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A HISTORY OF TRAPHILL INSTITUTE
WILKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

by

Eunice Hicks Clark

MILLERS FALLS
ERASE
COTTON CONTENT

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A HISTORY OF TRAPHILL INSTITUTE
WILKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Education
Appalachian State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by
Eunice Hicks Clark

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E. H. C.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

For many years historians have stressed the importance of collecting and preserving facts and of recording a description of the forces, influences, and causes which have motivated events; the principles, ideas, and ideals associated with them, and also the significances and consequences of these happenings.

The Historical Association of Western North Carolina is now interested in investigating the history of the academies, institutes and early schools in the area. The findings will be recorded with the expectancy that the preservation and appreciation of the difficulties encountered may be better known and understood by posterity.

The writer became interested in the collection and preservation of historical materials in a social studies class at Appalachian State Teachers College. In an interview with the instructor it was suggested that the writer consider as a subject for a thesis The History of Early Education at Traphill, North Carolina, provided sufficient materials could be found. The search began and in subsequent interviews with Dr. D. J. Whitener, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, North Carolina, materials were evaluated and a subject was selected.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to find facts relating to Traphill Institute. To organize and preserve these facts for posterity and to show that the influences of early education were significant and forceful.

Importance of the study. The method of writing history which combines the formal records with recollections of participants and eye-witnesses results in greater accuracy than any other.¹ It is important to write the history of Traphill Institute before old records are lost and to get the added information that can be secured from participants and eye-witnesses through interviews with them. Many of the events covered by this study were not written and if the writings had to be done from printed records only the accounts would be incomplete.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Academy. Academy was applied to a type of school established in the early republic to educate youth not planning to enter a college or university, yet wishing to go farther

1

Mark Sullivan, Our Times: The United States, 1900-1925, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), pp. 69-71.

than was possible in the lower schools.

Institute. Institute was interpreted as a secondary school or intermediate between elementary and college.

College. College in this study was an institution for instruction in the higher branches of study.

Subscription school. Subscription school was interpreted to be a school that was supported in part or entirely by funds subscribed to by patrons of the school by which the expenses of the school were defrayed.

Association. Association was applied to a body of persons organized for fellowship in the church.

III. ORGANIZATION INTO CHAPTERS

In presenting the study the writer has used some information that is not directly concerned with the subject of the thesis. This has been introduced with a view to supplementing the facts of the problem with background material to make the reader aware of the forces at work in the area of Traphill, North Carolina.

The developments that led to the establishment of Traphill Institute and later the present Traphill High School are narrated in chronological order from the forming of Wilkes County to the present day. The justification for

Chapter III on Wilkes County as has been stated is to furnish background material. The study of the community has the advantage of allowing the reader to see what the citizens have done and what they have tried to achieve. Some of the integral parts of community life are viewed in Chapter IV.

Development of higher education at Traphill is discussed in Chapter V. This includes a study of the first academy, Fairview College, and the rivalry between denominations that led to the establishment of another school, which was in operation concurrently with Fairview College. These two schools were located within the village and approximately one-half mile apart.

The origins and growth of Traphill Institute are related in Chapter VI. Background materials of the Baptist Associations are given to emphasize the enthusiasm and support of the Traphill Institute for the education of youth.

Chapter VII contains a further account of Traphill Institute covering the period of 1895-1912. The decline, closing of the school, and final disposal of property are discussed in the chapter.

Contributions of the Traphill Schools are discussed in Chapter VIII; Chapter IX discusses Traphill High School from 1922 to the present time; and Chapter X includes the summary and conclusions of the study.

IV. SOURCES OF DATA AND METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Historical research was the method used to study the beginnings of trends in the community and the culmination of events into the present system of education at Traphill. A bibliography was prepared of original and secondary sources. Some highly treasured and very valuable records were made available through families which had collected and preserved events as they happened. Church minutes from three associations were available; these were Elkin Baptist, Stone Mountain Baptist, and the Primitive Baptist. Several school catalogs were located and these usually included a sketch of the developments of the school. Private letters, school records, and other written records were collected. Several pictures were obtained from the people of Traphill for use in this study. From catalogs and through interviews the names of former students were located. These interviews would invariably give some valuable information and supply leads to further sources. After about two hundred interviews had been made and other sources investigated and materials collected, these were organized in chronological order.

This study has required thirteen months of constant alertness on the part of the writer in the search for materials. Many miles have been traveled investigating

sources revealed in records, and as has been said, through the various interviews. The courtesy and cooperation that was extended by those contributing information tended to stimulate interest in the project and to encourage the writing of this study.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There has been no previous study made of the history of Traphill Institute. The writer was able to collect some published materials on Wilkes County, Traphill Village, and some dependable records of the schools at Traphill.

The original sources included a collection of Minutes of the Elkin Baptist Association, 1879-1895, and Minutes of the Primitive Baptist Association, 1879-1929. The proceedings of the Stone Mountain Baptist Association included minutes from 1898. None of these collections was complete but they contained valuable information. Local happenings and school news were related in the Curfew-Outlook, a four-page, monthly newspaper. These were published for approximately one year and ten volumes were located. Some of the private letters of J. S. Holbrook were investigated as well as many personal papers. Two Traphill Institute Catalogs, 1894-95 and 1895-96 came from the Holbrook family. One catalog of Fairview College, 1891, and various other printed materials were made available by Charlie Miles. These records included a short history of Traphill, facts collected from old people who remembered them as they happened, pictures of buildings

as they existed during the time in which the school operated and other related materials.

Several reports of the county superintendent of schools in Wilkes County made during the period of this study were available at Appalachian State Teachers College Library, along with various other general sketches of Wilkes County.

Personal interviews proved to be a valuable source for data since written records were not plentiful. The writer would have been greatly handicapped without the information gained through interviews.

CHAPTER III

WILKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Geographical Aspects

Wilkes County, in Northwestern North Carolina, lies directly on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge. It is a county of mountains, plateaus, and valleys, ranging in altitude from 900 to 4,000 feet. Sharpe points out that "of its 489,600 acres of land 57,000 acres in 1945 were in cultivation."¹ The remainder is in farm woodland, largely cutover. Wilkes has a multitude of streams including the headwaters of the Yadkin.

The county is bounded by Yadkin, Iredell, Alexander, Caldwell, Watauga, Ashe, Alleghany, and Surry Counties. Wilkesboro is the county seat. The population in 1950 was 43,003.²

The climate is temperate. It was described as "one of the most delightful climates of the world" by Horace B.

¹ Bill Sharpe, North Carolina, A Description by Counties (Raleigh: Warren Publishing Company, 1948), unpagged.

² David Leroy Corbitt, Formation of the North Carolina Counties (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), p. 227.

Satterwhite in the Yadkin and Catawba Journal, May, 1828.³
He was inviting and encouraging students to come to the
"Wilkesborough" Academy.

The county is dominantly agricultural and rural. In recent years poultry has become the most important agricultural cash product. Apple orchards are profitable, especially in the Brushy Mountains. Wilkes has a few tenant farms. Many of the small home owners supplement their earnings by work in town where they are employed in the manufacture of textile products and wooden furniture. The lumber and timber products are also of value.

The Historical Background

Wilkes County was formed in 1777 from Surry County and the District of Washington. It was named for John Wilkes, a violent opponent of the Tory Party in England. Corbitt suggests that "American's imagined that he was suffering in the cause of liberty and named this county in his honor."⁴

The size of the county of Surry and the district of Washington made it inconvenient for many of the inhabitants

³ Charles L. Coon, North Carolina Schools and Academies 1790 to 1840 (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1915), p. 14.

⁴ Corbitt, op. cit., pp. 227-228.

to attend the courts and other public meetings. The new county would improve the situation.

The first inferior court was held at the house of John Brown. Commissioners appointed for the new county were: Charles Gordon, Benjamin Cleveland, Joseph Herndon and Elisha Isaacs. They were invested with power to build a courthouse, prison and stocks in the county. A tax was levied for the purpose of public buildings.⁵

The commissioners met and selected the Mulberry Field Meeting House area as the most central place to locate public buildings for the county. A courthouse was erected and in 1801 "Wilkesborough" had been laid out. Prior to this time this area was a vast happy hunting ground, filled with every opportunity for pioneer adventure and frontier experience.

Henderson states that in 1752 when surveyors were in the territory of Wilkesboro that one hut was occupied by a man named Owen.⁶

⁵ The State Record of North Carolina, Volume 24 (Goldsboro, North Carolina: Nash Brothers Book and Job Printers), pp. 142-43. See Appendix for copy of Act Establishing Wilkes County.

⁶ Archibald Henderson, The Old North State and The New, Volume I (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1941), p. 65.

