools. All of these schools were short lived.

The Roanoke District then brought to the area a man pre-eminently qualified to establish a successful school. George BonDurant, who came as Roanoke District Evangelist in 1948, and his wife Sarah had founded Atlanta Christian College after four earlier unsuccessful attempts to establish a Bible college in Georgia. To understand Roanoke, one must have a knowledge of the background of this couple.

Finally, one needs to see BonDurant's work as District evangelist and the birth of a plan to start a Bible college in Elizabeth City with the subsequent break this brought with leaders of the Roanoke District.

When one has traced this current of men and events, he then is at a point that he can understand the history of Roanoke Bible College.

Roanoke Bible College is a part of the Restoration Movement, an effort begun in the early years of the nineteenth century to restore unity to a divided Christendom by a return to the Scriptures as the norm. This movement began on the frontier of America at the time: western Pennsylvania and middle Kentucky. Hence, the ideas of a restoration were carried west as the nation expanded in that direction. Only slowly did the ideas penetrate back east.¹

Tracing the beginnings of the Restoration Movement in North Carolina is not an easy task. C. C. Ware in his North Carolina Disciples of Christ labors with the task extensively, yet leaves the reader somewhat perplexed as to exact beginnings. Ware makes no mention of the work of James O'Kelly.² He does record that ministers of the Christian Connection, O'Kelly's movement, were welcomed "joyfully" as messengers by the Free Will Conference of 1829, as recorded in the minutes of that meeting, "the earliest such records accessible."³ Between 1831 and 1836, the Bethel Free Will Conference of North Carolina slowly moved to the Restoration position. In 1829, a motion to require all their ministers to confess

¹Anyone unfamiliar with the history and principles of the Restoration Movement should consult James D. Murch, Christians Only (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1962).

²See Murch, pp. 32, 33.

³C. C. Ware, North Carolina Disciples of Christ (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1927), p. 91.

their adherence to Free Will Baptist principles and practices lost overwhelmingly. Two years later the Free Will Baptist designation was dropped from the name of the conference.⁴ At their annual conference in 1844, they proposed "a convention for the purpose of effecting union between Churches of Christ represented in this conference, and such other churches of Christ as are willing to unite on 'the Faith once delivered to the Saints.'"⁵

Another such group of churches was the union meeting of the Disciples of Christ. In 1831, representatives from five Baptist churches of the Neuse and Kehukee associations met at Little Sister Church, near Kinston, in what one of North Carolina's earliest Restoration editors called "the earliest general meeting of Disciples in North Carolina."⁶ In 1833, three of the delegates at this meeting were excluded from their pulpits by the Neuse Association because they "have embraced, and are now in the habit of preaching, doctrines which are deemed not only heretical, but subversive of the peace and best interests of our Church, viz.: the fundamental views of a certain Mr. Campbell" ⁷ The same year, the Kehukee Association struck two of the churches from their list and resolved to "disapprove the conduct" of some of the members of a third.⁸ The problem in the Kehukee Association was the opposition by some to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, especially its predestination and foreordination. General William Clark, one of those excluded

⁴Ware, p. 92. ⁵Ware, p. 93.

⁶Ware, p. 86, quoting J. T. Walsh. ⁷Ware, p. 87.

⁸Ware, p. 83.

from the pulpits in the Neuse and a leader in the congregations in the Kehukee that were stricken, was a reader of Alexander Campbell's periodical, Millennial Harbinger.⁹ Yet, he wrote in 1851 that he had reached the conclusions on his own, adopting the Bible as "being alone sufficient for Christians," and although he had been accused of being a Campbellite, he said, "This was not true, for we did not know what you [Alexander Campbell] taught."¹⁰

Representatives from the Union Meeting of the Disciples of Christ and from the Bethel Conference met at Hookerton May 2, 1846, and agreed "in order to the conversion of the world to pure and undefiled religion" that they would unite and form one body, meeting annually, to be known as The Bethel Conference and Union Meeting of the Disciples of Christ. They were to have no rule of faith and practice except the Bible and claim no name except Christians or Disciples of Christ and the churches were to be known as Churches of Christ.¹¹ Each congregation, then, was to ratify these actions in order to make them valid. There were now 30 congregations, totalling 1859 members, with 26 preachers. The churches were located in twelve counties: Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Greene, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Pamlico, Pitt, and Sampson.¹²

None of these congregations was north of the Albemarle Sound. Dr. B. F. Hall, who had been converted by reading the Campbell-McGalla debate, became minister of the Edenton Baptist Church in the summer of 1833. In the fall, he invited Thomas Campbell to return home with him from a meeting in Richmond, Virginia. Campbell preached for the church,

⁹Ware, p. 86. ¹⁰Ware, p. 89. ¹¹Ware, p. 94.

¹²Ware, p. 96.

and stayed in Edenton for three months. He was attacked mercilessly by the former minister, Thomas Meredith, who was also editor of the first Baptist paper in the state, Biblical Interpreter.¹³ Meredith led the actions of the Yeopim Union Meeting to exclude the Disciple adherents in Edenton from "all privileges, responsibilities, and relations of the union meeting." Meredith also recommended the passing of their resolutions to guard their members against the "Campbellites."¹⁴

In a few years, however, Meredith's position on baptism for the remission of sins began to bend toward Campbell's. Historian Ware believes that Meredith's progressiveness "averted much potential defection to the Disciples from the Baptists in North Carolina."¹⁵ Thomas Waff, who had housed Thomas Campbell in Edenton, became a preacher for the Chowan Baptist Association. Quinton H. Trotman, most influential of their preachers and their leading evangelist, preached baptism "for the remission of sins with all the clarity and emphasis of the Disciples."¹⁶ The 1849 annual meeting of the Bethel Conference and Union appointed two delegates to represent the body at the Chowan Association. At the same meeting, the Disciples, in response to an appeal by Dr. Wheeler for support for the new girls' school at Murfreesboro, provided two trustees for this Baptist school, and invited Dr. Wheeler to visit Disciple churches to solicit support for it.¹⁷ This friendly exchange continued for five or six years, until some Baptists became worried. The Biblical Recorder began to attack fraternity between the two groups, and the Christians returned in kind. One Baptist wrote in 1859: "I believe it is the established

¹³Later called Baptist Recorder. ¹⁴Ware, pp. 57-64.

¹⁵Ware, p. 75. ¹⁶Ware, p. 99. ¹⁷Ware, p. 99.

belief of Baptists generally, in North Carolina, and probably in Virginia, that the Chowan Baptist Association ministers, are in the main, Campbellites."¹⁸ At the Chowan meeting in May, 1859, a reaction was forced. They voted to acknowledge the original articles of faith under which they had been founded. Thus, there died the Disciple movement north of the Albemarle Sound.¹⁹

Over twenty years later, in the 1880's, evangelists came to Perquimans and Currituck counties. Congregations were established during that decade at Powell's Point, Bethlehem, and Berea.²⁰ The following decade, a Disciple evangelist said of Elizabeth City, "There is no more important point among us for the building of a church than this one,"²¹ but it was not until 1919 that a congregation was established there.²²

Early leadership in these congregations was furnished largely by uneducated men.²³ To train leadership for the congregations, Atlantic Christian College in Wilson enrolled its first students on September 3, 1902.²⁴ Although this was the culmination of a number of private efforts of Disciples in North Carolina, it was the first collective effort and resulted from work of The North Carolina Missionary Convention. As early as 1856, one leader had moved that "it be recommended to the churches of this body, the propriety and importance of educating pious young men for

¹⁸Ware, p. 100. ¹⁹Ware, p. 101.

²⁰C. C. Ware, Albemarle Annals (Wilson, N. C.: Privately published, 1961), pp. 17, 18, 78.

²¹Ware, Albemarle Annals, p. 29. ²²Ware, Albemarle Annals, p. 101.

²³Ware, North Carolina Disciples, pp. 157, 282; also see in same book, "Memories of Past Leaders," pp. 281-350.

²⁴C. C. Ware, A History of Atlantic Christian College (Wilson, N. C.: Atlantic Christian College, 1956), p. 77.

the Gospel Ministry."²⁵ An English visitor to the state had written in 1899:

It takes intelligence to be a Disciple. An educated and paid ministry is the crying need of the churches of the south. It is truly pitiful to hear the average sermon. Sickly sentiment, pious platitudes, senseless superstition, glittering generality, superfluous sound are its chief constituents. Nothing but the schoolmaster can remove such conditions.²⁶

A North Carolina evangelist wrote three years later: "Too long have we neglected the things that make for prestige and power in intellectual culture among us as a people in North Carolina. Agitate, agitate, until the Disciples are the peers and leaders of intellectual force in North Carolina."²⁷ Atlantic Christian College was begun to change this condition.

As most of the people in the Restoration Movement in North Carolina had a Baptist background, they were accustomed to regular union meetings. Quite logically they formed associations of themselves after departing from the Baptists. In 1885, the Disciples' State Convention projected seven districts, two of which were Old Ford and Albemarle. These two districts merged in November, 1891, at Old Ford into the Roanoke Union.²⁸

The Roanoke District of the Churches of Christ (as the Roanoke Union was later called) became a potent force for the Restoration

²⁵Ware, North Carolina Disciples, pp. 157, 158.

²⁶Ware, Atlantic Christian College, p. 83, quoting Claris Yeuell, The Christian-Evangelist, 1899, p. 244.

²⁷Ware, Atlantic Christian College, p. 82, quoting J. L. Burns, The Watch Tower, February 13, 1902, p. 4.

²⁸Ware, Albemarle Annals, p. 4.

Movement in northeastern North Carolina. In 1939, B. F. Leggett, Sr., was elected president; Clarence Gurkin, vice president; and W. O. Ellis continued as secretary-treasurer. This slate of officers brought life into the District's work.²⁹ President Leggett began publishing the Gospel Light in March, 1940, to keep the people of the District aware of activities of the convention as well as the local congregations. The Evangelizing Committee heard requests from struggling churches and made recommendations to the Convention for financial support for ministers for these congregations. Missionary support was encouraged. In March, 1941, forty-two of the fifty-six churches of the District were represented at the Rosemary Convention.³⁰ In August, 1944, Miss Lyda Respass began a regular column in the monthly paper concerning various missionaries.³¹ In February, 1945, Harry Poll and Mildred Welshimer held a week of Bible School and Youth Rallies in churches in the area.³² These all-day meetings, held at a different congregation each day, resulted in the establishment of Roanoke Christian Service Camp in the summer of 1945.³³

The fifth Saturday and Sunday meetings of the Roanoke District afforded opportunities for outstanding preaching and fellowship. There would be two sermons on Saturday and two on Sunday³⁴ interspersed with

²⁹Memories of Clarence Gurkin in a personal interview, Williams-
ton, North Carolina, May 30, 1978.

³⁰Gospel Light, April, 1941, p. 2.

³¹Gospel Light, August, 1944, p. 3.

³²Gospel Light, February, 1945, pp. 1, 4, 5.

³³First mention of this camp, Gospel Light, April, 1945, p. 1; see also, Gospel Light, June, 1945, p. 1; Gospel Light, July, 1945, p. 4.

³⁴Later, the Sunday afternoon program was given over to a youth session; see Gospel Light, March, 1946, p. 4.

numerous musical specials and a small amount of business. The host church would serve the noon meal each day. When the convention reached its peak of attendance in the late 1940's, it was estimated that attendance may have reached as high as three to four thousand people for the Sunday morning service. Of course, no church building could hold that many; so there were often two or three services held simultaneously in and around the church building.³⁵

In November, 1947, the District president appointed a Bible School Chairman for each of five areas in the District. This chairman was to "have meetings, arrange a program of an inspirational nature, urging all Bible School leaders and workers to participate."³⁶ In January announcement was made of the first area Bible school conventions to be held that month.³⁷

During this period the convention was helping as many as twelve congregations with salaries for ministers.³⁸ But the Evangelizing Committee envisioned even greater work with the employment of a District Evangelist. In March, 1946, they called Harvey Bream, Sr., to be the first evangelist for the Roanoke District.³⁹

³⁵Gurkin interview; see also, Gospel Light, November, 1948, p. 2; Gospel Light, June, 1948, p. 2.

³⁶Gospel Light, December, 1947, p. 5.

³⁷Gospel Light, January, 1948, p. 1; they are mentioned again in March (Gospel Light, March, 1946, p. 2) and June (Gospel Light, June, 1946, p. 3).

³⁸Gurkin interview.

³⁹Gospel Light, April, 1946, p. 8; Aldis Webb had earlier been asked, but he had already accepted a position with Johnson Bible College; he did, however, work for a month during the summer of 1945, Gospel Light, August, 1945, p. 5.

The first mention of the coming of Bream in the Gospel Light stated that his task was "to build up new churches, and help make the weak churches strong and the strong churches stronger."⁴⁰ The following month, his services were offered to "help with problems, securing minister or otherwise."⁴¹ When he arrived in May, he began a revival at Philippi, followed by one at Scuppermong. During this time, he also led in the re-opening of the Cross Landing congregation near Columbia. After a revival at Edenton, Bream worked in the camp, and then held three more revivals.⁴²

In November, Bream began a revival in Hamilton toward organizing a congregation there. Large delegations from sister congregations helped the attendance; already plans had been laid for a building.⁴³ The congregation was actually organized on November 21.⁴⁴ Attendance at church was over fifty in February.⁴⁵ The cornerstone was laid on April 20,⁴⁶ and the building was dedicated on August 31.⁴⁷ In July the church had called D. A. Hudson as minister,⁴⁸ and by September the membership had grown to sixty.⁴⁹

⁴⁰Gospel Light, August, 1946, p. 8.

⁴¹Gospel Light, May, 1946, p. 2.

⁴²Gospel Light, July, 1946, p. 7.

⁴³Gospel Light, November, 1946, p. 5.

⁴⁴Gospel Light, December, 1946, p. 5.

⁴⁵Gospel Light, February, 1947, p. 4.

⁴⁶Gospel Light, May, 1947, p. 2.

⁴⁷Gospel Light, August, 1947, p. 5; Gospel Light, September, 1947, p. 5.

⁴⁸Gospel Light, August, 1947, p. 2.

⁴⁹Gospel Light, September, 1948, p. 8.

Despite all of these good reports of the work of the Roanoke District, all had "not been well in Zion." The problem of liberalism that began plaguing the Restoration Movement on the national scene was felt also eventually in eastern North Carolina.

On the national scene, the Disciples Divinity House, a graduate school of theology for the Restoration Movement, was established at the liberal University of Chicago in 1894 with Herbert L. Willett, a wholehearted liberal, as dean. In 1901, a liberal, Restoration-oriented organ, Christian Century, was begun; in 1911 this paper openly advocated "open membership," the receiving of the pious unimmersed into congregations.⁵⁰

J. W. McGarvey died in 1911, and an all-out attack was made on his school, College of the Bible, by the liberals. So successful were the liberals that on March 31, 1917, Christian Standard carried a long list of liberal teachings from the school; the investigation of the College of the Bible staff that followed exonerated them. As a result, McGarvey Bible College and Cincinnati Bible Institute opened in 1923 to train a ministry for the conservative congregations.

The controversy also raged on the mission fields. Charges of promoting open membership in China and the Philippines brought stormy annual meetings of the national conventions of Disciples. However, each time that it seemed that conservatives had adopted measures to check the liberalism, some loophole permitted its continuation. In the meantime, the liberals had pushed through the merger of the various mission agencies into one association, the United Christian Missionary Society.

⁵⁰For a more detailed account of the conservative-liberal controversy, see Murch, pp. 223-262, or Winfred E. Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1948), pp. 414-446.

Some missionaries were so greatly disturbed that they withdrew from the old agencies and became "independent," direct-support missionaries. The Christian Restoration Association was formed to assist them. Many of the conservatives refused to attend any more of the national conventions and formed their own North American Christian Convention.

One of the earliest problems in North Carolina arose over a new president for Atlantic Christian College. When Dr. Raymond A. Smith was called in 1916, a controversy ensued over his orthodoxy with some stating that he favored higher criticism. Although a resolution which was adopted unanimously by Disciple ministers in May and signed by some very conservative ministers was published in The Watch Tower, the editor still questioned Smith's orthodoxy.⁵¹ Three years later this editor continued to raise the issue.⁵²

Some began losing confidence in the school. Mrs. Julia Dunbar in the 1920's began trying to tell people in Hyde and Beaufort counties that Atlantic Christian was liberal and that they should stop their support.⁵³ Mrs. Z. V. Whealton of Mesic refused to send her daughters there as she had earlier planned when she became aware of the apostasy in the 1920's.⁵⁴ Others chose to attend Carolina Institute and Bible Seminary.⁵⁵

In 1918, the District Convention meeting at Mt. Pleasant, Greenville, protested the teaching of "German rationalism, evolution, and

⁵¹The Watch Tower, May 9, 1916, pp. 1, 2.

⁵²The Watch Tower, August 9, 1919, p. 1. See Ware's treatment in Ware, Atlantic Christian College, pp. 117-121.

⁵³Mrs. Dunbar was the author's maternal grandmother; his mother, Lucille D. Griffin, has told him this many times.

⁵⁴Letter of Mrs. Z. V. Whealton to author, June 3, 1978.

⁵⁵See below, p. 19.

'science falsely so called'" at the College of the Bible, affirmed a strong doctrinal stance, and opposed the use of funds to support any school "of which there is the least suspicion that any favor, or teach, anything contrary to the declaration of the Holy Scriptures."⁵⁶ A year and a half later, the Hyde Union (Roanoke's sister to the east) protested the involvement of the Disciples in the Interchurch World Movement and resolved: "That we recognize no apportionment imposed upon us by any board or society . . . until they have fully assured us that they will in nowise co-operate with any of the sectarian bodies"⁵⁷

In 1920, a new paper, the official organ of the North Carolina Christian Missionary Convention, the North Carolina Christian, appeared.⁵⁸ Shortly thereafter, The Watch Tower was complaining that no state news was being sent to the older paper by the state secretary.⁵⁹ This older paper stated in December, 1923, that the North Carolina Disciples were then divided;⁶⁰ and almost a year later, the editor was calling for Roanoke District funds not to be used for the "North Carolina Christian Convention, the college, and the United Society" because it was known "that many things, being taught in the institutions of learning, preached from scores of pulpits in this country and on the foreign field, are entirely contradictory of the New Testament teaching." He suggested that if others wanted to support such work, "let them, if they so desire, have

⁵⁶Christian Standard, October 19, 1918, p. 6.

⁵⁷Christian Standard, June 19, 1920, p. 32.

⁵⁸Volume 1, Number 1 is dated February, 1920.

⁵⁹The Watch Tower.

⁶⁰The Watch Tower, December 5, 1923, p. 4.

another organization, and do the work that suits them."⁶¹

In 1928, C. C. Ware, State Secretary, however, assured the State Convention that there was "no compromise" in North Carolina, and the Christian Standard representative reporting the convention made no comment to contradict his statement.⁶² However, the next year, Stephen J. Corey was one of the speakers at the Convention and his message was very "interdenominational" in the words of the Standard reporter who nevertheless praised Ware.⁶³ The following year, John Barclay, minister at Kinston, spoke at the youth banquet of the Convention and seemed to favor open membership.⁶⁴

Two major steps were taken at the 1931 Convention. C. J. Sharp filed the following report concerning the decision reached over the problem of choosing a minister:

. . . the convention is to appoint an ordination and examination board of three men who were to examine, pass on and recommend or reject, any one seeking a ministry in the State. Naturally, there was a difference of opinion as to the wisdom of such a step for fear of the precedent and an incipient ecclesiasticism.

The second measure dealt with changing the charter of Atlantic Christian College. Mr. Sharp wrote:

. . . making it possible to add to the twenty-four trustees, who are and must be members of the Christian Churches, the names of three who would not be members of Christian Churches. It was frankly admitted that it was for the purpose of securing money, and naturally aroused earnest discussion.⁶⁵

⁶¹The Watch Tower, October 22, 1924, p. 4.

⁶²Christian Standard, December 22, 1928, p. 17.

⁶³Christian Standard, December 7, 1924, pp. 16, 17.

⁶⁴Christian Standard, November 22, 1930, p. 18.

⁶⁵Christian Standard, November 28, 1931, pp. 1, 8.

The 1938 State Convention, meeting at one of the Roanoke District Churches, First Christian in Washington, had Herbert L. Willett as one of the speakers. Among a number of other very liberal statements, he said that Ruth, Esther, and Jonah were "little books of fiction that teach certain truths," and that Revelation predicted the destruction of Rome which did not occur.⁶⁶ Four years later when the State Convention was again to meet at that church, the Gospel Light, the editor of which was a member of the congregation, carried the following announcement:

The pastor and church expect to see to it that we don't have an episode in this Convention as was in the last one here. There was only a small group in the Washington Church that acquiesce in such stuff. The influence of the "Old School" still has its weight in the lives of its membership.⁶⁷

However, the "Old School" was not sufficiently weighty in a number of the congregations of the Roanoke District; these congregations determined to follow the suggestion earlier made by the editor of The Watch Tower and start their own organization. Thus a "voluntary Steering Committee within the Roanoke Union" unanimously petitioned the State Board of Managers to grant a new designation to the area as the Albemarle Christian Missionary Union in November, 1945. C. C. Ware, who wrote a history of the churches of the area, stated:

From their [Roanoke Conventions] start several decades before this, there had been invariably an open forum for such presentations of the brotherhood's missionary program at home and abroad as was generally felt to be expedient, sponsored always by the established state services. Yet in the meetings cited above [Conventions of 1944 and 1945] the drift of exclusiveness toward such programming reached an extreme toward both personnel and policy.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Christian Standard, December 8, 1938, p. 19.

⁶⁷Gospel Light, March, 1942, p. 2.

⁶⁸Ware, Albemarle Annals, p. 5.

J. M. Perry, minister at Robersonville, explained the need for the Albemarle Union in these words:

. . . . The Roanoke, starting in 1890, was long a cooperative brotherhood work. Then non-cooperative men floated in from other states. These took the ear of our uninformed folk and with the assistance of some native malcontents, they are systematically trying to destroy our Christian brotherhood built up by faithful leaders through long years of prayerful and sacrificial toil. This is more than we can stand.

. . . . These irresponsible men who breeze into our areas, known for their destructive spirit, building independent churches, and breeding suspicion and hate, we do not countenance. This fighting clique, which would kill our brotherhood for their selfish gain, we will withstand to the face. We humbly count it our service to God to bring them to judgment, prayerfully considering ourselves lest we also be tempted.⁶⁹

Of the sixty-six churches listed in the Albemarle Union, only eighteen of them actually participated in the new organization. The remaining ones continued in the Roanoke District and Hyde Union. The North Carolina Christian, in its quarterly listing of district conventions, did not list Roanoke any more after September, 1945, although it continued listing Hyde.

The following year, Raleigh L. Topping was summoned for trial for ordaining a young man who had not been approved by the State's Committee. Henry Speight had asked Topping to ordain him at the Mount Pleasant Church; Topping agreed, and the ordination was scheduled. Just before the ordination was to begin, C. C. Ware arrived and cautioned Topping not to proceed. However, Topping stated he had interviewed the candidate and planned to continue; he even called on Ware for the ordination prayer. Three months later he received a letter from three men appointed by the state president to hear his case summoning him to meet them at Rocky Mount.

⁶⁹Letter, dated May 22, 1947, in Gospel Light, June, 1947, p. 6.

Topping presented the committee with ten mimeographed questions, showing that the Scriptures set up no such machinery for ordination as the State Convention demanded. The committee reported that the ordination had been conducted irregularly according to the convention, but they requested permission to make recommendations to the convention in November.⁷⁰ Their recommendations called for a revising of the constitution to bring it into harmony with the Scriptures.⁷¹

Speight had attended Atlantic Christian College "about a year and a half and became dissatisfied with his course."⁷² About this same time, considerable discussions and differences of opinion concerning what was being taught at Atlantic caused Fred L. Voliva of Belhaven to arrange a meeting between leaders of the Roanoke and Hyde conventions and John Waters, Bible teacher at Atlantic Christian. At this meeting, held at First Christian Church, Washington, in 1944 or 1945, Waters was asked about his faith. Those who were there remembered him saying that he believed that Christ was the son of God and the rest was not anybody's business including what he believed about the Bible as the inspired word of God. He was also angry that he had driven from Wilson to answer that question. This meeting brought to an end the relationship between most of the churches of these two conventions and Atlantic Christian College.⁷³

⁷⁰ Christian Standard, October 19, 1946, pp. 5, 6. In a personal interview with Raleigh L. Topping, Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, June 4, 1978, he reminisced that John Waters stated during the trial, "We called Raleigh for trial and he has put us on trial."

⁷¹ The complete report to the Board of Managers is in Gospel Light, November, 1946, pp. 4, 5.

⁷² Gospel Light, May, 1945, p. 2.

⁷³ Letter from Marvin R. Rose to author, June 7, 1978. Rose

Atlantic Christian College was producing few preachers, even if they had been acceptable to the majority of the churches in eastern North Carolina. Only thirty ministers graduated in the first twenty-seven years of the college.⁷⁴ In the freshman classes of 1944 and 1945, there were only four each year who planned to "devote themselves to Christian service."⁷⁵ In 1947, with a total enrollment of 475, only 30 were in the ministerial department.⁷⁶ Only four ministers graduated in 1947.⁷⁷

Because of the definite need for ministers, other attempts toward training them had been made in eastern North Carolina.⁷⁸ In 1907, John W. Tyndall, Sr., opened the Industrial Christian School at Dawson, eight miles from Kinston, to be "run somewhat after the order of Ashley S. Johnson's school at Kimberlin Heights, Tennessee." He thought it would "in no way interfere with Atlantic Christian College"; rather, he believed he was securing a class of students that would not be reached by that

attended the meeting with his father, Ernest Rose. He also remembered B. F. Leggett, Sr., W. T. Adams, and F. J. Butler among the approximately twenty-five there. R. L. Topping stated in Topping interview that he was present. Letter from Mrs. R. H. Shavender to author, dated June 16, 1977, stated her husband and G. Delma Ross, Sr., were present. Author remembers being told on numerous occasions by Joe C. Bishop of Scranton, who was also in attendance, the same basic report as given by others cited.

⁷⁴Ware, Atlantic Christian College, p. 151.

⁷⁵North Carolina Christian, October, 1944, p. 6; North Carolina Christian, September, 1945, p. 6.

⁷⁶North Carolina Christian, February, 1947, p. 6. In a picture of the ministerial group, nine of the twenty-nine pictured were girls, North Carolina Christian, April, 1947, p. 1.

⁷⁷North Carolina Christian, July, 1947, p. 6.

⁷⁸There was also an attempt in Norfolk, Virginia, by Dennis Myers that continued as long as he lived--"a tent-makers' school"--by which he trained men while they were still working in other occupations and they continued to work these jobs and preach in addition.

college."⁷⁹ Tyndall stayed with the school until 1914;⁸⁰ he was succeeded by J. M. Perry, 1914-1916, while it was known as the Industrial School and Music Academy; J. A. Saunders was president, 1916-1929, with the name Carolina Institute and Bible Seminary.⁸¹

Although this school may have originally been started for students of a different class, at least during the presidency of Saunders it became an alternative to the liberalism of Atlantic Christian College. Bryan Gray, a student in 1922, states he went to Carolina Insitute because Atlantic Christian was "too soft" in the fundamentals of the faith.⁸² Leo Henries, a student who also taught music in 1923 and 1924, also stated that was the reason he chose to attend Christian Institute.⁸³ President Saunders stated in a report in 1923 that his school was being attacked by the organization;⁸⁴ and in 1926 he urged parents to send their children to "a school where there is no question as to orthodoxy and where fundamentals are emphasized."⁸⁵

⁷⁹Christian Standard, February 2, 1907, p. 45. See also Appendix A.

⁸⁰Raleigh Topping stated in Topping interview that he was a student there in 1911, 1912. He remembered about seventy-five students and three buildings: boys' dormitory, girls' dormitory, and classroom building.

⁸¹Ware, Atlantic Christian College, p. 98.

⁸²Personal interview with Bryan Gray, Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, May 23, 1978. He remembers that there were between eighty and one hundred students at the time.

⁸³Telephone interview with H. Leo Henries, Bayboro, North Carolina, June 5, 1978. He remembers two frame buildings: boys' dormitory with classrooms on first floor and girls' dormitory with dining hall on first floor. When he returned from the west coast in the late 1940's, all buildings were gone.

⁸⁴The Watch Tower, December 19, 1923, pp. 1, 5.

⁸⁵The Watch Tower, March 10, 1926, p. 5.

Tyndall also planned a branch school at Acre Station in Beaufort County.⁸⁶ In October, 1910, Henry A. Bowen gave the Industrial Christian College, Inc., eleven and one-half acres and sold to them thirty-four acres.⁸⁷ James Cutler sold them fifty-eight adjoining acres.⁸⁸ Tyndall planned a development around his campus, divided out lots, and laid off streets.⁸⁹ On this property, five miles north of Acre Station, he began a building to house his school. However, insufficient funds caused him to abandon the project before the building was ever finished, and no classes were ever taught there.⁹⁰

Perry F. Baldwin, who had become minister at Philippi, Scuppernong, Albemarle, and Columbia a year earlier,⁹¹ began Carolina Bible

⁸⁶Ware, Atlantic Christian College, p. 98.

