

1948

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Recommended Citation

Dodd, William G. (1948) "Early Education in Tallahassee and the West Florida Seminary, Now Florida State University, Part II," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 27 : No. 2 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol27/iss2/5>

EARLY EDUCATION IN TALLAHASSEE AND THE
WEST FLORIDA SEMINARY, NOW FLORIDA
STATE UNIVERSITY

by **WILLIAM G. DODD**

Part II

In the year 1850, Tallahassee, through its city government, took the first faltering steps which led later in the decade to the organization of a stable school system. Before that year, as was told in Part I of this article, parents had depended for the education of their children on private schools and on two corporate institutions, Leon Academy and Leon Female Academy. The former, constantly in financial straits, was barely kept alive through the years from 1827 to 1840. The Female Academy, begun in 1844, continued as an independent school until 1858. Thus the story of boys' education before 1850 is that of the breakdown of a public academy followed by a succession of transitory private enterprises. In the education of girls, the events occurred in the reverse order. For the necessity of establishing the Female Academy grew out of the inadequacy and uncertainty of the private girls' schools in the town from 1829 to 1843.

Early in 1850, the efforts of the city government were directed to providing educational facilities for the boys of the town comparable in excellence with those which the girls were enjoying. The first step taken was an experiment with a free school. After three years, this was discontinued and the Council, along with interested citizens, devoted their energies to securing for Tallahassee the West Florida Seminary, which had been established, but not located, by the Legislature of 1850. An attractive and commodious school building was erected and, in 1855, a male school established which a little later came to be known as Florida Institute. The new school prospered from the first, and it would doubtless have served adequately the needs and interests of the town. But as a result, in part, of the Council's offer

to convey the school and its property to the State, the Legislature of 1856 chose Tallahassee as the site of the new Seminary. Thus Florida Institute was transformed into the West Florida Seminary, and thus Tallahassee's efforts to secure the Seminary were crowned with success.

But she did not attain her goal without encountering the determined opposition of rivals. In the Legislature of 1852, the Act which located the East Florida Seminary at Ocala passed the Senate on December 23, 1852.³⁵ When the similar Act came up in the House, N. A. Long of Jackson county proposed the addition of Section 2, providing that the Governor appoint six commissioners from Middle Florida, at least three of them from West Florida, who should select a location for the West Florida Seminary. This section was a part of the Act as approved January 6, 1853.³⁶ Whatever may have been Long's ultimate object in proposing this new section, nothing could have suited better the long-range plans of Tallahassee. For the added section delayed effectively the final location of the Seminary, and so gave the city time to erect the new school building which she intended to include in her offer to the legislature of 1854.

For his own reasons, Governor Broome showed little interest in the special commission. He waited until August 18, 1854, more than twenty months, to announce his appointments,³⁷ and it was not until November 23 that all had qualified. The commissioners themselves seem to have felt little enthusiasm for their task: which is not strange, seeing that they had on their hands an uncommonly hot potato. There is no record that they ever took any action, and when the legislature convened in the fall of 1854, the matter of locating the Seminary

35. Florida Senate, *Journal*, 1852, p. 154.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

37. They were Rev. D. P. Everett, Walker Anderson, Rev. Jesse Coe, C. H. Dupont, William J. Bailey, Rev. R. J. Mays. C. H. Dupont declined the appointment and J. M. W. Davidson was named in his place. (Secretary of State's Record of Commissions).

passed by default from their hands to the delegations from Jackson and Leon counties.

Three towns, Quincy, Marianna, and Tallahassee, evinced an interest in securing the Seminary. The Quincy memorial, in the form of resolutions adopted by the citizens of the town, came before the House on January 4, 1855,³⁸ and was referred to a special committee whose bill to locate the Seminary in Quincy died on the calendar. The memorial of Marianna is not extant. But her plans to secure the school, or at least to thwart Tallahassee's plans, are plainly evident in the records of the General Assemblies of 1854 and 1856.

As exciting as they were at the time they were being waged, this account is not concerned with the details of these "battles long ago." It needs only to be said that they were fought hard and to the finish, with neither side showing any quarter. The main contests were over the memorials addressed to the legislature by the City Council of Tallahassee, through the intendants, William R. Hayward in 1854, and Francis Eppes in 1856. The first of these was presented to the Senate by Medicus A. Long of Leon county³⁹ as part of his Minority Report of the Committee on Schools and Colleges, of which J. T. Myrick of Jackson county was chairman.⁴⁰

The inducements which the City Council offered for locating the Seminary in Tallahassee were the growing population of the city and of Leon county; its healthful-

38. Florida House of Representatives, *Journal*, 1854, p. 230.

39. Florida Senate, *Journal*, 1854, pp. 199-202.

40. In the majority report Myrick proposed to the Senate a plan by which the seminary funds might be distributed to all the counties of West Florida for the purpose of establishing an Academy in each county. In his minority report, Long deftly reduced Myrick's proposal to an absurdity by stressing two points: first, the main intention of the law of January 24, 1851, was to set up two seminaries as a means of training teachers for the common schools. County academies without competent teachers would serve little, if any, purpose. Second: If the income of the Seminary fund were to be distributed to all the fourteen counties of West Florida, each county would receive the sum of about \$128.00. A county academy which could not prosper without state aid, would not be helped much by \$128.00 per year.

ness; its easy accessibility, even though Tallahassee was not at the geographical center of West Florida; its situation in a prosperous growing section, thus ensuring cheap board to students; its distinction of being the seat of the State government, thus placing the Seminary under the immediate supervision of the executive and the General Assembly.

