

Civilian Education and the Preparation for Service and
Leadership in Antebellum America, 1845 - 1860

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by

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Introduction

On February 5, 1898, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology held a special ceremony for the unveiling of a bronze bust of their former president, Brigadier General Francis Amasa Walker. Walker had died the year before and the campus decided to build a memorial to honor him. During the ceremony, those who had been his students or had served under his command during the Civil War gave a series of speeches about his amazing leadership skills. Edward Winslow recounted stories of his great courage and leadership at the Battle of Chancellorsville. James Craft discussed his great sense of duty to his country that he passed on to both his soldiers and students. Then, almost as an afterthought, Craft reminded the audience that General Walker had had no previous experience in the military before joining the army during the Civil War.¹ Indeed, he had been a special tutor in Greek at the outbreak of the conflict. Despite this apparent disadvantage, Walker had been promoted from captain to brigadier general for his actions during the war.

¹ Boston Transcript, January 5, 1898. Francis A. Walker Papers, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston.

This seemingly minor detail could be considered largely an anomaly if it were not for the fact that several of the men who emerged as great leaders during the Civil War came from educational backgrounds.

The Civil War was a defining moment in American history. Soldiers from both sides believed they were fighting to preserve their nation, and idealistic volunteers initially flooded to recruitment centers to join the battle. However, neither the Union nor the Confederacy would achieve victory without capable leaders.

Most of the high-ranking officers who originally fought in the American Civil War were professional soldiers. Both the Union and Confederate armies filled the ranks of their senior officer corps with graduates of West Point or the Virginia Military Institute who had careers in the army. Moreover, many of them were veterans of the Mexican War or the struggles with Native American tribes. Of the 1,008 men who served as generals in the Civil War, 319 had professional military experience before the war.² However, as the conflict continued, both the North and the South replaced fallen or promoted officers with men who had little or no previous military training. These were men

² Ezra Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), p. xix.

from all walks of life who made the difficult decision to join the fight and left behind their homes and civilian occupations.

In some cases, these men were unable to adjust to the stress and responsibilities of army life. They did not know how to lead men or understand the necessities of war. Thus, they failed as military leaders. For example, General Leroy Pope Walker, a lawyer in Alabama before the war, was unable to "cope with the tremendous tasks" of military leadership, was eventually removed from command and instead became a military judge. General Philip Sheridan criticized General John Starkweather, a Wisconsin lawyer, for the lack of discipline among his men. Eventually, Starkweather resigned from command after his brigade was nearly destroyed by a Confederate cavalry raid.³ However, other former civilians not only adapted, but also flourished in their new environment. These officers who had little military training are valuable to our understanding of education and leadership in both the antebellum period and the Civil War.

Some of the civilian fields were notorious for providing relatively poor leaders. Ironically, historians

³ Warner, *Generals in Blue*, p. 472; Ezra Warner, *Generals in Gray*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) pp. 320-321.

often deride the officers who came directly from positions of political leadership as usually being poor military leaders. The cases in point often provided are Daniel Sickles from the Union and John B. Floyd from the Confederacy. Both men apparently got involved in the war to enhance their political careers and did not perform well as military leaders. Sickles led his corps to near annihilation at Gettysburg when he disobeyed a direct order from General George Meade. Floyd and his men unceremoniously fled Fort Donelson in early 1862, which weakened its defenses and contributed to its quick surrender to the Union. Jefferson Davis immediately removed him from leadership and Floyd died soon after.⁴ Nathaniel Banks, the former governor of Massachusetts, lost 30% of his men when he confronted Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley in 1862 despite the fact that the Union force was larger.⁵ John Alexander McClernand, a congressman from Illinois, frequently exaggerated his successes on the battlefield and was eventually removed from command. Roger Atkinson Pryor, a congressman from Virginia, was so unpopular with his troops that he was "consigned to

⁴ Woodworth, *No Band of Brothers* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), pp. 137-138; Gabor S. Boritt, *The Gettysburg Nobody Knows*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 91-93.

⁵ Warner, *Generals in Blue*, p. 41.

oblivion and resigned.”⁶ In fact, many of the politician officers that served as generals during the Civil War, resigned under less than auspicious circumstances or were removed from command.

Professional educators who taught during the years 1840 to 1860 were among this group of untrained leaders who entered military service during the conflict. Ezra Warner, author of Generals in Blue, points out that of the 1,008 generals in the Civil War, thirty-one were professional educators, about half of whom taught in civilian institutions before the war. The remainder taught in military academies.⁷

Those future Civil War non-professional military leaders on the faculties of civilian colleges and schools are the subjects of this study. Historians have long ignored the civilian academic world as a training ground for military leaders, despite the tremendous impact that these men had on the fighting of the Civil War. This impact is measured by the effect of their actions on the battlefield and the overall influence on the men who served under them. While they were relatively few in number, they

⁶ Mary Seaton Dix, “Surviving the Confederacy: Rebellion, Ruin and Recovery - Roger and Sara Pryor during the Civil War” Journal of Southern History, Vol. 40, 2004, p. 169.

⁷ Warner, *Generals in Blue*, pp. vi-vii.

played vital and constructive roles in some of the most significant moments of the war. Whether they were the principal of a women's college in Alabama like William Flank Perry or a professor of modern languages at a liberal arts college in Maine like Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, these men would make their mark in the army.

For the purposes of this study, leadership is defined as the ability to inspire, motivate and command a group of individuals. More specifically, Steven Woodworth argues that the Civil War era leader

must select loyal and efficient subordinates, secure their appointment, inspire their cooperation and that of such less-than-inspiring specimens as politics may force him to retain under his command, and somehow contrive to get the very different minds of all these men working together in harmony. He must see to the training, organization, discipline, equipping, and supply of his army and have his orders carried out in all of these areas and others too. He must endeavor to get valid information about his enemy, knowing that a fair proportion of the raw information he receives will be egregiously false, some of it probably deliberately so, and any of it dangerously likely to feed either his fears or his hopes till they become the means of his destruction. He must endeavor to prevent the enemy's learning his own strength, plans, and dispositions. In all of this he will be overworked, sleep deprived, harassed, frazzled, and under constant tension, knowing that the fate of his country and his whole reputation are riding on nearly his every decision. And he will have the dubious pleasure of working with other

men whose personalities are equally on the ragged edge and for similar reasons.⁸

All of the subjects of this study showed these kinds of leadership skills while serving in the military despite the fact that they had little or no previous experience in that arena. While they may not have been successful in every aspect of Woodworth's definition, on the whole, they made a positive impact on the armies in which they served.

However, this study is not attempting to argue that educators necessarily made the best fighters. No attempt is being made in this dissertation to *equate* leadership in the classroom with the stresses and horrors of Civil War combat. As Woodworth's definition above would indicate, only a small portion of a Civil War officer's time was spent fighting. Leadership in this conflict was much more than strategy and killing one's enemy.

It is important, however, to recognize that the nature and definition of leadership was quite different between north and south. Because this dissertation examines subjects from both regions, it is necessary to examine some of these differences. As Bertram Wyatt-Brown points out, leadership in the south had strong moral and class

⁸ Steven Woodworth, ed., *The Art of Command in the Civil War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), p. ix.

components. Leaders in the antebellum south were expected to be of the highest moral character, eschewing activities such as gambling or heavy drinking. Within class lines leadership was fraternal; southern leaders were dependent on the esteem and support of their subordinates and were expected to treat them with honor. During the Civil War, Confederate soldiers whose officers treated them with disrespect or indifference were more likely than their Union counterparts to mutiny or desert. Leaders became more patriarchal as they dealt with those much further down the social ladder, with the planter/slave relationship being the most extreme example.⁹

Leadership in the Victorian north was not as closely associated with class and morality as it was in the south. Affected by the growing market economy, northern leadership was characterized by ambition and a strong work ethic. While the vast majority of southern generals came from the aristocratic class, northern commanders originated from a variety of backgrounds.¹⁰ For example, Ulysses S. Grant was the son of a tanner. In his study of Grant, William

⁹ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 68-69. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor Grace and War, 1760s-1890s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 224-227.

¹⁰ Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture*, p. 226.

McFeeley credits Grant's "intellectual initiative" as the reason for his success at West Point. He would spend hours reading books in the library.¹¹ Many others in the north, including Abraham Lincoln, followed a similar prescription of hard work and self-education to get into positions of leadership.

Another concept that differentiated southern leadership from its northern counterpart was the concept of manliness. As Peter Carmichaels has cogently argued, southern leadership was tied greatly to masculinity. Southern leaders, to a much greater extent than in the North, saw war as the opportunity to prove their manhood. Further, young southern men believed in the refining and maturing properties of war-time leadership; in the crucible of warfare, they would "purge their inner weaknesses."¹² While a desire to prove one's manhood was certainly not missing from many northern leaders, it was not a primary goal as it was for many southerners.

Regardless of their notions of what leadership was, the subjects of this study demonstrated very similar qualities as military leaders. This study argues that their

¹¹ William McFeeley, *Grant: a Biography* (New York: Norton, 1981), p. 19.

¹² Peter S. Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War and Reunion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), p. 13.

time preparing as students and their careers as educators served several important functions. First, experiences as learners and teachers in the classroom helped them to develop excellent leadership skills. As students they often served as leaders for campus functions, in school organizations and with regard to scholarly activities. As faculty members they not only demonstrated leadership in the classroom, but also among their colleagues and in their communities. They faced many struggles and conflicts as teachers and invented creative solutions to overcome problems.

One of the major sources of conflict on college campuses during this time was the issue of slavery. Schools in both the North and South regularly dealt with the issue especially after the emergence of the northern abolition movement and important political events such as the Compromise of 1850 and Kansas-Nebraska Act. Many of the subjects of this study were on the front lines of the fight over slavery. School administrators suddenly found themselves caught between warring factions of pro- and anti-slavery students at many northern colleges and universities. Occasionally, the tension erupted into violence. Some students and faculty members wrote long

papers or gave stirring orations regarding the issue. Because they were accustomed to taking the lead in difficult circumstances or on controversial subjects, these individuals developed exceptional leadership abilities that helped them as military leaders. Of course, there were obvious differences between leading men in the classroom and doing so on the battlefield, but as this study will show, there were some striking similarities. Also, as mentioned above, only a small fraction of a Civil War soldier's time was spent fighting. Solid leadership skills had to be displayed in camp, during a march, and immediately before and after battle.

Second, their careers in education helped to instill an intense feeling of patriotism in them that compelled them to join the fight. Once they had joined the fight, they were exceptionally committed to the cause, which also helped them to excel as leaders. American education during the antebellum period was focused on civic duty and both national and state pride. These were men of principle who were willing to work hard and give of themselves, not just as a job, but because they believed strongly in what they were doing as educators. They were training young men and women to be good citizens. Some of them, such as Claudius

Wistar Sears and Ormsby Mitchel, fought for months or even years to bring educational opportunities to their communities. Others struggled to improve educational offerings for their neighbors. That sense of duty and responsibility made their transition into positions of military leadership much easier and made their commitment to the cause much stronger.

Third, Christianity was an important part of antebellum education and thus was important in the development of these individuals into leaders. Christian denominations founded most of the non-military colleges and universities of the antebellum period. This growth of secondary education in the United States was closely related to the Second Great Awakening of the early 1800s. Christian ministers served as presidents of these colleges and Christian churches provided these schools with funds and facilities.

In return, education helped to buttress American religious life during the turbulent post-Second Great Awakening period. It helped to bring a degree of stability to a nation caught up in millennialism, emotionalism and a new host of unconventional confessions. Indeed, many educators, such as Thomas Upham of Bowdoin College, stated

that this was an important aspect of their teaching mission.¹³ The administrators of Bowdoin College claimed that the creation of their school was important in order to fight the presence of Unitarianism in other New England colleges and universities.¹⁴ The Disciples of Christ denomination founded Hiram College in northeast Ohio to combat what they saw as the domination of Baptist millennialist thought in the colleges of the region.¹⁵ It was in these religious controversies that many educators first took leadership roles. Thus, Christianity played an important part in the careers of teachers and the development of leadership skills.

Fourth, the American educational system of the nineteenth century underwent changes due to the influences of the Industrial Revolution and a growing market economy and many of the subjects of this study were caught up in these changes. More practical knowledge and training were

¹³ Richard Hofstadter and C. Dewitt Hardy, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 31-38; Louise Stevenson, *Scholarly Means to Evangelical Ends* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) pp. 12-13; John Brubacher, *Higher Education in Transition* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 141-143; Donald Tewksbury, *The founding of American colleges and universities before the Civil War, with particular reference to the religious influences bearing upon the college movement* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965), pp. 4-6.

¹⁴ Kenneth Sills, *The Beginnings of Bowdoin College* (New York: Newcomen Society, 1945), p. 11.

¹⁵ Allan Peskin, *Garfield: a Biography* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1978), p. 89.

needed to support the shifting U.S. economy. Thus, an understanding of engineering was more beneficial than philosophy or rhetoric. These changes, like the controversies regarding religion, also led to a great deal of conflict on college campuses. Some educators no longer saw the strictly classical curriculum that had been a part of the American college experience since the mid-seventeenth century as being so crucial. But as Frederick Rudolph has argued, administrators at American institutions of higher learning were reluctant to embrace new curricula forcing confrontations between those who wanted education to reflect the nation's growing needs and those who wanted to continue following the classical model.¹⁶ Many of the individuals in this study were on the forefront of this conflict.

Along with these changes in curriculum came conflicts over pedagogy. The old methods of learning such as recitation were falling out of favor with some educators who wished to develop learning based on laboratory experience and a collegial relationship with their students. However, many college administrators and board members were slow to recognize this and battle lines were

¹⁶ Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962).

drawn between educational reformers who wished to embrace change and the old guard who wanted education to remain the same. Many educators were involved in these conflicts over curriculum and pedagogy, forcing them to take sides in the fight over the future of American education.

This dissertation will focus on nine of the fifteen individuals who spent a considerable period of their antebellum life as either educators or working in academic endeavors. Of these nine, four fought for the Confederacy and five fought for the Union. Moreover, all of these men served at the brigade level or higher. In order to understand their values and their training, I will examine the lives and pre-Civil War careers of Henry Lawrence Eustis, Ormsby Mitchel, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, James Garfield, and Francis Amasa Walker who fought for the Union; and Claudius Wistar Sears, James Johnston Pettigrew, John Carpenter Carter and William Flank Perry who fought for the Confederacy.

These individuals were chosen for this dissertation because they provide a good representation of antebellum educators. Having grown up in differing regions of the country, they also are a good illustration of the kinds of educational experiences that were available all over the

nation. They were also chosen because of their varied educational experiences. For example, though they both grew up in the southeast, James Pettigrew and William Flank Perry had very different educations and served as faculty at very different institutions. Thus, by examining educators who came from different backgrounds, it is possible to demonstrate some characteristics that were common among all antebellum educators who fought in the war.

The purpose of this study, then, will be to examine educators from the North and South to discover how their experiences in antebellum education helped these men to become such capable leaders. My main focus will be the various forms of conflict in higher education that served as a crucible for the subjects in this dissertation. Whether it was arguments over pedagogy or religious values, these men spent the years preceding the Civil War learning to stand strong in their beliefs and they inspired others to follow their lead. This dissertation will establish that these experiences came together to forge a form of training that led to excellent leadership skills and compelled some educators to leave their comfortable positions to fight in the Civil War.

This study will help in the overall understanding of the values that were part of the antebellum educational experience by focusing on those who were receivers of, then responsible for imparting, those values. In most of the examinations of Civil War leadership, education has not been seen as an important cause of success. Consequently, none of the current studies of higher education during the late 1840s and 1850s have attempted to bring together a group of educators who all held one thing in common; they all were important leaders during the most crucial event in 19th century American history.

The study of the importance of American education in the nation's development has undergone significant changes over the past fifty years. Richard Hofstadter, the most influential historian of American education, represents the traditional view of the 1950s. His work focused on two main arguments. First, that nineteenth century higher education was a luxury of the upper class and second, that the religious influences in most colleges and universities fought against the development and implementation of more progressive curricula. Other historians of the period, such

as Donald Tewksbury and George P. Schmidt, echoed Hofstadter's main ideas in their works on the subject.¹⁷

However, in the 1970s and 1980s, historians began to reevaluate Hofstadter's thesis. David Allmendinger has written several essays on the nature and effects of antebellum education. Allmendinger argues that both wealthy and poor Americans found a place in higher education during the early nineteenth century. David Potts demonstrates that religious and secular forces worked together in many 19th century colleges to create much more progressive and useful forms of learning. Natalie Naylor has written a reappraisal of Donald Tewksbury's *Founding of American Colleges and Universities* in The History of Education Quarterly in which she focuses on the founding of dozens of church-sponsored colleges. She argues that these colleges greatly enhanced the nation's intellectual growth. While these works help to set the stage for this study, none of them address the issue of education and leadership.¹⁸

¹⁷ Hofstadter, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education*, pp. 11-12; Richard Hofstadter and Walter Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 209-213; Tewksbury, *The Founding of Colleges and Universities*; George P. Schmidt, *The Liberal Arts College: A Chapter in American Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957).

¹⁸ David Potts, "American Colleges in the Nineteenth Century: From Localism to Denominationalism" (History of Education Quarterly, Vol. 11, 1971), pp. 363-380; David Allmendinger, "New England Students and the Revolution in Higher Education" (History of Education Quarterly,

David Allmendinger also wrote an important monograph on the subject of education called *Paupers and Scholars: The Transformation of Student Life in Nineteenth-Century New England* (1975) in which he discusses the changes in student life on the campuses where many of the subjects of this study attended school. He focuses on the fact that many of the students in antebellum colleges came from humble backgrounds. Because several of the individuals in this study, such as James Garfield and William F. Perry, came from poor families, his work will provide important insights regarding their college education. While Allmendinger alludes to the leadership positions that many from poor backgrounds were able to attain because of their education, it is not the focus of his work.

The historiography of leadership in the Civil War has also undergone some changes in the last thirty years. The most common viewpoint on this subject focuses largely on the role of West Point and other military institutions in the training of Civil War leaders. Many of the biographies of important officers such as Robert E. Lee, William T.

Vol. 11, 1971), pp. 381-389; David Allmendinger, "Strong Men of the Academic Revolution" (*History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 13, 1973), pp. 415-425. Natalie Naylor, "The Antebellum College Movement: A Re-appraisal of Tewksbury's Founding of American Colleges and Universities" (*History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 13, 1973), pp. 261-274.

Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant reveal that it was their time at West Point that turned them into good military leaders.¹⁹ Even in some of the more recent scholarship, this is a common viewpoint. James Conrad argues this in *The Young Lions: Confederate Cadets at War* (1997) by showing how rebellious young men were shaped into leaders through attending one of the south's several military training institutions. He goes on to argue that had the South done a better job of supporting these institutions, they would have had a much better officer corps during the war.

Concurrent with this theme is the common notion that those with long-standing careers in the army made the best officers. Of course, this was the case with many of the most well known leaders of the Civil War, such as the ones noted above. Lee, Sherman and Grant spent much or all of their antebellum adult lives as soldiers. Historians have often pointed to their time in the Mexican-American War or

¹⁹ Davis Burke, *Gray Fox: Robert E. Lee and the Civil War* (New York: Rinehart, 1956); William S. McFeely, *Grant: a Biography*, pp. 15-18; Richard M. McMurry, *John Bell Hood and the War for Southern Independence* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp. 9-10; Wesley Allen Riddle, "Duty, Honor, Country: Molding Citizen Soldiers" *Policy Review*, Vol. 87, 1998; Robert Krick, "The Confederacy's Scrappy Little General" *America's Civil War*, September 2001, Vol. 14, pp. 31-32.

fighting Native Americans as important in the development of their leadership skills.²⁰

However, within the last twenty years, some historians have revised these two popular theses. In his book *Warrior Generals* (1997), Thomas Buell asserts that it was a variety of different characteristics and influences, including temperament and organizational style, which led to successful Civil War leaders. Grady McWhiney points out that it was natural personality traits such as audacity and aggressiveness that made the best leaders.²¹ Conversely, Milton Bagby and Daniel Ford both argue that natural characteristics such as aggressiveness were not as important as an ability to communicate and work well with colleagues and subordinates.²²

Other historians have pointed to the importance that education played in the leadership capabilities and promotion of Civil War leaders. Jon L. Wakelyn argues in

²⁰ Carl C. Rister, *Robert E. Lee in Texas* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946); Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *A Different Valor: the Story of General Joseph E. Johnston* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Publishers, 1956), pp. 17-21; Francis McKinney, *Education in Violence: the Life of George H. Thomas and the history of the Army of the Cumberland* (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1961); Michael Hull, "The Union Army's Most Innovative Cavalry Leader" *America's Civil War*, March 1997, Vol. 10, p. 62.

²¹ Grady McWhiney, *Confederate Crackers and Cavaliers* (Abilene, TX: McMurry University Press, 2002) pp. 30-33.

²² Milton Bagby, "Advance and Retreat" *American History*, October 2002, Vol. 37, p. 38-40; Daniel Ford, "Communication Lessons from U.S. Civil War Leaders" *Law Enforcement Bulletin*, October 2006, Vol. 75, p. 9.

“‘Civilian’ Higher Education in the Making of Confederate Army Leaders” that many excellent Confederate leaders received crucial leadership training at non-military academies, colleges and universities throughout the South.²³ Herman Hattaway contends that civilian education was important for Civil War leaders, but that prior military experience was even more so.²⁴

This study goes a step further and ties together, to a greater extent, two historiographies: American antebellum education and leadership in the American Civil War. Historical investigation has not considered the role of the former educator in the war. This study will show that education was important for American society in the development of leadership qualities in its citizens.

Because of the subjects of this dissertation are educators, most of these men have collections of papers, speeches and lecture notes at the schools or universities where they taught. The correspondence, journals and memoirs of my subjects will provide insight into their ideas and feelings regarding education and the sectional crisis.

²³ Jon L. Wakelyn, “‘Civilian’ Higher Education in the Making of Confederate Army Leaders” from *The Confederate High Command*, Roman J. Heleniak and Lawrence L. Hewitt, ed. (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1990)

²⁴ Herman Hattaway, *Reflections of a Civil War Historian: Essays on Leadership, Society and the Art of War* (London: University of Missouri Press, 2004) p. 5.

Along with these kinds of materials, this study will focus on their educational surroundings through faculty and trustee meeting minutes, published lectures, and college curriculum catalogues. These resources will provide context by showing the environment in which they learned and taught.

Primary sources will be the foundation of this study. As much as possible, I shall learn from the correspondence and writings of these individuals about their experiences in education and how they developed leadership skills. For example, James Garfield's letters from Williams College back to his friends in Ohio will provide insight into his education, considering the differences between formal learning in Ohio and in New England. Claudius Wistar Sears' requests to the Louisiana state legislature for more funding for the newly created University of Louisiana will provide important clues about the educational system in the South.

Of nearly equal importance will be the writings of those who influenced or were influenced by these leaders. This analysis will include an examination their families as well as the geographical and cultural environment in which they lived. Some good examples of this kind of material can

be found in the minutes of the Episcopal Diocese where William Flank Perry was active. This study will also examine the records of the Bingham Academy where many young southern men including James Johnston Pettigrew were educated in advance of their university experience. James Garfield was active in the Campbellite denomination, thus an examination of the activities of the Disciples of Christ will help provide background information on his beliefs. All of these primary sources will be important in understanding the motives of these individuals.

Beyond these primary sources, there are several recent studies on American education that will be important to this dissertation. For example, in his examination of education in the early American republic entitled "Useful Knowledge? Values and Access in American Education, 1776-1840" (History of Education Quarterly, Fall, 1990), James Watkinson examines contemporary journals and magazines to determine the type of education that reformers deemed most important at various stages of the late 1700s and early 1800s. He argues that educational institutions were changing rapidly to meet the demands of a growing market economy. Because the changes that were taking place in education are an important theme in this study, Watkinson's

work will provide specific insight into the struggles that many of these educators faced.

Terry Reynolds makes a similar argument in "The Education of Engineers in America before the Morrill Act of 1862" (History of Education Quarterly, Winter, 1992), Reynolds uses a much more quantitative method in his examination of engineering education by showing increased numbers of American colleges and universities that added engineering courses and programs in the antebellum era. He concludes that American colleges were responding affirmatively to the demand for more practical subjects. Henry Lawrence Eustis, Claudius Wistar Sears and Ormsby Mitchel were all at the forefront of this issue as educators; thus Reynolds' study will provide context to their work.

In "The Making of the Victorian Campus," (History of Education Quarterly, Fall, 1997), J.M. Opal uses an examination of the single institution of Amherst College to provide a window on the relationship between teachers and students in the Victorian era. Because one of the themes of this study is how changing pedagogies helped these individuals strengthen their leadership skills by developing relationships with students, this study of

Francis Amasa Walker's alma mater will provide specific examples of how relationships between faculty and students were changing. While Opal does not focus on the issue of leadership, he does provide a clear view of how these changes had wide-ranging effects on students and institutions nationwide.

Marianne Larsen, in her article entitled, "Pedagogic knowledge and the Victorian era Anglo-American teacher," (History of Education, 2002) takes a more comparative methodological approach in her study of 19th century teachers and professors in the United States and Great Britain. Larsen argues that nineteenth century educators were greatly interested in different methods of teaching and this attention to pedagogy was demonstrated in the frequent exchange of teaching methods between the United States, Canada and Britain. Once again, because an important segment of this dissertation focuses on the effect of changing teaching styles and curricula, Larsen's work will play an important role in understanding the complexities of this issue.

Together, these sources should provide a clear portrait of the environment in which these nine individuals learned and taught and the role that education played in

their development of leadership skills. Because many of these secondary sources focus on the conflict that came from the changing nature of education during the antebellum period, they will be of great value.

This study is organized into five chapters that show how careers in education played an important role in developing the leadership skills of these men. This dissertation follows the lives of these men and examines their time as both students and educators then analyzes how these experiences helped them to become leaders.

The first chapter of this dissertation examines the significance of these nine individuals as leaders in the Civil War by examining moments when they displayed leadership characteristics during the Civil War. These were officers who, for the most part, came not from the military training schools such as West Point or the Virginia Military Institute, but from small liberal arts colleges and fledgling state universities. The three individuals in this study who did attend West Point did so to partake in the excellent engineering program offered there, not to become professional soldiers. This is demonstrated in the fact that all three resigned their commissions soon after graduation. In fact, all three of them became teachers at

civilian institutions soon after leaving West Point. And as will be illustrated in this study, during the antebellum period the administration of West Point desired that their institution be a school for mathematics and engineering first and for military training second.

The second chapter provides a look at the educational systems of the nation by examining the institutions attended by the subjects of this study. These schools are a good cross-section of American higher education in that they represent a variety of institutional goals (what they sought to accomplish as a college or university) and geographical locations. Major changes in curriculum and policy were taking place in the world of higher education at the time that these young men attended college. The schools themselves were transformed as a result of the burgeoning market economy that needed trained men in new fields and by the religious upheaval from the Second Great Awakening. It was in this environment that these men began their studies and their teaching careers.

The third chapter of this study looks at their college careers to examine commonalities in their scholarly development. Often, these men came under the sway of educational role models who guided their young charges in

their beliefs about education and leadership. Also, as college students, these individuals were interacting with peers and dealing with inter-relational problems that they would experience later as military leaders. Extra-curricular activities at these schools also played an important role in developing leadership and loyalty. Many of the individuals in this study first demonstrated their leadership skills outside the classroom.

The fourth chapter focuses, in particular, on the skills they developed as instructors. While they did learn some leadership abilities as students, it was their time as educators that the subjects of this study truly developed into leaders. As they dealt with the idiosyncrasies of working in education in the regions of the country where they lived, these Civil War civilian leaders had to fight for a variety of causes. In antebellum American colleges there were constant battles over funding, curriculum, and religious affiliation.

Finally, chapter five analyzes their choice to leave their academic positions to join in the American Civil War. Their lives as students and educators had prepared them well for leading men as military officers, but many different issues went into their decisions to leave the

classroom for the battlefield. Some joined the fight in the early stages of the war; others responded to a particular event of the war. All of them joined out of a sense of duty that was a part of their lives as educators.

Despite the fact that education was so important to our nation's development as a whole, it would seem that few historians have sought to put education into the greater context of leadership skills and civilian performance in the American Civil War. This study seeks to correct this omission by showing the important role that antebellum education played in the development of these men into leaders.

Chapter 1 - Service and Leadership

The nine individuals in this study all served ably as leaders during the American Civil War. Once again, for the purposes of this dissertation, leadership is defined as the ability to influence, motivate and manage a group of individuals. It also includes the ability to take orders from superiors as well as give clear, concise orders to subordinates. These are the same as or similar to the definitions used by many historians in the most recent examinations of Civil War leadership.¹

In this study leadership is determined in a variety of ways. Some of the subjects of this dissertation demonstrated their abilities as a leader by their rapid ascension through the ranks. For example, William Flank Perry began as a private and was promoted all the way to brigadier general. It is highly unlikely that he would have achieved this distinction without having proven himself to be a good leader of men. Others demonstrated their capabilities in a small series of events, such as Ormsby Mitchel's remarkable march through northern Alabama in 1862. Mitchel crafted a complex assault on the Confederacy's railroads and led his

¹ Gary Gallagher, *Three Days at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1999), p. ix-x; Woodworth, ed., *The Art of Command*, p. ix; Jon L. Wakelyn, *Confederates against the Confederacy: Essays on Leadership and Loyalty* (New York: Praeger Publishing, 2002) p. 8-10; Hattaway, *Relections*, p. 4;

men in a flawless execution of that plan that gave the Union complete control of an important railroad. In diverse ways all nine individuals in this study showed significant leadership abilities during the war.

It was their experiences as learners and teachers in the classroom and as school administrators that helped them to develop these excellent leadership skills. Because they were accustomed to taking charge in educational matters, these individuals developed an ability to lead that they then demonstrated on the battlefield. Certainly, there were differences between taking a leadership role in a classroom and leading a large group of soldiers in battle; for example, teachers *usually* did not have to fear for their lives. However, there were some major similarities in their job descriptions. Despite little or no military experience, they served ably as military officers, inspiring and commanding their men. Later chapters of this dissertation will discuss their development as leaders; this chapter will highlight some of the major examples of leadership skill demonstrated by these nine individuals.

As the fighting subsided, Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain grimly considered his options. On July 2, 1863, his brigade commander, Colonel Strong Vincent, had placed

his regiment at the extreme left end of the Union lines at Gettysburg on a small, rocky hill known as Little Round Top. Colonel Vincent had given strict orders that the 20th Maine must hold at all costs. Within moments of taking their position below the crest of Little Round Top, Colonel William Oates and the 15th Alabama had attacked them. Confederate General John Bell Hood had given Oates the task of clearing the hill of Union defenders so that Confederate reinforcements could sweep behind enemy lines. The fighting had raged all afternoon long. The Confederates would attack, withdraw to reform, and attack again.²

Meanwhile, Chamberlain's company commanders informed him that the men were getting lower and lower on ammunition. They had already taken bullets and powder from the dead and wounded. After the last volley, most of the 20th Maine were completely out. Urgent requests for more ammunition sent to nearby Union units were rebuffed; they were having supply problems of their own. One of his captains approached and asked if he would give the order to retreat.³

As he stood looking down the wooded slope at the Confederate troops that appeared to be reforming to hit his

² Joshua L. Chamberlain, *"Bayonet! Forward": My Civil War Reminiscences* (Gettysburg: Stan Clark Military Books, 1994), p. 24-28.

³ *Ibid*, p. 28-29.

lines again, he wrestled for a solution to his dilemma. If his men withdrew, the Union lines that occupied the heights to the south of Gettysburg would be flanked and possibly disintegrate. The northern cohorts could suddenly find southern soldiers coming from behind and beside them and be forced to retreat. It would be another defeat in a string of military fiascos for the North. If he remained, his ammunition-bereft regiment would be slaughtered where they stood and the end result would be the same.⁴

Then, he settled upon an unlikely course of action. If they could not stand fast and they could not retreat, they would charge. But his men were tired, having marched over 100 miles in just five days and they remembered the results of their disastrous charge up Marye's Heights at the Battle of Fredericksburg, earlier that year. His men hesitated. With a loud cry, Chamberlain ordered his regiment forward and raising his saber, he himself led his men down the slope towards the approaching Confederates.⁵

It was more than the tired rebels could withstand. As Colonel Oates would later describe it, "We ran like a herd of

⁴ Alice Rains Trulock, *In the Hands of Providence: Joshua L. Chamberlain and the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 143-146.

⁵ Chamberlain, "Bayonet! Forward," pp. 28-29.

cattle.”⁶ Most turned and fled while a few remaining Alabamans made an attempt at halting the advance of the Maine men and were then captured.⁷ The Union left had held and Chamberlain had captured over 400 Confederates despite the fact that his men had no ammunition. During a moment of tremendous crisis, Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain had stood firm and won the day. The Union held Little Round Top against a strong attack by superior numbers of Confederate troops.⁸

The struggle for Little Round Top was a defining moment in the life of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. His actions at Gettysburg are a prime example of his excellent leadership skills. Despite being heavily outnumbered and repeatedly attacked, he was able to keep his regiment organized and maintain the morale of his men. When his soldiers ran out of ammunition and other officers might have withdrawn, Chamberlain came up with a unique solution to the crisis. Then he was able to inspire his men to follow him on a bayonet

⁶ William C. Oates, *The War Between the Union and the Confederacy* (New York and Washington, D.C.: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905), p. 32.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 32-34.

⁸ Recent historical investigation of this event has cast doubt on the leadership role that Chamberlain played at Little Round Top. Edward Longacre argues in *Joshua Chamberlain: the Soldier and the Man* that not only would Chamberlain have been too injured to lead the attack himself, but also that Oates was probably already beginning to withdraw his tired and disorganized men at the time that the charge took place. However, while the former point of view has merit, the latter relies too heavily upon the post-war writings of Oates who exaggerated his success at Little Round Top, claiming to have broken through the 20th Maine and engaged Strong Vincent's other regiments.

charge against superior numbers because he himself led the attack.

It was these kinds of leadership skills that he learned as a professor of rhetoric and modern languages at Bowdoin College. As a teacher Chamberlain came up with creative ways to solve problems. When he believed that changes needed to be made at Bowdoin, he took the initiative to begin the process himself, often in the face of much resistance. It is because he had developed these skills as an educator that he was successful as a military commander.

The defense of Little Round Top has been immortalized both in fact and fiction, film and prose. Had the 20th Maine withdrawn from their hastily erected defenses on that crucial day in early July 1863, the Union would have most likely suffered another terrible defeat and the public's already waning support for President Abraham Lincoln's war of the rebellion would have fallen even more precipitously. The cries for a peace settlement would have become too loud to ignore.

Without Chamberlain's actions on the second day of Gettysburg, Robert E. Lee's dreadful and costly decision on the following day to send George Pickett's division charging up Cemetery Ridge would have never taken place. Pickett's

Charge decimated a significant portion of the Army of Northern Virginia and ended Lee's ability to conduct any further offensive campaigns. The myth of Confederate invincibility and superiority would have remained solidly in place and Union commanders would have found it increasingly difficult to maintain the morale of their troops. It is altogether possible that without the successful defense of Little Round Top, the Civil War would have ended with a Confederate victory or, at the very least, would have lasted longer than four years. The importance of Chamberlain's actions at Little Round Top was recognized later when Chamberlain was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.⁹

James Johnston Pettigrew was also at the Battle of Gettysburg. But on July 14, 1863, he sat on the northern banks of the Potomac River near the town of Falling Waters, Maryland, nursing a wounded hand. As a brigade commander in General Henry Heth's division, on July 1, 1863, the Confederate brigadier general had been given temporary command of the division when Heth had been injured in the first day of fighting at Gettysburg. When he took command, the division was

⁹ Stephen Sears, *Gettysburg* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 2003) pp. 296-297; Philip Thomas Tucker, *Storming Little Round Top: the 15th Alabama and Their Fight for the High Ground, July 2nd, 1863* (Cambridge, MA, DaCapo, 2002), p. 290; Chamberlain, *Bayonet Forward!*, pp. 251 - 253.

in poor shape because Heth's troops had begun the fighting at Gettysburg and had been repeatedly repulsed by dismounted Union cavalry under John Buford. Pettigrew had used the division's inaction on the second day of the battle to try to reorganize and re-supply his men. He had also visited with some of the men and congratulated them for their actions in the previous day's contest. The next day, Pettigrew had injured his hand in Pickett's Charge, but when Heth had proved himself well enough to return to his duties, Pettigrew had been sent back to his brigade. He was then given the task of covering the Confederate retreat back into Virginia.¹⁰

Recent summer rains had swollen the Potomac River making the crossing dangerous and time-consuming. Union cavalry had begun the pursuit of the southern forces requiring a strong defensive stand on the north side of the river. In absence of this, a small Northern force could have easily destroyed a much larger Confederate army that was waiting to cross the Potomac on pontoon bridges. Union General George Meade belatedly began moving his infantry south in an attempt to prevent the Confederate escape.¹¹

¹⁰ Clyde N. Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier: the Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), pp. 271-280.