⁸⁷Washington County Deeds, Book 61, p. 2.

⁸⁸Washington County Deeds, Book 61, p. 1.

⁸⁹See Appendix B.

⁹⁰Telephone interview with Wilmer Bowen, Plymouth, North Carolina, May 31, 1978. Bowen is the son of Henry A. Bowen; he remembers that Tyndall stayed in their home when he came there to oversee the building and the planned development. Tyndall sold a number of the lots, and the elder Bowen bought most of them back with younger Bowen buying the remainder after his father's death. The younger Bowen now lives next to where the building stood, 2.9 miles south of the Washington-Beaufort County line on the east side of Highway 32. He remembers that the building was weather boarded, but the roof was not put on, nor were windows installed. The building eventually rotted down. Mrs. Phenie Respass (Personal Interview with Henry Harris, Plymouth, North Carolina, May 29, 1978, who called Mrs. Respass) remembers that the building was erected in 1914; she thinks that people stopped giving to the project when a problem arose with Tyndall over control of the property; however, Bowen does not remember any such disagreement. (Mrs. Respass was born in 1900; Mr. Bowen, in 1900.) Mrs. Respass must be at least one year off concerning the date of the building; for Henry A. Bowen rebought the campus section of the property in February, 1914 (Beaufort County Deeds, Book 180, p. 508). This author has been unable to determine when Tyndall left eastern North Carolina; he started Cincinnati Bible Institute in 1923 (Christian Standard, August 4, 1923, pp. 3, 4).

⁹¹Gospel Light, January, 1944, p. 5.

Institute, a correspondence school at Creswell, in January 1, 1945.⁹² Baldwin hoped to train elders and deacons in his school,⁹³ but he also envisioned training ministers⁹⁴ and had three enrolled in the ministerial group in his total twenty-two students in February.⁹⁵ However, Baldwin moved to Norfolk for the summer, and moved to Texas in the fall.⁹⁶

Therefore, of the three attempts to train ministers in eastern North Carolina, only one, the school at Kinston, had really been successful. And, this school did not operate after 1929. The preacher shortage in eastern North Carolina was drastic. The 1948 Yearbook listed for the area nine preachers that had three or more churches.⁹⁷ One of these preachers was Raleigh Topping who stated in 1945 that he was preaching for ten churches at that time.⁹⁸ The following year, he was still preaching for nine.⁹⁹ Preston Cayton stated he was preaching for six churches

⁹²Gospel Light, January, 1945, p. 2; see also Restoration Herald, September, 1977, p. 23, where it is called Christian Bible Institute; the school was also called Correspondence Bible Institute, see Christian Standard, September 3, 1949, p. 2.

⁹³Gospel Light, January, 1945, p. 2.

⁹⁴Gospel Light, June, 1945, p. 7.

⁹⁵Letter of P. F. Baldwin to Joseph A. Brickhouse, Sr., February 22, 1945, a copy of which is in files of author.

⁹⁶Gospel Light, September, 1945, p. 1.

⁹⁷1948 Yearbook of International Convention of Disciples of Christ (Indianapolis: International Convention of Disciples of Christ, 1948), pp. 530-539.

⁹⁸North Carolina Christian, February, 1945, p. 4: Mt. Pleasant (Pitt), Wilbanks, Athens Chapel, Woodards Pond, Everetts Schoolhouse, Union Grove, West Belhaven, Bath, St. Clairs, and Gaston.

⁹⁹North Carolina Christian, May, 1945, p. 3.

in 1945.¹⁰⁰ The 1948 Yearbook also listed twenty-one congregations without a minister;¹⁰¹ so, undoubtedly, some of these men were preaching for more churches than listed.

Response from thirty-seven congregations to a survey taken in 1977 which asked them how often they had preaching in 1948 revealed the following: eighteen stated they had preaching one Sunday a month; sixteen, two Sundays a month; and only three stated every Sunday.¹⁰² As can be easily inferred from statements made by Topping and Cayton, some of these churches just had preaching on Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon, Sunday night, or even just Saturday night.¹⁰³

All of the time, calls were being made for more preachers. Bream, in one of his first meetings with leaders after he became Roanoke District Evangelist, pleaded for two things: 1) bring in more ministers, 2) provide parsonages.¹⁰⁴ In the January, 1948, Gospel Light, Garland Bland, who had just become half-time preacher for two churches rather than quarter-time for four churches,¹⁰⁵ made an impassioned plea for every church to

¹⁰⁰ Ware, Albemarle Annals, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ 1948 Yearbook, pp. 530-539.

¹⁰² Survey made by the author, questionnaires are in his possession. The three churches with full-time preaching were First Christian Church and East Tenth Street Church of Christ, Roanoke Rapids, and Elizabeth City Church of Christ.

¹⁰³ Memories of many in the area, including the author, can also substantiate this statement. Raleigh Topping, in Topping interview, stated he preached at three churches on a Sunday. As he preached the same sermon at each church, his sons who drove him stated they could preach the sermon by the time they heard it at the last church.

¹⁰⁴ Gospel Light, August, 1946. p. 6.

¹⁰⁵ Gospel Light, December, 1947, p. 8.

go full-time.¹⁰⁶ D. A. Hudson in the same paper made the same plea.¹⁰⁷

A college was needed in the area to train ministers.¹⁰⁸ Upon the resignation of Bream in 1947, the second evangelist to come to the Roanoke District was the man who would start the school to supply those needed preachers.

George William BonDurant was the son of staunch leaders in the Restoration Movement, William W. and Helen Lawrence BonDurant. William and his brother and sister, pioneer settlers of Mt. Rainier, Maryland, started a Bible school in their home in 1902 which consummated in 1904 in the Mt. Rainier Christian Church.¹⁰⁹ When George graduated from McKinley High School, Washington, District of Columbia, in 1933, he was admitted to Columbia University for the following fall. His mother was concerned over her son's losing his faith in that center of liberalism and expressed her anxiety to Dr. Zoena Rothermel, at that time on one of her rare furloughs from the mission field in India. Dr. Rothermel suggested that Mrs. BonDurant send her son to Erieside Christian Service Camp, Willoughby, Ohio. Although Mrs. BonDurant wanted Erieside to help solidify her son's beliefs, she warned him not to be overcome by emotionalism and decide to become a minister while there.¹¹⁰

Mrs. BonDurant's efforts were well rewarded for her son had a

¹⁰⁶Gospel Light, January, 1948, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷Gospel Light, January, 1948, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸Letter of B. F. Leggett, Sr., to George W. BonDurant, July 5, 1948, stated that the leaders of the Roanoke District had recognized this need for some time.

¹⁰⁹The Roanoke Messenger, January, 1967, p. 3.

¹¹⁰Personal interview with George W. BonDurant, May 22, 1978.

class under Glenn Gates Cole on science and the Bible, and he later credited this with saving his convictions while at Columbia. Also, he was not overwhelmed by emotionalism into becoming a minister. This decision was to come the following December, after considerable deliberation. He worshipped with the Maspeth congregation while attending Columbia; the co-minister, Ella Robb Cook, wrote a play especially designed for the Maspeth youth group that year based on Shelton's In His Steps. George BonDurant, the journalism student, was Jerry Durant, newspaper reporter, in Mrs. Cook's "What Would Jesus Do?" George pondered that question as he reflected on the play while returning home by bus for the Christmas holidays; on that bus trip he decided to enter the ministry. He finished the one year at Columbia, again attended Erieside that summer, and entered Cincinnati Bible Seminary in the fall of 1934.¹¹¹

On the first day of school at Cincinnati, a senior girl who worked in the cafeteria caught the sophomore's eye. On that Friday evening, he and his roommate were invited to a weiner roast at which Sarah Lou Presley was in charge of cooking. George walked her home from the weiner roast. They dated for the rest of the year. That summer Sarah was pianist for revivals held by M. B. Miller; George went to Norfolk, Virginia, to assist Dennis Myers in preaching at the Berkley and Brambleton congregations. When Sarah had finished playing for Miller, Myers got her to come to Norfolk to play for an outdoor front yard revival that eventually culminated in the Colonial Heights Church of Christ. At the end of the summer, on his birthday, August 9, 1935, George and Sarah

¹¹¹ Personal interview with George W. BonDurant, May 22, 1978.

were married at South Mills, North Carolina.¹¹²

Sarah was the daughter of a pioneer preacher of the Restoration Movement, Cicero G. Presley, Sr., and Sophronia Tatum Presley. Her father died while Sarah was young, leaving Mrs. Presley with five children. Sarah helped her mother cook at Rhinehart College in Waleska, Georgia, before she was twelve. Later the family moved to Canton, Georgia; the older girls went to Atlanta and began working with Southern Bell, and eventually the entire family moved to Atlanta. They attended Capitol View Church where Judge and Mrs. T. O. Hathcock also attended. The Hathcocks, who had no children of their own, took special interest in Sarah; she spent considerable time in their home; and they underwrote her college education at Cincinnati Bible Seminary.¹¹³

During his first year at Cincinnati, George had preached at the Elm Street mission. During his second year, he became the minister at Fairborn, Ohio, and continued after his graduation in 1937. As he neared the end of his senior year, he and Sarah were discussing future plans. He mentioned that he was interested in returning to Norfolk, Virginia, and helping Dennis Myers in the small ministerial training school he was trying to operate. She suggested that if he were interested in Bible college work he should go to Atlanta and revive efforts there.¹¹⁴

There had been four earlier attempts to start a Bible college in Georgia. Josephus Hopwood began Lamar College at Clarkstown in 1913, but it only lived two years. Southeastern Christian College began in Auburn

¹¹²BonDurant interview, May 23, 1978.

¹¹³Personal interview with Sarah P. BonDurant, June 2, 1978.

¹¹⁴Personal interview with George W. BonDurant, May 24, 1978.

in 1915 and closed in 1924.¹¹⁵ The Hathcocks provided land and running expenses for a Christian school in 1925 which operated two years; in 1928 efforts began on the same land to launch Atlanta Christian College. Lack of support caused this school to close at the end of two years.¹¹⁶

The following school year, 1930-1931, thirteen students of the Western District of Georgia enrolled in Cincinnati Bible Seminary. Sarah Presley was among that number.¹¹⁷ Hathcock served as a trustee of the Cincinnati school from 1933 until 1937. Hathcock and President Records "locked horns" at a trustee's meeting over whether or not women had a right to preach. Hathcock's name was dropped from the board of trustees at the next meeting.¹¹⁸ It is also said that Hathcock and Records disagreed over whether or not elders must be married and have a family¹¹⁹ and over tithing.¹²⁰ However, it was not disagreement with Records that caused Hathcock to be receptive to the offer of the BonDurants; he had never lost interest in a school in Georgia to train ministers.¹²¹ Thus

¹¹⁵T. O. Hathcock, "My Best Investment," Christian Standard, August 6, 1966, p. 5.

¹¹⁶R. Edwin Groover, "T. O. Hathcock: The Judge and His Work" (unpublished M. Div. thesis, Emmanuel School of Religion, 1972), pp. 75-84, covers this period in detail.

¹¹⁷Groover, pp. 85, 86.

¹¹⁸Groover, pp. 87, 88; however, George BonDurant, in personal interview, June 15, 1978, stated that in the eleven years he worked closely with Hathcock he never heard him favor women preaching, nor was any effort made at Atlanta during his presidency to train women as preachers.

¹¹⁹Groover, p. 88; George BonDurant interview, May 24, 1978.

¹²⁰George BonDurant interview, May 24, 1978.

¹²¹George BonDurant interview, May 24, 1978; see also Owen Still, "The Only School in the Southeast," Christian Standard, December 24, 1927, p. 18.

Hathcock remembered it thirty years later in these words:

. . . , they came to Georgia and asked to reopen the school building for training. I was glad to grant them permission and to guarantee running expenses again for the first year. So the college was reopened in 1937, and it has been in operation ever since.¹²²

The BonDurants closed their ministry at Fairborn and moved to Atlanta on July 1, 1937. Twenty-two-year-old George became minister of Grove Park Church and president of Atlanta Christian College. He and Sarah moved into one room of the building on Judge and Mrs. Hathcock's property that had been used for the school.¹²³

There were six resident and fourteen non-resident students that first fall. BonDurant taught all classes except for music classes taught by Pearl Presley, Sarah's sister. In addition to the teaching and preaching, BonDurant led in efforts to clear the land which had not been farmed in several years and planted crops to feed the student body. The enrollment increased every year but one, and had surpassed seventy by the fall semester of 1947. However, during that semester, due to conflicts between BonDurant and the trustees, BonDurant resigned.¹²⁴

BonDurant's resignation at Atlanta was presented at about the same time that Bream resigned as evangelist for the Roanoke District. BonDurant learned quickly of Bream's resignation through Roanoke District students at Atlanta, including Marshall Leggett, son of the District president.¹²⁵ Hence, BonDurant approached the elder Leggett about becoming

¹²²Hathcock, p. 6.

¹²³George BonDurant interview, May 24, 1978.

¹²⁴Groover, pp. 89-92; George BonDurant interview, May 24, 1978; The Harvester, 1953, yearbook of Atlanta Christian College, pp. 4, 5.

¹²⁵George BonDurant interview, May 24, 1978.

evangelist.¹²⁶ BonDurant was well known in the District: he had taught two summers at Roanoke Christian Service Camp, held evangelistic meetings, spoken for high school commencements, and participated in the cornerstone laying ceremony for the building at the Hamilton Church of Christ.¹²⁷ Concerning his part in the camp, Leggett had written: "It was YOU [his emphasis] who put the Adult week over. When the Brethren came one time they just could not stay away, they had to come back."¹²⁸

Leggett's letter to BonDurant after the latter had been accepted by the Convention began:

The Roanoke District Evangelizing Committee did just what I thought they would do. When they made their report to the convention, they recommended you as the new Evangelist, for the Roanoke District Churches of Christ, which was accepted by the District, in Convention assembled, unanimously.¹²⁹

BonDurant's reply suggested starting to work on January 1, 1948, and that he was willing to go wherever the District might send him.¹³⁰ Leggett's next letter suggested the place: " . . . , we will want you to go to Elizabeth City and help those brethren."¹³¹ This congregation had begun in May, 1947; there were twenty-eight charter members when the group formally organized on July 10; and they had occupied the basement unit of their new building on November 23.¹³²

¹²⁶Letter of B. F. Leggett to George BonDurant, July 5, 1948. Copies of Leggett-BonDurant correspondence in files of author.

¹²⁷Gospel Light, December, 1947, p. 3.

¹²⁸Letter of B. F. Leggett to George W. BonDurant, no date.

¹²⁹Letter of B. F. Leggett to George W. BonDurant, December 3, 1947.

¹³⁰Letter of George W. BonDurant to B. F. Leggett, December 6, 1947.

¹³¹Letter of B. F. Leggett to George W. BonDurant, December 11, 1947.

¹³²Gospel Light, May, 1948, p. 2.

BonDurant arrived on the field on January 1, 1948, and began at once to do "extensive personal evangelism." He held an evangelistic meeting for the congregation, January 18-25.¹³³ On his second Sunday, there began a chain of additions that continued for seventeen consecutive Sundays.¹³⁴ Reports of his work to the District brought very favorable response. Dennis W. Davis' report to Christian Chapel concerning work of the new evangelist caused that congregation to double its offering to the District's work.¹³⁵ The reporter from Philippi wrote of a Bible Teacher's Training Course at that congregation about which "words fail to express just what it meant to all of us." She concluded:

Now let me urge all of you Bible School superintendents to do as we did and get Bro. BonDurant for a week or ten days if you possibly can. It will be worth all you put in it, and more. That man should be President of the United States. And if things don't soon straighten out in Washington, D. C., I move we put him in. Do I hear a second?¹³⁶

However, much of this praise was to change as a result of plans BonDurant revealed in a letter to Leggett on April 26, 1948. After a report of the work in Elizabeth City, he continued:

Elders and deacons voted unanimously permission to use church building and minister for college of evangelism starting mid-September. Plan calls for classes Tuesday morning through Friday morning; and actual field work in evangelism remainder of time, in teams under personal direction of faculty. This would assure graduation of none but those who could do the work as well as being thoroughly instructed in the Faith. Within a few years would solve our ministerial problem in present churches, establish and supply preachers for new congregations, strengthen our work against encroachment of UCMS and reclaim some churches from its grip, and conserve

¹³³Gospel Light, January, 1948, p. 2.

¹³⁴Personal interview with George W. BonDurant, June 13, 1978.

¹³⁵Gospel Light, March, 1948, p. 2.

¹³⁶Eva Davis Woodley in Gospel Light, March, 1948, p. 5.

local youth for our own ministry rather than the enrichment of areas where they now go to college and from which their return to us is problematical.

Would you agree to my helping in such a college of evangelism for the $3\frac{1}{2}$ class days per week during the $3\frac{1}{2}$ months from mid-September to the expiration of my year's contract as evangelist, in return for the stimulus to evangelism throughout the District that such a school would give? I would use a team of students in my regular evangelistic work, thereby increasing the contacts I would make during the time devoted to it. This would not obligate us financially other than through the contribution of my help. Of course, before the end of the year it would be necessary to decide whether to employ me at all for another year and whether to let me continue to help in the school. I have enjoyed my work enough these first four months to consider continuing as long as things are mutually satisfactory. But I would really like to try expanding my work as evangelist to include helping in such a college of evangelism, because I feel the two go together hand in hand, and whatever other small ability I may possess I am primarily a teacher.¹³⁷

In May, one of the members of the Evangelizing Committee, Ernest Rose, wrote BonDurant concerning the proposal, "As for me, I think it would be one of the best ways yet, to evangelize this part of the state and I am willing for you to work with them as you have outlined." He urged that the possibility be discussed in an open meeting at the next Convention on May 29.¹³⁸ Yet, no discussion of the matters occurred at that Convention or any subsequent one in an open meeting.¹³⁹ BonDurant worked three weeks that summer at Roanoke Christian Service Camp.¹⁴⁰ But on July 5, Leggett wrote him a long letter stating that the officers of the District had met the previous day to consider his resignation. His concluding paragraphs stated his opposition to the college:

Brother George: Don't you know, we know, that you know, a college has been a part of the District leaders' program for some time. In

¹³⁷Letter of George W. BonDurant to B. F. Leggett, April 26, 1948.

¹³⁸Letter of Ernest Rose to George W. BonDurant, May 3, 1948.
Copy of letter in author's files.

¹³⁹Personal interview with George W. BonDurant, June 2, 1978.

¹⁴⁰George BonDurant interview, May 24, 1978.

getting out the charter for the service camp, we have the word "school" incorporated in it. Don't you remember when you and I first went down to see the proposed camp site, we talked over the college idea there. So you know and are bound to admit that you knew the District was and is working to the end of having a college of its own, just as soon as time and conditions would permit. Now for you, an employee of the Roanoke District for less than six months, and having been up here in the District just six months, then to hand in your resignation as the Roanoke District Evangelist, to by-pass the District, that came to your rescue, run around and get ahead of it and start a school or college of your own. Personally I think you have handed the District and all concerned a very dirty deal. And, too, YOU have started the dissension and confusion within, that no one knows where it will end--just the thing Mr. Ware and the machine wanted to happen.

Do you think you know about what is best for this area, than all these brethren who have lived here all their lives, and you have just been up here six months? You know, Brother George, personal ambition and bull headedness will only HINDER. This is a free country; you can start just as many colleges as you want to and where you want to; and as far as I know no one is going to try and stop you. But!¹⁴¹

BonDurant answered him on July 14, stating he wanted there to be cooperation between the District and the college and asking Leggett to speak at the first convocation service,¹⁴² but Leggett declined and asked that his name not be used any more in connection with the college.¹⁴³ The August issue of the Gospel Light ran the following notice on its front page:

Friends: The Gospel Light and its Editor, B. F. Leggett, Sr., can NOT endorse the Roanoke Bible College at Elizabeth City, N. C., for several reasons.

Thank you,
B. F. Leggett, Sr.¹⁴⁴

So Roanoke Bible College would begin with strong opposition from the leadership of the Roanoke District Churches of Christ.

¹⁴¹Letter of B. F. Leggett to George W. BonDurant, July 5, 1948.

¹⁴²Letter of George W. BonDurant to B. F. Leggett, July 14, 1948.

¹⁴³Letter of B. F. Leggett to George W. BonDurant, August 2, 1948.

¹⁴⁴Gospel Light, August, 1948, p. 1.

Chapter 2

THE FIRST FOUR YEARS

Roanoke Bible College began its first school year on Monday, September 13, 1948, when the planning of the previous months brought fruit in the form of fifteen students who enrolled.¹

The fifteen pioneer students were Joseph A. Brickhouse, Sr., Sidney M. Brickhouse, Loma H. Hassell, Evelyn F. Hendricks, Herbert R. Humphress, Mary B. Humphress, Nettie M. Liverman, Ella V. Mohorn, Virginia S. Perry, Walker B. Perry, Charles G. Presley, Grace B. Sullivan, Pauline B. Winslow, Doris F. Woolard, and Mark M. Woolard. These students were from North Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Indiana. There were ten freshmen, three sophomores, and two juniors. Those with advanced standings had transferred from Atlanta Christian College, Kentucky Christian College, and Mars Hill College.² Three others registered later in the semester: Ronald B. Clifton, Thurman L. Riddick, and Ruth C. Waters. Of this total eighteen for the first semester, twelve were full time.³

The teaching staff was composed of three former professors of Atlanta Christian College, George W. BonDurant, Sarah P. BonDurant, and Pearl A. Presley; plus Harold C. Turner, who had served as field representative at Atlanta and was now minister of the Elizabeth City Church of

¹The Roanoke Messenger, October, 1948, p. 1; hereinafter cited as Messenger.

²Messenger, October, 1948, p. 1; see also records in registrar's office.

³Registrar's records.

Christ; Erie M. Davis, a graduate of Atlanta Christian College; and Walker B. Perry, student instructor in Greek.⁴ Only ten classes were offered: six designed for freshmen (Elementary Greek, Acts of the Apostles, Introduction to Church Music, Elementary Public Speaking, English Grammar, and The Gospels: Part I); and four planned for the remaining upperclassmen (Introduction to Philosophy, Historical Geography, Advanced N. T. Greek Exegesis, and General Church History).⁵

As a house was rented on Maple Street commodious enough for classrooms as well as dining room and girls' dormitory, the expense of heating the Elizabeth City church building for classes was saved.⁶ Necessary equipment for furnishing dormitory, dining room, and kitchen was furnished by Christians from the congregations at Souppernong and Philippi in Creswell and Elizabeth City. The editor of The Roanoke Messenger, the monthly organ of the college first issued in October, 1948, wrote from memory three years later:

The school began three years ago in a ten-room rented house on the far end of Maple Street. There was one bathroom. The open stairway came down inside the classroom, and the dining room opened from the classroom by an archway which had no doors. We had 3 double beds, 1 single bed, and 1 borrowed cot, with springs and mattresses; 5 washstands, bureaus, or chests of drawers; and a few old chairs; a handful of pots and pans and dishes; and a borrowed piano.⁷

During that first year, the girls and a married couple also lived in that Maple Street building. The boys "stayed at different places around town"; some for a while with the BonDurants on Main Street, then

⁴Registrar's records; see also Messenger, October, 1948, p. 1.

⁵Registrar's records.

⁶Messenger, October, 1948, p. 4.

⁷Messenger, September, 1951, p. 5.

at the corner of Road and Ehringhaus, then on Church Street. One of the students remembers money was very scarce: "Mrs. B had to make do with very little in the feeding of the college group; we ate all kinds of leftovers, prepared in different ways." He was quick to add, however, "but it was always good."⁸

Dennis C. Myers, the veteran preacher from Norfolk, Virginia, who had been instrumental in first bringing George BonDurant to the area, preached at the first convocation, held at the Elizabeth City church building on September 15. Brother Myers had already been instrumental in the establishment of seven congregations in Norfolk and had dreamed of a Bible college in the area to supply ministers for the pulpits. As he saw his dream coming true on that evening, he stated, "I would rather be here tonight than on the platform of the largest and wealthiest college or university in the state, because I glory in pioneer work."⁹

Traditions began on the second day of the school year when a student-faculty meeting selected green and white to be the school colors and white roses to be the school flower. The school motto had been adopted on July 6, "Set for the defense of the Gospel" (Philippians 1:16, ASV).¹⁰ A "Sneak Day" was held in the fall.¹¹ Early in the year the students organized the Epsilon Pi Chi Literary Society "to foster college spirit and to develop themselves in public expression, the management of

⁸Letter from Mark A. Woolard to author, June 20, 1977.

⁹Messenger, October, 1948, p. 2.

¹⁰Messenger, October, 1948, p. 4. Green later became kelly green, see Messenger, November, 1949, p. 4.

¹¹Messenger, November, 1949, p. 4., spoke of the second one.

a society, and in other cultural extra-curricular interests."¹² The first of the annual Choral Club Christmas tours was begun with programs at one Virginia and six North Carolina congregations.¹³

In January, a Monday evening chapel service was inaugurated with a guest speaker each week.¹⁴ This was in addition to the daily morning chapel with faculty-student participation.

In an area where preachers were at a premium, the students found many opportunities for service. A January, 1949, report shows that four of the full-time men had preached at an average of three congregations recently.¹⁵

An even greater service was performed for the churches during this first year by the extension classes taught at churches within driving distance of the college by President BonDurant. The first enrollment figures showed seventy-six extension students in five classes.¹⁶ This necessitated President BonDurant's driving to a different church each week night in addition to his preaching appointment on Sunday. During the second series of nine-week, two-hour classes, seventy-eight enrolled in four classes.¹⁷ The final class of the year enrolled seventy-eight at a congregation 128 miles from the college.¹⁸

¹²Messenger, January, 1949, p. 4.

¹³Messenger, January, 1949, p. 4.

¹⁴Messenger, January, 1949, p. 4.

¹⁵Messenger, January, 1949, p. 2.

¹⁶Messenger, October, 1948, p. 1.

¹⁷Messenger, January, 1949, p. 4.

¹⁸Messenger, April, 1949, p. 4.

Appeals in four areas were issued in the college paper during that first year: for 1) prayers, 2) students, 3) money, and 4) gifts of kind in form of foodstuffs and books for the library.

On February 19, 1949, the college purchased its first property at 707 Pennsylvania Avenue (later to be designated as 711 Poindexter Street). The property was a lot fifty by two hundred feet, extending back to First Street, and located just three hundred feet from the Pasquotank River and five blocks from the heart of the business district of Elizabeth City. The stately residence contained five spacious rooms on each of the two floors plus two and a half baths. The rooms on the first floor were to serve as chapel, library, classrooms, dining room, and kitchen. Those on the second floor would be used for dormitory space.¹⁹ The purchase price for this property was \$11,500.00, with a \$2,000.00 down payment, and another \$1,500.00 to be paid at the time of occupancy.²⁰

M. B. Madden, veteran missionary to Osaka, Japan, was the first missionary to address the student body, speaking in chapel on April 13, 1949.²¹

The first annual Gospel Rally was held at the Elizabeth City church building on May 3 and 4, 1949. Six southern preachers brought

¹⁹Letter from Melvin D. Styons to author, June 2, 1978, recalls the allocation of rooms in Wilkinson that first year it was used: "The upstairs of Wilkinson was divided into three areas: the ladies' dormitory on the downtown side of the building, the men's dormitory on the other side, and the Joe Brickhouse apartment in the First Street end of the building. . . . The downstairs front corner room . . . was the main classroom. . . . The room immediately behind the lobby was the chapel. . . . The room adjoining both the chapel and the main classroom was used as a dining room, the school library, and a classroom."

²⁰Messenger, March, 1949, pp. 1, 5.

²¹Messenger, April, 1949, p. 3.

messages in addition to two symposiums and one open forum.²² This rally registered 281 people from forty churches in six states.²³

An end-of-the-year report stated that twelve of the eighteen day students had persevered until the end; 280 had enrolled in the ten extension classes; and students had regularly served in seven churches. In the financial area, \$7,619.59 had been received during the first fiscal year from 327 individuals and churches in twenty-four states.²⁴

Harold C. Turner, who had served the Elizabeth City Church of Christ as minister for eighteen months, resigned that position to become Roanoke's first field representative, as he had earlier been at Atlanta Christian College.²⁵

During the first summer, three of the girls held five two-week vacation Bible schools; three of the boys held a total of six revivals and preached regularly; Professor Turner conducted four meetings; and President BonDurant "in the 95 days from June 5 to September 7, preached 98 sermons in 9 revivals, resulting in 124 additions, of which 84 were baptisms, besides meeting appointments with his four regular quarter-time churches."²⁶ Already, with the college only one year old, the history of the Restoration Movement in eastern North Carolina and Virginia was being rewritten.

²²Gospel Rally program, included in bound Volume I of Roanoke Messenger, following the issue for April, 1949.

²³Messenger, July, 1949, p. 2.

²⁴Messenger, July, 1949, p. 2.

²⁵Messenger, July, 1949, p. 6.

²⁶Messenger, October, 1949, p. 5.