Religious Developments

The most significant development in the religious life of Colonial North Carolina after 1730 was the growth and spread of the religious sects, notably Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, German Reformed, and Methodists. There was no organized Baptist Church until 1727 when the Chowan Church was founded by the Rev. Paul Palmer, the earliest recorded Baptist preacher in North Carolina.⁷

Poplin in his "Wilkes County History Stories," states that the Moravians were probably the first whites to explore this region and that the Mulberry Field Meeting House was a Baptist Church.⁸

Roaring River Baptist Church was organized some time prior to the year 1785. There are church records of that date but no date of the Constitution of the church. This church has been referred to as the mother of almost all the Baptist churches in Wilkes County.⁹

7

Lefler and Newsome, The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), p. 127.

8

Robert O. Poplin, Jr., "Wilkes County Stories," The Journal Patriot, 47:9, Thursday, June 4, 1953.

9

Joseph Holbrook, Curfew-Outlook, 1:17, January 11, 1912, p. 1.

We find also that many of the early school teachers were Presbyterian ministers.

Early Education in Wilkes

The people in Wilkes County decided at an early date that schools should be maintained for the instruction and training of the youth of the community. Some of the earliest schools are as follows:

From 1805 to 1837, there was a school of some pretension in Wilkes. In 1805, this school was in charge of a Mr. Harrison of South Carolina, evidently a college graduate. In 1810 Rev. Peter McMillan, a Presbyterian preacher and college graduate, was its principal. In 1828, another Presbyterian preacher was in charge, Rev. A. W. Gay.¹⁰

Tuition at that time was ten dollars and board could be obtained for twenty-five dollars per school term.

There was also a grammar school, Philomathia, which was housed in the courthouse at Wilkesboro in 1807. This was a subscription school which had existed for two years. Tuition for a school term was twenty-six dollars.

In 1837 the Ladies and Gentlemen connected with the Wilkesboro Seminary were publicly examined under the direction

10

Coon, op. cit., p. 636.

of a Mr. and Mrs. Hall. Summer school sessions were held. Latin, Greek, French, all the sciences, drawing, painting, and music were included in the courses offered.¹¹

Early education in Wilkes County was closely associated with the church. Most of the teachers were clergymen or lay readers. These early traveling teachers brought with them libraries and globes for the use of their students.

The wealthier class of people were willing to pay tuition where teachers could be obtained. Poor people did not pay much attention to education. Many students, however, were given a bare necessity through some agency or through the interest of some individual benefactor.

The people of Wilkes County seem to have been interested in the education of the youth from the time the county was formed. Subscription schools, academies, institutes and colleges were established in the county before public schools, as they are known today, were established. Mountain View Institute is an example of an institute which was established after there were state high schools in the county.

11

Loc. cit.

CHAPTER IV

TRAP HILL VILLAGE

Traphill, a village with a population of 150, is located in the northeastern part of Wilkes County, fourteen miles northwest of Elkin, and twenty miles northeast of Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

Elk Spur Mountain near which the village of Traphill was established, seems to have been the natural pass to the watering places for the animals. Great flocks of pheasants, wild turkey, numbers of deer, elk, coon, and wild hogs abounded and there were also a few bear. Early settlers would trap for such game in the vicinity where the village is located. One of the most lucrative of these traps was the one devised for trapping wild turkey. William Blackburn, a hunter and trapper, devised a railpen trap to catch the wild turkeys. His trap being placed on a hill, soon gave the place its name, which was originally spelled Trap Hill. Trap Hill Village eventually sprang up as a small post for trading in meats and provisions.¹

¹ Sam Holbrook, Charlie Miles, and Texie Pruett Miles, Private Interviews, June 20, 1954, in Traphill.

Sketches of Early Settlers at Traphill

The first settler was William Blackburn, who came from Virginia about the year 1770. He built a house near the old J. C. Kilby home, where Mrs. C. O. Pruitt now lives. The second settler was Joseph Bryan, also from Virginia, who built a log house near where Mrs. C. D. Holbrook now lives. Four rooms of this original house still stand and are part of the present home of the Rev. and Mrs. Charlie Miles. In 1847 a "working" was held and the original Joseph Bryan House was moved on skids by man-power to where the house now stands which is near the place where Blackburn trapped wild turkeys. A wooden bucket filled with whiskey and a gourd which served as a drinking cup helped to get the house moved. The house has been weatherboarded on the outside and finished on the inside and modernized completely, but Miles says the hewn logs are underneath all of the modern coverings. The next settler was Joseph Spicer from Kentucky, who settled at the Traphill Mill near where the present Traphill High School is located. The fourth settler was James Brown, who settled on lands now owned by Mrs. James Cheatwood and Dr. Sam Holbrook. The fifth settler was Joseph Haines, who settled south of the Traphill Mill on land now owned

by John A. Holbrook.²

The leading citizens of the early period of history included Johnson, Spicer, Bauguess, Sparks, Holbrook, and Bryan. Captain Samuel Johnson was wounded at the Battle Of Kings Mountain, but he recovered from the wound and lived to be 77 years old. A tombstone at the family burial ground marks his resting place.³ William Spicer was also one of the old heroes of that terrible struggle for freedom. He has a tombstone to his memory near Traphill at Round Hill Baptist Church.

The first mail was brought on foot to Traphill by Daniel Logan. This route started from Wilkesboro, North Carolina, and ended at Mouth of Wilson, Virginia. He made one round trip each week.

Joseph S. Holbrook states that Traphill was one of the first post offices established in Wilkes County.⁴ It was in existence many years before the Civil War. During the war many citizens had to come eight to ten miles for their mail from boys who were serving in the army.

² C. D. Holbrook and Charles Miles, History of Traphill, Unpublished manuscript.

³ Joseph S. Holbrook, "History of Traphill and Vicinity Before the Revolutionary War," Curfew-Outlook, 1:17, January 11, 1912.

⁴ Loc. cit.

In 1860 the postmaster at Traphill was either Stephen Johnson or John Prather. Clarence D. Holbrook was appointed postmaster for Traphill on July 23, 1904, by Henry C. Payne, Postmaster-General of the United States. The certificate of his appointment was hanging in the C. D. Holbrook Store recently when the writer made a trip to the store in the interest of this study.

In those days each family was largely a self-sufficient unit. Their log cabins were usually widely separated. As the community became more thickly settled community life became more highly organized. The little country store came in to facilitate the exchange of goods. The first store building was erected in 1850 by Stephen Johnson. This was a log building and probably was located where Charlie Mile's Store now stands. Traphill now has four stores.

Churches

The first church was erected in 1870 near where the present Methodist Church now stands. The Baptist organized a church in 1876. The building was located near the old Kilby home and also near the present Baptist Church.

Home Guard

Traphill had several union sympathizers in the War Between the States. This group dared to raise the union

flag to show their viewpoint.

Governor Z. B. Vance sent General Robert F. Hoke with a brigade to Traphill to get the citizens under control. General Hoke's encampment was near where Charlie Billings now lives.⁵

After the War the citizens of Traphill sent Tyre York, the medical doctor who lived in the vicinity, to see Governor Vance in regard to the uprising at Traphill and to offer their services in forming a Home Guard at Traphill. Through this endeavor the Home Guard was formed and the citizens proved themselves loyal to their state government.⁶

Early Education at Traphill

The first school building, according to all information available, was a one-story, one-room log house chinked with mud, located in just about the same place as that of the present Traphill High School. The building was approximately 14 feet by 12 feet, covered with clapboards, 6 inches to 12 inches broad, on a ridge pole. These were usually weighted down with rock. The floor was dirt. A stone chimney was placed in one end of the room where a five-foot

5

Sam Holbrook, Charles Miles, and P. E. Brown, Private Interviews, June 1954.

6

Sam Holbrook and Beatrice Holbrook, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

fireplace supplied heat for the building. A window the width of a log and eight feet long was cut out on one side of the room. A board shutter hinged at the bottom with straps of leather when open rested on wooden legs, and served as a writing table or "ciphering board," as it was called. When closed the shutter was fastened at the top of the window by means of leather straps looped over wooden pegs. The benches on which the students sat were called "puncheons". These were split logs with the face hewn smooth with a broad axe. Short wooden legs were used to support the bench.

It would seem that these pioneers had heard the saying which the Danish farmers use, "What can you do for a man or for a nation that does not know and cannot or will not think? Everytime you don't know something you ought to know, you pay a penalty for it."⁷

In 1815 the settlers made up a school and had it taught by Washington Welsh in a little log cabin near the present village of Traphill.⁸

The first log cabin school of 1790 burned between 1808 and 1820. The date is not definitely known. School

7

Macy Campbell, Rural Life at the Cross Roads (New York: Ginn and Company, 1927), p. 48.

8

"Historical Sketch, 1895-1896," Catalogue, Traphill Institute (Sparta, North Carolina: Star Job Printing Company, 1896), p. 5.

was then held in an old log building which was probably built for a store house. Citizens of the community think that schools in other communities were also patronized for several years during this time.