¹¹ Stephen W. Sears, *Gettysburg* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 2003), pp. 467-470

On July 13, the river began to recede enough for the construction of the pontoon bridge. At the same time, Union infantry began appearing on the ridges overlooking the riverbanks. In the late evening hours, the bridge was completed and the Confederates began crossing. Heth ordered Pettigrew and his brigade to remain behind to cover the retreating Rebels. During the night, the Army of Northern Virginia struggled to cross the river. A violent rainstorm made the riverbanks very slippery and muddy. In some cases, wagons and cannons were barely able to make it up the steep banks of the southern side of the Potomac. But difficulties aside, the Confederates streamed back into Virginia. By morning, only Heth's division remained.¹²

Pettigrew remained vigilant as the southern army made its way back into Confederate territory. He ordered his men to set up defensive positions around the pontoon bridge as the rest of Heth's division crossed the Potomac. By the late morning hours of the 14th, only Pettigrew and a small detachment of troops remained north of the river. One of his subordinates had recommended that for safety's sake the general cross to the southern side, but Pettigrew remained. He had been

¹² The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 27 (Part II) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), pp. 321-323.

ordered to protect the Rebel retreat and he considered it his personal responsibility to make sure that the Confederate army made it safely to friendlier climes. In addition, after the chaos of Pickett's charge and Lee's hasty retreat, Pettigrew's men were still rounding up a number of Confederate stragglers and he wanted to recover several cannon that had gotten stuck in the mud from the previous night's rainfall.¹³

Pettigrew's reticence to cross to the safety of the southern bank of the Potomac was an important display of his leadership capabilities. He recognized that a true leader led by example and that his men would respect the fact that he took the same risks as they. He also took his responsibilities seriously as a leader who lived by sacred principles. That is why he wished to remain on the north bank to make sure every last soldier and piece of equipment had made it back into Virginia.

Pettigrew's actions while covering the Confederate retreat were a reflection of what he had learned as a professor at the United States Naval Observatory. His attention to detail and to his duty was a hallmark of his career at the observatory. It is not surprising that he would

¹³ James L Morrison, Jr., ed. *The Memoirs of Henry Heth*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974) pp. 177-178

continue to demonstrate these characteristics as a leader during the Civil War.

At 11:00 a.m. scouts reported a small contingent of Rebel cavalry approaching. But Confederate cavalry often wore uniforms similar to Union blue, so by the time these cavalry were actually identified as belonging to the Union, there was very little time to set up a defense. The Confederates were able to fire a single volley before the enemy was among them, slashing with their swords and firing their pistols. Hoping to capture the pontoon bridge by the sheer surprise and audacity of their attack, the leader of the federal cavalry shouted for the Confederates to lay down their arms and surrender.¹⁴

Led by Pettigrew, the Rebels fought back with anything they could find. One Confederate even used an axe to knock a Union cavalryman out of the saddle. At one point in the battle, Pettigrew's horse reared and he fell to the ground. As he got to his feet and urged his men on, a Union private shot him in the chest. In a relatively short period of time, however, all of the attacking federal cavalry were dead or had retreated. Some of Pettigrew's men carried the fallen general across the bridge into Virginia. The Confederate leader died

¹⁴ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 27 (Part II), p. 323; Clyde Wilson, *The Most Promising Young Man of the South: James Johnston Pettigrew and His Men at Gettysburg* (Abilene: McWhiney Foundation Press, 1998), pp. 85 - 88.

three days later from his wounds. But the pontoon bridge had stayed in Rebel hands long enough so that the Confederate army made it safely back into Virginia.¹⁵

The crucial events of the Battle of Gettysburg, particularly Pickett's Charge, overshadowed the quiet, but important contribution made by Pettigrew as the Confederate army made its way back into the South. The spirit of the Rebel army was battered, but not yet broken. However, it was incumbent upon Robert E. Lee and his subordinates in the Army of Northern Virginia to demonstrate composure in the face of the Gettysburg crisis. Pettigrew did precisely this. By refusing to seek the safety of the southern shore of the Potomac until he was satisfied that his duties had been discharged, he set an example for his subordinates to follow. He also displayed an attention to detail, recognizing that the Confederacy could ill afford the loss of soldiers to straggling and cannons to mud-clogged roads. And when he was faced with the crisis of the surprise Union cavalry attack, he quickly rallied his men, refused to relinquish control of the

¹⁵ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies.* Series 1 - Volume 27 (Part II), pp. 323, 641.

pontoon bridge, and died making sure that the Union army would not be snapping at Robert E. Lee's heels.¹⁶

In the early afternoon of January 10, 1862, James Garfield sat in his saddle, looked up the steep slopes of the Middle Creek Valley in Eastern Kentucky and wrestled with the problem that confronted him. He had been sent from Lexington, Kentucky, to turn back another Confederate foray into Union territory. When Union General Don Carlos Buell received news that Confederate forces under Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall had moved west from Virginia into the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, he had realized that in order for the Union to maintain its control over the border state, the Rebels had to be forced out. Because Kentucky was a slave state, there were strong Confederate sympathies that threatened to push Kentucky towards the rebellion. Maintaining tight military control of the border territory was part of Abraham Lincoln's strategy to keep the state of his birth from joining the Confederacy.

¹⁶ Grady McWhiney credits the culture and mentality of the southern cavalier for Pettigrew's leadership capabilities. He argues that Pettigrew was simply living up to the ideal that had been set for him as a member of southern aristocratic society. However, this does not explain why he was a successful leader, only why he *expected* to be a successful leader. There were plenty of southern cavaliers, such as Benjamin Franklin Cheatham, who believed they would make excellent military leaders, but were utter failures as Confederate officers. It was the training he received as a student and professor that gave Pettigrew his skills.

Buell chose the newly promoted colonel of the 42nd Ohio Infantry Regiment, James Garfield, to lead this mission. He gave Garfield command of the 18th brigade, which numbered about 1,500 men and was composed of regiments from Ohio and Kentucky. Garfield himself had recruited many of the men who were now under his command. Very few of the men in the 18th brigade had ever tasted combat and most were unaccustomed to the rigors and discipline of military life. At one point, he gave a stirring speech to a group of rowdy soldiers who were stealing food from a nearby farm, saying that he thought he was in command of honorable men, not thieves. Feeling ashamed, the chastised men quietly returned the hams and cabbages.¹⁷

This event shows Garfield's ability to inspire his men to live up to his expectations. Army rations were quite poor and it was common for Civil War soldiers to forage for food both in friendly and hostile territory. However, Garfield expected his men to live up to his standards of conduct and as a former preacher and college professor, those standards were quite high. The fact that he was able to talk his men into returning the food without using the threat of punishment illustrates his leadership abilities.

¹⁷ "The Hero of the Sandy Valley: James A. Garfield's Kentucky Campaign of 1861-1862" by Allan Peskin. Ohio History, April-June, 1963, pp. 3-10.

James Garfield's abilities as a leader came from his previous trial by fire as a professor and president of the Eclectic Institute in northeastern Ohio. His skills at relating to and inspiring his soldiers had been developed earlier when he did the same for his students. He also came up with unique ways of dealing with crises at the Eclectic that served him well as a military commander.

Garfield and his men had moved eastward towards the last known position of the Confederates, playing a constant cat-and-mouse game with small detachments of Confederate cavalry. Garfield's skirmishers finally made contact with the main body of Marshall's men near the forks of Middle Creek, just south of Paintsville, Kentucky. That night as they made camp, the morale of his men suffered due to freezing rain and a bitter wind that made it nearly impossible to sleep. The next morning he ordered his men to drill in the attempt to keep up their spirits. Unknown to Garfield, this tactic had had an additional benefit. Marshall's scouts saw the Union men marching about and mistakenly counted their numbers as being as many as 5,000. This greatly unnerved the Confederate commander and he began doubting the viability of his position. As Garfield surveyed the Confederate position from a tall crag of rock called Graveyard Point, he discovered that he was

actually outnumbered and that the enemy occupied easily defensible ground. But his orders were to drive the Rebels back to Virginia.¹⁸

Garfield had no previous military experience. He had learned from military books of the standard Napoleonic tactic of hitting the middle of the opposing side's lines with as many men as he could muster. However, he was also aware of the conventional wisdom of the day that said if an assault was going to have any chance of success, attacking armies were expected to outnumber defensive forces by a margin of three to two. Thus, he deemed it unwise to expose his men to so much enemy fire when he was already outnumbered. Instead, he decided to initially concentrate all of his efforts on the northern end of the Confederate lines.¹⁹

At 1 p.m. Garfield ordered several companies from two of his regiments, the 40th and 42nd Ohio to cross Middle Creek and attack the northern segment of Williams' lines composed of a regiment of Rebel Kentuckians.²⁰ This was a dangerous move in that it left his own position at the top of Graveyard Point

¹⁸ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 7 (Washington: Government Print Office, 1882), pp. 31-34; Peskin, "The Hero of the Sandy Valley," pp. 11-16.

¹⁹ James Garfield, *The Diaries of James A. Garfield* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1981), pp. 187-188.

²⁰ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 7, pp. 38-40.

open to a counter attack. He realized that in his position, he was going to have to take some personal risks if his men were going to have any chance of success. By sending both of his regiments forward and keeping only a small number of reserves to protect his headquarters, he was inviting an attack on himself. That is exactly what happened.

Elements of the Confederate 5th Kentucky moved down from their fortified position and began firing at Graveyard Point. Garfield was forced to call up his reserves to push the Rebels back. By the late afternoon, some Union reinforcements began to arrive and Garfield immediately threw them into the fight. He ordered Lieutenant Colonel George Munroe and his 22nd Kentucky to commit to a bayonet charge of the Confederate 5th Kentucky and the success of this charge decided the outcome of the battle. Munroe pushed the Rebels back to their original positions and beyond until evening when the fighting slowed to a halt. Williams decided that his forces would have to pull back to Virginia.²¹

Despite the fact that the Battle of Middle Creek is not well known, Garfield's actions played an important role in keeping Kentucky safely in Union hands. He was able to keep

²¹ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 7, pp. 38-40, 602-603; Allan Peskin, "The Hero of Sandy Valley" pp. 17-21.

order among a group of rather rough individuals who were unaccustomed to military life and kept up the morale of his men when the weather turned brutal. His tactic of attacking the northern flank of the Confederate lines led to a relatively small number of casualties in his unit. In fact, Marshall's brigade suffered three times as many casualties as Garfield's. This is note-worthy when one considers that the Union soldiers were attacking an enemy that was fortified on good ground. Also, James Garfield's successful campaign to stop the Confederacy's incursion into eastern Kentucky eventually led Confederate General Braxton Bragg to make a more concerted effort to take Kentucky several months later - a move which led to a series of political and military victories in the western theater for the North.

William Flank Perry sat looking along the Chattanooga Road pondering the prior day's events. The regiment under his command, the 44th Alabama, had been involved in heavy fighting on the second day of the Battle of Chickamauga. Union forces under General William Rosecrans had begun moving south from Chattanooga after having chased the Confederate army under Braxton Bragg from the city. Bragg had not been willing to give up Chattanooga and began moving north to retake the city.

The two forces had met again in a heavily forested area near Chickamauga Creek and the fighting began on the evening of September 18, 1863. The next day, Perry's 44th Alabama had formed the extreme left of the Confederate line. During the battle, the Alabama regiment had lost their brigade commander, been confronted by a superior Union force and were forced to retreat. Perry, who had dismounted and subsequently lost his horse, tried to find a way to turn his men around and hold their position. He leapt upon a piece of limbered artillery that was being rushed from the field, hoping to get in front of his fleeing men.²²

At that moment, General Evander M. Law arrived on the scene, saw Perry riding away from the battle on the cannon and assumed that he was attempting to escape the battlefield. Law ordered the artillery to stop, unlimber and begin firing at the advancing federals. By the end of the evening, the Alabamians had then regrouped and halted the Union advance, but Perry was mortified. He knew that Law believed he had been trying to flee and was frustrated that his attempts to avert disaster had been misinterpreted. That night he went to visit General Law to explain the situation, but his superior had treated him icily. The following morning, Law had appeared and

²² William C. Oates, "General W.F. Perry and Something of His Career in War and Peace" Montgomery Advertiser, March 2, 1902.

offered the command of the brigade to one of Perry's subordinates, William C. Oates and indicated that he planned to arrest Perry. Fortunately for Perry, Oates had a strong sense of loyalty to his immediate superior and had refused. Instead, Oates had asked for Law to give Perry another chance. Law hesitantly agreed and gave him command of the brigade.²³

The support Oates gave his superior is an important indication of Perry's leadership abilities. The two men had known each other for less than a year, yet in that time, Perry's leadership had impressed Oates. Had Perry not been a good leader, Oates would have been happy to take his superior's place. It is certainly possible that Oates simply did not want the responsibility of commanding a brigade, but this is unlikely considering his own illustrious service to the Confederate cause. What is much more likely is that Oates recognized Perry's abilities and wanted the brigade to be in Perry's capable hands.

Perry showed many of these same leadership abilities when he became the first superintendent of education in Alabama. He secured the loyalty and admiration of many in that state with his tireless efforts to make public education a reality in Alabama despite constant opposition. He showed the same

²³ William C. Oates, "General W.F. Perry"

devotion and resolve as an officer in the Confederate army, which made him an attractive leader to his subordinates.

Now, on September 20th, the third day of the battle, Perry's brigade was ordered to move forward and dislodge the Union forces from their carefully constructed defenses. By a stroke of luck, confusion in the Union ranks caused a hole to open in the federal line just at the time when Longstreet's corps, of which Perry's brigade was a part, attacked. Perry carefully and expertly moved his brigade into position in order to get the most advantageous effect of the sudden serendipity, then ordered the brigade forward. He kept closely behind his men watching for any slip or problem. The Confederates quickly and resolutely moved forward into the breach. The effect was devastating; the Union troops fled in confusion from the field. Perry was conspicuous in his presence among the men, giving constant encouragement and urging his brigade onward. William Oates described it this way. "Perry kept in his place, behaved most gallantly, overlooking his line and sending orders, apparently thoughtless of danger to himself."²⁴ During one point of the battle, Perry's horse was shot from under him and he injured his leg, but he refused to be taken from the field. His

²⁴ Ibid.

leadership inspired his men and they crushed Union attempts to reform their lines. The day would have been a complete and utter victory for the Confederacy had not Union General George Thomas kept his line intact and held the Rebel advance until the federals could retreat back to their Chattanooga defenses. However, it was still a stunning victory for the Confederacy.²⁵

While Perry was not single-handedly responsible for the Confederate victory at Chickamauga, his bravery and leadership skills played a role in that success. His men were inspired by his strong desire to be a competent leader. This is evidenced by the strong show of loyalty demonstrated by William Oates after the second day of the battle. Oates explained in his memoir that he had witnessed daily acts of leadership and character in Perry that made him very appealing to the men under his command, especially the younger ones. Oates also added that on the third day of Chickamauga, Perry's actions, especially after his horse had been shot out from under him, "gave to everyone the liveliest assurance of his courage and capacity to command."²⁶ After the battle, General James Longstreet read an account of Perry's activities during the fighting and recommended him for a promotion. Eventually,

²⁵ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 27 (Part II), pp. 393-394.

²⁶ William C. Oates, "General W.F. Perry"

Perry was promoted to brigadier general, although it was not until the closing weeks of the war. Even then, however, Perry's skills as a leader could be measured by the fact his men stayed true to him to the end. And at the surrender at Appomattox, Perry's brigade made up one tenth of Lee's fighting force.²⁷

From a high hill near the Tennessee-Alabama border, General Ormsby Mitchel stared down at the small road that wound its way south into the heart of the Gulf Coast state. He was a part of the Army of the Ohio, which had moved south from Kentucky into the center of Tennessee and taken Nashville in the winter of 1861-1862. Once the Union forces had consolidated their grip on central Tennessee in the spring of 1862, Mitchel had been given orders by General Don Carlos Buell to take his division of about 8,000 men and move further south into Alabama. Their task was to repair and secure railroads that could be used by the federals to bring troops south and east towards Chattanooga and Atlanta. Meanwhile, Mitchel was to also destroy rail lines that could be used to bring Confederate troops to help defend Chattanooga. Once

²⁷ Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*. Vol. 4 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921) p. 1344.

having arrived in Alabama, his orders were to "act as circumstances dictate."²⁸

As Mitchel weighed his options on the best way to carry out his orders, his knowledge of engineering became a valuable tool. He was aware of the awesome power of the railroad in moving and supplying troops in the field. With this in mind, Mitchel hatched a plan to secure huge sections of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. He knew that the M & C Railroad had a roundhouse and supply station at Huntsville, Alabama. If this station could be captured before the Confederates escaped with the locomotives and supplies, his division would have the perfect mode of transportation for repairing necessary lines and destroying railroads that could be used by the enemy. In addition, the railroad would allow him to keep his men well supplied and to move quickly to meet any threat.²⁹

The most obvious problem of this plan, however, was securing the supply depot before the Confederates knew what was happening. The region was replete with Confederate scouts and cavalry and Mitchel's force would have to move quickly to avoid detection. It was over fifty miles from where his

²⁸ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 10 (Part II) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), p. 118.

²⁹ F. A. Mitchel, *Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel: Astronomer and General* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1887), pp. 275-277.

division was stationed in Shelbyville, Tennessee, to Huntsville, Alabama. He decided to take his men on a forced march in the attempt to quickly cross the border and take Huntsville. If everything went smoothly, Mitchel believed that they could reach the supply depot in fifty to sixty hours.³⁰

One last obstacle faced him: A bridge that led south from Shelbyville had been destroyed by retreating Confederates and needed to be repaired. Generally, an operation such as this took thirty to forty days. Thus, the Confederates turned their attention to the battlefield of Shiloh, believing that Mitchel's division was, for the most part, stuck in Shelbyville. Under Mitchel's guidance, however, Union repair crews were able to repair it in ten.³¹

While his men were repairing the bridge, Mitchel showed some of the characteristics of a great leader. First, he was not above doing manual labor right alongside his men. At various points of the project, he helped lift beams into place and constantly encouraged his men forward. Second, he invited his subordinates to ask questions and would clearly explain and sometimes demonstrate his answers. He recognized that his

³⁰ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 10 (Part I) pp. 641.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 279-281

men came from all walks of life and needed his expertise to complete the bridge.

On April 9, 1862, Mitchel's division quietly left Shelbyville and moved south. To aid in his chances of making it to Huntsville undiscovered, Mitchel sent a young corporal ahead of his division to towns they were approaching. Corporal Pike would announce that he was a Confederate officer looking for skulkers and volunteers to replace men that had been lost at Shiloh. The effect of this was that many of the town's young men, who might have put up resistance or sent word to Confederate forces stationed nearby, fled to the countryside to avoid this impromptu draft. When the Union army was only ten miles from Huntsville, Mitchel sent out small teams of cavalry who captured and detained all individuals who crossed their path so that no warning could be sent to the city. Once on the outskirts of the city, Mitchel again used his cavalry to rush the telegraph office and secure it before any plea for help could be sent. The infantry then arrived and secured the railroads leading out of the city. Soon, the entire town, along with the railroad supply depot, was in Union hands.³²

³² The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 10 (Part I) pp. 641-642.

Using ingenuity and strong leadership skills, Mitchel had made his way quickly out of Shelbyville and marched his men fifty-seven miles in forty-eight hours through enemy territory without being detected. His use of Corporal Pike was particularly creative. He developed this creativity as a professor at Cincinnati College and at the head of the Cincinnati Astronomical Society. The task of bringing an observatory to Cincinnati required the ability to overcome constant crises and obstacles. This helped prepare him for his role as a successful military commander.³³

The capture of the Memphis and Charleston supply depot provided the Union army with locomotives and supplies that gave the north almost complete control of the rail lines leading into Chattanooga from the west. It was precisely these rail lines that were used by the Union to bring troops and supplies from theaters further west and the Union was able to solidify its control of an important part of the Deep South. The city of Chattanooga quickly fell and provided the staging

³³ Bruce Catton argues that Mitchel's poor relations with his superiors kept the raid from being even more successful and that complaints from area businessmen and landowners show that his men "misbehaved badly" once they arrived in Huntsville because of a lack of discipline. Paul Horton echoes this by showing that Mitchel's men took food and supplies from the farms of even those Southerners who claimed to have Union sympathies. While these examples of foraging might indicate problems in leadership, the success of the raid itself is a much stronger indication of Mitchel's leadership capabilities; see Bruce Catton, *This Hallowed Ground*, (New York: Doubleday, 1956), pp. 145-146; Paul Horton, "Submitting to the 'shadow of slavery': the Succession crisis and Civil War in Alabama's Lawrence County" *Civil War History*, Vol. 44, 1998.

ground for Sherman's crucial sacking of Atlanta and the March to the Sea. Ormsby Mitchel's daring raid in April of 1862 helped to set the stage for some of the most crucial Union victories in the western theater of the Civil War.

Captain John Carpenter Carter passed through the ranks of the 38th Tennessee Volunteer Regiment and looked across the field at a Union division under the command of General Benjamin Prentiss. It was the first day of the Battle of Shiloh and so far it had been a tremendous success for the Confederacy. The Confederates had taken William T. Sherman's division completely by surprise causing the federal troops to withdraw in confusion. In fact, by the late afternoon, almost all Union troops were fleeing back to Pittsburg Landing where federal gunboats on the Tennessee River could protect them. The only exception was Benjamin Prentiss' men. They had dug in along a sunken road and were holding fast against all attempts to dislodge them. Impatient to drive the remaining Union troops from the field and press the attack on Pittsburg Landing, General Albert S. Johnston ordered extra regiments be

brought up to overwhelm the defenders. The 38th Tennessee had been one of those regiments.³⁴

The 38th Tennessee was under the command of Colonel Robert F. Looney and he gave orders to all of his company commanders, of which Carter was one, to move their men as quickly as possible towards the Union lines. He wanted to avoid the tremendous amount of musket fire from the Union soldiers that had had a devastating effect on previous Confederate units that assaulted the position. The regiment would be forced to march across an open field to reach Prentiss' men. When the signal was given, Carter ordered his men forward and moved out in front to keep the attention of the soldiers to their ultimate goal. As the regiment drew close to the Union position, he turned and shouted commands in a calm and steady voice. Confederate soldiers began falling victim to the hail of federal gunfire that gave the place its name: the Hornet's Nest. The 38th Tennessee slowed down in the face of the withering fire.³⁵

Worried that the resolve of his men was weakening, Carter urged them to continue forward. When that did not work, he grabbed a Confederate battle flag and began waving it back and

³⁴ Larry J. Daniel, *Shiloh: the Battle that Changed the Civil War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), pp. 101-102.

³⁵ Clement Evans, ed., *Confederate Military History*, Vol. VIII (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899), pp. 144-145.

forth in front of his men, calling on them to press on. This had a dramatic effect. The men of his company, as well as other companies of the 38th Tennessee, were heartened by Carter's show of courage and leadership. An emotional cheer went up among many of the men.

It was at this moment that John Carpenter Carter showed some of his greatest strengths as a leader. He realized that his men were wavering and that it was his responsibility to get them to continue forward. Getting out in front of them, he gave them an example to follow. He recognized that a display of courage and patriotism would motivate the soldiers under his command. It is certainly possible that the men of the 38th Tennessee would have continued forward without Carter's actions, but not with the sense of order and enthusiasm that he helped to maintain within them.

John Carpenter Carter showed similar resolve as a law professor at Cumberland University. As a new professor of a new department, Carter frequently took a leadership role in advancing the quality and reputation of Cumberland's law school. By the time he had joined the Confederate army, he was an experienced leader at the school.

The regiment began moving forward again and completed a textbook flanking maneuver that endangered the far right of

the Union position. Prentiss' lines, already under tremendous strain, could not sustain an assault on their flank. Almost at once, a majority of the Union soldiers surrendered, including Prentiss himself. The day was a complete Confederate victory although Prentiss had held out long enough to keep Johnston from his ultimate desire - the destruction of Grant's army on the shores of the Tennessee River.³⁶

When the battle was over, Colonel Looney made specific mention of Carter in his report. Looney said, "Captain Carter deserved the highest praise for his great coolness and high courage displayed throughout the entire engagement. At one time, he took the flag, and urging his men forward, rendered me great assistance in advancing the entire regiment."³⁷ Looney then recommended a promotion for Carter, which was later approved. While the second day of the battle was less successful for the Confederacy, it was the actions of men such as Carter that provided them with the success of the first day. He led his men with great skill and confidence and when they wavered in the face of enemy fire, he drew even further attention and risk to himself by waving a flag to steel the courage of the regiment. It was because of these kinds of

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 145.

³⁷ *Ibid*. p. 145.

actions and skills that eventually Carter was promoted to Brigadier General.

General Henry Lawrence Eustis watched as a large group of Confederate soldiers approached the fieldworks that his men occupied at the point known as "the Bloody Angle" on the Spotsylvania battlefield. Earlier that morning, two Union brigades had fought and paid dearly to take the fortifications that they now occupied. General Eustis had led his troops himself. After taking a brutal amount of Confederate fire, federals had assaulted the fieldworks, leading to almost an hour of close quarter and hand-to-hand combat. Eventually, the Confederates had retreated from their fortifications leaving the two Union brigades in sole possession of the field. However, it did not appear that Robert E. Lee was content to leave the Bloody Angle in Union hands as Confederates soon began massing for a counter attack.³⁸

One of the first problems that confronted Eustis was that there was a ravine in front of the Bloody Angle where enemy troops could both reform and reload without exposing themselves to Union fire. Confederates could mass very close

³⁸ Thomas Yoselhoff, ed., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: The Way to Appomattox*, Vol. 4 (New York: Thomas Yoselhof Publishing, 1956), pp. 174-177.

to the Union lines and defensive fire had little time to take effect before the enemy was at their gates. A second problem that Eustis faced was that his men were low on ammunition. He knew that either his men would have to engage in more hand-to-hand combat or withdraw.³⁹

It was in this decision that Eustis showed his ability to lead men. He recognized that if his soldiers were to withdraw after fighting hard to take the fortifications, it would be a terrible blow to the morale of his brigade. In a campaign that had seen so much fighting for very little gain, Eustis realized that he needed to be stubborn. But he also would need to convince his men to hold fast as well. He believed that he could best do this by joining his men at the front of the fortification.

When the Confederates finally did attack, Eustis' brigade poured the remainder of their ammunition into blunting the Confederates' assault. However, his men were still outnumbered and the enemy was still enthusiastically charging the fortifications. Then Eustis had his men fix bayonets and push the sharp ends between the top two logs of the fortifications making it extremely difficult for the rebels to climb their

³⁹ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 36 (Part I) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), pp. 491

way over without getting hung up or injured. Eustis joined his men in the trenches with his saber and pistol. The fighting continued until nearly three o'clock in the morning when the last of the Confederates finally retreated. Eustis's brigade had fought for over twenty hours. The firefight had been so intense, that a large oak tree near the epicenter of the fighting was cut down by the impact of hundreds of bullets hitting its trunk.⁴⁰

The days of May 12 and 13 of the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse were one positive moment for an Army of the Potomac that had regularly seen its sacrifices mean very little in their campaign to take Richmond. Most of Ulysses S. Grant's 1864 campaign was a Union bloodbath as he attempted to carry out a war of attrition against a Confederate army that was steadily shrinking, but still fighting bravely. Under the leadership of General Eustis, the Union army took control of the Confederate breastworks and then held them under a heavy counter-attack. His innovative method of defending the breastworks by sticking bayonets through the fortifications helped give his men extra protection at a time when they were low on ammunition and uncertain about their position. At the

⁴⁰ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 - Volume 36 (Part I) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), pp. 491-493.

end of the day, Union forces held the field. Overall, it gave the Army of the Potomac an important boost to morale during a desperate time.

As the head of a new engineering department at Harvard University, Eustis developed strong leadership skills as he built a department out of nothing. He did this in an environment of faculty and administrators who believed that engineering was of little importance to the life of the school. Thus by the time he became an officer in the Union army, he had already learned to lead despite facing strong opposition.

Colonel Claudius Wistar Sears stared down from Chickasaw Bluffs overlooking Mint Spring Bayou to the north of Vicksburg, Mississippi. He was the commander of the 46th Mississippi Regiment and part of a brigade that was defending the city from repeated attacks by Union forces under Ulysses S. Grant. His leadership of the regiment had been rocky. He had been assigned as colonel of the 46th after serving as captain of the 17th Mississippi, which had fought at Antietam. Sears had received praise for his actions on the battlefield

by General William Barksdale. Just a few months later he had been promoted to colonel and transferred to the 46th.⁴¹

Many men of the 46th Mississippi had been angry that their new colonel had not been promoted from among their ranks. These soldiers had been together for a long period of time and they had an established camaraderie. After only a short time as their commander, Sears had received a formal petition from the men that he resign in favor of one of the company commanders. While he had understood their feelings, he flatly refused their request arguing that he did not believe that any of the junior officers of the 46th were ready for the responsibility of an entire regiment. Sears knew it would be difficult to lead men that did not appreciate his presence, but he believed that it was his duty to the Confederacy.⁴²

This was one of his greatest examples of leadership skill. He was able to evaluate his subordinates and knew that none of them were ready for the responsibility of a regiment. Although it could be argued that it was just Southern pride that made it difficult for him to relinquish his post, considering his experiences at Antietam and as an educator, it is much more likely that he was drawing upon his knowledge and

⁴¹ Dunbar Rowland, *The Military History of Mississippi, 1803 - 1898* The Official Statistical Records of the State of Mississippi, 1908.

⁴² *Ibid.*

understanding of leadership. He knew that he had a tremendous challenge ahead of him, but recognized that it was incumbent upon him to earn the respect of the 46th Mississippi. Other regiments in similar circumstances had refused to follow their new commander. The spring of 1863 would be a true test of Sears' leadership capabilities.

By the time Sears became the leader of a reluctant 46th Mississippi regiment, he had already been forced to deal with much opposition as an educator at the University of Louisiana. As the president of the academic school, he had to constantly deal with budget shortfalls and dueling departments. It was from these experiences that he developed his strong leadership capabilities.

On May 18th, 1863, Union forces desperate to take the last bastion of the Confederacy on the Mississippi River marched down the Yazoo Valley Road and assaulted the Confederate position along the Fort Hill Road. Baldwin's Brigade, of which the 46th Mississippi was a part, had been given the responsibility of maintaining the northern defenses of the city. The Confederates had built a maze of trenches and fortifications that gave them a decided edge, but the brigade had been bloodied several times during Grant's daring spring campaign and morale was low. Even worse, most of the men had

had very little to eat for the past several days as the brigade had been constantly on the move.⁴³

As Union troops under William T. Sherman hit the 46th Mississippi, Colonel Sears walked up and down the lines shouting words of encouragement to his men. At one point, federals were able to achieve a break in the line between the 46th Mississippi and a neighboring Confederate regiment. Sears quickly sent in the last of his reserves and was able to destroy the Union foothold. When the Confederates beat back one assault, the federals simply withdrew, reformed and attacked again. When night fell on the 18th, Union troops renewed the assault the next day. Throughout both days, Sears was able to keep his hungry and tired regiment together and maintain their fighting spirit. Soon, however, the fighting devolved into a summer siege and the starving city of Vicksburg eventually capitulated. However, before the surrender, Brigadier General Baldwin singled out Sears for his brave and meritorious service on the 18th and 19th of May as well as for the leadership skills he displayed during the difficult siege.⁴⁴

⁴³ William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschel, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp. 147-148.

⁴⁴ Rowland, *The Military History of Mississippi, 1803 - 1898*; The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies*. Series 1 -

While Vicksburg was not a victory for the South, it was an example of extraordinary leadership under difficult circumstances. Claudius Wistar Sears took command of a regiment that did not appreciate his presence; other Confederate officers under similar circumstances had seen their men mutiny. Not only was Sears able to keep his men from deserting, he was able to keep them as a potent fighting force. The tired and hungry 46th Mississippi held against two days of brutal attacks by Union troops under William T. Sherman. After his capture at Vicksburg, Sears was paroled and went on to serve in other major conflicts of the western theater.

Captain Francis Amasa Walker rode his horse through the Virginia countryside. It was May 1862 and Walker was an aide to Brigadier General Darius Couch during the Battle of Fair Oaks. Earlier in the battle, Couch's brigade of four regiments had gotten separated from the rest of the division. The brigade could have easily been destroyed if a larger Confederate force had discovered their presence. Couch had sent young Captain Walker to both ascertain the location of the rest of the division as well as gauge any possible threat

from approaching Rebel forces. Walker, who was only twenty-two years of age, had ridden quickly in the direction of the Union lines and eventually had come upon a Minnesota regiment from Sedgwick's division. Acting under Couch's authority, Walker had directed the regiment's commander, Colonel Sully, to take up a position to connect Couch's brigade to the rest of the division. The Union troops once again formed a solid line. He had then returned to Couch's headquarters and rode with his superior to inspect the lines.⁴⁵

As Couch, Walker and other members of Couch's staff rode along a high ridge just behind their lines, they caught sight of a group of soldiers approaching from some distance away. The troops were marching quickly towards the Union position. Though they could not see them clearly enough to know if they were friend or foe, Walker posited the opinion that they must be Confederates preparing to attack. Couch simply replied that they were Union troops that were falling back to the federal lines. Unable to understand the lack of concern being displayed by Couch, Walker again voiced his fears and again the general quieted him. Fearing that if they were indeed Rebels, the brigade would not be prepared for an attack, Walker requested permission to ride out to see for himself.

⁴⁵ Memoirs of Francis Amasa Walker, Walker Collection, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

This was granted and Walker rode towards the mystery troops using some trees as cover.⁴⁶

This was a moment of true leadership on the part of Francis Amasa Walker. Despite his young age and lack of military experience, he was willing not only to openly disagree with a superior officer, but also risked his own life to prove his suspicions correct.

After covering a short distance, he popped out of the tree-line, sat high in the saddle and got a closer look at the approaching soldiers. They were, indeed, part of a whole Confederate division under General William Henry Chase Whiting.⁴⁷

Walker rode quickly back to the Union position where he found another Union officer, General Edwin Sumner, reviewing the forward lines and overseeing the placement of an artillery battery. Walker reported his discovery to Sumner who immediately ordered the artillery to begin firing on the approaching troops. The Confederates staggered but continued moving forward, hoping to quickly engage the federals and drive them from their position. But due to Walker's warning, the Union troops had enough time to prepare for the attack and

⁴⁶ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. XI, (Part I) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), p. 880.

⁴⁷ *Memoirs of Francis Amasa Walker*, Walker Collection, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

were not only able to hold their position, but then brought up additional reinforcements that slammed into the attacking Confederate's flank. This maneuver threw the Rebels into confusion and they withdrew from the field with heavy losses.⁴⁸

In his report of the day's action, General Couch wrote, "My thanks are due to Captain Walker...who made a daring personal reconnaissance."⁴⁹ Young Francis Walker had not let the assurances of a superior officer turn him away from his feelings of impending danger, and at great risk to himself, scouted the Rebel position. It could not have been easy for a newly appointed aide to openly dispute the declarations of a brigadier general. But once he was armed with his important intelligence, he was able to warn the Union lines of the threat. As a special tutor of Latin and Greek before the war, Walker developed his leadership skills working with underprivileged young men who desired to pursue a college education, but were not properly prepared for its academic rigors. Some of these students were strong-willed and difficult to guide. Walker learned that providing leadership often meant being stubborn.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ The United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: records of the Union and Confederate armies*, Series 1, Vol. XI, (Part I) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), p. 881.

While the Peninsula Campaign was not known for being a sweeping success for the Army of the Potomac, the bold leadership and selfless actions of Walker helped the Union win an important battle just before their overall retreat from the gates of Richmond in the summer of 1862.

All of the men in this study showed leadership ability while under fire for their respective causes. This is not to say that they did not have their faults or make mistakes. For example, after developing an addiction to morphine, Henry Lawrence Eustis was relieved of command in the closing months of the war. Ormsby Mitchel was publicly critical of his superiors and was sent to garrison duty in South Carolina where he died of yellow fever. Yet all of these men who had no combat experience took command of large numbers of troops and led them successfully as military officers. This is a sign of talent and resolve, but most importantly, it is a sign of great leadership skills. As Jon L. Wakelyn argues, part of their preparation came as students in civilian college classrooms.⁵⁰ But they received the bulk of their preparation while serving as teachers. As military officers these

⁵⁰ Jon L. Wakelyn, "'Civilian' Higher Education in the Making of Confederate Army Leaders," from The Confederate High Command, Roman Heleniak and Lawrence Hewitt, ed., (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing, 1990), p. 89.

educators overcame major obstacles, dealt successfully with controversy, maintained the morale of their men and confronted crisis after crisis.