The more telling inducements were, first, the sum of \$10,000.00, to be paid in part by the conveyance of ten acres of land with the new college building nearing completion, valued at about \$7000.00; the balance of the \$10,000.00, after a fair appraisal of the property, to be paid in cash. Second, the sum of \$1500.00 per year, so long as the institution continued to exist, the \$1500.00 to be used to pay the tuition of the children of Tallahassee in such manner as should be agreed upon between the governing board of the Seminary and the corporate authorities of Tallahassee.

With the memorial, Mr. Long submitted a bill which proposed to locate the Seminary in Tallahassee. At its second reading the next day, Mr. Myrick moved indefinite postponement. The motion was carried by a vote of 10 to 6, and the bill was indefinitely postponed. A similar bill, after a good deal of skirmishing, was passed in the House on January 5, 1855, and certified to the Senate the same day.⁴¹ Since the Senate had just defeated Long's bill, the fate of the House Bill was certain. In the final vote on January 10, only two senators voted for its passage. One of the two was M. A. Long of Leon county.

The second round of the contest took place in the House in the legislature of 1856. The leaders for Marianna were Mr. Roulhac and Mr. Pope. The interests of Tallahassee were carefully guarded by the regular Leon county delegation.

On December 4, 1856, the Speaker placed before the House the communication of Francis Eppes, intendant

41. Florida House of Representatives, *Journal*, 1854, p. 254.

of Tallahassee. The memorial was the same as the one submitted two years before, except that, in order to brighten their prospects of winning, the City Council now raised their annual payment from \$1500.00 to \$2000.00. On December 17, the Committee on Schools and Colleges recommended acceptance by the General Assembly of the "liberal offer by the City Council of Tallahassee," and introduced a bill to carry into effect their recommendation.⁴²

At the same time, Henry Pope submitted a minority report in favor of locating the school at Marianna. The peevish tone of his proposal lends it a sort of special interest. After refuting, to his own satisfaction, all the claims of Tallahassee, he declared that by the testimony of all visitors, the climate of Tallahassee was disagreeable, and the town an unhealthy place. Moreover, it had a bad name for extravagance "not only in the luxuries, but also in the realities of living."

Mr. Roulhac now came to the aid of his confrere. His motion to table the majority recommendation was lost; but at its second reading on December 17, he succeeded in having it referred to a select committee of five, three of whom were from West Florida. In their countermove, the Leon county representative in the House completely changed the complexion of the select committee by securing the addition to it of five members from Leon county and counties east of Leon.

The outcome of the contest was that the enlarged committee recommended the passage of the majority bill, and in spite of Roulhac's delaying tactics, the House did pass it on December 24, 1856. Mr. Pope and Mr. Roulhac did not vote. The bill passed in the Senate on December 27, and became a law with Governor's Broome's approval on January 1, 1857. And so Tallahassee won her signal victory.

The constitution of a governing board was the final step necessary to the legal operation of the Seminary.

42. Florida House of Representatives. *Journal*, 1856, p. 148.

By the provisions of the law of January 24, 1851, which were carried over to the Act of January 1, 1857, the Governor was required to appoint three members of the board. To serve with the three, the Register of Lands, in his capacity as State Superintendent of Schools, and the Judge of Probate of Leon county as County Superintendent, were *ex officio* members. Governor Broome's appointments were D. McNeil Turner, Francis Eppes, and Theodore W. Brevard. The *ex officio* members were David S. Walker, State Superintendent, and David W. Gwynn, County Superintendent of Leon county.

To this group, the first Board of Education of the West Florida Seminary, Francis Eppes, Intendant of Tallahassee, on April 1, 1857, conveyed lots 34, 35, 40, and 41 in the north one-half of the county quarter, and the college edifice recently erected by the City of Tallahassee. The deed of conveyance recites that the appraisers of the property "had fixed the price and valuation of said lots and college edifice at ten thousand dollars."⁴³ This convenient appraisal relieved the City Council of the obligation to pay in cash approximately \$3000.00 which their memorial to the legislature had anticipated.

While the city was consummating its plans for the education of its boys, the Female Academy was not prospering any too well. The records for the first half of the fifties show that the Academy was not paying its own way, and that the trustees were seeking outside help and even going in debt. On January 8, 1851, they borrowed \$295.00 "for the purposes of the Academy," and their note for that sum, with compound interest at 8%, was outstanding until the summer of 1858.⁴⁴ It has already been noted that in April of 1851 the Court, in response to the petition of the trustees, had ordered \$600.00 to be paid from the fire fund to the Academy.