In 1853 the office of superintendent of common schools in the state was created and the Rev. Calvin Henderson Wiley appointed. He built up a good school system. In this early period many teachers taught more than one school term per year. Since the average term was three months they could teach in one community three months and then move to another for an additional term.

Peter Eller was the first "Chairman of the Board of Superintendents" in Wilkes County. A. A. Scroggs followed Eller and he collected one hundred dollars to buy a circulating library for Wilkes County schools.⁹

CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AT TRAPHILL

Traphill Academy

In 1865 a renewed interest in education developed among the citizens of Traphill. Some of the outstanding leaders in this movement were J. S. Holbrook, G. W. Miles, Kelly Blevins, Tyre York, and Harden Holbrook. Many others co-operated with these men and in 1871 they erected a two-story frame building which was approximately thirty feet by fifty feet. This interdenominational school was located on a knoll which commanded a splendid view of the mountains. The building was surrounded by a grove of thriving oaks.¹ The following description was used to advertise the school in that day:

This school is situated in the pleasant little village of Traphill fourteen miles northwest of Elkin, twenty miles northeast of Wilkesboro, and five miles southwest of the famous summer resort, Roaring Gap Hotel. The Stone Mountain which draws so many sightseers the year round is only three miles away.

¹ Sam Holbrook and P. E. Brown, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

The village and surrounding country is noted for being one of the most healthful regions in the state. The morals and hospitality in and around Traphill are worthy to be imitated by any community.²

The school assumed academic work and enjoyed a patronage second to none in that part of the state.³

The academy movement was a new development in the school system of the state in the early part of the nineteenth century. As a rule, these academies were private and secured their charters from the state. Certificates could be granted but degrees were not allowed. In most cases the trustees selected the teachers and had general control over the school.⁴ The trustees of the early Traphill Academy, as far as can be established, included William Miles, A. J. Brown, C. W. Smith, and W. L. Brewer.⁵

² Traphill Institute Catalogue, Historical Sketch, 1895-96 (Sparta, North Carolina: Star Job Print, 1896.)

³ P. E. Brown, Private Interview, June 19, 1954. (Note: P. E. Brown's mother, who is 95 years old, has related many facts to him that have in turn been given to the writer.)

⁴ J. G. Hollingsworth, History of Surry County (Mount Airy: W. H. Fisher Company, 1935), p. 177.

⁵ Brown, op. cit.

Board, including the necessary expenses, was available in the homes of the village at reasonable rates. Many students were educated at this academy.⁶

The citizens of the community some time later, approximately 1888, persuaded the trustees to sell the school property to the Methodist Episcopal (South) Church and this denomination assumed the management of the school. The Baptist denomination later withdrew, purchased a lot and erected a new school.⁷

Fairview College

Fairview College was the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) purchased from the Trustees of Traphill Academy which had been established in 1871 by interested citizens of Traphill Village.

Fairview College was recognized as a good school in Ashe, Alleghany, Elkin and Little River Baptist Associations along with the Methodist churches in the area. Some very good pupils were also sent from the Episcopal churches.⁸

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Charlie Miles, Private Interview, June 19, 1954.

⁸ Fairview College Catalog, 1891 (Sparta, North Carolina: Star Job Print, 1891), p. 4.

LIBRARY

Appalachian State Teachers College
Boone, North Carolina

25

This school continued to solicit the patronage of any and all who would go or be sent to school with the view of self-improvement. It was chartered by the General Assembly of North Carolina in 1891 with all the rights and privileges belonging to an institution of its kind. It was the purpose of the school in 1891 to present a course of study that would meet the needs of the students.⁹

The president of the college in 1895 was Abe Bryan and the principal of the school was Walter Jones as recalled by P. E. Brown, industrialist of the Wilkesboros, and for many years Sheriff of Wilkes County. Brown has his diploma from Fairview College, which was dated 1895 and signed by Bryan and Jones.

The following copy was the invitation sent out by graduates in 1893. Relatives of E. M. Blackburn, former teacher and merchant of North Wilkesboro, supplied the invitation.

9

"Fairview College Historical Sketch," Curfew-Outlook, 1:2, Thursday, September 21, 1911.

10

Ann Sebastian, Hays, North Carolina. Invitation, Fairview College, 1893.

You are respectfully invited to attend the second Commencement Exercises of Fairview College, Traphill, North Carolina, May 23d and 24th, 1893

May 23

- 11 A. M. Annual Sermon
 7:30 P. M. Debate by Philomathean Literary Society

May 24

- 11 A. M. Exercises by Graduating Class
 Invocation
 Music
 Oration Barbarian Invasions F. A. Absher
 Oration Dead Voices Not All Roman's L. M. Lyon
 Music
 Oration North Carolina Claims Her Children S. F. Thompson
 Music
 Awarding Diplomas
 Music
 Literary Address by Hon. R. A. Doughton
 Music
 2 P. M. Gold Medal Contest by Philomathean Literary Society
 7:30 P. M. Awarding Medal
 Annual Concert

Fairview College was at a low ebb from 1903 to 1909, as was Traphill Institute which had been established by the Baptist denomination in 1889 at Traphill. No cause for the decline was recorded in the catalogs published by the schools or in other records. The history sketches given in the 1912 catalog of Fairview College stated that renewed interest was manifested in the school in 1910 at which time the school was reorganized and additions were completed. A new dormitory for girls was included in the improvements.¹¹

In 1911 J. L. Stevenson, Presiding Elder, was elected president of Fairview College and K. L. Haga was principal.¹² Stevenson was a graduate of Grant University, and Haga was a graduate of the University of Chattanooga. Haga taught mathematics, English and Latin. Other faculty members included W. M. Smith, Emory and Henry College graduate, who was the teacher for the lower grades. Miss Fannie W. Banner of Lees McRae Institute was instructor for art, literature, science and history, and Mrs. Edith L. Haga, also of Lees McRae Institute, taught music. The librarian was Miss Iva Harris and the matron of the girls'

11

Fairview College Catalog, 1912, Vol. XXI.
 Publisher not given.

12

Curfew-Outlook, 1:2, September 21, 1911,
 Traphill, North Carolina.

dormitory was Mrs. K. L. Haga.¹³

The course of study at this time consisted of nine grades preparatory work and a regular four-year college course. The 1911 session opened on August 1 with an enrollment of 114. The length of the term was ten months. Tuition was reasonable and room, meals, and laundry were six dollars per month inclusive.¹⁴

There were two literary societies organized under the laws of the college. These were the Philomatheon for gentlemen and the Sophonian for ladies. The young men met at seven o'clock on Friday evenings and the young ladies at three-thirty o'clock on Wednesday afternoons. These organizations were used to develop the literary tastes as well as ease and gracefulness of expression.¹⁵

A very interesting and valuable feature of the Fairview school life was the lectures of the eminent speakers engaged to speak to the students. The following were heard during the 1911 and 1912 sessions:¹⁶

13 Fairview College Catalog, op. cit., p. 6.

14 Curfew-Outlook, loc. cit.

15 Fairview College Catalog, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

16 Ibid., p. 5.

T. S. Bryan, Traphill, North Carolina
J. C. Holbrook, Traphill, North Carolina
Rev. J. L. Stevenson, Traphill, North Carolina
Rev. C. W. Smith, Traphill, North Carolina
Rev. J. M. Wall, Mount Airy, North Carolina
Prof. P. D. Cone, Washington, D. C.
Prof. A. W. George, Elkin, North Carolina

Athletics were conducted and supported in the interest of the students. Baseball was one of the leading sports. It was stated that no student could become a member of any athletic group until they had done acceptable work in their regular studies. The school had a good athletic field with ball diamond and track field.¹⁷

The library contained many valuable books, among which were a number of the former Congressional Records. The students had free access to all of the books and they were loaned for periods of two weeks.¹⁸

Prayer meeting was held at the college every Thursday evening and chapel services were held daily from one to one-twenty. The religious services of the two churches of the community provided a place for worship on Sunday.¹⁹

17 Ibid., p. 5.

18 Ibid., p. 6.

19 Ibid., p. 5.

The Curfew-Outlook, a four-page newspaper, was published in Traphill at that time and through this publication college news was made available to the public.

There was some disagreement in regard to the denominational status of the college. The Methodist advertised it as interdenominational while the Baptist referred to it as the Methodist School.

The college course was not offered after 1917. All work was on the high school level. The principals who followed Haga were J. L. A. Bumgarner, W. H. Patton, and M. F. Bumgarner. Some of the outstanding teachers of this school were Williard Smith, Quincy Bumgarner, Charlie Miles, Miss Sadie Woodruff, and C. M. Caudill.²⁰

The building was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church after it was closed in 1922.²¹

²⁰ Charlie Miles, Private Interview, June 19, 1954.

²¹ J. L. A. Bumgarner, Private Interview, June 19, 1954.