But in some ways, these teachers already had experience at dealing with crisis and controversy. They had already served in the front lines of educational and religious wars brought on by a growing market economy and the Second Great Awakening. Higher education in the United States during the antebellum period was a volatile and emotionally charged subject on many levels. Professors confronted budget shortfalls, job insecurity, religious turmoil and even threats to life and limb. It is important to look at the educational environment that helped create some of the men that fought and led so capably in the Civil War.

Chapter 2 - Their Schools and Educational Systems

One of the most significant factors in the history of antebellum American education was its connection with the history of religion. The correlation began with Harvard College in the seventeenth century and continued to mold the development of colleges throughout the United States. There were a variety of reasons for this. Often, the competition between Protestant denominations led to the founding of colleges in close geographical proximity to one another. For example, Presbyterians would establish a college a short distance from an existing Baptist college to make sure that their parishioners would not feel compelled to attend a school founded and governed by Baptists. From 1800 to 1860 one hundred and ninety colleges were founded in the United States by Protestant organizations. New denominations, such as the Disciples of Christ, emerged and wanted to solidify their position in American culture through education; long-established denominations such as the Presbyterians sought to maintain their position in American society through their colleges.¹

¹Natalie Naylor, "The Antebellum College Movement," pp. 261-262; Roger Geiger, ed. *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), p. 2; Sydney Ahlstrom, *Religious*

In other cases, colleges and universities grew from a common or charity school founded by a local church or headed by a minister of the community. Churches often viewed education as a way to bring some degree of stability and civilization to their town, or at the very least, a chance for the town to grow. Ministers served as professors and presidents, board members and benefactors. Even in the case of state universities, ministers were often called upon to play key roles in a school's creation because they were usually highly educated men. Even in non church-affiliated schools such as West Point and the Naval Observatory, religion was an important aspect of the overall educational experience. Thus in many ways, Protestant Christianity and education were tightly entwined.²

Because of the connection between Christianity and education, religious controversies were quite common in antebellum colleges and universities. These conflicts tested the beliefs and ideals of those who attended and staffed

History of the American People, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972) p. 438

² David Tewksbury, *The Founding of Colleges and Universities before the Civil War*, (New York: Columbia University Teacher's College, 1932), pp. 87-89; Louise Stevenson, *Scholarly Means to Evangelical Ends*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 1; William Warren Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765 - 1840*, (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1952), pp. 161-165.

these schools. Oftentimes, these debates over doctrine grew terribly bitter and threatened to destroy an institution.

In addition to religious disagreements, colleges were also prone to conflicts over pedagogy and curricula. The antebellum period was a time a rapid change for American society and some in education wanted to embrace these changes. However, there were others who appreciated the old ways of teaching and the classic curricula; this set the stage for a tremendous amount of conflict over the future of American secondary education.

Lastly, colleges and universities were often forced to close because of financial hardship or other catastrophes. Professors could easily lose their jobs because of an economic recession or an accidental fire at the school. Others might be chased from an institution by threats of violence. Due to all of these kinds of issues, a college could be seen as a crucible - a place where leadership skills were required and tested on a daily basis.

Of course, the most obvious example of these kinds of conflicts was America's first college, Harvard University. Since its establishment in 1636, Harvard set the example of curriculum and student conduct and promoted the importance of a college education. Also, the university often took the

lead in new opportunities for study. For example, at a time when engineering was typically only taught at military academies such as West Point, Harvard was one of the first civilian schools to open an engineering department. The first chair of this department was Henry Lawrence Eustis.

Nineteenth century colleges and universities would repeat many of the controversies and "growing pains" faced by Harvard throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Conflict between Unitarians and Congregationalists, issues of student discipline and debates over curriculum that influenced the individuals in this study were part of life at Harvard. Thus, a look at its early history is important.

Near the time when Harvard College formally became Harvard University in 1780, a religious controversy affected the school that would later be repeated in many of the colleges and universities where the subjects of this study were educated. It was the advent of Unitarian liberalism. Throughout the late 1700s and into the early 1800s, the school dealt with an increasingly bitter and fractious debate over the ideology of not only the divinity school, but the college as a whole. Unitarians, many of whom were recent immigrants from England or part of the Boston elite,

attacked the strict Calvinist views that were held by a majority of the professors and tutors in the Divinity School.³

Claiming that Calvinism was the antithesis of scientific advancement and intellectual freedom, Unitarians began to infiltrate institutions of higher learning in the late 1700s - Harvard being the first. Their desire was to break the grip of traditional Calvinism on Protestant colleges and replace it with deism. The standard method for achieving their goals was to gain positions on the boards of colleges and then use their authority to hire like-minded professors to new or vacant positions. This is precisely what they did in the case of Harvard.⁴

In August 1803, David Tappan, the ardent Calvinist Professor of Divinity, died of a fever, and the Board of Overseers immediately began the process of filling the vacancy. After the board suggested a few more liberal-

³ Marie Kuplec Cayton argues that Unitarians were not actively proselytizing during the early 1800s, instead preferring to create and promote philanthropic and educational institutions, but this viewpoint largely rests upon a very narrow definition of the word *proselytizing*. In truth, Unitarians were aggressively evangelical, using these institutions to promote their ideology. When it came to education, Unitarians were more likely to gain access to, then change an established school rather than create their own. It was this form of aggression that led to so much conflict in educational institutions during the early 1800s; see Marie Kuplec Cayton, "Who Were the Evangelicals?: Conservative and Liberal Identity in the Unitarian Controversy in Boston, 1804-1833," Journal of Social History 31.1 (1997).

⁴ Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, pp. 393-394.

leaning professors, the president at that time, Joseph Willard, claimed he "would sooner cut off his hand" than support the ascension of a Unitarian to the post. A stalemate ensued with neither side willing to back down. But then President Willard died, leaving two very important positions to be filled at Harvard. Eliphalet Pearson, professor of Hebrew, was made acting president and he nominated a Calvinist, the Rev. Jesse Appleton, to the position of Professor of Divinity and suggested himself for the presidency. The Board of Overseers then held a meeting to vote on the nominations. The Board had sixty-five members made up of about twenty ministers (mostly conservative) and forty-five laity (mostly liberal). Normally, board meetings were attended by a large number of ministers and only a few lay members. However, at the meeting to decide the fate of Harvard only twelve ministers appeared and all forty-five members of the laity were present. A revolution was about to commence.⁵

At the beginning of the meeting, the Board immediately withdrew the nominations of Appleton and Pearson. They then nominated Henry Ware (one of the board's original choices while Willard was president) and after a few protest

⁵ Morison, *Three Centuries*, pp. 188-189.

speeches made by the minority Calvinists, they elected Ware to fill the position of Professor of Divinity. Pearson then discovered that he had absolutely no support from the Board in his desire to be the next president of Harvard. So, a few weeks later, he not only resigned from his position as interim president, but also resigned as the professor of Hebrew. The Board then nominated Samuel Webber, also a Unitarian and a member of the Harvard mathematics faculty to the position of president. Once again, a large number of lay members attended the meeting to vote on Webber's nomination and he was confirmed by a vote of 35 to 14.⁶

With Unitarians in important leadership posts, Harvard's student body grew. Between 1800 and 1850, Harvard added fourteen new buildings and fifteen endowed professorships. No longer simply a school for training ministers and doctors, the university added three new professional schools. Its library raced to meet the new demand and quadrupled its number of volumes. Along with the immense growth of its curriculum and facilities, Harvard's financial situation also improved tremendously. As Unitarians usually made up a large percentage of the wealthy elite of not only Boston but also New England, they gave of

⁶ Ibid., pp. 189-190.

their money freely to the university they considered one of their own. All but two of the largest twenty-eight donors to Harvard during the 1830s were Unitarians.⁷ Other colleges and universities in New England, such as Bowdoin and Amherst Colleges, would soon follow Harvard's lead, much to the dismay of religious conservatives. It was into this environment that Henry Lawrence Eustis enrolled at Harvard in 1834.

Religious differences also led to controversies regarding teaching and learning. During the early 19th century, a series of debates over educational issues had escalated into war between conservative and liberal factions in New England. Conservatives wanted the educational system to remain as it was, patriarchal and fixed in its methods. For example, many of Joshua Chamberlain's professors believed that it was their responsibility to not only educate, but to mold young men into well-behaved, Protestant citizens. Conversely, many liberal educators wanted a more intimate setting in the classroom and wanted to try new modes of instruction. They also wished to remove the heavy-

⁷ Ronald Story, *The Forging of an Aristocracy: Harvard and the Boston Upper Class, 1800 - 1870* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1980), pp. 25, 30.

handed Congregational theology from colleges and universities favoring instead basic Christian values.⁸

The creation and subsequent improvement of the American public education system was the backdrop for this conflict over learning. Reformers such as Horace Mann and James G. Carter fought the conservative religious elements of New England for control of the minds of what they saw as the future of their young nation.⁹ Conservatives wanted Protestant piety and beliefs taught as part of public education curriculum. Moreover, they were keenly interested in maintaining the strict rules and methods of discipline that had been part and parcel of church sponsored education.

Mann, himself a Unitarian, along with Catholic educators, fought against most of these ideals and asked for more methodical and less sectarian education in the public schools.¹⁰ Reformers also sought to improve the quality of scientific instruction and break down the barriers between student and teacher. They believed that students were more likely to learn from professors and teachers whom they liked. It was these very precepts that were frowned upon by

⁸ Nivison, *Proving Grounds*, pp. 107 - 108.

⁹ Cremin, *American Education*, p. 175. Hofstadter, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰ Frederick M. Binder, *The Age of the Common School, 1830 - 1865* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1974), pp. 49-50; Ruskin Teeter, *The Opening Up of American Education* (New York: The University Press of America, 1983), pp. 53-54.

staunch Congregationalists. With the advent of the Second Great Awakening and the introduction of millennialism to American religion, these deliberations were often filled with angry rhetoric and strong opinions.¹¹ Because small institutions like Bowdoin, Amherst and Williams were training future teachers, these debates over the best methods of conducting public education filtered into the colleges and universities of New England.¹²

When Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain began his studies at Bowdoin College, the institution already held an important place in the history of Maine. A group of Congregational ministers and leading Portland citizens started Bowdoin College in June 1794 in Brunswick. The original organizers of the college disliked sending their young men far to the south to Harvard and Yale to attend college and wanted an institution of higher learning for themselves.¹³ The founders named their college after a popular governor of Massachusetts, James Bowdoin, whose Huguenot ancestors had fled religious persecution in France in 1687.¹⁴ At the time,

¹¹ David Madsen, *Early National Education, 1776 - 1830* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1972), p. 104.

¹² George P. Schmidt, *The Liberal Arts College*, pp. 38-40; Nivison, *Proving Grounds*, pp. 57-60.

¹³ Hatch, *Maine: A History*, p. 108-111. Williamson, *The History of Maine*, p. 537.

¹⁴ Charles C. Calhoun, *A Small College in Maine: 200 Years at Bowdoin*, (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College Press, 1993), p. 18.

the District of Maine was still considered a part of the state of Massachusetts and Governor Samuel Adams approved and signed their charter. Originally, the charter had been submitted to John Hancock, who was governor before Adams.¹⁵ However, John Hancock and James Bowdoin had been bitter adversaries both politically and personally. This animosity led the governor to delay approval of the college charter bearing the name of his rival until Hancock died in 1794 and Samuel Adams became governor of the state.¹⁶ The creators of the school patterned Bowdoin similarly to Harvard College with a governing Board of Trustees made up mostly of ministers from the local vicinity.¹⁷ Many of the Bowdoin founders were graduates of Harvard, thus they modeled Bowdoin after a system that was familiar.

Due to a wide range of conflicts between the governing board and the newly hired faculty, instruction did not begin at Bowdoin College until 1802.¹⁸ The first problem arose with the appointment of the first president. Various members of the board supported several different candidates. The second

¹⁵ George Thomas Little, *Historical Sketch of the College: Memorial of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of Bowdoin College* (Brunswick: Bowdoin College Publishing, 1894), p. xiii.

¹⁶ Louise D. Rich, *The Coast of Maine* (New York: Thomas Crowell and Company, 1975), p. 95.

¹⁷ Samuel Eliot Morison, *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), pp. 370-372.

¹⁸ Little, *Historical Sketch*, p. xiv.

problem related to the selection of a site for the college and the subsequent purchase of land. A third problem arose when the Board of Trustees was criticized for moving too slowly.¹⁹ These types of conflicts would continue to affect the school for many years.

The Rev. Joseph McKeen was eventually chosen as the first president of Bowdoin College. He died just five years after assuming the office and this led to immediate problems. The Trustees selected two different successors both of who were rejected by the faculty. The two groups were finally able to agree on the Reverend Jesse Appleton, the same individual that the overseers at Harvard had previously rejected. It was President Appleton who set the tone of the Bowdoin College that Chamberlain would attend years later.

The cornerstone of Appleton's presidency was a strict code of conduct for students. Punishable offenses included everything from playing cards to failing to observe properly the Sabbath. Students who did not follow these rules were often rebuked publicly or forced to do menial tasks. In

¹⁹ Nehemiah Cleaveland, *A History of Bowdoin College with Biographical Sketches of its Graduates* (Boston: James Ripley Osgood and Co., 1882), pp. 5-7.

extreme cases, students were suspended from school. Six were permanently expelled during Appleton's administration.²⁰

The president also believed in an expressly professional relationship between professor and student. According to Appleton, the faculty members of Bowdoin College were parties in a "contract" with the students to provide fair discipline and instruction. The president further believed that personal relationships between professors and students were harmful to this end. Friendships between students and professors would cause jealousies and preferential treatment and was frowned upon.²¹ These principles and guidelines would become the accepted standards at Bowdoin College for the next several decades and serve as the foundation for the struggles Chamberlain would later face as a professor.

After Appleton died in 1819, the Board of Trustees selected William Allen as his successor. Despite the fact that Bowdoin College grew and prospered during Allen's presidency, students and faculty mostly characterized his administration as a time of great tension and frustration. Allen was a strict conservative Congregationalist and was

²⁰ Bowdoin College Historical Records 1792 - 1858, Bowdoin College Archives, Brunswick, ME.

²¹ Little, *Historical Sketch*, p. xlii.

sometimes overbearing and verbose in his views. He quickly alienated many of the students with his cold demeanor and he angered the faculty with occasional insulting comments. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, professor of Modern Languages wrote, "Some of us would not be sorry to have Dr. Allen resign."²² Events came to a head in 1838 when a group of students burned the president's woodshed. The story of the incident made it into several regional newspapers. Realizing that the controversy was hurting his reputation, Allen resigned.

The Board of Trustees chose the Reverend Leonard Woods, Jr., formerly of Bangor Theological Seminary, to replace him. Woods was a benevolent and gentle man who earned respect through kindness. He placed little value in the strict codes of conduct enacted by President Appleton and he pushed for reforms in the disciplinary rules of the school. The first example of this was the way in which he investigated the burning of the former president's woodshed. Instead of interrogating students or doling out severe punishment, Dr. Woods called suspected participants into his office for a chat. He calmly explained that he understood the students' feelings at the time of the arson but added

²² Henry W. Longfellow to George W. Greene, 17 September 1833, Maine State Archives, Augusta, ME.

that violent behavior was not acceptable at the college. As a result, a few students volunteered to rebuild the woodshed and the matter was then closed.²³ It was in this new relationship between faculty and students that Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain began his college career.

Far to the south, the creation of the University of North Carolina was not expressly related to religion, but civic improvement. William Sharpe first proposed the idea for a state university in North Carolina in the State Assembly in 1784. He believed the young men of the state would greatly benefit from an institution of higher learning. His plans met strong resistance from Carolina anti-Federalists who were against any expenditure of public funds for the purpose of education and the proposal was tabled. Just five years later, the North Carolina Assembly, then populated with Federalists, adopted Sharpe's plans and elected a Board of Trustees to oversee the establishment of a state school of higher education. The University of North Carolina was organized in 1792 and its first building was completed in November 1794. The university was modeled closely after the College of New

²³ Wheeler, *A History of Brunswick*, p. 515.

Jersey (soon to become Princeton) as seven of its first trustees were graduates of the northern college.²⁴

A Princeton alumnus, Reverend Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, wrote the by-laws of the new university. Many believed that McCorkle would be elected as the presiding professor of the school, but several of the Trustees, namely William Richardson Davie, claimed that he disliked the idea of a minister as the head of a state university. In a letter to a colleague, Davie showed the early involvement of the Pettigrew family in the early history of the university. In describing the college at Chapel Hill, he wrote, "Bishop Pettigrew has said it is a very dissipated and debauched place. Nothing, it seems, goes well that these men of God have not some hand in."²⁵ The Pettigrew to which Davies refers is undoubtedly Charles Pettigrew, James Johnston's grandfather. As the leading Anglican clergyman of North Carolina and the first bishop of the North Carolina diocese, Charles Pettigrew was greatly respected and evidently visited the university to deliver eloquent sermons to the students.²⁶

²⁴ Henderson, Archibald, *The Campus of the First State University* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1949), p. 7

²⁵ William R. Davie to Spruce Macay, Halifax, N.C. from the Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives, Chapel Hill, NC.

²⁶ Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, p. 2.

Due to the opposition of Davies and several other trustees, McCorkle was not chosen as the first faculty member. Instead, David Ker was selected. Ironically, Ker was a Presbyterian minister from Ireland, leading one to believe that Davies' objection to McCorkle may have been for reasons beyond his vocation. The University of North Carolina opened for classes on January 15, 1795. Due to the poor lines of communication throughout the state, Professor Ker was forced to wait four weeks before the first student, Hinton James, enrolled and became the university's entire student body.²⁷ By February, several more students arrived and a rudimentary curriculum was devised by Reverend McCorkle involving several different levels of study from grammar (for those students who needed preparatory studies) to theology and advanced mathematics.²⁸ Over the next several years, both the size and prestige of the University of North Carolina grew steadily. By 1805, the preparatory school was separated from the university and eventually disbanded, leaving only the professional school.

One of the very first students of the university was Ebenezer Pettigrew, along with his brother, John. The "Pettigrew boys," as they came to be called, attended Chapel

²⁷ Henderson, *The Campus*, p. 38-39.

²⁸ Battle, *History of the University*, p. 65.

Hill from 1795 to 1797 and they wrote home to their parents on a regular basis.²⁹ This correspondence provides important insight into the life of young southern gentlemen who were away at school. Despite the fact that many of these young men, as the sons of wealthy planters, were accustomed to a certain degree of comfort, life at college was a completely different matter. The trials and tribulations of a university student in North Carolina are described in their letters home.³⁰

One of their main complaints was their food and living quarters. The dormitories were often the breeding grounds for various sorts of vermin, especially insects. Some sort of biting pest infested the room where the Pettigrew boys lived. Ebenezer describes them in one of his letters home. "The Sabines (their name for these insects) have quite defeated us. We have given them the entire possession of our room. None of us have been able to sleep in it for five weeks. I spread out tables in the passage and pour water around the legs. They are in general poor swimmers."³¹ The brothers also complained about the poor quality of their food. In one letter, they state, "It is impossible to describe the badness of the tea and coffee.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85 - 86.

³⁰ Ebenezer Pettigrew to Charles Pettigrew, May 1796, The Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

³¹ Ebenezer Pettigrew to Charles Pettigrew, May 1796, The Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

The meat generally stinks and has maggots in it.”³² John and Ebenezer often spoke fondly of the food they had while at home and complained that the food they ate at school was not even as good as that which their slaves ate.

John and Ebenezer reported on other happenings at school besides their room and board - situations that would be very similar to the experiences of Johnston. Charles wished to be kept informed regarding the moral standards of the school and those attending. John described the coarse atmosphere of the university to his father informing Charles Pettigrew of the “student’s detestable habit of cursing and swearing.” Bishop Pettigrew replied with advice on how to avoid the pitfalls of “loose living.”³³ John also described his attempts at becoming a cultured Southern gentleman by not only reading books on manners, but also by taking dancing lessons. When explaining to his father why he was taking these lessons, he declared that it was in his best interests to “attain such a genteel accomplishment.”³⁴ Despite his son’s progress in the area of gentility, Charles Pettigrew grew deeply concerned about exposing his sons to the bad influences of “those who make the

³² John Pettigrew to Charles Pettigrew, September 1795, The Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

³³ Charles Pettigrew to John Pettigrew, October 1795, The Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

³⁴ John Pettigrew to Charles Pettigrew, October 1796, The Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

greatest proficiency in the art of swearing" and removed John and Ebenezer from the University of North Carolina at the end of their 1797 term.³⁵ John was sent to Nixonton where he planned to study medicine, but he died of an "enlarged spleen" just as he was finishing his studies.³⁶

Student life at the University of North Carolina was similar to that found in northern institutions in the early 19th century, but in some ways it was distinctly southern. More so than at northern institutions, southern collegiate education was adversarial in terms of student-faculty relations. As the student body grew, so did the need for a well-established code of student conduct. As mentioned above, many of the young men of the South were not accustomed to the rigors and unpleasantness of college life; various forms of rebellion and violence were common. As Jon L. Wakelyn writes,

Classroom pranks, such as eating, sleeping, reading newspapers, and throwing wet paper balls, often led to a confrontation of wills. Student attempts to punish the non-compliant faculty, such as by breaking residence windows and destroying of gardens further exacerbated tensions and usually led to more rigorous enforcement of rules to control student mobility.³⁷

³⁵ Stamp, Kenneth, ed., *The Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations*, History Department of UCLA, NEXIS

³⁶ Battle, *History of the University*, p. 92-93.

³⁷ Jon L. Wakelyn, "'Civilian' Higher Education in the Making of Confederate Army Leaders" from *The Confederate High Command & Related Topics*, Roman J. Heliak and Lawrence L. Hewitt, ed. (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1990), p. 80.

Many of the early rules established by the University of North Carolina reflect a kind of rebellion that was more common in the South than the North. It was the purposeful disruption of school functions by resentful students. The concept of Southern honor was often at odds with the strict policies and discipline of college life. Students who were reprimanded by a professor frequently took the correction as a personal insult. The natural inclination for many of these students was to disrupt the class of the instructor that they felt had wronged them. Thus, the university dealt with these situations swiftly and without mercy. For example, students who disrupted a class were summarily suspended for two weeks and in more serious cases, they were expelled. Students involved in any kind of conspiracy to disrupt the school were immediately expelled. When Pettigrew arrived in Chapel Hill in 1843, he had already experienced such things at the Hillsborough Academy where he began his education.³⁸

In New England colleges were founded in large numbers throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Williams College began as an academy for young men in Williamstown, Massachusetts, in 1791. After less than a year, the principal of the school sent a request to the state

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 80-82.

legislature that the school be incorporated into a college called Williams Hall. The administration of Harvard University briefly fought the creation of a new college fearing that it would compete with them for students, but after a yearlong delay, Williams College was formally incorporated. Though it was not associated with any denomination, a local Congregational minister, Ebenezer Fitch, served at the school president. At its inaugural commencement, the Rev. Ephraim Judson preached a hellfire and brimstone message about ministers (namely Unitarians) who had fallen away from the true faith.³⁹

Initially, students did not have to pass an entrance exam, but once they had gained admittance, they became part of a new world of routine and discipline. At Williams, Harvard, and other 19th century New England colleges, infractions of the rules brought various forms of punishment, the most common being fines. For example, a student at Williams might be fined a penny for being late to class; a higher sum was levied for playing a prank or working on the Sabbath. Students were prohibited from drinking alcohol or participating in frivolous endeavors such as acting. In even more serious cases, students

³⁹ Leverett Wilson Spring, *A History of Williams College* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1917), pp. 40-47.

could be suspended or expelled.⁴⁰ For example, one student was expelled for gambling with money he had borrowed from a classmate to buy school supplies.⁴¹ Every aspect of a young student's life was controlled.⁴²

The Williams continued to grow and thrive as the 18th century came to a close and the 19th began. In the early nineteenth century, the Second Great Awakening exploded into existence and New England and Williams College were greatly affected. Revival services were held on campus calling for a return to piety and the men of the college heeded the call. The membership of the recently created college theological society ballooned. Disciplinary incidents were fewer in number. The fervor of the college even affected the surrounding community. For example, it was generally frowned upon for people to travel on the Sabbath, but it was becoming an increasingly common occurrence. Led by the faculty and

⁴⁰ The Laws of Williams College, 1795. Williams College Archives, Williamstown, MA.

⁴¹ Records of the Board of Trustees, 1805. Williams College Archives, Williamstown, MA.

⁴² In his examination of five New England colleges, Ken Nivison argues that these schools saw their most important role was that of turning young boys into proper young men. The codes of conduct found at most antebellum colleges were designed to bring about this effect. But even more specifically, these codes of conduct were meant to create young men who would be leaders in their community. Victorian America (especially in the South) saw self control as one of the main hallmarks of a leader.

students of Williams, nearby roads were closed to travel on Sunday and some would-be travelers were even detained.⁴³

In 1818, longstanding tensions with Williamstown led Rev. Theophilus Packard, a member of the Board of Trustees, to propose the relocation of the college to another town, possibly Northampton or Amherst. The towns were offering money to the college in exchange for the honor of having a well-established college in their town. A committee was appointed to investigate this possibility and the new president of the college expressed support for the idea. However, rather than lose what had become an important part of their community, Williamstown voted to provide over \$18,000 for new facilities and promised to resolve some of the contentious issues that had previously soured the relationship between town and college.⁴⁴

As was the case with many colleges and universities of the antebellum period, money was a constant issue. Much more so than in modern times, colleges and universities rode the economic ebb and flow of America's new market economy. In the late 1830s, as the nation was experiencing an economic recession, Williams University found itself in the midst of a

⁴³ Spring, *A History of Williams College*, pp. 60-63.

⁴⁴ Calvin Durfee, *A History of Williams College*, (Boston: A. Williams and Company, 1860), pp. 146-156.

financial emergency. In 1837, the school's treasurer reported that there was not enough money to pay faculty salaries. The school appealed to the state for help; the Massachusetts legislature promptly refused. The school held prayer meetings and encouraged students to fast, seeking divine help. In the end, a large donation from Amos Lawrence, a wealthy alumnus, kept the school solvent until the economy had sufficiently recovered.⁴⁵

In 1836, the Board of Trustees elected Professor Mark Hopkins as the new president of the college. Hopkins' nomination had been a dramatic break from tradition in that the prior six presidents had all been ministers. Hopkins was a medical professor. The board seemed reluctant to change its standard practice and thus also nominated the Rev. Azariah Giles Orton. Then there was an unusual development. The senior class of Williams College had prepared a letter and asked that it be read to the board. In this letter, the seniors expressed tremendous affection and respect for Professor Hopkins and posited the notion that he would have a profoundly positive effect on the school as president. The letter seemed to sway a few of the reluctant members of the board. The vice-president of the trustees, Rev. Samuel Shepard, turned to the

⁴⁵ Spring, *A History of Williams College*, pp. 161-164

gathering and said, "If the boys want him, let them have him."⁴⁶ A vote was held that approved Hopkins' ascension to the office.⁴⁷

The Hopkins' administration began as a time of great desperation for the school, but under his guidance, Williams College grew in both responsibility and stature. Always eager to improve the educational experience of his students, Hopkins frequently used his own money to help improve the college's facilities. When there were controversies on campus, Hopkins met with the students and seemed to always bring calm. The frequently fractious relationship between faculty and students that was a hallmark of 19th century higher education seemed less evident at Williams during Hopkins' tenure as president. One student wrote, "Called on the President and two or three of the Professors to-day. Was struck with their affable and familiar manner. . .the students almost universally regard the faculty as their friends."⁴⁸ It was precisely this kind of friendly atmosphere that drew James Garfield to the institution in 1854.

Related to Williams in many ways was Amherst College. When Williams briefly flirted with the idea of moving to

⁴⁶ Franklin Carter, *Mark Hopkins* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1897), p. 60

⁴⁷ Spring, *A History of Williams College*, pp. 153-155.

⁴⁸ David Ames Wells and Samuel Henry Davis. *Sketches of Williams College* (Williamstown, MA: H.S. Taylor, 1847), p. 73.

Amherst, it gave ministers in the community the idea of starting their own academy in the town. Thus, in 1815, the Franklin County Association of Ministers laid the groundwork for Amherst Academy. A year later, a charter was obtained from the Massachusetts legislature and the new school opened with an unusually large enrollment of students from all over New England. A year later, the academy established a charity fund for educating "indigent young men of promising talents and hopeful piety, who shall manifest a desire to obtain a liberal education with a sole view to the Christian ministry."⁴⁹

In 1818 when the hopes of Williams College moving to Amherst failed to come to fruition, a committee of Amherst Academy trustees was formed with the expressed purpose of buying land and erecting a new college named for the town of its location. Ten acres of land was purchased, but the money ran out before the inaugural buildings were finished. Thus began a laborious process of earning enough money for work to continue. When the money ran out again, work stopped until more funds were culled from regional benefactors and the construction resumed. This process continued for almost two years until the main building was finally finished and a new president and professors were hired to begin the work of

⁴⁹ William S. Tyler, *A History of Amherst College from 1821 to 1891* (New York: Frederick H. Hitchcock, 1895), p. 5.

educating the young men of New England. A new Board of Trustees was elected and was led by none other than Noah Webster, the great educational reformer and author of the Webster's dictionary.⁵⁰

The Rev. Zephaniah Swift Moore was elected the first president of the college and in his letter of acceptance, Moore promised to establish a rigorous course of study at the new institution. "I should be wholly averse to becoming united with any institution which proposes to give a classical education inferior to that given in any of the colleges of New England."⁵¹ Once he arrived, he developed a curriculum identical to that of Yale and sent notices to the surrounding communities that only young men who demonstrated the highest level of commitment and talent would be admitted to the new school. However, it should be noted that the Massachusetts legislature had not yet approved the incorporation of a college, only a charity school. The new president made it his main goal to have the Massachusetts legislature grant the school a college charter. On September 19, 1821, Amherst College opened with forty-seven students.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

⁵¹ Rev. Zephaniah Swift Moore to the Board of Trustees, June 12, 1821, Amherst College Archives, Amherst, MA.

⁵² Tyler, *A History of Amherst College*, pp. 24-26.

Students at Amherst, like many New England colleges, began their day with a mandatory prayer service. Afterwards, the students divided into their classes and participated in a very classical curriculum. For example, the freshmen studied Latin, algebra, philosophical grammar, geography, and composition. As seniors, students took natural theology, economics, rhetoric, philosophy and anatomy.⁵³ Within a few short years, the school had accumulated, mostly through donation, a library of over 700 volumes. Tuition, room and board cost eleven dollars per term and students were encouraged to be as frugal as possible. Rather than hire a groundskeeper, students were expected to keep the campus clean. Most students collected and chopped their own firewood. As Amherst was a sleepy farming community, there were few diversions to distract students from learning.⁵⁴

The Second Great Awakening also had a dramatic effect on Amherst College. When President Moore fell terribly ill in the fall of 1823, student Bela B. Edwards described the situation like this:

During his short sickness, loving pupils who had been converts in the recent revival offered prayers unto God unceasingly for him.

⁵³ Catalog of Amherst College, 1822, Amherst College Archives, Amherst College, Amherst, MA.

⁵⁴ Tyler, *A History of Amherst College*, pp. 34-36.

But while they were filled with anxiety and grief, Dr. Moore was looking with calmness and joy upon the prospects which were opening before him. While flesh and heart were failing him, Christ was the strength of his heart and the anchor of his soul.⁵⁵

The college also got deeply involved in the temperance movement. As one of the main effects of the Second Great Awakening was a return to piety, the use of alcohol seemed terribly out of place at Amherst and other New England schools. In fact, Moore's replacement, Rev. Heman Humphrey was a pioneer and outspoken member of the temperance movement. Humphrey captivated students with his passionate and eloquent sermons on the evils of alcohol. And despite that fact that not all Amherst students and faculty were teetotalers, his views were widely respected among the entire school.⁵⁶

By January 1825, the school still did not have its official charter as a Massachusetts college. More than one person associated with Amherst believed that the stress and disappointment of the situation had been a contributing factor in President Moore's death. At the heart of the controversy was the fear on the part of Williams College that another such institution in western Massachusetts would hurt their

⁵⁵ B.B Edwards to Rev. Thomas Snell, July 18, 1823, Amherst College Archives, Amherst, MA.

⁵⁶ Tyler, *A History of Amherst College*, pp. 41 - 42.

enrollments. Many influential members of Massachusetts polity were alumni or trustees of Williams and they fought the incorporation of Amherst tooth and nail. These individuals claimed that Amherst would not have the funds to sustain itself in a region that already possessed one well-respected college. In response, President Humphrey raised a large number of pledges for support from the surrounding community and presented the amount to the legislature. Duly impressed, the lawmakers voted to incorporate Amherst as a college.⁵⁷

Following its incorporation, Amherst grew at a rapid pace. Between 1825 and 1836, the student body doubled in size and the school added new courses of study including civil engineering and physical science. This was in response to the growing demands of a market economy that needed young men to be trained in such skills. Schools that held tightly to only providing a classical and religious education found that they were becoming increasingly obsolete. American society no longer just needed ministers, lawyers and doctors. The school built new classrooms and a chapel to accommodate the growing classes. As in the case of Williams, the school fell upon hard times in the late 1830s. Amherst, too, appealed to the legislature only to be rebuffed. Instead of relying upon a

⁵⁷ Dr. Humphrey's Historical Sketches, Early History of the College Collection, Amherst College Archives, Amherst, MA.

wealthy benefactor to save them, the school was able to get small donations from a large number of their alumni and made it through the Panic of 1837 unscathed.⁵⁸

During the late 1830s and into the 1840s, students began to chafe under the strong disciplinary standards of the school. During the same time, the abolition movement came to Amherst. This was problematic in that the school had an inordinate number of southern students who were deeply offended by the anti-slavery zeal of many of their northern colleagues. This set off a student civil war with both sides creating student clubs to formalize their causes. They wrote articles and gave speeches designed to show the opposing side the error of their ways. These tactics often led to heated debate. Initially, the faculty sought to alleviate the situation by dissolving the clubs, but this only escalated the problem and led to constant disciplinary action. The local press began picking up on the troubles at Amherst leading to publicity that the poor college could not afford. Alumni and trustees began complaining of what they saw as a lack of leadership on the part of the faculty. Finally, in January 1844 President Humphrey tendered his resignation stating, "A

⁵⁸ Tyler, *A History of Amherst College*, pp. 79-80.

change of leadership would be advantageous for this beloved institution with which I have been long connected."⁵⁹

The Board of Trustees replaced Humphrey with Professor Edward Hitchcock who was quite a departure from his predecessor. Not a great believer in the constant use of the rod, Hitchcock relied upon moral suasion and the development of personal relationships with the students. Beginning his first year, he began the practice of inviting incoming freshmen to his home to meet not only the professors, but also their families. He encouraged students to come to him with their problems and many of them did so. By cultivating these familial bonds with his students, he was able to exert a great deal of influence over them without the constant use of disciplinary action. For example, although the controversy over slavery had died down somewhat, hard feelings still abounded on campus. Hitchcock brought the leaders of the factions to his office and using his own humility and Christian faith as an example, was able to restore some semblance of peace to the divided campus.⁶⁰

In 1854, President Hitchcock retired and was replaced by Rev. William Stearns who had previously been professor of

⁵⁹ Edward Hitchcock, *Reminiscences of Amherst College* (Northampton, MA: Bridgman and Childs, 1863), p. 124.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-146.

theology at Amherst. His leadership was quite similar in style to that of Hitchcock's. Believing that young men often got into trouble because of a lack of physical exertion and training, Stearns created Amherst's first physical education program. A gymnasium was built and the new president constantly reminded his charges of the importance of physical health and strength. It was not only out of genuine concern for the welfare of his students that he resolutely championed the cause of physical education at Amherst, but also because he believed that the best leaders were those who were physically fit and healthy. Visitors to the campus often remarked about the excellent physical condition of the students. Due to this and other factors, the college experienced tremendous growth throughout the 1850s.⁶¹ It was during this time that Francis Amasa Walker joined the ranks of the student body at Amherst.