We could wish that the phrase "for the purposes of the Academy" were a little more explicit. But in ask-

43. Leon County Deed Book L, 517.

44. Leon County Deed Book, M, 113.

ing for a grant from the fire fund, the petitioners stated specifically the uses for which it was needed. "The Academy," the petition said, "is in great need of improvements to the building itself, of the erection of a suitable fence, of the purchase of apparatus for the school, and of other objects connected with the prosperity of the institution."⁴⁵ But even if the \$600.00 was spent as indicated, it was insufficient for the purpose. For sometime in 1854, the City Council, though under no legal obligation to do so, paid \$300.00 for repairs on the Female Academy building.⁴⁶ For whatever purposes the trustees expended the money in question, the resort to petition and to borrowing can mean only that the patronage of the Academy was not sufficient for the upkeep and operation of the school.

The lack of financial return adequate to retain the services of good school men helps to explain the rapid and continued turnover in the administrative heads of the Academy. When in the fall of 1850 William Neil took charge of the free school, the trustees announced that the Academy would reopen with Mrs. Neil as principal. This, however, was probably a temporary plan, for on January 7, 1851, a new principal, W. P. Cunningham of Greenville, South Carolina, began the second session of the year. Cunningham remained with the school only until the spring of 1852, when Rev. P. Teller Babbitt, A.M. took charge and conducted it until the spring of 1853. Babbitt's successor, apparently, was Rev. A. R. Wolfe, who at the time of his leaving Tallahassee in July, 1855 was said to have been the principal of the Academy for "some years past."⁴⁷ From the summer of 1855 till April 1856 the school was without a principal, but continued its work, presumably, under the direction of one of the teachers. On April 17, 1856, the Academy

45. Leon County Chancery Case File No. 1327.

46. *Floridian and Journal*, January 6, 1855. Financial Report of the City for 1854.

47. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1855.

opened for the spring term with Rev. W. W. Childers as principal and Mrs. H. H. Brown as teacher of music.⁴⁸

In the fall of 1856, the board dropped their recent practice of appointing ministers to the headship of the Academy and returned to their former custom of seeking for principals who were experienced school men. This time their search led them to the small south Georgia town of Cuthbert. Here they secured John A. Grant for principal and professor of mathematics and natural science, and his associate, Andrew L. O'Brien, for professor of languages and moral science.⁴⁹ We are not told what salary was paid to Grant, but O'Brien was to receive \$1000.00 payable in instalments every three months.⁵⁰

When Grant and O'Brien were called to Tallahassee in the summer of 1856, they were operating a male school named Randolph College which they had built as equal partners in 1854.⁵¹ Instead of selling or leasing the school, they closed it altogether. This enabled them to transfer to the Leon Female Academy "extensive apparatus, thus furnishing the school with all the paraphernalia of a first-class college." They were also joined by a number of teachers from Andrew College in Cuthbert. Of these, Mrs. L. E. Grant was named principal of the ornamental department, Miss L. C. Grant, assistant, B. R. Lignowski, principal of the music department, and Miss Elizabeth Levinus, assistant teacher of music.⁵²

In the editor's comments on these appointments, Lignowski was given the conventional "boost" that he

48. *Ibid.*, April 5, 1856.

49. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1856.

50. A. L. O'Brien, *The Journal of Andrew Leary O'Brien* (Athens, Ga., 1946), p. 59.

51. Though both of these men were American citizens, neither was American born. Grant's gravestone in the Tallahassee city cemetery records that he was born in Bristol, England, in 1805. O'Brien was born in County Cork, Ireland, in 1815. In his youth and early manhood he was in process of being educated for the Catholic priesthood; but in 1845, eight years after his arrival in America, he became a member of the Methodist Church. (O'Brien, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 40.)

52. *Floridian and Journal*, September 20, 1856.

had taught in many colleges in Georgia and Alabama, and was "well known as among the most accomplished. Musical Professors in the Southern Country." But O'Brien, who had known him well in Cuthbert and had stood as security on his promissory note, called him "that faithless and unprincipled Ruffian, B. R. Lignowski."⁵³ The two estimates need not be mutually exclusive. The feeling on O'Brien's part did not augur a "happy family" relationship in the Academy, but we are told of no serious results from the disharmony.⁵⁴

The smooth transition from the Florida Institute to the West Florida Seminary was largely due to President Peyton's careful organization and efficient direction of the earlier school. No change was necessary and none was made in the administration, and doubtless Dr. Junius and Mr. Clayton remained with the new institution till the close of the year.

The only school activity we know of was the presentation by the Thespian Corps, assisted by the school orchestra, of the old 18th Century drama, "The Siege of Corinth." The performance was given at the Seminary on July 30 "at early candle-light" as part of the closing exercises of the school year. The interest of the event for this article is in the fact that the play was directed by A. L. O'Brien, and the settings designed by John A. Grant, both of the Leon Female Academy.⁵⁵

In May, on account of ill-health, President Peyton submitted to the board his resignation, effective at the close of the term on July 31. This was indeed a misfortune for the school. In the annals of the West Florida Seminary, President Peyton is entitled to the distinction of being not only the first president of the Seminary,

53. O'Brien, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

54. Lignowski was already well known in Tallahassee. As early as 1840 he was frequently before the public as a pianist, and he advertised himself as a "scientific performer and teacher." In 1843 he set up his own short-lived Musical Seminary. (*Floridian*, May 9, 1840; *Star of Florida*, February 23, 1844.)

