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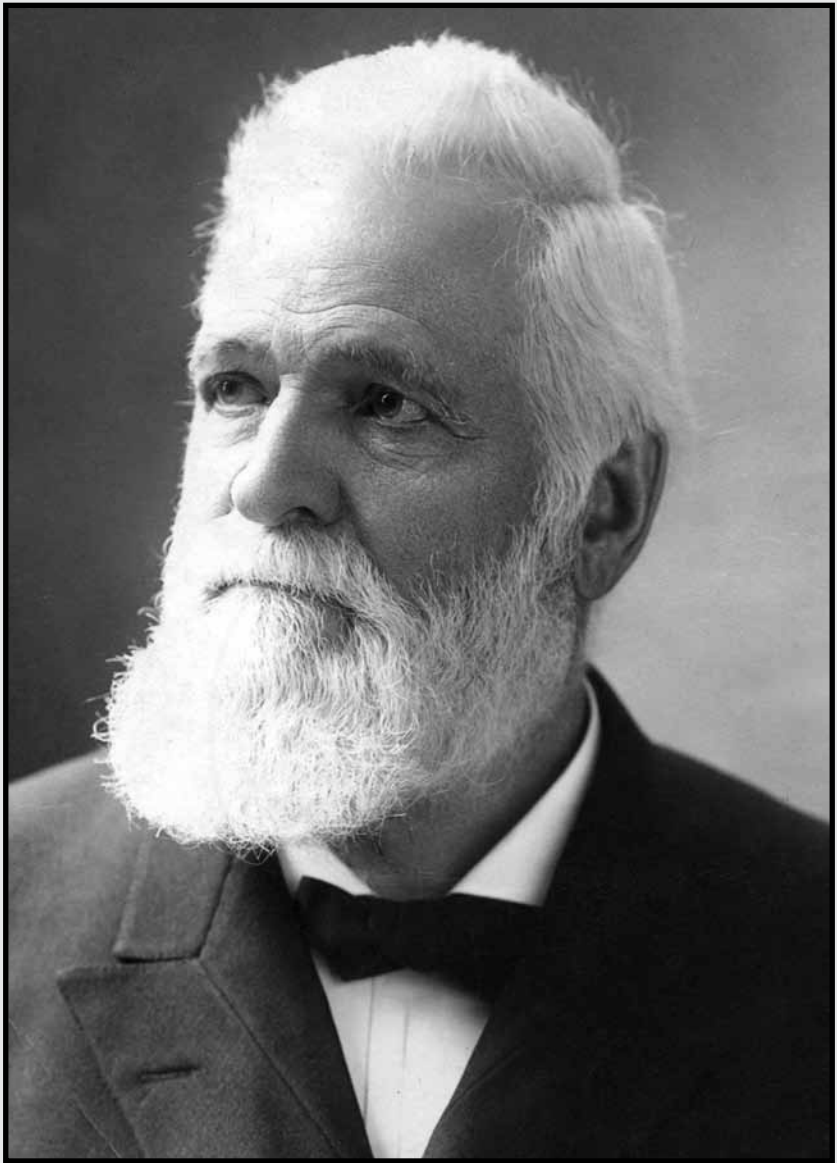
“NOT AS
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BUT FOR
ALL TIME”

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
AND ITS HISTORIES

JOHN W. BOYER

XX
OCCASIONAL PAPERS
ON HIGHER
EDUCATION XX

THE COLLEGE
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO



Galusha Anderson, President, 1878–1885

An oil portrait of Galusha Anderson hangs in the Common Room in Swift Hall at the University of Chicago. Anderson served as Professor in the University of Chicago Divinity School after the re-founding of the University, retiring in 1903. His career embodies the continuous tradition of the two institutions bearing the name of the University of Chicago.

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The University of Chicago and Its Histories

This academic year begins with a College student body of slightly over 5,200 and a first-year class of 1,386 students plus 56 transfer students. These numbers are important in several ways—some apparent and some not so apparent. What is not immediately apparent in the number of first-years whom we have welcomed to campus is the extraordinary Admissions process that brought them to us. This was a year in which demand for a place in the College reached unprecedented size. The Office of College Admissions and the faculty can be very proud of the fact that this was the case for exactly the right reasons—we had nearly 20,000 applicants to the College because we reached out with renewed energy to exactly the kinds of students we want. This success makes challenging work for Admissions, but it provides the faculty with students who want to be here because our values and practices as educators match their aspirations. We can be proud of the fact that in our era the College is home to a student body of high academic ambition and real intellectual quality, drawn from all parts of the nation and from the wider world as well.

This essay was originally presented as the Annual Report to the Faculty of the College on October 19, 2010. John W. Boyer is the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of History and the College, and Dean of the College.

The College is now, as it was before World War II, a strong demographic and cultural presence on our campus. As the College has grown, the quality of our student body has only increased, retention rates and graduation rates have risen to near the levels of our Ivy League peers, and student morale is evidently high — consider only the extraordinary rise in our Senior Class Gift participation rates (from 20 percent in 2001 to 81 percent in 2010). These changes are well-known and bear out our hope that a larger and more selective College would bring a higher percentage of talented students to campus, a higher percentage of students for whom Chicago was the first choice, and a critical social mass in the College population which would strengthen students’ personal ties with one another and with the institution.

Our growth has indeed been a virtuous circle of reinforcing benefits, the result of wise strategic decisions by many at the University, of the inherent quality of the education we offer, and of our good fortune to be located in a world-class city. In doing this work the College serves the wider University. It is the cultural home of important educational practices that contribute to faculty quality and research productivity; it is a source of increasing and essential financial revenue which provides key support for the broader domain of the arts and sciences at the University; it is a source of tens of thousands of loyal alumni, alumni whose generosity is essential for the University’s future; and it is one of the most visible public faces of the University in a society where the decision about where to attend college is vital to so many families. For the sake of its own well-being, then, and for the sake of its important educational mission, the University must take care of this College, making certain that we continue to offer what we promise to offer to our students.

We can see the fruits of our new investments and new strategies in College admissions in the large groups of applicants, potential applicants,

and their families touring the campus. The quality of our first-year students this year bears witness to the same fact, and I have every expectation that next year's first-year class — which we intend to bring in at a target of 1,380 first-year students plus 50 transfer students — will be as strong or even stronger than the current entering class.

Our applicants ultimately become our students, of course, and the faculty continues on several fronts to offer a robust and challenging curriculum to our students at all levels. As promised last year, we have begun to examine the current state of the Core curriculum. Social sciences faculty gathered in the winter last year to discuss the structure of the social sciences Core. The faculty teaching in the art, music, and drama portion of the humanities Core also met last year. We had a lively exchange that revealed the many common pedagogical elements shared across diverse forms of the study and making of art. New courses organized by Cinema and Media Studies and the Program on Creative Writing will be added to the art, music, and drama Core this year as a direct result of ideas generated by this meeting. This year and next we will have similar discussions of the physical and biological sciences, humanities Core sequences, and civilization studies.

Our goal for these conversations is not to debate any general curricular restructuring like that of 1998, since the new curriculum has worked well and has served the College and our students in many positive ways. The goal is rather to encourage serious thinking about the substantive intellectual content and teaching practices of our current Core structures. In addition, twelve years is a long time in the life of any college faculty, and over the past decade many new colleagues have joined our community who were not part of the extensive conversations about the curriculum that took place between 1993 and 1998. It is important to provide an opportunity for these colleagues (and for the veterans as well!)

to discuss our current Core offerings, and to find ways to engage all of our colleagues in conversations about how we might strengthen the Core.

Our academic programs beyond the Core are flourishing as well. This year we will discuss new ways of organizing the Biological Sciences major to take full advantage of our extraordinary laboratories and faculty members, and to give students with a strong interest in research a clearer path toward advanced (doctoral) study in biology. Our Big Problems program of innovative multidisciplinary courses for advanced students will be under new leadership this year. I am grateful to Bill Wimsatt for his energetic work founding and shepherding the program through its first decade, and I am pleased to report that John Kelly of Anthropology and Laurens Mets of Molecular Genetics and Cell Biology will take over this fall. I know that Bill Wimsatt joins me in welcoming them and urging on their efforts to expand faculty participation in these courses.

The College and the Provost's Office have begun a review of the work of the Center for Teaching and Learning this year. To inaugurate the process, last week we hosted a visit from the leaders of similar operations at the University of Michigan and Stanford University, both of which offer exemplary programs of this kind. The University should insist upon and support systematic efforts to train all advanced graduate students for teaching roles in the College and for the teaching that they will do after they have entered the ranks of the professoriate at other colleges and universities. We should also provide many more resources to assist our faculty in curriculum planning and evaluation, and to encourage and support curricular innovation.

On the international front, we continue to concentrate on civilization and other College courses abroad and on the Summer International Travel Grants. We are now offering 15 civilization programs in Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. In Winter Quarter



2011, we will inaugurate a new civilization course in Egypt, Cairo: Islamic Egypt at the Center of the Mediterranean World, with a teaching group under the leadership of Cornell Fleischer. In the Spring Quarter, the new Center in Beijing will offer Social Sciences in Beijing. Building upon strong student interest in China's economic transformation and rising global impact, the course will be taught by our colleague Dali Yang in its first year. Civilization courses abroad enrolled almost 300 students in the last academic year. We expect a similar number this year. The Center in Paris continues to flourish, offering a home not only to several sections of civilization studies, but also to more advanced courses in the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and mathematics. The center also serves as a valuable site for graduate student and faculty research, hosting this past year nearly 30 University of Chicago graduate students undertaking their dissertation research and dozens of University faculty who visited or who taught in the center.

The Summer International Travel Grant programs represent the College's commitment to cross-cultural experience, research, and foreign language acquisition for undergraduates. The two types of grants are Summer Research Grants and Foreign Language Acquisition Grants. More than 1,000 students have travelled to 60 countries for research and the study of 40 languages since the inception of the program in 1998. In the summer of 2010, 23 students travelled to 16 different countries to conduct research, including projects in France, India, Senegal, Egypt, Peru, Tanzania, Syria, and Uruguay. Sixty-six students received Foreign Language Acquisition Grants for 2010, travelling to 23 countries to study 13 languages. In 2010, the top five languages studied were Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, French, and Russian.

We remain active in encouraging departments to support student research. To date we have been able to raise 12 funds created by gifts

from College alumni to support 20 students annually doing BA research. These funds are dedicated to several departments and programs, including Art History, Biological Sciences, Classics, Comparative Human Development, English Language and Literature, History, Philosophy, Physics, Psychology, and Public Policy Studies. In addition, we are able to support research in Chemistry, Economics, and Mathematics with other funds provided by alumni. These funds include monies that allow us to support students who want to travel to present their research at conferences, as well as students undertaking research projects. At the same time, we are aware that faculty—especially in the sciences—provide many opportunities, paid and unpaid, for students to assist in substantive ways in their research. Our online directory of these opportunities is undergoing a major redesign this fall and will soon be both easier to search for students and easier to keep current for faculty.

There is no lack of demand for access to these opportunities from our students, and a goal of our fundraising efforts over the next five years will be to provide many more funds dedicated to student research for every department and major program in the College. Continuing demand is one measure of success on this front, but so are the prizes that our students continue to win, gaining recognition for their work from numerous national and international organizations. Their success is due to their own talent and ambition, but also to the energetic work of faculty colleagues and the advisers in the Office of the Dean of Students in the College, who work hard to coach our students in these competitions. Since 2005, College students have won two Churchill Scholarships and three Marshall Scholarships; they have earned six Rhodes Scholarships, and the College has ranked fifth in the nation in the Rhodes competition for these years, after Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and the United States Naval Academy. Eight College students have won Truman Scholarships since

2005, and we are first in the country (tied with Swarthmore) for Truman Scholars since that year. In addition, since 2005, our students have won 15 Goldwater Scholarships, four Gates Cambridge Scholarships, and one Mitchell Scholarship (the Mitchell is a new and highly competitive scholarship supporting graduate study in Ireland). Among all the faculty colleagues who have helped our students, I want to offer special thanks to Charles Lipson, who has done a truly magnificent job in chairing the British Scholarships Committee in the College over the past four years.

I can also report once again that the success of College students in Fulbright U.S. Student Program competitions continues to grow dramatically. The number of applicants (both fourth-years and alumni) has grown from six during the 2001–2002 competition to 86 during the competition for support in 2011–2012. Our number of recipients has also increased significantly, from two in 2001–2002 to 21 in 2009–2010. Over the past three years, our Fulbright Scholars have received grants to take up projects in 33 different countries including Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Macedonia, Mexico, Mongolia, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Syria, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Our academic work will always depend in part on its physical setting for its success, and I want to update you today about two projects in that arena. The new but only partially renovated Harper Memorial Library Commons has now been open for a year. As you know, our original plan called for a major renovation of both the Harper and Stuart reading rooms, which would completely update the heating and lighting systems in these rooms and install air conditioning so that they could be used from May through September. As a temporary expedient, we were able to undertake some modest renovations in summer 2009, which included

new carpeting, new furniture, new table lamps, and new backdrop lighting on the interior walls that creates a lovely cathedral effect in the main Harper reading room in the evening hours. We also created a student/faculty café in the old circulation area. The 24-hour study spaces in the Harper and Stuart reading rooms, and the café in what was once library circulation are now a firm part of student culture. By the midpoint of Autumn Quarter 2009 and continuing through the end of the academic year, the average number of students using the commons at any given time from 2:00 to 10:00 p.m. was over 100, with peaks of over 160 as finals week approached each quarter. That is, more than 100 students, and often more than 160, were in the commons at any point during those eight hours. Michael Baltasi, director of the commons, made a point of talking with many of our students about their reaction to the new facility. His research indicates clearly that the long-term success of the commons depends directly on timely completion of the full program of renovation. Despite overall positive comments from our students, they feel a measurable and specific set of frustrations about the commons, most of which have to do with issues of heating, (lack of) cooling, and access to bathrooms. Our progress so far has been encouraging, but these two great rooms are among the grandest and most impressive interior spaces on our campus, and the completion of the Harper renovation should remain high on the University's list of priorities.

Part of our purpose in creating the Harper Commons was to respond to the increase in the student population south of the Midway by making Harper a destination point for students. The numbers of students in the commons and the visible increase in students using and crossing the Midway point to the need for this renovation.