Education was no less important in the antebellum southwest. In May 1842 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Tennessee appointed a committee to begin the process of founding a new educational institution. A delegation from the town of Lebanon met with the committee and it was agreed that this locale would be the site of the new

⁶¹ Tyler, *A History of Amherst College*, pp. 160 - 164.

school. The town itself was founded in 1802 by a group of Scotch-Irish immigrants who were staunch Presbyterians and the town frequently served as a meeting place for the synod. This being the case, it was the perfect location for a school founded by the Presbyterian Church. In 1843, the newly elected Board of Trustees secured a charter for their new college and while this document made no mention of a particular denomination, all but two of the trustees were members of the Presbyterian Church.⁶²

The first president of the college was Franceway Ranna Cossitt. He was a northerner who had been educated in Vermont and Connecticut, receiving his master's degree from General Episcopal Seminary in New Haven. He came to the South as a teacher, taking his first position at a small school near Clarksville, Tennessee, in 1821. It was during this time that he joined the Presbyterian Church and then became the minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1822. He was one of the most outspoken proponents of developing a college in the Cumberland region and thus, a natural choice for its first president. He began his job with four main objectives: 1) To create a system of education for poorer individuals who had a strong drive to improve themselves. 2) To make this education

⁶² Winstead Paine Bone, *A History of Cumberland University* (Lebanon, TN: Winstead Paine Bone, 1935), pp. 39-41.

as inexpensive as possible. 3) To mix intellectual pursuits with a regard for physical health. 4) To prepare young men for positions of leadership in the church and community.⁶³

The inaugural year (1843) of the newly dubbed Cumberland University saw forty-five students attending classes. Amazingly, the school had not accrued a single penny of support or endowment money, but the trustees expressed an unshakable faith that God would provide for their needs. An early attempt to raise funds met with very little success. Additional funds would be necessary if the school were to grow. At the time, classes were held in the Lebanon Presbyterian Church and students who expressed an interest in training for the ministry were not charged tuition.⁶⁴ Money was desperately needed.

In 1845, Cumberland University engaged the services of Rev. J. M. McMurry to help raise funds. In just three months, he raised over \$7,000 in endowments; just seven years later, he had raised over \$60,000. As a testament to Rev. McMurry's level of skill and commitment, a majority of the donations

⁶³ Ibid., p. 56.

⁶⁴ Catalog of Cumberland University, 1845, Cumberland University Archives, Lebanon, TN.

came in the form of small donations from individuals of modest means.⁶⁵

Now that the university was more financially sound, the school began to expand. In January 1847, the trustees appointed a committee to study the practicality of establishing a law school. Within a month, a law professor was hired and Tennessee's first law school was operational.⁶⁶ The course of study required two years of coursework and within ten years, the department was considered one of the best law schools in the South. The Bible was listed in the catalog as one of the required textbooks for the program. Cumberland also added courses in natural science, economics and political science.⁶⁷

Like its northern counterparts, Cumberland University had a strict set of rules for its students. In fact, the code of conduct for students was fourteen chapters long. Every manner of transgression was described in detail in the school's by-laws, along with the recommended punishments. For example, a student could be punished with a public admonishment for ringing the university bell without authorization; the same punishment applied to throwing any object at a university

⁶⁵ Bone, *A History of Cumberland University*, p. 71.

⁶⁶ Thomas C. Anderson, *A Brief Sketch of Cumberland University*, Cumberland University Archives, Lebanon, TN.

⁶⁷ Catalog of Cumberland University, 1847, Cumberland University Archives, Lebanon, TN.

building. Fines do not appear to have been as common a punishment at Cumberland University as compared to Williams or Amherst; this may have been due to the overall poverty of many of its students and the fact that many of them were not paying tuition.⁶⁸

In 1847 Cumberland passed a new by-law that required all students to wear a uniform. This was not done for martial reasons, but for democratic ones.⁶⁹ The school was likely to have the son of a wealthy planter attending classes with a son of a local tanner. The administration did not want clothing styles to become a distraction, nor did they want poorer students to feel out of place. Instead, Cumberland University, from its inception, reached out to the poor and then worked to turn them into leaders. It was into this environment that John Carpenter Carter became a student in 1854.

But education was not as important to the residents of the Deep South as it was to northerners, the people of the Border states, or even the southern Atlantic states, for that matter. For decades after becoming states, Mississippi and Alabama had done little to promote learning among the great majority of its citizens. Unlike the North, residents

⁶⁸ By-laws of Cumberland University, 1845, Cumberland University Archives, Lebanon, TN.

⁶⁹ Bone, *A History of Cumberland University*, pp. 59-60, 71.

of the Cotton South viewed the concept of a common school or college, supported by tax money or church tithes, as alien to the principles of republicanism. The Episcopal Church, which was the most common denomination among wealthy southern elites, did not strongly promote education as a civic responsibility (as compared to Presbyterians and Methodists). And yeomen farmers were too busy with their crops to envision a need for colleges or universities. The wealthy elite of Mississippi and Alabama were content to send their progeny to the well established educational institutions of the North or the Upper South.

Southerners coupled this general malaise regarding education with a strong sense of disgust for spending public funds for civic improvements. Academies and colleges were given legislative sanction then were left to their own financial devices. Also, early settlements in the Deep South were transitory in nature and did not lend themselves to the immediate development of the civic institutions that were common in the Northeast. All of these aspects taken together left the antebellum Southwest far behind the North and East with regard to education.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), pp. 171-176; Charles William Dabney, *Universal Education in the South*, Vol. 1 (New York: Arno Press & The New

However, a transformation began to take place in the Deep South in the thirty years preceding the American Civil War. Colleges and universities began to dot the landscape in Alabama and Mississippi in the 1840s and 1850s. Secondary education came to represent an important status symbol for those of the Southern, rural, middle class to attain. Politicians grew less reticent to use public funds for education and small academies grew into thriving colleges and universities. In 1845 and 1854, Mississippi and Alabama, respectively, created state education boards to oversee the promulgation of learning. By the late 1850s, throughout the Deep South, educators expressed pride over the strides being made towards establishing and improving schooling, especially in the realm of colleges and universities. In the same breath, they chastised those who sent their children north for their education.⁷¹

During the 1820s and early 30s, the fact that the South greatly lagged behind the rest of the country with regard to education was not lost on education advocates from both the North and South. Newspaper editorials and magazine articles detailed what they saw as the main reasons for the South's

York Times, 1969), p. 306; Hofstadter, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States*, pp. 56-60.

⁷¹ Albert G. Brown, "An Address on Southern Education before the Faculty, Trustees, Students and Patrons of Madison College," July 18, 1859, The Western Reserve Historical Society Archives, Cleveland, OH.

poor educational system. One periodical composed a list of causes that included such things as a lack of proper and consistent funding, trustee boards that were too large and a reliance on small, ineffective preparatory schools that taught manners, riding and fencing instead of a classical curriculum.⁷²

Others compared the South to Great Britain, saying that the Southern aristocracy's preoccupation with class status and the gaining and retention of wealth made them insensitive to promoting the common good in the realm of education.⁷³ Those who viewed the South this way, many of who were Southerners themselves, issued stern warnings regarding the South's bleak future if this aspect of Southern society did not change. In an address given at the College of New Jersey in 1826, Virginian Charles Fenton Mercer states,

They will be found to demonstrate that the accumulation of wealth, so universally regarded as the sole criterion of national prosperity, if unaccompanied by the diffusion of knowledge among the great body of the

⁷² "Weaknesses of Southern Colleges and Universities," *North American Review*, XXX, Series No. 5. (January, 1821), pp. 33-34.

⁷³ Dorothy and James Volo argue that another reason related to Great Britain was the main cause for the South's dislike of public education. They propose that Southerners feared that public schools in the South would degenerate into England's pauper schools, which were widely seen by Southerners as "ragged" and chaotic; see Dorothy Volo and James Volo, *The Antebellum Period* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 75.

community, is not only a delusive measure of general happiness, but may, and indeed, must lead to calamity, misery and ruin.⁷⁴

Still others believed that the South suffered from general indifference, if not outright hostility, towards education. Especially in the North, but even to some extent in the South, educational reformers pointed to the Southern yeoman class as being particularly resistant to understanding the importance of learning.⁷⁵ Joseph Caldwell, a graduate of Princeton and former President of the University of North Carolina, wrote a series of open letters directed to the citizens of North Carolina (and Southerners, in general) to outline his ideas and feelings on education in the South. In one letter, he writes,

A further difficulty is felt in the indifference unhappily prevalent in many of our people on the subject of education. . .they have made their way through the world without it and learn to regard it with slight, if not opposition, especially when called to any effort or contribution of funds for securing its advantages to the children. So strangely may the truth be inverted in the minds of men in such circumstances. . .that they are sometimes seen

⁷⁴ Charles Fenton Mercer, *A Discourse on Popular Education* (Princeton: D.A. Barrenstein, 1826), Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

⁷⁵ Edward Magdol and Jon L. Wakelyn, eds., *The Southern Common People: Studies in Nineteenth-Century Social History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), p. 57.

glorying in ignorance.⁷⁶

Joseph Caldwell was the first of a host of Northerners who relocated to the South and found the local perspectives on education particularly distressing. Some of these reform-minded educators like Caldwell were associated with the growing universities of the Piedmont and did not traverse into the Deep South. Instead, they inspired a new generation of professors and teachers who did emigrate to Mississippi and Alabama. Other Northern educators brought their ideology and beliefs about learning directly to the Cotton South. Whether they worked in the southwest or stayed in the southeast, these men and women were largely responsible for the changes in education that would take place there in the three decades before the Civil War.

An important figure in the development of education in the Deep South was Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard. Barnard was born on May 5, 1809, in Sheffield, Massachusetts. As a young boy, he attended Saratoga Academy in New York; then at sixteen, he proceeded on to Yale. Even though he grew increasingly deaf during his tenure at Yale due to a hereditary defect, he graduated with honors at the

⁷⁶ Joseph Caldwell, *Letters on Popular Education, Addressed to the People of North Carolina*, Letter No. 1, (Hillsborough, NC: Dennis Heartt, 1832).

age of nineteen. Despite his disability, Barnard had a strong desire to teach. He taught at Yale and at the Hartford School for the Deaf and Dumb. In 1837, he left New England and took a position teaching sciences at the University of Alabama. After the Panic of 1837 exacted a terrible toll on the resources of that university, Barnard taught any subject that was needed as some professors left or were let go due to a lack of funds.⁷⁷

From Alabama, Barnard went to the newly established University of Mississippi where his tenacity and hard work led to several noteworthy achievements. When he arrived at the University of Mississippi in 1854, he discovered that the mathematics and science department, of which he was the new chair, was bereft of any of the equipment needed to teach successfully his classes. He immediately launched a campaign to secure additional funding from the state legislature. In a series of speeches, he convinced the lawmakers of the importance of proper education in their state and received a \$100,000 appropriation over the next five years. He used the money to purchase several scientific

⁷⁷ William Joseph Chute, *Damn Yankee!: The First Career of Frederick A. P. Barnard, Educator, Scientist and Idealist*, (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1978), pp. 12-18; Dabney, *Universal Education*, pp. 348 -349.

instruments including a telescope.⁷⁸ During this time, he also published a series of important letters on the improvement of Southern college government.

The state of Mississippi's educational system had a strong advocate from a native Southerner. Albert Gallatin Brown was elected governor of the state in 1843 and immediately set about the work of establishing schools to provide "the advantages of a liberal education."⁷⁹ Early in his career, Brown greatly admired the successes and positive effects of New England's educational system.⁸⁰ He strongly believed that a sturdy, state-supported educational system that was free to all Mississippians would increase their status in the nation. He began writing letters to Horace Mann, New England's main education advocate, asking for his help and counsel. Brown received a letter in return in which Mann passionately expressed his feelings on the benefits of free education. With Mann's help, Brown created

⁷⁸ Chute, *Damn Yankee*, pp. 19-20, 23.

⁷⁹ Published campaign platform of Albert G. Brown, May, 1843, Antebellum Politics Collection, Mississippi State Archives, Jackson, MS.

⁸⁰ John McCardell has argued that Albert Gallatin Brown was not as much interested in the growth of education in his state as he was making sure that southern parents did not send their progeny to northern institutions where they might be affected by abolitionism. McCardell points out that while Brown frequently did talk about the benefits of education, he almost always followed those comments by discussing the university as being a form of protection against the "false prejudices" of the North. While this point of view has credence, it does not explain why Brown sought the counsel of northerners such as Mann; see John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979).

a plan and it passed the legislature in the spring of 1846, creating Mississippi's first common school system that was funded by taxpayer dollars.⁸¹

Northerners also took the lead in developing the curriculum in Southern universities. Frederick Barnard exerted a great deal of influence in the debate over the introduction of the elective system pioneered by the University of Virginia. Realizing that most students in Mississippi did not have the sufficient educational background to succeed in such a curriculum, Barnard stiffly opposed its adoption. Against his advice, the university's trustees approved the elective system. After a few years of such academic miseries as failing students and frustrated professors, combined with Barnard's incessant campaigning against the University of Virginia approach, the trustees returned the university to a curriculum which was similar to that outlined by the Yale Report of 1828.⁸² It was because of the work of Brown, Barnard and others that William Flank Perry and Claudius Wistar Sears were able to begin their own careers in education in the Deep South.

⁸¹ Dabney, *Universal Education in the South*, pp. 344-345.

⁸² Allen Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years*, (Hattiesburg, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1971), pp. 45 -46.

However, individuals did not instigate all progress in the realm of curriculum in the Deep South. Christian denominations also played an important role. The Methodist Church was the first sect that concerned itself with bringing higher education to the Deep South. At a meeting of the newly formed Alabama Methodist Conference in the winter of 1829, the Reverend William McMahon proposed the building of a college in the small village of La Grange, Alabama. Recognizing that education could be a stabilizing force on the newly conquered frontier, the conference agreed and began the long process of securing land, improving area infrastructure and erecting buildings. McMahon was appointed financial agent of the college, which went into operation in January of 1830. La Grange had a three-member faculty and offered courses in ancient languages, mathematics and science. As part of the school's charter, the Methodist founders included a truly remarkable clause:

The institution hereby incorporated shall be purely literary and scientific; the Trustees are hereby prohibited from the adoption of any system of education which shall provide for the inculcation of the peculiar tenets or doctrines of any religious denomination whatsoever.⁸³

⁸³ Records of the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Alabama, 1830-1832, Alabama State Archives, Montgomery, AL.

By including this clause, the Methodist church created the very first non-religious institution with the status of "college" in Alabama. At the time, the Methodist church, as a denomination, was whole-heartedly opposed to the use of colleges for the purpose of training ministers. These precepts with regard to religious instruction led the Methodists to create the first classically based institutions of learning in the Deep South. Largely through their efforts, the inhabitants of the Alabama, including those in the state assemblies, began pondering the future of education in their region.⁸⁴

The first president of La Grange was the Reverend Robert Paine who was a native North Carolinian. He began his career as a Methodist minister at the age of nineteen and began his preaching circuit in the Huntsville area. Despite having had little formal schooling himself, he was given the title of President of La Grange "while in the full bloom of young manhood."⁸⁵ At first, he would not accept the title of President because of his tender age, general inexperience and because he had not yet been ordained as a bishop in the denomination. Instead, he called himself the superintendent.

⁸⁴ Anson West, "A History of Methodism in Alabama" Commission on Archives and History: Alabama-West Florida Conference, United Methodist Church, 1883. pp. 430-435.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

As superintendent and president, Paine took the responsibility for teaching classes on Ethics and Moral Science, leaving the more classically based courses such as Mathematics and Ancient Languages to two Yale graduates, William Hudson and Edward Sims. Because of Paine's youth and inexperience, it was Hudson and Sims who fought to create a curriculum that was in keeping with the Yale Report of 1828.⁸⁶ Once again, it was men from the North who took the lead in presenting the classical aspects of education to Southerners. And the methods used at La Grange College became the blueprint for the several schools that followed including the University of Alabama in 1831. Thus, the Yale Report of 1828 and the educators from the North who believed in it, formed the foundation for a plethora of schools in the Deep South. And later in 1857, largely in an effort to compete with Northern institutions such as West Point, Alabama converted La Grange into a military academy.⁸⁷

It should be noted that the origins and founding of La Grange were uncommon in the Deep South. Most colleges and universities began as small technical academies or female

⁸⁶ Conference Minutes, November 1832, Commission on Archives and History: Alabama-West Florida Conference, United Methodist Church.

⁸⁷ John Allan Wyeth, "A History of La Grange Military Academy and Cadet Corps," from *A Documentary History of Education in the South before 1860*, Edgar W. Knight, ed., Vol. 4 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), pp. 206 - 211.

colleges. For example, in 1838, a group of wealthy Baptists who lived in Marion, Alabama, came together to found an "institute for young ladies." Those living in the surrounding area considered it a foolish and impractical idea, but the Baptists surged ahead with their plans. Their first step was to find a man who could help them set up a solid curriculum. The man they chose for this task was Milo Parker Jewett.⁸⁸

Jewett was born in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, in 1808 and after receiving his law degree at Dartmouth, he decided to become an educator and graduated from Andover Seminary in 1833. After being exposed to the burgeoning women's movement in New York, he strongly advocated the idea that women were as intelligent as men and deserved to be educated. Jewett gladly answered the call of the Alabama Baptists to help them establish their female college. On January 7, 1839, Judson Female Academy was founded in honor of a Baptist missionary to Burma, Ann Hasseltine Judson. Though its founders had intended Judson to be a school for ladies, the need for educational institutions in Alabama exceeded original plans and almost from its inception, Judson was a

⁸⁸ Louise Manly, "A History of Judson College" a pamphlet produced by Judson College, (Atlanta: Foote and Davis Publishing, 1871).

co-educational school with a small number of young men in attendance.

After other facilities were made available to young men in the area, Judson reverted back to its all female status. Jewett's main influence on Southern education was related to the importance of education for Southern women. Jewett introduced a classical curriculum, which included recitation, mathematics and science to a Southern education system for women that was almost exclusively dedicated to the teaching of manners and music. Young women throughout the Deep South flocked to Judson. Milo Jewett acted as president of the college for sixteen years during which time he established a school of such high reputation that Judson Women's College exists even today.⁸⁹

Just two years after he had been appointed to the chair of the science department, Frederick Barnard received a promotion to president of the university. Despite having some difficulties speaking, he delivered a stirring commencement address on the importance of coordinating all forms of education. In his report on Southern educational progress written in 1903, Amory Dwight Mayo commented upon the effect of this speech:

⁸⁹ Virginia L. Close, *Double Play: Women's Education and Anti-Slavery*, Dartmouth University On-line Archives.

This was one of the most notable deliverances by any high university official in the Southern states in behalf of the struggling cause of general education. . .and especially was it valuable in connection with the effort to make a success of the new common school system in Mississippi, already under fire from its enemies and suffering from the general apathy.⁹⁰

From his position as President, Barnard sent open letters to the Board of Trustees, which were published and distributed widely among the public. In these letters, he consistently advocated the strengthening of Mississippi's educational methods. He also wrote for several newspapers and periodicals. Largely due to Barnard's efforts, the state legislature continued to support its infant school system up until the Civil War.⁹¹

It was difficult for many southern educators to deal with the constant contest of wills with students. The Reverend Alva Woods was appointed as the first President of the University of Alabama in the spring of 1831. Woods was born in Shoreham, Vermont, on August 13, 1794. As a young man, he attended Phillips Andover Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, and proceeded to Harvard where he graduated

⁹⁰ Amory Dwight Mayo, *The Report of the United States Commissioner of Education, 1903*, Vol. 1, p. 498.

⁹¹ Allen Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years* (Hattiesburg, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1971), pp. 37-46; Dabney, *Universal Education*, pp. 348-350.

with honors at the age of twenty-three. After graduation, Woods took a position as the assistant principal at Phillips Academy and finished a course of theological study at Andover Seminary. Leaving Andover, he took teaching positions at the Columbian University in the District of Columbia and Brown University in New Jersey. When the eleven-member Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama voted on calling Reverend Woods to fill the position of President, the motion was narrowly passed, six votes to five. Thus began Alva Woods' challenging seven-year tenure at the University of Alabama.⁹²

The students that the first faculty members of the university taught were known to be a particularly rowdy group. One observer writes, "The students were largely influenced in their conduct and manners by their environment. The state had not yet been redeemed from the wilderness. . .it is not strange that the sons of the pioneers were restless under the wise restrictions of college government."⁹³ A few of the more indulgent and easy-going professors were the first to resign because of complete chaos in their classrooms. But Reverend Woods was

⁹² James Benson Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama* (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1953), p. 49.

⁹³ Willis G. Clark, *History of Education in Alabama*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889) p. 45.

raised in the shadow of New England discipline and immediately set about the task of taming the students of his new university and turn them into community leaders. Students who consistently caused disturbances were summarily expelled. When two expelled students came back on the campus to assault Woods, the President formed a posse of students and ran them off school grounds.

After this incident, Woods compelled the board of trustees to pass a series of new regulations designed to curb insubordination. During his annual commencement addresses, Woods repeatedly stressed the importance of good behavior and discipline.⁹⁴ Despite his efforts, student conduct continued to deteriorate until events reached a crescendo in 1837. Unused to regimented college life, a large group of students circulated a petition to have the rules relaxed. Woods refused to accept the petition and riots ensued. A large number of the students left the campus and Woods, feeling that he was losing the struggle to maintain any semblance of order, resigned the presidency and returned to New England.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ *American Annals of Education and Instruction (1833)*, Vol. III (Boston: Allen and Ticknor, 1833), pp. 142-143.

⁹⁵ Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, pp 56-59.

Despite his short tenure as President, Alva Woods played an important role in the establishment of education in the Deep South. Woods was the first to introduce a northeastern system of discipline in a school in the Deep South. Others learned from his experiences and college boards throughout the South recognized the importance of immediately establishing discipline on campus.⁹⁶ Some schools began the practice of holding parents responsible for a student's actions while others hired disciplinary staff whose sole purpose was to keep rowdy students in line.

After Woods' resignation, the Board of Trustees passed a new series of laws that gave the faculty even greater disciplinary authority. Historians who later wrote about the early years of the University of Alabama nearly all agree on the source of conflict. The sons of Alabama were not yet ready to live under the kinds of restrictions that were associated with life on a college campus.⁹⁷ Some historians also suggest that many students were so poorly prepared intellectually for college level work, that rebellion acted as a by-product.⁹⁸ In either case, faculty throughout the Deep South found their

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 59 - 60.

⁹⁷ Merton E. Coulter, *College Life in the Old South* (New York: The MacMillen Company, 1928), p. 87; Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, p. 57; Clark, *History of Education in Alabama*, p. 43.

⁹⁸ James S. Edson, *History of the Crimson Tide*, (Montgomery: Paragon Press, 1946), p. 31; Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama*, p. 58.

jobs to be all the harder because of an overall lack of discipline among their early students. It was precisely because of the often difficult relations between faculty and student that educators were forced to develop solid leadership skills. Without them, a professor's career could be cut short by a variety of student-associated hazards.

The problems that the Deep South encountered with regard to higher education were partially to blame for the fact that William Flank Perry never attended college. Instead, he created his own personalized course of independent study based on the standard curriculum offered at most colleges.

Nationwide, one of the most well-known institutions of higher learning in the United States during the antebellum period (where discipline was not a problem) was the United States Military Academy at West Point. Three of the subjects of this dissertation - Ormsby Mitchel, Claudius Wistar Sears and Henry Lawrence Eustis - attended West Point. The Academy was created in 1802 when President Thomas Jefferson requested that Congress take action to formally incorporate an institution for the training of military personnel. However, the genesis of West Point was in the Hamiltonian Federalism of the 1790s, when Henry Knox, Washington's Secretary of War,

proposed the establishment of a military college for the purposes of investigating and diffusing martial knowledge.

The growing tension between the United States, Great Britain and France led many Federalists to believe that it was both necessary and proper for the young nation to be prepared for threats from European nations. Ironically, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson strongly opposed the idea declaring that such an institution was not mentioned in the Constitution, thus was illegal.⁹⁹ Yet by the time Jefferson became president he had relaxed his strict constructionist views to a certain extent, leading not only to the creation of West Point, but the Louisiana Purchase and the Embargo as well.

When the United States Military Academy began operation in 1802, it had twelve students and two full time faculty members, one of whom, Jonathan Williams, had no military experience but was a scientist of the highest caliber. Eventually, Williams was made the first superintendent of West Point despite the fact that he had never served in the military before. Thus from its inception, the military academy

⁹⁹ Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1986), pp. 613-4; David Meyer, "Necessary and Proper" from *Thomas Jefferson's Military Academy: Founding West Point*, Robert M.S. McDonald, ed., (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2004), pp. 63-64.

was designed to be exactly that: a place of learning, not simply military training. After John Adams left the presidency, he grew increasingly interested in the work and mission of West Point. He was an important figure in the institution's early development. In her essay on West Point's role as an American university, Elizabeth Samet writes, "West Point's identity as an *academy* (emphasis in the original) certainly harmonized with Adams's insistence on the centrality of education to the perpetuation of the republic."¹⁰⁰

By the 1830s, the United States Military Academy had developed a reputation as an excellent institution of higher learning. Despite its name, the school offered a wide variety of activities and intellectual pursuits far outside the bounds of military training. In 1837, three debate and literary clubs were combined to form the Dialectic Society. This group met on Saturday nights and membership was by invitation only. The group held literary and political discussions that reflected the issues of the day such as universal suffrage and capital punishment. Students at West Point followed many of the same procedures for learning as students of civilian institutions such as classroom recitation and laboratory experimentation.

¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth D. Samet, "Great Men and Embryo Caesars" from *Thomas Jefferson's Military Academy: Founding West Point*, Robert M.S. McDonald, ed., (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2004), p. 88.

The school also had an excellent library that subscribed to literary journals such as *The Edinburgh Review* and *The Literary Magazine and American Register*. A majority of the library's 14,500 volumes (as of 1844) were dedicated to mathematics and science.¹⁰¹

Religion played a limited role at West Point. Students were required to attend chapel every Sunday morning. The service was high church and Episcopalian in nature (despite assurances from administrators that it was non-denominational) leading many students, especially from the west, to dread Sunday mornings. Required ethics courses were based largely on Protestant Christianity and lectures focused on the relationship between man and God. Classes on theology and the Bible were offered, though not required. Despite its close proximity to the most intense regions of revivalism associated with the Second Great Awakening, the military academy seemed to be hardly affected by the event.¹⁰²

By the 1840s, the United States Military Academy had developed such a tremendous reputation as the premier science and engineering institution in the United States that even individuals who had no intention of beginning a career in the

¹⁰¹ James L. Morrison, Jr., *"The Best School in the World:" West Point, the Pre-Civil War Years, 1833 - 1866* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1986), pp. 75-76, 89-90.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 85 - 86.

military clamored to attend. This, however, was a two-edged sword. The standards in mathematics, in particular, were so high that most (78%) of the students who flunked out of West Point received a deficient grade in that subject. In some respects, the military training offered by West Point was inferior to the quality of the mathematics and science curriculum. While the military academy offered military training that traced back to Europe and was made obsolete by the development of new technology, the engineering curriculum was on the cutting edge. James Morrison writes, "The men who controlled the institution viewed its mission as being the production of engineers who could function as soldiers rather than the reverse."¹⁰³ Thus, many of the young men who came to West Point, such as Claudius Wistar Sears and Ormsby Mitchel, came not to become soldiers, but to partake in the superior engineering education that was offered at the United States Military Academy.

The schools and educational systems that both produced and hired the subjects of this study were heavily influenced by a variety of factors. Most of them were founded by Protestant denominations that either sought to combat the influence of other sects in their region or to provide their

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 101

parishioners with a new institution of higher learning to foster leadership skills. In both the northern and southern regions of the country, evangelicals took the lead in bringing higher education to their communities. In this regard, southern schools such as Cumberland University had much in common with New England colleges such as Amherst and Bowdoin. Many of them also were heavily involved in the religious upheaval and conflict found after the Second Great Awakening.

All of them used a curriculum that rewarded individual achievement and reflected the importance that the United States placed on a classical education. West Point, Williams College and the University of North Carolina all had student ranking systems that encouraged individual initiative and rewarded leadership. The schools also had similar curricula that focused on subjects such as mathematics and logic.

Additionally, they had comparable standards for student conduct but varying methods of punishing infractions. These standards were designed to create not only a proper learning environment, but also make students into good citizens. Public shaming, fines and even physical confrontations helped to tame wild young men and turn them into proper gentlemen and community leaders. Meanwhile, professors were

forced to hone their leadership skills among their young charges or possibly find themselves the object of a rebellion.

For the most part, schools in the South traveled a rockier path than their northern counterparts as education was seen as a privilege of wealth, and southern concepts of honor meant that faculty-student relationships could be particularly difficult. Discipline would remain a problem as southern colleges and universities until after the Civil War. Meanwhile, in the North the strict codes of teaching and discipline were beginning to relax at schools such as Williams and Amherst. Educators began taking a more relational approach to teaching.

Overall, however, all of these institutions, North and South, contributed to a process by which young men were transformed into religious, political and community leaders. As John Adams stated, "Education became the lifeblood of the republic."

Chapter 3 - College and Preparation for Leadership

The leaders in this study developed some of their important skills as college students. They overcame a variety of obstacles to become campus leaders. Whether it was poverty, illness, or conflict with other students, the subjects of this study dealt with a myriad of problems and challenges, yet frequently emerged from these difficulties as respected leaders among their classmates. In addition, they took leadership roles in extra-curricular activities such as debate teams, literary societies and sporting events. In these activities they learned public speaking, teamwork and personal initiative, all of which were important leadership qualities. They also demonstrated the ability to develop positive relationships with their professors and other authority figures. Considering the often adversarial relationship between faculty and students in antebellum colleges, this was a significant skill. Furthermore they were exposed to new ideas and new methods of teaching and relating to students, which helped to mold their own ideas on the subjects of education and leadership.

Several of the subjects of this study encountered massive and, in some cases, even life-threatening challenges as college students. Once he had settled in to his new

surroundings at Bowdoin College, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain immediately immersed himself in his studies. At first, things went smoothly for him. In his college correspondence, Chamberlain showed that he was a serious student. He believed himself to be on a mission to better himself and eventually help provide for his family. After all, he and his family had already made many sacrifices to get him into college. He had spent many hours in private study, preparing for entrance exams, and his family had gone without his labor on their farm. In a letter to his pastor, Chamberlain wrote, "My classmates seem to understand me now. If there is to be a class cut, a training or spree - 'O no, Chamberlain won't go into it.' - They seem to understand my duty pretty well."¹

In letters to his family, he mentioned that he felt a "calling to the Lord's service."² This sense of a calling, combined with his deep sense of honor and commitment allowed for little frivolity. Chamberlain knew his goals and he refused to be distracted from attaining them by class escapades, minor illness, or other activities. Only

¹ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Rev. Nathan Dole, 5 May 1848, The Chamberlain Papers, Pejepscot Historical Society.

² Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Sarah Chamberlain, 7 March 1849, The Chamberlain Papers, Pejepscot Historical Society.

endeavors that aided him in his quest to enter the ministry held any importance for him.

It was also during this time that he decided to change his given name of Lawrence Joshua. He inverted his first and middle names and began signing his name Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. The precise reason he did this are not exactly clear, however, one passage in his memoirs hints at the idea that he thought Joshua was a stronger-sounding name - the name of a leader.³

During his sophomore year, Lawrence's college career took some dramatic turns. Due evidently to a desire to be able to help provide for his parents and younger siblings back in his hometown of Brewer, Chamberlain decided to take on extra class work in an attempt to possibly graduate early. Despite this decision, he continued his other activities, including a two-mile walk to a nearby church to teach his Sunday school class. He often stayed up late to study, and then awoke before dawn to attend early morning classes. In his memoirs, Chamberlain wrote, "These first two years in College were on the whole a pretty severe experience."⁴

³ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 61.

⁴ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 63.

If his schedule allowed for little rest, it allowed even less time for recreation. Some occasional pleasure reading such as a "Sailor Song Book" and a few social events at a friend's home were the extent of his leisurely pursuits.⁵ In one instance, he participated in the "class-tree day" which involved going to a nearby town to acquire a tree to plant on the campus grounds. Many of his cohorts used the respite from the watchful eye of the college faculty to imbibe. Chamberlain, however, refused to partake in the bacchanal.

By the time they returned to Brunswick, many of his friends were drunk and caused a great deal of disturbance among the town's citizens. When word got to the faculty regarding the affair, those suspected of participating were called before President Leonard Woods to explain their behavior. Fearing expulsion, none of the students would confess to involvement in the debauchery. Chamberlain, whose reputation as a good student and a teetotaler was well established, was also called before Woods to testify against his classmates. Under threat of suspension, he refused, explaining that he had a responsibility to protect his comrades despite his personal disdain for their behavior.

⁵ Trulock, *In the Hands of Providence*, p. 18.

Those students involved felt so shamed by Lawrence's loyalty that they came forward to receive their reprimand.⁶ However, these types of recreational events were few and far between during Chamberlain's college career. He considered his education to be the ultimate priority.

In some subjects, such as languages, he was already greatly proficient. He worked out a study schedule that would allow him more time for subjects that were more challenging such as rhetoric and mathematics. With his busy schedule, Lawrence struggled to keep up with his studies and, for the most part, he was successful, achieving high rank in most of his subjects except mathematics. The strain, however, was tremendous. In a letter to his pastor, Chamberlain wrote, "My health has not been very good, but I am thankful that I have been able to keep on with my studies."⁷

After his sophomore year, poor health that had also plagued him as a child returned once again. Chamberlain blamed his illness on the "tension" of his first two years of college.⁸ This time, however, the sickness was more

⁶ Ken Nivison, *Proving Grounds: New England Colleges and the Emergence of Liberal America, 1790 - 1870* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2000), pp. 105-106.

⁷ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Rev. Nathan Dole, 5 May 1848, *The Chamberlain Papers*, Pejepscot Historical Society.

⁸ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 65.

serious. The fever lasted intermittently for more than nine months and forced him to stay home after the summer vacation was over. Chamberlain wrote, "A fever had worked deep into the blood, which showed a strange pertinacity; dogging the feeble footsteps of the patient from covert to covert, holding him at bay with a fight for life."⁹

Around the time of his birthday, the fever became suddenly severe. His attending physician, a dear friend of the family, felt certain that it would be fatal. He told Lawrence's parents that there was nothing more he could do, so they sorrowfully discharged him. His mother and young sister cared for him night and day, praying for a miracle.¹⁰ It would be the first of many near-death experiences for Chamberlain.

Perhaps out of desperation, his family also engaged the services of a local "homeopathic physician" to provide a therapy that was not generally accepted by the medical community. The exact remedies that this new doctor used with Lawrence are unknown, but other homeopathic healers in New England during the mid-1800s based their methods on cleansing the body by having the patient drink large amounts

⁹ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 65.

¹⁰ Sarah Chamberlain to Rev. Nathan Dole, 21 September 1850, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain Collection, Maine State Archives.

of water and repeatedly take baths in cool water. Homeopathic physicians would also wrap their patients in cold towels. In his memoirs, Chamberlain referred to it as the "hygenic system" which he partially credited for his eventual recovery. He wrote, "From that time the hygenic system of this school was put into practice in the family."¹¹

By the following February, the sickness had finally gone and young Lawrence was then able to begin thinking about his studies once again. He was determined that despite his weakened condition, he would return to school and continue on to Bangor Theological Seminary as planned. Unfortunately, the illness kept him out of school for the entire year and nullified most of his earlier hard work. Instead of finishing ahead of schedule, Lawrence returned to a four-year plan.¹²

When he went back to Bowdoin, he found the experience of returning to classes difficult for several reasons. Lawrence considered it somewhat embarrassing that he was a junior and the rest of his friends were now seniors. This was exacerbated by the fact that he was already older than most students of the senior class. Even though a serious

¹¹ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 66.

¹² Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Sarah Chamberlain, 11 October 1851, *The Chamberlain Papers*, Pejepscot Historical Society.

illness had held him back, he felt as though he was moving in "reverse" scholastically. Chamberlain wrote, "Falling back a year was not so pleasant. But it must be this or give up College."¹³ He also missed taking classes with many of his friends who had provided support for him in the past. He felt that he was no longer part of his class and it took some time for him to develop relationships with his new classmates. Despite this, Lawrence kept a positive attitude. He determined that he was going to finish his education and go on to seminary.¹⁴

This high level of determination and the ability to succeed in difficult circumstances were characteristics that Chamberlain began to develop as a college student. Much as a crucible melts away imperfections in metal, the difficult conditions of Chamberlain's college tenure helped to refine these traits so important for a good military leader.¹⁵

¹³ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 66.

¹⁴ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Sarah Chamberlain, 11 October 1851, *The Chamberlain Papers*, Pejepscot Historical Society.

¹⁵ Both Edward Longacre and Alice Rains Trulock argue that it was a single event from his childhood that taught Chamberlain the importance of determination. Both historians relate a time when Chamberlain was helping his father clear a hay field and the younger Chamberlain accidentally got their wagon wedged between two tree stumps. Lawrence asked his father how he should extricate the wagon and was told, "Do it, that's how." With brute force, he was able to free the wheel. Both authors explain that this event had an immediate effect of instilling within Chamberlain a sense of determination. While it is clear that Chamberlain's father and this event played an important role in his development into a leader, it was a series of events later in life that truly gave him the ability to persevere in difficult circumstances.