55. *Floridian and Journal*, August 1, 1857.

but certainly also one of the ablest of its long line of administrative heads.⁵⁶

To succeed W. Y. Peyton, the board, early in the summer of 1857, selected their own chairman, Rev. D. McNeil Turner.⁵⁷ Mr. Edward Houston was appointed to the board to fill the unexpired term of Turner, and David S. Walker was elected the new chairman.

Duncan McNeil Turner had been the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee since 1854, and for three years had been active in every movement for improving educational conditions in the town. His more specific service to education as president of the Seminary extended over the three scholastic years from the fall of 1857 to the summer of 1860.

Early in September 1857 the board announced the opening of the Seminary on October 1, with D. McNeil Turner as President and professor of mathematics and of mental and moral science ; A. L. O'Brien, A. M. professor of Latin and Greek languages and literatures ; Rev. John C. Long, A.M. professor of English literature and natural science ; and W. W. Woodward as tutor in the preparatory department. Tuition was placed at \$6.25 per quarter in the preparatory department, and at \$10.00 in the college ; and patrons were notified that no pupil would be admitted to classes without a certificate from J. L. Demilly, treasurer of the board, showing that his tuition had been paid.⁵⁸

The announcement gives no further information about John C. Long. W. W. Woodward was a local young man⁵⁹ who later was connected with the public schools

56. After leaving Tallahassee, Peyton returned to Williamsburg, Virginia, and, it appears, became the editor of the *Virginia Gazette*. He died in Williamsburg on July 9, 1859. (*Richmond Examiner*, July 15, 1859, copied in *ibid.*, July 23, 1859.)

57. *Floridian and Journal*, June 6, 1857.

58. *Ibid.*, September 5, 1857. Advertisement of "State Seminary at Tallahassee," signed by D. W. Gwynn, secretary of the Board of Education. It will be noted that the tuition fees as announced were double what they had been previously. The reason for this will appear later.

59. *Ibid.*, December 6, 1860.

of Tallahassee for many years. He may well have been the Woodward whose name appeared on President Peyton's honor roll the previous January. The employment of A. L. O'Brien, already professor of classics at the Female Academy, indicates the friendly cooperation which existed between the two schools. It was probably also a measure of economy from which the Seminary profited; for it seems likely that the larger part of his teaching Latin and Greek would be done in the boys' school. For this additional service, O'Brien received \$300.00, making his total salary for the year \$1300.00.⁶⁰

No data on the enrollment in Turner's first year are available, but the figure for the preceding year of about 100 cannot be far wrong. Of intra-seminary news, only one item is left us: the Thespian Corps was still active, and announced a performance to be given at the Planters hotel Friday night, April 19, 1858, at which time the front seats would be reserved for the ladies.⁶¹

In the second year of President Turner's administration culminated two developments of the highest significance to the West Florida Seminary, to the Leon Female Academy, and to the City Council of Tallahassee. These were, first, the extension of the Seminary's educational privileges to girls as well as boys; second, the adoption by the City Council of the policy of contributing a definite sum yearly toward the education of every Tallahassee boy and girl within certain prescribed age limits.

These extremely important events were closely inter-related and were the outcome of conferences, many of them informal, no doubt, of the Board of Education, the Trustees of the Female Academy, and the City Council, or of representatives of these bodies. And the formal action of opening the Seminary to female students was in accordance with an agreement reached between the board and the Academy's trustees.⁶²

60. O'Brien, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

61. *Floridian and Journal*, April 13, 1858.

62. Leon County Deed Book M, 113.

The overtures to these deliberations must certainly have been made by the city councilmen, who having inherited from the Council of 1856 the obligation to pay to the Seminary \$2000.00 a year for the education of the children of Tallahassee, could not have overlooked the fact that girls, as well as boys, were children. But the Board of Education, all of whom were citizens of Tallahassee, and also the Trustees of the Female Academy, who in their corporate capacity had borne for many years the heavy responsibility for education of the girls of the town, - all these men as citizens were entirely friendly to the overtures of the City Council. In a village or small town, actions of public import, in the present instance the adoption of an important school policy, never just happen. In their final form they are the result of much private and some public discussion and planning. And we shall misunderstand the developments here considered if we view them merely as actions of separate corporate bodies, and not as complementary results of the deliberations of citizens with common interests.⁶³

The discussions between the governing boards of the Seminary and the Female Academy dealt primarily with an equitable method of admitting girls to the facilities of the Seminary. The question was real and serious. For it was recognized immediately that the establishment by the Seminary of its own female department would certainly "conflict with the prosperity of the Academy" and very likely destroy the school altogether. The only feasible solution of the problem appeared to be for the Seminary, so to speak, to absorb the Academy, taking