I also want to mention another work in progress. The South Campus Residence Hall and the new dining commons that links it to Burton-



Judson have welcomed a second first-year class. This magnificent new residence hall is finished, and it has merited strongly positive evaluations from faculty and students alike. But our plans for housing are not finished, so let me remind you that the argument I and many other members of the faculty have been making remains unchanged — specifically, that the College needs another new residence hall a bit bigger than the new South Campus hall and just as conveniently located on our campus in order to achieve an on-campus residence rate of at least 70 percent.

Over the last decade, the size of the College has increased substantially, but our capacity to house our students in our housing system has steadily declined, from 70 percent housed in 1987 to just over 53 percent in 2010. We have a particularly low rate among our third- and fourth-year students, since we lack the mix of housing, including especially apartments with kitchens and suites, that most of our peers have available for their juniors and seniors to allow them to live with their friends. As a consequence, the numbers of students in our system are telling: whereas 99 percent of our first-year students live in our residential communities, we have only 68 percent of our second-year students, only 22 percent of our third-year students, and only 16 percent of our seniors living in our system. We know that enriching the on-campus residential community is one of the most powerful things that we can do to advance our case with the most academically talented high school students in the nation (and their parents). We also know that our peer institutions value strong residential communities as an integral part of the educational culture of their undergraduate programs, and we should do the same, especially since we already have the wonderful traditions of our faculty resident masterships and our College Houses.

At the present time, we are at the bottom of the list of the most competitive university-based colleges in the United States in our capacity

to house our students. If we wish to make significant and meaningful progress, we need another newly constructed building, located on the campus, designed with the specific functions of a residence hall in mind and to the high architectural standards of our brilliant new South Campus hall, and dedicated especially to the housing needs of our juniors and seniors. Commenting on the success of the new South Campus hall, I recently received the following note from Larry McEnerney, one of the resident masters:

My first task as Master is to help students make the most of their academic opportunities. For many of them, this means assimilating for the first time into a rigorous intellectual culture. It must seem overstated to say that the location of our building achieves this purpose, but I believe that I see it nearly every day. It matters enormously that their home is woven into their campus lives: whenever we meet, they have just come from a class, and are on their way to a lab, or just come from lab and are on their way to a rehearsal, or just come from rehearsal and are on their way to the library. In talking with them, I don't feel that I have to help them overcome a gap between class and life; I don't have to help them integrate a fragmented experience. They seem unified, and they quite literally carry the vigor of the classroom into their home.

I've heard it said that our location puts the dorm at the heart of the quads, but the key for me is that it puts the quads at the heart of the dorm. Our location almost visibly builds our students' sense that they belong to our community and just as powerfully fosters their readiness to meet our challenges.

The value of a strong, on-campus residential life experience to our parents is illustrated by the success of our parents fundraising effort undertaken last year. We asked the parents of first-year students in 2009–10 to contribute not to our general Parents Fund but rather to a fund to be used exclusively for student and faculty programming in the residence halls. Giving increased by 20 percent.

A vibrant culture of residential life at the College will benefit all of us in the long run, and it will benefit the whole of the University as well.

It is fitting that the talented students who belong to this College should be thinking about creative ways of taking full advantage of their University of Chicago education after the College, and we continue to insist that resources must be devoted to this aspect of our students' lives as well. Beginning this year, Career Advising and Planning Services (CAPS) will have a full complement of advisory and mentoring programs to assist students in planning future career options. With the addition of new programs in the arts, in science and technology, and in higher education (the latter designed to support students who wish to apply to graduate programs for PhD degrees), CAPS is now able to offer programming targeted at nearly all the major professions and fields of work in which students of the liberal arts are typically interested (programs in the arts, business, health professions, higher education, journalism, law, public and social service, and science and technology). Each of these programs is configured differently because each one is shaped by the demands of particular professions. At the same time each one is similar—they call on the faculty (from the arts and sciences and the professional schools) where appropriate to act as advisers and mentors to our students; they involve University of Chicago alumni who are able to provide practical advice, financial support, and research and internship opportunities to our students; and they are managed by a staff of experienced

professionals in CAPS who know our students and the professions our students aim for. This is an innovative structure, fully respectful of the academic goals of students and faculty, and yet also able to encourage our more advanced students — particularly our graduating seniors — to think about what their education means for their lives beyond the College and how they might engage, even as students, with the broad community of alumni who share their aspirations and their commitment to liberal learning.

These programs are a part of larger, broad-based effort to construct what I have previously called *enabling structures* around and linked with our distinguished academic programs, structures that can help our graduating seniors negotiate for themselves successful transitions from the world of the College to the world of academic and professional careers. These programs help our students *as students* because they help them to situate liberal education in the broader context of adult life; but they also strengthen our ties to existing and future members of the alumni community — people who support us by giving, by encouraging good students to apply, and by sustaining our reputation as an institution that matters in the lives of our students. In the end, however, the performance of CAPS programming is measured by outcomes, and we have good news to report about our two most recent classes. Data from the Class of 2010 and from the follow-up survey conducted about nine months after graduation with the Class of 2009 are consistent with the strong results we saw in the first year of this challenging economy. Students report that their job searches are taking longer, but they do continue to find work in about the same proportions by occupational sectors as in the past. Happily, we continue to have a high record of success for College students applying to doctoral programs and to professional schools: Fully 22 percent of our graduating seniors reported



going on immediately to doctoral or professional degree programs, which puts us at the second highest rank in the Ivy Plus group, which is our national peer group. Moreover, we also know that five years out of graduation fully 85 percent of our seniors will have entered an advanced degree program, which puts the University of Chicago at the very top of the Ivy Plus group of liberal arts colleges embedded in major private research universities.

All of the academic and paracurricular initiatives that I have mentioned (and many that I have not had time to discuss) depend on strong development efforts by the College. It is essential that we continue to make rapid progress on our fundraising. Over the course of the last campaign, which ended in 2007, the College raised over \$350 million, including the magnificent Odyssey gift by our anonymous alumnus donor.

Happily, over the last two years we have raised an additional \$45 million toward the Odyssey program, and we will continue to mount vigorous efforts to expand our scholarship funds for College students. But many other essential needs remain. We need to provide more support for faculty to undertake innovative teaching, and to increase the number of faculty who teach in the College. We also need to increase dramatically the number of special research grants available to the departments for allocation to third- and fourth-year students who wish to undertake BA paper research or other advanced research projects, and we want to expand significantly the number of internships available to College students in the next five years, so that by 2014 no less than 50 percent of the students in the College will have access to one of these special opportunities.

I am convinced that now, at this point in our history, the educational needs of our students at all levels must be at the core of our

fundraising priorities and that the next campaign undertaken by the University should, as it pertains to the College, focus very substantially on enhancing the educational experience of our students and on supporting our faculty in their roles as effective and even inspirational teachers. Indeed, this is the moment in the history of the University of Chicago and of higher education in America when we ought to make a strong public statement about the efficacy of our educational traditions and practices for our students and our faculty, and about our commitment to maintaining a learning community in which our students can continue to flourish and to which our alumni can be dedicated and generous.

I want to pause to remember and celebrate the lives of three great teachers and colleagues who passed on during the past year: Barry Karl, Ian Mueller, and Simon Swordy. Each of these men made important contributions to the teaching programs of their departments, and each also offered leadership in various College-related initiatives. Simon served as master of the Physical Sciences Collegiate Division; Barry authored a major report on the College; and Ian was the cofounder of one of our most venerable Core courses. Their work had many offshoots, and they enriched our community in many helpful and valuable ways. They were high-minded and fundamentally decent people, loyal colleagues, and inspiring teachers. Our community has grown over the decades by the investment and energy of such colleagues, and we are richer and better for having had them grace our presence for so long.

As we find ourselves remembering colleagues who contributed so much to our collective enterprise and also thinking about the wide range of resources we offer to our students, it is worth stepping back for a moment to consider the forces that sustain the University over the long run. We have many, often too many, daily tasks before us, but the



University is a community organized for sustainability, that is, “not as a thing for the moment, but for all time.” We should not lose sight of the larger professional and historical context in which our work is situated. Such a broader and more capacious understanding of the meaning and mission of the University is all the more important if we are to be able to answer the many commentators and critics, some friendly, others not so, who have emerged over the decades to challenge the operational assumptions of our institutions. Writing 50 years ago in *Harper’s Magazine*, a very young Christopher Jencks, who would later go on to a distinguished career as a scholar of American social policy, offered a pessimistic evaluation of the future of undergraduate education in American colleges and universities. For Jencks, the problem was two-fold: At the elite colleges and universities, which were filled with academically gifted students, most faculty cared only about teaching narrow specialized knowledge in the hope that they would persuade their students to embark on academic careers and become professors like themselves. To prove this point, Jencks argued that Harvard had essentially become a “cram school for graduate study” and that the Hutchins College experiment at the University of Chicago had been savaged by graduate departments that wanted to cannibalize its faculty appointment lines.

At major public colleges, in contrast, most students cared little for ideas or learning, which made their faculty teachers despair of doing a responsible job in trying to educate them. For Jencks, students at these institutions did not take ideas seriously, and faculty had no way to force them to do so.

What was missing, in Jencks’s account, especially among the elite, university-based colleges, was a conception of general intellectual education, a kind of education that would develop a host of critical analytic skills and present students with a broadening perspective on

the world, while not trying to make the undergraduate students into mini-doctoral candidates.¹

The last 50 years in the history of American higher education have seen a continuation of the tensions that Jencks articulated in 1961, with many new ones added. But the College at the University of Chicago has fared better than most because, in spite of the curricular civil wars that plagued the University in the 1950s, we have been able to sustain and protect our traditions of general education (the Core) and to create many new interdisciplinary programs like Big Problems, Human Rights, and Environmental Studies, while also building strong disciplinary majors and minors.

At the University of Chicago, we have never lost sight of the fact that students who are generally and broadly educated — in the Core, as well as in their majors, minors, and free electives — usually make the best young academics, just as they make the most effective young lawyers, doctors, and businesswomen and men. That is, we have systematically tried to create and sustain a system of liberal education that has general education at its core and to fashion a campus culture of learning that is suitably challenging to all highly motivated and talented students, whatever their ultimate professional career goals. This culture has, in turn, depended on the profound dedication of the faculty to teaching, in all of its forms and dimensions.

Our success in accomplishing this merger of teaching and research into a unified campus culture goes far back in our history. To understand why the University has been so devoted to research, yet so mindful of its responsibilities as a teacher of young undergraduate students, it is useful

1. Christopher Jencks, “The Next Thirty Years in the Colleges,” *Harper’s Magazine*, October 1961, pp. 121–128.

to return to our history, or more accurately, to return to our histories. The story is complex and tangled, but it has a happy ending, and it is worth exploring in more detail.

INTRODUCTION

For most outsiders who arrived after 1892, the new University of Chicago was *the* University of Chicago and that was that. Robert Herrick, an early recruit from Harvard, wrote a remarkable appreciation of the newness of the University for *Scribner's Magazine* in 1895, as if it had been created de novo out of thin air, but an air filled with ambitions, openness, risk taking, and seriousness, with Herrick taking particular pride in the “phenomenal birth and growth and the material side of the new institution.”² For Herrick, the new University was an almost providential act that was bound to be hugely successful, set in the dynamic West and in a burgeoning city whose hardworking people were eager for a rich intellectual and cultural life. This image of a new, hyper-innovative creation, brilliantly launched by William Rainey Harper in 1892, dominates most historical accounts of the origins of the modern university in American society, with the University of Chicago most frequently cited as a remarkably successful example of the more general pattern of new research university foundations that was launched with the opening of Johns Hopkins University in 1876. Images of instantaneous

2. Robert Herrick, “The University of Chicago,” *Scribner's Magazine*, 18 (1895): 399–417. I am extremely grateful to Daniel Koehler, Peter Simons, and Patrick Houlihan for their support with the archival research that is the empirical foundation of this essay, as well as to Michael Jones, Martha Merritt, and Dennis Hutchinson for helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts.

creation also dominate much of the fundraising literature that the University produced about itself over the course of the twentieth century. *The Responsibility of Greatness*, designed as the lead publication for the capital campaign of 1955 to 1960, proudly recounted, “No other university ever began like Chicago. Its founders quite literally knew what *they* were doing. Other universities grew from small colleges, but Chicago started as a *university*. It was founded for leadership sixty-five years ago, and in ten short years it had become a leader.” Similarly, in the lavish campaign book of 1925, *Great University Memorials, with a Reference to the Plans for the Development of the University of Chicago*, the authors noted, “In 1892, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, inspired by a deep impulse to advance civilization and to meet more specifically the needs for intellectual leadership of a population exceeding 50,000,000 people, founded a great university in the center of the Middle West. That the University might belong to this great central empire, Mr. Rockefeller refused to allow it to bear his name, but called it The University of Chicago.”³ Of course, neither of these statements is factually inaccurate. But both convey the sense of a university hatched suddenly, almost instantaneously, out of a pure and providential egg, having no prior connections to its home community and certainly lacking any attachment to prior educational ventures in Chicago.

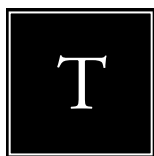
But for those leaders of the new University of Chicago who had personal or professional contacts with its titular predecessor, the first University of Chicago which had been founded in 1856, the historical threads connecting the two institutions were much more complex, and the

3. *The Responsibility of Greatness. A Statement Presented by the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago*. Chicago, 1955, p. 5; *Great University Memorials, with a Reference to the Plans for the Development of the University of Chicago*. Chicago, 1925, p. 12.



image of newness represented not so much an act “beyond history,” fallen from on high, but the outcome of years of deliberate scheming, plotting, and conspiring to create such a “new” opportunity. We forget today how big the risk and the gamble was to re-start a “Baptist University” on the South Side of Chicago in 1889, less than three years after its predecessor had collapsed and disappeared in misery and public humiliation. The two men most closely associated with the reestablishment of the University in Chicago in 1888 and 1889, Frederick Gates and Thomas Goodspeed, were acutely aware of the “image” problem that they had in trying to solicit the needed \$400,000 to match John D. Rockefeller’s historic offer of \$600,000 to recreate a first-rate Baptist college in Chicago. Much of the hyperbolic rhetoric that they deployed in 1889–1890 was a strategic effort to overcome the negative images left behind by the failure of the old University in 1886. If the new University of Chicago fashioned itself as a very new and very different foundation, it was because the old University had cast such a long and intense shadow, from which the founders were forced to struggle to escape. But at the same time, the very possibility that there could be a new University of Chicago was deeply indebted to a group of leaders who were profoundly influenced by the history of the old University and *its* educational goals and pedagogical ideals. It is their story that I wish to tell today.