Chamberlain, however, was not the only subject of this study to have his college education nearly derailed by health problems. Francis Amasa Walker entered Amherst College in 1855 believing he would transfer to Harvard as a part of the latter's class of 1859. It was an agreement he had made with his father who had been apprehensive about his young son going to the rigorous Harvard. He would attend Amherst for a year then move on to Harvard. However, once he had arrived at Amherst, he discovered that he enjoyed the environment there. It appears that he reveled in being one of the smarter young men at the school. In a letter to his father, he said, "I am amazed that my classmates seem to struggle with some subjects that come more easily for me."¹⁶ He especially excelled in writing and public speaking - something with which many of his classmates did, indeed, struggle. One of his Amherst colleagues, Cornelius Dickinson, described the nervousness that seized him (Dickinson) when called to make a recitation or give a speech, commenting that he hated the feeling of others

¹⁶ Francis Amasa Walker to Amasa Walker, 12 November 1855, Early History of the College collection, Amherst College Archives.

staring at him.¹⁷ Walker had no such difficulties; public speaking came easily for him.

This is not to say that Francis Walker did not commit himself whole-heartedly to his studies. While he recognized that he had obvious gifts in the area of learning, discipline passed down from his father helped to guarantee that he would press forward with full vigor. Cornelius Dickinson, one of Walker's classmates, recalled a time when he was visiting Walker in his room. When Dickinson suggested they continue their discussion into the night, Walker refused saying that he had been up late studying the prior two evenings and needed to get some rest. Further conversation revealed that Walker had actually stayed up all night on both evenings, contenting himself with a short afternoon nap both following days. He believed that he could concentrate best when the campus was quiet.¹⁸

This schedule, however, may not have been the best for him. Like Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, Walker's health often got in the way of his studies. Towards the end of his freshman year he contracted some physical ailment that affected his eyes, making it difficult for him to read.

¹⁷ Cornelius E. Dickinson to Robert Ailes, 16 July 1876, Early History of the College collection, Amherst College Archives.

¹⁸ Cornelius E. Dickinson to Robert Ailes, 16 July 1876, Early History of the College collection, Amherst College Archives.

This made it impossible for him to complete his college work that year and he returned home. His mother feared that it was a precursor to blindness, but after a few months, his eyes returned to normal and he began his studies anew. When he returned to Amherst the following year, he was forced to fall back a year to the class of 1860; in essence, he had to start all over again.¹⁹

But health issues were not the only obstacle that the subjects of this study faced as students. Sometimes challenges simply came from their learning environment. James Garfield arrived in Williamstown, Massachusetts in the summer of 1854 to attend Williams College. Having spent his entire lifetime to that point on the Ohio frontier, he was enthusiastic about the opportunities presented by a genuine New England college, especially one with the long tradition of Williams. He had been drawn to Williams by the friendliness of President Mark Hopkins' response to his letter of inquiry. Garfield wrote in his journal, "There was one clause in Pres. Hopkins letter that made me feel more of drawing toward him. Perhaps it may seem boyish, but here it is: 'We shall be glad to do what we can for you.'"²⁰ It could be that he saw a sliver of care in the president's

¹⁹ Phinney, *Francis Amasa Walker*, pp. 25-27.

²⁰ Garfield, *Diaries*, p. 249.

words and combined with his desire to experience New England, the choice was made.

On the surface, this may have seemed like a simple decision to make, but by this point in his life, Garfield had become an integral part of the Disciples of Christ denomination in Ohio. He did not feel completely comfortable with leaving his familiar surroundings and entering new geographical and ideological territory. He expressed concern over the Calvinist roots of his new school, fearing the dour and patronizing ways of their Puritan past. He would no longer have the comfortable and familial relationships with colleagues found at the frontier schools like Hiram College and the Eclectic Institute where he had received his early schooling. In Ohio his fellow students were largely from farming communities and small towns; the student body of Williams College came mostly from the larger towns and cities of New England. He worried about how he would be received.²¹

When he arrived in Williamstown, he immediately reported to President Hopkins. A meeting was arranged with some of the faculty who administered an impromptu entrance

²¹ Jerry Bryant Rushford, "Political Disciple: The Relationship between James A. Garfield and the Disciples of Christ," Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara, August, 1977, pp. 52-55.

examination. He was asked a variety of mathematics questions and to translate some Greek and Latin texts. The faculty members conferred, agreed that his prior training made him an upperclassman and admitted Garfield to the junior class. President Hopkins was glad for Garfield's admittance; he was beginning to tire of the urbanite attitudes of most of his students and was happy to have a down-to-earth frontiersman on the Williams campus.²²

Garfield correctly assumed that his frontier clothes and mannerisms would create a stir at Williams. In two of the three histories of Williams read for this study, the authors comment on Garfield's arrival on campus, specifically mentioning that his western ways were quite a novelty to many of his colleagues.²³ Also, due to the fact that academy schedules in Ohio were often affected by the growing season, and college schedules in Massachusetts were not, he discovered that he had arrived to Williams a month and a half early. The summer session was nearing completion and Garfield used the opportunity to sit in on a few classes. He soon discovered that in some ways, Hiram and the Eclectic had not fully prepared him for the level of work

²² Peskin, *Garfield*, pp. 33-34.

²³ Durfee, *A History of Williams College*, p. 180; Spring, *A History of Williams College*, p. 201.

expected at Williams. In a letter to one of his friends in Ohio, Garfield writes, "There is a high standard of scholarship here, and very many excellent scholars; those that have had. . .more thorough training than I have."²⁴

But his feelings of being behind only served to strengthen his resolve to succeed at his new school. However, some of his classmates were determined not to make it easy for him. Throughout his time at Williams, he frequently had to deal with snobbish students who looked down on him not only because of his plain clothing and frontier mannerisms, but also because he was a Campbellite. According to Garfield, most of his colleagues were not fully familiar with the beliefs and practices of the Disciples of Christ, but its reputation as being a religion of the frontier indicated "it was supposed to mean something awful."²⁵ Garfield knew that it would take him some time to adjust to his new surroundings and he desperately wanted to show his leadership qualities, but "the taunts, jeers and cold averted looks of the rich and the proud" would not make it easy.²⁶ If Garfield was going to succeed at Williams, it

²⁴ James Garfield to Corydon Fuller, 30 July 1854, Garfield Papers, James A. Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

²⁵ J. M. Bundy, *The Life of General James A. Garfield* (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1880), p. 38.

²⁶ James Garfield to J. H. Rhodes, 18 November 1862, Garfield Papers, Library of Congress, Washington.

was going to take a great deal of perseverance and determination. It was these character traits that he would be forced to develop as a college student; these are also traits necessary for a good leader.

Sometimes the challenges faced by the subjects of this study were of their own making. Henry Lawrence Eustis was a student at both Harvard and West Point and his initial academic record at the former institution is quite different compared to the other subjects of this study. He began his formal education at Harvard in 1834 where he initially struggled. On one occasion a faculty member privately admonished him for having a poor attitude towards learning. In another instance, he was disciplined for carelessness in his studies and for poor manners. Then his matriculation into the sophomore class was revoked because of his deficient skills in mathematics.²⁷ His struggles were serious enough that Eustis was personally mentioned in a report from mathematics professor Benjamin Peirce to the President Josiah Quincy.²⁸ This is particularly strange when one considers that his abilities in mathematics and science will

²⁷ Faculty Records of Harvard University, Vol. XI, Historical Register of Harvard University, Harvard University Archives, pp. 211, 278.

²⁸ Benjamin Peirce to President Quincy, 14 October 1835, Corporation Papers of Harvard University, Harvard University Archives.

eventually lead him to the top of his class at West Point and back to Harvard to become a Professor of Engineering.

However, his initial failures at Harvard only seemed to steel his resolve to succeed. The following year he received no disciplinary actions except for a private admonishment for sleeping during chapel services. His slumbering during public worship may have been the result of late-night studying as he was eventually able to catch up with the rest of his class in mathematics. At the end of his sophomore year, he had so improved that he was chosen to give an oration on the subject of scientific advancement at the summer exhibition in July of 1836. By his senior year, he had progressed so much in the subject that he was chosen to give an oration in mathematics entitled, "The Osculatory Curve and the Radius of Curvature."²⁹ Eustis had battled back from a disastrous freshman year to become one of the leading mathematical scholars on campus.

This is one of the clearest signs of his growing leadership ability. His freshman year at Harvard was a testing experience that he clearly failed. The fact that he was specifically mentioned in a letter to the president

²⁹ Harvard Commencement Parts and other Addresses, HUC 6838.78, Historical Register of Harvard University, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, MA.

regarding his deficient performance in mathematics indicates he was not making the effort necessary to succeed at Harvard. However, through determination and a solid work ethic, two very necessary characteristics for a good leader, Eustis was not only able to recover from his past failures, but become a leader at Harvard.

All of the subjects of this study who attended West Point dealt with challenges and hardships specific to the military college. When Ormsby McKnight Mitchel arrived at West Point on June 22, 1825, he joined some rather august company. Jefferson Davis and Albert Sydney Johnston were upperclassmen at the institution and Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston were in the very same class. Realizing that as a poor Ohio farm boy, he was fortunate to have received his appointment to the academy, he was determined to perform to the best of his ability. He reported to Superintendent Sylvanus Thayer immediately upon his arrival and was assigned a room. Of course, this did not mean that he was immediately accepted to the school. As in the case of most antebellum colleges, he would first have to pass the

entrance examinations to make sure that he had sufficient skills and intellect to continue.³⁰

It would be a week before he was to be examined by the professors of the school, so he took the opportunity to familiarize himself with his environment. He was assigned to a small dormitory room with four other newly appointed cadets. Mitchel had been the last to arrive and his colleagues were none too pleased to have another individual with whom they would have to share cramped quarters, especially one dressed so shabbily. However, he struck up conversations with two of them and the icy relationships began to melt somewhat. He also visited the mess hall, but between the poor quality of the food and his nervousness about the upcoming examinations, he did not eat much of the soup and bread that were put before him. He decided to spend the rest of his dinner hours in his room trying to prepare for his examinations.³¹

Two days before the entrance testing, he was spending another dinner hour in his room studying when an upperclassman named Fulton saw him there. Impressed by Mitchel's initiative and work ethic, he helped the new cadet

³⁰ Ormsby Mitchel to Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchel, 11 July 1825, Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel Collection, University of Cincinnati, OH.

³¹ Ibid.

study for the examinations by retrieving one of his textbooks from his room and showing young Mitchel what he should study to ensure a passing grade. He spent the next two days poring over the sections pointed out to him and felt more confident when he was called forward on the 28th of June to be examined. That night, the names of those who passed were read aloud to all of the young hopefuls. Only about fifty of the seventy individuals who reported were accepted, Mitchel being one of them.³²

Having grown up on the frontier where the necessities of life often interrupted the few chances to learn, Mitchel greatly enjoyed his time as a student at West Point. Here, he could throw all of his energies into intellectual pursuits. It was an environment that truly appealed to him. While he excelled in most subjects, he immediately showed a particular genius for science and mathematics. If he had a weakness, it was in the more martial subjects such as tactics and drill. This may have been more of a reflection of the quality of instruction in these subjects, rather than an indication of Mitchel's abilities. Be that as it may, he

³² Ibid.

received lower class rankings in these subjects, compared to his mathematics and science grades.³³

In the report issued to Congress in 1826, the faculty of the school placed particular emphasis on the January examinations as being the true test of the student's ability to learn under the system of education established at West Point.³⁴ While many of the students were able to pass the initial examinations based on their earlier education, some were unable to survive the rigorous schedule and high standards that were a part of life at the academy. As noted earlier in this study, this was particularly true in the subjects of mathematics and engineering. In a letter to his mother, Mitchel notes that three of his four roommates failed their January examinations and were sent home.³⁵ Fortunately, it was in mathematics that Mitchel showed talent.

Ormsby Mitchel's leadership abilities and intellectual prowess were evident to many of the individuals with whom he came in contact while at West Point. Jared Mansfield who was Professor of Natural Philosophy at the academy for several

³³ Records of the United States Military Academy, Official Register of the Officers and Cadets, USMA Archives, 1826.

³⁴ Records of the United States Military Academy, Annual Report of the Board of Visitors, USMA Archives, 1826.

³⁵ Ormsby Mitchel to Mrs. Elizabeth Mitchel, 10 February 1826, Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel Collection, University of Cincinnati Archives.

years remarked in a letter to his son, "Mitchel is very ingenious. He is quick to solve any problem I pose."³⁶

Charles Davies, Professor of Mathematics wrote a report in which he singled out Mitchel for his communication skills and exceptional work habits and recommended that he would make an excellent addition to the teaching staff at the academy.³⁷

Another important aspect to Ormsby Mitchel's time at West Point was his introduction to a strong sense of nationalism. While many southerners were somewhat immune to this indoctrination due to the strong ties to their states, many young northern men soaked in the pageantry of patriotism that was part of life at West Point. This began with the oath that all students took as they entered the academy.

I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and bear true allegiance to the national government; that I will maintain and defend the sovereignty of the United States paramount to any and all allegiance, sovereignty, or fealty I may owe to any state or country whatsoever.³⁸

³⁶ Memoirs of E.D. Mansfield, University of Cincinnati Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

³⁷ Report of Charles Davies to the Board of Visitors, 1828, USMA Archives.

³⁸ Headley, *Old Stars*, p. 30.

Ormsby Mitchel wrote to his mother how proud he was to live in a nation that would provide a poor boy like him with such an excellent education. He had an honest sense of gratitude and hoped that he would go on to make an important contribution to the future of the United States. Mitchel's son writes, "Under the (American) flag Mitchel was cared for and educated, at a susceptible period when men are most readily influenced. Here his ideas of duty were formed and here he imbibed a patriotism that grew stronger with every year he lived."³⁹

In 1829, Ormsby Mitchel concluded his studies at West Point. He took his final examinations and when the results were posted, he was pleased to see that he graduated fifteenth out of a class of forty-six. More important than his class rank, however, was the fact that his excellent work in mathematics had caught the attention of his mathematics professor, Charles Davies, who recommended Mitchel be added to the faculty upon graduation. The recommendation was approved and in the following autumn, Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel began his first of several teaching positions he would hold before the Civil War.⁴⁰

³⁹ Mitchel, *Ormsby Macknight Mitchel*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ Records of the United States Military Academy, Official Register of the Officers and Cadets, USMA Archives, 1829, 1830.

While at West Point, Ormsby Mitchel began to demonstrate some of his leadership abilities. His strong work ethic that led him to study during his dinner hour helped him through his difficult entrance and January examinations. His ability to communicate with others combined with his skills in mathematics made him a natural choice to become a leader at the academy. However, the greatest test of his leadership abilities would come several years later when he became a professor at Cincinnati College and worked to bring an observatory to Cincinnati.

Claudius Wistar Sears was also a student at West Point, but more than a decade later from 1837 to 1841. Unlike Mitchel, he began his schooling at West Point at an older age, almost twenty years old. He graduated thirty-first out of a class of fifty-two (just one ahead of Don Carlos Buell). As in the case of Mitchel, he received most of his lowest grades in military subjects. For example, his lowest class standing was in artillery. Though his record at the U.S. Military Academy is not particularly distinguished, he did receive higher marks in ethics and geology.⁴¹

The simple fact that he graduated from West Point meant that he had some of the best mathematical and engineering

⁴¹ Records of the United States Military Academy, Official Register of the Officers and Cadets, USMA Archives, 1841.

education that could be found in the United States. This put him in great demand and he moved to a rapidly developing (educationally speaking) South to begin a career in education. After a short stint of less than a year at a small preparatory academy called St. Thomas Hall in Holly Springs, Mississippi, he relocated to New Orleans in 1845 to take a position teaching math at the newly created University of Louisiana. It would be under very difficult circumstances at the University of Louisiana that Sears would fully develop his leadership skills.

As mentioned before, Henry Lawrence Eustis attended both Harvard and West Point. At his Harvard graduation commencement exercises in August 1838, Eustis was selected to give an address. The title of his speech was "Intolerance towards the Weaknesses of Men of Poetical Temperament." The theme of his address stressed the superiority of math and science above all other human endeavors, particularly art and literature.⁴² His speech was particularly well-received among those Harvard faculty and administration who were wanting to move the university in the direction of more practical pursuits such as natural science and engineering. His senior oration would play an important role in the

⁴² Ibid.

creation of a scientific school at Harvard and make him a prime candidate for a leadership position in it.

After receiving his bachelor's degree at Harvard, Eustis hungered to continue his studies in mathematics. Recognizing that West Point was the best institution for this purpose, he applied to the military academy and was accepted in the fall of 1838. The discipline and work ethic that he had developed while at Harvard stayed with him during his initial year at West Point in that he had a relatively small number of demerits.⁴³ More importantly, he finished his freshman year at the top of his class, largely because of his excellent marks in mathematics. In his sophomore year he was rated second out of over seventy students in mathematical ability and rated seventh in chemistry. By his senior year he was not only widely accepted as one of the more brilliant mathematicians at West Point, but also managed to get through his final year without a single demerit.⁴⁴ He became one of the few cadet instructors at West Point teaching underclassmen. In June of

⁴³ Eustis finished his first year at West Point with only 22 demerits which was fewer than the number given to Abner Doubleday, James Longstreet, William T. Sherman, John Reynolds and many other major Civil War military figures who were his classmates.

⁴⁴ Report of the Annual Reunion of Graduates, June 1885, West Point Archives, USMA Library.

1842, he graduated at the top of his class with high rankings in all of his math and science courses.⁴⁵

Henry Lawrence Eustis showed some of his early leadership qualities as a student at both Harvard and West Point. After initially struggling in mathematics, he adapted and redoubled his efforts, eventually becoming one Harvard's leading mathematical scholars. His ability to adapt to difficult situations would serve him well as a leader in the Civil War. The fact that he was chosen to teach underclassmen at West Point demonstrates that not only did he show a knowledge of the material, but also an ability to teach the material to others. These skills would become very important when he returned to Harvard to start and lead a new engineering department. Thus it was for many of the subjects in this study; they learned to overcome obstacles and face challenges as students.

The ability to lead takes practice, and it was during their time in college that the subjects of this study got their first opportunities to take leadership roles. James Garfield's experience at Williams is a prime example of this. Considering his lowly status in the eyes of many of his classmates, his outstanding career at Williams is all

⁴⁵ Official Register of Graduates, June 1842, West Point Archives, USMA Library.

the more astonishing. He repeatedly took leadership positions in many college organizations and functions. This was largely due to his amazing communication and debating skills that he had honed while a student at Hiram College in Ohio. In his first year at Williams, he joined the Philogian Society, the pre-eminent literary club on campus. His membership in the society gave him a stage on which to display his abilities. When he gave an oration on the meaning of Christian chivalry, he astonished his audience with his thought-provoking arguments and passionate eloquence. Afterwards, one of his classmates commented that it was one of the best orations he had ever heard.⁴⁶

When participating in debates, he frequently took a leadership role on his team and helped each member develop strategies for defeating their opponent. His colleagues appreciated his humor that often set them at ease before a debate, but when it came to execution of a strategy, he was the epitome of seriousness. At one point, he even used military language in his advice to a teammate. "Give him a chance to get at you where may think you weak; and then, to meet his attack, throw in your reserves and repulse him."⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Tony A. Conley, "The Religious Beliefs and Practices of James A. Garfield," Masters Thesis, Cincinnati Bible Seminary, May 1949, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 37.

In his senior year, he was voted president of the Philogian Society.

Garfield also joined the Mills Theological Society, which presented particular challenges for a member of the Disciples of Christ denomination. The vast majority of this club's members were longstanding Congregationalists who viewed Campbell's sect as a religion for emotional simpletons and frontiersmen, not refined college gentlemen. One area of considerable dissension between Garfield and the other members of the society was the issue of infant baptism. Disciples believed that only adult converts should be baptized, while the Congregational church regularly performed infant baptism. The tenet of believer's baptism was not simply an ideology to Garfield, but something he routinely put into practice. While he was at Williams, he preached at the few nearby Disciples congregations and baptized six converts.⁴⁸ When he engaged in debates on the subject, he prepared extensively and remained resolute in his beliefs, but always maintained a calm and humble demeanor. His manner won the respect of his colleagues in

⁴⁸ James Garfield to Corydon Fuller, 23 May 1855, Garfield Papers, James A. Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

the Mills Theological Society and he was first elected the club's librarian and then later, its president.⁴⁹

His election to the top posts of these two important clubs is a significant symbol of Garfield's growing leadership skills considering all of the strikes that he had against him. His colleagues were able to look past their prejudices and recognize his ability to lead.

Garfield also fought against the Greek system on Williams' campus. There were six secret fraternities that operated at the school. In the mid-1800s, fraternities had exploded onto the college campus scene. All across the Eastern seaboard, new organizations with secret rites and rituals were becoming a staple of college life. However, to many evangelical-minded individuals, these new clubs were antithetical to Christian belief, if not downright dangerous. The fraternities at Williams were nothing more than literary societies with exclusive membership, but Garfield still did not like them and joined the Equitable Fraternity. This club was formed for the simple purpose of fighting the influence of the six secret fraternities on campus. Its membership was open to anyone and Garfield once again took a leadership role. At one point, he gave an

⁴⁹ Rushford, *Political Disciple*, p. 64.

oration that was sponsored by the Equitable Fraternity. In his poem entitled "Sam," he mocked the emerging secret Know-Nothing organization and drew ties to the secret organizations at Williams. His speech was so eloquent and persuasive that a few of his classmates dropped out of their fraternities and joined the Equitable.⁵⁰ His performance led to his ascension to the leadership of this organization as well. By his senior year at Williams, Garfield was the president of the three most important clubs on campus. Clearly, he was demonstrating his emerging leadership skills.

Another important leadership post Garfield held as a senior was as editor of the Williams Quarterly. While more renowned for his speaking abilities than his writing, it was his leadership skills and his integrity that garnered him the votes for this post. It was a tremendous honor, especially for an individual from outside of New England, to be elected to this office. The Williams Quarterly was circulated throughout the region and represented the college in several important ways. First, its editorials were viewed as the official voice of the school. The positions that it took on various issues were a window on the thinking of the

⁵⁰ Durfee, *A History of Williams College*, p. 183.

college. Second, the sections on campus news were in some ways an advertisement for the school in the surrounding areas. By highlighting the important events, the Williams Quarterly hoped to draw more students to the campus. Third, the journal was an important literary magazine that included articles from important luminaries such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Ward Beecher. Students and faculty were also expected to submit articles for publication. To be responsible for deciding what material found its way onto the pages of the journal was a tremendous burden and a great honor, once again, especially for an outsider from Ohio such as Garfield.⁵¹

Far to the south, James Johnston Pettigrew was beginning an illustrious career at Chapel Hill. Most of the various histories of the University of North Carolina prominently feature the role of the Pettigrew family in its development. However, according to Kemp Battle, James Johnston Pettigrew is considered the member of this pre-eminent Southern family who affected the institution to the greatest degree during its antebellum period.⁵² In turn, the university had a tremendous effect on him. From the onset of his college career, Johnston displayed a consummate maturity and educational ambition that

⁵¹ Rushford, *Political Disciple*, pp. 66-67.

⁵² Battle, *History of the University*, p. 248.

both amazed and disgusted his classmates. Those who appreciated his restraint instantly became his friends and saw him as an influential leader on campus. One such student was John Napoleon Daniel. In his many letters to Johnston, Daniel expresses his appreciation for his friend's sense of responsibility and his work ethic. In one such letter he wrote, "You were the best of influences on me. . .you were a constant reminder of my duty."⁵³ However, many of Johnston's classmates were not impressed by his sense of honor and responsibility and as is often the case, those who are leaders often make enemies. One student declared that he lacked "charm, or any sociability, whatsoever."⁵⁴ Despite his lack of popularity with some, Pettigrew's reputation as a serious scholar grew both on campus and throughout the region.

Johnston succeeded in most of his endeavors as a college student. One of his particular strong points was in the area of mathematics. In his letters home, he described classes in which he was able to solve mathematical problems twice as fast as any of his classmates. Sometimes he would move so quickly through the material that the other students would have nothing left to do. In almost any class but particularly in

⁵³ John Napoleon Daniel to James Johnston Pettigrew, December 1846, The Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

⁵⁴ Thomas Edward Skinner, in the margins of a classmate's yearbook. Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

math, his professors noted that he seemed bored with the recitation material.⁵⁵ It was common to find mathematical formulas and algebraic equations on the borders of his notebooks in other classes.

Besides mathematics, Johnston showed an interest and excelled in a variety of subjects. In a history class, he wrote out a detailed time-line of the fall of the Aztec Empire, highlighting the leadership qualities of Cortes. In his rhetoric class he wrote an extensive defense of slavery that astonished his rhetoric professor in its eloquence and powerful arguments.

Johnston thrived in various physical endeavors as well, especially those that were deemed important in the aristocratic circles. With the advent of the Mexican-American War, he became very interested in the sport of fencing which favored the skilled combatant, not the biggest or strongest. He was also an accomplished dancer.⁵⁶

During his time at the University of North Carolina, Johnston also learned the habits and mannerisms of a proper Southern gentleman. He guarded his reputation very closely and filled his letters with references to the esteem that

⁵⁵ Spencer, Cornelia P., *The Last Ninety Days of the War in North Carolina* (New York: Watchman Publishing Company, 1866), p. 279.

⁵⁶ Nelson, *Carolina Cavalier*, p. 17.

the university community held for him and his family. In one such letter he wrote, "Our family has a tremendous reputation here."⁵⁷ He joined several college societies including the Philanthropic Literary Society and the Dialectic Literary Society, which were self-regulated clubs that taught members proper etiquette and a respect for the concepts of republicanism, liberty and independence.⁵⁸

Because his experiences with these societies along with the ingrained sense of Southern honor and respect, Johnston did not allow his classmates to trample upon his good name or reputation. When one classmate made a callous remark about his younger sister, Ann, Pettigrew challenged the young man to a duel with Bowie knives.⁵⁹ The boy promptly apologized and the matter was laid to rest. On another occasion, he requested his sister send him a pair of pistols just in case he would need them for a duel.⁶⁰ Fearing that the mere presence of the weapons with her brother might prompt him to more aggressive action, she refused, but Johnston was becoming a proper member of the North Carolina

⁵⁷ James Johnston Pettigrew to William Pettigrew, March 1846, The Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

⁵⁸ Battle, *History of the University*, p. 449-450.

⁵⁹ James Johnston Pettigrew to John Bryan, October 1847, The Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

⁶⁰ Nelson, *Carolina Cavalier*, p. 15.

planter class. He was quick to violently defend his family's honor, yet he was also concerned about his reputation as a scholar and gentleman. It was precisely these attributes that southerners assigned to their leaders and Pettigrew began learning them in college.

Another thing about Pettigrew's character that separated him from many of his classmates was the kindness that he showed to those less fortunate than himself; as W.J. Cash points out, this was a cornerstone of southern concepts of heroic leadership.⁶¹ Cornelia Phillips Spencer, the wife of one of Pettigrew's professors remembered "the generosity and patience with which he contributed from his stores even to the dullest applicant for aid." Kemp Battle recalled a time when Pettigrew spent considerable time nursing a classmate who had developed a deadly disease.⁶² Letters back and forth from his family reiterated the idea that he had a responsibility to help those in need.⁶³

⁶¹ Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1941), p. 63.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶³ It could be argued that these remarks from Pettigrew's contemporaries were simply what Bertram Wyatt-Brown calls the "ritual speech" of southern romanticism. It was common for southerners to heap great praise - whether deserved or not - on those they deemed as admirable or gentle. The fact remains, however, that a large number of Pettigrew's classmates, professors and acquaintances all had similar comments regarding his growing leadership skills.

This is not to say that young Johnston did not occasionally fall prey to the whims of youth. It was common for the young men of the university to visit the nearby towns looking for diversions, especially to visit the homes of pretty southern belles. At one point, Pettigrew traveled to nearby Raleigh and apparently got himself into some trouble (the transgression itself is not specifically mentioned in the correspondence). When his father wrote him a letter reprimanding him for his actions, his response was both contrite and mature.

My conduct in Raleigh was excessively foolish, but as no one can hope to pass through life without committing a great many thoughtless and inconsiderate deeds, I believe that the greatest task of a young man is to remember and profit by the follies of his younger days. And the best apology I can make is to attempt a faithful performance of my duties hereafter.⁶⁴

It would seem that he succeeded in this as there is no further mention of this event or any others like it in Pettigrew's school records through graduation.

James Johnston Pettigrew showed great leadership potential while he was a college student. He combined his natural abilities with a strong work ethic to become the

⁶⁴ James Johnston Pettigrew to Ebenezer Pettigrew, 11 April 1847, from the Pettigrew Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Archives.

foremost scholar on the University of North Carolina campus. At the same time, he made certain to help those who requested aid, so much so, that he developed a reputation as a young man who helped those less fortunate than himself. He did not consider himself of such great ability that he could not learn from the mistakes that he made. These traits in Pettigrew are a clear indicator that he was beginning to take on the mantle of a southern leader. As Lorri Glover argues, many southerners saw a university education as a prerequisite to becoming a community leader; Pettigrew's time at the University of North Carolina helped him to develop these skills.⁶⁵

So, at the age when Chamberlain and Garfield were beginning their studies, James Johnston Pettigrew was concluding his. By 1847, his graduation year, Johnston had a reputation throughout the Chapel Hill region as a pre-eminent scholar of unique intellectual and leadership abilities. He gave a senior oration entitled, "In Defense of the Pure Mathematics" that was well received by the college community, provoking one of his classmates to comment later,

⁶⁵ Lorri Glover, "'Let Us Manufacture Men:' Educating Elite Boys in the Early National South" from *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South*, Craig Friend and Lorri Golver, ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), pp. 28-29.

"He was a peerless student." He was class valedictorian and received an "excellent" evaluation in every subject.⁶⁶

The Commencement of 1847 was a particularly conspicuous event in the history of the University of North Carolina. In honor of the school's 50th commencement, President James K. Polk, himself an alumnus of the university, was urged to attend. The President agreed and arrived on campus with a large entourage, which included Secretary of the Navy John Mason and the superintendent of the National Observatory, Matthew Fontaine Maury.⁶⁷

Both men were so impressed with Johnston's mathematical scholarship that they immediately offered him an appointment as a professor at the Observatory. Johnston, with his usual modesty and control, accepted the position, then added, "I believe I will accept the station for six months, provided they are willing to allow me so short a stay."⁶⁸ Johnston did not want to limit his possibilities by committing to a long term of service with the navy. The superintendent found these terms agreeable, thus, in the fall of 1847, Johnston went to Washington D.C. and became a member of Maury's staff. He was paid an annual salary of \$1,200, which was a

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁷ Wayland, John W., *The Pathfinder of the Seas: The Life of Matthew Fontaine Maury* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1930), p. 111-112.

⁶⁸ Nelson, *Carolina Cavalier*, p. 20.

relatively standard professor's salary during the antebellum period. He began his career at the observatory with great anticipation ready to take on a leadership role.

Another subject of this dissertation who also began learning some of his leadership skills as a college student was John Carpenter Carter. Carter would attend three different colleges and universities - Georgetown College, the University of Virginia, and Cumberland University - before concluding his education. He enrolled in Georgetown College outside of Washington D.C. in the fall of 1853. Because of private tutoring provided for him by his father who was a wealthy doctor and landowner from Georgia, Carter entered college as a junior.⁶⁹

Carter's experience in college was a bit different compared to many of the other subjects of this study. Georgetown was the first Catholic college in the United States and was set up by the Jesuits. In some ways, student conduct was more closely regulated. For example, all student mail that was not from a parent was opened and read by the college president. Students were prohibited from leaving the campus except in cases of emergency or for the summer vacation. Students were expected to follow an activity

⁶⁹ Catalog of Georgetown College, 1853, Records of the Class of 1853-4, University Archives, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

schedule that was much stricter than what was found at other contemporary colleges and universities.⁷⁰ The administration of the school felt it necessary to keep students away from the temptations of the city.⁷¹

Despite these differences in student life, the education that Carter received at Georgetown was quite similar to that being offered at secular and Protestant schools. The curriculum at Georgetown was, once again, based on the Yale Report. He took courses in mathematics, French and rhetoric. Lessons were mostly based on recitation and students were ranked based on their performance on end-of-term examinations.⁷²

Upon entering college Carter quickly began developing and honing his leadership capabilities. He was elected into a leadership position in the Philonomosian Society, one of Georgetown's debating clubs, where he developed a reputation as a skilled orator. When his class decided to sponsor an event to raise funds for the Washington Monument, he was appointed as the keynote speaker. After a successful two years at Georgetown, Carter graduated in the top five of his

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Robert Curran, *American Jesuit Spirituality: the Maryland Tradition, 1634-1900* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) pp. 22, 24.

⁷² Catalog of Georgetown College, 1853, Records of the Class of 1853-4, University Archives, Georgetown University, Washington D.C.

class of 70 students.⁷³ These leadership skills would be developed further when he enrolled in law school at Cumberland University a few years after graduation.

Yet another subject of this study who began honing his leadership skills in college was Francis Amasa Walker. One of Walker's great strengths was his writing ability and he used this gift to start taking his first leadership roles. His essays were routinely published in the Amherst College magazine, the *Ichnolite*, as well as a New England intercollegiate magazine called the *Undergraduate*. His contributions to the *Graduate* were so respected that he was asked to be the Amherst College editor for the magazine. His favorite essay subject was economics, evidently taking after his father's interest in the subject. At the age of only seventeen, he submitted an essay entitled, "Thoughts on Hard Times" to a journal published in Washington D.C. called the National Era. The journal was so impressed that they invited him to write a series of four essays dealing with the importance of manufacturing to the economy. These essays brought him a degree of national exposure. Then, as a senior

⁷³ Harris D. Riley, Jr., "General John C. Carter, C.S.A." Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Vol. 48, Winter 1989, p. 196.

he took Amherst's Sweetser essay prize which was the top award for writing on the campus.⁷⁴

Besides the accolades he received as a writer, Walker was also known for his prowess as a public speaker. At Amherst, he became known campus-wide for his skills in this regard. A classmate, George Goodale, who later went on to become a professor at Harvard, recalled that one of his strongest memories of Walker was as "a good scholar and a forcible speaker."⁷⁵ His speaking ability combined with a natural charisma that was appealing to both faculty members and colleagues. Whether he was giving a speech or simply conversing with a friend, his ability to communicate verbally was memorable.

He belonged to the very small class of men who have genuine magnetism and his - always unconscious - exercise of that quality was a factor not to be neglected in considering his popularity as a soldier, his success as an organizer, and his ability to inspire young men.⁷⁶

It would appear that the faculty of the school agreed with this assessment as they awarded him the Hardy prize for extempore speaking.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 27-28.

⁷⁵ George Goodale to the American Statistical Association, 4 June 1897, Walker Collection, M.I.T. Archives, Cambridge, MA.

⁷⁶ Phinney, *A Life of Francis Amasa Walker*, p. 26.

Though he did not graduate at the top of his class as Chamberlain or Pettigrew had done, Francis Amasa Walker did finish near the top, and immediately he began making plans for his future. He flirted with the idea of becoming a lawyer. His natural speaking ability would have been a tremendous boon in the courtroom. He briefly clerked with a prominent judge in Boston, but did not find it to his liking. He was more interested in education. He spent several months as a special tutor in Greek and Latin, helping to prepare young men for their own college careers. As the Civil War broke out, he began looking at some of the nearby colleges hoping that he might find a job as a professor. Thus, in a variety of ways, the educators in this study got their first opportunities to lead while they were students. It was these experiences that helped them in their careers as professors, and eventually, as military officers.

The subjects of this dissertation were also exposed to new ways of thinking and, more importantly, new forms of leadership that aided them when they themselves became Civil War leaders. One of the reasons that James Garfield decided to travel from Ohio to Massachusetts to complete his college career was to be exposed to new ideas and different ways of thinking. Two individuals with whom he came in contact

while at Williams did exactly this. First was his exposure to the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson. When Emerson was invited to speak at a nearby community event, Garfield and several of his classmates went to hear him. He described his impression of the philosopher in a letter to Corydon Fuller. “. . .he is the most startlingly original thinker I have ever heard. . .I could not sleep that night, after hearing his thunderstorm of eloquent thoughts.”⁷⁷ He later told a friend that he dated his intellectual life as beginning with that first speech of Emerson. And he continued to collect Emerson’s writings for most of his life.⁷⁸

Second, and more importantly, was President Mark Hopkins. Hopkins, who for his times had unusual ideas about teaching and learning, taught almost all of Garfield’s senior year classes. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Hopkins was not interested in his students simply memorizing material and then reciting it back to him, nor did he want his charges to bury themselves in their textbooks. He rarely read books himself and encouraged his students to take their lessons from life, rather than from the dusty monographs

⁷⁷ James Garfield to Corydon Fuller, 22 August 1854, Garfield Papers, James A. Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

⁷⁸ Rushford, *Political Disciple*, pp. 55-56.

that were assigned in his classes. His greatest concern was developing their leadership skills and moral character.⁷⁹

Rather than simply having various students recite lessons, as was the habit in many New England college classrooms, including Williams, Hopkins held extensive classroom discussions that employed the Socratic Method. He wanted his students to think critically, make their own decisions, but also gently guide errant students when necessary. Garfield loved Hopkins' approach to learning and he blossomed under the president's tutelage. His journal and letters are full of references to all of the different ideas he was learning in Hopkins' classes and how much he appreciated "our powerful and beloved president." He further commented that Hopkins was "the greatest teacher entirely that was ever suffered to appear on this earth."⁸⁰ Garfield was learning important leadership lessons from his teacher and mentor.