Another major step forward was permitted by approval for the training of veterans given by the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction during this first summer to become effective in the fall of the second year.²⁷

The beginning of the second year was also memorable. Two weeks before classes were to begin, the new property was dedicated on Labor Day, 1949. Lewis Styons, Jr., minister of First Christian Church, Roanoke Rapids, preached the dedicatory message. President BonDurant announced that the building would be named Wilkinson Hall "in appreciation of the generous and unfailing help from Sister Pattie A. Wilkinson, of Pantego, N. C., who had given one thousand dollars toward the purchase of the property." When plans had been first announced for the establishment of the college, Sister Wilkinson had made the second gift. A portrait of Mrs. Wilkinson was presented to be placed in the chapel room. The all-day event included special music from area churches and the college, dinner on the lawn, and brief messages from incorporators, faculty, students, and friends.²⁸

The first broadcast of "The Roanoke Bible College Hour" was aired on the Sunday before Registration Day of this second year. The half-hour program was devoted to music by the Choral Club under the direction of Miss Presley with Mr. Turner as the master of ceremonies. The new program preceded on the Sunday afternoon schedule "The [Elizabeth City] Church of Christ Hour" which had been broadcasting for two years.²⁹

²⁷Messenger, October, 1949, p. 5.

²⁸Messenger, October, 1949, p. 1.

²⁹Messenger, October, 1949, p. 1.

Registration for the second year totalled thirty-one, nineteen of which were full time. Twenty of these students were new. A schedule of classes from this second fall reveals eighteen classes were offered on campus.³⁰ There were eighty-two enrolled for the first series of extension classes for the second year.³¹

L. L. Hinton, minister of the Colonial Place Church of Christ, Hampton, Virginia, delivered the second Convocation Sermon.³² The first Monday evening chapel of the new year featured Mr. and Mrs. Stanley R. Buttray, missionaries with the Cunningham Mission in Tokyo, Japan.³³ Shortly after the year began, L. Autrey Jackson came to be the second minister for the Elizabeth City Church of Christ, which served as home congregation for most of the students and staff of the college.³⁴

The November, 1949, issue of The Roanoke Messenger featured the first of a series of front page editorials of impassioned pleas for unity among Christians in eastern North Carolina and Virginia in the common task that was theirs.³⁵ This plea was combined with a logical apologetic for the existence of a Bible college in the area. The problems of division that had begun with President BonDurant's announcement of plans to begin the college and his subsequent resignation as evangelist of the

³⁰Registrar's records.

³¹Messenger, November, 1949, p. 1.

³²Messenger, October, 1949, p. 1.

³³Messenger, October, 1949, p. 4.

³⁴Messenger, October, 1949, p. 6.

³⁵See also Messenger, December, 1949, p. 1; Messenger, January, 1950, p. 1; Messenger, May, 1950, p. 1; and Messenger, July, 1950, p. 1.

Roanoke District Churches of Christ³⁶ still lingered. Although a number of editorial articles in the paper earlier had pledged college and staff support to District projects,³⁷ still disunity prevailed.

The board of Incorporators was expanded at the January, 1950, meeting to include leaders from four congregations in addition to the eight original men from the Elizabeth City congregation. The new incorporators were Harry W. Pritchett from Scuppernong, Ernest Rose from Union Grove, Redden H. Shavender from St. Clairs, and Pattie A. Wilkinson from Wilkinson Memorial.³⁸

A report in February, 1950, revealed that sixteen congregations (fifteen in eastern North Carolina and one at Creeds, Virginia) were being served regularly by college staff and students.³⁹ Frequent reports also added services in revivals, supply preaching, special meetings, and radio programs.⁴⁰ The extension class held during the winter at Athens Chapel set a record with 144 enrolled, which included delegations from Rosemary and Wilkinson Memorial in addition to the local members. This seventeenth class brought to a total of 19,872 miles driven by President BonDurant in extension classes in a year and a half.⁴¹

The college's first commencement came at the end of the second

³⁶See above, pp. 29-31.

³⁷Messenger, October, 1948, p. 3; Messenger, December, 1948, p. 4.

³⁸Messenger, January, 1950, pp. 1, 2.

³⁹Messenger, February, 1950, p. 1.

⁴⁰Messenger, February, 1950, p. 4; Messenger, December, 1959, p. 4; Messenger, March, 1950, p. 4; etc.

⁴¹Messenger, March, 1950, pp. 1, 2.

year. Walker B. Perry and B. Neal Puckett, both transfer students from Atlanta Christian College, became the first alumni of Roanoke Bible College on June 6, 1950.⁴²

The second summer's services in the churches, in "which every professor and student above freshman level took part," included thirty revivals, regular ministers for twenty-four churches, and fifteen daily vacation Bible schools, during which a total of 207 were baptized.⁴³

Enrollment rose to forty-one for the fall semester of 1950. Of this number, twenty-two were full time.⁴⁴ It was also reported during this fifth semester of the college's existence that thirty churches were regularly served by students, staff, and alumni.⁴⁵

Ground was broken on October 16, 1950, for the first building project of the college. The two-story frame dormitory was designed to house thirty-two students on two floors with a total of thirty-three hundred square feet. It was built entirely by volunteer labor, mostly by students and staff with men from the churches helping in various projects, all under the supervision of Herman Shavender, a student and experienced carpenter. In addition, most of the materials for the building were contributed even to the trees' being cut, sawed, and trucked to the college by volunteer labor.⁴⁶

⁴²Messenger, May, 1950, p. 4.

⁴³Messenger, September, 1950, p. 2; see also Messenger, July, 1950, p. 2.

⁴⁴Registrar's records.

⁴⁵Messenger, January, 1951, p. 6; see also, p. 8.

⁴⁶Messenger, October, 1950, pp. 1, 2; Messenger, January, 1951, pp. 1, 7.

The dormitory was built behind Wilkinson Hall, facing First Street. It was named Faith Hall during the period of construction as it was "not only built on faith, but it is dedicated to house students who will be taught to teach and preach and sing The Faith once for all delivered to the saints."⁴⁷ Faith Hall was sufficiently ready to permit the occupancy of all the first floor rooms at the beginning of the fourth school year, September, 1951.⁴⁸

Russell M. Smith, who had come to the college as a junior student from Cincinnati Bible Seminary, was graduated at the end of the third school year and became the college's third alumnus.⁴⁹

The BonDurants added much-needed space to the college property by purchasing as their home the residence adjacent to Wilkinson Hall on the south. This residence not only served as residence for the BonDurants and Miss Presley, but was also used to house the college office, a music classroom, and a guest room for the college. The additional land afforded "campus" space, including an outdoor basketball court.⁵⁰

The fourth year saw a slight decrease in overall enrollment to thirty-five, but there was a record number of full-time students enrolled, thirty.⁵¹

In October, 1951, a group of Christians in the area assumed \$850.00 annual support for Grace Fish, "missionary recruit to Okinawa.

⁴⁷Messenger, January, 1951, p. 1.

⁴⁸Messenger, July, 1951, p. 1.

⁴⁹Messenger, July, 1951, p. 6.

⁵⁰Messenger, July, 1951, p. 7.

⁵¹Messenger, September, 1951, p. 1.

This was evidence of the college's influence in a virtue--missionary giving--that had been severely limited in earlier years in the area. This voluntary cooperation of Christians adopted the name "Roanoke Living Link Fellowship." Although this fellowship was not legally connected with the college, all the churches promising support were ministered to by faculty or students of the college.⁵²

A monthly budget was published in the February, 1952, Messenger with total expenses proposed of \$1,006.14, divided as follows: salaries, \$365.00; kitchen, \$250.00; building note, \$124.00; Messenger, \$85.00; lights and water, \$70.00; heat, \$60.00; general, \$30.00; office, \$15.00; telephone, \$6.04.⁵³ The net income for the first three years had been \$7,620.99, \$12,263.68, and \$14,666.01, respectively.⁵⁴ The income for these years had not only met current expenses, but included down payments on Wilkinson Hall and the expenses incurred in the building of Faith Hall. Total student charges for each year of the first four years per student were \$308.00 which included fees, tuition, room, and board.⁵⁵ Only by frugal spending, sacrificial service, and the gifts of many food-stuffs and supplies was the college able to operate on such a limited budget.

One of the students who attended the first four years remembers vividly the scarcity of money:

Mr. B. seldom had enough money to fill up his tank with gasoline prior to the return trip to Elizabeth City on Sunday night. He had to

⁵²Messenger, October, 1951, p. 1. This is treated in more detail below, see pp. 115-117.

⁵³Messenger, February, 1952, p. 6.

⁵⁴Messenger, October, 1951, p. 5.

⁵⁵Roanoke Bible College catalogs, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951.

wait until he was paid for the Sunday's preaching. Since he usually had a group of students returning with him, we were all at one time or another witnesses to the almost walking situation that often happened and the swaying from side to side to try to get the last drops of gasolene until a station was found open.⁵⁶

The first four-year class was graduated on May 27, 1952. The four graduates, Joseph A. Brickhouse, Sr., Charles G. Presley, Grace B. Sullivan, and Mark A. Woolard, had enrolled on the original Registration Day. This class had edited the first yearbook, The Lighthouse, during their senior year.⁵⁷

What can be said for these first four years? During this time, a total of seventy-seven students had been trained on the campus, the largest total enrollment for one semester being the fall of the third year. In addition, 687 people had been trained in twenty extension classes in brief exegetical studies of Bible books. The college had begun with four professors and one student instructor; but by now Walker B. Perry had become a full-time professor and Erie M. Davis had resigned. Seven students had been graduated.

From a rented building on Maple Street, the college had moved onto its own property on Pennsylvania Avenue. In addition to the original dwelling that had been used for classes, chapel, library, dining hall, and dormitory, a dormitory capable of housing thirty-two students had also been constructed on the lot. President and Mrs. BonDurant had purchased adjoining property that afforded the college much-needed rooms and campus space in addition to their housing.

The college had brought new experiences to the area. The Choral

⁵⁶ Woolard letter.

⁵⁷ Messenger, May, 1952, pp. 1, 2, 4.

Club, organized during the first year, had visited many of the rural as well as city churches, singing the message of Christ, with concentration on the Christmas and Easter stories. Many of these same people could hear the Choral Club weekly on the college's radio program. The Gospel Rally had afforded a medium for fellowship, learning, and inspiration by bringing together the Christians of the area to share their own ideas and to meet new proclaimers of the old Gospel. A record attendance of 548 for the 1952 Rally attested to the success of this effort. Missionaries were visiting the college; and, as a result, they were beginning to speak in area churches. The missionary emphasis had led to the formation of the Roanoke Living Link Fellowship.

Yet, there is no question but that the greatest contribution had been the supplying of preachers to lead and train the congregations of the area. The October, 1951, Messenger had listed by name thirty-two congregations being regularly served by students, graduates, and faculty; four of these congregations were in Tidewater, Virginia, and the remainder were in North Carolina. Despite this, however, there was still a scarcity of preachers, as eighteen of these churches were quarter-time (preaching only on one Sunday a month), ten were half-time, and only four were full-time. In addition, virtually every issue of the college's monthly paper reported dozens of instances of supply preaching, special events, revivals, vacation Bible schools, and various services to the congregations. This was the purpose for which the college had been established, and its record was proving it successful.

Chapter 3

PEOPLE, PROGRAMS, AND BOOKS

James A. Garfield, Christian minister and twentieth president of the United States, stated that the two basic ingredients of an educational institution are teacher and student.¹ This chapter will deal with these two basics at Roanoke Bible College during its first twenty-five years. It will also be interested in the courses taught and the programs of study offered; in those who administered the operation and those necessary for its daily progress; and, finally, in the library, by which student and teacher alike were able to expand their horizons.

The 1948-1949 catalog contained eighty-four courses (202 semester hours), divided as follows: Bible, twenty (fifty-six hours); Christian doctrine, six (twelve hours); Christian education, four (six hours); English, ten (forty hours); history, eight (twenty hours); philosophy, four (sixteen hours); and practical ministry, thirty-two (fifty-two hours). Forty-eight courses were designed as two-hour credit courses, twenty-four as four-hour credits, ten as one-hour credits, and two for credit as earned.

President BonDurant's name was listed with half of the courses in the Bible department, all in Christian doctrine, all in philosophy, and all of the speech and preaching courses in practical ministry. Professor

¹"Give me a log hut, with only a simple bench, Mark Hopkins on one end and I on the other, and you may have all the buildings, apparatus and libraries without him." John Bartlett, Familiar Quotations (14th ed.; Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1968), p. 741.

Turner was listed for six courses in Bible and two in practical ministry. Miss Davis taught two of the four courses listed for Christian education and all courses in history. Mrs. BonDurant was listed for two courses in Christian education and all courses in English. Miss Presley was to be the instructor for all music courses with the help of "others" in private music lessons. Mr. Perry taught the first two years of Greek. No one's name was listed for instruction in the secretarial courses.²

Ten courses, totaling thirty semester hours, were actually offered the first year. President BonDurant taught four of these, totaling twelve hours: Introduction to Philosophy (four hours), Elementary Public Speaking (two hours), Advanced New Testament Greek Exegesis (two hours), The Gospels: Part I (four hours). Miss Davis taught two courses, totaling six hours: Historical Geography (two hours), and General Church History (four hours). Mr. Perry and Mrs. BonDurant each taught one four-hour class: Elementary Greek and English Grammar, respectively. Mr. Turner and Miss Presley each taught one two-hour class: Acts of the Apostles and Introduction to Church Music, respectively. The same courses were continued second semester. Classes were taught from 7:30 A. M. through 1:00 P. M. with a thirty-minute chapel at 9:30 A. M.³

The first catalog offered four degrees: Bachelor of Arts (ministerial), Bachelor of Sacred Literature, Church Secretarial Certificate, and Christian Workers Certificate. Each of the first two degrees required 128 semester hours of credit. The Bachelor of Arts degree was designed

²1948-1949 catalog, pp. 61-66; all catalogs are available in the president's office.

³Schedule of Classes, Fall, 1948; all schedules of classes are available in the registrar's office.

for "those preparing for service as ministers, evangelists, or missionaries." A typical schedule included two years of Greek. The Bachelor of Sacred Literature degree was designed for "those preparing for Christian service in some capacity other than ministers, evangelists, or missionaries, and who do not plan to do graduate work." Certain required courses, including Greek, in the former program were waived, and substituted with courses designed for training in the candidate's chosen field. The Church Secretarial Certificate (or Minister's Assistant Certificate), requiring sixty-four semester hours, was designed for "those preparing for full-time secretarial positions in church offices." The Christian Workers Certificate was designed for "those preparing for Christian service as elders, deacons, teachers, pianists, singers, or trained workers with children, young people, or other church groups." This program was similar to the Church Secretarial Certificate except it waived such courses as typing, shorthand, and office management and substituted courses in the candidate's chosen field.⁴

For the first year of the school, the teachers also served as administrators. In addition to President BonDurant, Mr. Turner served as dean, Mrs. BonDurant served as office secretary, and Miss Davis served as matron. Miss Presley was also working in Norfolk so she did not have time to serve in a position of administration. Mr. Perry was only a student instructor.⁵

The schedule of classes for the fall semester of the second year contains seventeen classes being taught on campus, Tuesday through Friday,

⁴1948-1949 catalog, pp. 13-15.

⁵1948-1949 catalog, p. 6.

7:30 A. M. through 3:30 P. M. and one class at 7:30 Tuesday and Thursday evenings. President BonDurant was teaching eighteen hours, plus four additional hours in extension classes. Mrs. BonDurant was teaching nine hours; Mr. Perry, eight; Mr. Turner, two; Miss Presley, four.

The 1950-1951 catalog listed one new course, radio music, not contained in the original catalog. Otherwise, the courses of instruction were the same. Mr. Perry was now listed as instructor for courses formerly taught by Miss Davis.⁶ He was also listed as librarian.⁷

The 1952-1953 catalog included eight new courses⁸ and one new professor, Anthony Thibodeaux,⁹ minister at the Elizabeth City Church of Christ.¹⁰ Mark A. Woolard, having received his B. A. degree the previous spring, returned to teach English literature and to take advanced courses.¹¹ Grace B. Sullivan, another graduate of the previous year, joined the staff as assistant to Mrs. BonDurant and dean of women.¹² In the first semester of this fifth year, President BonDurant taught thirteen hours; Mr. Perry, fourteen; Miss Presley, seven; Mr. Turner, eight; Mrs. BonDurant, eight; Mr. Woolard, four; and Mr. Thibodeaux, two.¹³

⁶1950-1951 catalog, pp. 16-21.

⁷1950-1951 catalog, p. 6.

⁸1952-1953 catalog, pp. 23-29.

⁹1952-1953 catalog, p. 13.

¹⁰Messenger, January, 1952, p. 5.

¹¹Schedule of Classes, Fall, 1952; see also, Messenger, October, 1952, p. 6.

¹²Messenger, October, 1952, p. 6.

¹³Schedule of Classes, Fall, 1952.

Both Miss Presley's name and Professor Perry's name are absent from the fall, 1954, schedule. President BonDurant taught all the Greek and Mrs. BonDurant directed the Choral Club. Virginia Perry, wife of Professor Perry, began a course in chalk art that semester.¹⁴ Also, Anthony Thibodeaux was succeeded by L. L. Hinton as minister of the Elizabeth City congregation and as part-time teacher on the college staff.¹⁵ Grace Sullivan taught a course each semester and offered private piano lessons.¹⁶

The 1955-1956 catalog listed the following staff: George BonDurant, Walker Perry, Harold Turner, L. L. Hinton, Neal Puckett, Virginia Perry, Pearl Presley, Grace Sullivan, and Sarah BonDurant.¹⁷ Harold Turner, no longer teaching,¹⁸ was now listed as field representative; Walker Perry, registrar; Neal Puckett, librarian; and Pearl Presley, dietician.¹⁹

In the fall of 1956, the boys received their first dormitory parent, L. L. Hinton, who was named dean of men and moved into Faith Hall following the death of his first wife.²⁰ Other changes included the resignation of Harold Turner,²¹ a leave of absence for Grace Sullivan,²² and

¹⁴Messenger, November, 1954, p. 2.

¹⁵Messenger, November, 1954, p. 2.

¹⁶Schedule of Classes, Fall, 1954.

¹⁷1955-1956 catalog, pp. 13, 14.

¹⁸Messenger, August, 1955, p. 2.

¹⁹1955-1956 catalog, p. 11.

²⁰Messenger, September, 1956, p. 1.

²¹His last check was September 10, 1956, business office records.

²²Messenger, August, 1956, p. 3.

the addition of Rebecca Moore to teach Freshman English and be dean of women while taking courses at Roanoke to supplement her degree from East Carolina College.²³

The 1957-1958 catalog lists the following administrators: George BonDurant, president; Neal Puckett, dean; Walker Perry, registrar; Sarah BonDurant, office secretary; Virginia Perry, librarian; Egypt Puckett, dietician and work supervisor; L. L. Hinton, dean of men; Pearl Presley, dean of women.²⁴ Cary Dannelly was called before the year began to become promotional director.²⁵ During that fall semester, Perry taught fifteen hours; BonDurant, ten; Puckett, twelve; Presley, four; S. BonDurant, four; E. Puckett, nine; and Hinton, two.²⁶

A revision of the curriculum preceded the 1958-1959 school year. A large part of this revision was combining of similar two-hour courses into four-hour courses; some courses were renamed. Although some courses were dropped, no entirely new courses were added.²⁷ Efforts were made to return to the first year's plan to have all classes completed by 1:00 P. M. so students would be able to work on off-campus jobs.²⁸ Wilbur Thomas, minister of the Victory Boulevard congregation, Portsmouth, Virginia, joined the staff, teaching personal evangelism.²⁹ Mrs. Margaret Hayman

²³Messenger, September, 1956, p. 3.

²⁴1957-1958 catalog, p. 11.

²⁵Messenger, August, 1957, p. 2.

²⁶Schedule of Classes, Fall, 1957.

²⁷1958-1959 catalog, pp. 23-28.

²⁸Schedule of Classes, Fall, 1958.

²⁹Messenger, October, 1958, p. 2.

also was added as dietician.³⁰ Charles G. Presley replaced Walker Perry as professor in the fall of 1959; he also served as academic dean and dean of men.³¹ Egypt Puckett was appointed librarian.³² Cary Dannelly taught during this year.³³

In the fall of 1960, BonDurant taught fifteen hours; Puckett, twelve; C. Presley, sixteen; P. Presley, nine; junior Beth BonDurant, four; Mark Woolard, one; Dannelly, one.³⁴ Willie Lee White joined the cafeteria staff as cook in October, 1960.³⁵ The Pucketts resigned after this academic year and W. Graham Barnes joined the staff on a part-time basis while continuing his ministry at West End Church of Christ, Gretna, Virginia.³⁶ In the fall of 1962, Cary Dannelly returned to the staff after a year's leave and John Thomas, new minister at the Elizabeth City congregation, was added to teach personal evangelism.³⁷

A major shift in the academics at Roanoke Bible College preceded the 1963-1964 year. Classes were extended to Monday, making a five-day week, rather than four-day. Three new full-time professors, Melvin Styons, Beth BonDurant, and William Griffin, and a part-time librarian, Patricia Griffin, were added. A new program of study, consisting of Christian

³⁰Messenger, October, 1958, p. 2.

³¹Messenger, September, 1959, p. 2.

³²1959-1960 catalog, p. 10.

³³Schedule of Classes, Spring, 1960.

³⁴Schedule of Classes, Fall, 1960.

³⁵Salary records in business office.

³⁶Messenger, July, 1961, p. 1.

³⁷Messenger, October, 1962, p. 2.

Ministry Program (BA, BSL), Biblical Arts Program (BA), Christian Workers Program (CWC), and Junior College Program (AA) were introduced. Over twenty entirely new courses were offered.³⁸ During the first semester, G. BonDurant taught twenty-two hours; Griffin, eighteen; Presley, seventeen; B. BonDurant, sixteen; Styons, nine; Woolard, six; S. BonDurant, five; Thomas, one; Dannelly, one; and "staff," one.³⁹ Miss BonDurant, also served as registrar; Styons, counselor; and Griffin, bursar.⁴⁰ Louise Spruill became dormitory hostess for Shavender Hall and school nurse.⁴¹ Mrs. Griffin became full-time librarian in the fall of 1964.⁴²

The programs of study and courses of instruction introduced during the 1963-1964 academic year remained basically constant through the remaining years of the first twenty-five years of Roanoke Bible College with only minor changes to the curriculum. The 1966-1967 catalog announced a change in the grading scale. Since the beginning of the school, sixty had been passing; sixty through sixty-nine, D; seventy through seventy-nine, C; eighty through eighty-nine, B; and ninety through one hundred, A.⁴³ The new system made seventy passing; seventy through seventy-seven, D; seventy-eight through eighty-five, C; eighty-six through ninety-nine, B; and ninety-four through one hundred, A.⁴⁴

The staff began to greatly expand during the last eight years of

³⁸1964-1965 catalog, pp. 12-20.

³⁹Schedule of Classes, Fall, 1963.

⁴⁰Messenger, October, 1963, p. 2.

⁴¹Messenger, October, 1963, p. 3.

⁴²Messenger, September, 1964, p. 1.

⁴³catalogs, 1948-1965. ⁴⁴1966-1967 catalog, p. 10.

the quarter century, and there was a large turn-over in minor staff positions and part-time teachers. Homer Styons replaced John Thomas as teacher of personal evangelism in the fall of 1965 when he became minister of the Elizabeth City church. Styons was also appointed basketball coach, relieving President BonDurant of this additional task.⁴⁵ Griffin was appointed dean of men.⁴⁶ Shirley Cash began as assistant to the dietician during the summer of 1965.⁴⁷ Phillip Alligood joined the staff in October, 1965, as promotional director.⁴⁸ Eddie and Barbara Griffin became dormitory parents in Shavender Hall in the fall of 1966.⁴⁹

Beginning in the fall of 1966, Melvin Styons took a three-year sabbatical for additional studies.⁵⁰ Merritt Watson joined the faculty in 1967 and his wife, Linda, became secretary to the president.⁵¹ Later he also became office manager,⁵² and she began to teach secretarial courses.⁵³ Larry Noyes taught introductory accounting during the fall semester, 1968.⁵⁴ Dianne Britton joined the staff as secretary to the

⁴⁵1965-1966 catalog, p. 3.

⁴⁶1965-1966 catalog, p. 3.

⁴⁷Messenger, August, 1965, p. 3.

⁴⁸Messenger, August, 1965, p. 3.

⁴⁹Messenger, October, 1966, p. 3.

⁵⁰Messenger, October, 1966, p. 3; Messenger, July, 1969, p. 3.

⁵¹Messenger, August, 1967, p. 1.

⁵²1968-1969 catalog, p. 3.

⁵³1968-1969 catalog, p. 6.

⁵⁴Messenger, September, 1968, p. 3.

president in 1968,⁵⁵ a position she held until February, 1971.⁵⁶ John Hamilton became maintenance supervisor in 1968.⁵⁷ Ted Davenport began the Roanoke Press in August, 1968,⁵⁸ and continued as college printer even after his moving to the Victory Boulevard church, Portsmouth, Virginia, in December, 1972.⁵⁹ Charles Spencer served as bookkeeper from June, 1969,⁶⁰ until June, 1971.⁶¹

Leon Williams taught a course in Christian recreation from the fall of 1969 through the spring of 1972.⁶² Joan Sawyer became registrar with the beginning of the 1970-1971 academic year.⁶³ Phillip Alligood transferred from promotional director to superintendent of buildings and grounds in January, 1971.⁶⁴ Rebecca Hedrick became secretary to the president in February, 1971,⁶⁵ and her husband, Stephen, became program director upon his graduation in June.⁶⁶ They stayed with the school until

⁵⁵Messenger, September, 1968, p. 3.

⁵⁶Messenger, April, 1971, p. 3.

⁵⁷Messenger, September, 1968, p. 3.

⁵⁸Messenger, September, 1968, p. 4.

⁵⁹Messenger, January, 1973, p. 3.

⁶⁰Messenger, June, 1969, p. 3.

⁶¹Messenger, June, 1971, p. 3.

⁶²Schedules of classes for these years.

⁶³Messenger, October, 1970, p. 2.

⁶⁴Messenger, February, 1971, p. 3.

⁶⁵Messenger, April, 1971, p. 3.

⁶⁶Messenger, June, 1971, p. 3.

May, 1972.⁶⁷ Linda Joyner served as bookkeeper from May, 1971⁶⁸ until January, 1972.⁶⁹ Melva Whitaker became mailing list supervisor in June, 1971,⁷⁰ and became bookkeeper in January, 1972.⁷¹ Susan Free became secretary and mailing list supervisor in January, 1972.⁷²

The silver anniversary year added six new staff members. Beginning the new year were Garrett and Melissa Lewis as director of student recruitment and secretary to the president, respectively; Randy Masters as cafeteria manager; Joy Bright as bookkeeping assistant; and Lucille Griffin as assistant bookstore manager.⁷³ Upon graduation, Bob Moulden became college evangelist.⁷⁴ Also, sophomore Barry McCarty taught courses in karate that year.⁷⁵

From ten courses, totaling 30 semester hours, the first year, the college had grown to forty-nine courses totaling 111 semester hours at the beginning of the twenty-fifth year. Rather than six instructors, there were thirteen. In 1948, the average teaching load was five hours; in 1972, almost nine. In 1948, the six teachers were the only employees of

⁶⁷Salary records, business office.

⁶⁸Messenger, June, 1971, p. 3.

⁶⁹Messenger, February, 1972, p. 2.

⁷⁰Messenger, June, 1971, p. 3.

⁷¹Messenger, February, 1972, p. 3.

⁷²Messenger, February, 1972, p. 3.

⁷³Messenger, September, 1972, p. 2.

⁷⁴Messenger, June, 1973, p. 2.

⁷⁵Schedule of Classes, Fall, Spring, 1972-1973.

the college; however, by the end of the silver anniversary year, there were thirty on the payrolls.⁷⁶

The first three years of Roanoke Bible College had seen steady growth in total registrations: eighteen, thirty-four, and forty-two. Although the fourth year total enrollment dropped to thirty-five, there were twenty-four full-time students this semester compared to twenty-two, nineteen, and twelve the first semester the preceding three years. For the 1952-1953 year, the total enrollment rose to thirty-nine; yet it then declined each year for the next four: thirty-seven, thirty-six, thirty-one, twenty-eight. In fact, only one freshman enrolled for the 1953-1954 school year. During that year, there were fourteen sophomores, eight juniors, and five seniors.⁷⁷ However, thirteen freshmen are shown in the 1954-1955 yearbook. The total enrollment jumped to fifty-three for 1957-1958; yet the fall full-time enrollment was the same it had been the previous year, twenty-three.

The following fall, a full-time record of thirty-four was set, and this began an upward trend for fall semester full-time enrollment with forty-two, sixty-two, and sixty-three the next three years. This declined to forty-eight in 1963. A climb began again in 1964, and continued steadily through 1970 with these totals: fifty-two, fifty-eight, sixty-one, seventy-three, eighty-six, one hundred twenty, one hundred fifty. The fall full-time enrollment for the last two years of the first quarter century were 136 and 147. The elusive one hundred total enrollment had been

⁷⁶Salary records, business office.

