



THE GROWTH OF THE EDUCATIONAL IDEA AMONG MISSOURI BAPTISTS

BY JOHN P. GREENE, D. D.



One hundred years ago the Missouri Baptists thought little or nothing of education. They were few and unlearned. There were at that time *two* preachers, *three* churches, and *fifty* members. Prior to 1803 the struggle for existence occupied their minds and claimed their efforts. Existence was the great problem that had first to be solved.

In 1763 France ceded the Louisiana Territory, including Missouri, to Spain. In 1800 Spain receded the territory to France. Napoleon had dreamed of a western empire, but he awoke from this dream, and sold the territory to the United States in 1803 for \$15,000,000.

During the Spanish and French rule Catholicism was the dominant religion of Missouri. Baptists had very little liberty. The restrictions imposed upon them by the Catholics hindered their growth and made them fearful. Missouri was a foreign land, under foreign and unfriendly rule. Immigrants came to the country but not in great numbers.

When the country passed to the United States in 1803 the Baptists could breathe freely. They were now under the Constitution, and religious liberty was guaranteed them. They now had a right to grow. The difficult problem of existence was solved by Providence.

In 1804 Lewis and Clark started on their exploring expedition. They left St. Louis, traveled up the Missouri river, crossed the mountains to the Pacific coast and came back in 1806, one hundred years ago. The report of their explorations revealed to the people of the United States the vast and rich territory which they had acquired. A thrill went through the hearts of the pioneers. Indeed the whole land trembled with excitement. Immigrants began to pour across the Mississippi into the new territory. Of course the Baptists got their share of the immigration and began to increase.

With the opening of the territory, Baptists North and South began to think of missions in the far-away new land. Welch visited the country in 1804, but did not remain long. During 1816 J. E. Welch and John M. Peck studied in Philadelphia with Dr. William Staughton. In 1817 the Triennial Convention, composed of representatives from all sections of the country, met in Philadelphia. Welch and Peck had their hearts set on mission work in Missouri and the Convention appointed them as missionaries to this new land July 17, 1817, setting apart \$1,000 for their support, Welch arrived in St. Louis November 21, 1817, and Peck December 1st the same year. St. Louis was a small town. But it was a hard field, a frontier town, full of American and English adventurers, Spaniards, Frenchmen, Indians—a mixture of Catholicism, paganism and sin. But the dauntless men of God went to work.

They were full of zeal for souls, well educated for their day, and up-to-date in their methods. They preached, organized Sunday-schools and distributed religious literature. Not in St. Louis alone did they work, but also in the region round about. Welch went into Northeast Missouri and Peck into Southeast Missouri, seeking to organize the scattered Baptists and to win souls to Christ, Three years later, in 1820, the Triennial Convention discontinued the mission. They thought that the money would be better spent on other fields. Our hindsight is better than their foresight. Welch went to Connecticut and Peck to Illinois, where he labored till death.

I find no trace of the "educational idea" prior to the coming of Peck and Welch. They were brimful of it. Baptists in the East and South were waking to the importance of education. These young men were in Philadelphia, the storm-center of Baptist education, where they could catch the spirit. In 1812 the Baptists here formed a "Baptist Education Society." In 1814 the Triennial Convention appointed Luther Rice to travel over the land to awaken Baptists on the subject of missions. He and Judson had gone out under the Congregational Board and had turned Baptist on the voyage. Luther Rice came back home to induce the Baptists "to hold the rope" for Judson and to send out other missionaries. When he entered on his mission he found the Baptists very ignorant and concluded that the best way to interest them in missions was to educate them, so he made a *campaign of education*. "*Education the high-road to missions*" was his idea.

Peck and Welch caught the spirit of Rice and brought it with them across the Mississippi. They founded a school in St. Louis and later another one near St. Charles. When Peck went to Illinois he started an academy at Hock Spring, which resulted in the founding of Shurtleff College, at Alton, in 1831. He was no longer a missionary in Missouri, but he was on the eastern border and never took his hand off Missouri. The college at Alton, on the eastern bank of the Mississippi river, only twenty miles above St. Louis, was a beacon light of education for Missouri. It inspired Missouri Baptists to found a college. All through the twenties and thirties Missouri Baptists were more or less interested in education. The idea of Luther Rice, brought into Missouri by Peck and Welch, did not die, could not die, but grew every year. All did not favor it; indeed some opposed it. But every year men came to Missouri that helped on the growth of the idea.