As graduation approached, Garfield grew increasingly consumed with thoughts about his standing in his class. Having struggled early in his career at Williams with feelings of insecurity and inferiority due to the haughty

⁷⁹ Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 39.

⁸⁰ James Garfield to Lucretia Rudolph, 10 November 1855, Garfield Papers, James A. Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

attitudes of some of his classmates, Garfield became determined to graduate with honors. Williams' class ranking system was based on the final examinations with only the top six students being designated as having graduated with honors. These six would then be given the honor of giving addresses at commencement. Of course, the greatest honor was to be chosen to give the valedictorian address, but as this address was traditionally given to a student who had been at Williams for four years, he was not eligible as a transfer. So he simply set his sights on being one of the six honors students.⁸¹

During the week leading up to examinations, Garfield spent hours in quiet study. He had been fortunate enough to shed the roommate he had as a junior and procure a single room on campus. He spent most nights studying until the early morning. His hard work paid off and he excitedly wrote home to tell Corydon Fuller, "I am one of the six and received the Metaphysical Oration."⁸² The significance of this responsibility was that it was considered the greatest honor besides the valedictory address. The Metaphysical

⁸¹ Durfee, *A History of Williams College*, p. 184.

⁸² James Garfield to Corydon Fuller, 16 May 1856, Garfield Papers, James A. Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

Oration required the greatest level of intellectual prowess and, more importantly, excellent public speaking skills.

He took on the challenge with enthusiasm, spending the small vacation between examinations and commencement with a nearby Disciples church, crafting his address. Some of his friends from Ohio, including his new fiancé, Lucretia Rudolph, came to Massachusetts to see Garfield graduate. Garfield's graduation address was a complete success. At the graduation party afterwards, he received the adulation of his classmates and the attendees of the graduation exercises.⁸³

With graduation behind him, Garfield had an important decision before him. Considering his education and skills, teaching and preaching were his natural vocation choices. As a junior, he had leaned more towards the ministry, but two things led him steadfastly away from that calling. First, the Disciples of Christ was going through a time of difficult transition with warring factions trying to take control of the young denomination's future. After attending an annual meeting of the Disciples in 1856, he came away feeling disillusioned with the church. Second, as an adoring pupil of Mark Hopkins, Garfield had developed a tremendous

⁸³ Rushford, *Political Disciple*, p. 76.

love for education. Having seen how Hopkins had guided the intellectual development of young minds, he became more interested in serving in the same capacity for others.⁸⁴ Thus, when the president of the Eclectic Institute, A. S. Hayden, offered him a teaching position, he accepted it, despite having reservations about Hayden's leadership.⁸⁵ After experiencing life in New England, he was going back to Ohio.

The seeds of Garfield's successful military career were planted in his days as a college student at Williams. He had to overcome a great degree of adversity to reach the level of leadership and success that he attained. Despite the fact that he had two strikes against him when he came to Williams - a Disciple and a westerner - he managed to overcome the stereotypes that followed him to New England. It was in college that one began to see one of his greatest leadership qualities: he had a unique ability to influence the thinking and actions of those around him. This is most starkly seen when he convinced several members of secret fraternities to cast aside those fellowships and join the Equitable. However, it was as a teacher and administrator at

⁸⁴ Garfield, *Diaries*, pp. 275-276.

⁸⁵ James Garfield to Lucretia Rudolph, 3 March 1856, Garfield Papers, James A. Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

the Eclectic Institute where he really began to develop these abilities.

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain had a similar experience at Bowdoin College. The tensions of President Leonard Woods' administration at the small Maine college were a prime example of one of the major educational controversies of the early 19th century. Woods believed in a more personal relationship between professor and student. It was also during this time that many educators, of which Woods certainly would have been one, pushed for the expansion of teaching methods. Lawrence Cremin writes, "During the 1840s and 1850s. . .well-trained scholars began to depart from a mere slavishness to textbooks and to use the lecture and the laboratory to impart vitality to scholarly material."⁸⁶ These individuals were taking the lead in educational innovation and often suffered criticism from colleagues while enjoying the loyalty of their students. This was most certainly the case at Bowdoin as the memoirs and letters of Chamberlain and his fellow students attest. Professors who were part of this new, emerging class of teacher were greatly prized and sought after by the students, much to the chagrin of the more conservative professors of the school. These new

⁸⁶ Cremin, *American Education*, p. 407.

scholars prepared dramatic and sometimes entertaining lectures for their students or used a laboratory to provide interesting examples of scientific progress. To many students who were accustomed to the dry and sometimes harsh classroom that was typical during this time period, these new forms of education were a welcome revolution.

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain was no exception. It was during this time that Chamberlain began to be inspired by some of the professors at Bowdoin who exhibited this more relaxed teaching style. A good example of this was his relationship with his French professor, Daniel Goodwin. While Lawrence had already learned some French, his experience in Professor Goodwin's class was something altogether new for him. Unlike many of the professors who taught at Bowdoin, Goodwin was genuinely enthusiastic about teaching French and he passed this along to his students. Regarding his professor, Chamberlain wrote, "He did more than to 'hear' lessons, or even to teach; he broadened; he inspired; he integrated knowledge, and animated it; vitalized it. Studying French in this way, (I) began to know something about language."⁸⁷ He responded so well to Goodwin's tutelage that his professor had him appointed as

⁸⁷ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 63.

an assistant librarian in the Modern Language Department. Chamberlain learned a great deal about leadership while a student under Goodwin.

Chamberlain's proudest achievement was attaining first rank in his class and being given the responsibility to give an address at commencement.⁸⁸ The young man from Brewer with the speech impediment was being asked to speak in front of hundreds of people. As it so happened, Bowdoin was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its founding and the presence of visiting dignitaries from across the country only added to the natural anxiety he felt about the challenge of speaking. Invitations had even been sent to many of the college's alumni living in the Deep South, only adding to the large numbers in the audience.⁸⁹ His experience giving the commencement address can be best summed up in his own words, describing himself in the third person.

All of the dignitaries of the nation were represented there - disturbed the anxious balance of the speaker's self-possession, and he stopped short. Our Gladiator was hit; the adversary had broken down his guard. . .but he reeled, half-turned and paced the stage, grasping some evidently extemporaneous and strangely far-fetched phrases, then suddenly whirling to the front, with more blood on his face than would have flowed from Caesar's

⁸⁸ Bowdoin College Faculty Records (1848 - 1852), Bowdoin College Archives.

⁸⁹ C. F. Merrick to Alpheus S. Packard, 24 June 1852, The Alpheus S. Packard Papers, Bowdoin College Archives.

'morituri salutamus', he delivered his conclusion straight out from the shoulder like those who are determined to die early.⁹⁰

He then walked awkwardly off the stage and the next day returned home to Brewer feeling discouraged and frustrated.

After college Chamberlain decided to attend Bangor Theological Seminary. He still considered the ministry as his most likely vocation. Just days before his graduation exercises at Bangor Theological, Chamberlain received an invitation from Bowdoin College to represent his class in delivering the Master's Oration at his alma mater. Mindful of his earlier failure, he put a great deal of work into practicing his delivery and elocution so as not to repeat his poor performance.

He returned to Bowdoin and presented an extremely well crafted oration called "Law and Liberty." The address reflected his own experiences as a college and seminary student. It was his thesis that only with a careful balance of freedom, virtue and responsibility could the young United States become a great nation. Unlike his graduation address, this oration was well received.

The conviction and passion that young Chamberlain showed in presenting his vision for the country impressed

⁹⁰ Chamberlain, Early Memoirs, p. 71.

many.⁹¹ Various attendees wrote notices to local newspapers regarding the power and execution of Chamberlain's address. Joseph Thompson wrote an article for the New York Independent in which he commented upon the wisdom and thoughtfulness of Chamberlain's work.⁹² Seemingly unaware of the stir that he had caused, Chamberlain returned home to Brewer.

Joshua Chamberlain's college career shows that he had many of the raw characteristics of a leader: perseverance, confidence and commitment. Despite poor health he continued to work steadfastly to complete his education and even became valedictorian of his class. When classmates tried to involve him in activities that would distract him from his goals, he simply refused to participate - and did so with such frequency that he developed a reputation for it. Notwithstanding a disastrous commencement address, he returned to Bowdoin just a few years later and presented a much better oration. However, it would not be until he took a position as a teacher himself that these crude traits would be refined into true leadership.

John Carpenter Carter was also exposed to new ideas and curriculum, while a student at the law school at Cumberland

⁹¹ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 70.

⁹² Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 70.

University. By the early 1850s, the school had developed quite a reputation for its *avante garde* pedagogy and maverick faculty. The cornerstone of the Cumberland curriculum was its moot court system. Almost from the beginning of their education, students were placed in a courtroom setting. They would be given a basic set of circumstances and then small teams of students would be set against one another to argue the case. Abraham Caruthers, Cumberland's first law professor extolled the virtues of such a system claiming that it fostered independent and creative thinking - something that was not exactly valued at most other colleges and universities of the time.⁹³ Other schools had moot court systems but they met less frequently and were not as central to the curriculum as it was at Cumberland.

Outside of the moot court systems, Cumberland was also much different than many of its contemporaries. At Harvard and the University of Virginia law schools, students were mostly taught by series of formal lectures and examination questions often required little more than a simple 'yes' or 'no.' At Cumberland students participated in less formal

⁹³ David J. Langum and Howard P. Walthall, *From Maverick to Mainstream: Cumberland School of Law, 1847-1997* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1997), pp. 24-29.

lectures and were required to fully explain their examination answers and even defend them.⁹⁴ This required students to think critically and develop good communication skills - important abilities for leaders.

The moot court system also gave students an opportunity to hone their leadership skills. Students would take turns as the lead lawyer for a case and then would be evaluated on, among other things, their ability to lead their team. In these moot court cases, the student lawyers were required to do essentially everything that pertained to bringing a case to court from pre-trial motions to taking depositions, so the team leader had to delegate responsibilities. If there were problems, the leader was expected to take full responsibility. Thus, many of the students at Cumberland were getting their first opportunities for leadership.⁹⁵

However, as explained previously, John Carpenter Carter had already begun to develop his leadership skills while a student at Georgetown. After arriving at Cumberland, he picked up where he left off. He joined a fraternity, Delta Kappa Epsilon, and was soon elected into a leadership

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 30.

⁹⁵ Ibid, pp.30-31.

position.⁹⁶ He excelled in the moot court system and was frequently chosen by his classmates to serve as lead counsel. As his schooling at Cumberland came to a close, Abraham Caruthers recommended him as a new addition to the law school's faculty, a position that he happily accepted.⁹⁷ This is certainly a sign that his skills as a leader were recognized and appreciated by Cumberland's professors. He began teaching at Cumberland University in the fall of 1858.

While William Flank Perry did not go to a conventional college, he did attend a preparatory academy run by Otis Smith in Georgia for several years. After Smith had taught him all he could and not immediately having the means to attend an expensive southern university, Perry set about developing his own college curriculum. The course of private study that he created for himself was very similar to the curriculum found at colleges in the antebellum United States. It focused on Greek and Latin, as well as mathematics. He so excelled in these subjects that he developed a reputation in his community in northern Alabama for being a learned man. He was still considering trying to find a college to attend when several individuals approached

⁹⁶ Winstead Bone, *A History of Cumberland University, 1842-1935* (Lebanon, TN: Cumberland University Press, 1935), p. 36.

⁹⁷ John C. Carter to E.J. Carter, April, 1858, Burke County Historical Society, Waynesboro, GA.

him to inquire about tutoring for their children. The experience convinced him that he already had all the schooling he required for his immediate future and began making other plans.⁹⁸

The individuals of this study developed and exhibited many of their strongest character traits and natural abilities while college students at their respective institutions. James Garfield became a campus leader despite the harsh stereotypes that were thrust upon him because of his frontier upbringing. James Pettigrew demonstrated amazing skills in mathematics that led to a leadership role at Chapel Hill. Henry Lawrence Eustis went from being held back at Harvard because of poor performance in mathematics to becoming a cadet instructor at one of the toughest mathematics programs in the U.S. at the time.

Their collective work ethic exhibited in their study habits and the frequent leadership roles they assumed as students are key examples of this. They held positions as tutors, choir directors, journal editors, leading scientific minds and class valedictorians, displaying their leadership abilities and a commitment to excellence in their endeavors. In overcoming obstacles, discovering new ideas, analyzing

⁹⁸ Perry, "The Genesis of Public Education in Alabama."

their own beliefs and developing new ones, they grew as leaders during their college careers.

Chapter 4 - Careers in Education

It was as teachers that the nine subjects of this study truly became leaders. The world of education during the antebellum period was in a constant state of turmoil. College professors faced a plethora of problems and challenges on a daily basis. As discussed earlier in chapter two, there were religious controversies, budget shortfalls, disagreements over pedagogy and sometimes even violent confrontation. The leaders in this study were forced to fight to accomplish their goals or to bring about change to the institutions where they taught. They also learned to develop relationships with their students that led to better communication with their pupils. Oftentimes, these men were innovators in the classroom, bringing new solutions to age-old problems faced by educators. Thus, in a variety of ways, their work as teachers and administrators served as a precursor to their leadership roles as warriors during the Civil War.

Several of the subjects of this study worked tirelessly to bring educational opportunities to the citizens of their community. Very few individuals had such a dramatic role in shaping the educational system of their state as William Flank Perry. It is quite possible that Perry's strong advocacy for the development of educational

institutions in Alabama may have come from his own experience of needing a school to help him advance in his studies. While he did not regret the time he spent in self-study, he frequently wished he had had the guidance of a wiser and more learned man to help him through his post-secondary education.¹

After he had moved with his family from Georgia to Alabama, William Flank Perry realized that with his time at Otis Smith's academy plus his strenuous course of self-study, he had a level of education far superior to what many in the region possessed. With this in mind, he decided to move to Talladega and become a principal of a preparatory academy. In 1848, he began his work at the Talladega High School for boys. During his time there, he proposed a more strenuous curriculum based on his own experiences in Georgia.² He was frustrated at the lack of interest that many in his community had in education and he took it upon himself to prepare the young men in his charge for a life of service and intellectual growth. Under his leadership, the Talladega High School prospered and grew in stature and reputation throughout the state.

¹ Oates, "General William Flank Perry"

² William Garrett, "Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama for 30 Years."

Beyond his regular duties as the principal of the school, Perry also served as a community leader in the temperance movement. He believed that alcohol was a cause of idleness and a destroyer of men's ambition for better things. He began to speak at local temperance meetings around the state usually sponsored by Whig party leaders or small temperance societies, such as the Sons of Temperance. James Mallory, a prominent Alabama planter described one of these meetings at which Perry gave an address. "The neighbourhood turned out to a meeting of the Sons of Temperance at Wewokaville, the turnout was good, a most eloquent address was delivered by Mr Perry of Talladega, when all partook of an excellent dinner prepared for the occasion."³ So combined with the notable work he was doing at the high school, his role as a leader in the temperance movement increased his reputation throughout the area.

Another effect that his time in Talladega had on him was that he became a vocal proponent of public, state-funded education. And he had arrived in Alabama at precisely the right time. In the 1840s educational reformers worked to improve the state of things in Alabama and they were beginning to make headway. They did not

³ Grady McWhiney, ed., *Fear God and Walk Humbly: The Agricultural Journal of James Mallory, 1843-1877* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama, 1997), p. 166.

particularly care for locally controlled education, fearing that it would create wide disparities in quality of instruction across the state. They did not want young students to be punished simply because of where they lived. They proposed a standardized system of instruction and funding and were especially concerned over the makeshift buildings that were often used for education. Wealthy Whig planters made up the ranks of these reformers, believing that quality education statewide would bring tangible benefits to Alabama. Democrats were content with locally supported and locally controlled schools.⁴

As early as 1849 Governor Henry W. Collier of Tuscaloosa proposed establishing the office of State Superintendent of Education, which would have responsibility for supervising the education offered by local schools, but the Democratically-controlled legislature rejected his plan. In 1853 there was a statewide ballot initiative that called for funds left over from the liquidation of the Bank of Alabama to be used for education; it passed narrowly. Inspired by the referendum, Alexander Beaufort Meek, associate editor of the Mobile

⁴ Wayne Flynt and William Warren Rogers, *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1994), p. 254.

Register and chairman of the House Committee on Education, pushed through the Public School Act of 1854.⁵

So after a tremendous struggle, the legislature had finally agreed to the proposition and in 1854 Alabama established the second system of public education in the Cotton South. Because of his exemplary work at the Talladega School, William Flank Perry was nominated to fill the new post. The two houses of the state legislature met in a combined session. After three ballots failed to produce a clear winner, those who had nominated Perry were able to convince the sponsors of another nominee to throw their support to Perry and he was then elected to be the state's first superintendent of education. In essence, his job was to build a public school system from scratch in a state that was not altogether supportive of the idea.⁶

In 1854, the condition of education in Alabama was simply pitiful. Illiteracy was rampant throughout the state with even members of the yeomen class being unable to read or write. One Alabaman described it this way:

There were hundreds of townships in Alabama in which not a school existed and there were whole tiers of counties which did not contain a comfortable school house. A majority of the

⁵ Ibid., pp. 254 - 255.

⁶ William Garrett, "Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama for 30 Years."

schools in the mountain counties were taught by men of the most limited scholastic attainments.⁷

Most Alabamans had come to the state for the simple purpose of making money. Robert Hunt writes,

(Alabamans) engaged in southwestern commercial development were a calculating and practical group. The necessity to become independent and self-managing in a growing southwest made for a pragmatic evaluation of the world and one's place in it.⁸

A vision of thousands of Alabaman children being educated by tax money and then leading productive and civically-minded lives did not come easily to them. William Perry was charged with the difficult responsibility of changing this.

"To better these conditions and especially to arouse vast numbers of people from their lethargy to an active interest in the education of their children was a task to which Mr. Perry bent every faculty of his mind."⁹ At the most practical level, he introduced new courses into Alabama schools, including U.S. history and geography, and standard textbooks like Webster's Blue-back Spelling Book and McGuffey's Readers. He instituted basic requirements

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Robert Eno Hunt, "Organizing a New South: Education Reformers in Antebellum Alabama, 1840 - 1860" Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Missouri-Columbia, 1988, p. 121.

⁹ Ibid. p. 121.

for those seeking to teach in Alabama that gradually increased the quality of instructors. Perry also traveled around the state, visiting local schools and working to solve the various challenges they faced.¹⁰

Perry began writing a series of pamphlets on the benefits of public education in bringing about general prosperity and civic pride in Alabama. He focused on the themes of the molding of young minds and freeing of Alabama from dependence on northern goods. One of his admirers wrote about the first time he read one of Perry's pamphlets.

I read it two or three times; it was, in addition to being new and novel to me, couched in beautiful language, flowery and imaginative which won my admiration for the man though I had never seen him.¹¹

These pamphlets appear to have had a beneficial effect on some of the leading men of Alabama society as newspaper editorials began taking a more favorable view of this new experiment.

In 1857 Perry also began publishing the Alabama Educational Journal, which operated as the official voice of his department. Although it only ran for two years, it

¹⁰ Flynt and Rogers, *Alabama*, p. 255.

¹¹ Oates, "General William Flank Perry"

played a very important role in the intellectual development of the state. First, it put into concrete terms what Perry and other educational reformers had in mind for Alabama. In the journal Perry expressed a desire for a training system for teachers, an education "headquarters" in every county and the development of a college preparatory curriculum in Alabama schools. Second, it repeatedly addressed the issue of why education was so important. For example, in the inaugural issue of the journal, Perry writes, "We wish to see the arm of industry freed from the paralysis of ignorance" adding that only through education would the South be able to free itself from reliance upon the North.¹² And third, it helped to establish a pedagogy for education in the state that lasted for years. In one article, Perry argues that teachers should avoid the constant reliance upon discipline and endeavor to develop relationships with and inspire enthusiasm in their students.¹³

Perry's labor as the Superintendent of Alabama's public school system was mostly successful. In his four years, he supervised a dramatic increase in spending on education by the state, a three-fold increase in the

¹² Alabama Educational Journal, January 1857, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL

¹³ Alabama Education Journal, July 1857, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.

number of state-funded primary and secondary schools and an extension in the number of months that made up a school term.¹⁴ The public schools in some areas of Alabama were thriving and offered such quality education that private academies in those regions of Alabama were driven out of business. But despite these advances, most Alabama elementary schools offered such a rudimentary education that colleges and universities provided remedial or preliminary courses for entering freshmen.¹⁵

William Flank Perry was forced to develop true leadership skills to carry out his responsibilities as the superintendent of education in Alabama. Perry fought against both a political system and a culture in Alabama that devalued public education, and he managed to make major strides in improving the state's educational offerings. As superintendent not only did he have to create a new educational system out of nothing, but also do it under the most adverse of conditions. Many people in Alabama did not want a public school system and actively opposed his efforts. Through his tireless endeavors he was able to convince some Alabamans of the importance of education and improved the accessibility and quality of

¹⁴ Thomas McAdory Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, Vol. 4 (Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), p. 1344; Dabney, *Universal Education in the South*, pp. 316-317.

¹⁵ Flynt and Rogers, p. 255.

education offered. These are clear examples of Perry's growing leadership capabilities.

Another subject of this study who took a major leadership role in bringing educational opportunities to his community was Claudius Wistar Sears. When Sears arrived in New Orleans and began teaching mathematics at the University of Louisiana, it was a school in transition. It had begun training students as the Medical College of Louisiana in 1836. It was the brainchild of several civic-minded doctors who had recently immigrated to New Orleans who hoped to create some form of state-funded medical training facility to combat the frequent epidemics that ravaged the city from time to time. When the school opened, it had no building (they met in a church), no instruments (the faculty used their own), and no library. For eight years, it struggled just to keep its doors open.¹⁶

In 1844 everything changed for the small medical college. A group of Whig politicians including the state's chief justice, George Eustis, and the territorial governor, William Claiborne, requested that an amendment be added to the state constitution that would transform

¹⁶ John P. Dyer, *Tulane: The Biography of a University, 1834 - 1960* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 20.

the Medical College of Louisiana to the University of Louisiana. Their plan called for the school to have four departments: medicine, law, academic and natural science. Since the medical college already existed, the proposal suggested that the additional departments could be added by simply procuring more property around the medical school. State tax funds would be used to buy the property and the necessary supplies.¹⁷

The proposal met strong opposition on the part of delegates from the northern counties of the new state. These representatives to the constitutional convention were Democrats, and as in the case of Alabama, they were opposed to state funds being used for any sort of civic improvement. In the end, a compromise was reached which created the university and gave the school some seed money, but absolved the state legislature from providing any further funds. Some tax monies were provided occasionally, but most of the money went to the medical school and usually was a result of a state health crisis during which the medical college gave free health care.¹⁸ It was another example of a southern state that created an

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 22 - 23.

educational institution, but found it difficult to gain enough popular support for its financial maintenance.

The process of adding the new departments was slow and prone to conflict. The medical school, having been the first department, looked upon the rest of the university with a degree of derision. They refused to share anything that the medical school had purchased before 1844, such as the school seal. Since law was the favored profession for many of Louisiana's elites, the law school was created next and an instant feud erupted between the medical and law departments. Despite the election in 1847 of a university president, Dr. Francis Lister Hawks, who was supposed to bring some semblance of centralization, the two departments continued to act as completely separate institutions. The legislation that created the university gave too much autonomy to the medical and law schools. Due to this and the failure of the state legislature to provide any money for the university, Dr. Hawks resigned after only one year.¹⁹ The events that occurred at the University of Louisiana between 1844 and 1847 were a perfect example of the conflict and controversy that

¹⁹ Edwin Fay, *The History of Education in Louisiana* (Washington: The Government Print Office, 1898), pp. 167-168.

tested and developed the leadership abilities of someone like Claudius Wistar Sears.

Sears had taken the job as Professor of Mathematics in the academic department in the fall of 1845. This was at a time when the academic school had no designated buildings, no equipment and very few students. Exhibiting a tremendous amount of optimism and good faith, Sears taught any students who showed up for his lectures. His salary was frequently late in being paid. This continued for five years until the Board of Trustees, impressed by Sears' work ethic and positive attitude, tried to breathe some life into the struggling department. In the fall of 1850, they hired seven new professors and made Sears the dean of the department.²⁰

When it came time to register students for the academic year in 1851, the faculty had high expectations but was greatly disheartened when only three individuals came to the new academic building to enroll. Showing the patience of Job, Sears wrote letters to New Orleans newspapers and journals trumpeting the value of education. The next year fourteen students arrived and it appeared that the academic department was finally getting off the ground. Then in 1853, a yellow fever epidemic hit the city

²⁰ Dyer, *Tulane*, p. 27.

prompting many citizens, including young people, to flee to the countryside. Once again, the academic department was without students, prompting a local newspaper to decry the waste of public funds on a school that was not teaching any students.²¹ Believing that brighter days were ahead, Sears continued to promote education throughout southern Louisiana and remained at his post as dean of the academic department.

This was a time in which Claudius Wistar Sears began to develop into a great leader. Despite a series of major setbacks, Sears continued to carry out his responsibilities and never lost sight of his ultimate goal of making the Academic Department a thriving institution of higher learning.

Then the ray of light that Claudius Wistar Sears had been waiting for finally appeared. The governor of Louisiana, Paul Hebert, intervened and completely reorganized the university's Board of Trustees. He disbanded the existing board and appointed eleven new individuals. All were energetic men who felt strongly about the importance of quality education. They came into office feeling that they had been given a mandate to fix the problems plaguing the University of Louisiana. Led by

²¹ L'Abeille, 30 December 1854, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge.

Matthew M. Cohen who had served in various capacities in government, business and education, the new board set about the work of reforming the ailing institution and bringing a degree of equality to the departments.²²

They immediately requested reports from the four colleges regarding the state of their affairs and made several important changes based on this material. For example, they discovered that several of the professors were using school facilities for personal functions, such as private tutoring and family get-togethers. This practice was immediately halted and strict rules were enacted regarding faculty and student conduct.²³

The Board further discovered that Sears, lacking funds or public interest in senior competitions, was holding private ceremonies to reward students for their progress. The board ordered him to halt this custom and instead, declared that public competitions would be held for students of the Academic Department. They assembled an august panel of judges including George Eustis, Rev. Leonidas Polk and Major Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard. Medals were awarded to students who distinguished themselves in elocution and ancient languages. The event

²² Samuel Lang, "The First Century of the Tulane University of Louisiana," Chapter VIII of an unpublished manuscript, Tulane Archives, New Orleans.

²³ Ibid.

drew much community attention and translated into increasing numbers of students applying for admission to the Academic Department in the late 1850s.²⁴

With increased numbers of students attending the academic college, Sears felt more comfortable asking for a greater piece of the resource pie. When the new wing was completed on the main classroom building in October 1856, Sears requested and was granted use of six of the new rooms.²⁵

Near the end of 1856, the Board of Trustees combined the Academic Department with the recently created College Preparatory Department and entitled the hybrid, "the Collegiate Department." Uncertain of his future in this new arrangement, Sears inquired as to what his responsibilities would be and was promptly put in charge of the new division. The Board then asked him to prepare a report about the current status of the department, as well as suggestions for improvement.²⁶ This was a watershed event in the career of Claudius Sears. In his commentary on the current state of affairs, he was both congratulatory of the university and sharply critical of the quality of education available elsewhere in the South.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 2 October 1856, Tulane University Archives, New Orleans.

Could we at any time have satisfied ourselves and the expectations of the Board of Administrators by the establishment of an institution of the character of many of the ephemeral enterprises called colleges in the South, with all their paraphernalia of quackery, our individual interests would have received temporary benefit while the character and standard of the department could not have risen above that of a common public school. We have unquestionably overlooked our own immediate personal interests in considering that a university should deem her standards as paramount to all other considerations.²⁷

He went on to list a number of well-known colleges and universities, such as Harvard, Yale and the University of Virginia, where their graduates had gone on to achieve distinction. Because the academic department had been so weak for the past several years, the current selection of courses offered were not enough to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree. This forced all students of the department to transfer to other institutions to complete their work.

With regard to his suggestions for the future, Sears was assertive and grandiose. He suggested a larger faculty be hired and the adoption of a curriculum similar to that espoused in the Yale Report. He asked for an appropriation of \$5,000 for the creation of a library for collegiate students. He even suggested the establishment of a

²⁷ Claudius Wistar Sears' Report to the Board, November 1856, Tulane University Archives, New Orleans.

commerce and industry program led by James Dunwoody Brownson DeBow (of DeBow's Review fame).²⁸

While the board received Sears' suggestions with enthusiasm, the dean feared that their will to see any of his suggestions through to fruition would wither under the glare of the medical and law schools. Since the creation of the university in 1844, these two schools had dominated the affairs of the University of Louisiana. This went back to legislation passed in 1847 that put medicine and law only partially under the control of the president and board of trustees. Earlier attempts to help the flagging Academic Department had led to objections by the Medical and Law Departments; they feared that the expansion of Sears' school would lessen their prestige and cut into their resources.²⁹

Sears' suggested method for dealing with this issue was to submit all of his plans to the Louisiana legislature along with a request for changes in the 1847 legislation that would give the president and board greater powers in dealing with the medical and law schools. The trustees agreed and in January of 1857 they submitted a request for money to fund Sears' plans and

²⁸ Claudius Wistar Sears' Report to the Board, November 1856, Tulane University Archives, New Orleans.

²⁹ Lang, "The First Century."

also asked for the creation of a committee that would study the current system of administration. But by the 1850s, the Democratic Party was solidly in control of the state legislature and as Samuel Lang writes, "The lawmakers showed no profound interest."³⁰

Tired of constantly being rebuffed by the legislature, Sears and the Board of Trustees decided that if the Collegiate Department was going to ever truly succeed, it would have to find other methods to obtain funding and support. In a statement prepared by the trustees, they declared that the lack of support by the state government was having an "injurious effect upon the character and prospects of the institution" and that they felt compelled to look "mainly to individual enterprise and the stimulus of individual pride and interest" for their future success.³¹ The local press agreed and editorialized, "Better would it be to abandon the idea of establishing a first-class seminary in New Orleans than to suffer it to continue in its present condition of inefficiency. . . through the culpable neglect of the legislature."³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Minutes of the Board of Trustees, May 14th, 1857, Tulane University Archives, New Orleans.

³² L'Abeille, 9 May 1857, Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge.

The first step in their plan to achieve this transition was to give Sears and one of his colleagues, Louis Dafau, actual control of Collegiate Department property through a leasing agreement. They could sub-lease certain facilities to other community groups for a fee to help support the department. Also, they were free to offer any courses they chose that would attract a larger student body and charged a larger sum (\$120 annually) for tuition, while offering scholarships to hard-working, but poorer students. In effect, the facilities belonged to the state, but the school was going to be managed like a private institution.³³

Thus under Sears' leadership, the Collegiate Department underwent some major changes in the spring of 1857. Not content to allow the lack of support from the Democrats in the state legislature ruin the progress they had made, Sears and his department stepped out on their own. The success or failure of the Collegiate Department was in his hands. It would be a true test of the leadership skills he developed over the past several years.

This new formula was a great success. The school was able to raise healthy sums of money from sub-leasing

³³ Lang, "The First Century."

agreements, and the creation of a complete Bachelor of Arts degree brought in a good number of paying students. Since Sears and Dafau controlled the curriculum, they offered courses like commerce and economics that were unusual for southern universities. By the end of 1857, the Collegiate Department had their first baccalaureate graduate, nineteen year-old Joseph Arsenne Breaux. The graduation ceremony was filled with pomp and circumstance with a brass band, speeches, and medals awarded for scholastic excellence. The local press was in full attendance. The Daily Crescent, the Daily Picayune, and L'Abeille all wrote stories about the grand proceedings.³⁴ Not surprisingly, the following school year saw the largest student body in the eleven-year history of the Academic/Collegiate Department with twenty-nine newly enrolled freshmen and ten upperclassmen.³⁵

It is difficult to comprehend all of the obstacles that Claudius Wistar Sears overcame to bring a high quality collegiate program to the city of New Orleans. Through a tremendous amount of hard work, ingenuity and steadfast resolve, Sears turned a failing and neglected academic program into New Orleans' first liberal arts

³⁴ Daily Crescent, 27 July 1857; L'Abeille, 27 July 1857; Daily Picayune, 26 July 1857 Louisiana State Archives, Baton Rouge.

³⁵ Lang, "The First Century."

institution. He surmounted low student enrollment, a complete lack of funding, non-existent or poor facilities and utter disregard or outright opposition by many political authorities. However, these events served as a crucible through which Sears emerged with unquestionable leadership skills. As the Civil War broke out, Sears turned his back on his northern birth and fully sided with the Confederate cause. He began to wonder how he might best serve his new country with his excellent leadership skills.

But Claudius Wistar Sears was not the only subject of this study who was tasked with creating a completely new department out of thin air. Henry Lawrence Eustis faced a similar task at Harvard. Eustis spent the next several years after graduation from West Point alternating between civilian and military engineering projects in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Then in 1847, he returned to West Point to teach engineering. He was made Assistant Professor of Engineering under his old teacher, Dennis Mahan.³⁶

However, outside the walls of the U.S. Military Academy, non-military colleges and universities began easing the hostility they had previously felt towards

³⁶ Official Register of Graduates, June 1848, West Point Archives

science and engineering curricula in the face of a growing market economy that needed useful knowledge. After 1840 several schools began planning new courses of study that were not so classically based. Terry Reynolds writes,

The conjunction of a growing need for engineers and growing criticism of higher education for not serving the real needs of American society prompted many colleges to modify their classical curricula or to otherwise experiment with various means of offering engineering training as a way of silencing critics.³⁷

Harvard University was one such school. Throughout the 1840s President Josiah Quincy had begun the process of improving Harvard's scientific offerings. In 1846 the university completed its observatory complete with a \$100,000 bequest from a wealthy alumnus, Edmund Bromfield Phillips.³⁸

Just after Quincy's retirement in 1846, Abbott Lawrence, a wealthy Bostonian who made a fortune in the early railroad building industry provided a \$50,000 donation for the creation of an engineering school at Harvard. However, the new president, Edward Everett, thwarted Lawrence's main goal by hiring a European

³⁷ Terry S. Reynolds, "The Education of Engineers in America before the Morrill Act of 1862" History of Education Quarterly, Vol. 32, Winter 1992, p. 462.

³⁸ Morison, *Three Centuries*, pp. 264-265.

geologist, Louis Agassiz, as the first dean of the Lawrence Scientific School. Agassiz was more interested in research and scientific inquiry than training engineers and the early days of Harvard's new department reflected this. Nonetheless, the university's board of director's proposed the idea of hiring a full-time engineering professor and began the process of searching for a suitable candidate. Meanwhile, President Everett retired due to ill health and was replaced by Jared Sparks.³⁹

At the same time, Henry Lawrence Eustis began to tire of teaching the cadets at West Point and when he heard of Harvard's search for a professor of engineering, he eagerly applied by writing a letter to Jared Sparks. His excellent academic record at both schools made him a prime candidate and in the fall of 1849, President Sparks wrote to him and offered the position of Professor of Engineering at the Lawrence Scientific School. He resigned from the teaching at the military academy and returned to Boston greatly excited about the prospects for his new position. He was only 30 years old, which was quite young for someone to assume a key leadership position at a prestigious institution such as Harvard.⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 279-280.

⁴⁰ Report of the Annual Reunion of Graduates, June 1885, West Point Archives, p. 64.

Eustis was given the Herculean task of creating an engineering curriculum out of nothing, all while under the authority of Louis Agassiz who was much more interested in geological research. Jared Sparks called for the board to set aside a portion of Abbott Lawrence's bequest for the purpose of constructing a building to house the new department and Eustis himself. This was quickly achieved and work began immediately.⁴¹ President Sparks requested that Eustis prepare "a plan of the proposed operations of the Engineering Department" in time for the December meeting of the Corporation.⁴²

Originally, the Lawrence Scientific School had very little in the way of connections to Harvard University. The scientific school received no funds from the university's budget, the students at the two institutions rarely mixed (only Harvard seniors were allowed to attend Eustis' lectures) and they even held separate commencement exercises for a time.⁴³ This, of course, meant that Eustis had a free hand to develop the Engineering Department as he saw fit, but it also meant that the responsibility of

⁴¹ Jared Sparks to S.A. Eliot, 6 November 1849, Corporation Papers of Harvard University, Harvard University Archives.