⁷⁷The Lighthouse, 1954, p. 26.

finally surpassed in the 1968-1969 school year, with 101 enrolled. The first semester of the next year saw 129 enroll. The silver anniversary year set a record for total enrollment at 169.⁷⁸

For the fall enrollment of 1948, there were twelve full-time students; eight were from eastern North Carolina, within one hundred miles from Elizabeth City; the remaining four came from Atlanta with the BonDurations, three of these transferred from Atlanta Christian College and the other was Mrs. BonDurant's nephew. For the fall semester of the second year, ten of the nineteen full-time students were eastern North Carolinians; four came from the "Greater Norfolk Area," within fifty miles to the north of the college; four were from Atlanta; and one came from Mosesen, Pennsylvania.

Of the third fall's total full-time enrollment of twenty-two, eighteen came from eastern North Carolina, three from the Norfolk area, and one from Atlanta. In the fall of 1951, all but two of the students came from eastern North Carolina, with one of these two from South Norfolk and the other from Atlanta. The Chatham, Virginia, area was represented with three students in the fall of 1952, and one came from the Hampton-Newport News, Virginia, area. Added to these were one from South Norfolk and twenty-seven from eastern North Carolina. One student came from Texas in the fall of 1953 to join five from Virginia and twenty-one from North Carolina.

Ohio was represented in the fall, 1956, full-time student body, although the student had become acquainted with the college as a result

⁷⁸Studies on pp. 57 through 62 were made from enrollment records in the registrar's files unless otherwise noted.

of being stationed in the United States Navy at Elizabeth City. Another Texan registered in the fall of 1956; he had been a student at Atlanta during the BonDurant administration. The thirty-four full-time students in 1959 followed the same pattern: twenty-three North Carolinians, six Virginians, one from Atlanta, two from Ohio, one from Florida.

This picture began to change in the fall of 1960. Of the seventeen full-time new students, eight came from eastern North Carolina, one from the Norfolk area; but eight came from other states: three from Pennsylvania, two from Indiana, and one each from Maryland, Ohio, and West Virginia. There were more new students from states other than North Carolina and Virginia in this student body than there had been total students from states other than these two in any previous year. No doubt, the tours of the Choral Club into these areas for the first time the previous year were reflected in this broadened base of enrollment.⁷⁹ For the first time, Virginia registered as many new students as North Carolina in the fall of 1961, and surpassed North Carolina by one student the following year. However, North Carolina supplied at least half of all the new students for the next three years until the first semesters of 1966 and 1967 when states other than Virginia and North Carolina tied North Carolina in the number of new students.

The period of fastest growth for the college came between 1967 and 1970. David Branholm graduated from the college in 1967 and entered full-time evangelism.⁸⁰ He was an excellent recruiter of ministers and is probably one of the most important factors in growth during this period. There

⁷⁹Messenger, November, 1959, p. 1; Messenger, April, 1960, p. 1.

⁸⁰Messenger, May, 1967, p. 1; Messenger, January, 1968, p. 3.

were forty-one new students for the fall of 1968; sixteen from North Carolina, twelve from Virginia, and thirteen from other states. The following fall there were fifty-four new students, 48 percent of whom came from states other than North Carolina and Virginia; and Virginia outnumbered North Carolina. Fall, 1970, enrollment included sixty-six new students of which only ten were from North Carolina, thirty were Virginians, and twenty-six were from other states.

Total enrollment slumped in 1971, the year that Bluefield College of Evangelism, of which Branholm was the president, began; there were forty-six new students. The Spokesmen, a quartet composed of students, recruited during the summer before the silver anniversary year, and enrollment set a record at 162 for the fall semester with a record number of new students, sixty-seven. Virginia accounted for 45 percent of these, while North Carolina sent 33 percent, and other states supplied 20 percent. Florida was the home of seven of the fifteen students coming from other states.

Women never outnumbered men in full-time enrollment. For the fall semester of the first year, there were seven men and five women taking a full-time load. Thus 58 percent of this first student body was male. This remained at the same level the second year, but climbed the next three years until the fifth year when the highest percentage of male students was enrolled, 75 percent. Through the next eight years, the percentage of men in the full-time enrollment stayed in the sixties and seventies. But, in the fall of 1961, this percentage fell to 53 and the percentage stayed in the 50's for the rest of the quarter century except for the falls of 1963 and 1964 when it again rose to the 60's. In the fall of 1968, there were forty-three men and forty-three women.

During the first semester of the school, ten students were resident students, and eight were non-resident, making 56 percent residency. This number peaked at 75 percent the fifth and ninth years, but fell to 45 percent during the tenth year. During the second decade, it fluctuated between 53 and 71 percent. During the last five years, it reached an all-time high of 83 percent residency in the fall of 1970, and averaged 73 percent for the five years.

No retention records were kept for the first twenty-five years. In a spot check of full-time fall enrollments beginning in 1948 and then checked every four years, the first year had the smallest percentage to graduate from Roanoke, with only 42 percent of those full-time students in 1948 going on to graduate. Although the next four-year statistic rose to 66 percent, there was no pattern set; for it fell to 61 percent in 1956, rose to 68 percent in 1960, peaked with 79 percent in 1964, and declined to 74 percent in 1968 and 66 percent in 1972. The average of these percentages is 65 percent. This would say that on the average two-thirds of a full-time student body in any given fall would eventually receive a degree at Roanoke. A spot check of new students at four-year intervals, beginning in 1960, revealed that 63 percent of those entering as full-time students in 1960 were graduated; 59 percent of those in 1964; 59 percent of those in 1968; and 52 percent of those in 1972. This leads to the question as to the intention of the students when they first enroll as, on the average, only 58 percent complete a degree program.

During the first decade, the B. A. degree was received by 75 percent of the thirty-six diplomas granted. Only six of the graduates, or 17 per cent, received the B. S. L. Three Master of Arts degrees were

awarded during these years, although the program was not listed in the catalogs. During the second decade, eighty-three were graduated with forty-five, or 54 percent, receiving the B. A. The B. S. L. was conferred upon 29 percent, or twenty-four. The first Christian Workers Certificate was given in 1971 and thirteen more were received during this decade, to account for 17 percent of the total degrees. During the last five years, 229 degrees were granted as follows: forty-one (37 percent) B. A.; forty-four (40 percent) B. S. L.; and twenty-five (23 percent) C. W. C.

The over-all totals and percentages for the first twenty-five years were 113 B. A. (49 percent), 74 B. S. L. (32 percent), 39 C. W. C. (17 percent), and 3 M. A. (1 percent). This total of 229 degrees was awarded to 223 people, as 6 received two degrees. No one ever received the Church Secretarial Certificate, listed in the catalogs from 1948 through 1963, nor the Associate in Arts degree, listed in the catalogs from 1963 through the twenty-fifth year.

During the first decade, 74 percent of the graduates were men. In fact, only one woman was graduated in the first four classes. The percentage of women graduates steadily rose from the 26 percent in the first decade to 38 percent in the second, and 44 percent in the last five years. Of the 223 graduates, 136 were males (61 percent) and 37 were females (39 percent).

These graduates settled close to their alma mater. In fact, four years after this quarter century had ended, 87 of the 215 living graduates from these twenty-five years were living in North Carolina, and 60 were in Virginia. Overall, 76 percent were living within a three hundred mile radius of the college.

The library did not keep pace with growth in enrollment and staff.

In fact, for the first fifteen years, the library was almost non-existent. In the announcement of the college to the brethren in August, 1948, four ways of helping the new enterprize were listed. The fourth was stated: "Send gifts of money, foodstuffs, library books, or other material contributions to the College."⁸¹ The first issue of The Roanoke Messenger expressed appreciation for various gifts received at the beginning of the college, but no mention was made of library books or materials.⁸² The third issue carried the following appeal:

Among the first tasks of a new Bible College is the building of a good library. Do you have a few volumes, either religious or secular, which you are willing to contribute? Perhaps some elderly minister or other leader has a library which he would like to dedicate to the training of these young preachers.⁸³

The same issue thanked Mrs. H. P. Hampton for "several fine volumes for our new library."⁸⁴

Although accession records were not begun until January, 1957, the first three books listed were the gifts of Mrs. H. P. Hampton, given October 30, 1948. The books are Christ in Isaiah, Natural Laws in the Spiritual World, and St. Paul's Concept of Christianity.⁸⁵ The following issue of the Messenger named three library donors, including Mrs. Frankie J. Leighton.⁸⁶ Early accession records cite the Leightons with the gift

⁸¹ "Announcing Roanoke Bible College," p. 4, bound as the first issue of The Roanoke Messenger.

⁸² Messenger, October, 1948, p. 4.

⁸³ Messenger, December, 1948, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Messenger, December, 1948, p. 3.

⁸⁵ Library accession records; see also inscriptions in the books.

⁸⁶ Messenger, January, 1949, p. 3.

of over fifty volumes, and President BonDurant remembers that they regretted having donated to Disciple State Secretary C. C. Ware a large part of their library for his Discipliana collection now at Atlantic Christian College, Wilson.⁸⁷

In February, 1957, when the librarian began accessioning over one thousand books that had been in the attic of Wilkinson Hall when it was purchased, there were only 465 books in the accession record. Most of the books in the Wilkinson Hall collection were fiction or outdated reference books, over 60 percent of which were later discarded.

In December, 1960, announcement was made that the library had been named in honor of Mary E. Griffith of Washington, District of Columbia, who "for several years sent a regular gift each month . . . designated 'library.'" Miss Griffith had been a regular giver to the college since its beginning; she had been superintendent of the junior department of the Mt. Rainier Church where President BonDurant grew up, and he credited her with playing an important role in influencing his life in paths of Christian service. In a letter stating her appreciation for the honor, she stated, "To me a library has always been the acme . . . of an institution."⁸⁸ At this time, there were 1,550 books in the collection.⁸⁹

During 1961 the library grew by two hundred books. These books included many valuable reference works; some of the alumni took an active interest in soliciting and donating books, and the Alumni Association

⁸⁷Personal interview with George W. BonDurant, June 14, 1977.

⁸⁸Messenger, December, 1960, p. 1.

⁸⁹Library accession records.

purchased the Ante-Nicene Christian Library.⁹⁰ At the annual fall meeting of the directors of the college, Howard Waters, student librarian, made a report on the library, although the minutes do not include his remarks.⁹¹ The RBC Bookstore was begun that profits could be used for library expansion.⁹² The first books from the bookstore were accessioned on November 29, 1961.⁹³

During 1962, the collection increased by over eight hundred volumes.⁹⁴ Although it included some books that were only numbers and later were discarded, it also included numerous books of real value given by alumni and a collection of over a hundred volumes, largely reference works, given by Graham Barnes, class of 1959, in memory of his father.⁹⁵

However, in speaking of the academic year 1962-1963, President BonDurant despaired, "The library has made little progress this year, although the bookstore has added some volumes and shelves."⁹⁶ The class that graduated that year donated as its departing gift the first unit of the card catalog.⁹⁷ In August, the Messenger made a front-page appeal for

⁹⁰ Library accession records; see also Alumni Association minutes, August 25, 1961, filed in author's office.

⁹¹ Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 18, 1961, filed in author's office.

⁹² Messenger, October, 1961, p. 3; see also, Messenger, February, 1962, p. 2.

⁹³ Library accession records.

⁹⁴ Library accession records.

⁹⁵ Messenger, January, 1962, p. 2.

⁹⁶ Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 29, 1963.

⁹⁷ Messenger, June, 1963, p. 3.

books, stating Roanoke would be happy to "accept anything from one book to an entire collection."

As Patricia Griffin was preparing to return to the college with her husband who would be teaching, she surveyed where she could best be used in service for the institution. She decided that the library was the place, so she began studies in library science to become the college's first trained librarian. When she joined the staff in the fall of 1963, the school's sixteenth year, 2,650 books had been accessioned. Already the church at Berea in Hertford had undertaken a campaign to collect books⁹⁸ that added approximately one thousand volumes to the collection.⁹⁹ In September, 1964, Mrs. Griffin reported 6,253 volumes in the library.¹⁰⁰ Although a large number of these three thousand new volumes may have been of very dubious value, they also included approximately two hundred more volumes given by Graham Barnes and a large number bought by the bookstore especially for the library.¹⁰¹ At that time, an intensive drive was being made for a total of eight thousand volumes as suggested by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges.¹⁰²

One year later, the fall of 1965, there were 7,088 books in the collection.¹⁰³ The number had grown to 8,900 by the next fall¹⁰⁴ and

⁹⁸ Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 30, 1963.

⁹⁹ Library accession records.

¹⁰⁰ Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 28, 1964.

¹⁰¹ Library accession records.

¹⁰² Messenger, February, 1962, p. 3.

¹⁰³ Minutes of Directors' Meeting, October 4, 1965.

¹⁰⁴ Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 19, 1966.

9,335 in the fall of 1967.¹⁰⁵ In this last year, the librarian reported to the directors that her total income for the previous year had been \$1,259.80, of which \$1,025.00 was given by the bookstore. She pled for more memorial gifts which were used "to purchase the finest books."¹⁰⁶ She also announced at that time that she intended to soon start culling the "multitude of books stored in the attic."¹⁰⁷ Thus she reported a year later that she now had "seven thousand good books."¹⁰⁸ But the culling process continued as she reported only 6,050 books in January, 1970.¹⁰⁹ But then the trend slowly began upward with 6,395 at the end of 1970; 6,784, end of 1971; and 7,129 at the end of 1972.¹¹⁰ A drastic change took place as this number increased by 1,245 books to total 8,374 at the end of 1973.¹¹¹

People, programs, books at Roanoke Bible College for twenty-five years--a study in growth, although not always steadily upward. Yet, as the silver anniversary year ended, there was an adequate staff to train the approximately two hundred students for various areas of Christian service and a library that for the last decade had made steady progress toward becoming a collection that would afford the institution a true resource center.

¹⁰⁵Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 18, 1967.

¹⁰⁶Library Report, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 18, 1967.

¹⁰⁷Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 18, 1967.

¹⁰⁸Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 16, 1968.

¹⁰⁹Library Report, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 19, 1971.

¹¹⁰Library Report, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 30, 1973.

¹¹¹Library Report, Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 29, 1974.

Chapter 4

FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL PLANT GROWTH

A growing institution demanded increased finances. Mention has already been made of the extremely frugal budget of the earliest years. Many of President BonDurant's hours were spent raising the funds to underwrite the expenses of the growing college. From its inception, the college newspaper, The Roanoke Messenger, has been used as a means for appealing for financial support. The first edition listed ten donors, called Ropeholders, with total gifts of \$171.00. Following this list is "Our Appeal" in which financial gifts were solicited so long as they not "be at the expense of your gift to any other loyal Gospel agency."¹ Virtually every copy of the paper since then has carried an appeal for financial gifts.

On November 1, 1948, students at the college sent mimeographed letters to friends who had not yet donated to the college, asking for a Thanksgiving Day gift.² President BonDurant's first appeal letter was mailed January 6, 1949, to those who had already helped financially. This letter asked for gifts toward the \$2500.00 down payment on the building later to be named Wilkinson Hall. On February 9, he mailed a letter to 326 non-donors, outside North Carolina, in which he reported \$1700.00 had

¹Messenger, October, 1948, p. 3.

²This letter and all other subsequent appeal letters are in "Appeal Letters" file in president's office.

been raised and asked for help from these friends. A letter of February 21 reported that the successful down payment campaign had strained the general funds: "obligations for food, lights, heat, publication of 'The Messenger,' rents until we move into our new property, and other current items are pressing upon us for immediate payments." This letter appealed to 44 previous donors and 244 non-donors in North Carolina. On May 19, President BonDurant appealed to two hundred previous donors to help with \$2.00 each to raise the \$500.00 needed to close the first school year with all obligations paid. On June 1, the goal was within \$200.00, and he appealed to former donors to finish the debt. The following day he addressed a letter to the entire mailing list of approximately fifteen hundred to ask for \$1.00 each toward the short-term note of \$1500.00 due on August 15 for Wilkinson Hall. Thus during the first year, the President had sent six appeal letters, and the students had sent one. Gifts and tuition had nearly met current expenses (with a deficit of \$200.00 on June 1) and provided a down payment for the first property. It is interesting to note that President BonDurant's extension classes provided 15 percent of the total income for the first year from tuition alone, not counting the numerous gifts generated by these weekly visits.³

President BonDurant increased his appeal letters to seven the second year. In his third one of that year, he appealed to 427 former donors to become regular givers, people or churches who would try to give a regular amount each month. He wrote:

³This and all subsequent annual income reports are based on comparative annual studies of income and disbursements, copies of which are included in Appendix C.

We need the equivalent of 50 persons, societies, classes, or churches who will give \$10.00 each month; 75 who will give \$5.00 each month; and 125 who will give \$1.00 each month. We will not consider these gifts as "pledges" if you should become unable or unwilling to send them each month.

He proposed that this regular income of \$1,000.00 per month would relieve the frequently-sent appeal letters. However, his letter of May 29 revealed that \$1,000.00 was needed to clear all debts for the second school year. Total income for this year had been \$12,263.68, of which \$1500.00 had been paid on the short-term note on Wilkinson Hall. Regular monthly payments had been made on the property from the general fund, and approximately \$600.00 was spent for kitchen and dormitory equipment.⁴ On-campus tuition accounted for \$2,102.25 of the total income for this second year, or 17 percent of the \$12,263.68.

Only one letter appealing for support for the general fund was sent during the third year. In the other two appeal letters, finances for the new dormitory, Faith Hall, were sought. A January progress report stated that the appeal for patrons to maintain regular monthly support for current expenses at the same time Faith Hall was being funded had been successful.⁵ However, a year later a bold face "URGENT" in the Messenger drew attention to an appeal for \$2,000.00 to cover general fund expenses that had gone unpaid during construction and \$1,000.00 to meet current obligations.⁶ Two weeks later about one-third of the goal had been reached.⁷ And two months after the first appeal, only \$1,200.00 had been

⁴Messenger, November, 1949, p. 3.

⁵Messenger, January, 1951, p. 8.

⁶Messenger, January, 1952, p. 3.

⁷Appeal letter, no date, filed before March 13, 1952.

received toward paying off the old accounts, leaving \$800.00 unpaid,⁸ and this amount increased to \$1,400.00 of unpaid bills at the end of the school year.⁹ During this two-year period, Faith Hall, estimated at the time of construction to be worth \$40,000.00,¹⁰ was built at a cost of \$12,923.38,¹¹ \$3,667.52 of which was borrowed.¹² Total income for these two years was \$31,143.73, of which 17 percent came from on-campus tuition. Extension class tuition only provided \$125.00 during the third year and produced no income during the fourth.

The fifth year began with all past bills paid up,¹³ and even though a campaign was launched to raise \$1,000.00 to repair Wilkinson Hall,¹⁴ general fund bills were mostly current in January.¹⁵ In March, the "Mortgage Free in '53" Campaign was launched to remove the \$7,500.00 indebtedness on the college property. During the following ten months, March through December, \$750.00 was to be raised each month with the college's territory divided into districts for each of these ten goals.¹⁶ A gift by E. T. Watson of Raleigh of \$1,500.00 at Christmas enabled the mortgage to be burned on January 25.¹⁷ As could be expected, the fervor of the

⁸Appeal letter, March 13, 1952.

⁹Appeal letter, May 31, 1952.

¹⁰Appeal letter, May 1, 1951.

¹¹Messenger, March, 1953, p. 3.

¹²Messenger, July, 1951, p. 1.

¹³Messenger, October, 1952, p. 1.

¹⁴Messenger, October, 1952, p. 3.

¹⁵Messenger, January, 1953, p. 1.

¹⁶Messenger, March, 1953, p. 1.

¹⁷Messenger, January, 1954, p. 1.

campaign to raise money for a special fund was detrimental to the general fund, with only \$333.50 contributed to the general fund during November, 1953.¹⁸ By May 18, the outstanding bills had been reduced to approximately \$900.00.¹⁹ The total income for these two years was \$18,435.55 and \$21,249.79, but it could be reported in September, 1954: ". . . the college property is now mortgage free. General fund bills amount to only a few hundred dollars, and salaries are in the best condition in several years."²⁰

During the seventh year, the corner property, adjoining Wilkinson Hall to the north, was purchased. The property contained sixteen thousand square feet and a nine-room house, divided into two apartments. The lot provided a parking lot and recreational space; the house was used for two faculty families.²¹ On January 24, 1955, a campaign was begun to raise \$1,500.00 for a down payment toward the \$10,000.00 purchase price; thirty days later the goal was reached.²² The new building was named Shavender Hall in honor of Herman G. Shavender who had been chief in charge of construction of Faith Hall and renovation of Wilkinson Hall while he was a student.²³ And, even though the general fund suffered, a campaign to clear up bills was "fully successful, and for the first time in its seven

¹⁸ Messenger, January, 1954, p. 4.

¹⁹ Appeal letter, May 18, 1954.

²⁰ Messenger, September, 1954, p. 3.

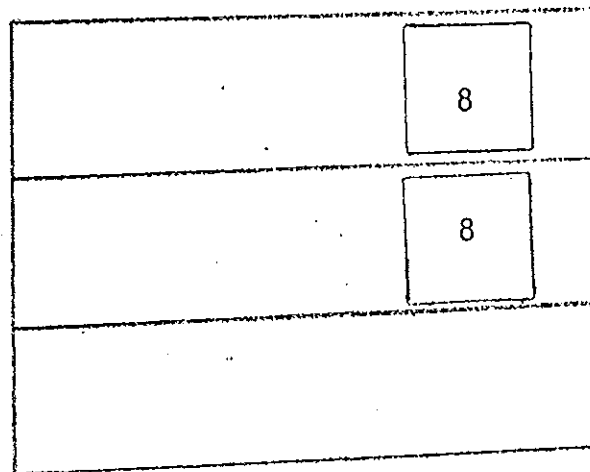
²¹ Messenger, February, 1955, p. 1; Appeal letter, March 21, 1955; Messenger, September, 1955, p. 1. See map on following page for this property.

²² Messenger, March, 1955, p. 1.

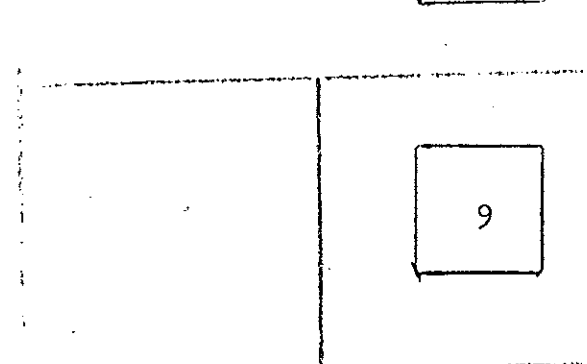
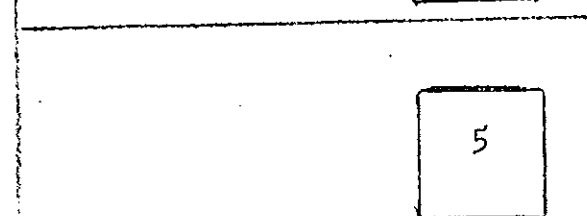
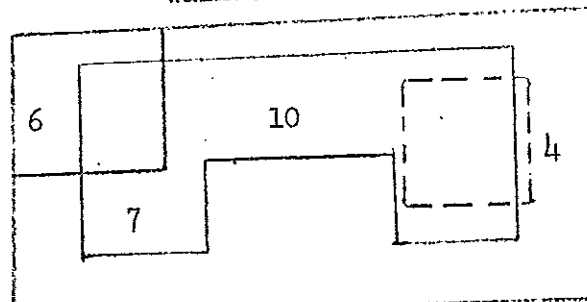
²³ Messenger, August, 1955, p. 4.

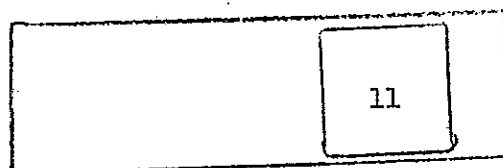
LEGEND:

1. Wilkinson, 1949
2. Faith, 1951
3. BonDurant, 1951
4. Shavender, 1955 (razed, 1969)
5. Presley, 1960
6. Corner property, 1964
7. Heritage (first phase), 1965
8. Providence and 805, 1967
9. Old Yellow, 1969
10. Heritage (second phase), 1969
11. JEB, purchased by Julia E. BonDurant, 1970



Walnut Street

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year history Roanoke Bible College ended a school year with all bills paid."²⁴ The total income for this year was \$16,611.35, and the college now owned three buildings: Wilkinson Hall, Faith Hall, and Shavender Hall, the first two of which were mortgage free. Adjacent to these properties on the south was the president's home.

Repairs on Shavender Hall in August began a financial crisis²⁵ that was quickened by three hurricanes that devastated the area. The hurricanes, although causing very little damage to the college property, did "substantial damage . . . to many of our patrons in the very area where our heaviest support has been."²⁶ In addition, on September 29, the directors initiated a campaign to raise \$2,000.00 for the first of two annual notes on Shavender Hall.²⁷ This \$2,000.00 was raised by March,²⁸ and the eighth year ended with \$1,000.00 owed in general fund bills.²⁹ Total income for this eighth year was \$17,401.20.

By time school opened the ninth year, the indebtedness had reached \$1,989.81. President BonDurant began a campaign of five appeal letters, spaced two weeks apart, informing patrons of the need and reporting progress; the last of these letters, on November 15, reported that only \$580.39 was still owed. By early December the indebtedness was cleared.³⁰ This

²⁴Messenger, August, 1955, p. 1.

²⁵Messenger, October, 1955, p. 4.

²⁶Messenger, October, 1955, p. 4.

²⁷Messenger, October, 1955, p. 2.

²⁸Messenger, March, 1956, p. 1.

²⁹Appeal letter, September 20, 1956.

³⁰Messenger, December, 1956, p. 1.

continued into the new calendar year.³¹ But the campaign to raise \$500.00 to pay the final annual note plus an additional \$500.00 on the first mortgage again took its toll in the general fund.³² The Shavender Hall campaign was successful.³³ So, during the 1956-1957 school year, President BonDurant sent ten appeal letters; yet, in July, \$2,000.00 was owed and total income between January and June had been \$2,400.00 less than the same period the previous year.³⁴ Total income for the year was \$18,230.46.

The tenth year saw two financial campaigns inaugurated: the September meeting of the directors proposed to pay off the Shavender Hall mortgage by making the remaining monthly payments on a weekly basis and thus cut to sixteen months the payment period.³⁵ It was proposed that fifty-two congregations be found which would give the \$69.70 payments for the first year, and then that sixteen of these would be asked to give again so that all payments would be made by January 27, 1959.³⁶ In January, a campaign was begun to insure \$1,000.00 a month in regular gifts so that the repeated appeals, which were "embarrassing, expensive, and time consuming," might be eliminated. It was reported that during 1959 thirty-seven individuals and churches had given "regular gifts" each month, totaling about one-third of all gifts. Regular gift cards were sent out to

³¹Messenger, January, 1957, p. 1.

³²Messenger, January, 1957, p. 3.

³³Messenger, March, 1957, p. 2.

³⁴Appeal letter, July 24, 1957.

³⁵Messenger, October, 1957, p. 1.

³⁶Appeal letter, September 25, 1958.

everyone on the mailing list.³⁷ By the end of the school year, 153 regular givers were sending \$671.28 per month.³⁸ Total income for this tenth year was \$20,245.09.

The first decade had been a continuous financial struggle. The ten years could be characterized by emergency appeals. And although total income rose steadily during the first six years from \$7,609.99 to \$21,249.79, it dropped sharply the seventh year to \$16,697.65 and did not again rise to the peak for the rest of the decade. The sixth year's summit came from the successful campaign to end the school year with no debts. However, a campaign to remove the mortgage on Shavender Hall (just over half the amount of the previous mortgage) which was begun during the tenth year never motivated the people; and the mortgage was not burned until the sixteenth year. But, in spite of the financial struggle, two large pieces of property had been acquired, the houses on each of them had been extensively repaired, and Faith Hall had been built. This plant had cost over \$47,000.00, yet slightly over \$3,000.00 was owed on it.

The bulk of financial support during this period came from North Carolina. Through August of 1956, The Roanoke Messenger ran its ropeholders list. After the first one, without exception, the vast majority of givers as well as the amount of gifts came from North Carolina. In the February, 1955, issue, thirty donors who had contributed more than \$500.00 during the first six and a half years were listed. Except for President BonDurant's family and former Bible school superintendent, all but three were North

³⁷Messenger, February, 1958, p. 4.

³⁸Messenger, May, 1958, p. 4.

Carolínians.³⁹ In the accompanying list of donors who had contributed twenty-five or more times, over 80 percent were North Carolínians.

During this first ten years, total income was \$163,388.14. Of this, \$118,383.19, or 73 percent, was from gifts, and \$29,905.22, or 16 percent, came from room, board, and tuition. The remaining sum came from the sale of textbooks, extension class tuition, and miscellaneous sources.

Tuition charges were raised at the beginning of the second decade. Estimated total charges for on-campus students were raised to \$576.00 from \$340.00 which had been the charge since leaving the \$308.00 of the first four years.⁴⁰ Previously, all dormitory students had been required to work at various chores for approximately four hours per week. No credit had been directly applied to accounts for this work, but this had been taken into consideration in figuring charges. Under the new charges beginning in the fall of 1958, work would be optional, and a student would be credited \$1.00 per hour on his account for all work.⁴¹ This did not, however, increase income from students the first year; for although the full-time enrollment increased slightly and the resident enrollment decreased slightly, the total room, board, and tuition collected for the school year was \$3,491.85 as compared to \$3,739.98 the previous year.