THE FOUNDING OF THE FIRST UNIVERSITY



he first institution to bear the name of the University of Chicago actually began as a modest denominational college. This was the institution that was founded by Senator Stephen A. Douglas in Chicago in 1856.

Chicago had been incorporated as a frontier town in 1833. By mid-century, the population had increased to over 30,000 and the town quickly began to assume the appurtenances of an organized city. The two decades between 1850 and 1870 marked the demographic takeoff of the city, which grew from 29,963 in 1850 to 298,977 in 1870. As the city grew, the diversity and complexity of its many religious communities increased as well. The population of the Baptist denomination in Chicago grew as rapidly as that of the general city, but remained extremely modest—from approximately 1,800 members in the mid-1840s to about 5,500 members in 1872.⁴

The Baptist communities in the western states had long wanted an institution of higher education to educate ministers for their region, given that young men who went East to study rarely returned to their home states. Various efforts in the 1830s and 1840s to establish a seminary in the West were not successful, but in the mid 1850s the Baptists had greater luck, in the person of Stephen Douglas.

From the late 1840s, Stephen Douglas was a prominent citizen of Chicago. Between 1849 and 1851, he purchased 75 acres of land between 31st and 35th Streets on the South Side of the city on the shores

4. Edward P. Brand, *Illinois Baptists. A History* (Bloomington, IL, 1930), p. 165; Perry J. Stackhouse, *Chicago and the Baptists. A Century of Progress* (Chicago, 1933), p. 83.



of Lake Michigan. Douglas sold part of the land to the Illinois Central Railroad for right-of-way purposes and retained the rest, planning to build a large mansion on the property.⁵ Douglas's tomb at 35th Street and the Lake, nowadays an impressive public memorial maintained by the State of Illinois, is the last remaining vestige of this estate, which Douglas called Oakenwald. Douglas's dedication to westward expansion was considerable, and he was a strong advocate of the commercial and cultural development of the early city of Chicago. In Congress he advocated using federal funds to improve the Illinois River in order to connect the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River, and he was crucial in sponsoring legislation in Congress to secure for Chicago a prominent connection in the new Illinois Central railway system. He was also a strong believer in what was called at the time education in "practical science." It is not surprising that Douglas was one of the prime supporters in Congress of the creation of the Smithsonian Institution in 1846, as well as of the transcontinental telegraph system. He even sponsored a bill to help develop balloons for "aerial navigation." His enthusiasm for the development of Chicago also led Douglas to proselytize younger men to do likewise, and it is a little known story that he helped to persuade a young lawyer from New York who moved to Chicago in 1847 to do what he had done, namely, purchase a large tract of land on the southern reaches of the city. Following Douglas's urgings, Paul Cornell purchased 300 acres in 1853 in what would become the core district of the township of Hyde Park, so it is not too much to say that we also owe the neighborhood of our current University to Douglas's foresight and imagination. Ironically, Paul Cornell also sought to lure an institution of higher learning to his investment area, offering the Presbyterians free

5. Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York, 1973), pp. 335–336.

land to build a seminary in Hyde Park. Cornell's initial gambit failed, but 40 years later it would become a reality on a scale that he would never have imagined.

As an unabashed booster of the young city of Chicago, Douglas's awareness of “the importance of higher education in the rapidly growing west” led him to want to found a college in Chicago.⁶ Douglas's recently deceased wife, Martha Douglas, was a Baptist, and it was alleged at the time that his willingness to give land to the Baptists reflected his desire to honor his wife's religious affiliation. But the real motivation to found a college may have come from a trip that Douglas took in 1853 to Europe, where he visited several leading European universities; according to John Burroughs, who knew Douglas's motives well, “Mr. Douglas had recently returned from extended European travel, and while his main errand abroad was political, his quick insight had not failed to discover the bearing of its universities on the social and political development of Europe, and he had returned, full of the idea of a university at Chicago, which should be for the Northwest what he had seen those of England, and Germany, and France, and Russia to be to their States. This was the real main-spring of his project.”⁷

6. William Everts, “History of the University of Chicago,” p. 1, *Old University of Chicago Records*, Box 9, folder 4, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library. Unless otherwise indicated, all archival collections cited in this essay are in the Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

7. J. C. Burroughs, “Benefactors of the University. Stephen A. Douglas,” *The Volante*, December 1872, p. 28; Everts, “History of the University of Chicago,” p. 2; Justin A. Smith, *A History of the Baptists in the Western States East of the Mississippi* (Philadelphia, 1896), pp. 281–282. Douglas had traveled to Europe between May and October of 1853. See Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, pp. 382–386.

Douglas was a deeply controversial figure in his home state, and he was grateful for the support that a leading Baptist minister in Chicago, John C. Burroughs, had given him in the mid-1850s during the heated controversy surrounding the Kansas-Nebraska Act, much of which was owing to Abraham Lincoln's trenchant critique of Douglas's role as the principal architect of the act in his famous Peoria speech of October 16, 1854.⁸ After Douglas decided to create a college in Chicago, he first opened negotiations with local Presbyterians in the spring of 1855, offering them 10 acres of land if they could raise \$100,000 by December 1, 1855 (which Douglas later extended to March 1, 1856). At the urging of prominent Baptists in Chicago including Charles Walker and Daniel Cameron, Burroughs visited Douglas in November 1855 in Terre Haute, Indiana, where Douglas was staying at the time, and proposed that Douglas give his land to the Baptists if the Presbyterians were unable to meet his stipulations. When the Presbyterians decided not to exercise the option, most likely because of opposition over Douglas' evident insouciance on the slavery issue, Douglas informed Burroughs in April 1856 in Washington, DC, that he was willing to consider a deal with his denomination, specifically that the Baptists would receive a site located on 34th Street between Cottage Grove and Rhodes Avenues (today this land is about 50 feet directly east of the parking lot for the local Jewel food store).⁹ Burroughs was the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Chicago and a cagey negotiator who has to be seen as the real founder of the old University. Working with Mrs. Douglas's former pastor, Dr.

8. "Address of Thomas Hoyne," *Addresses and Appeals in Behalf of the University of Chicago and the Baptist Theological Seminary* (Chicago, 1867), p. 12; Daniel Meyer, *Stephen A. Douglas and the American Union* (Chicago, 1994), pp. 29–30.

9. J. O. Brayman, "Stephen A. Douglas Gift," n.d., *Old University Records*, Box 9, folder 5.

G. W. Samson, Burroughs fashioned a proposal that was acceptable to Douglas, including a commitment to construct a building on the land within one year at a cost of not less than \$100,000 and a stipulation that the institution was to be under the general control of the Baptist church, of which two-thirds of the University trustees would always have to be members, but open to students and faculty without limitation of religious identity. Douglas's motives in making this gift have been variously interpreted, but it seems clear that he viewed the addition of a college not only as an asset to the fledgling city of Chicago, but also as a way to enhance the real estate value of the land that he intended to develop on the South Side.¹⁰ In return for the land, Burroughs agreed to organize a fundraising campaign among local Baptists to secure no less than \$100,000 to construct a building for the new college.

Burroughs was able to secure support from many Baptist leaders for the project and collected pledges well beyond \$100,000, but when the time came to persuade donors to honor their pledges he ran into difficulties. Stephen Douglas's name and his close association with the project was sufficiently controversial with antislavery factions within the Baptist denomination, especially in the eastern states like New York and Pennsylvania, and in Chicago itself, that this issue made Burroughs's fundraising more complicated. Both at the dedication ceremony on July 4, 1857 (where he refused to speak on grounds of ill health), and subsequently until his death, Douglas proved to be more of a hindrance than a help to the Baptists, and he certainly provided no positive endowment support to the fledgling University beyond his original donation of land. In many respects, Abraham Lincoln's dogged critique of Douglas over the slavery issue between 1854 and 1858 generated sufficient collateral damage to

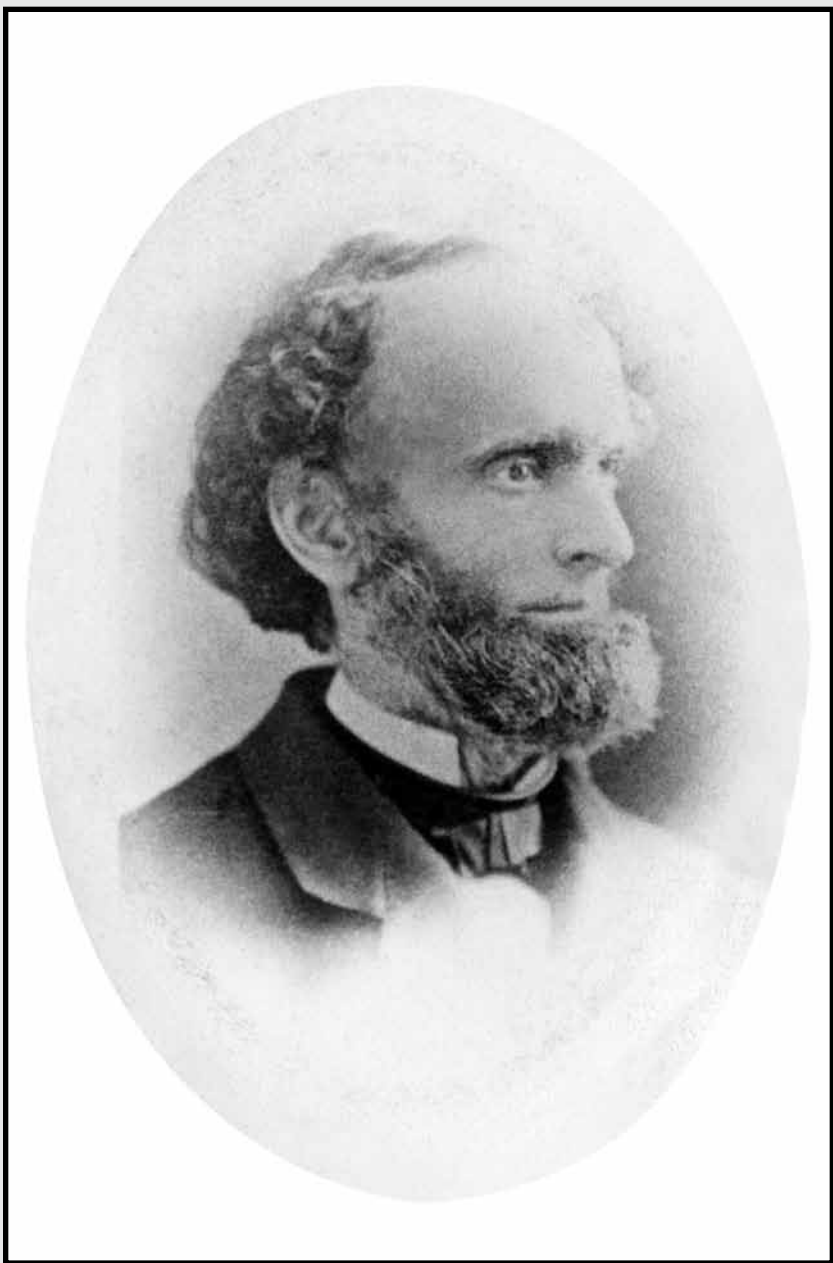
10. *Chicago Tribune*, July 8, 1857, p. 2.

make Douglas' public sponsorship of the new University of Chicago a very mixed blessing. In August 1857 Douglas sent what amounted to a public letter to Burroughs, offering to withdraw his grant of land and instead give the university a cash gift of \$50,000, citing the fact that "many persons and newspapers opposed to me in politics have allowed their partisan feelings and prejudices to influence their action to the extent of endeavoring to injure and perhaps destroy the Institution over which you have been chosen to preside, for no other reason than the ground upon which it was established was owned and donated by me." As long as the attacks were only directed against Douglas, "I was content to remain silent and trust to the people of Illinois. . . . But when my enemies go so far as to assail the Institution itself, and endeavor to marshal the forces, and exert the influence of a powerful political party to destroy its usefulness, merely because I donated the grounds and own the surrounding lands, I feel it my duty so far as I have the power to obviate the objections."¹¹

Burroughs and his fellow trustees rejected Douglas's offer, also in a public letter, which offered an idealistic statement of the goals of the founders and argued that since the University was ipso facto a nonpolitical institution, it would never engage in partisan political activity, whatever Douglas's views on any given issue of state:

Composed as the Board is of members of all political parties, and of several religious denominations, it is only necessary to say that their action as a Board in the original selection of the present site was entirely unanimous, as well as the vote declining your present proposition, to satisfy all persons of all parties that no political, partisan or sectional feeling or prejudices have in the

11. "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," September 2, 1857.



John Burroughs
President, 1859–1874

slightest degree influenced its determinations. . . . The establishment of the University of Chicago was looked upon by the Board as a matter above and beyond all political considerations, not as a thing for the moment, but for all time, not as a thing which concerns you immediately, or any other persons, but of the youth of Chicago and of the Northwest generally, not only of the Chicago of today but of that Chicago which in the fullness of time, will become a city of which the sanguine can hardly tend for an adequate conception, to enable them to accomplish that high and literal purpose they have steadily sought and obtained subscriptions and donations from the men of all parties and of all denominations. . . . It is impossible therefore for them to see any just ground for arraying any political or partisan prejudice against the institution itself, because you were the owner and were pleased to become the owner of the most objective site for the buildings of the University. But even it were possible that some such prejudice might be arrayed against the institution, it must, as it rests on no good foundation, be merely temporary. It would moreover be a little less than a betrayal of the sacred trust committed to their hands, accompanied by a loss of all self-respect on the part of the Board of Trustees, to yield their unanimous judgment to mere temporary, personal or political considerations.¹²

Officially, in its charter, the new institution was not defined as exclusively Baptist, and Burroughs later insisted that Douglas had deeded the land to an individual (himself) in trust who happened to be a Baptist, but not the denomination as a corporation, in order to avoid

12. "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," September 3, 1857.

the appearance that the new University was overly sectarian.¹³ But the popular press and public sentiment in Chicago viewed it as such (the *Christian Times* proudly announced in October 1856 that “the subscription of \$100,000 for the building of a Baptist university in the city has now been completed”), and this too limited the range of early donors to whom appeals might successfully be made.¹⁴ Although a majority of the board and the president were mandated to be Baptist, the charter also opened the school to students and faculty of all faiths, thus setting up a tension in institutional identity and pragmatic policy that would plague the new school throughout its 40 years of activity.