⁴² Jared Sparks to Henry Lawrence Eustis, 26 December 1849, Corporation Papers of Harvard University, Harvard University Archives.

⁴³ Jared Sparks to S.A. Eliot, 6 November 1849 and Jared Sparks to Henry Lawrence Eustis, 17 June 1850, Corporation Papers of Harvard University, Harvard University Archives

the success of an important part of the scientific school sat squarely on his shoulders. His skills as a leader were to be immediately tested.

In light of his education and prior experiences, the board of Harvard University voted to confer upon Eustis a Master of Arts degree in the summer of 1850. They also whole-heartedly endorsed his plans for curriculum in the Engineering Department. Working with President Sparks, Eustis developed an advertising campaign to attract students.⁴⁴ The Lawrence Scientific School began with four students, all of whom graduated in 1851 with Harvard's first Bachelor of Science degrees. However, because Louis Agassiz, the natural scientist, was at the helm of the scientific school, none of the initial graduates went on to become engineers. In fact, it would be several more years before the Lawrence Scientific School would begin to graduate engineers with any regularity much to the frustration of Eustis and Abbott Lawrence.⁴⁵

But Henry Lawrence Eustis was not content to keep the Lawrence Scientific School just for the natural scientists. With a tremendous amount of zeal, he promoted his Engineering Department in the Boston area and soon had

⁴⁴ Corporation Papers of Harvard University, Vol. 13, July 1850, Harvard University Archives.

⁴⁵ Morison, *Three Centuries*, p. 280.

several interested students. Eustis took advantage of the great public interest in the railroad to bring attention to his fledgling department.

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, technical expertise was the realm of workingmen and craftsmen. Conversely, the American university was the home of philosophical and classical knowledge. It was the long-standing debate between those who worked with their hands and those who worked with their heads. But with the advent of new technology and inventions in the 1840s and 50s, the college sought to incorporate "useful knowledge" into their curriculum. James Watkinson writes that the period saw "changing conceptions of what constituted useful knowledge and perhaps, more importantly, how and to whom that useful knowledge should be conveyed."⁴⁶

This change in educational tides aided Eustis in his mission to fill his department with young men wanting to learn engineering. However, he was still contending with the elitism still profoundly strong, especially in Cambridge, which proclaimed that the university (specifically Harvard) was the realm of the upper class.⁴⁷ He countered this by reaching out to a variety of young

⁴⁶ James D. Watkinson, "Useful Knowledge? Concepts, Values, and Access in American Education, 1776 - 1840" History of Education Quarterly, Vol. 30, Fall 1990, p. 351.

⁴⁷ Story, *The Forging of an Aristocracy*, pp. 30-32.

men. Eustis directed that advertisements should be placed in a wide variety of publications including almanacs and trade publications for the working classes. But many in the scientific community, including Eustis, worried that the elitist and classical traditions of Harvard would not provide a nurturing environment for an engineering department.⁴⁸

Despite the struggles he encountered in establishing the Lawrence Engineering School, Henry Lawrence Eustis never let his teaching suffer. In fact, one of the things that he was most known for at Harvard was his teaching ability. His students held him in high regard and his colleagues respected his abilities in the classroom. William Rogers, a well-known scientist from Boston wrote to his brother, Henry, commenting, "Eustis is a good teacher."⁴⁹ Ralph Waldo Emerson commented that he appreciated Eustis' style and methods in the classroom.⁵⁰

Like Claudius Sears, Henry Lawrence Eustis found himself having to create a new department under somewhat adverse conditions. The administrators of Harvard were more interested in having a renowned scientist like Louis

⁴⁸ Dirk J. Struik, *Yankee Science in the Making* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), pp. 349-350.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 353.

⁵⁰ Edward Waldo Emerson, *The Early Years of the Saturday Club, 1850-1870* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1918), p. 9.

Agassiz at the head of their scientific school rather than develop an excellent engineering department. But despite the attitudes of the Harvard elites, Eustis established a successful engineering department. This process, more than anything, helped to forge Eustis into an excellent leader both among his colleagues as well as his students.

Ormsby Mitchel is another example of an educator who overcame great odds to bring educational opportunities to his community. He began teaching at West Point in the fall of 1829. Overall, he enjoyed the work, although because of his junior status, he was given the task of teaching mathematics to the incoming freshmen. This was hardly the intellectual challenge he sought, but he used the relatively large amount of free time that his position afforded to continue in private study and renewed an interest in astronomy that he had as a young man. He also began doing some public speaking, giving orations on a variety of topics, including temperance and physical training. During this time, he met and married a nineteen year old widow named Louisa who was not generally enthusiastic about having a career soldier for a husband. Considering his own lack of interest in matters martial, after two years of teaching at West Point, he resigned

from his position and moved back to the city where he had grown up: Cincinnati, Ohio.⁵¹

After returning to Ohio, he spent a few years trying to practice law but found it difficult to support his family with few clients. Then in 1836, the newly revived Cincinnati College elected him Professor of Mathematics and Engineering. He was also asked to teach freshman French. Because the railroad was growing quickly throughout Ohio and Mitchel was often called upon by fledgling railroad companies to help with engineering, the school granted him extended vacations to continue these excursions.⁵²

Despite being the Professor of Mathematics and Engineering, Mitchel began teaching a class on astronomy, which was a favorite subject of his. As much as possible, he kept the class focused on mathematical issues associated with astronomy such as calculating distances and navigational formulas. However, despite the strong math component, many in the student body developed interest in the science of astronomy. Eventually, some of the students began asking permission for their friends and families to be allowed to attend the lectures. This gave

⁵¹ Mitchel, *Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel*, p. 23-25, 33.

⁵² Letter of Appointment from Cincinnati College to Ormsby Mitchel, 5 June 1836, University of Cincinnati Archives.

way to an invitation from the "Cincinnati Society for the Diffusion of Useful Information" to give three public orations on the subject of astronomy, greatly increasing community interest in the subject. Centerpiece to his presentation was that he showed his audiences transparencies of drawn observations taken by high-powered telescopes in Europe. Few denizens of New York and Boston had seen such images and they thrilled the audience.⁵³

Several years before, former President John Quincy Adams had suggested the value of building an observatory in one of the Eastern Seaboard's larger cities. The suggestion had been largely ridiculed and no one in any of the large metropolitan centers of the east had made plans to do so. But the interest garnered by Mitchel's lectures made some in the "frontier town" of Cincinnati believe that such an institution might be possible there, and Mitchel was happy to take the lead in beginning the process. At the conclusion of his final oration, after seeing the tremendous enthusiasm of the crowd, Mitchel promised to devote the following five years to the foundation of the first large observatory in the United States in Cincinnati. Though there was no money for such

⁵³ Mitchel, *Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel*, p. 47; "The Centenary of the Cincinnati Observatory," 5 November 1943, *The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio*, 1944.

an institution, Mitchel was not discouraged. He proclaimed, "I will go to the people and by the anvil of the blacksmith. . .and thus onward to the rich parlor of the wealthy, I will plead the cause of science."⁵⁴ He saw genuine educational opportunities in the construction of such an institution.

Mitchel's first step was to form the Cincinnati Astronomical Society in the spring of 1842. To gain entrance to this society, members had to purchase a \$25 share of stock that was basically a free ticket to view the institution's observations at their leisure. Many scoffed at the idea, saying no one would commit money to such a far-fetched idea, but Mitchel had both idealism and the energy of youth, and he threw himself whole-heartedly into the project. He called upon most of his friends and acquaintances around the city and in one day sold over forty shares. With the ultimate goal of raising \$7,500 for the building of an edifice and the purchase of a telescope, Mitchel had one-seventh of what he needed. Because of his initial success, a Board of Control was formed to guide the building process. By the following autumn, the Cincinnati Astronomical Society had the

⁵⁴ "The Centenary of the Cincinnati Observatory," 5 November 1943, The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1944.

requisite \$7500 and the Board dispatched Mitchel to Europe to procure a telescope.⁵⁵ The initial successes that Mitchel had in bringing an observatory to Cincinnati shows he was developing excellent leadership skills.

Ormsby Mitchel traveled to Munich, Germany, where he ordered a telescope and also spent time in London studying at the Royal Observatory learning about its technical operation. He excitedly wrote to his wife, "Think of it, dear wife, I am now an assistant of the Astronomer Royal: his pupil, and he a kind, attentive and most courteous instructor."⁵⁶ He returned home elated at the success of his mission and hoped that in his absence, progress had been made to construct the building in which the newly purchased telescope would be housed. However, he was disappointed to find that nothing had been done. Not deterred, he contacted a local wealthy businessman, Nicholas Longworth, who assented to providing a site located on a large hill just outside of the city limits. The foundation for the observatory was laid in the summer of 1843.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ormsby Mitchel, "The Building of the Cincinnati Observatory," 1843, Records of the Cincinnati Observatory.

⁵⁶ Ormsby Mitchel to Louisa Mitchel, 21 August 1842, University of Cincinnati Archives.

⁵⁷ Mitchel, *Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel*, pp. 145-146.

By the time the foundation was laid, however, the Cincinnati Astronomical Society had run out of money. Mitchel began using his own personal savings to pay the workmen who were building the observatory. When his own money ran low, he sold some of his belongings in the city streets to raise more. In the early mornings before his classes, he went to the worksite to help as best he could. He did the same in the evenings. When the Astronomical Society could no longer pay for the transporting of building materials to the site, Mitchel used his own horse to bring limestone from a nearby quarry. Individuals that he visited on weekends donated other materials. When some members of the Board worried that the observatory would not have enough funds to operate, Mitchel promised that he would work as the institution's director without pay for ten years; his teaching income would be his only financial support despite the fact that he held what could be considered two full-time jobs. Finally, the facility (minus the telescope that was still being crafted in Germany) was completed in November of 1843. Fittingly, an aged John Quincy Adams traveled from Buffalo to Cincinnati to give an oration at the grand opening of the facility.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ "The Centenary of the Cincinnati Observatory," 5 November 1943, The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1944.

Without Mitchel's resolute support and growing leadership skills, the observatory would have never come to fruition.

Just as things were beginning to look up for the striving professor, he was met with a new problem, one with possibly disastrous circumstances for him and his family. The building that housed Cincinnati College burned to the ground and there were no immediate plans to have it rebuilt. He was without a paying job and he had a wife and three children to support. However, after all of his work to see an observatory come to Cincinnati, he refused to relocate to another teaching position elsewhere. He and the astronomical society flirted with the idea of charging admission that would form a foundation for his salary, but many in the community (those who had not paid for shares) were angry that they did not have free access to the telescope. In addition, the numbers of people who wanted to pay for access was causing interruption to the scientific work being carried out there. Ormsby Mitchel would have to find another way to earn a living.⁵⁹

Then it occurred to Mitchel that he might make use of his teaching and oration skills to earn money outside of the classroom. Giving lectures at philosophical societies and civic groups about the new discoveries of science and

⁵⁹ Ibid.

technology could be a profitable endeavor in the 19th century. Americans were intrigued by innovation and in a society with few forms of entertainment, public lecturers could earn large sums if sufficient numbers came to their orations. Mitchel determined that this could possibly be a way that he could both advance the cause of science by informing the American public of the wonders of astronomy and support his family and the observatory.⁶⁰

In October 1845 Mitchel sought a leave of absence from the Board of Control of the observatory to try his plan. He took his entire family to Massachusetts believing that Boston would be a true test of his mettle. He advertised that he would give a lecture on astronomy at Tremont Hall and despite the fact that he had no contacts or acquaintances in the city, believed he would get a nominal audience. However, the night of the scheduled lecture saw a terrible storm pushing through the region, which discouraged people from emerging from their homes. Mitchel and his wife stood outside the hall trying to get a sense of how many people would show up and in that time, not a single person entered the lecture hall. For a brief time, they considered returning to their hotel and

⁶⁰ Philip Shoemaker, "Stellar Impact: Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel and Astronomy in Antebellum America," Ph.D. Dissertation, 1991, pp. 14-15.

slinking away, but at the last moment, Mitchel turned around and entered the building. About 100 individuals were present (the building could hold about 500) and Mitchel, realizing that the present audience might help him bring in future audiences through word of mouth, gave one of the most stirring orations of his career.⁶¹

After that night, throngs of Bostonians attended his next several lectures, many commenting on Mitchel's ability to make the complex easy to understand. After a time in Boston, the Mitchel clan moved on to New York where after an initially cool response, his lectures brought praise and notoriety for himself, but more importantly, large crowds to lectures halls in Brooklyn. They also traveled to Philadelphia where Mitchel's orations also met with success. The proceeds from his lectures throughout 1845 brought him a generous income that was enough for his family to live on for several years, and he returned back to Cincinnati with a sense of triumph to begin the serious scientific work of the observatory.⁶² Through his tremendous leadership abilities, Mitchel was supporting his dream of a working

⁶¹ Mitchel, *Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel*, p. 160.

⁶² "The Centenary of the Cincinnati Observatory," 5 November 1943, The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1944.

observatory in Cincinnati and, at the same time, providing for his family.

Throughout the 1840s and 50s, Ormsby Mitchel made important contributions to astronomical science as well as developed practical applications for the discoveries he made. This was the particular genius of American science. While Europeans made many of the scientific breakthroughs of the 19th century, it was American innovators who often put these advancements to practical use. For example, with the aid of an assistant, Henry Twitchell, who was gifted in mechanical work, Mitchel devised a chronometer that could record the transit times of planets, giving astronomers much greater power in locating various celestial bodies at various times of the year.⁶³

When winter weather made observation more difficult, Mitchel went back out on the lecture circuit to earn money for the coming year. He would then return to Ohio in the spring and continue with his observations. His work was becoming renown nationwide, so much so, that in 1852 Harvard offered him a professorship in their math and science department. Despite being proud of such an honor, Mitchel politely declined, saying that he had worked so hard for the creation of the Cincinnati Observatory, he

⁶³ Shoemaker, "Stellar Impact," pp. 44.

wanted to continue his work there. However, throughout the mid-1850s, a growing problem threatened the work he was doing at the observatory. Smoke from the increasing number of factories and coal-burning engines that could be found along the Ohio River made it increasingly difficult to see the night sky.⁶⁴

When Nicholas Longworth had given the Cincinnati Astronomical Society the land for the observatory, he had stipulated that he would retain the right to veto any proposed moving of the institution to a new location. When Mitchel approached him with the idea of moving the observatory to higher ground, away from the smog, Longworth refused to go along with the plan. So, in 1858, when the newly constructed Dudley Observatory in Albany, New York, offered him a house and a stable salary if he assumed the directorship of their institution, Mitchel regretfully accepted. However, he did not move his family to Albany until the spring of 1860 and did not resign his position at the Cincinnati Observatory until the war broke out.⁶⁵

Ormsby Mitchel showed several different leadership characteristics during his time in Cincinnati. He

⁶⁴ "The Centenary of the Cincinnati Observatory," 5 November 1943, The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1944.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

convinced a large number of Ohioans to financially support a rather far-fetched scheme of building an observatory in what was still considered the wild American frontier. When funds were short, he used his own money and materials to help the project along. But probably the greatest example of his prowess as a leader was his commitment to the observatory after Cincinnati College burned to the ground. In one fell swoop he lost the only source of income for himself and his family. Despite the fact that he could have sought a job elsewhere, he adapted to a new career in public speaking so that he could see the work on the observatory through to fruition. These kinds of experiences made him a master of adaptation when he became a leader in the Civil War.

In a similar way, James Garfield also faced some serious challenges at the Eclectic Institute. When he returned to Hiram, Ohio, and the Eclectic Institute in the summer of 1856, the school had fallen into a state of chaos and dysfunction. In many ways the students, not the faculty, ran the school. Classes did not meet on regular schedules, but met at the convenience of the pupils. The school was understaffed and discipline was lax. Some of the instructors hired by President Hayden were not fully qualified to teach their courses, because the president

had not taken the time to closely examine their credentials. One of the instructors was preparing for classes by simply reading books on the subject before he entered the classroom.⁶⁶ When Garfield beheld the state of things, he was disgusted and confided to his friend Corydon Fuller, "Had I known before all I now know, I would not have come here at all."⁶⁷

Yet he consoled himself by expecting that with his credentials, education and experiences, he would be the natural choice to replace Hayden when the president soon (hopefully) retired from the position. But as the fall term began, he became aware of the political wrangling and scheming that was taking place for the leadership of the school. The Board of Trustees at the Eclectic was divided into three camps. The first group was made up of those who wanted Hayden's continued presence at the school. They were not as concerned about the curriculum as they were personal followers of the president. The second faction were those who wanted to remove Hayden, but replace him with Norman Dunshee, a longstanding faculty member who already was taking on some of the presidential responsibilities due to Hayden's frequent absences.

⁶⁶ Garfield, *Diaries*, pp. 283, 285, 300.

⁶⁷ James Garfield to Corydon Fuller, 18 September 1856, Garfield Papers, James A. Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

Dunshee was part of the group of individuals who formed some of the earliest Disciples congregations, thus many of the senior members of the board supported him. The third camp was composed of those who wanted to replace Hayden with Garfield and of the three groups, they were the most vocal and vigorous.⁶⁸ His supporters had begun to see Garfield's growing leadership abilities and believed he would guide the school to greater success.

By the end of the spring term, the conditions at the Eclectic had gotten so bad that a large majority of the faculty, led mostly by Dunshee, threatened to resign *en masse* if new leadership for the school was not chosen immediately. Despite the support that Hayden still enjoyed among some of the trustees, the actions of the faculty compelled the board to "retire" the president. The trustees then had to decide on Hayden's replacement.⁶⁹

The twelve members of the Board of Trustees met to choose a new president, but they were unable to come to a unanimous decision. The unusual relationships between the three factions of the school were quite evident. Those who had supported Hayden did not want Dunshee because they felt that he had conspired to remove the former president.

⁶⁸ Peskin, *Garfield*, pp. 48-49.

⁶⁹ F.M. Green, *Hiram College and the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute: Fifty Years of History, 1850 - 1900* (Cleveland: O.S. Hubbell Printing Company, 1901), pp. 29-30.

At the same time, they were concerned about Garfield's young age and the fact that he had been exposed to the liberalities of New England. In the end, they came to a compromise that put Garfield into the leadership position, without actually doing so. The trustees avoided electing a president, but instead, chose to have the faculty continue collectively making decisions for the Eclectic and then made Garfield 'chairman' of the faculty.⁷⁰

Initially, no one was happy with the arrangement. Dunshee, despite having any evidence to support the claim, asserted that Garfield had always coveted the presidency and had used him to unseat Hayden. Dunshee and his confederates even went so far as to dredge up his less-than-appropriate conduct with a female classmates when he was a student to indicate that Garfield was not a wise choice to lead the school. Garfield, himself, felt like the compromise demonstrated that he did not have the confidence of the board and that they were just waiting for the moment that he made an error, so they could then remove him. His letters to friends during this time frequently referred to his colleagues as predators and

⁷⁰ Rushford, *Political Disciple*, p. 84.

vultures, looking for any weakness they could exploit to get at him.⁷¹

But Garfield relished the opportunity to show his leadership capabilities. Determined to prove his detractors wrong, Garfield immersed himself in his new position and began by formulating a new curriculum and instituting discipline on campus. Many historians of the college, along with Garfield biographers, mark a new beginning for the Eclectic Institute in 1857 with Garfield's ascension to the leadership of the school. Nearly all agree that the school changed at this time from a regional academy for training ministers to a high quality college that offered a variety of programs.⁷²

The first task Garfield tackled was the Eclectic Institute's curriculum and schedule. Using his experiences at Williams as a guide, he established a concrete schedule that students were to follow. He published a brand new catalog that defined the curriculum and set up ground rules for student conduct. And while Christianity continued to be an important factor at the Eclectic, the school expanded its programs to include more practical

⁷¹ James Garfield to Corydon Fuller, 30 August 1857 and 16 January 1858, Garfield Papers, James A. Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

⁷² Conley, *Religious Beliefs*, p. 14; Rushford, *Political Disciple*, p. 85; Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 50; Green, *Hiram College*, p. 32; Hinsdale, *President Garfield*, p. 55.

subjects such as science, government and even physical education.⁷³ While there were still plenty of grumblers who disliked the changes that Garfield was making, for the most part, his development of the Eclectic was well received.

After a year of being the "chairman" of the faculty of the Eclectic Institute, Garfield had brought about tremendous positive changes to the school. Some of those who had initially feared Garfield's youth would lead the school to disaster were now forced to admit they were wrong. This slight change in the Board's outlook led them to finally officially elect Garfield as the president of the Eclectic. And in 1859, the Board of Trustees fired Roger Dunshee, the *de facto* leader of those who opposed Garfield and replaced him with J. Harrison Rhodes, one of Garfield's friends. He considered this series of events personal victories and a confirmation of his leadership abilities.

Much like Claudius Wistar Sears, Garfield developed and honed his leadership skills in a time of trial and tribulation when he was given partial control of the Eclectic Institute. Despite the miniscule vote of

⁷³ James Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, 15 January, 1857, Garfield Papers, Mentor, OH.

confidence he received from the Board of Trustees, Garfield struck out boldly to change the small college for the better. All along the way, colleagues such as Roger Dunshee harried and harassed the young "chairman of the faculty." Garfield, however, maintained his composure and continued to revolutionize education at the Eclectic. He avoided the pitfalls of the growing schism in the Disciples denomination by keeping himself focused on the task at hand - turning the Eclectic Institute into a first-rate institution of higher learning. When Dunshee was dismissed, Garfield's vision for the school was confirmed and he emerged from the controversy victorious.

Several of the subjects of this study were innovators in the classroom and as such, they faced a variety of challenges. When Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain took the position of Special Instructor of Logic and Revealed Religion, the two went hand-in-hand. Science and logic were seen by many mid-nineteenth century educators as nothing more than proof of the supremacy of God in the universe. The idea that the sciences controverted their spiritual beliefs was a foreign concept on the New England college campus. Ann Rose states, "The pre-Darwinian belief in the compatibility of natural science and faith permitted a scientific outlook to insinuate itself in

place of faltering modes of thought that probed supernatural truth."⁷⁴ In the mid-nineteenth century, works by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer that made science into its own form of religion were beginning to emerge, but would not take hold for several decades. Thus, to Chamberlain, theology was important to scientific thought and study as well as an integral part of receiving a proper education. With these ideals, he began teaching at Bowdoin College in the fall of 1855.

After only one year of teaching logic, he was promoted to the position of professor of rhetoric and oratory, taking the place of his friend and mentor, Henry Boody. While he was happy with his new job, he found some of the work tedious. In one year alone, he had to read almost 1,100 themes written by young, often ill-prepared underclassmen. Frequently, his students would have to correct, then re-submit the same theme several times before Chamberlain felt their work was finally acceptable. However, taking his cue from Henry Boody, he strove to be encouraging and constructive as much as possible. In a letter to Nehemiah Cleaveland, Chamberlain wrote, "Let a young man be encouraged to put forth his best even if it

⁷⁴ Anne C. Rose, *Victorian America and the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 41.

is for the moment worthless. Let the poor fellow's thought and striving have a little sunshine, we must nurture first."⁷⁵ In a letter to his cousin, Sarah, Chamberlain, he wrote, "It is important to be encouraging to these young men as they begin their studies."⁷⁶ He maintained his positive attitude regarding the work of his students, but the work could be mentally draining at times.

His solution to the drudgery was two-fold. First, he labored to maintain a positive attitude regarding his work and his role as a mentor. In one letter he wrote, "If such duties as these are drudgeries, then I do drudgery without knowing it."⁷⁷ His second solution was a semi-annual private retreat during which he would read scholarly works, create innovative teaching methods and plan the following semester's coursework. He also took plenty of time for physical exercise. In a letter to Bowdoin College's Board of Trustees written in 1858, Chamberlain wrote, "The ordinary duties of the department are of such a nature as to require of the professor a constant course

⁷⁵ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Nehemiah Cleaveland, 14 October 1859, The Chamberlain Collection, Bowdoin College Archives.

⁷⁶ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Sarah Chamberlain, 11 September 1857, The Chamberlain Papers, Pejepscot Historical Society.

⁷⁷ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Nehemiah Cleaveland, 14 October 1859, The Chamberlain Collection, Bowdoin College Archives.

of compensating and invigorating studies."⁷⁸ After a time of mental and physical recharging, he would then begin writing his lectures. In a letter to a friend in Connecticut written in 1859, he described some of the lessons on which he was working. "I am preparing several lectures on various topics. . . 'Truthfulness as an Element of Style' - 'The Laws of Mental Growth' - 'The Logic of Expression.' These I propose to deliver to the Junior class in the summer term."⁷⁹ The young professor's goal was always to challenge himself intellectually and keep his mental abilities sharp for whatever lay ahead.

Chamberlain had very fixed ideas as to the best ways to educate properly young men. First, he believed that each individual student had particular needs, just as he had when a student at Bowdoin. Education was not a one-size-fits-all experience. In one letter to a colleague, Chamberlain wrote, "I firmly believe that what is most vital in education cannot be given by outward forms or rules."⁸⁰ To truly educate, Lawrence believed that the teacher must be willing to look inward, to his relationship with each student.

⁷⁸ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Board of Trustees, 11 November 1858, The Chamberlain Collection, Bowdoin College Archives.

⁷⁹ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Nehemiah Cleaveland, 14 October 1859, The Chamberlain Collection, Bowdoin College Archives.

⁸⁰ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Board of Trustees, 11 November 1858, The Chamberlain Collection, Bowdoin College Archives.

Second, education must have a high degree of appeal. Chamberlain was greatly frustrated by the lackluster and dry atmosphere that was so common in the college classroom. The emphasis at Bowdoin College was on the traditional practice of student recitation exercises. The classroom was without meaningful dialogue between students and professors.⁸¹ Chamberlain worked to begin this kind of dialogue. One fundamental change that he made in this area was to meet individually with each of his students on a regular basis.⁸² With them, he evaluated their needs and designed coursework that would be particularly useful. He believed that his students would learn more if he were able to present the material in an appealing and practical manner.

The relationships that he developed with his students helped him to become a great military leader, as he was much better able to understand the needs of his soldiers when he became a military commander. His ability to communicate with those under his authority was another skill that he developed as a professor that translated well when he became an officer.

⁸¹ Singleton, *Rhetoric and Change*, p. 15.

⁸² Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Nehemiah Cleaveland, September 1857, *The Chamberlain Papers*, Pejepscot Historical Society.

Other professors at Bowdoin also began to adopt these kinds of ideas in dealing with students. Professor Roswell D. Hitchcock, whom Chamberlain had replaced wrote,

First of all (a professor's) care is to make the particular acquaintance of each individual student, as he enters upon his college course; gaining if possible, his confidence that he may learn his character and adopt the wisest measures for the mental and moral advancement of each and of all. To this end, the students are invited to his house; called upon so far as practicable, at their rooms; and in every way encouraged to make him their friend.⁸³

With the departure of Hitchcock, Chamberlain lost an ally in his efforts to reach out to students on a more personal level. Only a small number of professors at Bowdoin believed that they should befriend their students. More common was the perspective of Thomas Cogswell Upham who had been professor of Moral Philosophy and Biblical Literature since 1825. He wrote, "It is a disservice to the student to distract him with fanciful stories or overly kind words. It is our purpose here, to educate men for service. . ."⁸⁴ Professor William Smyth, despite being somewhat of an innovator in the mathematics department when he began the use of the blackboard in his classes

⁸³ Annual Report of Professor Roswell Dwight Hitchcock (1850), Bowdoin College Historical Records 1792 - 1858, Bowdoin College Archives.

⁸⁴ Annual Report of Professor Thomas Upham (1852), Bowdoin College Historical Records 1792 - 1858, Bowdoin College Archives.

wrote, "It is not in the general interest of our institution to refrain from the just and proper use of discipline in the classroom. . . ." ⁸⁵

The type of education that Chamberlain wished to provide to his students was frowned upon by many of the long-standing members of Bowdoin's faculty. This conflict led to a prime example of Chamberlain's powers of perseverance and leadership. Soon after he had become the Professor of Rhetoric at Bowdoin, many of the long-standing members of Bowdoin's faculty openly turned against his ideas on education. They exhorted him to continue some of the traditional methods of teaching. ⁸⁶ The "Gentlemen" as Chamberlain called them, also had strong ideas about how a college class should be taught. Continuing the theme of Appleton's contract with students and the imposed code of conduct, they believed that a college professor should be an austere, patriarchal figure as well as a strict disciplinarian. Chamberlain was anything but austere. He once wrote to his wife and said, "Some of the faculty rule their classes too sternly and they wish me to do the same." ⁸⁷ He often found that

⁸⁵ William Smyth to the Board of Trustees, (date illegible) Bowdoin College Historical Records 1792 - 1858, Bowdoin College Archives.

⁸⁶ Trulock, *Hands of Providence*, p. 18.

⁸⁷ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Fannie Chamberlain, 20 May 1857, The Chamberlain Papers, Pejepscot Historical Society.

President Woods was one of his only allies in this regard. Two of his three mentors as an undergraduate, Professors Stowe and Goodwin had left Bowdoin College by this time.

Lawrence preferred a more relaxed and friendly atmosphere in his classroom. He had gained so much from his experiences with Goodwin and Boody, which he greatly desired to pass this on to his students. Robert Singleton writes, "Chamberlain's training and natural human qualities. . .brought him to his greatest strengths as a teacher - empathy, affection for his students and flexibility of rhetoric."⁸⁸ He strongly believed in getting to know his students and dealing with them on an individual basis as much as possible. It is important to remember that it had only been three years since he himself had been a student at Bowdoin. In some cases, Chamberlain was only a few years older than his students. He could easily identify with the many struggles they were facing.

Also in contrast to most of his older colleagues, Professor Chamberlain saw himself as more of a mentor than a simple evaluator. He believed that his individual relationship with a student was more powerful than anything that he might write on a student's assignment.

⁸⁸ Singleton, *Rhetoric and Change*, p. 18.

I do not consider it the chief post of a professor only to "correct themes." Though this, it would seem, is all that is generally expected of him. Now, "correction" is necessary; but I do not know that a few remarks on the margins of a theme will make it any more serviceable in the kindling of the student's next fire.⁸⁹

In several cases, he acted or spoke on behalf of students who were late paying their tuition or were struggling academically. One such student had fallen behind in his coursework and his parents planned to remove him from school to take a job in Portland. Chamberlain hastily wrote a letter to the young man's father.

I have taken some interest in your son's case. . . During the five months he was reciting for me, his attention to study gave me great satisfaction. I regret exceedingly that it has turned out for him so. I shall be glad if anything in my power to do, could assist him in carrying out this good resolution he has made.⁹⁰

Chamberlain believed that it was his responsibility to do everything he could to serve his students.

The young professor also disagreed with the way that many of Bowdoin College's faculty placed little value on coursework that would not lend itself to training future ministers or doctors. Other professors wanted their

⁸⁹ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Nehemiah Cleaveland, September 1857, The Chamberlain Papers, Pejepscot Historical Society.

⁹⁰ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Francis Smith, 1 October 1859, The Chamberlain Collection, Bowdoin College Archives.

students to take only the classes that were in their field of study. Chamberlain wanted his students to get as much training in as many subjects as they could. He believed that science, literature and languages were very important in the total development of the student and would be useful no matter what their chosen profession. In a letter to a colleague, Lawrence stated, "My idea of a college course is that it should afford a liberal education. . . involving such acquaintance with all the departments of knowledge and culture."⁹¹ He also believed that all students should graduate from college with good writing and oratorical skills. Chamberlain considered these elements of education necessary in order for the United States to continue to strengthen as a nation.

Chamberlain's feelings in regard to these educational matters were quite different than those of most of his colleagues in mid-19th Century New England. He began to notice the pressure from several of the more distinguished members of Bowdoin's faculty to change his views. Despite his junior status, Chamberlain held his ground. He continued to teach his classes in his preferred format, disregarding the exhortations of his colleagues.

⁹¹ Joshua Chamberlain to Nehemiah Cleaveland, 14 October 1859, Chamberlain Collection, Pejepscot Historical Society.

Chamberlain's attention to their welfare earned him the undying loyalty of many of his students. The journals and diaries of many of his students tell of the respect and admiration that they held for him. John Deering, one of Chamberlain's students, wrote, "He is a fine scholar. It seems to be the aim of the instructor (referring to Chamberlain) to furnish us, or rather to cause us to lay for ourselves, a solid foundation upon which we can build a thorough knowledge."⁹² By calling Chamberlain a "scholar," Deering was not referring to any works published by Chamberlain. He was only alluding to the large body of knowledge that Chamberlain displayed in the classroom. At the end of one semester, a group of students wrote him the following letter:

Having been permitted to listen from Sabbath to Sabbath during the past term to your interesting and profitable explanations of the Word of God, we entreat you to accept this simple expression, not only of our sincere thanks, but also of our love and esteem for the kind and brotherly interest which you have shown in our temporal and eternal welfare.⁹³

The letter closed with "Your Affectionate Pupils" and was signed by twelve students. Chamberlain built strong

⁹² Diary of John Deering (1857 - 1859), Bowdoin College Historical Collection, Bowdoin College Archives.

⁹³ Class to Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, 19 November 1855, The Chamberlain Collection, Bowdoin College Archives.

relationships with his students and they recognized and appreciated the interest that he took in them.

James Garfield was also an innovator in the classroom. As a teacher, Garfield followed in the footsteps of his mentor, Mark Hopkins. He did not want his students to follow the same precepts for learning as the past generations, namely rote memorization and recitation. He viewed these methods as being more of a hindrance to true learning. Instead, he wanted each student to discover the joy of intellectual pursuits. One of his colleagues at the Eclectic, W. H. Everest, wrote of Garfield that, "he gave more attention to the boy than to the book."⁹⁴ He treated his students as individuals, not automatons.

Besides his teaching methodology, Garfield brought an immense amount of energy and enthusiasm to the classroom. Some students recalled that he even occasionally used humor in his lectures, something quite unusual for the times. His classes were so popular that not even a start time of 5:00 a.m. kept students away from his geology class.⁹⁵ Garfield was quick to praise his students for progress, recognizing that Hopkins' words of encouragement to him had meant so much. At the same time, he held

⁹⁴ Hinsdale, *President Garfield*, p. 53.

⁹⁵ Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 52.

resolutely to standards and expected his students to challenge themselves. When they became discouraged or confused, he was there to offer "a great brotherly arm" in support.⁹⁶

Northerners were not the only educational innovators. In 1859 the East Alabama College at Tuskegee elected Perry to be their president and so he resigned his position as superintendent to assume the new position. The school was a college for women that had been founded by the Baptist Church in 1852. At the beginning its curriculum mostly centered on teaching young southern women theology, manners, music, and literature. But with new faculty members who began arriving in 1856, this gradually changed.⁹⁷

Educational reformers like Perry saw women as a civilizing influence on the uncivilized southwest. By providing southern women with a proper education, he believed that they would then have the tools to help with the transformation of Alabama society into a noble, urbane and thriving populace. Robert Hunt writes, "(Perry) argued that education made it possible to create a society which ruled by something other than the constant demonstration

⁹⁶ Hinsdale, *President Garfield*, p. 64.

⁹⁷ Isabella Blandin, *The History of Higher Education of Women in the South prior to 1860* (Washington: Zenger Publishing Company, 1975), pp. 98-99.

of force.”⁹⁸ It was the ideal of Republican Motherhood; it was just appearing much later than it did in the north.

Perry helped to institute a more classical curriculum that focused on mathematics, science, and rhetoric. Women were taught Latin and Greek as well as critical thinking and public speaking. With Perry’s name then attached to the school as its president, it began to grow at a solid pace. Forty-five students attended East Alabama College in 1855; by 1861, the school had sixty-five attendees.

Despite the fact that Perry himself was not a Baptist, he received a tremendous show of support from the largely Baptist board of overseers when they agreed to raise his salary and give him a greater role in the plans for the school.⁹⁹ But as the Civil War broke out in 1861, Perry’s attention turned from his administrative duties to the Tuskegee newspapers providing reports of the war.

As the president of East Alabama Female College, Perry introduced a completely new curriculum that provided women with more than just instruction in music and poetry. He gained the admiration and respect of the Baptists who served as trustees of the school despite not being Baptist himself. And while he possessed many of the necessary

⁹⁸ Hunt, *Organizing a New South*, p. 282.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

character traits as he began his tenure as an educator, it was his experiences in Alabama that shaped him into an excellent leader.