CHAPTER VI

ORIGINS AND GROWTH OF TRAPHILL INSTITUTE, 1889-1894

Preliminary Steps Toward Building An Institute

Traphill Institute was established in 1888-1889 through the combined efforts of the Elkin and Primitive Baptist Associations.¹ A study of the factors which led to the establishment of Traphill Institute was reviewed to establish a clearer understanding of what happened. As has been stated, the school that replaced Traphill Academy was Fairview College, a Methodist controlled school. The study revealed a wholesome cooperation among the supporting patrons of Traphill Academy before 1889. There were many contributing factors responsible for this. Teachers were hard to get, books and money were scarce, and these factors along with others made it profitable to combine efforts and money. As conditions at Traphill and elsewhere improved, rivalry and jealousy developed among the leaders of the school to such an extent that a division resulted.

This division caused the establishment of two schools where there had been only one. The two schools were Fairview

¹ Traphill Institute Catalogue, 1895-96, p. 5.

College, as mentioned, and Traphill Institute. The latter was established by the combined efforts of the Elkin and Primitive Baptist Associations.

The following was an excerpt from a history sketch in the Traphill Institute Catalogue of 1895-96:

Some years ago the Trustees were persuaded by the promise of aid to convey the school property of the old school to the Methodist Episcopal Church. This did not prove satisfactory so the Baptist withdrew and in 1888-89 purchased a new lot. The new property used the name of Traphill Institute and the property conveyed to the Methodist Episcopal Church took upon itself the name of Fairview College.

Many of the same family groups that had founded the Traphill Academy in 1871 were leaders in the movement to establish a Baptist School to give the youth of the area at least a practical education and to prepare them to meet the demands of the times. Some of these leaders were J. S. Holbrook, William Miles, Kelly Blevins, Tyre York, C. F. Fields, Pressley Brown, Sr., Joshua Spicer, J. A. McCann and others.²

The rivalry, as stated, between the Baptist denominations and the Methodist Episcopal (South) seemed to be the factor needed to inspire the Baptist to build a co-educational school which would train the youth and would

² P. E. Brown, Sam Holbrook, Beatrice Holbrook, and Charlie Miles, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

also help the denomination to grow and prosper in proportion to the sister denominations.³ It has been stated that the Baptist had sold their interests in Traphill Academy to the Methodist and while many continued to support Fairview College, others, especially the Baptist leaders and their ministers, gave their support to their own denomination.

The Baptists placed much stress on education in the associational reports in 1883. A committee was appointed to study the situation for a year and their findings were reported to the group when the association convened.

A report given at the Gum Orchard Church, Surry County, North Carolina, in 1883, stated that education had improved in fifty years. It was true that in 1833 they had academies and what was termed old field school houses, scattered here and there over the state. In the corner was seated the schoolmaster with his ferrule and bunch of roasted hickories in hand, which ever and anon, were applied to the backs of mischievous urchins who were sent to school to keep them out of mischief at home. It was rare then to see a young man who aspired to anything in books beyond Webster's Spelling Book and Pike's Old Arithmetic. It was then that the general idea prevailed,

³ Verna McCann, Charlie Miles, and Texie Miles, An Interview, January 7, 1954.

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

After fifty years new views had developed. Colleges and high schools had sprung up from the mountains to the sea. Members were exhorted to do all that they could to encourage the development of the moral as well as the physical, to train minds to shine with splendor.⁴

The Report on Education in 1884 included four recommendations:

1. A thorough education of the rising generation for the upbuilding of society.
2. That the young people be educated beyond that of their fathers, that they would be able to read and understand so as to defend the truth.
3. To educate ministers.
4. Recommended that the Elkin Association use all their energy to accomplish this program.⁵

Dissatisfaction was expressed in regard to the free school system of our state in 1888 by the Educational Committee, G. M. Woodruff and J. T. Fowlks. They suggested that good teachers be employed and that the free school

⁴ Minutes Elkin Baptist Association, 1883, Report on Education by John Adams and A. T. Pardue (Raleigh: Broughton and Edwards, 1883).

⁵ Minutes of the Elkin Baptist Association, 1884, At Center Church, Wilkes County, North Carolina (Raleigh: Broughton and Edwards, 1884), p. 4.

money be supplemented by subscription and thereby make the free schools more efficient. They recommended that the association build an academy and that Moravian Falls Academy and Wake Forest College be patronized.⁶ Moravian Falls Academy was founded in part by Thomas J. Gilreath, father of Charles G. Gilreath, prominent lawyer of Wilkesboro, North Carolina.⁷

Founding the Institute

The suggestion that a Baptist school be organized was accepted enthusiastically by the Elkin Baptist Association. The Elkin Association met at Traphill in 1889 and appointed a committee to select a site for a Baptist school. The men serving on this committee were W. S. Edwards, L. W. Sparks, and J. P. Holbrook.⁸ Holbrook had served in the same capacity when Traphill Academy was established. He was the grandfather of Dr. Sam Holbrook, surgeon at Davis Hospital, Statesville, North Carolina.

⁶ Minutes of Elkin Baptist Association, Tenth Annual Session, October 4, 5, 6, 1888 (Elkin: Johnson S. Roth, 1888), p. 5.

⁷ Staff of special writers, History of North Carolina, Biography (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), Vol. V, p. 98.

⁸ Minutes of Elkin Baptist Association, Eleventh Annual Session, October 4, 5, 6, 1889 (Elkin: Johnson S. Roth, 1889), p. 9.

The Primitive Baptist Association met at Round Mountain Church on October 25 and 26, 1889, in their twenty-first annual session. They were also interested in education and Elder C. F. Fields submitted a request that they cooperate with the Elkin Baptist Association in locating and building an academy. A building committee was appointed to serve with the representatives of Elkin Association. These men were G. W. Miles, T. C. DeBorde, and C. P. Gilliam.⁹ Miles was the father of Charlie Miles, Baptist minister and former teacher of Traphill, North Carolina.

The Trustees of Traphill Institute erected a two-story frame building twenty-six feet by fifty feet on a lot conveniently located in the village of Traphill.¹⁰ The trim around the windows, doors, and gable was decorative and added to the appearance. The sills were hand-hewn pine and the sleepers were sawed from pine. The building, which was not underpinned, rested on rock pillars. The original part of the structure is still standing and is in use today. The writer observed on a recent trip to the Institute building that extensive remodeling was underway to make the

⁹ Minutes of the Primitive Baptist Association, Twenty-first Annual Session, Held at Round Mountain Church, Wilkes County, North Carolina, 1889. Page 3, item 18.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

building suitable for a Traphill Community House on the first floor, with storage space and a Masonic Lodge on the second floor.

School furniture was manufactured locally. The students' desks were made of pine or hemlock lumber of varied widths and approximately three-fourths of an inch thick. These desks were made wide enough to seat two students, as was the custom in that day. One of these desks was recently identified at the C. D. Holbrook Store in Traphill by Pearl Holbrook Welborn, daughter of C. D. Holbrook, a former merchant of Traphill.

First Session

The trustees selected J. H. Yarboro, a Baptist preacher, as principal of the first session of Traphill Institute, which opened on February 3, 1889, with an enrollment of eighty-seven.¹¹ The students lived in homes of the community and walked to school. Rivalry between the Methodists and Baptists kept expenses at a minimum. Students desiring to board themselves or persons desiring to move their families to the village for the purpose of "schooling" them could rent rooms at a very reasonable

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Ibid.

price for from five dollars to six dollars per month. These expenses included rooms, meals, laundry, and general mending of clothes as needed. Fairview College students enjoyed the same rates, especially in homes which favored the college.

These boarding students became additional members of the family with which they stayed during the school term and were responsible to the parents for their behavior while they lived there. This gave a very strict method of control on students when they were away from the school.¹² Some of the families that kept students were J. S. Holbrook, Grant Cathren, W. J. Combs, Rev. J. W. Burchett, J. S. Kilby, D. J. McCann, William Sparks, T. C. DeBorde, Hardin Holbrook, J. M. Spicer, C. D. Holbrook, and others.¹³

The second session of Traphill Institute opened July 28, 1890, with the Rev. J. H. Yarboro engaged by the trustees as principal for another term. The enrollment on October 2 of that year was seventy-seven students. The session was reported to have "flattering prospects for

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P. E. Brown, Charlie Miles, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

13

Verna McCann, Former student and teacher at Traphill School; Dr. Sam Holbrook, surgeon at Davis Hospital, Statesville; and P. E. Brown, former student at Fairview College, and at present an industrialist at North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. Private interviews respectively as of April 19, 1954, June 19, 1954, and July 10, 1954.

the future."¹⁴

In 1893 J. S. Kilby of Traphill read the Report on Education at the association which stated that "Education is the proper development of the physical, mental, and moral powers of mankind."¹⁵ He also said that education was an important factor in the future lives of the youth, so much so that parents could not afford to allow their children to grow up in ignorance and superstition. The report recommended two good schools within the bounds of the association, Traphill Institute and Ronda Academy, in which the boys and girls would be well cared for, not only mentally, but morally and religiously.¹⁶

The Baptist Church in Traphill had made progress since the report at Liberty Grove Church, printed in the Minutes of the Elkin Association of 1888, which stated that "Rev. T. M. Honeycutt preached an able sermon after which a collection was raised amounting to eleven dollars to help

14

Report of Trustees, J. W. Holbrook, Chairman, C. F. Fields, Secretary, Proceedings of Elkin Baptist Association, Twelfth Annual Session, Cool Springs Church, Wilkes County, North Carolina (Elkin: Hubbard and Roth, 1890), p. 3.