In 1832 William Hurley, an educated English Baptist preacher, came to Missouri. He threw himself into every progressive movement —Sunday-schools, missions, and education. The Baptist people were proud of him—pointed to him as their best educated man. One association appointed him to travel over the state and preach, to show the people, especially the Presbyterians, that the Baptists had at least one educated man in the ministry.

All through the thirties the educational idea among Missouri Baptists grew rapidly. Here and there men gathered and discussed the possibility of founding a Baptist college. Our people were very poor, indeed, all the settlers were poor. They knew that a college must be endowed and they did not see where they could get the money.

Finally in the forties the "idea" took shape. Dr. William Jewell of Columbia made a standing offer of \$10,000 for a Baptist college in Missouri. The offer was considered by the General Association, and a committee appointed to report on the matter at the next meeting. The committee reported in favor of the idea, but against the feasibility of undertaking the work at that time. Dr. Jewell's offer still stood. Finally in 1848 the General Association voted to take up the work. The college was chartered in February, 1849. On August 21st of that year the stockholders met at Boonville and voted to locate the school at Liberty and to name it "William Jewell College" in honor of the noble layman who made the generous offer.

Let it be remembered and never forgotten that this movement was started and carried into a reality by our laymen! Some of our preachers were in favor of it and advocated it with all their might; but the laymen were the most ardent friends of the movement, and persisted in it and carried it to a reality. Let it be remembered, too, that the mainspring of the movement was the desire to have an educated ministry. Our laymen have always believed in an educated ministry. But let us remember also that the idea of all, preachers and laymen, was to have a college where all our

sons could be educated. They did not believe in separating the preachers from the laymen, in college. Pioneer preachers were men of the people. They took their place by the side of the laymen in all the work and sacrifices and dangers of pioneer life. It never occurred to any of them that it should or could be otherwise. And we shall be wise if we cling to this sensible New Testament idea. So far, the college founded by them has continued as they began it, and it is safe to say that it will never depart from this policy. All our sons will continue to mingle in the halls and classrooms of William Jewell, a college by and for the Baptists of Missouri.

Unfortunately and unavoidably some dissatisfaction followed the locating of the college. Other places wanted it. Some Baptists of course did not want a college at all, and the dissatisfaction gave them an opportunity to make trouble. Very few of our people had any just conception of a real college. Many thought that a building, a small one at that, and one or two teachers, constituted a college. William Jewell College was regarded by many as a local institution. Of course it was not. Baptists all over the state helped to found it. The General Association of Missouri Baptists really and truly founded the college to meet the educational needs of the brotherhood of the state.

At length, after twenty-five years of thinking and planning, the educational idea of Missouri Baptists materialized in the founding of William Jewell at Liberty. The enterprise was launched upon a more or less troublous sea. It has lived and moved forward.

The "idea" grew slowly at first. But when it once took form in William Jewell it increased rapidly, and soon become rampant. One college was not enough, not a drop in the bucket. People in all parts of the state became possessed with the educational idea, and proceeded to found institutions. The "idea" ran away with them. If they could have been restrained then, and their efforts confined to one great college for men and one for women, we should now be much better off. But there was no sane leadership, at least none strong enough to restrain them. District associations, towns, and groups of individuals proceeded to start colleges in all parts of the state, till we had a great number of struggling schools. All appealed to the brotherhood for support. All received pretty generous support in a local way. But the Baptists thus lost sight of the original idea, *one strong college in the state*. They divided their small resources and squandered years of time and thousands of dollars. The schools no doubt did a great deal of good. Our rapid growth is largely due to their influence. But many of these local schools died, all of them that lived are still having bitter struggles, and to-day the Baptists of Missouri have no college strong enough to meet the present demands. It has also made it hard for us to concentrate our efforts. The ties then formed are still binding. Times have changed. The state schools have grown up and become strong. The means of communication have increased, so that an institution can not now be local, and does not need to be so. Then it required one or two days to travel fifty or sixty miles; now a student in any part of the state can reach William Jewell in twenty-four hours. Nearly every one of these colleges is now overshadowed by a strong state school in the same place. One little house and two or three teachers no longer stand for a college. There must be adequate equipment, library and laboratories and buildings, and many well-trained teachers.