Another form of controversy which tested the leadership capabilities of the subjects of this study was in the tremendous changes in Christianity which occurred following the Second Great Awakening. By the time that Lawrence became a professor at Bowdoin, the war between Congregationalism and Unitarianism had been raging throughout New England for several decades. Unitarians were at the forefront of many of the educational reform issues of the mid-nineteenth century, which tended to aggravate conservative Congregationalists even further.¹⁰⁰ William Channing and others saw the advent of the publicly funded school system as the opportunity to bring legitimacy to Unitarianism. In a famous statement, Horace Mann said, "Education beyond all other devices of human origin, is the greater equalizer of the conditions of men."¹⁰¹ They believed that in making public education non-sectarian, they could begin to relax the grip that conservative Congregationalism had on many aspects of life in New England as well as instruct children in the

¹⁰⁰ Wright, *The Unitarian Controversy*, p. 109.

¹⁰¹ Binder, *The Age of the Common School*, p. 50.

benefits of Protestant civic virtue. The idea of responsibility and service to the fledgling United States and the surge of nationalism created by the War of 1812 and the "Era of Good Feelings" were important facets of the reforms supported by the Unitarians. Another important aspect of the beliefs of reformers like Horace Mann was that education was to be inclusive of youth from all economic and religious backgrounds. Even though much of Mann's rhetoric was similar to their own, conservatives continued to fight against the restructuring that Mann proposed.

Despite the fact that he was an active member of the Brunswick Congregational Church and had gone to college with the idea of becoming a Congregational minister, Lawrence held some beliefs that were more consistent with the Unitarian faith. The themes of civic virtue and serving the public good expressed by many Unitarians were the cornerstone to many of his own feelings. Chamberlain expressed confidence in the human intellect to discern that which was right and he found orthodoxy's reliance on fear and punishment to be depressing. He did, however,

disagree with the liberties that many Unitarians took with the Scriptures.¹⁰²

Chamberlain and two of the leading educators at Bowdoin, Professor Upham and Professor Smyth, who were both dedicated, conservative Congregationalists, were soon to clash over these issues. Upham viewed Bowdoin College as a bastion of traditional theology in the encroaching sea of liberalism.¹⁰³ While they were not enthusiastic about Chamberlain's leanings, they were satisfied that he possessed adequate Congregational convictions and they felt confident in his abilities. They also believed they could influence him because Lawrence was so young. Chamberlain, however, was resolute in his beliefs and just as in the case of his teaching methods, refused to bow to pressure. However, when the Civil War broke out, Upham and Smyth discovered how little control they had over their youthful colleague.

James Garfield also faced religious controversy at the Eclectic. For different generations to see life differently is nothing new in American history. Young people in the 1920s rebelled against what they saw as the repressive lifestyles of the Victorian Era. A similar

¹⁰² "Relevance of the Scripture in the Modern World" an oratory delivered by Joshua L. Chamberlain for the Peucinian Society, Maine State Archives.

¹⁰³ Calhoun, *A Small College*, p. 168-169.

dynamic appeared amongst the Campbellites in the 1850s. Those who were older had been among the first converts to the denomination. Many of them came out of the emotional zeal of the Second Great Awakening. They were purists whose life centered around the church and for whom all other aspects of life, including a classical education, were less important, if not trivial.

The younger generation were the children of those original converts. While they had been raised in very devout Disciples homes, many of them did not have the same life-changing experiences and thus they were more interested in the tangible world around them. They were still committed to the faith of their parents; they simply saw themselves as "in the world," not separate from it. This was the source of conflict on the Eclectic Institute campus that had affected Garfield's ascension to a leadership position and continued to be a source of tension during his tenure there.

One of the greatest areas of contention between Garfield and the 'Old Guard' was the very purpose and mission of the Eclectic Institute. President Hayden had wanted the school for training ministers for the denomination, thus only sought to reach out to those who belonged to the Disciples. Garfield, on the other hand,

wanted the school to have wider appeal. In his journal he wrote, "My aim has been to introduce the school more fully to the community in general. . .we have reached some of the strongest men in the county."¹⁰⁴ One of the reasons that Garfield sought to expand the intellectual offerings of the school was to attract a wider variety of students. At this, it would appear, he was highly successful as the enrollment at the Eclectic Institute grew rapidly during the late 1850s. In 1859, the school surpassed 300 students for the first time in its history.¹⁰⁵

Despite these positive elements, the older generation of the Eclectic and the Disciples denomination in the area continued to criticize Garfield's leadership. Since many of the policy decisions he was making brought about positive results, the first generation Disciples singled out his character for critique. They complained that everything he was doing was for his own aggrandizement and claimed his motives were sinister.¹⁰⁶ When he refused to allow the Eclectic to host an anti-slavery rally, they called him the "prince of slaveholders" despite the fact that he had helped smuggle a slave into Canada.¹⁰⁷ Garfield dealt with these individuals with as much patience as he

¹⁰⁴ Garfield, *Diaries*, p. 300.

¹⁰⁵ Rushford, *Political Disciple*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁶ Garfield, *Diaries*, p. 302.

¹⁰⁷ Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 58.

could muster, but cathartically released his feelings in his journal and in letters to his friends. While in public he simply tried to keep his mind on the task of developing young intellectuals.

Garfield's handling of his constant criticism at the Eclectic greatly helped in the development of his leadership skills. The situation forced him to trust in his abilities and make difficult decisions in the face of great opposition. It was precisely these traits that he demonstrated at a Union officer.

The individuals of this study demonstrated important leadership qualities as teachers, educators and scientists. They showed an ability to improvise and ingenuity to achieve their goals. When they met resistance, they strived to overcome whatever obstacles were thrown into their path and kept their eyes focused on what they wished to achieve. Furthermore, the subjects of this study took the lead in instituting new ideas and developing new methodologies, never just content to keep the status quo.

More importantly, however, the world of education helped these men recognize they were part of a larger society that needed them. In the South, education reformers like William Flank Perry and Claudius Wistar

Sears recognized that aspects of their culture were antagonistic to learning, thus they became part of a crusade to make education more accessible to southerners. In the North, educators like James Garfield and Joshua Chamberlain fought against a mindless orthodoxy that hampered learning and also became part of a crusade to make education more accessible to northerners.

Many of them also learned the importance of developing relationships with their students. Educators, from both North and South, worked to influence the individual lives of their students. Whether it was Joshua Chamberlain speaking up for a student at Bowdoin College or Claudius Wistar Sears using his own money to pay for academic prizes at the University of Louisiana, the subjects of this study saw leadership as more than just bending minds to their will. They learned to communicate with and relate to their students. It was these attitudes towards education that served them so successfully as military leaders. Thus, before these men made decisions to participate in America's terrible Civil War, many of them had already earned their stripes as educators in their various localities.

Chapter 5 - Joining the Fight

As the nation descended into civil war in the spring of 1861, the nine educators in this study felt compelled to act. For some, this meant joining the army as soon as it could be arranged. For others, it meant initially trying to provide important support services to their respective causes. For example, some helped to recruit young men by traveling around the area and giving stirring speeches on fighting for their nation or state's honor. Others took part in preparing defenses for their communities, while still others helped to train young men for battle. These men did not act because they sought the glory of battle (although some did hope to distinguish themselves). They all participated in their various ways because of a sense of duty. As students and educators they were part of a values system that extolled the virtues of personal initiative and service to their nation or state.

By the summer of 1862, all nine of the educators in this study had joined the army. By the fall of 1862, all nine had seen action. They entered the army in a variety of ways. Some were immediately accepted as officers, while others had to work their way up the ranks. All of them, however, were acutely aware that their time as teachers

had given them important skills that could be used to lead men in battle. They were good communicators, were familiar with handling crises and had the ability to inspire young men into action. Many of them showed an ability to relate to their men that brought them respect and admiration. It was their understanding of their own skills combined with a strong sense of duty that brought them to the battlefield.

Some of the subjects of this study joined the war effort even before the firing on Fort Sumter. In South Carolina, the birthplace of secession, James Pettigrew had developed a reputation as a man of both high character and strong leadership. As events continued to escalate, he was consulted by many of the state's leading politicians on ways they could prepare for trouble and by the summer of 1860, Pettigrew felt fairly certain that trouble was on the horizon. Like many southerners he was greatly troubled by John Brown's failed attempt to start a slave insurrection and wanted his state to be better prepared in case they were attacked. He decided to advertise around Charleston that he was raising a regiment of special soldiers. After his time as a professor at the naval observatory, Pettigrew had spent time in Europe. In his travels around the continent, he had come to admire the

elite light fighting units of France, the Zouaves; having seen them in action in Italy, he wished to create and train a similar unit in South Carolina. He believed that his education and extensive travels made him the perfect choice to lead such a group of soldiers.¹

The newly formed Washington Light Infantry elected Pettigrew as its lieutenant and began their training as the Election of 1860 heated up. Following the example he had seen in Europe, Pettigrew prescribed serious physical training and daily drills. He even modeled the uniform after the French "Chasseurs D'Vincennes." Wanting men of only the highest "moral character and gentlemanly deportment," he added his own honor code that prohibited members from visiting taverns or houses of prostitution. Once again, these characteristics were required of those who wished to take leadership positions in the South. Many citizens of Charleston came out to watch the Washington Light Infantry conduct their drills and the unit quickly became the talk of the town.²

Throughout the summer and early fall of 1860, Pettigrew guided his fellow South Carolinians in their preparations for the conflict that was coming. He stressed

¹ Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, pp. 119-120.

² Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, p 122.

the importance of training a well-disciplined militia, wrote an article in which he pointed out the flaws of the current system and made proposals for improvement. The main thrust of his argument centered around discipline and sacrifice. He complained that many men of the South had grown lazy and complacent. He believed most Southern men had an unrealistic view of battle and military life and wanted South Carolinians to start taking the impending threat more seriously. Pettigrew also suggested methods to finance a military buildup and kept himself abreast of changes in martial technology so that he could advise South Carolina on weapons purchases.³ Inexplicably, the state did not adopt many of Pettigrew's ideas.

After Abraham Lincoln won the presidency in November 1860, the governor of South Carolina, William Henry Gist, requested that Pettigrew prepare a report on what the state needed to do to prepare for a war with the United States. Secession was a foregone conclusion at this point and Pettigrew feared that South Carolina would be the Union's first target if war broke out. In response to Gist's request, Pettigrew wrote "Memoir on the Armament of South Carolina," which echoed the ideas of his earlier

³ James Johnston Pettigrew, "The Militia System of South Carolina" Russell's Magazine, March 1860, UNC Archives.

essay, but was much more detailed. It contained instructions for organizing units, discussed the usage of slaves for menial military-related tasks and focused on South Carolina's two most immediate problems: procuring weapons and organizing a system of military administration.⁴

Governor Gist, however, did not have time to take much action before a new governor, Francis Pickens, was elected. Pickens immediately made James Johnston Pettigrew, a man with no real military experience, one of his top military advisors. When Major Robert Anderson spiked the guns at Fort Moultrie and withdrew his men to Fort Sumter on December 27th, 1860, it was James Johnston Pettigrew whom Governor Gist sent out to meet with Anderson to ascertain the Union officer's intentions.⁵ Eventually, he was made the colonel of the First Rifle Regiment of South Carolina and prepared to lead his state into the Civil War.

Claudius Wistar Sears also got an early start in his involvement in the Civil War. As the presidential campaign of 1860 went into full swing, Claudius Wistar Sears had resigned his position at the University of Louisiana. He

⁴ James Johnston Pettigrew, "Memoir on the Armament of South Carolina" A photocopy of a manuscript from the North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

⁵ Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, p. 137.

relocated to Holly Springs, Mississippi and took over the leadership of a small academy called St. Thomas Hall where he had briefly taught mathematics after graduating from West Point. The precise reason for his return to Holly Springs is unclear; however, the fact that the school had recently been converted into a military academy may be an indication of his plans.

Beginning in the mid-1850s, Southerners grew increasingly aware of the fact that they would have to fight to protect the institution of slavery. Especially after John Brown's failed raid on Harper's Ferry, Southern men took the already existing interest that Southern culture held for things martial and turned it into mania. Fraternities at Southern schools like Cumberland University and La Grange College began to organize into local military clubs complete with drilling and shooting practice. Liberal arts colleges like St. Thomas Hall were converted into military academies or began offering instruction in military tactics. These actions usually occurred with the full support of the schools' faculty and administration.

For example, St. Thomas Hall began as an Episcopal preparatory academy that had provided schooling for many of Mississippi's elite young men. But in fall of 1860, the

board of trustees of the school requested of the denomination that the institution be changed to a military academy. The annual meeting of the denomination in April 1861 was ironically held in Holly Springs where St. Thomas Hall was located. They gladly reported,

During the past year, the Board of Trustees, duly impressed with the advantages possessed by schools under military organization, have in addition to its scientific and classical departments, made St. Thomas' Hall a Military Academy; and, a gentleman of large experience and well-known ability, Prof. C. W. Sears, a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy; and for many years acting President of the University of Louisiana, has been elected Superintendent of the school. Favored with such an efficient Head, ease of access, and located in one of the healthiest portions of the State, we cordially commend this Institution to the confidence of our brethren in the Diocese at large, who are seeking an establishment of the highest grade for the education of their sons.⁶

The decision probably had less to do with "the advantages of military organization" as it did the degree of insecurity that many Southerners were feeling now that war was upon them. They wanted a place of their own to train young men to fight and lead. After all, West Point was in New York and Virginia Military Institute was far away.

⁶ Journal of the Protestant Episcopal Convention for the Diocese of Mississippi, April 1861, The American South Collection, UNC Archives.

After a short time at St. Thomas Hall, Sears had completely reorganized the school to follow much of the curriculum offered at West Point. He continued, however, to teach mathematics throughout most of the spring of 1861 while keeping watch on the early events of the war.⁷

Claudius Wistar Sears was genuinely concerned about the Confederacy's chances. Having been born in Massachusetts and spending most of his formative years in New York, he was fully aware of the strengths of the northern states. However, he had never really developed strong ties to the North. As an adult he was not particularly close to his immediate family, most of whom still resided in Massachusetts and New York. Conversely, after graduating from West Point, he married into a Texas slave-holding family. Given the choice, he decided that fighting for his new family and home of almost two decades was more important than the oath he had taken at West Point.

In June 1861 Sears formally offered his services to the state of Mississippi and was originally given command of a group of men from Calhoun County called the "Magnolia Guards." This unit became part of the newly formed 17th Mississippi Infantry regiment and Sears was commissioned

⁷ Ibid.

captain.⁸ In late June his unit headed east, soon to take part in the Battle of Bull Run.

Other subjects of this study joined up within weeks of the firing on Fort Sumter. At his new position in Albany, New York, Ormsby Mitchel heard of the firing on Ft. Sumter and realized that his country needed him. He left Albany in the spring of 1861 and returned to Ohio; like Garfield, he offered his services to Governor Dennison, then returned to Cincinnati. Dennison contacted Abraham Lincoln who, because of Dennison's words of high praise, commissioned Mitchel as a Brigadier General. Dennison, in turn, put Mitchel in charge of Ohio volunteers. As he left his former home in Cincinnati to report to the governor, he gave a stirring speech to a group of well-wishers.

Earlier in his life as a lecturer on astronomy, he had liberally sprinkled his speeches with references to God.⁹ Now on the subject of civil war, he continued the same practice. Claiming that men such as himself could only do their duty, he proclaimed that God was the ultimate arbiter who would see the nation preserved. He called on more Ohioans to join the Union ranks and "save

⁸ Dunbar Rowland, *The Military History of Mississippi, 1803 - 1898* The Official Statistical Records of the State of Mississippi, 1908.

⁹ Headley, *Patriot Boy*, pp. 117-119.

our blessed nation from the ravages of treason" and consistently referred to the northern armies as instruments of the Lord.¹⁰

After visiting briefly with the governor, Mitchel was sent east to Washington to report to the newly promoted General George McClellan. McClellan promptly assigned him to General William B. Franklin's brigade, which was part of the VI Corps of the Army of the Potomac. His time there under a seasoned career army officer helped him to relearn the ways of the military that he had left behind thirty years earlier.

Meanwhile, the citizens of Cincinnati were beginning to grow nervous, as Kentucky became an early battleground state. Confederate and Union forces tangled there on several occasions during the summer and early fall of 1861. Feeling that the city was completely unprepared for any sort of Southern aggression, the citizens looked for salvation in the form of their former favorite son. A committee of leading citizens contacted the Governor Dennison, asking that Mitchel be reassigned to Cincinnati to help prepare defenses. He was released from his duties in the Army of the Potomac and returned to southern Ohio in the fall of 1861. Besides working on the city's

¹⁰ Mitchel, *Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel*, p. 181.

defenses, he also took it upon himself to train new recruits.¹¹ After all, teaching was one of his greatest strengths.

James Garfield was also quick to volunteer his services when news of South Carolina's secession reached Ohio. He had just begun getting active in Republican Party politics and had been a strong campaigner for Abraham Lincoln. When some Ohio Democrats began to speak of placating the South to bring defecting states back, Garfield spoke out against them, claiming that they sought to appease traitors. When others fretted about the possible cost in lives if civil war was initiated, Garfield declared, "Better to lose a million men in battle than allow the government to be overthrown."¹²

April, 1861, found James Garfield serving in the state senate of Ohio. He had just been elected to office a year and a half before and was just getting used to his life in politics. While he did not believe that any Southern state would have the gall to secede, he had run for office by underscoring the impending threat posed by the slave power. When he was elected to the senate, he looked forward to using his position to strengthen the

¹¹ Robert Wimberg, *Cincinnati and the Civil War: Under Attack!* (Cincinnati: Ohio Books, 1999), pp. 26-27.

¹² James Garfield to J. H. Rhodes, 14 April 1861, Garfield Papers, Library of Congress.

anti-slavery sentiment of his state. Garfield was confident in his ability to reach individuals with his powerful and persuasive oratory. Thus, it seemed to him that politics was the most logical career choice at this crucial crossroads for the nation.¹³

However, even before the firing on Fort Sumter, Garfield was eager to fight. Between South Carolina's secession and that fateful day in April, Senator Garfield began making preparations for both himself and his state to go to war. On January 24th he proposed legislation to raise a 6,000 man militia to deal with any threat that might arise. The bill had wide support, but a coalition of Democrats and conservative (Garfield called them "emasculated") Republicans managed to defeat the measure. Garfield was angry, particularly at the fellow Republicans who had opposed the militia bill, calling them timid and weak.¹⁴ He warned them that events had been set in motion that could not be stopped and that their actions would only mean that Ohio would be unprepared for the inevitable conflict.

He also began preparing himself for battle. Garfield was convinced that military leadership did not require a

¹³ Peskin, *Garfield*, pp. 62-65.

¹⁴ Rushford, *Political Disciple*, p. 147.

West Point education or even battlefield experience, only intelligence and determination. But not wanting to be a complete novice when the inevitable military appointment came, he began studying military textbooks and the histories of major military leaders such as Napoleon.¹⁵ His language in letters and conversation to friends and colleagues was steeped in martial and crusade-evoking terms. He used Biblical anecdotes as illustrations and proclaimed, "I believe the doom of slavery is drawing near. Let war come. . .and a magazine will be lighted whose explosion must shake the whole fabric of slavery."¹⁶

When the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, Garfield felt a degree of vindication. The peace Democrats and "emasculated" Republicans' attempts at bringing the nation back together by appeasing the South had failed as Garfield had said they would. He began to campaign for a military appointment with a two-fold strategy. First, he played a prominent role in the raising of the 7th Ohio Volunteer Regiment from his old stomping grounds, hoping to become its colonel. Second, he traveled throughout the Western Reserve giving speeches at churches and community meetings to raise civilian support for the war. He

¹⁵ James Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, 14 April 1861, Garfield Papers, James Garfield Museum, Mentor, OH.

¹⁶ James Garfield to B. A. Hinsdale, 15 January 1861, Garfield Papers, Library of Congress.

especially enjoyed speaking at churches where his religious rhetoric was particularly appreciated. In both regards, he was successful, but the desired colonelcy eluded him.¹⁷

Because regiments from Ohio raised in the early stages of the war were allowed to elect their leaders, it was up to the men of the 7th Ohio to determine whom their commander would be. Thus, it was very much like running for a civilian office and, as in the case of civilian office, it is very hard to win if one does not campaign. In the weeks leading up to the 7th Ohio's decision, Garfield was away in Illinois fulfilling a request made of him by Governor William Dennison. Meanwhile, his main competition for the position, Erastus Tyler, was actively moving about the regimental camp drawing followers. Tyler, a Democrat from Ravenna, had some military experience and had raised more troops for the 7th than Garfield. These things, combined with Garfield's absence in the weeks leading up to the vote, guaranteed Tyler the victory.¹⁸

Stunned at this turn of events, Garfield scrambled to find another regiment to command, but no opportunity

¹⁷ Peskin, *Garfield*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

presented itself. In disgust, Garfield struck out at Tyler and his "treachery."¹⁹ Since getting involved in politics, he had grown to distrust Democrats. He considered most of them to be sneaky opportunists and this event only served to confirm those suspicions. He returned to the Eclectic Institute feeling frustrated.

When the governor contacted him and asked him to consider a lieutenant colonelcy, he declined saying that he had important business to attend to in Hiram.²⁰ This appears to have been nothing more than an excuse, not because he did not want to fight, but because he had expected to be given control of a regiment or possibly even a brigade.²¹ Garfield had great hopes of making a name for himself. In a letter to his friend, B. A. Hinsdale, written soon after secession, he wrote, "This is really a great time to live if any of us can only catch the cue of it." Starting so far down the ladder may have made it difficult for him to "catch the cue;" maybe his pride simply got in the way.

He spent most of his time in June and early July hanging around the Eclectic Institute, dealing with the idiosyncratic problems of the school. He also did some

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

²⁰ James Garfield to William Dennison, 18 June 1861, Garfield Papers, Library of Congress.

²¹ Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 87.

traveling. He briefly went to Bethany College to meet with Alexander Campbell, the leader of the Disciples of Christ, who worried about the effect of the war on his denomination. When Garfield arrived, he discovered that many of Bethany's students had run off to join the Confederacy. Seeing so many of his Disciples of Christ brethren joyfully committing treason depressed him even further. Garfield also spent some time in Michigan visiting a friend.²²

When he returned home to Ohio, he discovered a letter was waiting for him from the governor, once again asking him to take the rank of lieutenant colonel in a new Ohio regiment. This time he did not hesitate and immediately accepted the offer, realizing that it might be the only way for him to get into the war without enlisting as a private. Thus, he went to Columbus and was sworn in as lieutenant colonel of the 42nd Ohio Regiment.²³

The first challenge of the new officer was that the 42nd Ohio Regiment did not exist; it was his responsibility to raise it himself. As Chamberlain did, Garfield returned to Hiram and began recruiting his students, past and present. Some students had joined

²² Rushford, *Political Disciple*, p. 153.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

early, but many others had waited around to make sure that they could fight together, hoping that someone familiar would be leading them - like their school president.²⁴

Besides those who had been waiting for Garfield's commission, others were convinced by the stirring recruitment speeches he gave. After just two such orations, over 110 men volunteered.²⁵

Largely because of his ability to get Ohioans to volunteer, Governor Dennison promoted Garfield to full colonel and commander of the 42nd Ohio Regiment. He and his men went to Columbus where several additional companies from other parts of Ohio joined them. Garfield's two junior officers, Lionel Sheldon and Don Pardee, both had some military experience and they were tremendously helpful to Garfield who was still learning the military ropes.²⁶ Because the regiment was still not at full strength, the commander went around to nearby churches and schools looking for more recruits. He used the same techniques he had used in the classroom to inspire his students to learn; now he was trying to inspire strangers to fight. By November, the regiment was full and Garfield was turning his boys into soldiers. As

²⁴ Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 93.

²⁵ Rushford, *Political Disciple*, p. 155.

²⁶ Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 93.

Allan Peskin writes, "Managing a thousand boys was, after all, very much the same whether they were in school or in uniform."²⁷

Other subjects of this study joined in response to a specific event or trigger. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain was quick to condemn secession when it erupted in 1860. He described how he felt when war broke out. "The flag of the nation had been insulted. The honor and authority of the Union had been defied. The integrity and the existence of the People of the United States had been assailed in open and bitter war."²⁸

Chamberlain's strong feelings regarding rebellion were related to his experiences and environment throughout the earlier part of his life. This, however, is not to say that he was bereft of any Southern sympathies. First, there had been his wife, Fannie's, experience as a teacher in Georgia. Lawrence had been impressed by their treatment of his fiancé while she had been in Milledgeville. Also, Lawrence's father had revered John C. Calhoun of South Carolina so much that he named one of his sons after him. This was because of the strong stance that Calhoun had taken as a nationalist early in his career. As a student,

²⁷ Peskin, *Garfield*, p. 97.

²⁸ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 74.

Chamberlain expressed great admiration for the intellect and literary skill of Nathaniel Hawthorne who was vocal in his support of Southern rights.²⁹ But these circumstances were overwhelmed by the enormous tide of religion, culture and politics that had turned the idea of Union and civic duty into a form of faith, in its own right. Throughout his life, the views of his father, the ideals of his heroes like Noah Webster and his own experiences as a professor had molded Chamberlain. He had been immersed in this civic and civil religion. And Chamberlain was a true believer.

Since the American Revolution, the Congregational Church had been a stalwart supporter of the national union. During the Constitutional Convention and the debate that followed, Congregational ministers wrote pamphlets and preached sermons in support of a strong centralized government. In a sermon the Reverend Elizur Goodrich, a well-respected Congregationalist minister from Connecticut, stated,

If the national union, by concentrating the wisdom and force of America, was the means of our salvation from conquest and slavery, certainly there are not objects of greater magnitude and importance than the national union and the necessity of supporting the

²⁹ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 73.

national honor."³⁰

In the state legislative bodies of New England, members of the Congregational church continually advised their representatives to support a strong federal union. Unlike the Lutheran or Episcopal Church, Congregationalists had no organized central hierarchy, which meant they relied on individual pastors and laymen to campaign for their causes. This led to a great deal of political participation by members of the Congregational church in the name of their denomination. And to a man, nearly all became Federalists.³¹ Congregational nationalism did not work itself out in hierarchical, centralized institutions, but on the local level.³² This sense of nationalism and the importance of federalism was deeply rooted in Chamberlain.

Several months after the firing on Fort Sumter, Chamberlain requested a paid leave of absence for the purpose of fighting in the war. Despite the fact that he had no real military experience, Lawrence believed that

³⁰ "The Principles of Civil Union and Happiness Considered and Recommended" a sermon by Rev. Elizur Goodrich, Hartford, Conn., 1787.

³¹ William Warren Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765 - 1840* (Gloucester: Peter Smith Publishing, 1963), pp. 55-56.

³² Edward F. Humphrey, *Nationalism and Religion in America (1774-1789)* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965) p. 109; Susan Mary Grant, *North over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), pp. 24-25.

his duty to the nation was paramount and that he could fulfill some role in the army. He was aware that college graduates were being placed into low-level officer positions to train under veterans.³³ This was the kind of appointment he desired. However, Professors Smyth and Upham summarily rejected the idea. Having no other means to support his family, Chamberlain decided, for the time being, to let their decision stand. The reason that the college declined Chamberlain's request was clear even to himself. It was not that Upham was a Southern sympathizer or even that he was against the war. In his memoirs, Lawrence described Upham and Smyth's motives for their decision in great detail.

The professors were men of military experience in the religious contests for the control of the college. They had learned grand tactics. The young professor held for them a very strategic position. The chair was much sought for; and those competent to fill it were for the most part, not of the strict orthodox persuasion. In the case this chair should become vacant. . . chances were that it would be filled by one of the adverse party.³⁴

Chamberlain decided to dismiss, for the time being, his ideas of fighting for the Union. He concentrated his

³³ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to Governor Israel Washburn, 17 July 1862, *The Chamberlain Papers*, Pejepscot Historical Society.

³⁴ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 76.

efforts preparing for his new position as chair of the department of modern languages.

By 1862, the Civil War was in full swing and with every lost battle suffered by the Federal Army, Chamberlain's feelings regarding his duty became ever stronger and his plans to go to Europe fell by the wayside. Then, he received an encouraging response from the governor's adjutant, John L. Hodgson, asking him if he would consider command of the newly formed 20th Maine. Fearing he would be overwhelmed by the responsibility, Chamberlain modestly replied that he had not the military experience to assume that rank.³⁵ He suggested a lower rank so that he could learn under a veteran.

While these details were being worked out, an ill-timed article appeared in the local newspaper, the Brunswick Telegraph.

Lawrence Chamberlain, professor of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College, has accepted the Colonelcy of the 20th Maine regiment. This is a most significant and gratifying index to the state of public feeling in the present crisis. When such men relinquish high positions of comparative ease and safety to enter the service of their country, it is evidence that the danger is pressing and that the patriotism of the men of '76 still burns brightly in the

³⁵ Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to John L. Hodgson, 19 July 1862, Maine State Archives.

hearts of their descendants.³⁶

The reaction on the campus of Bowdoin College was immediate and in some cases severe. Not because the college was pro-slavery or even against the war. In most cases, it was over the loss of Chamberlain as a new department chair. Many of his fellow professors thought he was foolish for wanting to go to war. One of them told Chamberlain that he had no qualifying experience and was not fit for command. Another representative of the college went to Governor Washburn himself and reported that Chamberlain was "no fighter, but only a mild-mannered, common student."³⁷ The governor refused to listen; he knew Chamberlain's family had fought in the Revolutionary War as well as in several other campaigns and he needed officers to lead the regiments requested by Abraham Lincoln.

In early August 1862, Governor Washburn formally offered Chamberlain the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of the newly formed 20th Maine. Chamberlain was pleased; he preferred the commission of Lieutenant Colonel above any other.³⁸ It would give him an opportunity to learn

³⁶ Brunswick Telegraph (undated) The Chamberlain Papers, Pejepscot Historical Society.

³⁷ Chamberlain, *Early Memoirs*, p. 76.

³⁸ Trulock, *In the Hands of Providence*, p. 12.

military procedures and tactics from a veteran and leave him but one step away from command of his own regiment. Without hesitation, Joshua Chamberlain turned his back on Europe and prepared to leave for Camp Mason in Portland, beginning a time of tremendous service in the United States military.

Another subject of this study who answered the call of duty in response to a series of events was William Flank Perry. He was still serving as president at the East Alabama Female College when the Civil War broke out. Uncertain as to what role he could play, he was initially content to keep his job as an educator. Having never been a slave-owner himself, he did not fully agree with secession. But according to his friend, William Oates, he believed that Lincoln's election and the ascendancy of the Republican Party would cause tremendous problems for the South. He also greatly feared the result of a Union invasion of his home state of Alabama. Throughout the winter of 1861 - 1862, Perry constantly scanned the local newspapers looking for news and information about the Confederacy's conduct of the war.³⁹ He paid particular attention to the western theater, as the events in that

³⁹ Oates, "General W.F. Perry."

portion of the country would have the greatest effect on him and his family.

Perry was greatly distressed when news came of the surrender of Fort Henry on February 6, 1862. He knew that if the Union were able to secure the Tennessee River, it would be like providing the North with a highway into the Cotton South - and his home. When news came about two weeks later of the surrender of Fort Donelson, Perry felt compelled to act. He would later comment that it was after the fall of Fort Donelson he knew it was time for him to put aside his "bomb-proof position" at the East Alabama Female College. As he left the women's college, he offered a prayer that God would protect the valiant Southern soldiers from the greedy Yankees.⁴⁰

Having had no formal education, martial or civilian, Perry was not a prime candidate to be commissioned as an officer. So when Alabama answered a desperate call from Richmond for new regiments of soldiers (many of the original enlistments had run out), Perry enlisted as an ordinary private in the newly created 44th Alabama Infantry Regiment. He enlisted on May 16, 1862, and spent the next two weeks getting to know his fellow soldiers. What happened on May 30, 1862, was a true testament to his

⁴⁰ Ibid.

leadership skills and good character. Though only a private with no military training, he was elected as one of the regiment's new majors. After having spent only two weeks with these men, a large portion of them felt confident enough in his abilities to give him a crucial leadership position.⁴¹

The educators discussed in this study came from a variety of different educational backgrounds, yet they all felt compelled to become soldiers in America's greatest and most terrible conflict. Northern educators were a part of a system that extolled the virtues of service to the nation as a whole. Thus, when the Union was threatened, it was a natural choice for many educators to leave their positions and fight to preserve the United States. Ormsby Mitchel believed his responsibility to his nation was greater than his responsibility to a brand new employer in upstate New York and made the long journey back to Ohio when the war broke out. Joshua Chamberlain overcame the objections of Bowdoin College faculty and administration to become part of the Union effort.

⁴¹ Charles E. Boyd, *The Devil's Den: A History of the 44th Alabama Infantry Regiment, Confederate States, 1862 - 1865* (Birmingham, AL: Banner Press, 1987), pp. 8-10.

Southern educators joined the Confederate cause for both local and national reasons. They were concerned about the protection of family and community, but also wished to see their fledgling nation succeed. While Southern education was focused on more localized issues of individual and family honor or the improvement of a community, educators were also leading the charge to educate the South, recognizing that public education was important. For example, neither Claudius Wistar Sears nor William Flank Perry joined the army until they felt that Union armies were threatening the families and communities of which they had become a part. However, once they were a part of the Confederate army, they saw themselves fighting a war for national independence. James Johnston Pettigrew was drawn into the war when he tried to help prepare South Carolina's defenses, but then quickly became an important leader for the Army of Northern Virginia.

Another difference between North and South was their view of leadership. Leadership in the South was much more tied to class. Leaders in the South were more likely to be from the upper classes, such as in the case of James Johnston Pettigrew. As a member of the South Carolina aristocracy, Pettigrew became a military leader in the South even before the war broke out. However, someone like

William Flank Perry who came from humble beginnings had to work his way up through the ranks before being given a major leadership position.

However, their views regarding what they were defending were not the only similarities between northern and southern educators and their decisions to become part of the Civil War. Both James Johnston Pettigrew and James Garfield viewed the war as an opportunity to distinguish themselves and lay the foundation for future success. Both men saw education as a highway to distinction and when the war broke out, it seemed like a natural transition from one position of leadership in the classroom to a similar position of leadership in the military.

The role of religion in their decision was another similarity. Because most ante-bellum colleges and universities were solidly associated with Christianity, faith was an integral part of their decision to fight. Both sides believed that God was on their side. James Garfield and Ormsby Mitchel spoke at length about God using the war to end the evil of slavery and asked God to preserve the Union. William Flank Perry, as he resigned from his position at the East Alabama Female Academy, offered a prayer that God would bring victory to the

South. And Claudius Wistar Sears became the president of a new military college created by the Episcopalian Diocese in Mississippi. Religion was a central part of the educational experience in antebellum America and this is reflected in the actions of educators as they went off to war.

In addition, it was often religious conflict that helped to prepare these men for positions of leadership in the military. Antebellum colleges were hotbeds of both sectarian conflict and internal struggles within a single denomination. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain saw himself as a pawn in the struggle between conservative Congregationalism and liberal Unitarianism at Bowdoin College. James Garfield fought for the expansion of the Eclectic Institute against the first generation Disciples who wanted to keep the college as simply a training ground for new ministers. Several of the subjects of this study took leadership roles in these controversies and, thus, it helped to shape them as leaders.

Another important factor in the development of many of these men was the growing market economy. Education was forced to change to meet the needs of new economic forces. Many educators saw the classical methods, curriculum and pedagogy as useless in supporting the U.S. economy and the

industrial revolution. They pushed for radical changes in both subject matter and teaching methods to help address education's shortcomings in this regard. There were, of course, those who stoutly defended the old ways and battle lines were drawn between these two groups of educators.

All of the individuals in this study were among those who wished to revolutionize American education. Henry Lawrence Eustis fought to bring more useful knowledge to Harvard despite the complaints of Boston elites. Claudius Wistar Sears wanted to open engineering and mechanics departments at the University of Louisiana. This was in spite of the prevailing notion among many southerners that education was for nothing more than refining young men into southern gentlemen. A majority of the subjects of this study were forced to stand up for their beliefs with regard to education.

There was one great unifying factor, however, that *all* of these men shared. This study has clearly shown that civilian education helped to prepare these men for the important roles that they would play as leaders in the Civil War. All of them exhibited leadership characteristics both as students and, more importantly, as educators themselves. Claudius Wistar Sears struggled to bring a classical education to the people of New Orleans. Ormsby

Macknight Mitchel fought to create an important educational institution in the sleepy town of Cincinnati. James Garfield worked to improve the sagging quality of education at the Eclectic Institute and prove that he could successfully lead the school despite his youth. William Flank Perry managed the first department of education in the less than hospitable environment of antebellum Alabama and made great strides in improving education there. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain championed the cause of incorporating more progressive methods of teaching and learning at Bowdoin College. James Johnston Pettigrew worked hard to make the U.S. Naval Observatory an excellent institution for scientific research and study. Henry Lawrence Eustis created a brand new engineering department at Harvard University and campaigned to make his program more accessible to lower class students. The individuals in this study learned to fight for what they believed in, namely, the importance of education. They carried these experiences with them onto the battlefield and made valuable contributions to the armies in which they served.

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