The new University was incorporated in the State of Illinois on January 30, 1857, as “The University of Chicago,” and the board of trustees had their first meetings on May 21–22, 1857. The first board of trustees had 36 members, including little-known Baptist ministers in Chicago and the state of Illinois, but also prominent business and political leaders like William Ogden and John H. Kinzie. Douglas agreed to serve as chairman of the board. Other prominent Chicagoans on the early board included William Jones, a hardware merchant and real estate investor; James H. Woodworth, a dry goods merchant and former mayor; Thomas Hoyne, U.S. attorney and politician; Charles Walker, a major real estate and lumber developer; and J. Young Scammon, a prominent banker, but none of these men viewed the University as their primary philanthropy. With the exception of Jones and Scammon, none of these men gave the new University a major gift during their tenure on the board.¹⁵ Perhaps

13. *Chicago Tribune*, January 28, 1874, p. 7.

14. *Christian Times*, October 1, 1856, p. 2.

15. Jones gave \$40,000 in general support, including Jones Hall, whereas Scammon gave \$30,000 for the Dearborn Observatory.

most noteworthy was the fact that upon his death in June 1861, Stephen Douglas was overwhelmed with debts, having long since disposed of most of the property he owned in Chicago; even if he had been so inclined, he was unable to leave the University any legacy in his will.¹⁶

After some hesitation, during which he recommended as an alternative candidate Francis Wayland, who had just stepped down as president of Brown University, John Burroughs agreed to become the first president of the new University in July 1859.¹⁷ Burroughs served as president for over 16 years, and he left behind him many staunch friends and advocates. The editor of *The Standard*, Justin A. Smith, later insisted that “Dr. Burroughs had proved himself an instructor, a leader, and an administrator of marked ability, of course, patience, and resource. The affection and honor in which his memory has been cherished by those who were his pupils, and by those who knew him in such relations as to reveal the man as he

16. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, pp. 620, 702, 870–871.

17. Burroughs was born in Stamford, New York, in December 1818 to a pioneer farm family. A bookish youngster who was an avid reader, his early education was literally in a log schoolhouse. He was appointed a part-time teacher at the age of 16 and then apprenticed in a law office in Medina, New York, at the age of nineteen. Desiring more formal education, he attended the Brockport Collegiate Institute and then Yale College, from which he graduated in 1842. While at Yale, he decided to enter the ministry and eventually graduated from Madison Theological Seminary in 1846. He served as a pastor in West Troy, New York, for five years, and then moved to Chicago, where he became the pastor of the First Baptist Church in 1852. He was offered the presidency of Shurtleff College in Alton, Illinois, in 1855, which he refused. After leaving the old University of Chicago, Burroughs remained in the city, serving as a member of the Board of Education. In 1884 he was elected assistant superintendent of public schools in Chicago. He died in April 1892. See “John C. Burroughs,” *Biographical Sketches of the Leading Men of Chicago* (Chicago, 1868), pp. 583–589. In addition to serving as president (and later as Chancellor) of the University from 1859 to 1877, Burroughs also taught metaphysics in the undergraduate curriculum.

truly was, are personal attributes whose emphasis is not to be doubted.”¹⁸ That said, if leaders are judged on the long-term institutional consequences of their decisions, Burroughs’s legacy was a very ambivalent one.

The University’s building was a large, capacious structure designed by a prominent local architect, William W. Boyington, in a “castellated Gothic” style. The first section to be built was the south wing, named Jones Hall in honor of William Jones, who gave a substantial gift to start the subscription campaign that was sufficient to permit the foundations of the building to be laid. The actual construction of the remainder of Jones Hall required additional cash, and this was slow in coming. By mid-1858, Burroughs had secured pledges of over \$200,000 for the University, but in the aftermath of the financial Panic of 1857 most of the pledges proved worthless, thus depriving the University of a solid financial footing from its inception, a state from which it was never to recover. In July 1858, for example, he reported to the board that he had accumulated \$112,600 in subscription pledges in the city of Chicago itself, but was only able to translate that figure into \$20,000 in actual cash payments.¹⁹ Thomas Goodspeed later estimated that over 75 percent of the early pledges were uncollectable and thus worthless.²⁰ Given the lack of cash on hand, it was only by persuading Stephen Douglas to transfer title of the land to the trustees in late August 1858 that Burroughs was able to secure a loan of \$25,000 from the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company of Maine to start construction on the walls of the building, thus immediately placing the new institution in debt. In a case of stunning

18. Smith, *A History of the Baptists*, p. 287.

19. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” July 15, 1858.

20. Thomas W. Goodspeed, “The Founding of the First University of Chicago,” *University of Chicago Record*, 5 (1919): 248.

conflict of interest, the agent for the insurance company in Chicago was none other than Levi D. Boone, a trustee of the University, a medical doctor and former mayor of Chicago, who happily negotiated a five-year term loan at 10 percent per annum. The University deployed its land as the security for the loan. A later historian of the Baptists, Justin A. Smith, argued that this propensity to finance new institutions via debt taking was “quite in the line of what had become customary in the West, in the building of churches and for other purposes. It was held to be expedient and right to anticipate resources as likely to become more available in the rapid development going forward in many directions, and to meet deficiency of present means by loans based upon such hopes. The future was to teach many a sharp and salutary lesson in this regard, but the policy we indicate was deemed at the time a safe one, even by far-sighted men.” But Smith was also forced to add about the consequences of such a strategy that “the University of Chicago was destined to be perhaps the greatest sufferer of all.”²¹ And the most basic issue was less one of farsightedness than of the capacity to sustain ongoing operational revenue and to gain support from the larger metropolitan community, and on both counts the early trustees proved both inept and extremely unlucky.

These modest first steps into secured debt were to prove of fateful consequence for the longer-term survival of the institution. Most 19th-century colleges in America hovered between genial penury and unmitigated disaster as a routine financial experience, having to rely on ad hoc charitable contributions as well as meager tuition revenues, and the new University of Chicago was completely typical in this regard.²² But

21. Smith, *A History of the Baptists*, pp. 284–285.

22. Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University, A History* (New York, 1962), pp. 177–200.

what set the University apart was the disjunction between its early ambitions — represented by its expensive building program — and the realistic capacity of its leaders to sustain an institution worthy of such ambitions.

At the ceremony laying the cornerstone of Jones Hall on July 4, 1857, a crowd of several thousand heard a clutter of longish speeches, which ranged from covert political critiques of Douglas’s ambivalence on the slavery issue to pleas that education serve the cause of public morality. But one of the speakers, Rev. Adonirarn J. Joslyn of Aurora, Illinois, captured the moment best when he pronounced the new University’s devotion to the indissoluble trinity of “religion, science, and liberty.”²³ In a word, Douglas’s University had as its mission to be a “decidedly Christian but not sectarian” university under the stewardship of the Baptist church.

On the day-to-day level, this ideal translated into a University devoted to the customary studies of the 19th-century undergraduate college: classics and grammar foremost, a more modern course of study in a scientific school for some, and an agricultural school whose aim was to apply “science to agriculture.” Douglas’s University was thus built on the model of the frontier town, church-sponsored college of the mid-19th-century, with a special interest in “practical science” and agriculture added for good measure. The fact that the University offered a separate track in science reflected currents of reform that had begun in the 1840s that suggested college curricula needed to be both more professionally relevant and more reflective of modern needs, and thus move away from

23. *Christian Times*, July 10, 1857, p. 2. The ceremonies were delayed inordinately because proper equipment to maneuver the cornerstone into place had not been summoned, but following a ceremony managed by a local Masonic lodge, all the guests were well fed at tables loaded with “bountiful provision” by local Baptist ladies.

fixed curricula dominated by classical studies.²⁴ In many respects, the curriculum at Chicago thus reflected many of the concerns articulated by Francis Wayland in his classic critique of antebellum American colleges, *Thoughts on the Present Collegiate System in the United States*, published in 1842.²⁵ Given Wayland's strong profile as a preeminent Baptist educator, it is very likely that his curricular writings were influential on the Chicago project, and in fact, John Burroughs visited with Wayland for two days on his way to meet with Douglas in Washington, DC, in the spring of 1856.²⁶ In a word, Douglas and his college represented an unsteady compromise between those traditional 19th-century educational values that Richard Hofstadter characterized as "designed for the strengthening and adornment of the mind and not for immediate practical use or vocational advancement," tempered with some additional programs with a greater vocational pragmatism.²⁷

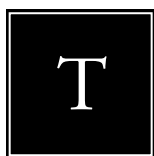
24. See Frederick Rudolph, *Curriculum. A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study since 1636* (San Francisco, 1977), pp. 61–65; and Arthur M. Cohen, *The Shaping of American Higher Education. Emergence and Growth of the Contemporary System* (San Francisco, 1998), pp. 73–83.

25. See Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith, eds., *American Higher Education. A Documentary History* (2 vols., Chicago, 1961), 1: 334–375, esp. p. 358. Wayland had recently published another tract in 1855, *The Education Demanded by the People of the United States. A Discourse Delivered at Union College, Schenectady, July 25, 1854, on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Presidency of Eliphalet Nott, DD, LLD* (Boston, 1855).

26. See John C. Burroughs, "Benefactors of the University — Dr. Wayland," *The Volante*, January 1873, pp. 42–43.

27. Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States* (New York, 1952), p. 13; as well as Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 21–25, 32–40.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, FACULTY, AND STUDENTS



he site on which the University was built was largely uninhabited in 1858. Thomas Goodspeed, a student at the early University, later remembered the site as an isolated, semirural place on the deserted outskirts of the town:

The street cars, then horse cars, ran on Cottage Grove Avenue only as far south as Thirty-first street, nearly half a mile north of the University. On Thirty-fifth street, just west of the Avenue, was a small, dingy saloon, appropriately named “The Shades.” There was but one building, a small one-story cottage, on Thirty-fifth Street between “The Shades” and State Street, nearly a mile west. There a few houses to the southeast—Cleaverville—but none to the south or southwest, and only two or three between the University and Thirty-first Street. Across the Avenue from the University was “Oakenwald”, the Chicago home of Senator Douglas. A fine oak grove covered the ground for several hundred feet on both sides of the Avenue and the whole country south of the University was a region of oak openings, every slight ridge being covered with trees.²⁸

The new University of Chicago opened its doors in the fall term of 1859. The first students were 20 in number, 12 freshmen and eight sophomores. The University’s academic year was divided into three terms, a fall term of 15 weeks, followed by winter and spring terms of 13

28. Thomas W. Goodspeed, “Frederick A. Smith,” *University of Chicago Biographical Sketches* (2 vols., Chicago, 1922–25), 1: 320.

and 12 weeks, a structural innovation that eventually offered a strong precedent to justify William Rainey Harper's decision to create a quarter system at our University in 1892. At its inception, the University comprised a preparatory school, first housed in the basement of St. Paul's Universalist Church at the corner of Wabash and Van Buren, and a four-year collegiate program. Matriculating students in the college program had to be at least 15 years old and had to demonstrate a prior knowledge of Latin, Greek, mathematics, geography, U.S. history, and English grammar. The undergraduate curriculum was divided into two tracks, a classical curriculum that was heavy on ancient languages and a scientific course that stressed modern languages and the natural sciences (chemistry, zoology, physiology, meteorology, civil engineering, etc.) in addition to a reduced classical component. By 1870, candidates for the science track were excused from any prior knowledge of Greek, and they were held to a less rigorous Latin requirement. Each track resulted in a bachelor's degree, either of arts or of science.

The University at its inception provided training in the application of science to agriculture, in a course of study that was "adequate of itself to meet that claim for liberal culture which the sons of farmers, not less than other young men are asserting for themselves." The curriculum of this track involved a two-year program, encompassing mathematics, the natural sciences, and some history and philosophy, as well as book-keeping and surveying. The agricultural program, proudly announced in 1859, gradually died away, and catalogues from the 1870s and 1880s had no mention of it. Instead, the University tried mounting programs in civil engineering and "practical chemistry," but these too failed to gain many matriculants and eventually disappeared.

The University announced that it would award master's degrees to students who had successfully passed one of its baccalaureate programs

and who had over the course of (at least) three additional years pursued either a literary or scientific calling.

In April 1859, Burroughs also added a law department, which initially was housed in a downtown commercial college adjacent to the Federal Court House, and only later moved to the 34th Street main campus. The Law Department offered a two-year curriculum over six quarters in which students studied common law, constitutional law, equity, commercial law, international and admiralty law, and the history of jurisprudence of the United States. Upon passing an examination at the end of their first year, students received a bachelor of law degree, and at the conclusion of their second year a doctor of law degree. Unlike students in the undergraduate program, law students did not have to meet age or knowledge requirements, being expected only to demonstrate a “good, common English education.” The Law Department lasted until 1872, when it was merged into the Union College of Law that was supported jointly by Northwestern University and the University of Chicago. The Union College experiment lasted 14 years until 1886, when it was dissolved upon the collapse of the University, becoming instead an integral part of Northwestern University. The Law Department was immediately successful—in the 1859–60 academic year, 48 students matriculated in law, and by 1884 it had graduated 745 students, compared to 290 in the collegiate programs.

On the whole, the University’s curricular structures were progressive for their time. They offered students various options toward the baccalaureate degree, acknowledging the need both for “a liberal provision for classical and scientific culture” and “the almost universal demand for what is known as ‘practical education,’” while also sustaining the older faith of American colleges in the 18th and early 19th centuries that they existed to civilize the young by building moral character, to educate

gentlemen in the liberal arts as future leaders of a frontier society, and to offer substantial opportunities for preprofessional social mobility.²⁹

The academic quality of all of these programs varied. As was to be expected, instruction in the arts and humanities enjoyed a certain traditional esteem and rigor, whereas the natural sciences were perceived by some students as less impressive. In 1873, the student newspaper, *The Volante*, slammed the science programs as being “loose and jointless” and “a fraud on the student and a disgrace to the University,” insisting that teaching was poor, the students unmotivated, and a shorter and more “practical” science curriculum should be developed.³⁰ But such comments may have reflected the cultural bias that still hindered 19th-century colleges from developing fully creditable programs in the natural sciences, as well as a chronic lack of resources (one lone faculty member at the University of Chicago was responsible for teaching chemistry, geology, mineralogy, and agriculture!).³¹ Given that the advancement of scientific knowledge was not part of the mission of midcentury universities like Chicago and in some quarters was even looked upon

29. See *First Annual Catalogue of the University of Chicago. Officers and Students for the Academic Year 1859–1860* (Chicago 1869), p. 19. The literature on pre-1870 colleges in the United States is large and varied. I have found most helpful Cohen, *The Shaping of American Higher Education*, pp. 9–97; and Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University. A History* (New York, 1962), pp. 44–286.