63. The members of the Board of Education were David S. Walker chairman, Francis Eppes, Edward Houston, David W. Gwynn, and Theodore W. Brevard. The trustees of the Academy were M. A. Long, president, Thomas Baltzell, Charles E. Dyke, Richard A. Shine, David C. Wilson, Richard Hayward, and David P. Hogue. The city councilmen for 1858 were R. A. Shine, P. B. Brokaw, D. S. Walker, P. T. Pierce, George N. Heir, F. H. Flagg, Arvah H. Hopkins, and Selim Meyers. The double membership of David S. Walker, D. P. Hogue, and Richard A. Shine emphasizes the common interests of the groups.

over the ownership of all its real property. And this was the solution agreed upon by the two boards.⁶⁴ As this action put into effect the City Council's purpose of securing the benefits of the Seminary to the girls of the town, the city authorities readily concurred and cooperated in the solution.

Accordingly, at its meeting of June 14, 1858, the Board of Education of the Seminary "Resolved that from and after the first day of October next, females as well as males, shall receive instruction in said Seminary, and that a suitable building will be provided for the Female Department. The City Council on the very same day "Resolved that after October 1 next, the Seminary may receive as pupils all the children, male and female, above the age of seven, permanently residing in the City, and the City will pay tuition fees to the Seminary to the extent of \$6.25 per quarter for each child."⁶⁵

The clause in the board's resolution relating to a suitable building for the female department was doubtless left indefinite because the conveyance of the Academy property to the board had not yet been made. That action was provided for six weeks later "at a meeting of all the Trustees of Leon Female Academy, on July 26, 1858."⁶⁶ On motion of Thomas Baltzell, the trustees adopted a resolution to transfer to the Board of Education of the Seminary the entire management and control of the Female Academy, and to convey to the board the Academy's real property, on the conditions and ac-

64. Leon County Deed Book M, 113.

65. *Floridian and Journal*, June 26, 1858. The city thus obligated itself to contribute \$25.00 a year toward the education of each eligible child. It is likely that this figure had been set by the Council at the same time that the Board of Education, perhaps in conference with the Council, set an identical tuition for pupils in preparatory department. The fixed annual payment of \$2000.00 would cover the tuition of 80 students in that department. As the total enrolment in the Seminary was approximately 100, the Council were evidently prepared to put up a substantial sum in addition to the \$2000.00; it can hardly be supposed, however, that they anticipated the large financial obligation which their resolution entailed in the following school year of 1858-59.

66. Leon County Deed Book M, 113.

ording to the agreements already entered into between the board and the trustees.

The basic agreements by the board were, first, to constitute the Female Academy a part of the Seminary ; second, to "apply," that is, to expend on the female department, a due proportion of the funds derived from all sources, including specifically the Seminary fund and the sum of \$2000.00 paid annually to the Seminary by the city authorities, so that the teachers of both the male and female departments should be employed and paid in the same manner in all respects.

The board further agreed to pay to the trustees of the Academy the sum of \$295.00, with compound interest at 8% from January 8, 1851, which had been borrowed for the purposes of the Academy; and to pay to D. C. Wilson the sum of \$42.00, and to D. C. Wilson as agent for Rubin F. Correll the sum of \$30.00.

By the deed of July 27, 1858, Medicus A. Long, President of the Trustees of Leon Female Academy, conveyed to the Board of Education of the Seminary, lots 216 and 217 in the North Addition, Tallahassee, "said lots being the same whereon the Leon Female Academy Building stands," provided if the West Florida Seminary was ever removed from Tallahassee, the title to the said lots should revert to the trustees of the Leon Female Academy.⁶⁷

Thus came about simultaneously three events of the highest importance in the history of Tallahassee's schools: first, the final organization of the West Florida Seminary in a male and female department, each to be conducted in its own building on its own school premises; second, the culmination of the city's efforts be-

67. Medicus A. Long, whose name appears several times in this narrative, came to Florida from Tennessee in 1843. He practiced law in Tallahassee for sixteen years. In addition to the positions he filled of civic importance, he was a member of the State Senate in 1852 and 1854 ; a Buchanan elector in 1856 ; and a prominent candidate for United States Senator the same year. In order to get relief from asthma, he left Tallahassee in July, 1859 to reside permanently in Texas. (*Floridian and Journal*, July 2, 1859.)

gun with the Free School of 1850, to provide at least a common school education for all of Tallahassee's boys and girls; third, the end of the fifteen year struggle for existence of a separate or independent school for girls.

The achievements were hailed with delight by the editor of the *Floridian and Journal* who must have spoken the sentiments of many of the best citizens in his comments on the resolutions of June 14: "They open a new era in our educational system. We feel proud of old Tallahassee."⁶⁸ And later in the year, David S. Walker as State Superintendent of Schools cited as admirable the example of Tallahassee, which was raising by taxation and paying to the public schools \$25.00 for each child, rich or poor, male or female, within her borders, with the result that nearly all her children were at school.⁶⁹

Under the new organization, the Seminary opened on September 20, 1858. D. McNeil Turner was president of the male department, and we may conjecture that he kept as his assistants the teachers of the previous year, Dr. Long, Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. Woodward. On August 2, John A. Grant, head of the female department had died, and A. L. O'Brien had been appointed to his position as supervising principal. The staff of the female department as announced were A. L. O'Brien, classics and mathematics; Mrs. L. E. Grant, higher English branches ; Miss C. Smith, preparatory department ; Mrs. Grant, music and ornamental branches. The tuition was the same in both the male and female departments.⁷⁰

68. *Floridian and Journal*, June 26, 1858.