Let me show how enthusiasm ran away with our people.

Here is a table that shows their educational activity:

1. William Jewell—Liberty. . . 1849
Founded by General Association.
2. Mt. Pleasant College — Huntsville 1853
Founded by brethren in Randolph county. Died in 1882.
3. Lexington (for women)— Lexington 1855
Founded by a company of brethren.
4. Baptist Female College—Columbia 1856
Founded by good men in Columbia and Boone county. Now Stephens College (1870).
5. LaGrange College — LaGrange 1856

- Founded by Wyaconda Association.
6. Grand River College 1859
 Founded by brethren in Edinburg. After ten years turned over to several associations — moved to Gallatin. Now an academy under care of William Jewell College.
 7. Louisiana Baptist College—Louisiana 1869
 Founded by a group of brethren. Afterward Mo-Cune College. Died in the eighties.
 8. Hardin College—Mexico 1873
 Founded by Governor and Mrs. Hardin and others.
 9. St. Joseph Female Seminary — St. Joseph. 1877
 Founded by Dr. Dulin and other brethren. Died 1881.
 10. Pierce City Baptist College — Pierce City 1877
 Founded by four associations. Died 1905.
 11. Southwest Baptist College—Bolivar 1878
 Founded by Southwest Baptist Convention. Now Southwest Baptist Academy of William Jewell College.
 12. St. Louis Seminary—Jennings 1871
 By group of brethren. Passed into the hands of Dr. P. T. Blewett. Dead.
 13. Mayfield-Smith Academy. . . 1878 Now Will Mayfield College at Marble Hill.
 14. Farmington College—Farmington Dead
 15. Clarksburg College—Clarksburg
 16. Webb City Dead

Think of it! Sixteen colleges in fifty years. And there were other endeavors not recorded here. In one decade, from 1849 to 1859, six colleges were founded by the Baptists of Missouri, and in the next forty years ten more! Surely this is education gone wild! Of the sixteen schools, seven are dead—a large mortality —two have become academies connected with William Jewell, leaving seven that are more or less alive, not one of them strong enough to do complete college work.

The "idea" of the fathers got away from them —it literally broke loose. There was no unity of purpose, no definite plan, and an imperfect idea of a real college. When William Jewell was founded, there was a very clear idea in the mind of a few men of what the Baptists needed, and of what they would do. But many of the brethren broke away from this idea, and there was a wild rush for the golden opportunity of starting a college. Did "the gold fever" of '49 sweep them away?

No doubt our denomination lost time and money through this unbridled enthusiasm, and what is worse, divisions were made, and strife engendered. For a long time, I think, we have seen our mistake, but we have not yet seen our way out of our troubles, nor the way back to the original idea. Perhaps we are slowly emerging into the light, through force of circumstances and the providence of God. The fathers started out, according to their own words to "*originate an institution of learning for the Baptist denomination in the state.*" It was their aim to forge one great thunderbolt of education, but it broke into sixteen little bolts, with noise enough, but with little effective force. We now have no such institution as they prayed and planned for seventy-five years ago. William Jewell most nearly approaches their ideal. Today we are numerous and rich—and have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in education, not to *no* purpose, but not to the *right* purpose; not wisely, not with the best results. The "idea" is still unrestrained, but not rampant as in other years. Many wise brethren see clearly that we have wasted too much time and money. Institutions can not spring up now in every association and town as they used to. But we have not yet gotten back to the original idea. It seems that we can't get together, can't see eye to eye. All prejudice has not yet died, all personal interests have not been laid aside, and not all of us understand what is required *to* make a real college. But I think that we are facing the right way. No man with a burning desire to found another college in the state could get much of a following. But many of us are not sure we know what to do with those we have. And there are people hovering on the border of the state, and looking over with longing eyes, consumed

with the desire to keep us out of our educational Land of Promise. Let us get back to the original "idea" and work at it till we realize it.