15

Minutes of Elkin Baptist Association, 1893 (Elkin: Hubbard and Roth, 1893), p. 3.

16

Loc. cit.

finish Traphill Church."¹⁷ The statistical report given at the meeting in 1888 stated that Traphill Baptist Church had forty members. The pastor was T. M. Honeycut of Sparta, North Carolina, and the Church Clerk was J. S. Brinegar of Traphill. The statistical table in 1895 showed a considerable increase in membership which currently had a total of one hundred and seven compared with the 1888 report of forty members.¹⁸ The Traphill Institute was no doubt a contributing factor toward the growth of the church. The pastor of Traphill Baptist Church in 1895 was Rev. J. W. Burchett, with T. C. DeBorde serving as clerk and the following men serving as delegates to the association: J. S. Kilby, J. S. Holbrook, and T. C. DeBorde.¹⁹

These men were outstanding leaders in the community of Traphill. They sent their boys and girls to the Institute and encouraged other parents to take advantage of the local school, whether they lived in the community or at a distance. The trend in thought seemed to be that the

¹⁷ Minutes of the Elkin Baptist Association, 1888, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁸ Minutes of Elkin Baptist Association, 1895, White Plains Church, Wilkes County, North Carolina, J. S. Kilby, Moderator; J. A. McCann, Clerk (Sparta: Star Publishing Company, 1895).

¹⁹ Loc. cit.

prosperity of church and state depended on the resources of a cultivated and trained intellect.

The following amendment on general education was submitted to the Elkin Association in 1894 by J. A. McCann of Traphill, and J. H. Foote of Ronda:

Whereas the amount of money used in the public schools gives only about a 3 months school in each district, and pays teachers a monthly salary of about \$22 and, whereas, the amount of taxes of the people drawn from the public treasury in 1893 and 1894, for higher, is \$148. Therefore, resolved first that, in our opinion, the Legislature, soon to be elected by the people, ought to provide for a 4 months school in each district in every county in the state; Resolved, second, that in our opinion, the people's taxes should not be appropriated by the Legislature to higher education; Resolved, third, that in our opinion, the appropriated taxes of the people to education is a hindrance, and not a help, to the best educational interest of North Carolina.²⁰

After discussions the report was adopted. This indicated that these leaders were entreating the people to support the Traphill Institute as a child of the Elkin Association, also Ronda Academy and Wake Forest College, referred to as a grand institution of learning and rated among the highest institutions of the South.²¹

20

Minutes of the Elkin Baptist Association, 1894
Macedonia Church, Wilkes County, August 30, 31, September 1, 1894. Rev. C. F. Fields, Moderator; Rev. E. N. Gwyn, Clerk. (Elkin: Hubbard and Roth, 1894), pp. 5-6.

21

Loc. cit.

The School Under E. Leff Wagoner - 1894-1895

The Board of Trustees of Traphill Institute in 1894²² employed E. Leff Wagoner, L. I. (Licensed Instructor), who was a graduate of Peabody Normal College, Nashville, Tennessee, and had a teaching record of two sessions. Assistant to the principal was Miss Beatrice Smith, a graduate of Salem Female Academy. She was also a teacher of music and elocution. "These two principal teachers represented the foremost normal college in the south and the best college for women in the south."²³ These two were assisted by tutors in the program of instruction. Teachers and tutors co-operated with trustees in an endeavor to make Traphill Institute the leading school of its kind in that section of Western North Carolina.²⁴

22

Board of Trustees, J. S. Holbrook, President; J. S. Kilby, Secretary; Rev. J. W. Burchett, D. J. McCann, William Sparks, T. C. DeBorde, all of Traphill; Rev. C. Blevins, Laurel Springs; Rev. E. N. Gwyn, Elkin; J. A. McCann, Roaring Gap; Rev. D. J. Roberts, Cherry Lane; Rev. I. W. Landreth, Amelia; Joshua Spicer, Spicer; Rev. C. F. Fields, Elkin, Rev. E. Blevins, Blevins; Rev. J. W. Myers, Dockery; J. F. Gentry, Parks; F. Brewer, Round Mountain; and Rev. W. F. Byrd of Roberdell; each from his respective town in North Carolina. Traphill Institute Catalog, 1894-1895 (Sparta: Star Job Print, 1895), p. 3.

23

Ibid., p. 10.

24

Loc. cit.

The Institute, which was chartered by the General Assembly of North Carolina in 1893, prepared pupils for entrance to any of the colleges or the University of North Carolina and for life and its duties.²⁵ Every pupil who attended the school and anticipated teaching was required to take a course of study prescribed by the principal to better fit him for the duties of a teacher. The recitations were forty to sixty minutes long and no student was allowed to recite more than twenty or less than fifteen lessons per week. In addition to school work students were required to do a lot of special reading from the library.²⁶

A uniform system of textbooks was used. Students could purchase textbooks before entering school, or they could be purchased at the Institute at publisher's prices. Old books were exchanged for new by paying exchange prices.²⁷

The following list of textbooks were those used at that time:²⁸

25 Traphill Catalog, 1895-1896, op. cit., p. 6.

26 Ibid., p. 13.

27 Ibid., p. 14.

28 Ibid., p. 15.

Algebra	Wentworth
Arithmetic	Sanford's Series, Davie's University
Botany	Gray
Caesar	Allen and Greenough
Cicero	Allen and Greenough
Dictionary	Webster
English Grammar	Harvey
French Grammar	Whitney
Geography	Maury's Series
Geometry	Wentworth
Greek Grammar	White
History, N. C.	Moore
History, U. S.	Hansell
History, English	Montgomery
History, Universal	Servinton
Latin, Beginners	Collar and Daniell
Latin, Grammar	Allen and Greenough
Penmanship	National System
Physics	Gage
Physiology	Martin's Human Body
Readers	Holmes' Series (New edition)
Rhetoric	Hill's Foundation
Speller	Harrington's Graded
Trigonometry	Wentworth
Virgil	Allen and Greenough

Regular written examinations were given every four weeks and a full report of the department, scholarship, and class standing was sent to parents at the end of each month. Written and oral examinations were held at the close of each term on all studies pursued during the ten months term. No student was excused from any examination except for providential hindrance.²⁹

Tuition, which was payable monthly, was one dollar to three dollars per month for the common and high school

departments, and one dollar per month for the primary department. Music, including the use of the instrument, was two dollars and fifty cents per month. Society fees were twenty-five cents per session. There was an incidental fee, payable in advance each month, of five cents. A liberal discount was given for all bills paid in advance.

The Literary Societies were recognized as a necessary part of student training in elocution. Each student was required to join a society. Their program consisted of recitations, essays, and debates. John A. Holbrook of the Agatheridan Society won the Orators Gold Medal in 1895 and it was presented to him by George Cheek, Esquire, at Commencement.³⁰

The chief officer for the Commencement Exercises on May 15 and 16, 1895, was Thomas Contee Bowie.³¹ This student was destined to become an influential and outstanding citizen in various fields. In 1925 he was serving on the Board of Trustees at Appalachian State Teachers College at Boone, North Carolina.³² He was

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

³¹ Loc. cit.

³² The Dew Drop, Appalachian State Normal School, Boone, North Carolina, Catalog edition, 23:1, July, 1925, p. 10.

familiarly referred to as Tam Bowie. P. E. Brown of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, who was in school at Fairview College in that same year, stated that Tam Bowie was the "Lion of the Blue Ridge". Bowie had attended school at Fairview College sometime earlier.³³

Chief marshall and best debater was Thomas Lacy Smith of Sparta, North Carolina, who later married into the Holbrook family at Traphill.

Declaimer's prize was given to James Franklin Billings and the Declaimer's Medal went to Columbus Spottswood McKnight of Cherry Lane, North Carolina. Two girls won the Recitation Medals--Manie Samantha McCann, the gold medal; and Nannie Jane Holbrook, the silver medal.³⁴

The following was the Commencement Program of 1895 at Traphill Institute.³⁵

33

P. E. Brown, Private Interview, June 19, 1954.

34

Ibid., p. 9.

35

Copy of program used at Commencement furnished by Ruth Linney, Roaring River, North Carolina.

TRAPHILL INSTITUTE

Thursday, May 16, 1895 10:30 A. M.