69. Florida Senate, *Journal*, 1858, Appendix, pp. 12-18. David S. Walker's report to Governor Perry of the Register of Lands, November 1, 1858.

70. *Floridian and Journal*, September 11, 1858. With 112 students in attendance, as will appear below, Mrs. Grant's teaching load was oppressive, if not impossible. O'Brien, at the time he was elected head of the female department, understood that "Miss Wilson" was to be one of his assistants (O'Brien, *op. cit.*, p. 66). She may have joined the staff after the announcement was published, but our records do not include her among the teachers before the following year, 1859-60.

The Seminary prospered from the very beginning of the reorganization. On October 2, more than 130 pupils were reported. From this figure, the enrollment rose toward the mid-year to a maximum of 200. As more than half of the students were girls, there was a rather serious overcrowding in the female department.⁷¹ The parents of Tallahassee were making good use of the school, but not everybody was pleased. There were the usual self-important critics who approved of no home products, and who moved the editor to remark that, while in schools as in everything else distance lends enchantment, he wondered if the time would ever come when "our people" would cease to ask, "can anything good come out of Nazareth?"⁷²

Public reports of the male department's activities were highly favorable. For example, on December 23, the state Senate Committee on Schools and Colleges visited the Seminary at the time of the mid-year public examinations. The chairman, who reported on the visit, was generous in his compliments, on the neat, orderly classrooms; on the perfect behavior of the pupils; and on the intelligent answers of the students, who thus gave evidence of the breadth and completeness of the instruction they were receiving. The committee pronounced the State Seminary in Tallahassee "to be equalled by few and surpassed by none of a similar class in our country." And they recommended that the legislature then in session empower the Board of Education to confer collegiate degrees on the young men who should desire to complete their education at the Seminary and thus obviate their going to other states in order to secure a degree.⁷³

71. *Floridian and Journal*, December 4, 1858.

72. *Ibid.*, October 2, 1858.

73. Florida Senate, *Journal*, 1858, p. 215. The committee's recommendation was not put into effect until December, 1859. The Act of December 22, 1859, authorized the West Florida Seminary to confer degrees after January 1, 1860. (*Florida Acts*, 1859, Ch. 1019.)

President Turner, by his careful management and his original methods of teaching, was winning golden opinions for the Seminary as well as for himself. And generally throughout the community, he was regarded as "the right man in the right place."⁷⁴

No reports are left of the female department, but subsequent announcements of the board indicate their confidence in its teachers. Early in 1859, the department lost its principal when O'Brien, on account of business troubles in Cuthbert, had to ask for his release. Although at first the board, did not receive his request with favor, after some consideration they decided to release him, and on February 1 he left the Seminary for good to return to Cuthbert.⁷⁵ Notwithstanding, his work in both the male and female departments went on without the employment of new teachers. Everything we are permitted to know about the Seminary in the school year 1858-1859 points to that year as a markedly successful one, and as giving promise of a bright future.

In spite of the flattering picture, however, some question must have arisen as to the city's ability to carry out its financial arrangement with the school. If we suppose, conservatively, that of the 200 students in attendance 80%, or 160, were from the city, at \$25.00 per pupil the Council owed the Seminary for the year 1858-1859 alone the sum of \$4000.00. Their fixed annual obligation of \$2000.00 would cover one-half of the amount; as to the payment of the other half, we know nothing. The financial statement of the city for 1858 does not mention this deficit, and we lack entirely the

74. *Floridian and Journal*, June 11 and 18, 1859.

75. O'Brien, *op. cit.*, p. 67. Tho O'Brien certainly performed his duties to the Seminary conscientiously and well, his stay of two and one-half years in Tallahassee was a chapter of personal miseries. His invalid wife died soon after he assumed his new position; his personal care of his four young children was a consuming anxiety; and he was constantly harassed by creditors in Cuthbert who held liens on his property and who threatened sheriff's sales to satisfy the liens. On February 7 he reopened Randolph College. His Journal does not reveal what finally became of him.

statement for 1859. Without more definite information, and perhaps with it, we would have to conclude that in adopting the resolution of June 14, 1858, the councilmen were taking a long leap in the dark. Ensuing events bear out this conclusion.