By February, 1959, the year-old regular gift campaign had reached \$823.96 from two hundred donors. The largest gift was \$40.00, and there were seventy-six \$1.00 gifts; there were only nine gifts above \$10.00.⁴² A concentrated effort was being made to avoid special appeals. Nothing

³⁹ Messenger, February, 1955, p. 5.

⁴⁰ See catalogs for these years.

⁴¹ Messenger, September, 1958, p. 3.

⁴² Messenger, February, 1959, p. 1.

was said in The Roanoke Messenger about either the Shavender Hall campaign or regular gift campaign. In fact, there was no appeal for financial support in four of the issues of the eleventh year.⁴³ And, in the other issues, the appeals were very subtle; there were no bold-faced "HELP" or "URGENT" pleas. Total income was \$20,402.19, slightly more than the previous year, but gifts were down about \$300.00. Only more income from camp than the previous year caused the total to surpass that former year.

The tight financial condition of the college was reflected in a motion at the fall meeting of the directors at the beginning of the twelfth year that "Shavender Hall mortgage be removed from special appeal status." The motion was carried. Need for more regular gifts was also stressed.⁴⁴ However, the winter meeting of the directors decided to renew the Shavender Hall campaign by proposing that each student, graduate, faculty member, incorporator, director, and auxiliary member pay or raise \$10.00 by April 1. This would produce the final \$2,000.00 needed.⁴⁵ The issue of the Messenger for May was still hoping that the Mortgage would be burned at graduation;⁴⁶ yet it was not.⁴⁷ The January meeting of the directors was told that 230 donors were now making regular gifts of

⁴³Messenger, December, 1958; Messenger, March, 1959; Messenger, May, 1959; Messenger, July, 1959.

⁴⁴Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 14, 1959.

⁴⁵Messenger, March, 1960, p. 3.

⁴⁶Messenger, May, 1960, p. 4.

⁴⁷Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 30, 1963.

\$936.66 monthly.⁴⁸ Total income for this year rose to \$22,179.60 and tuition rose to 22 percent of the total.

The commodious house adjacent to the BonDurant property on the south was offered for sale to the college in the summer of 1960 just when it seemed that prospects of total on-campus registration would overflow both Faith Hall and the dining room, and that the chapel would be too small for the student body and faculty. The building on this property could house girls and furnish space for the chapel so that Faith Hall could be used exclusively for boys and the cafeteria could expand into another room in Wilkinson.⁴⁹ The directors, in a special meeting, proposed that the 156 officers, alumni, and students raise \$1560.00 of the \$2,000.00 down payment toward the \$16,000.00 purchase price.⁵⁰ By August 27, \$1,200.00 had been raised;⁵¹ the building was occupied by twelve girls and Miss Presley at the beginning of the school year;⁵² and by September 19, \$2,358.86 had been raised.⁵³ A Messenger article in January appealed for 365 new regular givers in 1961.⁵⁴ In the spring a brochure was mailed to churches beyond the Roanoke area asking for support that so far had come from the immediate area.⁵⁵ The May Messenger again appealed for

⁴⁸Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 25, 1960.

⁴⁹Letter, dated July 5, 1960, filed with Directors' Minutes.

⁵⁰Minutes of Directors' Meeting, July 11, 1960, and letter, dated July 22, 1960, filed with these minutes.

⁵¹Letter, dated August 27, 1960, filed with Directors' Minutes.

⁵²Messenger, September, 1960, p. 3.

⁵³Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 19, 1960.

⁵⁴Messenger, January, 1961, p. 3.

⁵⁵"The Atlantic Coast States Need Roanoke Bible College," bound in Roanoke Messenger after April, 1961.

regular givers and announced that "For the past 13 years, 95 percent of the support for Roanoke had come from churches and individuals within a two hundred mile area."⁵⁶ During this thirteenth year the first April Showers campaign was launched; this new method would enable a number of future years to close debt free. After recounting the blessings of the year, the editor of the Messenger concluded:

In the fact of these showers of blessings, we ought to close with "April Showers of Dollar Bills." We are appealing to our friends who are not regular givers to Roanoke, to join in this campaign, and send us one dollar in April and one in May. This is a reasonable and painless way to solve our problem [unpaid bills].⁵⁷

Total income surpassed \$30,000.00 this year by \$91.13.

In April and May of 1962, the April Showers campaign was extended by asking students, alumni, and officers to mail letters to friends asking for one thousand gifts of \$5.00 and \$10.00 as there was a deficit in the general fund of \$6,000.00.⁵⁸ By May 3, the deficit had been lowered to \$3,500.00.⁵⁹ Total gifts for this year were \$32,917.89.

Another concentrated effort to enlist regular givers was launched in the fall of 1962 with the appointment of a Regular Gift Committee by the directors.⁶⁰ Success for this could be seen in the annual report that regular gifts had increased more than \$2,000.00 during the fifteenth year over the previous year. And this, coupled with favorable response from April Showers, produced a report in June that the college was "in our best

⁵⁶Messenger, May, 1961, p. 3.

⁵⁷Messenger, April, 1961, p. 4.

⁵⁸Appeal letter, March 29, 1962.

⁵⁹Appeal letter, May 3, 1962.

⁶⁰Messenger, November, 1962, p. 1.

financial condition of four years."⁶¹ The budget was now reported as \$2,378.00 per month;⁶² the property value had risen above \$97,000.00 with only \$9,000.00 indebtedness.⁶³ Tuition had provided 24 percent of the \$34,885.60 income this year.

During the sixteenth year, two mortgages were burned and additional property was purchased. The second mortgage on the New Girls' Dormitory was burned at the fall directors' meeting,⁶⁴ and the first mortgage on Shavender Hall was burned at the winter meeting.⁶⁵ At this latter meeting, they also voted to buy the corner lot adjacent to the Shavender Hall property for \$3,500.00,⁶⁶ which was paid for in full on June 30.⁶⁷ Total income rose to \$36,347.49 that year.

In the fall of the seventeenth year, a building fund campaign was launched. The directors called for each member of the Roanoke Family to give or raise \$100.00 before the January meeting.⁶⁸ In November, a special building committee of incorporators and alumni met with representatives of the Paden Company.⁶⁹ This company drew up plans and estimated price of the proposed building to house classrooms, offices, and a temporary chapel⁷⁰

⁶¹Messenger, June, 1976, p. 2.

⁶²Messenger, February, 1963, p. 3.

⁶³Messenger, February, 1963, p. 1.

⁶⁴Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 30, 1963.

⁶⁵Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 28, 1964.

⁶⁶Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 28, 1964.

⁶⁷Messenger, July, 1964, p. 1.

⁶⁸Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 28, 1964.

⁶⁹Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 26, 1965.

⁷⁰Messenger, October, 1964, p. 1.

to be \$52,000.00.⁷¹ By May, \$32,000.00 had been pledged and ground breaking was held on May 15.⁷² Total income for this year dropped for the first time in the decade, to \$33,990.76.

The new building was completed and occupied in early November, dedicated on Thanksgiving Day,⁷³ named Heritage Hall in January,⁷⁴ and by July 9 had been completely paid for.⁷⁵ With the occupancy of Heritage Hall, the downstairs of Wilkinson Hall was completely given to cafeteria, and the upstairs was used entirely for library. In the midst of raising the last of the money for the new building, a successful April Showers reaped \$5,108.01 toward a general fund deficit of \$3,000.00 plus approximately the same amount in salaries.⁷⁶ Although all was not paid at the end of the school year, the college was in the best financial condition of three years.⁷⁷ In the light of this, a campaign was begun in June to secure one hundred new regular givers⁷⁸ after launching in January a campaign to find fifty individuals or churches to give \$1.00 a day for the second unit of the new building to be used as a library and cafeteria.⁷⁹ Income rose by over \$15,000.00 above the previous year to \$49,351.70.

⁷¹Messenger, January, 1965, p. 1.

⁷²Messenger, May, 1965, p. 2.

⁷³Messenger, November, 1965, p. 1.

⁷⁴Messenger, January, 1966, p. 1.

⁷⁵Messenger, August, 1966, p. 1.

⁷⁶Letter from President BonDurant to alumni and officers, dated March 16, 1966, bound as A/O Letters, available in his office.

⁷⁷Messenger, June, 1966, p. 1.

⁷⁸Messenger, June, 1966, p. 1.

⁷⁹Messenger, January, 1966, p. 3.

During the nineteenth year, there was a concentration on efforts to secure fifty dollar-a-day donors to build the library-cafeteria section of Heritage Hall.⁸⁰ By August, half-way point had been reached.⁸¹ Over \$4,000.00 in April Showers enabled the school year to close debt free.⁸² Because of substantial gifts of the Presley family (the family of Mrs. BonDurant and Miss Presley), the new girls' dormitory was named Presley Dormitory at the beginning of this year.⁸³ Total income took another substantial step upward to \$63,177.65.

Anticipated increase in enrollment for the twentieth year and the return of Merritt and Linda Watson from graduate school to positions on the staff necessitated additional housing. Two houses in the eight hundred block of Poindexter Street⁸⁴ became available. The third annual Roanoke Day was successful in raising more than the necessary \$4,000.00 down payment toward this property.⁸⁵ Professor and Mrs. Watson occupied the downstairs, and Professor Beth BonDurant and nine girls lived upstairs at 803 Poindexter, which was named Providence Hall. The house at 805 Poindexter was rented for income toward making the annual payment.⁸⁶ With thirty-four and a half of the needed fifty commitments promised for the

⁸⁰A/O Letter, September 8, 1966; A/O Letter, February 7, 1967.

⁸¹A/O Letter, August 14, 1967.

⁸²A/O Letter, May 2, 1967; A/O Letter, June 27, 1967.

⁸³First use of new name, A/O Letter, September 8, 1966.

⁸⁴Pennsylvania Avenue was renamed Poindexter Street in 1964, see Messenger, March, 1964, p. 3.

⁸⁵Messenger, September, 1967, p. 2; Messenger, December, 1967, p. 3.

⁸⁶Messenger, September, 1967, p. 2.

library-cafeteria, the directors voted at their winter meeting to start construction on March 1, 1969, of not only this unit but also the middle unit which houses chapel upstairs and various classrooms and offices downstairs.⁸⁷ An April Showers campaign that produced almost \$6,700.00 enabled the second straight year to end debt free and the annual note of \$3,625.00 plus interest to be paid on Providence Hall and 805 Poindexter.⁸⁸ Also, by April, the fifty dollar-a-day commitments had been promised,⁸⁹ and by the beginning of the next school year, twelve more for the middle unit had been promised.⁹⁰ Another substantial increase in income brought the total for the twentieth year to \$79,304.84.

The second decade was a period of stabilization of the financial picture. In extant records, only five general appeals were mailed.⁹¹ By the end of the decade, the \$1,000.00 a month in regular gifts was being received,⁹² and occasional gifts were double that amount for the final year.⁹³ April Showers had enabled the last two school years of the decade to end debt free and had aided the year before these to almost succeed in having all debts paid. Total income for the decade was \$402,648.85; the combined income of the last two years of the decade was 86 percent of

⁸⁷Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 23, 1968; Messenger, February, 1968, p. 2.

⁸⁸Messenger, June, 1968, p. 1.

⁸⁹Messenger, April, 1968, p. 2.

⁹⁰Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 16, 1968.

⁹¹Appeal letters file.

⁹²Annual reports show over \$13,000.00 in regular gifts for the last two years of the decade.

⁹³\$24,608.19.

the total income for the first decade. Except for one school year, 1964-1965, income each successive year was an increase over the former. For four of these times, the increment was basically \$2,000.00; but starting with the 1965-1966 year, the last three increments of the decade were approximately \$15,000.00. The total income of the last year of the decade was almost four times that of the first year of the decade and over ten times that of the first year of the college.

During this decade, Presley Dormitory, a corner lot for Heritage Hall, and Providence Hall with its adjacent property had all been purchased; the first phase of Heritage Hall had been built. Worth of buildings and equipment surpassed \$200,000.00 of which only \$14,500.00 was owed on Providence.⁹⁴ The \$52,000.00 cost of Heritage Hall was raised within twenty months and was completely paid within eight months after completion. Only two appeal letters to the general public were sent to raise this money although much Messenger space and numerous officer-alumni letters were devoted to raising the money.

Tuition accounted for 24 percent of the income during the second decade, and 27 percent of the last year of that decade. Tuition charges remained stable throughout the period, but efforts were begun during the 1965-1966 school year to have a portion of each student's room, board, and tuition paid in cash, rather than permitting all of this to be worked off in scholarship work. During that year, \$60.00 in cash was to be paid each semester in addition to cash paid for fees.⁹⁵ This cash minimum was

⁹⁴Financial report for 1967, filed with Directors' Minutes, January 23, 1961.

⁹⁵1965-1966 catalog, p. 9.

increased to \$80.00 for 1966-1967⁹⁶ and to \$90.00 for 1967-1968.⁹⁷

Although the full-time average enrollment only grew from fifty to fifty-eight between the sixteenth and seventeenth years, a 16 percent increase, collection of room, board, and tuition rose 60 percent.

Upon this financial stability of the second decade, Roanoke launched into extensive physical growth and unprecedented financial gains during the last five years of the first quarter century of its history. During the first semester of the twenty-first year, demolition of Shavender Hall was begun to make room for the future expansion of Heritage Hall.⁹⁸ Ground was broken for these additional wings on Wednesday of the Gospel Rally with assistance from presidents of four sister Bible colleges.⁹⁹ By the following week, \$83,088.23 had been pledged toward the \$110,000.00 estimated cost of these units. Already \$47,487.15 had been received. In addition, work had begun preparing the land for the building.¹⁰⁰ Total income for this twenty-first year was \$122,750.90, which was an increase of \$43,446.06 over the previous year; although there was considerable increase in the building fund, \$15,381.46 more was collected in the general fund. And for the third straight year, the school year ended with all bills paid.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶1966-1967 catalog, p. 9.

⁹⁷1967-1968 catalog, p. 11.

⁹⁸A/O Letter, December 2, 1968.

⁹⁹Messenger, March, 1969, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰A/O Letter, March 10, 1969.

¹⁰¹A/O Letter, May 25, 1969.

The girls in Shavender Hall had been placed in other dormitories when the former was razed the previous year, but prospect for increased enrollment for the 1969-1970 year decreed that Wilkinson Hall would be needed to house boys and additional space must be found for girls. Also, it was thought that a permanent dormitory would need to be eventually built on the southern end of the original block, and thus houses there should be purchased when available. With these two needs, the college purchased the huge dwelling on the northwest corner of Poindexter and Cypress streets. The house, referred to by the college as Old Yellow, contained sixteen rooms and five baths; it was purchased for \$30,000.00 with \$2,000.00 paid as down payment.¹⁰² Girls were housed in the building with Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Griffin as house parents.¹⁰³

The new sections of Heritage Hall were occupied by opening day of the twenty-first year, but approximately one month's work was still left to be done before completion.¹⁰⁴ The building was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day; and by April, the complete \$110,000.00 had been paid.¹⁰⁵ But as the campaign to liquidate these bills was being pushed, the general fund registered a deficit of \$14,406.48 in unpaid bills and salaries.¹⁰⁶ Although there was a record April Showers of \$8,049.31,¹⁰⁷ this year did not close debt free.¹⁰⁸ The record enrollment had more than consumed the

¹⁰²A/O Letter, August 15, 1969.

¹⁰³A/O Letter, June 30, 1969.

¹⁰⁴Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 15, 1969.

¹⁰⁵Messenger, April, 1970, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶A/O Letter, April 24, 1970.

¹⁰⁷A/O Letter, April 28, 1971.

¹⁰⁸Messenger, April, 1971, p. 2.

increased income, up to \$150,262.49, with all the gain being in the general fund. As regular gifts had averaged only \$1300.00 per month even with inflation and additional students, a new concentrated effort was made to enlist more and greater regular gifts.¹⁰⁹

The regular gift campaign continued with a report to the directors in September, 1970, that \$1,430.00 additional monthly regular gifts were needed.¹¹⁰ By June, \$1,430.00 additional monthly regular gifts had been promised,¹¹¹ and the average monthly income was approximately \$900.00 above the previous year. President BonDurant's sister, Julia, provided a house across the street from the campus to be used to house fifteen girls for this year.¹¹² In January, the mortgage for Providence Hall and the adjacent property, now housing the Roanoke Press, was burned, climaxing a campaign which surpassed its goal of raising \$7,685.00 to pay off the mortgage on this property.¹¹³ Then a record April Showers of over \$12,000.00 enabled the year to close debt free.¹¹⁴

By November of this twenty-fourth year, \$1,228.00 in additional regular gifts had been promised,¹¹⁵ but in January the directors voted to try to increase the regular giving by another \$1,000.00.¹¹⁶ Regular gifts

¹⁰⁹A/O Letter, June 2, 1970; Messenger, June, 1970, p. 4.

¹¹⁰Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 22, 1970.

¹¹¹Messenger, June, 1971, p. 4.

¹¹²Messenger, September, 1970, p. 3.

¹¹³Messenger, January, 1971, p. 2.

¹¹⁴Messenger, June, 1971, p. 2.

¹¹⁵Messenger, November, 1971, p. 4.

¹¹⁶Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 25, 1972.

did increase considerably during this year, to an average of \$3,141.00 per month. In addition, \$8,000.00 was raised on Roanoke Day to pay two annual payments on Old Yellow.¹¹⁷ At the fall meeting of the directors, mention was made of the possibility of acquiring the railroad property across the street from the campus.¹¹⁸ In November, Norfolk Southern Railway rejected the college's request of donating the property and suggested that "a very realistic offer" be made.¹¹⁹ On March 9, 1972, the Railway agreed to sell the 18.2 acres of land for \$125,000.00; \$5,000.00 had already been sent as a deposit, \$10,000.00 was due on September 9, and the remaining amount was to be paid by the end of 1972. President BonDurant wrote the officers and alumni on March 13, seeking to find five individuals or churches who would give \$5,000.00, seventy-five who would give \$1,000.00; and two hundred fifty who would give \$100.00 each. At the time this first letter was sent, \$21,300.00 had already been promised.¹²⁰ On June 5, it was reported that over half the amount had been promised (\$66,700.00) and that April Showers had produced another debt-free commencement, the fifth in six years.¹²¹ Total income rose over \$42,000.00 above the previous year to \$214,167.71.

The silver anniversary year opened with a continued push to raise the money for the railroad property. By November 6, the goal had been reached in pledges; and already \$87,875.43 in cash had been received at

¹¹⁷ Messenger, February, 1972, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ Minutes of Directors' Meeting, September 21, 1971.

¹¹⁹ A/O Letter, November 21, 1971.

¹²⁰ A/O Letter, March 13, 1972. See Appendix D.

¹²¹ A/O Letter, June 5, 1972.

the college.¹²² On December 4, a gift of \$5,000.00 carried the cash over the purchase price.¹²³ Thus, in less than nine months after the agreement to sell, the \$125,000.00 had been raised. On December 14, in an impressive chapel service in the college chapel, the deed for the property was presented to the college.¹²⁴ However, the money for the property continued to come in, and by January the goal had been exceeded by over \$20,000.00.¹²⁵ These additional funds were added to the building fund.¹²⁶

In early January, work began on clearing the new property of trees and overgrown shrubbery as well as dilapidated buildings so that the "rail-road property" might be transformed into the "East Campus."¹²⁷ This clearing continued throughout the year, even with some days being taken out from classes for a combined clean-up effort of students and staff.¹²⁸

Another campaign to increase regular gifts was inaugurated in January, 1972,¹²⁹ but its over-all success was severely limited as total regular gifts for this year were \$100.00 a month less than the former year. By the time of April Showers, the general fund deficit was over \$8,800.00,¹³⁰ but April Showers cleared this and replenished the East

¹²² A/O Letter, November 6, 1972.

¹²³ A/O Letter, December 6, 1972.

¹²⁴ Program bound with A/O Letter, December 13, 1972.

¹²⁵ A/O Letter, January 30, 1973.

¹²⁶ Messenger, January, 1973, p. 2.

¹²⁷ A/O Letter, January 19, 1973; see also Messenger, January, 1973, p. 1.

¹²⁸ Messenger, February, 1973, pp. 1-3; Messenger, April, 1973, p. 3.

¹²⁹ Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 19, 1973.

¹³⁰ A/O Letter, April 16, 1973.

Campus beautification fund,¹³¹ and the sixth debt-free commencement in seven years was celebrated.¹³² Work continued on improving East Campus with hope to have ball fields ready for camp, but this goal was not reached.¹³³ By the end of summer, the northern end was ready to seed, 509 feet of the 1,100 feet of waterfront had been bulkheaded by staff and friends, and the station and warehouses were virtually gone.¹³⁴ Total income for this last year of the first quarter century was \$352,856.07.

During this five year period, total income was \$1,102,063.50 as compared to a sum of \$566,036.99 for the first twenty years. Average yearly income for the first twenty years was \$28,306.85 as compared to \$202,412.70 annual average for these last five years. The income had risen substantially every year during this period, the average increase being \$33,715.72 for the first four years, with a staggering \$138,688.96 increase the final year.

Room, board, and tuition had produced a greater proportion of income during this half decade. Total charges were raised to \$660.00 in 1968-1969,¹³⁵ \$716.00 in 1969-1970,¹³⁶ and \$1,008.40 in 1971-1972.¹³⁷ Additionally, the cash minimum was raised to \$126.00 per semester in

¹³¹A/O Letter, June 15, 1973.

¹³²Messenger, June, 1973, p. 2.

¹³³Messenger, May, 1973, p. 3; see also Messenger, August, 1973, p. 3.

¹³⁴Messenger, August, 1973, p. 3.

¹³⁵1968-1969 catalog, p. 10.

¹³⁶1969-1970 catalog, p. 10.

¹³⁷1971-1972 catalog, p. 10.

1968-1969¹³⁸ and to \$180.00 in 1971-1972.¹³⁹ With increased charges, increased cash minimums, and increased enrollment, room, board, and tuition accounted for 40 percent of the income other than property and building fund income for these five years.

The library-cafeteria and middle units of Heritage Hall were built and paid for during this period. Old Yellow was bought, and about \$9,000.00 was still owed on it at the end of the quarter century. The East Campus was purchased, completely paid for, and beautified. And \$36,849.13 was in the building fund. Total worth of equipment and buildings just surpassed one-half million dollars. This was a long way from the rented quarters of the first year.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸1968-1969 catalog, p. 11.

¹³⁹1971-1972 catalog, p. 11.

¹⁴⁰See map, p. 73, of college property at the end of 25 years; Also see Appendix D.

Chapter 5

MEMORIES OF COLLEGE LIFE

A Bible college history must include more than statistics on growth in students, faculty, resources, income--more than a chronicling of major events from year to year--more than the names of important characters who have played the major roles in all of these; for Bible college is more than these. Bible college is campus life, feelings, impressions, memories, friendships, experiences. But how does the historian record these? This author asked alumni to sketch their memories from their days at Roanoke.¹ The following is a composite of these memories, linked with other primary sources, to reveal life on Roanoke Bible College campus for the first twenty-five years.

The memories that received the most attention were those associated with choral tours. As one alumna wrote:

Probably the most outstanding memories I have of RBC are those pertaining to choral tours. There is no way to describe the learning experiences and the fun of those trips--always meeting new people, going places for the first time, and just the fun of being with classmates and getting to know each other better.²

¹ Author made two general appeals to the alumni in alumni-officer letters of June 6, and July 18, 1977. To these, there were only six responses. He then selected twenty-four alumni from these first twenty-five years; from these, he received sixteen responses. It is possible, since he mentioned some specific items, that he has partially colored the response by his question; if they only concentrated on those items to the exclusion of writing about other areas of their interest. The request stated, "...; but I want your memories of classes, parties, rallies, trips, programs, friends, dorm life, growth, learning, literary societies, contests, practice preaching, work, romances, etc."

² Letter of Carolyn Busby Schultz, '69, to author, May 24, 1978.

Another stated, "I'd give up a lot of memories before I'd part with the ones of tours."³

Miss Pearl Presley, director of the Choral Club, is remembered for her patience and concern. One student provided Miss Presley a real challenge to teach him to sing on key, so she worked with him in private sessions. After he had been in school a few weeks, his mother, seeing Miss Presley, said, "They tell me you have my boy in a music class; he can't sing." But the reply came quickly, "Anybody who can talk can learn to sing." So, she taught him as she did countless others.⁴

The tours, during those early years when they were no farther than could be traveled to and returned from the same evening provided fond memories although they were tiring and under very crowded conditions with so many cramped into the cars.⁵ The extended tours of later years afforded opportunities to meet new Christians and enjoy the warmth of hospitality in their homes⁶ and established friendships that still exist.⁷ They also were educational; one student stated she toured twenty-three states and parts of Canada.⁸ Another states that his visit to the home of

³Letter of Shelby Jones Bennett, '66, to author, June 1, 1978.

⁴Letter of Melvin D. Styons, '53, to author, June 2, 1978; see also cassette of Geneva Anderson, '55, to author, June 16, 1978.

⁵See Anderson cassette; Letter of Lamar Tillman, '56, to author, June 8, 1978; Letter of Pernell Gallop, '54, to author, May 29, 1978.

⁶See Letter of Ted Davenport, '60, to author, September 6, 1977; Letter of Grace Scruggs Lewis, '62, to author, June 9, 1978; Bennett letter; and Letter of Cindy Simmons Lease, '71, to author, June 5, 1978.

⁷For example, memories of author concerning the East family at Chatham, Virginia.

⁸Bennett letter.

Alexander Campbell was an inspiration he would never forget.⁹ A Master's Twelve tour introduced one student to the mission field where she spent two summer internships.¹⁰

Many humorous memories linger from those tours. There was the time that Mrs. BonDurant had the words to one of the songs the Freshman Chorus could not seem to remember written on a card hanging around her neck and covered by her buttoned jacket. When it came time for that song, she simply unbuttoned her jacket and they sang as she directed.¹¹ Another alumnus told of passing food out of the window of the church building to the accomplice stationed on the outside; this extra food was eaten later.¹² The funniest episode was when a wasp in one of the country churches landed on Miss Presley's back, and one of the sisters quietly sneaked up to swat it with a rolled-up program while Miss Presley was completely oblivious to the whole affair. The singers had trouble holding their composure as they witnessed the affair and as they saw the surprised look on Miss Presley's face as she was assaulted from behind.¹³

The second most popular memories revolved around dormitory life. From the occupation of Faith Hall during the third year until the fall of 1960, both males and females lived in Faith Hall. Alumni today like to joke about the co-ed dorm;¹⁴ however, the two sexes were well separated

⁹Davenport letter.

¹⁰Schultz letter.

¹¹Bennett letter.

¹²Tillman letter.

¹³Anderson cassette.

¹⁴Anderson cassette; Letter of Robert Johnson, '58, to author, June 12, 1978.

by doors and partitions. One alumna recalls after curfew that the boys would sit on their side of the double doors on first floor, the girls, on the other side, and they would converse.¹⁵

Although there are many stories of mischievous activities and practical jokes,¹⁶ probably the most frequently told story concerns a water battle in the boys' end of Faith Hall. They had locked the outside door; Frank Fuller and Harold Alligood were leading the war, armed with water hoses in the dorm. There came a rapping at the door; everyone knew who it was, yet no one opened the door. Another rap came and then a glass pane shattered as President BonDurant gained entry and the battle was over. As one observer told it, "No man durst ask him why he was wearing a bandaid on his wrist and hand the next day."¹⁷

From a serious point of view, there are fond memories of nightly devotions together,¹⁸ of a dorm mother who left notes saying, "This room needs a friend,"¹⁹ of another dorm mother who had placed a colorful fall leaf on each bed for her girls when they returned from the weekend.²⁰ There was an eagerness to return from the weekends, compare notes, and settle the great theological questions of the world.²¹

¹⁵Anderson cassette.

¹⁶Tillman letter; Letter of Michel Turner, '72, to author, June 1, 1978.

¹⁷Tillman letter.

¹⁸Letter of Rebecca Turner West, '68, to author, June 3, 1978; Bennett letter; Schultz letter.

¹⁹West letter.

²⁰Lease letter.

²¹Gallop letter.

Some of the memories of dormitory life deal with learning to get along with people and with sharing.²² Dormitory life brought a closeness especially with the roommate²³ and those living close by;²⁴ and, especially for the girls when they began to live in the old homes, a closeness for the entire residents of the dormitory.²⁵

However, the whole college group was viewed as a family. A graduate of the first four-year class wrote, ". . . but really we were like a big family, especially those first two years because there were so few of us."²⁶ Yet, a graduate of nineteen years later was still making the same observation: "The friends we made while in school are our dearest ones in all the world. Roanoke to me is like one large family. I am really closer to some of the friends there than I am to my own blood family." She later remarked, "My memories of the class work, the studying, and everything else I have mentioned are all secondary to the one overwhelming memory of love and closeness that I feel for each person that I came into contact with while a student."²⁷ Others said: "One big family,"²⁸ and "close-knit family."²⁹ Two spoke of the after supper assembly when a majority of the students met informally in Wilkinson lobby or on the front

²²Bennett letter; Letter of Brenda Woolard Pittman, '64, to author, June 6, 1978.