30. *The Volante*, March 1873, p. 1.

31. Another, more sympathetic student writer commented that the weakness of the sciences reflected the simple fact that “the want of money is the root of the evil.” *Ibid.*, May 1873, p. 78. As late as 1886–87, 62 percent of all students enrolled in colleges in the United States were taking classical courses of study. See Thomas D. Snyder, *120 Years of American Education. A Statistical Portrait* (Washington, DC, 1993), p. 64.

with suspicion, it was natural that experimental science felt itself and was perceived to be an orphan.³²

For its first two decades, the University admitted only male students, but in 1873 women students were admitted on the same terms and to the same classes as men. The first woman to graduate was Alice Boise, the daughter of Professor James R. Boise. Ms. Boise was referred to as "the Entering Wedge" for her revolutionary achievement in securing a BA.³³ The introduction of coeducation was part of a national and regional trend after 1860 — women were first admitted to the University of Wisconsin in 1863, to the University of Michigan in 1870, and to Cornell University in 1870 — and, again, demonstrated a capacity at Chicago for modest innovation, even in the face of opposition from the male students.³⁴

For a university located in a major metropolitan area its collegiate enrollments were quite small, with typical graduating classes of 15 to 20 students. Between 1870 and 1880, the undergraduate school averaged a total matriculation of 102 students per year, with 100 in 1870 and 107 in 1880). This modest size was not unusual, for the average enrollment size of colleges in the United States in 1870 was only 112 students.³⁵ But what is significant is that the University's student population did not grow as the size of the city mushroomed between 1870 and 1880, increasing from 298,977 to 503,185, another example of the failure of the University to reflect the larger metropolis of which it was a part. During

32. See Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, pp. 40–42.

33. *Chicago Sunday Record-Herald*, October 6, 1912, part 5, p. 2.

34. The student newspaper was strongly opposed. See *The Volante*, June 1873, pp. 95–96.

35. Snyder, *120 Years of American Education*, p. 64.

the next decade, in which the demographic size of Chicago more than doubled (to 1,099,850 by 1890) enrollments at the University declined steeply, from 107 in 1880 to 67 in 1883 and 73 in 1885.

By 1884, the University had approximately 1,035 living alumni. Of the 290 arts and sciences graduates, 74 chose careers as ministers, 72 went on to law schools, 55 became businessmen, 35 became school-teachers and professors, 15 were physicians, 13 were journalists, and six were farmers. Geographically, the alumni were distributed across the United States, but 90 remained in Chicago.³⁶

The cost of tuition for a full academic year was \$50. Additional expenses came with residential and food requirements. Many students lived at home or in boardinghouses, but the University did provide rooms in its building for those who wished to live on campus. Room charges were \$15 a year, with \$2 a week required for those who wished to eat their meals in the dining hall. Students also had to provide wood for heating and oil for their lamps. The total cost of attendance at the University was estimated at approximately \$300 a year, including tuition and residence costs.

From which social strata did the University recruit its students? Attendance at a college was possible for only a very small minority of young people in the United States at this time (in 1869–70 only 1.3 percent of the population between the ages of 18 and 24 was enrolled in one of the 563 existing institutions of higher education).³⁷ We have data on the occupations of the parents of University students from only one year, 1869. In that year 25 percent of families who sent their children to the University were farm families, another 25 percent were merchants or

36. *The Volante*, May, 1884, p. 152; March 1885, p. 5.

37. Snyder, *120 Years of American Education*, pp. 75–76.

other businessmen like bankers, and 21 percent were ministers. Physicians and lawyers made up another 20 percent, with a few teachers, real estate developers, and artists thrown in. Demographically, a small minority of the University of Chicago students came from wealthy social backgrounds, but the majority seem to have been children of enterprising middle- and lower-middle-class families who could afford to allow their children to leave the labor market for an extended period of time, some of whom were also able to offer partial support to their children while they were in college. Still, many students had to work to meet their expenses, which made it possible (in theory) for a student of very modest means to attend the University. Most of the very wealthy families in Chicago sent their children to the East for college, so the University did not develop a deep reservoir of wealthy patronage from alumni with wealthy family resources.

Slowly, a coherent student culture evolved, and a student association was created to give voice to student concerns and interests, along with several honor societies, including the Tri Kappa and the Athenaeum, and four Greek letter fraternities (Delta Kappa Epsilon, Phi Kappa Psi, Psi Upsilon, and Zeta Psi). By the early 1870s, a student newspaper was being regularly published, *The Volante*, whose editors were elected by the senior class. Beyond ritualistic expressions of school pride and confidence in the liberal arts, which suffused the newspaper to the point that it almost reads as if it were published by a University-run communications office, one can gain valuable insights into student views about the accomplishments of the institution and about its future financial peril. Other ad hoc groupings of students also came together — during the Civil War students banded together to help prisoners in nearby Camp Douglas and also created a student militia group. Thomas Goodspeed was a member of this organization, reminding us that many of the men



CLASS OF '86 - OLD UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

L. M. Coy.	A. Sage.	W. L. Burnap.	G. F. Holloway.	F. J. Walsh.	E. A. Buzzell.	H. J. Furber, Jr.
E. R. Rundell.	T. R. Weddell.	J. Isetta Gibson.	Guy Bockway.	G. E. Newcomb.	A. G. Anderson, Jr.	(Absent).

The Class of 1886



Koli S. Thabue Bassein, 1879–1882
Student from British Burma

who founded our University were adults during the Civil War. What is most curious about the early student culture is what one does not find — no recorded conflicts between the fraternities and the University administration, no formal athletic leagues (a student baseball club — the “College Nine” — played an annual series with Northwestern University, and the students also had an amateur boating club), and little of the petty violence, alcoholism, hooliganism, and social hedonism that marked much of undergraduate life in 19th-century American colleges.³⁸ It is telling that a later memoir on student life suggested that competitive oratorical contests between University of Chicago students and those from neighboring colleges took the place of football games as a site for student entertainment and sociability.³⁹ Since the majority of students had to find part-time and sometimes even full-time jobs to cover their expenses, this may have reduced the temporal opportunities for socially aberrant behavior.⁴⁰ Describing the cultural differences between leading eastern colleges and the University of Chicago, one student wrote in 1873 that “in boating, at the bat, and in other sports we may not be able to compare with the Eastern clubs; but while these are of benefit in themselves, they are, or should be of second rate importance to the

38. For the norm at many other colleges, see Helen L. Horowitz, *Campus Life. Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 23–55.

39. “The Passing of the Old University of Chicago,” *Chicago Sunday Herald-Record*, October 6, 1912, part 5, p. 2. On the contests, see *The Volante*, December 1873, pp. 29–30.

40. “Many students pay their entire expenses by engaging in clerical and manual labor of various kinds. No young man desirous of a liberal education need be deterred by lack of means.” *Twenty-Seventh Annual Catalogue of the University of Chicago, including the Union College of Law* (Chicago, 1886), p. 25.

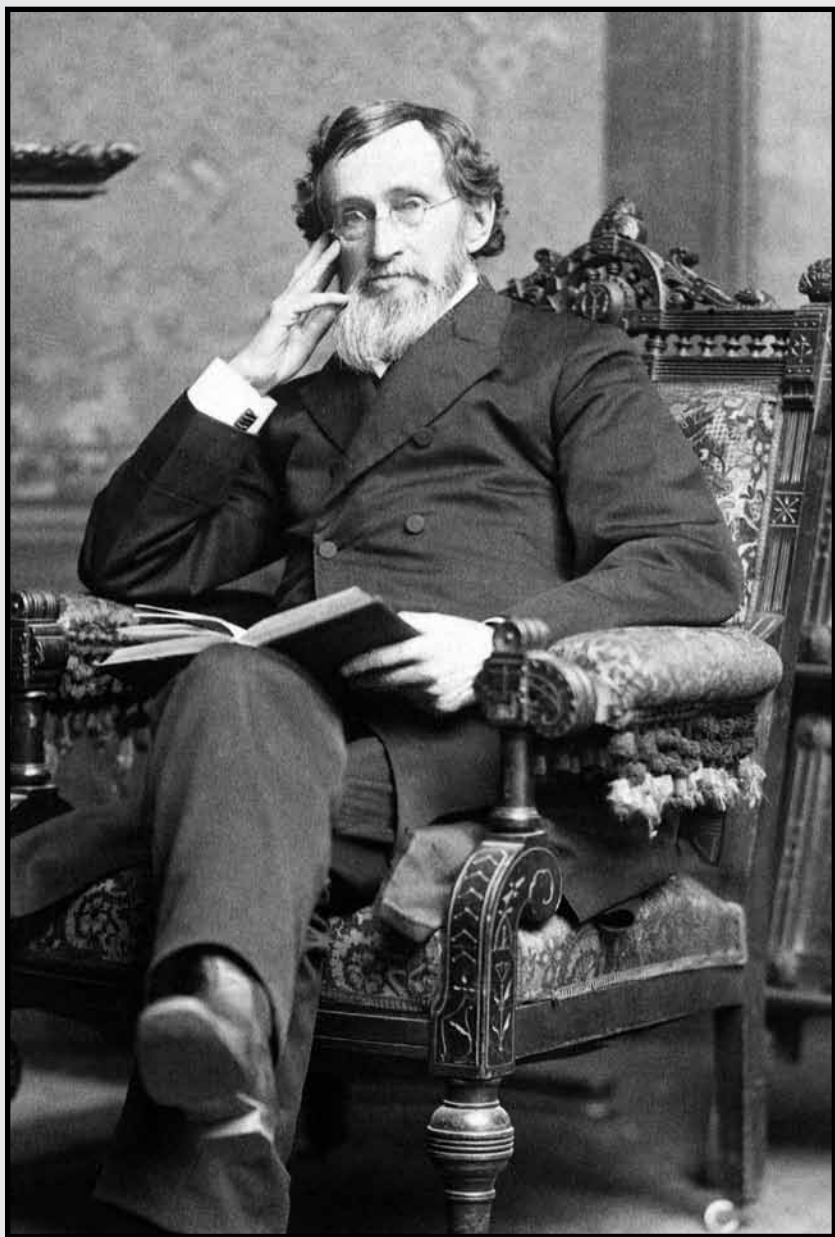
student. To drill and strengthen the *mental* faculties is the prime area of college life; and the school that does this the most thoroughly is the most successful."⁴¹ All in all, the academic culture of the old University seems to have made it into a serious, engaged, and sober place for students, and thus worthy of its Baptist origins, although the trustees' minutes do record one incident in 1883 in which a student threatened the president with a pistol over a controversy on the award of a prize for an oratorical contest, with the student being summarily expelled.⁴²

In a typical year, the arts and sciences faculty numbered about 10 to 12 (including the president, who regularly taught classes in addition to his administrative duties), with four to five additional faculty in the Law School. Some were regionally prominent, like James R. Boise in Greek and literature and John C. Freeman in Latin, and a few former faculty ended up in prominent professorships at universities like Rochester, Wisconsin, and Illinois. To the extent that they published books, these were usually grammars or other pedagogical texts, including selections from ancient authors and from the Bible.⁴³ Occasionally a faculty member might gain wider recognition, as was the case with William Mathews, a former lawyer turned publicist, financial writer, and rhetoric professor at the University, who published a remarkable success manual in 1873 called *Getting On in the World, or Hints on Success in Life* that

41. *The Volante*, December 1873, p. 27; November 1877, pp. 24–25.

42. "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," June 12, 1883.

43. For example, James R. Boise, *Exercises in Greek Prose Composition, Adapted to the First Book of Xenophon's Anabasis* (New York, 1867); idem, *First Lessons in Greek, Adapted to the Grammar of Goodwin, and to That of Hadley As Revised by Frederic D. Forest Allen* (Chicago, 1891); and Albert H. Mixer, *Manual of French Poetry with Historical Introduction, and Biographical Notices of the Principal Authors. For the Use of the School and the Home* (New York, 1874).



*James R. Boise
Professor of Greek and father of the first woman to graduate
from the University of Chicago, Alice Boise, Class of 1877*

sold 70,000 copies.⁴⁴ But for the most part, the majority were competent instructors with no significant professional reputations as scholars. Their academic backgrounds reflected the intellectual and scholarly attainments expected of faculty at the old University: These were intelligent and dedicated pedagogues, fiercely loyal to the idea of the liberal arts, not original thinkers or writers or scientists. The typical advanced degree held was an MA. In 1875, for example, none of the faculty in residence had a doctoral degree.

The University relied on this core of dedicated teachers, who served it well. But it also had difficulty in retaining other faculty, and the records of the board are filled with notations that so and so simply resigned and left the University for a better-paying job at another institution. Far too often the trustees struggled to meet the regular payroll, with the result that faculty were often forced to appeal to the board to honor the full extent of their contracts. As Frederick Rudolph pointed out many years ago, 19th-century colleges often had poor records of compensating their faculty, sometimes not meeting salary payrolls at all and assuming that faculty would either work for free or have family members who would otherwise support them.⁴⁵ This was clearly the case with the first University of Chicago. In his comprehensive survey of the state of Baptist colleges in 1888, which will be discussed below, Frederick Gates discovered that faculty at most western Baptist colleges were paid salaries about half the value of those earned by teachers at other, more prominent

44. Judy A. Hilkey, *Character Is Capital. Success Manuals and Manhood in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill, 1997), p. 60.