In engaging Turner for his third year of 1859-1860, the Board of Education adopted a new form of contract. By this agreement, Turner as president of the male department was to receive \$2000.00 in cash and the tuition fees of the department. The school year was divided into two sessions ending on January 15 and July 1. To add to the attractiveness of the contract, the tuition fees were scaled upward from \$10.00 per session for primary subjects to \$25.00 for the advanced classes. But at the same time, the City Council, in order to keep their total payment to the Seminary within their specified obligation of \$2000.00, reduced their allotment of \$25.00 per pupil to \$10.00. Additional tuition, if any, was to be paid by the students.⁷⁶ On his part, Turner agreed to pay all the incidental expenses of the male department, and to employ from his own resources as many assistant teachers, in no case less than two, as the interests of the department might demand.⁷⁷

Just how well the female department might fare under the new arrangement with Turner evidently gave some concern to the citizens. The board, however, considered the available assets sufficient to operate the department, and they assured the public, "The Board of Education will continue to exercise constant supervision over both [departments,] and do all in their power to make the Institution the pride, the ornament, and the blessing of our State."⁷⁸

In accepting the presidency of the Seminary in the first place, Turner's ambition was to develop the school into the strongest possible literary and scientific insti-

76. *Floridian and Journal*, September 3, 1859.

77. *Ibid.*, September 10, 1859.

78. *Ibid.*, September 3, 1859.

tution. At some time within his first two years, whether on his own initiative or at the suggestion of others we do not know, he began to consider the desirability of adding to the traditional curriculum a system of military training. In the summer of 1859 he apparently was still open-minded on the question. With the object of learning directly how such a system worked, and of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion in the matter, he spent the vacation months traveling widely and visiting other institutions where the system was in operation. His final decision was that military training would be a valuable addition to the educational program of the Seminary.

The decision entailed two additional steps: first, securing the money for the needed "guns and accoutrements." Turner was encouraged by Governor Broome and Colonel Houston, whom he met in Baltimore, to expect that these needs would be supplied by the State. The uniforms would, of course, be purchased by the cadets.

The second step to be taken was the employment of competent teachers to offer the military instruction and training. For the purpose, he engaged two teachers: George M. Edgar, highly recommended by the Virginia Military Institute, of which he was a graduate; and a Mr. Pierce, a graduate of Jefferson College and an instructor in the Scientific and Military Academy at Portsmouth, Virginia. Both men were said to be excellent scholars and good teachers. Mr. Edgar was induced to come to Florida, even at the sacrifice of his professional prospects elsewhere, by the promise of his having a part in building in Florida a literary, scientific, and military

79. Turner found on investigation in Baltimore that the uniforms could be bought at wholesale prices from a manufacturer in that city. The dress uniform of blue broadcloth with gold lace and metal buttons would cost \$12.00 per suit, and undress uniform of satinette, \$6.00. Caps would cost from \$1.00 to \$1.50.

school.⁸⁰ In addition to the two military instructors, Turner also engaged H. B. Craig, a graduate of Washington College, and a recent teacher in Albemarle, Virginia.

He had thus completed arrangements "for meeting all the demands of an English, classical, mathematical and scientific school of high grade and embracing 100 pupils." And he pledged himself to employ an additional instructor for every additional 25 students. Thus President Turner entered upon his third year at the Seminary with high hopes of building an institution which would "compare favorable with any in the country," and such as would convince Florida that she need not depend on other states for the instruction of her sons.⁸¹

The scholastic year of 1859-1860 began in both departments on October 3. The female department was under the direction of Miss C. Smith as principal, and her assistant, in the higher branches, was Mrs. Case, a graduate of Patapsco Institute ; in the common branches, Miss Wilson, of whom we are told nothing more. No teacher of music was employed ; but Mrs. H. H. Brown had her studio near the school, and arrangements were made for pupils who so desired to take their lessons with Mrs. Brown without interfering with their other studies. Tuition fees corresponded with, those in the male department, but each girl was first examined and the charge made in accordance with the subjects to be pursued.⁸²

Considering the lofty ambition for the Seminary

80. This apparently was the same George M. Edgar who returned to Tallahassee as principal of the Seminary in August, 1887, and remained until the summer of 1892. (See Florida Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Report*, 1887, p. 12.)

81. *Floridian and Journal*, September 20, 1859. Letter of President Turner to D. S. Walker, Chairman of the Board of Education, written from Beaver, Pennsylvania, August 25, 1859.

82. The arrangement with Mrs. Brown was probably made for reasons of economy. One result of it was the final severing of Mrs. L. E. Grant's connection with the school. Her card of September 22, 1860, indicates that she had been operating her own private school thru the previous year.

which Turner had entertained and which the Board probably shared and assuredly supported, it is disappointing that we know almost nothing of the school for the year 1859-1860. We are given but one important item of information, that "upward of 120 pupils were in attendance."⁸³ Lesser items tell us that in the May party of 1860, the children had been trained for their part in the ceremony by Miss Smith and Miss Wilson of the female department,⁸⁴ and that in the Fourth of July celebration, a detachment of cadets from the Seminary, under the command of Captain Nicholas W. Eppes, appeared in the "military display."⁸⁵

With our meager information about what promised to be Turner's most important year at the Seminary, we are wholly unprepared to understand his action at the end of that year in resigning his position as president of the institution. In reporting the May party, the editor ended his story with the remark, "And we may say in conclusion that the flourishing condition of our Seminary is a source of gratification to all true lovers of our country and our City."⁸⁶ And in commenting on Turner's resignation, he declared, "The State Seminary under his management has continued to increase in numbers and in public confidence. . . Very few institutions at the South, not endowed, enjoy such an organization for instruction as was effected by Mr. Turner for the past year. The development of his plans would have eventually secured for our community regular Collegiate as well as Academic instruction."⁸⁷ Why then did Turner make his seemingly abrupt decision?