²³Lewis letter.

²⁴Memories of author.

²⁵Lease letter; Bennett letter; West letter; Schultz letter; Letter of JoAnn Alligood Isbell, '67, to author, June 6, 1978.

²⁶Letter of Mark A. Woolard, '52, to author, June 20, 1977.

²⁷Letter of Margaret Perry, '71, to author, May 27, 1978.

²⁸Anderson cassette.

²⁹Davenport letter.

porch and steps for a "communal gab-fest."³⁰

The family atmosphere included a closeness to the teachers. One spoke of the teachers being "our friends, too," and the freedom she felt, along with the entire student body, to use the BonDurant house for cooking, washing clothes, viewing television, even to the point that she felt sorry for the BonDurants.³¹ Another spoke of the good times he had conversing with one of his professors for whom he worked.³² One told of viewing one of the professors as an older brother and how this student and one of his buddies jumped the professor in a wrestling match, only to end up with broken glasses for the professor.³³ Miss Presley was often singled out in memories for her concern and patience.³⁴

Another alumna has this fond memory of President BonDurant:

. . . , I found Greek hard to comprehend. One night I was studying and couldn't understand enough to make my studying worthwhile. It was about 10:00 p.m. and I looked over and saw that Mr. BonDurant's lights were on downstairs. I took a chance on catching him up. I went over and he was head over heels involved in plumbing. However, he stopped and carefully, as if he had nothing to do, explained everything until it was clear to me. This is only one example out of many of his concern for our learning. He was always ready to help. This kind of dedication is one thing that made Roanoke a very special school for me.³⁵

Greek was a class that President BonDurant only taught when there was no one else available to teach it. Gospels was his class. It was

³⁰Isbell letter; Bennett letter.

³¹Anderson cassette.

³²Letter of Nelson R. Bennett, '65, to author, May 28, 1978.

³³Turner letter.

³⁴Woolard letter; Styons letter; Anderson cassette; Shelby Bennett letter; Perry letter.

³⁵Shelby Bennett letter.

memories of this class that brought his name up so often by the alumni: "I could see the characters come alive and watch them move from place to place on his maps of Palestine."³⁶ "He made them live for you; Gospels class was sheer joy; I'd return to Roanoke tomorrow just to take it again."³⁷ "I never knew the Bible was so interesting."³⁸ "Excellent teacher."³⁹ "I could actually see the events that happened."⁴⁰

Practice preaching recalled numerous happy memories. Practice preaching is a school-sponsored project to ask the congregations to invite a second semester freshman team from the college to take charge of services for one Sunday. Originally, the team was made up of two freshman men; one would lead singing at the morning service and speak in the evening while the other preached in the morning and led singing in the evening. Beginning in 1962, freshman ladies also were on the teams; they sang, played, taught Bible school lessons, helped in youth churches, and fulfilled such other responsibilities.⁴¹ Two men of the class of 1972 offer much credit to this program. One states:

I did not come to R. B. C. with the intent of being a preacher. Practice preaching gave me confidence--confidence in preparation and confidence to stand before the people. I knew from then on that I could handle pulpit preaching and have never since doubted it.⁴²

³⁶Gallop letter.

³⁷Anderson cassette.

³⁸Pittman letter.

³⁹Letter of Linda Long, ex '70, to author, August 3, 1977.

⁴⁰Perry letter.

⁴¹Messenger, February, 1962, p. 1.

⁴²Letter of Stephen Thornton, '72, to author, July 2, 1977.

The other wrote:

Practice preaching was my first real experience with speaking before large groups. I had done it occasionally before but it always was a painful thing. Practice preaching gave me confidence to speak in front of others. I just checked my file to see how often I used that first practice sermon while I was in college and counting the day I used it in class, it comes out 19 times. It was those long drives to appointments when we had time to talk and think that made me feel even stronger about being a minister in some form. Working as a team we were all under pressure and pulling for each other, and I began to see it wasn't just four or five people involved, or a college, but all Christendom pulling together to help the lost see the Lord.⁴³

Memories of practice preaching included the expected faux pas of the unexperienced like singing "Why Not Tonight" for the morning's invitation hymn,⁴⁴ being unable to call the name of the person being introduced as the speaker,⁴⁵ the speaker's fainting at his home congregation,⁴⁶ and various incidents in the homes.⁴⁷ But the classic story of Roanoke's practice preaching history occurred at Holly Neck, Roper, with J. A. Brickhouse, Jr., and Ray Everton, Jr., in 1953. Ray had led the singing and introduced J. A. to speak. Ray sat down and began looking through the hymnal for an invitation hymn, but before he could find his hymn, J. A. had sat down. Ray asked, "Did you pray or preach?" "I preached, you nut!"⁴⁸

During those days of scarcity of preachers, the practice preaching appointment might also be a trial sermon by which a freshman might begin

⁴³Turner letter.

⁴⁴Isbell letter.

⁴⁵West letter.

⁴⁶Shelby Bennett letter.

⁴⁷Isbell letter; Shelby Bennett letter.

⁴⁸Tillman letter.

regular preaching.⁴⁹ In the earliest days, student cars were the exception rather than the rule. One early graduate recalled:

We rode buses to appointments, thumbed, or any way else we could get there. I rode buses for three years of preaching from Hyde County to Norfolk. Sometimes you would be paid enough to pay the bus fare and a little extra; sometimes, just the bus fare; but it was all very nice.⁵⁰

Roanoke has had a policy since its founding that each of its students speaks in chapel. This speaking begins in the fall, with seniors in alphabetical order, and continues through freshmen; in the early days, when there were only a few students, the list would then start over again, and continue going until the year was completed. One alumnus remembers: "With the very small student body, your turn for speaking in chapel came several times during the same year. It reminded me of 'going to bat' in a softball game with only three members on your team. You could hardly get around before it was time to bat again."⁵¹ It was not frequency, however, that was most vivid to one alumna who wrote: ". . . the most apprehensive thing of all was speaking in chapel--a room full of critics with Mr. B. sitting on the front row, nodding his head and looking very serious. What a relief when it was over."⁵² Another remembers this side of it, for she reflects that knowing that she had to speak in chapel was the one thing that almost kept her from entering Roanoke. Yet, she continues, this chapel speaking greatly aided her in overcoming shyness. This alumna

⁴⁹Nelson Bennett letter; although Pernell Gallop was not at Roanoke for his freshman year and thus did not go on practice preaching, he reported a similar circumstance for his first sermon his first year at Roanoke, in Gallop letter.

⁵⁰Woolard letter.

⁵¹Styons letter.

⁵²Anderson cassette.

later became a missionary and is now a school teacher.⁵³

As has been mentioned earlier, the Epsilon Pi Chi Literary Society was organized during the first days of the school.⁵⁴ A growing membership caused this society to divide into two societies in 1955: Pi Tau Lambda Literary Society and Pi Upsilon Chi Literary Society.⁵⁵ When numbers again threatened every-member participation, the Lambdas divided in 1969 into the Delta Tau Beta Literary Society and the Pi Tau Kappa Literary Society.⁵⁶ These societies were "a great deal of the social life of the college--a program was given with devotionals and entertainment."⁵⁷ Another of the early graduates recalled, "The society program included skits, poems, music, and the reading of 'The Epsilon Pi Chi Pecker,' a paper of dubious literary quality but of significant educational value for those who wrote and read it."⁵⁸ He added, "Everyone waited at the table following the Tuesday lunch for President Bondurant to give a detailed critique of the literary society program presented the night before."⁵⁹

Several recalled the literary programs and the open session plays at the end of the school year.⁶⁰ Projects were recalled by which the

⁵³Anderson cassette.

⁵⁴See above, p. 34.

⁵⁵Messenger, November, 1955, p. 4.

⁵⁶Messenger, October, 1969, p. 3.

⁵⁷Woolard letter.

⁵⁸For a copy, see Appendix E.

⁵⁹Styons letter.

⁶⁰Gallop letter; Anderson cassette; Tillman letter; Johnson letter; West letter; Schultz letter; Lease letter; Turner letter.

societies provided many valuable gifts for the college:⁶¹ sidewalks,⁶² signs,⁶³ piano,⁶⁴ dies for class rings,⁶⁵ spotlight,⁶⁶ auto-typist,⁶⁷ stage curtains,⁶⁸ automatic washer,⁶⁹ movie projector,⁷⁰ calculator,⁷¹ and mimeograph.⁷²

Other delightful memories surrounded the special parties given by the literary societies. Halloween was most remembered. The Epsilon Pi Chis sponsored the first Halloween party in 1948. One participant recalled:

Our first Halloween party at the first building was a dilly. We invited the lady from the store, Mrs. Stallings, and Mrs. Crank, along with some of the church ladies and we nearly split our sides at them getting down on their hands and knees to pay respect to The Great White Goblin. Their corsets were really a hindrance! This game was handed down from year to year for sometime as sorta an initiation to the newcomers on Halloween.⁷³

⁶¹Davenport letter; Schultz letter.

⁶²Messenger, April, 1952, p. 4.

⁶³Messenger, May, 1957, p. 2; Messenger, March, 1964, p. 3.

⁶⁴Messenger, October, 1966, p. 2.

⁶⁵Messenger, October, 1966, p. 2.

⁶⁶Messenger, April, 1971, p. 4.

⁶⁷Messenger, July, 1971, p. 4.

⁶⁸Messenger, July, 1970, p. 3.

⁶⁹Messenger, October, 1958, p. 2.

⁷⁰Messenger, June, 1969, p. 3.

⁷¹Messenger, April, 1971, p. 4.

⁷²Messenger, April, 1973, p. 3.

⁷³Letter of Virginia Perry, whose husband was among first students and also student instructor, to author, July 8, 1977.

In the fall of 1958, Zorro struck the campus with mysterious practical jokes and kept everyone guessing who Zorro might be until "they" revealed themselves at the Halloween party. One victim recalled, "My pajamas were never the same after the good dousing of itching powder. I 'rested in pieces' as my note said."⁷⁴

The first literary society also sponsored the annual Declamatory Contest in which the students presented literary offerings they had memorized and were judged. The winners were then inducted into the Forensic Society. The Forensic Society was responsible for evening devotions immediately following the evening meal; it also led in the presentation of high school programs.⁷⁵

Very strong volleyball competition among the literary societies lingers in the members' memories.⁷⁶ The losing team had to sweep the curb, and one Pi Upsilon Chi member wrote, "I grew to disdain the feel of a broomstick in my hands." But he also remembers: ". . ., but my senior year, we won triumphantly and had the pleasure of watching and even gloating at the Lambdas sweeping that street."⁷⁷

One alumna sums up her memories of her literary society in these words: "We were able to gain a greater knowledge of some things in literature, a greater ability to work with others, and have fun at the same time."⁷⁸

⁷⁴Lewis letter.

⁷⁵Messenger, September, 1959, p. 3.

⁷⁶Turner letter; Letter of Scott Carter, '73, to author, June 10, 1978.

⁷⁷Turner letter. By this time, Lambdas had been divided, so it was Betas or Kappas sweeping.

⁷⁸Schultz letter.

In 1965, a Missions Club was organized "to further the knowledge of mission fields at home and abroad among students and churches."⁷⁹ In the early years of its existence, it worked hard at this and gave an annual talent show to raise money for expenses and to share with missionaries.⁸⁰ However, in 1969, a volunteer visitation of local nursing homes was begun and this later became the main project of the Missions Club,⁸¹ which seemed to forget its primary purpose.⁸²

Sneak Day⁸³ also produced many memories,⁸⁴ even if some of them were negative: "It rained all day, plus the location was ill-chosen and it wasn't much fun. I remember thinking these seniors are crazy."⁸⁵ Another observation concerning Sneak Day was written by one alumna: "I enjoyed those days very much as they offered a break in the routine and gave those of us who were not from N. C. a chance to see a part of the country we had not seen before."⁸⁶

However, one year some decided to have a second sneak day. One of the participants recalls that those who planned it were not those who went. Upon their return, the sneakers were called "on the green carpet"

⁷⁹Messenger, February, 1965, p. 3.

⁸⁰Lighthouse, 1966, p. 48; Lighthouse 1967, pp. 46, 47; Lighthouse, 1968, pp. 50, 51; Lighthouse 1969, p. 54.

⁸¹Carter letter.

⁸²See Lighthouse, 1972, p. 43.

⁸³See above, p. 34.

⁸⁴Gallop letter; Anderson cassette; Lewis letter; Nelson Bennett letter; Perry letter.

⁸⁵Nelson Bennett letter; he speaks of the Sneak Day of 1961.

⁸⁶Perry letter.

before President BonDurant and "raked over the coals." Although they "weren't treated too kindly," and one declared he was "quitting school and joining the navy," they later "cooled down" and thought the correct action had been taken. No second sneak day was ever tried again.⁸⁷

Roanoke has always had a work-study plan. In the early years, everyone was expected to work as part of his payment toward his room and board. As a few during this period "hid behind the barrel when work came along,"⁸⁸ a time-clock system was introduced in 1958.⁸⁹ The students remember this work as a valuable part of their training: "Some of my earliest lessons in carpentry were learned under the tutelage of Herman Shavender, a master carpenter who was also a student at the college."⁹⁰ "Most of what I know about cooking I learned from Willie Lee and Mrs. Bon-Durant while working my way through school."⁹¹ "I learned a lot about harmonizing while washing dishes."⁹² "I came out of my work experiences knowing that a living is capable of being made if a person is willing to invest the time and the effort."⁹³

But, beyond this, it was more: "Many Sophomores found working in the kitchen not only a way to work off tuition, but also great fun."⁹⁴

⁸⁷Anderson cassette.

⁸⁸Anderson cassette; see also, Johnson letter.

⁸⁹See above, p. 77.

⁹⁰Styons letter.

⁹¹Schultz letter.

⁹²Pittman letter.

⁹³Turner letter.

⁹⁴Carter letter.

"I remember with fondest thought the time I spent working in the kitchen of old Wilkinson Hall. . . . My best friends were those who washed pots and pans, dishes and silverware, cooked, and planned . . . meals."⁹⁵ "Student work occupied a lot of time and sealed a lot of friendships. . . . That was in the days when the kitchen was in Wilkinson . . . and people would drop in to ask what was for supper and to chat just like it was home."⁹⁶ "It was a time of release after classes, an opportunity to get to know staff and students better, and a way to cut our expenses of college life."⁹⁷

A major work time every year was the days spent in preparing for the Gospel Rally: "The Gospel Rallies were really a high point of each year. All the preparation we endured, tired and sore muscles, callouses on knees and hands. But when the visitors came and enjoyed themselves so much, we were all proud of RBC."⁹⁸

Others remembered preparing the Gospel Rally noon meal: "I'll never forget mixing 'tons' of potato salad on the table, not in the pans."⁹⁹ The Rally was also remembered for inspiration and fellowship.¹⁰⁰

The sports program at Roanoke has always been very limited, and sports do not come quickly to the memories of those surveyed for this

⁹⁵Letter of James Hensley, '69, to author, June 27, 1977.

⁹⁶Isbell letter.

⁹⁷Schultz letter.

⁹⁸Lewis letter.

⁹⁹Hensley letter; see also, Anderson cassette.

¹⁰⁰Gallop letter; Anderson cassette; Tillman letter; Nelson Bennett letter; Perry letter.

work.¹⁰¹ A basketball team is mentioned in the January, 1952, Roanoke Messenger.¹⁰² Melvin Styons, Class of 1953, stated, "Among the many happy memories I have retained through the years are basketball games against 'allstar' teams at Cherry and Swan Quarter and against the competitive Elizabeth City Boys' Club."¹⁰³ The yearbook for his senior year shows him as captain with seven other players; Harold Turner was coach.¹⁰⁴

Although the teams were pictured through the years in The Lighthouse and written about in The Roanoke Messenger, the next mention in memories is by a senior of twenty years later, a member of the silver anniversary class, who stated of his sophomore year: "The basketball teams bought new uniforms but once again failed to win a game as basketball enthusiasm diminished and volleyball grew."¹⁰⁵ That year three college volleyball teams in the local eight-team league captured the three top places in regular season play.¹⁰⁶

Romance has played a starring role in the Roanoke drama. Mrs. BonDurant has ever been there coaching and coaxing. As one girl remembers it: "Mrs. B. told the boys they would get no dessert unless they took a girl. Ray took me. He wasn't going to miss out on dessert."¹⁰⁷ That was convocation during the first week of their freshman year; and, following their graduation, this couple became Mr. and Mrs. Ray West.

¹⁰¹This may be area affected by note 1 of this chapter.

¹⁰²Messenger, January, 1952, p. 2.

¹⁰³Styons letter.

¹⁰⁴Lighthouse, 1953, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵Carter letter.

¹⁰⁶Lighthouse, 1973, p. 51.

¹⁰⁷West letter.

It worked differently for another couple:

. . ., I remember very vividly seeing Professor Walker Perry talking with an entering freshman on registration day of my sophomore year. I recall they were in the library-dining room of Wilkinson. Since she was wearing a diamond, I focused attention elsewhere. In the "What Would Jesus Do" drama at the end of that school year, I played the role of the preacher and Dorothy Miller, the freshman girl earlier mentioned, was cast in the role of the preacher's wife. During the next school year, Dorothy and I started dating. We were in the lobby of Wilkinson a year later when I asked her to marry me.¹⁰⁸

As this alumnus completed his memories of his four years at Roanoke, he spoke words of gratitude, ending with these words: ". . . and for the opportunity of meeting the lady whom I married on my graduation day, the lady with whom I have been living for one-quarter of a century."¹⁰⁹

There are many other memories of Roanoke, but these should suffice to give at least a "snapshot" of campus life. Yet, as the memories came in, there were so many expressions of gratitude that two have been chosen to complete this chapter.

Reference has already been made to Melvin Styons' gratitude for meeting his wife. He had stated just before the already quoted words: "I am grateful for the four years spent at Roanoke, for the memories associated with Wilkinson Hall, for the many opportunities of speaking we had during those early years, for clear presentation of Bible truth. . . ."¹¹⁰

Rebecca Turner West completed her memories with these words: "I am thankful for RBC and her location because I know there are many laborers on the field that never would have been otherwise. Thanks, RBC!"¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Styons letter.

¹⁰⁹ Styons letter.

¹¹⁰ Styons letter.

¹¹¹ West letter.

Chapter 6

BY THEIR FRUITS

How has Roanoke Bible College assisted the work of the Kingdom in its sphere of influence? There is no way to accurately measure the accomplishments of the college and answer that question. There are too many variables. And, how does one measure intangibles? Yet, all recognize that some attempt must be made at trying to do the impossible. This is that attempt to assess some of the benefits.

Roanoke is not so naive as to believe that her presence alone has made all of the differences cited in this chapter. In some congregations, Roanoke may have played a considerable role toward progress; in some others, very little. But all progress, as Paul states, has come when "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."¹ It has been by working together that the Lord has given much increase to the Kingdom in this area. And Roanoke wants Him to have all the credit.

Mention has been made of the scarcity of preachers in eastern North Carolina in 1948.² Of those fifty-four congregations reporting half-time or quarter-time preaching in 1948, every one of them reported full-time preaching in 1977.³ In addition, two congregations which failed to note on the questionnaire the frequency of preaching in 1948 showed

¹I Corinthians 3:6, NIV.

²See above, pp. 21-23.

³Survey made by author, Spring, 1977; all returned questionnaires are in his possession; hereinafter referred to as Survey.

full-time preaching in 1977.⁴ A similar study made of eastern Virginia churches showed that preachers were not as scarce in 1948: fifteen churches had full-time preaching; only three had half-time, and only four had quarter-time. In 1977, all seven of these part-time churches had gone full-time with Roanoke men preaching at five of them. All twenty-two churches that reported had full-time preaching; in addition, twenty-six new congregations had been established with full-time preaching. As in North Carolina, no questionnaire was returned that reported part-time preaching in Virginia.⁵

During the first twenty-five years, twenty-nine new congregations in which Roanoke students, alumni, or staff were either in leadership in planting or as the first minister were established in the two-state area of North Carolina and Virginia. In addition, there were nineteen such congregations planted during the same period outside of the two-state area. Hence, forty-seven congregations were established during these first twenty-five years.⁶

Of the fifty-four North Carolina congregations that responded to a survey, all but six had employed a Roanoke man as a minister or youth minister; three of these six had used Roanoke men for revivals. Of the Virginia churches that responded, all but nine had employed a Roanoke man

⁴There were twenty-three congregations that did not respond; it is believed by the author that only three of these did not have full-time preaching in 1977.

⁵Survey.

⁶"Churches Begun by College Men," compiled by the president and kept in his office. These churches count only congregations that actually succeeded in becoming established and living for a period, not including attempts that never succeeded.

for minister or youth minister, and two of these nine had used them for revivals.⁷

It was during the early years of the college's existence that the most drastic changes were registered. The school paper in December, 1952, featured pictures of seventeen Roanoke men who were serving thirty-three congregations.⁸ In January, 1956, forty-four churches were being served,⁹ and that number remained at forty-four in December of that year.¹⁰ However, whereas only six of these churches were full-time in 1952, seventeen were full-time in December, 1955; during the same period, the quarter-time churches had declined from sixteen to nine.¹¹ Roanoke men led congregations in greatly expanding and improving their church properties, including buying or building parsonages, renovating or building auditoriums, and adding classrooms.¹²

Attendance also grew. Thirty-one North Carolina churches reported their attendance in 1948 with a total of 2,684 for morning worship services, or an average of 87. These same churches totalled 3,715, or an average of 120, in 1977. Add to this 1,039 people reported in attendance at eleven new congregations in 1977, and the total is 4,754 in attendance in 1977, or an increase of 77 percent. In Virginia, the growth had been

⁷Survey.

⁸Messenger, December, 1952, pp. 1-4.

⁹Messenger, January, 1956, p. 1.

¹⁰Messenger, December, 1956, p. 1.

¹¹Messenger, December, 1952, pp. 1-4; Messenger, December, 1956, p. 1.

¹²See enumerations in Messenger, February, 1954, p. 2; Messenger, August, 1957, p. 3; "Atlantic Coast States Need Roanoke Bible College," after Messenger, May, 1956.

greater: twenty churches reported attendance in 1948 as 1,810, or an average of 87. In 1977, the total was 3,192, for an average of 160. But there were twenty-seven new congregations which reported an attendance of 3,201, for a total of the two Virginia groups of 6,393, or a 253 percent increase.¹³

Spiritual growth is certainly one of those intangibles; yet some statements by admirers have pointed in this direction: "There is no way to measure the benefit that RBC has been to Beaufort County."¹⁴ "I believe that directly or indirectly Roanoke has contributed a great deal to the growth of the church."¹⁵ "Definite help in spiritual growth through missions' education and Christian education training."¹⁶ "Her last three preachers have been trained at RBC. The church has enjoyed continual growth in many areas; numerically, spiritually, in missions, plus the expansion of facilities"¹⁷ "This congregation would not be where it is today without RBC."¹⁸ "And I remember my great-grandmother Ada White saying what a change in the community took place because of Mr. BonDurant's ministry there."¹⁹

Just before his death, Dennis Myers spoke of the difference in spiritual maturity of the churches in Eastern North Carolina. Myers, who

¹³Survey.

¹⁴Guy Woolard, Rosemary questionnaire, survey.

¹⁵Mark Woolard, Scuppernong questionnaire, survey.

¹⁶Bill McCracken, Chippenham questionnaire, survey.

¹⁷Larry Owen, Cool Spring questionnaire, survey.

¹⁸Terry Schultz, West Park questionnaire, survey.

¹⁹Letter of Jennifer Ross Evans to author, August 1, 1977.

is responsible for the establishment of at least eleven congregations in the Norfolk, Virginia, area²⁰ and an incessant personal evangelist, stated that when he first started calling there that he called upon countless homes of people who had been members of Christian churches or churches of Christ in eastern North Carolina but who had identified with the nearest denominational church to their new home. However, he continued, once Roanoke's influence had firmly been established in eastern North Carolina, he no longer found that condition; but rather, the people would search until they found a New Testament congregation.²¹

There is no doubt but that much of this growth came from President BonDurant's extension classes. One student wrote that after the extension classes at her church, "the congregation at Scuppernong desired full-time trained preachers. I believe these classes were the turning point in full-time Christian work at Scuppernong."²² At Athens Chapel, where he taught a class in Revelation as a result of their request, one student said, "He made it plainer and clearer than all the ministers I have ever heard."²³ Another wrote concerning an extension class, "Most of all, my beliefs in the doctrine of Christ's church was strengthened."²⁴

The college also aided the churches during early years with vacation Bible school teams. During the first summer, the girls conducted

²⁰ Lighthouse, 1970, p. 113.

²¹ Personal interview with George W. BonDurant, June 8, 1978, to whom Myers had made this statement.

²² Letter of Mrs. Callie Davenport to author, July 10, 1977.

²³ Letter of Mrs. Delma Elliott to author, July 12, 1977.

²⁴ Letter of John H. Hufton to author, July 10, 1977.

five schools of two weeks each.²⁵ The following summer, two of the men helped as well,²⁶ and a total of fifteen Bible schools with 860 pupils were conducted.²⁷ Seven schools in which 570 students were enrolled were held the third summer.²⁸ This project of the college reached its peak in the summer of 1953 when nineteen schools which enrolled 1,231 pupils were held.²⁹ Although the college eventually dropped this program, it had served well in introducing many congregations of the area to the useful tool of education and evangelization. The congregations then continued the schools with their own members in leadership and teaching positions.

When the Gospel Light in August, 1944, introduced the regular missions feature by Lyda Respass, the editor remarked, "Our churches are weak in their missionary activities."³⁰ A question on a 1977 survey that asked how much money was given to missions by churches in 1948 was answered by thirty-six congregations. The majority answered, "Unknown"; but two stated, "very little"; five, less than \$100.00; one, \$400.00; one \$450.00. Of the fourteen that stated an amount, \$75.00 was the average.³¹

In October, 1957, a group of churches in eastern North Carolina formed the Roanoke Living Link Fellowship to support Grace Fish of the

²⁵Messenger, July, 1949, p. 2.

²⁶Messenger, July, 1950, p. 2.

²⁷Messenger, September, 1950, p. 2.

²⁸Messenger, September, 1951, p. 2.

²⁹Messenger, November, 1953, p. 2.

³⁰Gospel Light, August, 1944, p. 3.

³¹Survey.

Okinawa Christian Mission. Although the college was not directly connected with this voluntary fellowship, its faculty and students ministered to each of the churches that promised support.³² During the first year, \$1,048.³⁴ had been given.³³ In the meantime, the fellowship had also assumed \$1,200.00 per year support for the Malcolm Coffey family of the Mediterranean Christian Mission, Bari, Italy. To do this, additional churches volunteered to join in the fellowship.³⁴

In April, 1953, Harrold McFarland, editor of Horizons magazine and director of Mission Services, was invited for a course of lectures at the college and a series of missionary rallies on independent missions in nearby congregations.³⁵

By October 31, 1954, over \$5,000.00 had been given through the Roanoke Living Link. Twenty congregations were represented in this giving. A number of youth rallies and vacation Bible schools were included; hence, young people in the congregations were being introduced to missionary giving.³⁶

In August, 1956, Geneva Anderson, of the Class of 1956, a native of Elizabeth City, announced plans to go to Alaska Christian Home, Homer, Alaska. Now there was a local person going to the mission field.³⁷

³²Messenger, October, 1951, p. 1.

³³Messenger, November, 1952, p. 4.

³⁴Messenger, October, 1952, p. 2.

³⁵Messenger, March, 1953, p. 2; Messenger, April, 1953, p. 1.

³⁶Messenger, November, 1954, p. 4.

³⁷Messenger, August, 1956, p. 3.

Support was raised from the area and one of the alumni served as her forwarding agent.³⁸

An August, 1957, report showed over \$28,000.00 had been given to six mission causes (other than the college) in less than four years by congregations closely associated with the college.³⁹

And so mission giving arose in the congregations. Those fourteen congregations that had averaged \$75.00 in 1948 in missions giving averaged over \$4,000.00 in 1976. Of the total forty-four eastern North Carolina congregations that reported amounts of missionary giving in 1976, the average was \$3,366.00. Eastern Virginia congregations reported an average of \$572.00 in 1948; they reported an average of \$6,540.00 in 1976.⁴⁰ Certainly the encouragement of mission giving and the introduction of missionaries into the area by the college had played a part in this increase.

However, the college was not as fortunate in instilling in her students the desire to become missionaries. Guy Whitley who was graduated in 1958 went immediately to Jamaica to work with the Jamaica Christian Boys' Home.⁴¹ Geneva Anderson returned to the continental United States to work at Mountain Mission School, Grundy, Virginia, in 1957,⁴² but returned to Candel, Alaska, in 1959.⁴³ In 1967 she went to Cookson Hills

³⁸Messenger, December, 1956, p. 3.

³⁹Messenger, August, 1957, p. 3.

⁴⁰Survey.

⁴¹Messenger, May, 1958, p. 3.

⁴²Messenger, August, 1957, p. 1; Messenger, February, 1958, p. 2.