45. Frederick Rudolph, “Who Paid the Bills? An Inquiry into the Nature of 19th-Century College Finance,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 31 (1961): 144–157; idem, *The American College and University*, pp. 193–200.

eastern colleges.⁴⁶ Haphazard payrolls also meant that faculty had to take on more part-time jobs outside of the University to make ends meet. In 1878, a young instructor of botany, Edson S. Bastin, explained to his sister that he was “still living on the hope that the University will be able to throw off the incubus of debt & that better times will come to us when salaries will be paid promptly & fully; still hoping that I shall not always be required to teach so many different things, & do such a variety of work that I may have the chance to do some one thing well.”⁴⁷ By 1886, the University was only able to pay its teachers 59 percent of the nominal value of their annual salaries (\$885, as opposed to their official pay of \$1,500).

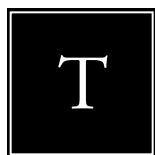
The surviving records of the University’s fundraising efforts reveal a constant effort to seek small contributions from local and regional Baptist congregations, many of which made subscription pledges that they were in no position to honor. When the financial agents of the University inquired as to the status of an unpaid pledge, they often encountered evidence to the effect that the subscriber had moved to the West, had gone bankrupt, or had even died. The financial files of the old University are full of accounts such as those of Lincoln Patterson, who

46. Kenneth W. Rose, “John D. Rockefeller, the American Baptist Education Society, and the Growth of Baptist Higher Education in the Midwest,” unpublished ms., 1998, p. 8.

47. Edson S. Bastin to Anna Bastin, July 31, 1878, *Elon N. Lee and Edson S. Bastin Papers*, Box 1, folder 1. A year earlier he had written that “[t]he University still lives although many a time in the last year we have thought her to be in the last stages of consumption. ‘While there’s life there’s hope’ is our chief source of comfort even now, although with returning spring signs of life are rather on the increase. The attendance is about as usual, & so far as the internal affairs are concerned everything is pleasant, but money! money! there’s the rub!” Letter of April 3, 1877, *ibid.*

was found to be “dead and family destitute; worthless,” while I. R. Gale was “old & sick & will not pay as he has no property,” and S. S. Davis was reported as having “gone to California[,] has no means, probably worthless.”⁴⁸ In spite of efforts to persuade “wealthy men” of Chicago to give large contributions, the University found itself bereft of any significant capitalist support in the 1870s and 1880s. It also relied heavily on Baptist clergy to do fundraising, but this was a mixed blessing since some of the most effective fundraisers were also complex personalities with powerful political bases in their own congregations who required a great deal of hand-holding and who could easily go off the rail and cause harm to broader institutional priorities. This proved to be the case with the Rev. William W. Everts, who claimed to have raised \$150,000 for the new college and who was touted in an early biographical sketch as someone who used “his marvelous faculty for ‘raising money’ with great effect,” but who spent years feuding with many of his fellow trustees.⁴⁹

FINANCIAL CRISES IN THE 1860S AND THE 1870S



he University was inevitably caught up in the strains and dislocation of the Civil War. As early as July 1860, the board approved a resolution by William Everts, who proposed “a compromise with such subscribers to the University endowment, as by the change of times, have become

48. *Old University of Chicago Records*, Box 2, folder 14.

49. On Everts’s influence, see Stackhouse, *Chicago and the Baptists*, pp. 58, 68–69, 81; and “William W. Everts,” in *Biographical Sketches of the Leading Men of Chicago* (Chicago, 1868), pp. 141–147, here 146.

unable to pay their subscriptions as they now stand.”⁵⁰ After the commencement of hostilities in 1861, enrollments in the undergraduate and law programs remained steady, but dipped in the preparatory school. The University’s campus was less than half a mile from the notorious prison camp used to house Confederate prisoners of war, Camp Douglas, so by 1862–63 the war must have had a real and visible impact on the campus.

The worst impact of the war was a severe loss of financial resources. As happened in the aftermath of the Panic of 1857, many donors again found themselves unable to honor their pledges, creating a balance sheet overwhelmed with red ink and leading to frequent approaches to the insurance company, which came to be seen by the trustees as providing an open-ended line of credit. The 1860s also saw the emergence of a cluster of personal antagonisms among members of the board of trustees that, over time, were to hamstring the capacity of the institution for strong, goal-directed leadership. After Douglas’s death in 1861, the board was chaired by William B. Ogden, a prominent businessman and early mayor of Chicago with many and varied interests who turned out to be a rather complacent and inattentive chair and who ceded de facto control of the institution to Burroughs.⁵¹ So unhappy was Ogden over the ongoing feuding that disrupted the board of trustees, which he was unable to master, that he decided not to donate a major gift to the University in his lifetime.

As the institution’s financial plight worsened in the 1860s, some trustees faulted Burroughs’s financial assistant, James B. Olcott, for financial

50. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” July 3 and 4, 1860.

51. On Ogden, see “William Butler Ogden” in Thomas W. Goodspeed, *The University of Chicago Biographical Sketches*, Volume 1 (Chicago, 1922 and 1924), pp. 35–56.

ineptitude and poor decision making. Olcott resigned in disgust in July 1862, resentful that Burroughs had not only failed to defend his reputation but had sought to take credit for successful pledges that Olcott himself had engineered.⁵² A year later, the Committee on Finances, chaired by James Dickerson, was asked to report on the University's finances, and it is clear from the circumlocutions in the minutes that Dickerson's group had very little understanding of the actual state of budgetary affairs. The situation was confirmed two years later at a meeting on June 30, 1865, when Thomas Hoyne offered a resolution to the effect that “this Board deems it essential to a clearer apprehension and understanding of the present condition of the Institution, pecuniary and otherwise, that there should be some clearer and well digested report of all its affairs, embraced in a single Report to this Board.”⁵³ When a summary of the University's finances was produced a month later, it demonstrated that the institution had vastly overreached its real resources.⁵⁴ What is particularly noteworthy is the fact that very few local Baptists had made significant financial contributions.

The board occasionally allowed itself to go off on flights of fancy, as when an enthusiastic Baptist minister from Springfield, Illinois, N. W. Miner, assured his fellow board members in July 1866 that he was certain that he could raise 50 subscriptions of \$1,000 each by simply alerting the public to the dire state of its affairs. The board immediately endorsed the idea, regarding Miner's proposal as “a Providential indication of the course which it would be wise for us to adopt under the present exigencies,”

52. William Everts to his wife, September 10, 1888, p. 4, *Old University of Chicago Records*, Box 9, folder 4.

53. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” July 7, 1863; June 30, 1865.

54. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” July 19, 1865.

and commissioned Miner “to lend his special efforts to secure the foregoing subscriptions in connection with any other persons who may be appointed by the Executive Committee.”⁵⁵ Miner was, in fact, able to raise little of this money, the idea being a classic wild goose chase.

Burroughs’s most significant opponent was William W. Everts, the outspoken pastor of the First Baptist Church of Chicago and fundraiser extraordinaire, who believed that Burroughs was a weak leader who was also engaging in financially irresponsible activities, such as booking pledges from potential donors who had neither the capacity nor real intent of paying, and then using the existence of such pledges as a kind of moral collateral to justify the University’s increasing accumulation of debt. In the summer of 1863, Everts invited Burroughs to his home and urged him to resign, promising that he would arrange for Burroughs to have a trip to Europe or some other destination, free of charge.⁵⁶ Burroughs refused, and thus began a nasty and increasingly public feud between the two men that festered and worsened over the years, with Everts scheming to force Burroughs to resign, while the latter’s supporters on the board counter-maneuvered against Everts.

In 1861, the board decided to pursue further construction, adding the main section to the University building, which was designated as Douglas Hall, at a cost of \$120,000. A subscription campaign was

55. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” July 4, 1866. Miner’s daughter, Mary R. (Miner) Hill, left a short memoir of her family’s life in Springfield, Illinois, from 1854 to 1869 that is now in the Illinois State Library.

56. W. W. Everts, *The Life of Rev. W. W. Everts*, DD (Philadelphia, 1891), pp. 96–97. Everts later wrote an unpublished manuscript attacking Burroughs and his fellow trustees for all manner of irresponsible and irresolute behavior, alleging that out of indifference or laziness they deliberately refused to find ways to strengthen the University’s finances. See his “History of the University of Chicago,” [1889 or 1890] *Old University of Chicago Records, 1856–1890*, Box 9, folder 4.

mounted to cover these costs, but failed to generate all of the needed monies. Rather than delay construction until the missing funds could be raised, the trustees proceeded with the completion of Douglas Hall, which was finally opened in 1866, since the hall was a requirement for the construction of a new astronomical observatory (discussed below) that was deemed of urgent interest.⁵⁷ Given the lack of pledge payments on existing subscriptions, the trustees decided that in order to complete the building—the roof was missing—they would temporarily deploy \$14,000 from an endowment of \$23,000 that had recently been given to establish a professorship of Greek.⁵⁸ This action was taken when William Everts was out of town. For all of his other faults, Everts was an effective fundraiser who had raised this fund from Baptists in New York City, and when he returned to Chicago he insisted that the endowment be restored (which it never was). Facing still more pressures, the trustees, in another act of risky behavior, took out yet another loan of \$15,000 in October 1864 from the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company, thus adding a second mortgage to the University’s physical property.⁵⁹

The trustees then hoped to complete the main building by adding a north wing. In 1864, they had obtained a pledge from William B. Ogden to cover the costs of the new wing (\$50,000), but only if they

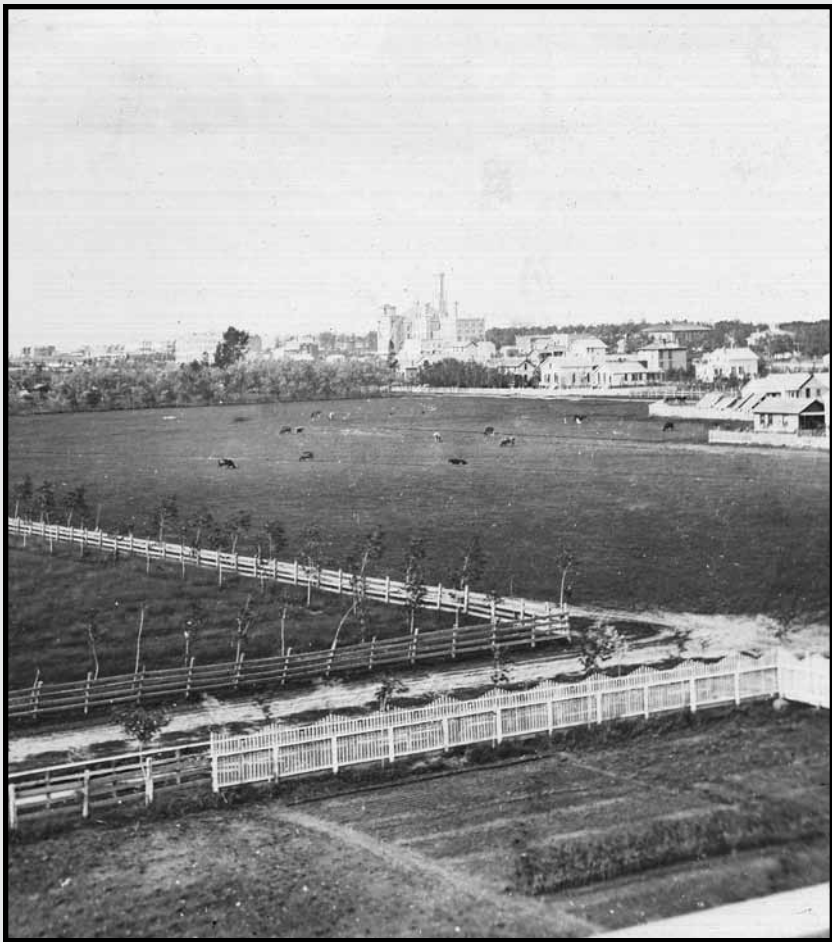
57. Smith, *History of the Baptists*, p. 285.

58. See the long article by Everts’s son, W. W. Everts Jr., in the *Chicago Tribune*, February 7, 1874, p. 7. Everts Jr. reported that one former trustee had alleged, “My recollection is that the [budgetary] accounts of Dr. Burroughs with the University had been running for many years and were in hopeless confusion.” A total of \$25,000 was eventually raised for this professorship. See “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” December 20, 1865.

59. Everts, *The Life of Rev. W. W. Everts*, pp. 99–100; “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” October 11, 1864.



Douglas Hall
Circa late 1860s.



The photo shows Douglas Hall and the astronomical observatory tower affixed to its west side against the horizon. To the left of Douglas Hall, behind an upright outgrowth of dark trees, is a long multi-story building that appears to be the one that housed the Baptist Union Theological Seminary before it moved to Morgan Park. The view is from the southwest, and in the foreground are a mix of houses, gardens, and fenced pastureland with cattle. Caption by Daniel Meyer, University Archivist, University of Chicago.

raised sufficient funds to eliminate the debt and to provide for the permanent operating costs of the University. Failing to meet Ogden's stipulation because of more feuding (including the sudden resignation of the two men who were charged with eliminating the University's debt and with leading a canvass for the building, M. G. Clarke and a faculty member, Albert H. Mixer), the north wing was never built.⁶⁰ In August 1866, the trustees again went to the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company, this time asking for \$25,000 to cover (among other things) unpaid bills and assessments that the city of Chicago had levied against the University for street and lighting improvements. By 1866, the University now owed the insurance company \$75,000 in principal and interest.⁶¹

In the midst of such financial turmoil, the decision of the trustees to purchase a major telescope in a deal with the Chicago Astronomical Society was still further evidence of poor and fitful planning. In December 1862, a Baptist minister from New York City, Martin R. Forey, who had a penchant for things astronomical, approached Burroughs with the proposal that the University purchase a large, 16-inch telescope manufactured by a New York optical craftsman, Henry Fitz. Intrigued by the idea of constructing an astronomical observatory adjoining the main building of the new University, which would match or exceed what other American

60. *Chicago Tribune*, September 7, 1873, p. 7. Ogden "felt a lively interest in the institution, and was understood to be pledged to erect the north wing of the great university building as soon as the institution should free itself from debt. This it never did, and the troubles which broke out among the trustees and for many years paralyzed their efforts so discouraged Mr. Ogden that any benevolent intentions he had cherished toward the institution were never carried out." Goodspeed, "William Butler Ogden," p. 52; see also Everts, "History of the University of Chicago," p. 5.