Programme

Music

HYMN: "Nearer My God to Thee"

Prayer - - - - - Rev. John T. Jenkins

Contest for Gold Medal

Luck or Pluck - - - - - John A. Holbrook, Traphill

Music

The Progress of the Nineteenth Century - Thomas L. Smith, Sparta

Music

Valedictory- - - - - Miss Samantha McCann, Traphill

Music

Literary Adress- -Congressman R. Z. Linney, Taylorsville

Chorus: "Meet Me Where the Pansies Lift Their Lowly Heads"
Misses Mattie Smith, Ella and Leora Wagoner, and
Messrs. Jarvis and Smith

- - - - -

Thursday, May 16, 1895 7:30 P. M.

Programme

Chorus: "Calm is the Lake" -- Misses Samantha McCann,
Mattie Smith, Ella and Leora Wagoner, and Messrs.
Jarvis and Smith

Contest for Silver Medal

An Ideal With A Roman Nose - - Stella Johnson, Roaring River
 Annie's Ticket - - - - - - - - - - -Nannie Holbrook, Traphill
 General Hancock's March- - - - - - - - - - - Leora Wagoner, Whitehead
 Do You Love Butter?- - - - - - - - - - - Ethel Sparks, Traphill
 Advice to Girls- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Carrie Wood, Traphill
 Vocal Solo - "Diamonds or Roses" - - - - - Mattie Smith
 Be A Woman - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Fannie Wood, Traphill
 My Mother at the Gate - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -Phoebe Lyon, Traphill

Music

Homesick - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Irene Johnson, Roaring River
 A Vision - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Lenora Holbrook, Traphill

Music

Drill of the Little Patriots - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Twenty-three Girls

Music

Contest for Gold Medal

Too Late for the Train - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Dositia Gambill, Ira
 A Leak in the Dike - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Leora Wagoner, Whitehead
 An Angel in a Saloon - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Effie Sparks, Traphill

Vocal Duet- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - "Beautiful Moonlight"
 Misses Ella and Leora Wagoner

Whistling in Heaven- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Susan Gambill, Ira
 The Village Bell - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Lillie Caudill, Dockery

Music

Finding of the Cross - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Ella Wagoner, Whitehead

The Old Surgeon's Story- - - - -Mattie Smith, Sparta
 Old Letters- - - - - Bertie Edwards, Edwards Cross Roads
 The Angel of Buena Vista - - - - - Samantha McCann, Traphill
 "Who Did" - - - - - Male Chorus

Awarding of Medals

Music

Tambourine Drill - - - - - Eighteen girls

- - - - -

The Next Session Begins Wednesday, August 7, 1895

MILLERS FALLS
 ERASE
 COTTON CONTENT

CHAPTER VII

TRAPHILL INSTITUTE FROM 1895-1912

The Institute, with E. Leff Wagoner as principal, continued to solicit the patronage of students from other denominations even though it was recognized as being the school of Ashe, Alleghany, Elkin, Little River, and later Stone Mountain Baptist associations. Some outstanding students were from the Methodist denomination.¹

Teachers for the 1895-96 session were E. Leff Wagoner, principal, and Lula Ballentine, assistant. Miss Ballentine was a graduate of Thomasville Female College, and instructor in music and elocution. Henry F. Baity, a graduate of Sowers' Normal Penmanship, taught penmanship. A course in Bible was offered and the Rev. James W. Burchett taught the class.²

The Institute's catalogue of students in 1895-96 showed enrollments from twenty-five towns in North Carolina, other than Traphill, and three towns in Virginia.³

1 Traphill Institute Catalog, 1895-96 (Sparta: Star Job Printing, 1895), p. 6.

2 Ibid., p. 8.

3 Ibid., pp. 11-14 (See Appendix for Roll).

The summary of enrollment from the catalog was:⁴

Common and high school departments	49
Primary department	41
Bible class	12
Music department	6
Special elocution	1
	<hr/>
	109
Deduct names counted twice	- 13
Total number in attendance	<hr/> 96

The trustees with Joseph S. Holbrook, chairman, were interested in the success of the school, and endeavored to provide adequate facilities. In 1895 additions were made to the original two-story building.⁵ A two-story wing was added on the left side of the original building and a one-story building was erected across the road, and directly in front of the institute building.⁶

The Baptist associations that were instrumental in the establishment of Traphill Institute continued to support and patronize the school. The leaders were interested in progress in education and in the church work. The formation of a new association was suggested and on November 19, 1897, a presbytery appointed by the Elkin Association, met at the New Covenant Church, Dockery, North Carolina, and organized

⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

⁶ Sam Holbrook, Beatrice Holbrook, Private Interview, June 20, 1954.

the Stone Mountain Baptist Association. The group transacted the usual business and adopted a Report on Education signed by J. O. Brewer and J. T. Byrd. This report stated that education was the proper development of the physical, mental, and moral powers of mankind. To educate the child was the responsibility of the parents. They were admonished to carefully investigate the moral and religious atmosphere of the schools before patronizing them. It was emphasized that there were schools in the area which were conducted by Christian Baptist teachers and the report suggested that these schools be given preference.⁷

Traphill Baptist Church was a member of the Stone Mountain Baptist Association after its organization and many of the leaders were Traphill Baptists. This new association became another promoter of Traphill Institute.

The Institute continued to grow for several years as evidenced by various letters of recognition written by patrons of the school.⁸

Joseph S. Holbrook stated that he appreciated the work of E. Leff Wagoner as principal of Traphill School. He

⁷ Minutes of the First Annual Session of the Stone Mountain Baptist Association, 1897 (Above information courtesy H. T. Clark, Unpublished Master's Thesis.)

⁸ Whitehead Academy Catalog, 1897-98 (Whitehead: Batiler Print, 1898), p. 5.

was well pleased with the progress that his son, John A. Holbrook, had made and that the son at that time was in Wake Forest College.⁹ John A. Holbrook later became a lawyer and established his office at North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. He formed a partnership with Johnson J. Hayes (now Judge Hayes) in October, 1909.¹⁰ Joseph S. Holbrook at that time was President of the Board of Trustees of Traphill Institute and Ex-Representative of Wilkes County.

Another satisfied patron of the Institute reported that he regarded E. Leff Wagoner as one of the best teachers in western North Carolina. This report came from J. P. Elledge, Ex-Representative of Wilkes County.¹¹

The school and E. Leff Wagoner were both recommended by the Rev. W. J. Burchett, pastor of Ronda and Traphill Baptist Churches. He stated that the principal was a good Christian gentleman and said that no parent could do better than to put their boys or girls under his charge.¹²

9

Ibid., p. 15.

10

Feature article, "Judge Hayes Deals Out Justice, Harvests Apples, Raises Cattle," by Mary Holcombe Gordon, Greensboro Daily News, Sunday, October 29, 1950, pp. 1-2.

11

Whitehead Catalogue, op. cit., p. 16.

12

Ibid., p. 15.

Another Ex-Representative of Wilkes County, Rev. William M. Lee, related that he had placed his son, D. W. Lee, under E. Leff Wagoner's care at Traphill Institute in 1895 and that he was perfectly satisfied with the progress he had made there.¹³

These reports give a cross section of the opinions of influential citizens of Wilkes County in regard to the progress and success of Traphill Institute. General satisfaction was the sentiment of the group. The same sentiment was expressed by today's citizens of Traphill and by some of the people who received training at the Institute. The people of the mountain section of Traphill and vicinity as well as other places were enriched through the moral and intellectual training they received in the school.

Decline of the School

Beginning in 1904 there was a period of decline in Traphill Institute. The Association Minutes continued to contain Reports on Education and requests that denominational schools be supported. There was no recorded information in the association records which gave the cause of the decline. The review of circumstances at that time

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Ibid., p. 16.

has indicated that the chief cause for the decline and final closing of Traphill Institute was the establishment of two schools within a radius of one-half mile in the remote mountain village of Traphill, North Carolina.¹⁴ The study of that period also indicated that state supported high schools were becoming more numerous and the people no longer associating the idea of charity with the public schools, were beginning to support some of these.¹⁵

Other factors that entered in were better roads and improved methods of transportation. Traphill had continued to be a trading center for the local area in that section of Wilkes County, but other trading centers were developing also. Traphill no longer had a monopoly on trade. Two successful country stores had been established in the preceding period. These were the C. D. Holbrook Store, Dealer in General Merchandise, established by C. D. Holbrook, prominent citizen of Traphill, and the Traphill Bargain House, which was developed by J. S. Kilby, a former student of Traphill Academy.¹⁶ These and other unknown reasons

¹⁴ Dr. J. Sam Holbrook, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

¹⁵ Hugh Lefler and Albert Newsome, North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), p. 352.

¹⁶ Charlie Miles, Private Interview, April 8, 1954.

were responsible for the low ebb in education at Traphill during this period.