⁴³Messenger, July, 1959, p. 3.

Christian School, Siloam Springs, Arkansas.⁴⁴ Larry Coyle, alumnus of 1963, and his family joined the New England Christian Evangelizing Mission in 1964.⁴⁵ Two graduates of the class of 1966 volunteered for the foreign mission field: Janet Spencer for Mexico and James C. "Red" Jones for Brazil.⁴⁶ Janet went to the field immediately after graduation for a summer internship and then returned for full-time service in Mexico.⁴⁷ "Red" and family left for Belem the following March.⁴⁸

In the summer of 1968, Jean Comer, class of 1963, and Shirley Cash, class of 1965, joined the staff of Mountain Mission School.⁴⁹ A year later, Harold C. and Peggy Turner, both graduates of 1966, also joined the staff of that mission;⁵⁰ and the following summer, Wayne Davis, class of 1968, and his wife, Mary Ann, class of 1969, were added.⁵¹ In the meantime, however, Jean Comer had left this work to join the efforts in Indonesia.⁵²

Carolyn Smith, class of 1968, began working in the greater New York City area in January, 1969.⁵³ Two members of the class of 1971 chose

⁴⁴Messenger, September, 1967, p. 3.

⁴⁵Messenger, June, 1964, p. 1; Messenger, September, 1964, p. 3.

⁴⁶Messenger, February, 1966, p. 2.

⁴⁷Messenger, October, 1966, p. 3.

⁴⁸Messenger, April, 1967, p. 3.

⁴⁹Messenger, July, 1968, p. 2.

⁵⁰Messenger, June, 1969, p. 3.

⁵¹Messenger, July, 1970, p. 3.

⁵²Messenger, May, 1969, p. 3; Messenger, January, 1970, p. 3.

⁵³Messenger, January, 1969, p. 4.

missionary work. Melissa Isbell Lewis and her husband, Garrett, a rising senior at the college, spent one year teaching at Puerto Rico Christian Day School, San Juan;⁵⁴ Cheryl Hearn joined the David Scates family working with the Navajo Indians in Arizona.⁵⁵ Ken and Eunice Salyers, who were graduated in 1972, left the following fall with their two children to take the Gospel to Saigon, South Vietnam.⁵⁶

Of the sixteen alumni who had volunteered for mission service, only five were still working in their missions at the end of twenty-five years of Roanoke's history. And, only two of these were on foreign soil.⁵⁷ Although the record of graduates going to mission fields was certainly not as great as the college would have liked, it did give the area some "real, live missionaries" of its own. In addition to these, a number of students had gone in summer internship programs which also better acquainted area churches with those mission fields.

During the silver anniversary year, the college had its first Faith Promise Missionary Rally which introduced this concept of giving for the first time to a number of the students and staff.⁵⁸ As these people implemented this mission concept in the congregations they served, the cause of missions would again be aided.

Graduates of the college established the Bluefield (West Virginia) College of Evangelism in 1971. David Branholm, class of 1967, was founder

⁵⁴Messenger, June, 1971, p. 2; Messenger, September, 1972, p. 2.

⁵⁵Messenger, June, 1971, p. 2.

⁵⁶Messenger, October, 1972, p. 4.

⁵⁷The two on foreign fields: Whitley and Comer; the others in United States: Cash, Smith, Hearn.

⁵⁸Messenger, November, 1972, p. 2.

and president; Reggie Webb, Class of 1969, academic dean; and Joseph O'Neal, Class of 1967, a full-time teacher and printer.⁵⁹

Staff men gave early impetus to the establishment of the Eastern North Carolina Christian Men's Fellowship. Professor Melvin Styons was the first chairman of the organization formed to establish new congregations in the eastern part of the state and to afford men the opportunity to enjoy the fellowship with one another. The first congregation begun by the fellowship, in Rocky Mount, in late 1972, had a Roanoke alumnus as its first preacher.⁶⁰

The Gospel Rally was an unquestioned gift of the college to the people of the area. The first Gospel Rally in May, 1949, has already been mentioned with its total registration of 281; so has the record attendance of the 1952 rally, 548.⁶¹ From the beginning, registration has been free and only those who attended were registered. For the first thirteen years, the average registration was 481. When the alumni set a goal of one thousand for the fourteenth rally,⁶² the previous four rallies had climbed approximately one hundred registrations per year from 375 in 1958 to 705 in 1961. The 1962 goal was missed by 124.⁶³ The one thousand goal eluded the next two rallies; but 1,224 registered for the 1965 rally when Herbert Philbreck, former counterspy for the Federal Bureau of Investigation and author of I Led Three Lives, spoke at the opening session.⁶⁴ The next

⁵⁹Messenger, November, 1971, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Author was among those in early leadership of organization.

⁶¹ See above, pp. 36, 37, 45.

⁶²Messenger, March, 1962, p. 4.

⁶³ Record of rally attendance, kept in president's office.

⁶⁴Messenger, March, 1965, p. 1.

two rallies fell below the one thousand mark until the twentieth rally surpassed that number, and the silver anniversary rally broke all registration records with a total of 1,405.⁶⁵

The alumni were constant in their support of the rally. Early rallies were planned by the college staff, but beginning with the eleventh rally in 1959, the Alumni Association has joined the staff in rally planning. For the first time that year, the gathering was also designated as a homecoming; since that time the annual event has been called Gospel Rally and Homecoming.⁶⁶

Earliest speakers for the rallies were mainly from Virginia and Georgia.⁶⁷ In 1953, the first three graduates spoke along with three other speakers. The 1954 rally featured alumni for all six sermons. In 1958, again half of the speakers were alumni. In 1960, thirty-three of the thirty-eight alumni were on the program, although they preached no sermon.⁶⁸ But in 1961, four of the five sermons were brought by alumni and a total of twenty-six alumni were listed on the program; two of the five sermons of 1962 were by alumni. However, no alumni spoke again from 1963 through 1967. At the 1967 rally, all classes from 1950 through 1957 were honored to begin a tradition of honoring the graduates at ten-year intervals.⁶⁹ Two alumni spoke at the Wednesday morning session of the

⁶⁵Records of rally attendance.

⁶⁶Messenger, March, 1959, p. 4.

⁶⁷Rally programs, filed in president's office. These programs can also be found for each year bound in Messenger. All subsequent details concerning rally personnel, dates, and locations were also taken from these programs.

⁶⁸Messenger, March, 1960, p. 1.

⁶⁹Messenger, February, 1967, p. 1.

1968 rally; in 1971 the custom of having three alumni speakers develop one theme at the Wednesday morning session was begun. All speakers except two for the silver anniversary rally were alumni.⁷⁰ Percentages on alumni attendance that were reported in 1967, 1968, and 1970 were 58 percent, 60 percent, and 65 percent, respectively.⁷¹

The first rally was in May; except for the 1953 rally, the next ten were in April, and then the date was changed to March; since 1966, it has met the first Tuesday and Wednesday of March. The first twelve rallies were held in the Elizabeth City Church of Christ building, first in the basement and then in the completed auditorium. In 1961, the meeting, which had outgrown the church building, moved to the spacious National Guard Armory. A conflict in schedule for the use of the armory caused the 1970 rally to be staged in the S. L. Sheep auditorium, which has served as the location since that time.⁷²

The first announcement of the initial rally laid the groundwork for a "preaching rally." There were to be six sermons and three open forums in the four sessions. "No business will be discussed and no cause will be advocated except the simple New Testament Gospel."⁷³ There was to be no offering, and all emphasis was to be devoted to "singing, preaching, and discussing of the simple New Testament Gospel."⁷⁴ Fifteen years

⁷⁰One of the two was President BonDurant.

⁷¹Messenger, April, 1967, p. 2; Messenger, April, 1968, p. 2; Messenger, April, 1970, p. 2.

⁷²A/O Letter, January 28, 1970.

⁷³Messenger, January, 1949, p. 2.

⁷⁴Messenger, March, 1949, p. 2.

later the same words were being used.⁷⁵ At the time of the twentieth rally, the editor of the college paper commented that the rally has a "distinctive 'flavor'--a closeness of fellowship, an uncompromising message, an inspiration of great music"⁷⁶ The twenty-fourth rally had six sermons, but no symposium or open forums. By this time it had become traditional to feature a missionary message at the Wednesday afternoon session. The silver anniversary rally did have a partisan session when the afternoon session was given to a tribute to Roanoke. However, the other three sessions were still devoted to the preaching of the Gospel; the theme was "No Other Gospel."

Few people of the area have ever attended a North American Christian Convention that comes no nearer than Cincinnati, and not many have attended a Southern Christian Convention or National Missionary Convention that are sometimes held in Virginia Beach; for many people of eastern North Carolina and Virginia, the "big convention" is the Gospel Rally. Here these people are blessed by fellowship, inspiration, exhortation to return from the mountain to the valleys for another year of service. Here they hear the preachers they will invite for their revivals;⁷⁷ here they learn of the progress of their "boys" and "girls" they have supported through college, either directly or indirectly; here they see new developments at the college and tour the new facilities; here they meet the new spouses and see the new babies of the alumni. This rally is the spiritual and social highlight of many people of the area for each year.

⁷⁵Messenger, February, 1964, p. 2.

⁷⁶Messenger, March, 1968, p. 2.

⁷⁷See "Campus Happenings," Messenger, October, 1954, p. 4.

Between 1962 and 1969, Roanoke, in cooperation with the Rosemary Church of Christ, Washington, held five "Get-Acquainted Preaching Rallies" to bring to the area men that college personnel had met at conventions, camps, or on choral tours.⁷⁸ Four men each time were invited to the area; two spoke each evening of the two evening meetings at Rosemary; all four lectured at the college on the intervening morning. These rallies afforded the churches in eastern North Carolina an opportunity to meet new preachers, and preachers an opportunity to become acquainted with the work in this area. At the same time, they afforded an opportunity for fellowship, inspiration, and learning. On a much smaller scale, they offered some of the same advantages as the Gospel Rally; however, they never became a time for alumni to return.

Roanoke has provided the area with a limited number of lectureships. In April, 1964, Carl Ketcherside, editor of The Mission Messenger, presented the "Living Issues Lectureship" on unity within the brotherhood.⁷⁹ Bryton Barron, former State Department official, gave the first Americanist Lectureship on Columbus Day, 1964, on un-American influences in the State Department.⁸⁰ Julia Brown, a Federal Bureau of Investigation counterspy, spoke for the Americanist Lectureship in November, 1967, on Communist infiltration into and exploitation of the civil rights movement.⁸¹ Ralph Bennett, associate editor of Reader's Digest, spoke on "The

⁷⁸ Messenger, November, 1962, p. 1; Messenger, October, 1964, p. 1; Messenger, October, 1966, pp. 1, 4; Messenger, October, 1967, p. 2; Messenger, October, 1969, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Messenger, April, 1964, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Messenger, August, 1964, p. 2; Messenger, November, 1964, p. 3.

⁸¹ Messenger, November, 1964, p. 1.

Myth of the Political Prisoner" in October, 1972.⁸² Once again, the college had provided a means for better information and understanding for people of the area.

In 1964, the first On-Campus Day, for high school seniors and juniors, was held on Tuesday of the Gospel Rally.⁸³ Seventy-four registered for that first year.⁸⁴ Eventually the day became open for all high school students.⁸⁵ The original days were designed to give the student sample classes and information about college in the "on-campus atmosphere."⁸⁶ The format changed in 1967 with no sample classes, but with challenges by college students in a morning chapel, a talent contest in the afternoon, and the opening session of the rally designed for the culmination of the on-campus day.⁸⁷ There was a return to sample classes with the inspirational chapel and evening rally in 1968.⁸⁸ An afternoon songfest was used in 1970 and 1971.⁸⁹ Plays were presented in the afternoon in 1972 and 1973.⁹⁰ Over four hundred high school students registered for the 1973 On-Campus Day with almost six hundred people present for the chapel service.⁹¹

⁸² Messenger, November, 1972, p. 2.

⁸³ Messenger, February, 1964, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Messenger, April, 1964, p. 2.

⁸⁵ Messenger, March, 1968, p. 3; Messenger, January, 1970, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Messenger, March, 1965, p. 2; Messenger, March, 1965, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Messenger, March, 1967, p. 3.

⁸⁸ Messenger, February, 1968, p. 1.

⁸⁹ Messenger, March, 1970, p. 3; Messenger, March, 1971, p. 3.

⁹⁰ Messenger, March, 1972, p. 3; Messenger, March, 1973, p. 3.

⁹¹ Messenger, April, 1973, p. 3.

Between 1952 and 1958, a number of the supporting congregations held Fifth Sunday Rallies. The first was at Scuppernong, Creswell, in November, 1952;⁹² the last mentioned one was at Beulah, Nashville, in March, 1958.⁹³ These meetings never had any organizational structure; a congregation would volunteer to be host for the next meeting; publicity was by word of mouth and The Roanoke Messenger; the host congregation planned the program, which was usually Bible school, morning service, afternoon service, and evening singspiration; everyone brought his own basket lunch. These quarterly meetings were basically a time for Christian fellowship. Those present could learn about progress of the Roanoke Living Link, Roanoke Acres Church of Christ (established in Manteo), Camp Roanoke, the college, and other cooperative efforts.⁹⁴

Many of the people of the area would see the various musical programs of the college as one of its greatest gifts to the area.⁹⁵ The Choral Club, called Glee Club that first year, presented programs of Christmas music during December, 1948, at Zion's Chapel, Roper; Wilkinson, Pantego; Geneva Park, Chesapeake, Virginia; Rosemary, Washington; Powells Point, Harbinger; Scuppernong, Creswell; and St. Clairs, Bath.⁹⁶ These programs were the beginning of an annual Christmas and Easter presentation to many congregations in the area that had never hosted a college choir,

⁹²Messenger, November, 1952, p. 2.

⁹³Messenger, March, 1958, p. 2.

⁹⁴Messenger, January, 1954, p. 3.

⁹⁵John Griffin (1908-1971), father of the author, would have so thought; see Messenger, June, 1971, p. 3.

⁹⁶Messenger, January, 1949, p. 4; copy of program on file in president's office.

and some of the smaller congregations probably never would have had a college choir to come by. The programs were more than music; but, rather, they were a message with songs sung in a chronological order, woven together with appropriate Scriptures. In time, a script developed that narrated the whole story.

What did these programs do for the churches in the area? They have brought inspiration, not only because of the songs, but also because of the lives of the singers;⁹⁷ the Christmas and Easter programs have set the spirit for the true meaning of those seasons;⁹⁸ they have challenged the young people⁹⁹ and helped them to decide to attend Bible college;¹⁰⁰ they've strengthened the bond between congregations and the college¹⁰¹ and between congregations;¹⁰² they have brought honor to Roanoke and to the Lord;¹⁰³ and they've caused churches to improve their music in worship.¹⁰⁴ A musician in one of the congregations wrote:

. . . . The quality of the programs show they are carefully planned and performed by a well-trained group. This in turn has

⁹⁷Letter of Nellie Baker to author, May 31, 1978.

⁹⁸Letter of Rosa Dowdy to author, June 3, 1978; letter of Barbara Alligood to author, June 7, 1978.

⁹⁹Letter of Carolyn Harrell to author, June 7, 1978.

¹⁰⁰Dowdy letter; letter of James T. Davis, Jr., to author, May 31, 1978; letter of Mrs. Horace Miller to author, June 1, 1978.

¹⁰¹Alligood letter; letter of Pauline Webb to author, June 5, 1978.

¹⁰²Davis letter.

¹⁰³Letter of Mary Simmons to author, June 1, 1978; letter of Alice G. Shavender to author, May 26, 1978; letter of Edythe Benson to author, May 28, 1978.

¹⁰⁴Letter of Florence Oliver to author, June 5, 1978.

inspired the churches to pay more attention to the musical part of their church program. More music has been bought and much more practicing has been done.¹⁰⁵

The tours outside of the area were carefully planned to include small, mission churches that would benefit by the rare visit of a college group at the same time that the students could learn about the mission work, especially in the northeast. Charles E. Faust, director of Go Ye Mission in New York City, wrote:

RBC was the only college who regularly came to our area when our churches were very, very few and quite small. These groups . . . made us aware of the role Bible colleges play in the life of the churches of Christ and Christian churches. They provided us the opportunity to watch RBC grow--in numbers, programs, and services. This all was certainly an encouragement to our young, struggling, and growing congregations.

He continued by saying that "the decorum of RBC students . . . encouraged Christian parents in our efforts to rear our children properly."¹⁰⁶ Another laborer in the northeast, Charles E. Fordyce, agreed with Faust on the latter point, stressing how the groups always brought joy to his congregations.¹⁰⁷

A small congregation in South Carolina wrote after hosting one of the choral groups:

We have had many compliments from the ones present and we feel we received a special blessing by your being with us. We were at a low point, not having a full-time minister, and your message was so inspiring that we felt uplifted for the first time in a long while.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Oliver letter; see also letter of Harlan P. Wolfe, minister, Georgetown (Ohio) Church of Christ, to college, April 31, 1966, in files of academic dean.

¹⁰⁶ Letter of Charles E. Faust to author, June 2, 1978.

¹⁰⁷ Letter of Charles E. Fordyce to author, May 31, 1978.

¹⁰⁸ Letter of Friends of Branchville (South Carolina) Christian Church to college, May 12, 1971, in files of academic dean.

In the summer of 1953, the college began offering another service for the churches of the area: a Christian service camp. Young people in the congregations served by the college family did not feel comfortable at Roanoke Christian Service Camp because of the controversy surrounding the establishment of the college.¹⁰⁹ So, very quietly, with no effort to recruit campers from any other camp, Camp Roanoke was launched in June, 1953.¹¹⁰ Seven months later, it was stated that the camp was held "for the spiritual instruction of young people in churches served by the faculty, graduates, and students of the College, and other interested congregations." This first year only had two weeks of camp and enrolled a total of 106 campers.¹¹¹ The second year expanded to three weeks, and 143 campers were enrolled; the next six years fluctuated from a low of 132 campers to a high of 188. The summer of 1961 set a record with 172 campers enrolled for the junior week and a total of 308 for the three weeks.¹¹² However, 172 campers plus forty staff members and five days of pouring rain¹¹³ were probable cause for a drop to only 167 campers the following year.

Camp attendance began to climb again in 1963 until the total again reached the three hundred mark in 1968; in 1973, there were 432 campers. Camp Roanoke has emphasized a strong curriculum, a highly organized

¹⁰⁹ See above, pp. 39, 40.

¹¹⁰ There is no mention of camp in Messenger until January, 1954.

¹¹¹ Messenger, January, 1954, p. 2.

¹¹² Camp Roanoke files in president's office. Subsequent statistics are also from these, unless otherwise noted.

¹¹³ Messenger, July, 1961, p. 1.

program, a class for teaching new choruses, and, in recent years, missionary giving.¹¹⁴ There were thirty-six young people who answered the invitation to become life recruits in the 1973 camp; forty-one were baptized; and a total of \$1,827.18 was given to mission causes, for a per capita giving of \$4.23 for campers.¹¹⁵

Memories of those early years of camp still linger. An ever-recurring memory is the singing class. One former camper reflected: "Through my life--from the time I learned the songs until right now-- words from camp choruses come to me when I need them most."¹¹⁶ Another remembered the singing class as the most "fun" class.¹¹⁷ Another lists "learning new choruses in singing class" as one of her cherished memories.¹¹⁸ As another camper remembered, she wrote, "I think the major contribution that Camp Roanoke made to my life was its challenge to full-time Christian service."¹¹⁹ Another told how she and four of her friends became life recruits on the same evening of camp, and then went through Bible college together.¹²⁰ The camp always had a strong emphasis on full-time Christian service, and many could cite how this influence charted their lives.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ Observations of the author, involved in Camp Roanoke since 1954 as camper, junior counselor, teacher, and director.

¹¹⁵ Messenger, August, 1973, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Letter of Jennifer Ross Evans to author, August 1, 1977.

¹¹⁷ Letter of Ellan Pittman Smithwick to author, July 15, 1977.

¹¹⁸ Letter of Wanda Rose McCants to author, July 27, 1977.

¹¹⁹ Letter of Ellen Potter Barmes to author, August 27, 1977.

¹²⁰ Evans letter.

¹²¹ Personal interview with Michel Turner, June 16, 1978; also author's personal experience.

The presence of the college in the area has afforded revival speakers, pianists, speakers for special occasions, and interim ministers for most of the churches in the area. As an elder in one of the nearby churches wrote, "Whenever called upon, she has graciously responded with whatever assistance that has been needed."¹²²

One of President BonDurant's reasons for establishing a college in the area was to "conserve local youth for our own ministry rather than the enrichment of areas where they now go to college."¹²³ It has been shown in this paper that this purpose was accomplished.¹²⁴ Another real blessing, it seems to this author, is that many people of the area, both young and older, who would not have attended any Bible college or be in full-time Christian service were afforded these opportunities because the college was located in their area. Although no one can definitely say what would have happened, others have expressed the same sentiment. One elder wrote, "We also have many boys and girls that have graduated from Roanoke who would not have gone at all."¹²⁵ One mother wrote, "Without R. B. C., I doubt that Norman and Dorothy might ever have entered Bible College."¹²⁶ Some alumni who were interviewed expressed the same thoughts.¹²⁷

¹²² C. L. Hershberger, Jr., on Laurel Avenue, Chesapeake, Virginia, questionnaire, survey.

¹²³ See above, pp. 29, 30.

¹²⁴ See above, p. 62.

¹²⁵ Guy Woolard, Rosemary questionnaire, survey.

¹²⁶ Letter of Mrs. Horace Miller to author, June 1, 1978.

¹²⁷ Personal interviews during camp week, June 12-17, 1978: Joan Sawyer, Shirley Cash, Michel Turner, Ray West, Phillip Alligood.

So, Roanoke's fruit are plentiful: churches established, churches strengthened from part-time to full-time preaching, growth in congregations, improvements in properties, mission emphasis and giving increased, Gospel Rally, Get-Acquainted Rally, lectureships, choral programs, Camp Roanoke, servants trained who would not otherwise have been in Christian service. And, there are other fruits that simply cannot be enumerated; but these given prove her worth.

EPILOGUE

Twenty-five years is such a little time in comparison to eternity. What can be accomplished in that short period toward eternal goals? And, what can a dream of a Bible college in one man's mind do in God's eternal scheme? When that man is George BonDurant and his dream is Roanoke Bible College, the answer is "Much."

Roanoke Bible College evolved from BonDurant's dream to a board of incorporators; then to a rented building with eighteen students and six teachers; next to an old dwelling of its own to house all its activities; then to a city block; and finally to a twenty acre campus with 169 students and thirty staff members. During that quarter of a century, over six hundred fifty students had been trained. Of these, two hundred twenty-three had been graduated. Although the majority of these alumni were concentrated within a three-hundred mile radius of the college, thirty-five states and ten foreign countries had been served by the students and staff.¹

During this twenty-five years, the curriculum had grown from ten courses taught by six teachers to forty-nine courses taught by fifteen teachers. From that original staff of six (two of whom only taught one class each), the staff had grown to thirty by the end of the period. From a total of 18 in the fall of 1948, the student body had increased to 169 in 1972-1973. The library had grown from three books donated on October 30, 1948, to over eight thousand volumes by the end of 1973.

¹Roanoke Day Brochure, 1973, filed in president's office.

The budget had grown from \$7,609.99 the first year to \$352,856.07 the last year. This budget had underwritten the expansion of the campus, the acquiring of houses and the constructing of two buildings especially designed for college use, library acquisitions, the enlarged staff, maintenance, and all other expenses. No money was owed on any building or property at the end of the quarter century; total assets were conservatively placed at six hundred thousand dollars;² and there was over thirty-six thousand dollars in the building fund.

Cherished memories of life together during those twenty-five years linger. Choral tours, dormitory life, professors, practice preaching, speaking in chapel, literary societies, sneak days, student work, romances--all of these have molded the Roanoke students.

Yet, the most notable change of all--the greatest accomplishment of the college--the final goal toward which all others had been pointing--was the progress made in the churches: the changes from quarter-time to full-time preaching, churches strengthened, new congregations established, and growth in missionary outreach. This progress is the culmination of all efforts of the twenty-five years.

The accomplishments chronicled in this book are changes; yet some things must remain constant. In the last issue of the twenty-fifth volume of The Roanoke Messenger, the following assurance was given: "But one thing remains unchanged--Roanoke's uncompromising commitment to 'The Faith once for all delivered to the saints' and her willingness to do everything in her power to train a faithful ministry to extend that faith to all men everywhere."³

² Minutes of Directors' Meeting, January 19, 1973.

³ Messenger, August, 1973, p. 2.

During those short twenty-five years, the dream became a reality and marched forward. In 1973, Roanoke Bible College could give thanks to God for those things He had enabled her to accomplish in His eternal plan. And, she could look forward with assurance that the same purpose and goals were guiding her as she launched her second quarter-century of service.

God be with thee, Alma Mater,

In the fight for right.

May His hand sustain and bless thee,

Ever, day and night.⁴

⁴Last stanza of Roanoke Bible College Alma Mater.

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APPENDIX A .

INDUSTRIAL CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

A Visit to Bro. Tyndall's School

On Monday morning, January 7, P. B. Hall and I drove out seven miles from Kinston, N. C., to J. W. Tyndall's school. We had expected to attend the opening exercise of the school, which had been planned for that day, A. J. Edmonson, of Newbern, having been chosen as speaker for the occasion. I was anxious both to hear Bro. Edmonson, Newbern's new preacher, and to see the new school. The opening exercises, however, had been postponed until the 14th, on account of the unfinished condition of the building.

This school is to be run somewhat after the order of Ashley S. Johnson's school at Kimberlin Heights, Tenn. Bro. Tyndall thinks it will in no way interfere with Atlantic Christian College, but believes himself to be securing a class of students that would not be reached by that college, and thinks, in the long run, it will really prove to be advantageous to Atlantic Christian College. In this I hope he is right, and that our cause in the State will not be hampered with too many half-way educational institutions. I am glad to know that Bro. Tyndall is broad-minded enough to want Atlantic Christian College to succeed, in spite of the fact that he is trying to build up a school of his own. The people among whom he labors as preacher, are standing loyally by him in his effort, and I believe when they come to appreciate the value of Atlantic Christian College, they will stand as nobly by that. Our people are ready for everything that looks toward the advancement of our great cause in this grand old State.

May our prayer be that God bless everything that looks toward the uplift of humanity, and the betterment of mankind.

W. G. WALKER, Cor. Sec.

WASHINGTON, N. C.

Christian Standard, February 2, 1907

Industrial School And Music Academy

KINSTON N. C., Rt. 2.

Will open its first term Sept. 22nd 1914. This school has taken the place of The Industrial Christian College, and will endeavor to help boys and girls in every possible way. If you want to prepare for college and university, if you want to study music, if you want a Bible Course, if you want to prepare for lifes's work, write us now

J. M. PERRY, General Manager,
KINSTON, N. C.

The Watch Tower, August 27, 1914

CAROLINA INSTITUTE AND BIBLE SEMINARY
KINSTON, NORTH CAROLINA, R. 2.

Special advantages here are as follows, viz:

It is near one of the best Towns in the State.

It is co-educational, yet well regulated.

It is easily reached by rail or on hard surface road.

It has daily mail from Kinston to the College direct.

It has as good water as is found east of the Blue Ridge.

It is well disciplined, and gives personal attention.

It allows you to make terms to suit.

It accepts money, preferably, in full for payment, etc.

It allows you to pay part in money and work part.

It offers the best courses in Literary, Music or Bible.

It promises you the very best instruction by the best instructors.

It offers terms that that meet the needs of rich and poor.

It is the place for you. Write for terms and room.

We are yours to serve.

J. A. SAUNDERS, President.

APPENDIX B

LONG ACRE CAMPUS

WOOD

LHND.

LONG ACRE ROAD TO PLYMOUTH.

N 27° 00' E

N 30° 05' E

189.6

No 19.

N 40° 50' E.

213.6

No 18.

234.2

No 17.

208.71

208.71

No 16.

58.401

208.71

No 15.

58.401

208.71

No 14.

98.101

208.71

No 13.

104.35

208.71

No 12.

214.

S 49° 10' E.

MO 50.05 S

SCHLE

120 FEET = ONE INCH.

CAMPUS CONTAINS

9.33 ACRES.

MAIN-BUILDING.



SPRUELL AVENUE.

S 63° 30' E

N 27° 40' E.

CENTER STREET.

MO 4.25 S

No 5.

209.4

No 4.

208.71

No 3.

208.71

No 2.

208.71

No 1.

208.71 Feet.

208.22 E

N 64° 15' W.

208.82

208.71

N 62° 20' W

208.71

208.71

208.71

208.71

208.71

100.9

107.96 S

107.96 S

104.35

104.35

104.35

104.35

104.35

122.3 Feet

73.4

SURVEYED SEPT-1st 1911.

by - A. J. Newberry, C.E.