The growth of state education will either force us back to the original idea or strangle the life out of our educational work, and the last state will be worse than the first, when we had no schools. It is not profitable to indulge in unreasonable hopes. The small college must have more money or die! The high school has all the money it needs. As it grows it can get more. Good teachers will go where they can get good salaries. How can we compete with these schools? Our people have been disappointed in some of our schools. They have been giving money to them for many years. Many of the schools they have supported have died, others they have supported are weaker than they were twenty-five years ago, and not one of them is what it should be.

Baptists will do as they please, and I am glad they may. But their liberty in school work has cost them dearly, and the end is not yet. They have been reasonably patient with one another—have suffered long and been kind. Perhaps it is beginning to dawn on many of them that the "idea" of the fathers was a good one—to have a strong well endowed college, equal to the best—a strong literary institution and a strong theological institution combined in one, controlled by the Baptists of the state, and thoroughly dominated by the spirit of Christ. Time has eliminated some elements of the difficulty. There has been a holy evolution in our educational work. We may have to wait some' time on this process of evolution. If we do, let us wait in patience and love.

The institution that embodies the educational idea of the fathers is now rapidly rising on the sight of our people, after a partial submergence of fifty years. It has passed out of the precarious stage of its existence and is sure to abide. But how long shall we have to wait to realize the full "idea?" How long shall the vision of our prophet-fathers have to tarry? *We* are standing on this spot to-day where Peck and Welch once stood and lifted up their voices for the Kingdom. They believed that education was essential to church work, Sunday-school work, mission work—indeed, to all the work of the Lord. They imparted this idea to the untutored but consecrated Baptists of this trans-Mississippi country. It fired their hearts. They nourished it from decade to decade. Finally that noble soul, Dr. Jewell, was inspired to give form to the idea, and William Jewell College rose high on the hill at Liberty. About ninety years ago Peck and Welch uncaged this noble idea on the west bank of the Mississippi, and fifty-seven years ago it rested on "The Old Hill." How far they could see! The vision was from God! For a long time it has been obscured. May it come anew to us to-day—and in greater glory! God restore to us the prophetic vision of the fathers!

We need a strong college now more than our fathers a hundred years ago needed one. We have more to* lose than they had, and more to gain. Our enemies are mightier than theirs. They contended with the ignorant and debauched. We fight against worldly and educated unbelievers. They were on the skirmish line', but we are in the heart of the battle, amid the roar of the great guns that make the foundations tremble. We are contending with the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the high places! The Catholics said the Bible should never cross the Mississippi. But our fathers brought it over and erected on this spot the first pulpit in this territory that ever held an unchained Bible. Here they opened the Word first and set before-the people God's plan of salvation. For a hundred years their children have enjoyed the heritage of their courage. To-day the Bible has other enemies. It is not a, question now of transporting the Bible into new territories. But what is the Bible? Have we any Bible at all? How much of it is the word of God? Is its testimony concerning our Savior trustworthy? Did our Lord really rise from the dead?—and a host of other questions like these. It is foolish to say that these questions are silly. All the learning of the age is directed towards their solution. And we must answer them. In order to' answer them correctly we must learn all that can be known about the Bible. Railing is not argument. Ignorance will not sustain us in the conflict. If we do not meet the issues of to-day, our children a hundred years from now may have no Bible, at least no correct knowledge of the Bible. Let us have a school where our laymen and our preachers can be equipped for their part in this struggle. We shall need strong men arid fearless, men that love the truth, men of piety and learning, whom God can use as he used the old prophets. In their day our fathers saw

our day and provided for our needs. Why can't we in our day see the day of our children, and provide for their needs?

Having traced "the growth of the educational idea among Missouri Baptists" from the origin of that idea to the present time, and having endeavored to show how the successors to the pioneers departed from the original idea, I think it wise to consider present conditions and tendencies of our educational work, and the problems growing out of these, which will probably come up for solution during the next century. It is needless to say that I shall try to do this with fairness towards all, and prejudice towards none. I have gathered my facts from the histories of Duncan and Yeaman, and from the presidents of the schools. No two men would treat the facts exactly alike. I can scarcely hope to satisfy all. But as I have been asked to prepare this paper I shall do it as well as I can, with a sincere and unselfish devotion to our educational work.