In 1910 a move was made to re-establish the status of Traphill Institute. Tilden Eller was employed as principal and C. M. Caudill was assistant. These teachers were excellent instructors but this alone could not make the school a success. For various reasons the school was never opened again. The building was sold to the Traphill Masonic Lodge in 1912. Traphill Institute had lived its life and had influenced the lives of hundreds of students but it had served its purpose and the founders of the school had accomplished their goal, their sons and daughters had received educational training in the community.¹⁷

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Charlie Miles and C. C. Faw, An Interview, July 10, 1954.

CHAPTER VIII

CONTRIBUTIONS OF TRAPHILL SCHOOLS

The contributions and cultural developments accomplished through education could not be itemized and measured. It was strikingly presented in the study by facts and figures and documentation that the progressive leadership in economic and cultural fields was attributed in large measures to education. Outstanding citizens later stated that among the effects that this general cultural and educational advantage had was material prosperity for many of the students and for the community in general.¹ The graduates were better prepared to earn a place of leadership. The students of the Traphill Academy manifested their interest in progress by the building and equipping of school houses, the continued growth of the churches and by the establishment of business enterprises that had indicated determined progress.

Traphill Academy

Traphill Academy was an important element in the educational development that was to follow in Traphill.

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P. E. Brown, Dr. Sam Holbrook, and others in private interviews as noted throughout the study.

It contributed its full share toward the goal of education and training for the youth of that section of Wilkes County. The records show that many of the students of this early school became influential leaders.

An excellent example of just such a leader was James Senter Kilby, born on December 31, 1858. The date would suggest that his youth was coincident with that period which included the Civil War, and the trying years of adjustment which followed. The times offered few opportunities for education and only the well favored, or exceptionally ambitious were able to secure more than the rudiments. Into the latter class Kilby was placed because he secured for himself better equipment than many of his contemporaries.²

The fact that Kilby secured his education under difficult circumstances was, perhaps, the controlling factor that shaped his long and useful life. His ambitions were that his own should have greater educational advantages than were his and when his three children died in early youth, he transferred this ambition to the benefit of others.

Kilby launched into the mercantile business at Trap-hill and in this pursuit, which he followed for more than thirty years, he was signally successful. The influence

² C. C. Faw, Sr., Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

and opportunity for service of the country merchant in those years, when rightfully used, were effective and far reaching. For honesty, uprightness and fair-dealing, his mercantile career was above reproach.³

Aside from his business, Kilby gave his support to every worthwhile social and civic project in his community and section. In 1876 he helped to organize the Baptist Church of Traphill and was a charter member. He contributed much to the field of religion. He married a Traphill girl, Lula E. Holbrook, in 1881 and they erected their home in the village.⁴

Kilby was one of the co-founders of Traphill Institute, which in its day offered exceptional high school opportunities during the period before the state offered many advantages.⁵ In 1913 he became the chief promoter of Mountain View Institute at Hays, North Carolina. He moved to Hays and devoted much time and money to the school. He also served on the Board of Education in Wilkes County for several years.

³ "James Senter Kilby, Memorium," The Wilkes Patriot, North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, September 4, 1930.

⁴ Charlie Miles, Private Interview, June 10, 1954.

⁵ Elkin Baptist Associational Minutes, 1883 through 1895.

During his lifetime Kilby had acquired large real estate holdings and had saved over fifteen thousand dollars cash.⁶ His death in 1930 closed a life that ranked high in the annals of the school history of Traphill and Hays, North Carolina.

There were many other students of the early academy who were destined to be influential leaders in their day. Joseph S. Holbrook, son of Ralph Holbrook, II and Nancy Spicer Holbrook, took advantage of all opportunities offered him and gave freely of his time and talents to promote progress in many fields. His name was found among the leaders in church histories, records of the establishment of schools, on real estate deeds and on many other documents.⁷

Joseph S. Holbrook was President of the Board of Trustees when Traphill Institute was established. He was instrumental in getting the buildings erected and it was through his influence that dependable teachers were hired

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J. Sam Holbrook and Charlie Miles, An Interview, June 19, 1954.

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Family Bible records, collection of private letters and papers, and other documents made available to the writer by Miss Beatrice Holbrook and Dr. J. Sam Holbrook, grandchildren of Joseph S. Holbrook, in an interview June 19, 1954, at Traphill, North Carolina.

to have charge of the school program.⁸

Holbrook was secretary of the Masonic Lodge, Number 346, which was located at Traphill and contributed much to the advancement of that organization.⁹ He was influential as Representative of Wilkes County and in many other fields. Holbrook contributed facts to this study by a short paper on the history of events in his day. This recorded data was used to establish facts that otherwise would not have been available.¹⁰

The contributions of these two men who attended school at Traphill Academy were outstanding. There were no doubt many other students who were more influential and successful citizens because of the training that they had been able to get in this early school.

Fairview College

There were many outstanding students who attended Fairview College. Among these was P. E. Brown of North

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ By-Laws of Trap Hill Lodge, Number 346 of Trap Hill, North Carolina (Raleigh: John B. Nichols, Book and Job Printers, 1876).

¹⁰ Joseph S. Holbrook, "History of Traphill and Vicinity Before the Revolutionary War," Curfew-Outlook, 1:17, January 11, 1912.

Wilkesboro, son of John M. Brown of Traphill vicinity. P. E. Brown received his diploma from Fairview College in 1895 and afterwards taught school for several years. He later established the P. E. Brown Lumber Company. Plants were located in North Wilkesboro and Wilkesboro and, in addition, several lumber yards were located in surrounding territories. Brown has been an outstanding politician and has represented his party in several out-of-the-county conventions. He was also successful as sheriff of Wilkes County, a job he held for several years.¹¹

E. M. Blackburn received his education at Fairview College. He taught school and later entered the mercantile business in North Wilkesboro.¹²

R. A. Doughton, former Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina, was a student at the college.

There were several hundred of these graduates that could be enumerated, according to P. E. Brown and Minda Spicer Absher. The latter was a graduate in 1899 and received her teaching certificate in that year.¹³ An

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P. E. Brown, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

12

Ruby Blackburn, daughter of E. M. Blackburn, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

13

Minda Spicer Absher, Private letter to writer, February 18, 1954.

outstanding personality and leader was Thomas Contee Bowie.¹⁴
 Others mentioned by these former students were Johnny Blackburn, Dr. John Q. Myers, Tyre Holbrook, Tye Pruett, W. B. Woodruff, John Q. A. Bryan, Sallie DeJournette, Alice Holbrook, and Frank A. Linney.

The following were included in the "pedagogy class" of 1912:¹⁵

Eudemma Caudill	Zebra, North Carolina
Clemma Billings	Moxley, North Carolina
Verna McCann	Austin, North Carolina
Elizabeth Poole	Delhart, Virginia
Ethel Lowe	Low Gap, North Carolina
Milliard Royal	Miles, North Carolina
Charlie Miles	Miles, North Carolina
Washington Vannoy	Miles, North Carolina
Artie Harris	Laurel Branch, North Carolina
Hilary Thompson	Ashland, North Carolina
Glenn Dancy	Hays, North Carolina
Myrtle Cass	Jennings, North Carolina
Edith Haga	Traphill, North Carolina
Robert Smith	Traphill, North Carolina
Lonnie Holbrook	Traphill, North Carolina
Williard Smith	Traphill, North Carolina
Dora Doub	Traphill, North Carolina
Maud Sparks	Traphill, North Carolina
Bettie Bryan	Traphill, North Carolina
Watson Lyon	Traphill, North Carolina
Stella Bryan	Traphill, North Carolina
Lee Stephenson	Traphill, North Carolina
Ivah Harris	Traphill, North Carolina
Pheroby Belle	New Life, North Carolina

14

Brown, op. cit.

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Fairview College Catalog, 1912 (No publisher given), p. 11.

There were 126 students enrolled in the school in 1912 and many of these have reflected the training received at Fairview College.

Traphill Institute

Traphill Institute offered exceptional advantages and opportunities as a preparatory school during the period in which the state schools were not accessible for many of the families who lived in the mountain village of Traphill. The expenses were kept low and within reach of many local students. Individual loans were extended by leaders of the school in many instances, thereby providing for the education of boys and girls who were without money or means for such training.¹⁶

Traphill Institute was a contributing factor toward the growth of Traphill village in various phases such as the churches, the stores, and improvements of the homes in which the students boarded. In many cases extra rooms were added to house students.¹⁷

Hundreds of students were given a high school education and many continued their training in college after

¹⁶ Verna McCann, Private Interview, June 10, 1954.

¹⁷ Loc. cit.

they had finished at Traphill Institute. Among these was John A. Holbrook, son of Joseph S. Holbrook, co-founder of the school. John A. Holbrook received his degree in law from Wake Forest College and was one of the best that has ever practiced in North Wilkesboro or this part of the state.¹⁸ When he finished at Traphill Institute in 1896, he was acclaimed the best orator that had been trained in the elocution department of the school and he was the valedictorian of his class. He died at the age of thirty-three, but during his life he and his wife, Nancy Spicer Holbrook, established their home near Traphill and their children began their education at Traphill. From this family we have two sons, John A. and J. Sam Holbrook. The latter, a well-known surgeon at Davis Hospital, Statesville, North Carolina, and his sister, Beatrice Holbrook, librarian at Raleigh, were keenly interested in the study of Traphill Institute.