61. Arthur A. Azlein, "The Old University of Chicago," course paper, University of Chicago, 1941, p. 37.

colleges were doing in the field of astronomy (telescopes were increasingly common scientific instruments at many institutions, having both a scientific and a general prestige value), Burroughs invited Forey to give several public lectures on astronomy at Bryan Hall, on Clark Street. Forey's lectures stimulated great enthusiasm among a group of trustees, several of whom constituted an ad hoc committee to explore the possibility of bringing the telescope to Chicago. In so doing they also created the nucleus for the Chicago Astronomical Society, a public interest group officially chartered in 1865. Along the way, the group discovered another and still larger telescope with an 18-inch lens created by the firm of Alvan Clark and Sons in Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, and decided to purchase that instrument for \$11,200. They were encouraged to do so by an early faculty member, Albert H. Mixer, a polymath who taught ancient and modern languages but had a personal interest in astronomy.⁶² One trustee with a particular enthusiasm for astronomy, the banker and newspaper publisher Jonathan Young Scammon, who was also the chair of the Chicago Astronomical Society's board of directors, then offered the University the funds necessary to construct an observatory to house the telescope to the rear of Douglas Hall, the structure being designated as the Dearborn Observatory.⁶³ Scammon also agreed to pay the salary of the director of the program, Truman H. Safford, who was appointed in December 1865. Scammon was good to his word about funding the observatory, to

62. *Chicago Tribune*, December 3, 1862, p. 4; *Christian Times*, December 3, 1862, p. 2; December 10, 1862, p. 2; Philip Fox, "The Semi-Centennial of the Dearborn Conservatory," *Popular Astronomy*, 24 (1916): 476–477.

63. See T. H. Safford, "J. Young Scammon and the Dearborn Observatory of Chicago," *The Western Monthly*, 1 (1869): 130–131; Ian R. Bartky, "Chicago's Dearborn Observatory: A Study in Survival," *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage*, 3 (2000): 93–114.

the tune of \$30,000. But in the early 1870s, in the aftermath of the Great Fire where he suffered enormous losses, Scammon was unable to continue to pay Safford's salary, and the University found itself saddled with the operating expenses of the building, without astronomy ever having developed into a major instructional program at the University.⁶⁴

Safford resigned to take a position at the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, after which the program limped along with part-time leadership, including George W. Hough, who was hired in 1879 and served without a regular salary until 1881. Along the way, Mixer made an effort to recruit a second faculty member as an assistant director, Cleveland Abbe, but expected that Abbe's family would pay his salary. Abbe refused to accept the scheme, but his biographer, Norriss S. Hetherington, has pointed out that this practice was quite common in 19th-century American colleges, and it is not surprising that the cash-strapped officials of the University would try to make use of it.⁶⁵ Once the University went bankrupt, the telescope was removed to a site on the campus of Northwestern University in June 1888.

Financial distress continued to plague the University. In 1869, the board hit upon the idea of asking other Christian denominations to fund individual faculty positions, urging that the Presbyterians take responsibility for the chair in mathematics. When the incumbent faculty member

64. "The complete endowment pledged by Mr. Scammon on which he had paid the annual interest for some eight years was destroyed by the fire." "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," January 11, 1877.

65. Norriss S. Hetherington, "Financing Education and Science in Nineteenth-Century America. The Case of Cleveland Abbe, the Chicago Astronomical Society, and the First University of Chicago," *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 68 (1975): 319–323; idem, "Cleveland Abbe and a View of Science in Mid-Nineteenth Century America," *Annals of Science*, 33 (1976): 31–49.

in that role, Alonzo J. Sawyer, was asked to solicit the Presbyterians for the costs of his salary, he refused and instead threatened to resign in protest. Sawyer complained, “[I]f the Trustees will also keep in mind the great aversion which every literary man must have to begging for a matter in which he is personally interested and which he cannot do without sacrifice of his finer feelings, they will perceive the exceedingly unpleasant nature of the task they wish me to perform.”⁶⁶ Instead, the board quickly accepted his resignation, noting that “this Board while regretting to part with so old and faithful a professor feel compelled under the present pecuniary necessities of the institution to accept the tendered resignation.”⁶⁷ What is most fascinating about this incident is that the board expressed the hope that selling off professorships to other denominations would help to “place this institution among the most useful and commanding Universities in the country.” Yet the resignation of Sawyer showed how marginal the role of the faculty was in the life of the institution and how dispensable they were seen to be. Rather than viewing the faculty as a key capital resource, to be protected and nurtured, and as agents who would give a lustrous professional identity to the University, they were viewed at best as genial teachers, perhaps beloved and respected by their students, but eminently replaceable or exchangeable if financial necessities hit.

In the face of such problems, President Burroughs was tempted to sanction extreme and unorthodox measures, such as the so-called “land scheme” of early 1871, which involved two laymen from the First Baptist Church obtaining a guarantee of \$50,000 from Burroughs to purchase 160 acres of land near the Stock Yards, which they then proposed to sell

66. Sawyer to the Board of Trustees, April 20, 1869, *Old University of Chicago Records*, Box 2, folder 5.

67. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” July 2, 1869.

at a high profit, sharing the difference with the University. Burroughs acted without the official approval of the board and in fact had no money available to join in the plan. In the aftermath of the 1871 fire, the scheme eventually collapsed of its own improbable weight, with the University gaining nothing except another blemish on its good name. William Everts later claimed that, at the urgent request of the trustees, he had undertaken an emergency fundraising campaign in the East, netting \$60,000 that enabled the board to finance the commitment Burroughs had made to the investors.⁶⁸

In a typical but unfortunate replication of past strategies, the trustees again returned to the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company in July 1869 for an additional \$25,000 loan, making the total indebtedness now \$100,000.⁶⁹ Continued squabbling on the board over how to deal with the debt and growing expenses continued, and then the University was hit with the dual body blows of the Great Fire of 1871 and the subsequent Depression of 1873. The board noted in October 1872 that “a large part of the subscriptions for the University obtained in Chicago, within the last three years, have been rendered uncollectible by the fire last October.”⁷⁰ Even the usually optimistic student newspaper was

68. Everts, *The Life of Rev. W. W. Everts*, pp. 101–103.

69. See “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” October 1872. Much of the early financial history of the University emerged during the proceedings of the foreclosure suit filed by the Union Mutual Insurance Company. These proceedings are reprinted in “The Chicago University,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 27, 1884, p. 9.

70. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” October 1872. In 1877, the board again reported that “all that had been relied upon for Endowment of professorships before the great fire of 1871 was literally swept away by that calamity.” “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” January 11, 1877.

forced to admit that the losses in the wake of the fire were “incalculable; many men of wealth in the city had declared grand intentions, and some had made generous provisions for large things for the college, whose fulfillment is now hopeless and impossible. The institution was seriously crippled — [it] labors now under great embarrassment, and therefore needs the support of all its friends at home and abroad.”⁷¹

William Everts continued his campaign to force Burroughs’s dismissal, even ghostwriting attacks on Burroughs that were published anonymously in the *Chicago Tribune*.⁷² Everts was persuaded to resign from the board in October 1872, having been accused of “impudence, dishonesty or infidelity” in leaking damaging material concerning the finances of the University to the press.⁷³ Everts denied wrongdoing, and insisted, “What public-spirited man in Chicago could look on indifferently while our University remained at a stand-still, as largely in debt and with less endowment today than seven years ago? . . . If the incompetency of the President has been jeopardizing the promise of the University, my opposition may have been but scant loyalty.”⁷⁴

Burroughs also agreed in principle to step down from the presidency as soon as a suitable successor could be identified. But Burroughs was not one to abandon his position easily, and when a new president was elected in July 1874 — Dr. Lemuel Moss, a respected professor of theology at Crozer Seminary near Philadelphia — Burroughs had already been

71. *The Volante*, February 1872, p. 4.

72. *Chicago Tribune*, October 3, 1872, p. 5; October 4, 1872, p. 6; October 10, 1872, p. 7; September 7, 1873, p. 7; January 13, 1874, p. 3; January 23, 1874, p. 3; and January 30, 1874, p. 7.

73. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” October 1872.

74. Everts, *The Life of Rev. W. W. Everts*, p. 105.

appointed to the newly created office of chancellor of the University, with specific responsibility to supervise the finances of the institution.⁷⁵ The problem with this arrangement was that no one had consulted Moss about it, and he assumed that his appointment as president involved “the whole of it,” with “all of its duties and prerogatives.”⁷⁶ Moss came from the East with a strong reputation as a public speaker and educator, and his appointment was seen as a fortuitous chance to turn the situation around and enable the University to gain momentum. He announced his support for a conception of the University as an agent of high spiritual culture, by which he meant the “strengthening of the intellectual and moral nature of man such that he should be able at last to guide them in such a way as best to promote the general good.”⁷⁷ In spite of such idealistic intentions, within a few months Moss was at daggers drawn with Burroughs over the scope of the authority vested in the president — Burroughs insisted that Moss could not make any decisions involving money without his prior consent, while Moss sought to persuade the board to eliminate Burroughs’s position.

The board then became badly divided into pro- and contra-Burroughs factions. The anti-Burroughs faction believed that Burroughs had

75. *Chicago Tribune*, April 10, 1874, p. 2; July 1, 1874, p. 4; July 3, 1874, p. 2. Moss was born near Burlington, Kentucky, in 1829. He worked first as a printer, and then attended the University of Rochester and the Rochester Theological Seminary, graduating in 1858 and 1868. In addition to teaching at Crozer and Lewisburg, he was the secretary of the United States Christian Commission from 1863 to 1865. From 1868 to 1872, he served as the editor of the *National Baptist*. He died in 1904.

76. Moss’s own account is in *The Standard*, August 26, 1875, p. 4.

77. *The Volante*, November 1874, pp. 16–18. Moss was also openly in favor of collegiate education for women students.

become tired and incapable of assuming the kind of strong leadership needed for a new financial campaign, proposing that his office be vacated and that he be retired “with every expression of honor and respect on the part of the Board and all interested in the University.”⁷⁸ When this group brought their motion forward, they were met with a countermotion that essentially turned the tables by proposing that Moss be fired. The consequence was that Moss was fired by a 16 to 8 vote at a meeting of the board on July 13, 1875, for spreading “dissatisfactions” and undermining a “harmony of interests” in the administration, and Burroughs was put back in charge of the University until an interim president could be identified.⁷⁹ It is quite telling that among Moss’s supporters were Francis E. Hinckley, George Walker, and E. Nelson Blake, donors who were to play a major role in the development of the Morgan Park Seminary and, eventually, the new University of Chicago.

The Moss scandal (one is tempted to call it an affair) was a critical turning point in the history of the institution’s governance. First, it generated a huge cloud of negative publicity about the governance systems of the University, with the majority of the board being accused of undignified, petty, and irresponsible behavior. *The Standard*, the main newspaper of the Baptist communities in Chicago, reported that “the action of the Trustees, at their last meeting, has called forth an indignant and almost unanimous protest on the part of the general public and the denominational press. We have met, personally, no man during this week of anxiety and agitation who has not declared the act alike unjust and suicidal; while the utterances of the press, both denominational and

78. *The Standard*, August 19, 1875, p. 2.

79. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” July 13, 1875. *The Standard*, August 19, 1875, pp. 2, 4, contains a detailed account of these maneuvers on the board.



Lemuel Moss, President, 1874–1875

secular, with the exception of exceptional communications to the latter from interested parties, is to the effect that the course of the Board is wholly without justification.”⁸⁰ Second, as detailed reports emerged of the meeting on July 13 where Moss was terminated, it was clear that the motives behind this move had everything to do with status and prestige and nothing to do with a pragmatic concern for having strong leadership for the University. Levi D. Boone emerged as the public spokesman for the anti-Moss faction. Boone published several explanatory letters in the press, stressing only that the issue was one of formal honor — Moss had agreed originally to live with the dual system of governance and he now found it unworkable. This made the situation worse, since Boone in fact offered no plausible reason why Moss had been terminated, and, as Trustee J. A. Smith observed, “[T]hroughout the letter [from L. D. Boone], as throughout that discussion and the document on which it was based, scarcely one word of allusion appears to the University considered as an institution of learning, representing the great interest of higher education. It is nowhere implied that any other point is at issue save the one personal to Dr. Burroughs.”⁸¹

Smith, who tried to mediate between warring factions on the board, publicly characterized Moss’s dismissal as a “signal injustice” and rightly predicted that “it probably puts an end to all hope that the University

80. *The Standard*, July 29, 1875, p. 4. A meeting of alumni of the University on July 26 manifested very divided opinions, but in the end a majority approved resolutions demanding that Moss be reinstated as president. *Chicago Tribune*, July 27, 1875, p. 1. On the history of *The Standard* as a voice of the Baptist community in the Midwest, see Myron D. Dillow, *Harvesttime on the Prairie. A History of the Baptists in Illinois 1796–1996* (Franklin, TN, 1996), pp. 274–275.

81. *The Standard*, August 19, 1875, p. 2.

will become, at least in this present generation, what so many have hoped to see it, and labored to make it.”⁸² Moss himself landed on his feet, for he was immediately hired to become president of Indiana University, where he served with distinction from 1875 to 1884.

The public scandal over the dismissal of Moss seems to have frightened the board, and a pro-Moss supporter, James R. Doolittle, a former senator from Wisconsin, was persuaded to serve as acting president. In mid-1876, Alonzo Abernethy, an alumnus of the University (Class of 1866) who worked as the superintendent of public instruction in Iowa, was chosen to become the permanent president, but he served for only two years before resigning early in 1878. Abernethy was uncertain that he was qualified for the rigors and stresses of the job. He made this painfully clear to the board in a candid letter sent in June 1876, where he asked frankly, “[A]re there not misgivings among students, teachers, and friends of the University as to my ability to master the situation, which neither my past record, my experience, nor my personal address can for the present dispel and will not the resulting coldness tend to embarrass you and other friends of the University?” Abernethy’s lackluster track record once in office seemed to confirm his own self-evaluation.⁸³ An attempt to gain support from the educational fund associated with the Baptist Centennial Movement of 1876 failed when Burroughs refused

82. *The Standard*, July 22, 1875, p. 4.