LOOKING TOWARD THE NEXT CENTURY.

Three problems in education are before Missouri Baptists as they look towards the second century of their history:

1. The first is, carrying out the plans of the fathers concerning William Jewell. This is the first school originated by the pioneers, and the only one, in the state that was founded by their united efforts. It has grown steadily towards their ideal. Perhaps it has already grown beyond their expectations. But if they were alive now, they would have large views of their institution, for it was their purpose to make it as good as the best.

The trustees of William Jewell are facing the next century with great hopes of enlargement. They are now undertaking to add \$1,000,000 to the assets of the college. Many new buildings are needed and a larger endowment is an imperative necessity. All the literary departments must be enlarged, and the theological course must be extended and strengthened. If the Baptists of the state will give their loyal support to the trustees in this movement, the ideal of the fathers will soon be realized.

2. The second problem that confronts us is the education of our daughters. Six years after William Jewell College (for men) was founded, "Lexington Baptist Female College" was originated by several good brethren in Lexington. Afterwards it was turned over to the Association. Seven years after William Jewell was founded the "Baptist Female College at Columbia" was originated by good men in Columbia and Boone county. It was afterwards turned over to the district association. The founding of these two schools for women shows that our fathers were interested in the education of their daughters. Even before this time, as early as 1853, four years after William Jewell was founded, "Mt. Pleasant College" at Huntsville, was started, with favorable prospects. This was co-educational. We can read between the lines and see several things very clearly. Many of the brethren were displeased with the location of William Jewell; others were dissatisfied with the lack of provision for the education of women; and the division of opinion was so great that there could be no harmonious action.

Things went on this way, "every fellow for himself," till 1870. Lexington and Columbia and Mount Pleasant all claimed the patronage of the brotherhood. All were engaged in the education of women. With many vicissitudes and struggles they did their work and achieved considerable success. But our wisest people were dissatisfied with the situation. These institutions were largely local and private, and the struggle for patronage caused more or less friction. Our people wanted one strong college for women patterned after William Jewell. Finally in 1870, at the meeting of the General Association, Second Baptist Church, St. Louis, it was resolved to have a state college for women, and the "Baptist Female College at Columbia" was adopted, and the name changed to "Stephens College," in honor of Mr. Jas. L. Stephens, who gave \$20,000 towards the endowment of the school. We who did not participate in those events, wonder why the three schools, Lexington, Columbia, Mt. Pleasant, were not united in one. This union would have given the new school a magnificent start, and would have removed all rivalry. But we may suppose that they did the best they could—there must have been

insurmountable difficulties in the way.

The adoption of "Stephens College" did not satisfy all the brethren. In 1873, Governor C. H. Hardin and his noble wife founded Hardin College, Mexico. It was their purpose to make this a great school for women. Their gifts to the institution were munificent, about \$100,000. A part of this, \$50,000 (I speak from memory), was set apart for endowment. One-fourth of the income from this is used for current expenses, and three-fourths added to the principal. This provision will insure a large endowment for the college in the future.

Mt. Pleasant College died in 1882. Lexington is still alive, and is now enjoying great prosperity.

The situation now is this: We have three schools in the state for the education of women, Stephens, Hardin and Lexington. But Stephens is the state school for girls, adopted by the General Association in 1870. The college has had many vicissitudes and struggles during the last thirty-six years. The other schools have done a good work, have educated many noble women, and of course have many warm friends. On this account the Baptists of the state have not rallied to the support of Stephens as they were expected to do and as the friends of Stephens had a right to expect they would. It can be truthfully said, I think, that there is now no bitter jealousy towards Stephens. It has done well in spite of the difficulties in the way, and is now more prosperous than it has ever been. What the outcome will be no one can say. But it now seems that the college will grow and develop into a strong institution. It is probable also that the other schools will grow, and Missouri Baptists a hundred years from now may have three strong schools for women. The friends of "Stephens" at this time are enthusiastic, and are preparing for larger things in the immediate future—a new and more commodious building.