There were several students who later became successful ministers. Among these were Noah Thomas Jarvis, C. D. Brown, and others. Another well-known personality was Thomas Contee Bowie, who attended Fairview College previous to the session of 1894-95 when he graduated at Traphill

¹⁸ Miles, loc. cit.

19
Institute.

There were a number of teachers who graduated from Traphill Institute as well as successful farmers and homemakers. The contributions that this school made, in its time, were many and the study has shown that it contributed much toward helping citizens to live happily in their society with their fellowman.²⁰

¹⁹ P. E. Brown, Private Interview, June 19, 1954.

²⁰ J. Sam Holbrook, Private Interview, June 19, 1954.

CHAPTER IX

TRAPHILL HIGH SCHOOL, 1922-1954

Traphill High School is an outgrowth of the schools that preceded it at Traphill. The Traphill Academy was replaced in 1889 by two schools: Fairview College, a Methodist, co-educational school, and Traphill Institute, a Baptist co-education, preparatory school. These two co-educational schools were the result of a division in leadership not entirely within denominations, as pointed out by the fact that Methodists supported the Baptist school and many Baptists were sent to Fairview College, the Methodist school.¹

Traphill Institute was the first of the two schools to be closed and to have the property sold. In 1912 the building that had housed Traphill Institute was sold to the Masonic Lodge, Number 346, of Traphill, North Carolina.² This closed one of the programs of education that citizens of Traphill, the Primitive Baptist Association, the Elkin Baptist Association, and the Stone Mountain Baptist Association had co-operatively founded and

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Beatrice Holbrook, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

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Charlie Miles, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.
(Miles had been associated with the Traphill Masonic Lodge.)

supported.³

Fairview College, during the year of 1910, was improved, a girls' dormitory was completed and the school was reorganized in every respect.⁴ During the fall term of 1911 a room was prepared for the departments of bookkeeping, typewriting and penmanship. The building was painted and general improvements made.⁵

With Traphill Institute closed, Fairview was the school of the village at that time. It was called inter-denominational in the Curfew-Outlook, a four-page newspaper printed in Traphill during the years of 1911-1912.⁶ The course of study in the reorganized school consisted of nine grades, preparatory work, and a regular four-year college course.⁷

Operating expenses were met through tuition charges for students and supplemented by state and county funds, which were available for four months for the common grades.⁸

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fairview College Catalogue, 1912 Volume XXI
(No publisher given).

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ Curfew-Outlook, 1:2, Thursday, September 21, 1911.

⁷ Fairview College Catalogue, loc. cit.

⁸ Miles, loc. cit.

The school was reorganized again in 1917 and was from that time on called Traphill High School. The citizens of the section known as Traphill Township, comprising ten districts, were to have a state high school that would serve the community in much the manner in which the preceding schools had served.⁹ The new high school building was a three-room, one-story frame building located near the site of the present brick building. This building was later destroyed by fire of undetermined origin.

The original part of the present brick building was erected by the contractors Foster, Settle, and Nelson, at a cost of twenty-six thousand dollars. This building was U shaped containing eight classrooms, a principal's office, with library housed in the front section of the office, and an auditorium.¹⁰

Traphill High School was placed on the accredited list of high schools of the state and so recorded in the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

9

A collection of annual reports of the public schools of Wilkes County, C. C. Wright, County Superintendent of School, 1904-1927. Supplemented with private interviews with Charlie Miles and others.

10

C. C. Faw, Sr., Insurance executive of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, who was at that time Chairman of the Board of Education of Wilkes County, Private Interview, July 19, 1954.

on June 1, 1927.¹¹

The school board at that time included T. H. Higgins, Chairman; C. D. Holbrook, Secretary; and T. S. Bryan. In their report in the catalog of 1927-28 they included the following appreciation of the building and of the faculty:

Our new building is known and admired by people far and near. No more beautiful auditorium and stage is to be found anywhere in the northwestern section of the state.

We are pleased to call attention to the progressive spirit of our entire faculty; all have been in summer school except one, and she has traveled at some lengths in other states.

There is only one new face (member) in our faculty, and he is no stranger, being the son of our County Superintendent of Schools, he is David Wright, B. S., History and Science.¹²

The faculty in 1927 were as follows:¹³

Elementary

Hattie Gambill	First and second grades
Verna McCann	Third, fourth, and fifth grades
T. Lester Gregory	Sixth and seventh grades

High School

David Wright, B. S.	History and Science
Beatrice Holbrook, A.B.	English and Civics
Edgar R. Settle, A.B.	Mathematics and Latin
E. Ruth Settle	Piano

¹¹ Traphill High School Catalogue, 1927-28 P. 2.

¹² Loc. cit.

¹³ Traphill High School Catalogue, op. cit., p. 1.

Tuition for high school was one dollar and fifty cents per month and for piano three dollars and fifty cents per month. Board was available at reasonable rates and rooms for light housekeeping were available.¹⁴

A modern, cement-block, one-story gymnasium was added in 1952 to the school plant, along with four additional classrooms.¹⁵

The Traphill High School principal's report of May, 1954, had an enrollment of 104 high school and 381 elementary students. The school had fourteen teachers, which included four high school teachers. The principal during the 1953-54 term was E. H. Edmisten.¹⁶

Traphill High School, a follower of Traphill Academy, Fairview College, and Traphill Institute, has been the result of a conviction that education is a valuable factor in the training of citizens and in the development and use of talents of students. Advantages of a state school developed to such an extent that Traphill High

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

¹⁵ Mrs. Clyde S. Hutchens, Secretary to C. B. Eller, Superintendent of Wilkes County Schools, Private Interview, July 10, 1954.

¹⁶ Principal's final records and reports, 1953-54, County Superintendent of Wilkes County Schools Office, Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

School was established, Fairview College was closed and the property was deeded in 1922 to the Methodist Church.

Traphill High School has remained relatively small but has served the community well. The future plans for Traphill High School, as outlined by C. B. Eller, Superintendent of Wilkes County Schools, included consolidation with Mountain View School, which was founded in part by two citizens of Traphill.¹⁷ Eller stated that the consolidation program would probably be authorized within one year and construction begun on a modern high school building which would include vocational home economics, vocational agriculture, industrial arts, diversified occupations, a commercial department, as well as the routine courses offered in a high school curriculum. The new school would be located on a neutral site and would be called North High.¹⁸

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J. S. Kilby and wife of Traphill, North Carolina, contributed much time and wealth toward the establishment of Mountain View Institute. (See the History of Mountain View Institute, unpublished Master's Thesis, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, North Carolina, by H. T. Clark.)

18

Unpublished paper by P. W. Gregory, principal, Mountain View School, Hays, North Carolina, July 17, 1954.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has traced the growth of education at Traphill, North Carolina, from 1790, when the first log school house was erected, to the school program of 1954. Citizens of Traphill have had access to, and have taken advantage of, the educational opportunities which were available to them during that stated span of time. The people recognized that there was only one remedy for ignorance and that remedy was education.

As conditions improved from the pioneer days the citizens improved their homes, the schools, and the churches, as has been shown in this study. These developments were contributing factors toward the progress which followed.

Traphill Academy was an interdenominational school and reflected wholesome co-operation among the supporting patrons of the school from 1865 until 1889. It was an advantage to all concerned to combine efforts and money. Later, as conditions were improved in Traphill village, rivalry and jealousy developed among the leaders of the school to such an extent that a division was the result. The division gave rise to two schools where there had been only one.

Some of the leaders were Methodists while others were Baptists and, as the study has showed, Fairview College became the Methodist Episcopal school and Traphill Institute became the Baptist school.

These schools both operated successfully and provided excellent opportunities for the youth of the territory from 1889 until 1905. From that time on there followed a period of decline and both schools were at a low ebb. The chief cause for the decline was the establishment of two schools only one-half mile apart in a small, remote mountain village. There were other contributing factors and among these, as has been stated, was the growth of the state educational program and economic and internal improvements in general.

Traphill Institute was closed in 1912 and the building sold.

Fairview College was able to continue a program after the Institute closed until that time when the advantages of a state high school developed to such an extent that the competition could not be met. When this period was reached, Fairview College was closed and the property deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Traphill High School, an outgrowth of the schools preceding it, became an accredited school in North Carolina

in 1927. The proposed consolidation program for 1954, as has been outlined, will probably be authorized within one year. If the program is approved Traphill High School will have served its purpose just as the schools preceding it had served a purpose in the progress of the educational program in the section of Wilkes County known as Traphill, North Carolina.