Perhaps no complete answer to the question can be given. But, as one would expect, the matter of the city finances had something to do with Turner's resignation. By his contract, he was to receive \$2000.00 in cash and

83. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1860.

84. *Ibid.*, May 5, 1860.

85. *Ibid.*, July 7, 1860.

86. *Ibid.*, May 5, 1860.

87. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1860.

the tuition fees in the male department. Undoubtedly Turner, and possibly the board also, understood this to mean all the fees collected. But the City Council of 1860 held that their annual obligation to the Seminary did not extend beyond their guarantee that the tuition fees paid by the "City scholars" should amount to \$2000.00.⁸⁸ That is to say, the Council claimed these fees as payment on their annual obligation.

The new Council of 1860 had hardly taken office when the matter came up for consideration. In order to arrive at some understanding about the conflicting interpretations of Turner's contract, the Council, at their meeting on February 13, appointed two of their members to confer with the board about the payment of the Council's obligation. At the meeting of March 12, the committee, through the intendant, reported that nothing could be done in the matter until the expiration of Turner's contract.⁸⁹ And on June 7, they reported finally that the Board of Education agreed that the city should be required to pay "only such sums as may be necessary to make the sum of \$2000.00, if the tuition fees of the City pupils at the male and female seminaries should not equal that amount."⁹⁰

In plain words, the board could not renew Turner's contract for the following year 1860-1861. And so, early in the summer Turner left Tallahassee for good.⁹¹

Late in September, Francis Eppes, president of the Board of Education announced the faculty of the Semi-

88. Minutes of the Tallahassee City Council for 1860, p. 2.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

90. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

91. Mr. Turner originally came to Tallahassee from Abbeville, South Carolina, where he had been pastor of one of the Presbyterian churches in that vicinity. When he accepted the presidency of the Seminary, he relinquished his pastoral charge of the church in Tallahassee, but continued to serve the congregation at Lake Iamonia as stated supply of the church. On leaving Tallahassee, he returned to Abbeville as pastor of his former church. He spent a good portion of his later years in pastoral and educational work in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. He died about 1896. (Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 726.)

nary for 1860-1861. In the male department, the president and professor of ancient and modern languages was Philip H. Montague, a graduate of the University of Virginia, and a teacher of long experience. James H. Lane was professor of mathematics and military tactics, succeeding George M. Edgar of the previous year. Remaining from that year was H. B. Craig as professor of Greek, and apparently in charge of the preparatory department.

The female department continued under the direction of Miss Smith, who had as her assistants Mrs. Case and Miss Fannie Bull. No teachers of modern languages, music, and drawing had been engaged, but the board agreed to employ teachers of these subjects in the city "according to the preferences of the pupils."⁹² On October 6, however, the board announced that they had secured the services of the "distinguished linguist," Professor Sartori, a graduate of the University of Padua, and for a number of years a teacher in the schools and colleges of Lynchburg, Virginia.⁹³

The school year had hardly started when serious trouble arose in the male department. Professors Lane and Craig suddenly resigned their positions on the faculty. We are given no intimation what their grievance was; but their action was regarded by the board as insurgent and disloyal.

The board therefore immediately accepted the resignations, even though they came in the very beginning of the academic year, at a time when it is always difficult to secure acceptable new teachers. President Montague took over Craig's students in Greek; and Professor Sartori, for an extra stipend no doubt, relieved Montague of his classes in modern language. W. W. Woodward, who two years before had taught the English branches, was recalled to the same position in the emergency. But no one was available to carry on Lane's work in mathe-

92. *Floridian and Journal*, September 22, 1860.

93. *Ibid.*, October 6, 1860.

matics, and the Board had to suspend these classes until they could find a new teacher.

At length, on December 1 they were able to inform the friends and patrons of the Seminary that they had secured for Professor of mathematics and military tactics J. Lucius Cross. The new professor, a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, had been a teacher for several years, and brought to the board the highest testimonials of qualification and character. The board deeply regretted the interruption of the routine of the Seminary, but they felt considerable satisfaction in pointing to their prompt acceptance of the resignations of Lone and Craig as "ample proof of their inflexible determination to preserve order in the School, as well among teachers as pupils."⁹⁴

And so, the corps of teachers was once more complete, and the Seminary, under President Montague's guidance, proceeded, auspiciously it seemed, into its fourth scholastic year. In little more than a month after Mr. Eppes' announcement, Florida joined her sister state of South Carolina in seceding from the Union. In two months more, the conflict between the Northern and Southern States, long smouldering, burst into flame. The vicissitudes of the West Florida Seminary through the four years of that struggle and through the four decades following it, afford an important and attractive theme for future writers.

94. *Ibid.*, December 1, 1860.