MO 4.25 S

120 FEET = ONE INCH.

APPENDIX C

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

FINANCIAL REPORT

	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53
<u>Income</u>					
Undesignated gifts	3786.75	7157.89	7880.75	10675.12	8338.93
Designated gifts	2175.34	1572.82	3811.54	2700.52	4553.71
Regular room, board, tuition	387.20	2102.25	2459.35	2904.43	3901.30
Extension class tuition	1127.00	975.53	125.00		13.38
Books	143.30	140.68	382.04	113.92	238.17
Loans	155.00	264.20	10013.00	215.80	
Miscellaneous	1.40	314.51	7.33	83.73	1390.06
<u>Total Income</u>	7775.99	12527.88	24679.01	16693.52	18435.55
<u>Net Income</u>	7620.99	12263.68	14666.01	16477.72	18435.55

Disbursements

Salaries	940.83	2041.65	3440.73	3641.38	4619.83
Kitchen	1071.35	1858.93	2198.81	2634.41	3431.69
Office	170.21	245.58	138.17	187.46	348.00
General	210.57	269.18	7396.02	1050.20	962.00
Equipment	220.11	1187.79	961.86	3625.98	1997.08
Building upkeep	60.19	210.58	140.29	274.38	1287.23
Field representative driving	35.00	253.90	181.73	125.03	240.06
Extension class driving	383.74	731.37	35.10		
Books	181.02	170.38	536.91	521.02	448.31
Building note	2501.00	3086.25	1507.20	1369.50	2116.50
The Messenger	479.98	962.38	341.92	1040.89	569.87
Lights and water	110.44	511.97	560.35	701.44	435.67
Telephone	17.94	81.40	206.02	146.69	122.92
Other driving	63.04	88.66	188.09	472.39	508.28
Heat	111.75	159.89	281.30	218.00	325.75
Other publicity	26.63	52.66	204.55	71.91	441.00
Rents	969.00		475.00		
City gas			36.85	1.84	
Loans	125.72	194.19	5809.59	665.80	450.00
Radio	69.50	268.50	125.00		
<u>Total Disbursements</u>	7748.02	12375.26	24785.47	16748.32	18304.19

FINANCIAL REPORT

	1953-54	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57	1957-58
<u>Income</u>					
Undesignated gifts	10,407.41	8,504.39	9,185.80	10,917.68	11,622.25
Designated gifts	6,530.69	2,130.56	2,630.93	1,537.10	2,262.01
Room, Board, Tuition	1,918.75	3,630.82	2,844.97	2,942.93	3,739.98
Extension tuition	680.53				
Books	81.37	198.49	279.17	638.82	761.60
Loans		155.00	164.90		
Miscellaneous	1,631.04	1,933.39	2,559.33	2,193.93	1,859.25
<u>Total Income</u>	21,249.79	16,852.65	17,666.10	18,230.46	20,245.09
<u>Net Income</u>	21,249.79	16,697.65	17,501.20	18,230.46	20,245.09
<u>Disbursements</u>					
Salaries	4,995.64	4,193.99	4,749.51	5,414.52	6,333.71
Kitchen	3,846.02	4,274.50	3,979.35	4,132.87	3,719.14
Office	361.28	361.50	268.01	404.76	301.36
General	903.95	644.37	717.89	1,116.59	2,089.73
Equipment	229.26	962.55	429.94	849.28	1,400.16
Building upkeep	917.72	431.01	1,014.26	1,159.42	813.62
Field driving	234.35	394.13	270.00		638.26
Ex. cl. driving	559.03				
Books	571.00	905.10	534.38	854.92	1,367.41
Building note	6,634.33	1,804.10	2,986.40	1,505.80	1,254.60
The Messenger	491.77	580.49	327.58	593.76	167.76
Lights and water	407.30	456.62	397.91	364.19	449.12
Telephone	62.03	32.62	49.27	149.29	150.04
Other driving	388.11	352.20	1,024.22	1,113.34	1,052.33
Heat	375.49	273.10	272.00	205.00	413.00
Other publicity	218.15	666.70	341.12	330.98	165.28
Gas		131.00	70.40		61.89
Loans		155.00	164.90	41.18	
<u>Total Disbursements</u>	21,195.43	16,628.98	17,597.14	18,236.90	20,377.51

FINANCIAL REPORT

	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	1962-63
<u>Income</u>					
Regular gifts	11,046.63	9,839.95	8,222.10	7,794.22	9,843.21
Occasional gifts	2,553.50	4,289.14	11,868.73	14,556.52	11,518.18
Room, board, tuition	3,491.85	4,852.32	4,992.32	7,132.48	8,523.87
Extension tuition	100.00				
Books	571.34	735.72	1,558.25	98.00	
Loans	69.00				
Miscellaneous	2,638.87	2,452.47	3,449.73	3,336.67	3,838.34
Scholarships					1,162.00
<u>Total Income</u>	20,471.19	22,179.60	30,091.13	32,917.89	34,885.60
<u>Net Income</u>	20,402.19	22,179.60	30,091.13	32,917.89	34,885.60
<u>Disbursements</u>					
Salaries	6,765.83	4,851.13	7,086.89	6,956.35	7,156.22
Kitchen	4,510.85	4,492.48	7,101.75	9,270.39	10,598.95
Office	352.49	352.32	646.73	766.56	851.27
General	1,570.60	2,563.27	2,693.13	2,817.67	3,333.49
Equipment	578.76	1,710.30	2,946.59	4,064.64	1,946.69
Building upkeep	1,394.25	1,247.96	804.44	380.37	1,176.37
Field driving	7.05	217.35	2.00		
Ex. cl. driving	27.90				
Books	789.20	1,248.58	1,379.75	986.04	
Building note	1,672.80	1,672.80	3,046.45	3,300.00	3,580.00
The Messenger	282.15	468.61	449.24	872.83	744.47
Lights and water	461.73	525.06	880.77	1,190.50	1,359.52
Telephone	141.20	288.00	281.47	217.20	343.65
Other driving	984.63	2,179.46	1,510.56	1,358.78	1,845.99
Heat	334.50	229.00	587.00	766.71	716.04
Other publicity	292.93	527.18	440.25	292.56	361.65
Gas	66.89	82.12	154.80	144.57	265.84
Loans	69.00				
<u>Total Disbursements</u>	20,322.76	22,655.62	30,041.82	33,385.17	34,280.15

FINANCIAL REPORT, JULY 1 TO JUNE 30

	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
<u>Income</u>					
Regular gifts	11,284.41	11,104.18	10,251.88	13,580.70	13,998.02
Occasional gifts	17,005.08	8,964.61	11,578.55	18,983.35	24,608.19
Room, Board, Tuition	6,601.75	9,328.20	14,924.22	16,731.29	21,368.19
Miscellaneous	651.25	3,473.77	3,569.45	4,082.37	4,050.63
Scholarships	805.00	1,040.00	400.00	446.60	420.00
Promotional			2,377.29	2,279.36	1,310.75
Building fund			6,161.27	1,249.63	
\$1-A-Day			89.00	5,824.35	13,549.06
<u>Total Income</u>	36,347.49	33,990.76	49,351.70	63,177.65	79,304.84
<u>Disbursements</u>					
Salaries	8,649.31	5,646.96	7,072.94	11,753.64	18,974.30
Kitchen	8,427.47	7,029.42	11,185.70	9,793.07	11,368.54
Office	894.62	1,101.05	2,335.12	2,347.33	1,408.58
General	5,731.24	8,156.27	7,397.75	6,225.81	4,956.79
Equipment	4,150.36	1,739.17	3,178.26	3,048.82	6,357.30
Building upkeep	682.24	1,185.54	578.10	5,557.82	2,751.07
Building note	4,831.07	1,015.62	1,200.00	4,726.05	7,745.83
The Messenger	1,064.10	1,051.96	1,370.47	189.70	
Lights and water	1,590.95	1,396.81	1,646.51	2,105.18	2,496.22
Telephone	534.88	618.98	725.35	849.96	919.37
Driving	1,710.79	1,642.71	1,892.73	1,762.44	2,836.58
Heat	613.38	1,014.30	1,725.12	2,653.58	3,232.27
Other publicity	537.96	484.37	576.22	136.19	
Gas	189.39	433.89	469.80		
Promotional			2,445.74	2,330.06	1,289.87
Library				197.13	131.00
Printing				1,025.40	2,240.99
Insurance				600.14	566.30
<u>Total Disbursements</u>	39,607.76	32,517.05	43,799.81	55,332.32	67,354.94

Total Building Fund money including all interest - \$26,818.88

FINANCIAL REPORT, JULY 1 TO JUNE 30

	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73
INCOME					
Regular gifts	14,792.12	15,606.11	26,676.15	37,697.19	36,540.14
Occasional gifts	23,227.79	32,025.72	53,016.60	60,178.32	56,037.38
Room, Board, Tuition	32,154.11	50,443.64	70,445.58	74,436.83	81,176.99
Miscellaneous	8,277.67	8,839.62	11,640.34	12,442.29	55,607.34
Scholarships	390.00	320.00	240.00	240.00	440.00
Promotional	2,295.55	1,355.98	569.04		
Building Fund	41,613.66	41,671.42	9,428.02	4,541.14	4,754.88
Railway property				24,631.94	118,299.94
Total Income	122,750.90	150,262.49	172,025.73	214,167.71	352,856.67
DISBURSEMENTS					
Salaries	24,187.82	31,794.53	42,549.49	59,914.27	75,009.72
Kitchen	20,120.00	23,208.71	37,259.14	35,546.94	41,568.75
Office	1,212.72	1,634.36	2,366.13	3,426.47	5,313.08
General	5,310.37	10,487.75	14,468.77	19,340.37	38,612.18
Equipment	5,039.31	11,154.01	11,620.74	13,860.99	15,983.70
Bldg. upkeep	3,795.99	1,043.15	17,587.13	13,248.96	14,947.79
Bldg. note	4,295.50	3,570.00	13,185.00	13,420.00	540.00
Lights and water	2,366.47	4,369.42	7,301.38	8,673.41	6,779.72
Telephone	976.95	1,115.87	1,138.00	1,547.00	1,270.56
Driving	2,389.57	2,354.49	1,671.14	2,713.06	2,626.55
Heat	3,081.92	2,366.30	4,771.78	5,304.17	5,331.64
Promotional	2,290.75	1,229.71			
Library	421.53	678.00	683.79	4,476.49	1,791.46
Printing	2,910.52	1,945.05	5,422.34	3,738.73	2,877.85
Insurance	2,037.77	1,805.68	4,288.26	5,240.34	3,597.36
Building Fund	41,000.00	70,400.00	2,072.50		
Railway Property				5,000.00	120,000.00
East Campus					4,572.80
Total Disbursements	121,437.09	169,157.03	166,385.59	195,451.20	340,823.16

Not worth dec 31, 1972 - \$641,746.94

APPENDIX D

CAMPUS, 1973, WITH PROPOSALS

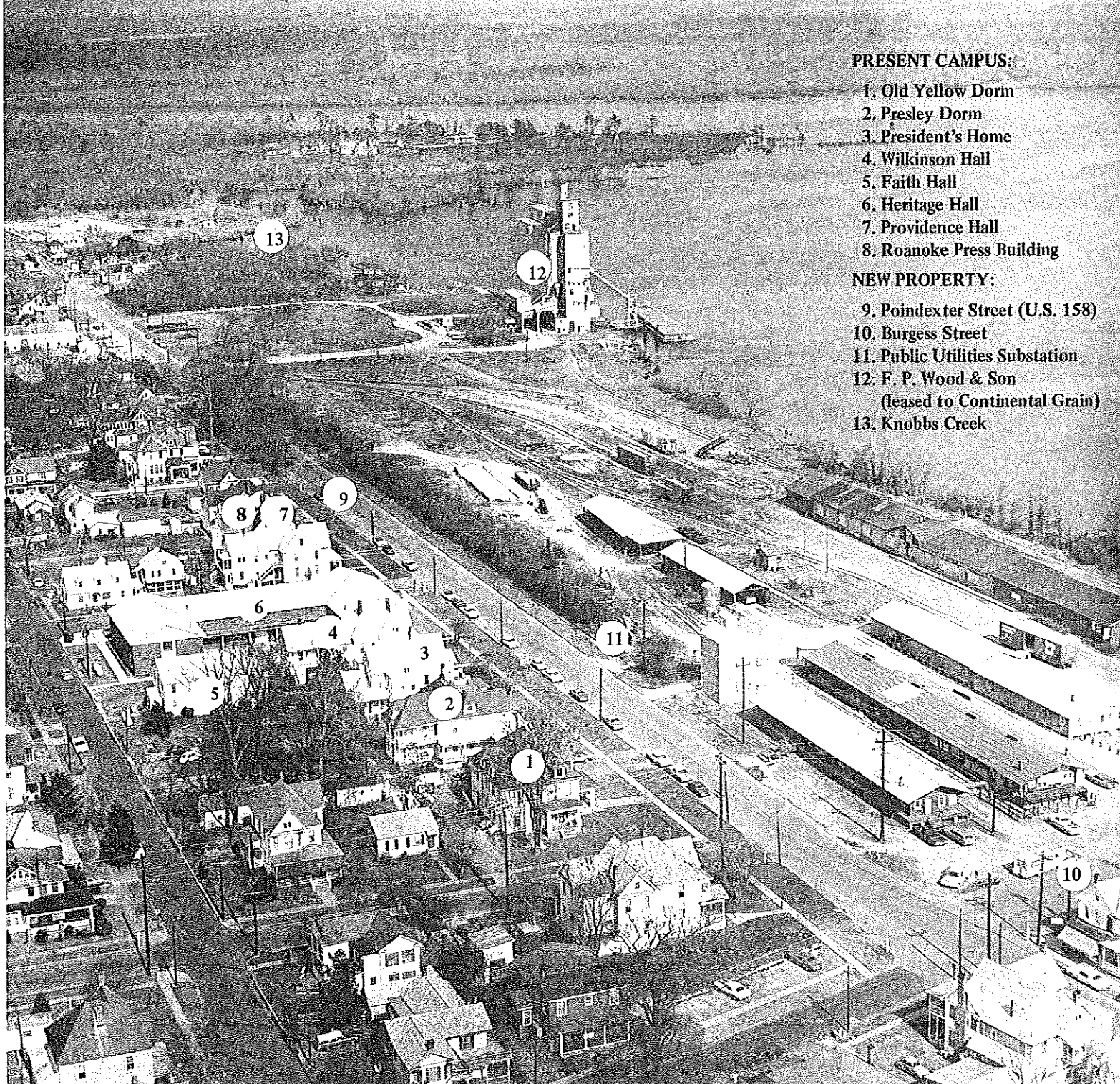
Will This Dream Come True?

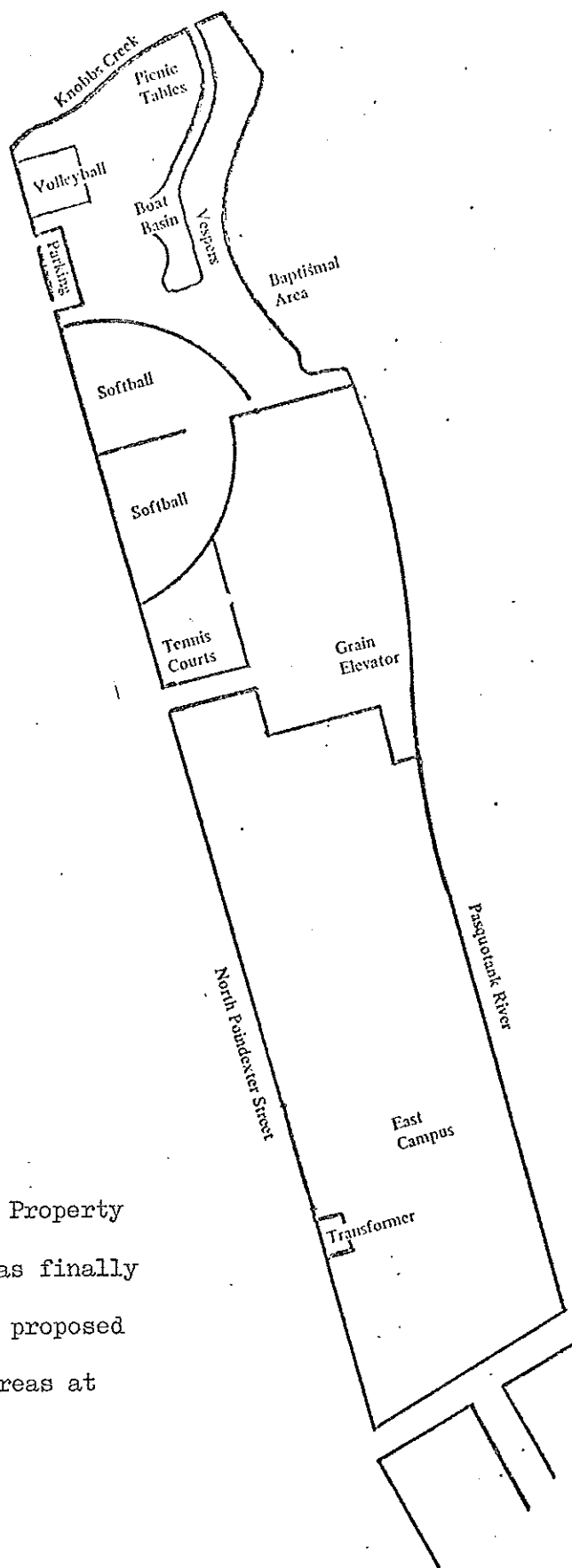
PRESENT CAMPUS:

1. Old Yellow Dorm
2. Presley Dorm
3. President's Home
4. Wilkinson Hall
5. Faith Hall
6. Heritage Hall
7. Providence Hall
8. Roanoke Press Building

NEW PROPERTY:

9. Poindexter Street (U.S. 158)
10. Burgess Street
11. Public Utilities Substation
12. F. P. Wood & Son
(leased to Continental Grain)
13. Knobbs Creek



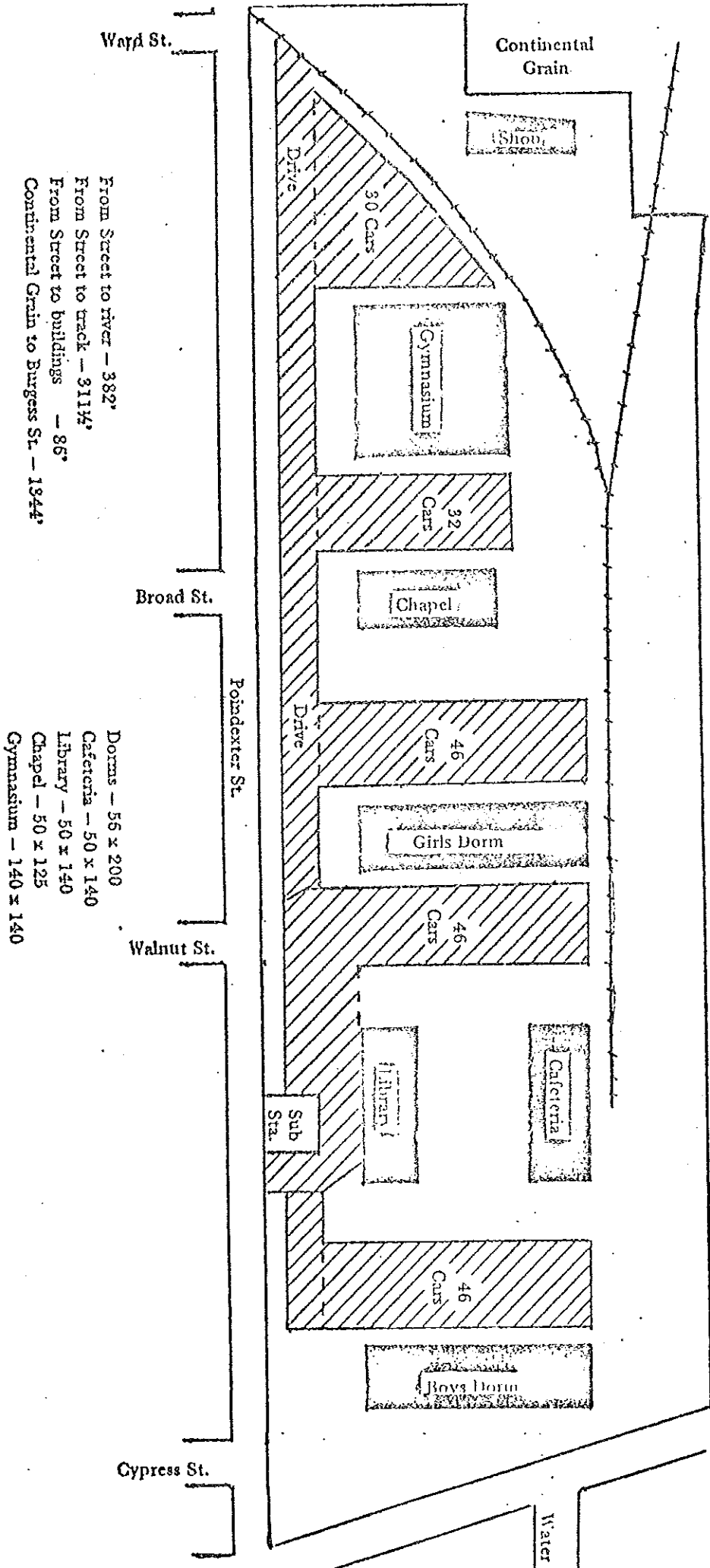


Map of Railroad Property
(East Campus) as finally
purchased with proposed
recreational areas at
north end

Long-range building plans on East Campus

Pasquotank River

Scale: 1/4" = 100'



APPENDIX E

THE EPSILON PI CHI PEEKER

THE EPSILON PI CHI PEEKER
Monday, March 21, 1949
by Walker B. Perry

The Peeker wishes to extend its heartiest congratulations to the society on the successful carrying out of its project.

Everyone certainly enjoyed Mrs. Sullivan's short visit. See that she does that again, Grace. Ronald Clifton, a former student of R. B. C., was in town one day the past week. It was good to see him again.

Remember! The Declamatory contest will be two weeks from tonight at this same hour. This is going to be a very interesting contest and I am sure no one wants to miss it. Make your plans now so that you can be sure to be here.

Also, remember the Gospel Rally the 3rd and 4th of April. This will be a time for Spiritual growth as we are assured of plenty of good wholesome spiritual food. Tell your friends and family about this important occasion and let's have good crowds at every session.

Nettie Mae Liverman and Joe Brickhouse spent the weekend at their homes in Columbia.

Mr. BonDurant preached at Wilkinson Memorial Sunday and reports a very good day.

Mr. Turner preached at Elizabeth City on the Church of Christ hour and at Bethlehem Sunday and also had a good day.

Yours truly went to Sweet Home and we also had good crowds both morning and night.

Joe Brickhouse preached at Zion's Chapel and reports good attendance.

This is March 21st--the first day of Spring! In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of--Greek--! Fooled you, didn't I?

If I were running the world I would have it rain only between the hours of two and five a.m. Anyone who was out at that time of day ought to get wet.

Lady: "So you are on a submarine. What do you do?"

Sailor: "I run forward and hold her nose when we want to take a dive."

Love makes the world go round. But for that matter, so does a good swallow of tobacco juice.

A smile is to the female countenance what the sunbeam is to the landscape--it embellishes an inferior face and redeems an ugly one.

The Peeker sees all, knows all, and tells all.

One night about eleven O'clock Mrs. B. and Beth were all alone when they heard a loud knock at the door. "Who is it?" asked Mrs. B. "Policeman Jones," came a rough masculine voice. "What do you want?" asked Mrs. B., and her voice didn't sound like rippling waters either. "It's your husband," hollered the cop. "A big steam roller just ran over him." "Well, don't just stand there talking," commanded Mrs. B. "Slide him under the door."

"My goodness, Sunday School again," grumbled Buddy Turner. "I bet Pop never went to Sunday School when he was a kid." "He went every Sunday," his mother answered him. "O. K." agreed Buddy reluctantly, "but I bet it won't do me any good either."

DAFFINITIONS:

Rush hour - That hour during which traffic is almost at a standstill.

A matron - A young girl gone to waist.

Sign on a garbage truck - "Used vitamin Dept."

Professor BonDurant to Professor Turner - "Radio programs are ruining this college. Everytime one of my Gospels pupils answers a question, he wants to get paid for it."

It's better to go broke than never to have loved at all, eh, Chas?

Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds:

You can't do that when you're flying words.

Careful with fire is good advice we know;

Careful with words is ten times doubly so.

Thoughts unexpressed sometimes fall back dead:

But God himself can't kill them once they're said.

Ella Mohorn once went to the Brown Derby and was having a good time watching the celebrities. After a while she caught sight of Bing Crosby and she stared at him so intently that he finally nodded to her. "Isn't that odd" she exclaimed to the waiter. "I've seen so many pictures of his, he thinks he knows me."

THE EPSILON PI CHI PEEKER

May 30, 1949

"THE PEEKER"

This is the highest learning, The hardest and the best--
From self to keep still turning and honor all the rest.

If one should break the letter, Yea, spirit of command,
Think not that thou art better; Thou may'st not always stand!

We all are weak--but weaker hold no one than thou art;
Then, as thou growest meeker, Higher will go thy heart.

* * * * *

The first year of Roanoke Bible College has come to a close. For all of us it has been a happy and glorious year. Never again will we be able to capture exactly such a feeling of contentment and happiness as that which we have shared together this year. There will be other happy ones, full of memories, the Lord willing; but the first year will always have a special place in our hearts.

Our memory carries us back to that first day, when we came together--strangers. After the introductions were made we set in to organize our society. Then came our first program. It wasn't too much in the way of entertainment, but we were proud of it. Our memory guides us back to "Sneak Day," a day when the student body sneaks away early in the morning and the faculty finds empty classrooms, with only a note telling where we are going. This year we sneaked away to City Park in Norfolk and the faculty joined us there later. We played soft ball, and watched the monkeys, or else they watched us. We are not sure which! The following night brought forth liniment, rubbing alcohol, or any thing the medicine cabinet might hold for sore and aching muscles.

Then came Hallowe'en. We planned a party--spooks and all. It was a scream. Don't you remember Mrs. Stallings asking "Oh great white goblin, what have I done?" Fun wasn't it?

Just before Christmas the Glee Club presented a series of Christmas programs at churches throughout Eastern North Carolina. Then came mid-term exams. It came in the month of January, but it sure reminded me of Fall, because the leaves really began to turn. Of course, I mean the leaves of the textbooks! The question of the hour was, "Do you think you passed?" And we did! The opportunities we had during the school year to meet other people were really wonderful experiences for all of us. Meeting people--visiting places--and singing the wonderful hymns of praise to our Heavenly Father were all worth our time and effort put forth in preparing programs to take to other churches.

Now the year is over, and we are about to embark on the voyage of summer vacation. Behind us are happy memories for all and these memories are sometimes so tender that tears cannot be forced back. But we should not continue to look back, but look forward for therein lies our goal. Ahead lies years and years of happy fellowship, years of toil for the

Master and that promise of a heavenly reward given us by the Master when he said "I go to prepare a place for you."

As the close of this school year comes around, we are reminded of the many good friends we have made during this time. It is indeed fitting that we say to every one who has been so kind to us, "Thank you." We do truly appreciate all the many, many things, both small and large, that have helped to make our first year at Roanoke Bible College a very happy, successful one. Among the special kindnesses shown are the many, many thousands of cubes of ice that Mrs. Annie Basnight has given to us in order that we might have a cool drink of water or a glass of tea. And also for the lovely flowers she so graciously gave to keep our classrooms fragrant. It would take all night to list all the things Mrs. Annie, and Mr. and Mrs. Trannie Crank have done for us. So to them we say, "Thanks."

We might also add to the list of ice donors, Mr. and Mrs. Stallings. And also for their goodness in letting us use their market refrigerator when needed. And thanks to Mr. Stallings for the many times he had to leave his dinner table to open his store to let us have a jar of mayonnaise or something we had forgotten. So to you, Mr. and Mrs. Stallings, we say "Thank you."

To Mr. and Mrs. Owney, we owe a number of "Thank you's" for all you have done for us this past year. We have learned to love you and deeply appreciate all the good deeds you have done for us. We will be looking forward to next year and coming to your house for "Sunday dinner."

To all the others who have helped make this year so successful, to Bill Cullipher for his help in emergencies such as frozen water pipes; to Mr. Fodrey for the use of the piano during the past year; and to all those who are too numerous to mention, our hats go off to you and we say God bless you and thank you.

To our faculty who have so patiently stood by us during thick and thin, during all the ignorances of we freshmen, we gratefully thank you. To you who made us burn the midnight oil, to you who made us labor and toil, we do, from the bottom of our hearts, say "Thank you for your patience, your faithful instruction given us, and may God bless all of you."

To our beloved President and his wife, we stand with bowed heads before you, because words cannot express our love for both of you, and our appreciation for all you have done for us as individuals, as class-room groups, as a school body. To you we say "Thank you" for all the many sacrifices you have made to make this school year possible for us. To you, who in your tireless effort to train us, we truly say "Thank you." Someone asked the question a few days ago, "Where does Mr. BonDurant get the strength to keep going continually without breaking?" In answer to that question my friend, I would say to go to the Scriptures and you will find the answer. "As thy days so shall thy strength be." May God shower His richest blessings on you, Mr. and Mrs. B.

And to Thee, O Christ, we pray that thou wilt make us worthy of all these many blessings. Guide us, protect us, and save us.