3. The third problem is this: what will become of our ether schools? La Grange was founded in 1858 by the Wyaconda Association. It is one of our oldest schools, and has done an immense amount of good. It deserves the respect, and I may say, *admiration* of the brotherhood. Perhaps no school ever did more good with such meager resources. Clarksburg was founded 1876 by a "stock company," made up for the most part of good Baptist brethren. It has worked on in a quiet way, as a local institution, but has done a great deal of good. Many good men and women have gone out from its walls. Will Mayfield College, Marble Hill, was founded 1878 by Dr. W. H. Mayfield. It is located in a part of the state that very much needs its offices. Though it has done great good, we may safely predict for it a more useful career. These three schools, all co-educational, have been and are now very useful. They have passed through many bitter struggles. Conditions have changed since they were founded. It seems plain to me now that they must have considerable endowment or the High Schools will drive them out of business. Can this endowment be raised? The schools are largely local, at least it seems almost impossible to interest the brotherhood of the state in their behalf. All our schools are so weak and needy that the friends of each can not be interested in others. But something ought to be done. Many plans have been suggested. "The Board of Education" was originated several years ago by the General Association to lead us out of our educational difficulties. But the board has no power. The schools are not owned by the General Association. The board has made suggestions from time to time, but no one seemed disposed to accept them. So the problem has been left to solve itself.

Recently Southwest Baptist College at Bolivar, and Grand River College, Gallatin, have turned their properties over to William Jewell, to be conducted as academies. The trustees of these two schools saw no other way out of their difficulties, and of their own accord offered these properties to William Jewell. Of course this transfer was made with the consent of the associations that controlled the schools. William Jewell on its part has promised to do its best to maintain these schools as first-class academies. William Jewell has no money to give to the current expenses of these schools—it has not sufficient income for its own expenses. But with the help of private subscriptions and tuition fees, it is hoped that these academies can be maintained for two or three years, until the endowment can be raised. Does this movement on the part of these two schools suggest a way out? It may and it may not. In the first place, the other schools, being under the control of their own trustees, may decline to

follow the example of Southwest Baptist College and Grand River, believing that they would better work out their own destiny. Again, the effort to conduct these two academies successfully may fail. Even if they prosper for the next few years, it is a question whether endowment sufficient to insure their success can be raised. It is to be hoped that the Lord will so lead us that we may either "federate" our schools, on some wise plan, or help them in an independent way to greater strength and usefulness. The situation calls for wise, unselfish and harmonious action. Our schools should not be allowed "to live at this poor dying rate." Their past record entitles them to kind consideration and generous help. Neither should these schools be allowed to die—their death would be a great loss to our cause in work and money. But the fate of Webb City, of Farmington, of Pierce City, and of others, warns us of approaching calamity. Reinforcement must come to the weak schools—they can not hold out forever. The alternative is *endowment or death!*

I close with this statement of our educational resources:

	Endowment.	Other Assets.	Total.
1. William Jewell - -	\$400,000.	\$150,000.	\$550,000.
(a) S. W. Baptist Acad. - - -		25,000.	25,000.
(b) Grand River Acad. - - -		25,000.	25,000.
2. Stephens - - - -	50,000	125,000.	175,000.
3. Hardin - - - -	75,000	90,000.	165,000.
4. Lexington - - - -	- - -	40,000.	40,000.
5. LaGrange - - - -	7,000.	35,000.	42,000.
6. Will Mayfield - - -	5,050.	20,000.	25,050.
7. Clarksburg - - - -	- - -	15,000.	15,000.
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	\$537,050.	\$525,000	\$1,060,050.

			Students
William Jewell - -	J. P. Greene, President - - - -		450
S. W. Academy - -	J. W. Rucker, Principal - - -		75
Grand River Academy	O. L. Wood, Principal - - -		75
Stephens - - - -	W. B. Peeler, President - - -		175
Hardin - - - -	J. W. Million, President - - -		240
Lexington - - - -	E. W. White, President - - -		140
LaGrange - - - -	J. W. Crouch, President - - -		125
Will Mayfield - - -	F. J. Hendershot, President - - -		156
Clarksburg -	Chas. C. Peters, President		60
Total - - - -	- - - -		1,496.

These facts were furnished by the presidents of these schools.