83. See Abernethy’s letter to the board, filed with the minutes of June 28, 1876. Abernethy was born in 1836 in Ohio. He entered the University in 1857 and left in 1861 to enlist in the Ninth Iowa Infantry regiment as a private. He was commissioned as an officer during the Civil War and retired as a lieutenant colonel, having fought in 17 different battles. In 1870, he was elected president of Des Moines College and in 1871 won a statewide ballot to become superintendant of public instruction. After resigning from the University of Chicago, he became president of the Cedar Valley Seminary at Osage, Iowa.

to allow agents of the American Baptist Educational Commission to inspect the University's financial records.⁸⁴

The feuding on the board of trustees had manifold unfortunate consequences. Reports of dissension among members of the board led to the University having a dismal image both locally and nationally, and among Baptist and non-Baptist civic and religious leaders alike, making fundraising appeals to non-Baptist supporters nearly impossible.⁸⁵ Nor was finger-pointing absent. When the *Chicago Tribune* editorialized in December 1875, “[T]he University is probably now in a worse condition, pecuniarily speaking, than at any time during its history. . . . It has been difficult to get money from the members of the Board of Trustees, and from friends of the University in the city, for the reason that they have been paying steadily for years to support what seems to be a failing institution, and they are at last getting weary in good-doing,” the paper seemed to imply that the financial misery was owing to poor administrative control by University leaders and not errors of omission or commission by the board of trustees.⁸⁶ Yet whatever John Burroughs's failings as a budgetary and administrative leader, and they were many,

84. William Everts, “History of the University of Chicago,” pp. 5–6.

85. *Chicago Tribune*, July 31, 1875, p. 8; August 10, 1875, p. 3; August 15, 1875, p. 14; October 23, 1877, p. 2. The *New York Methodist* proclaimed, “The Chicago University (Baptist) has for some time been a seat for an incompetent President. The struggles of the institution to get out from under him resulted a year ago in a peculiar compromise. President Burroughs took the office of Agent and Collector under the proud title of Chancellor, and Dr. Moss was called to the Presidency. After a year of good work, Dr. Moss has been summarily dismissed by the Burroughs faction. It will not hurt Dr. Moss, or cure the hopeless inefficiency of Dr. Burroughs. It is to be hoped it will result in a better settlement than the one made a year ago.” Quoted in *ibid.*, August 1, 1875, p. 16.

86. *Chicago Tribune*, December 9, 1875, p. 8.

substantial responsibility for the dismal performance of the University also had to lie with the board's own erratic behavior. Even though the trustees had pledged in October 1872 that "no liability shall be contracted by the Trustees above the cash resources for the fiscal year in which the same matures," in February 1876 they took out an additional loan of \$13,200 from the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company to cover unpaid faculty salaries. The company used this opportunity to consolidate past debts and unpaid interest into a new note for \$150,000, at 8 percent interest, but with the stipulation that if the interest were unpaid, the rate would increase to 10 percent.⁸⁷

In February 1873, a planning committee appointed by the board presented a critical discussion of the profile of the University, admitting that there was a serious disconnect between the image of the University and of its educational programs, and the changing nature of Chicago's economy and demography:

[T]he University must attempt and achieve very much more and this in two main directions: . . . The first respect [involves] the University itself and the scope of its work. . . . [I]t is in intimate relation with such a city as ours, with its extended commerce, its vast industries, its energetic and enterprising people, the University should be in a position to commend itself to those who regard it as an important part of the mission of such institutions to guide the appreciation of theoretical learning in practical affairs. The committee are of the opinion that resources to interest wealthy and generous citizens in the endowment of a school

87. *Chicago Tribune*, April 8, 1878, p. 2. In addition to the debt to the insurance company, the University had another \$35,000 in floating debt.

of this kind, under some appropriate designation, as an organic part of the University, should be entered upon without delay: confident that in connection with other measures looking to relief, enlargement and improvement in all ways, it will help greatly in rallying to the institution public interest and enthusiasm.

Beyond enlarging the programmatic reach of the institution, more attention had to be devoted to finding a stable financial platform on which to operate the newly rethought programs, including provision for a much larger number of students:

The financial resources of the University need to be enlarged in every particular, and its financial policy as respects salaries to professors and in other respects, made more liberal, and more nearly what the growth of the institution with the exigencies of its practical working so imperatively require. Beyond all question, the educational power of the University may be vastly increased by judicious action on the part of those having its interests in charge, and its standing in every way improved. It is the deliberate conviction of the faculty from what they ascertain of existing tendencies that the number of students in the several courses of instruction might just as well be a thousand, or the four or five hundred now included.⁸⁸

This diagnosis was perceptive, but unfortunately it was short on specific ideas or pragmatic interventions that might lead to such a shift in direction, and subsequent records of the board suggest that the

88. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” February 19, 1873.

proposals were yet one more exercise in wishful thinking by the trustees. During his short tenure as president, Lemuel Moss argued that the undergraduate curriculum should be “somewhat elevated and broadened . . . to conform to those of the best colleges in the country” and that the University should create a “polytechnic and scientific school of high grade.”⁸⁹ But the fiasco surrounding his firing in July 1875 effectively killed whatever tentative plans might have come forward to achieve these goals. By 1877, citing the fact that “many citizens of Chicago from whom the University had realized liberal support and encouragement of future aid had been unable to continue their donations and will probably never be able to fulfill what they had proposed,” the board was debating whether to sell “one hundred perpetual scholarships at one thousand dollars each” as a way of raising immediate cash for operations, but this too proved to be a chimera.⁹⁰

As rumors about the financial weaknesses and political infighting became more public, students became more concerned about the long-term survival of the University. In 1875, the editors of *The Volante* were guardedly optimistic about the future chances, writing, “[W]e do not see any cause for discouragement to students, faculty or trustees, and we believe we utter the truth when we say that none exists. . . . It seems the determination of the authorities to make the University a progressive and progressing institution, and one which shall meet the demands of the Northwest for higher culture. We have the fullest confidence that the denomination which is at the helm, and the vast population whose interests center in Chicago, will nobly and ably second this determined

89. See Moss's “Annual Report for 1874–1875,” filed with “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” July 1, 1875.

90. “Minutes of the Board of Trustees,” January 11, 1877.

and unremitting endeavor."⁹¹ But the problem with such optimistic rhetoric was that it was ill suited to inspire the new wealthy elites of Chicago to view the school as anything other than a modest confessional institution, an operation that clearly lacked leaders who could mobilize sentiment on behalf of a more ambitious conception of higher education that went beyond the pieties and the practical vocationalism of the mid-century liberal arts college.

Between 1862 and 1878, the University did indeed graduate several hundred students, yet it remained underfunded, paralyzed by tensions in its board, and increasingly divorced from the burgeoning metropolis growing up around it. This disjunction was further aggravated by new kinds of elites who came to prominence after 1870. In her excellent book on elite philanthropy in Chicago in the later 19th century, Kathleen McCarthy has argued that the 1870s saw the emergence of a "substantially different generation of leaders" in the worlds of business and commerce, who had settled in the city in the 1850s and begun to assemble enormous wealth in the 1860s, especially during the Civil War. Displacing an older generation of "Christian gentlemen" civic leaders like William Ogden, J. Young Scammon, and John Woodworth (all of whom were at one time trustees of the old University), the new industrial and commercial leaders were much more focused on managerial discipline, financial efficiency, and wealth generation as a sign of conspicuous social consumption. The Great Fire of 1871 further empowered this new "plutocratic" elite to gain social and cultural hegemony in the city.⁹²

91. *The Volante*, October 1875, p. 1.

92. Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige. Charity and Cultural Patronage in Chicago, 1849 to 1929* (Chicago, 1982), pp. 53, 62.



These men were, according to McCarthy, “richer, younger, and more ambitious than [their] antebellum predecessors. While the prewar generation had built a city from a prairie swamp, this group would fashion Chicago into the second largest city in the nation, the hub of a network of national and international business concerns.”⁹³ This second generation of social and economic elites — represented by men like Marshall Field, Philip Armour, George Pullman, Richard T. Crane, Charles Hutchinson, N. K. Fairbank, and others — was much more aggressive in viewing investment in cultural institutions as a way to enhance the luster and reputation of the city of Chicago, and they tended to direct their philanthropy toward organizations that were well run with sound business practices, that had a broad self-help mission to improve the lives of the ambitious poor, and that would enhance Chicago’s status in the world. As Helen Horowitz has argued, men like Hutchinson “not only wanted their city to be a good place to live and work; they wanted it to be thought of as the very best. As their horizons had expanded, they increasingly compared their city to other great cities of the world. It was no longer enough for Chicago to be economically powerful or even moral: the test it was forced to meet was the level of culture.”⁹⁴ To men of such mind-sets, the forlorn image of the University as both debt ridden and badly managed was hardly likely to inspire substantial philanthropy, certainly not investments of the level that would transform it into an institution worthy of the newly emerging industrial metropolis.

93. Ibid., p. 65.

94. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Culture and the City. Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago from the 1880s to 1917* (Chicago, 1989), pp. 84–85.

THE SECESSION OF THE SEMINARY

Another equally unhappy outcome of the time of troubles between 1872 and 1878 was the decision of the leaders of the Chicago Baptist Union Theological Seminary to break their ties with the University and to move their campus to a distant location in the southern part of the metropolitan area. Baptist leaders in the middle-western states wanted a seminary to train future ministers as early as the 1840s. When the University of Chicago was founded in 1856, it was expected by many in the denomination that it would eventually develop, or at least house, a seminary for Baptist ministers. A committee of Baptist ministers of the Chicago Baptist Association insisted in 1856, “[Y]our Committee are . . . convinced that the churches in the great West must depend mainly upon ministers raised up in their midst to supply their own destitution. And we are equally convinced that such young ministers must be instructed on our own soil. But the question returns upon us with great interest — what are our present facilities for such instruction? Your Committee are pained to reply that our denomination has not a well conducted and endowed institution in the State, where your young men, seeking a thorough preparation for the Christian ministry, may thus be prepared.”⁹⁵ In supporting Burroughs’s proposal to establish a Baptist college in Chicago, the Illinois Baptist General Association argued, “We hail with special satisfaction that feature of this enterprise in which it is proposed to furnish in connection with this new University means for gratuitous

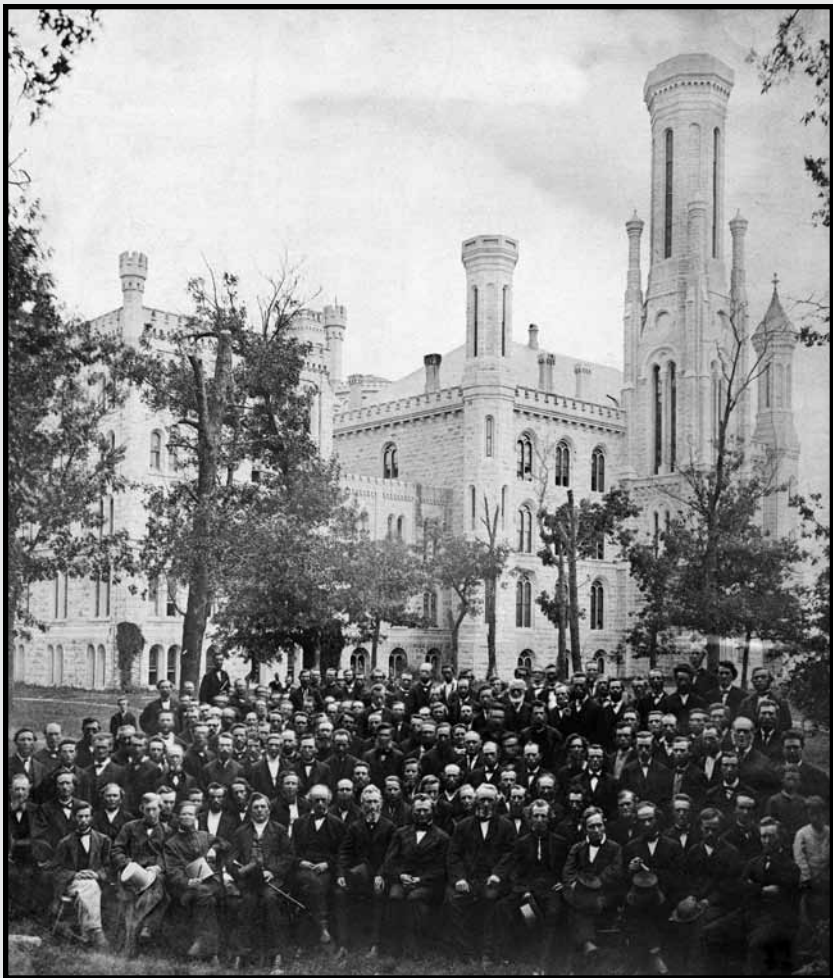
95. *Proceedings of the Chicago Baptist Association at Its Twenty-First Annual Meeting, Held with the Tabernacle Church in Chicago, June 11th and 12th, 1856* (Elgin, Ill., 1856), pp. 10–11.

instruction to young men of limited means preparing for the Gospel ministry.”⁹⁶ In this view, the undergraduate programs of the University would then provide graduates ready for the more specialized learning of the seminary. Nor was this completely unrealistic, since almost 30 percent of the 300-odd alumni of the University by the mid-1880s had entered the ministry as their professional vocation. The financial and planning difficulties encountered by the new University made it virtually impossible for John Burroughs to develop a separate but organically linked seminary on the University’s grounds, and in failing to do so, he opened the way for other actors to emerge who would argue that such a seminary should be created, but not legally or curricularly linked to the University.

In August 1863, a group of Baptist leaders met in Chicago and created the “Baptist Theological Union Located in Chicago,” which would serve as the parent organizing group for a seminary.⁹⁷ Several of the men who attended the meeting were trustees of the University, so there was a natural overlap in constituencies, but the real question became one of the relative disposition of financial resources: Would the new seminary coordinate its fundraising energies with those of the University, or would the two become friendly but intentional competitors? In addition to a local committee that raised subscriptions in Chicago, Nathaniel Colver

96. *Christian Times*, October 29, 1856, p. 2. For the history of the Baptists in the 19th century, I have found the following to be helpful: William H. Brackney, *Baptists in North America: An Historical Perspective* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 44–105; Lawrence B. Davis, *Immigrants, Baptists, and the Protestant Mind in America* (Urbana, 1973); and Stackhouse, *Chicago and the Baptists*.

97. The early history of the seminary is charted in C. E. Hewitt, “Twenty-Five Years, History of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary, 1867–92,” in *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 8.



Group in front of Douglas Hall: Including the Reverends Charles K. Colver and Nathaniel Colver, Drs. Conant, G. S. Bailey, and Nathan E. Wood. Circa 1867.

and William Everts became de facto fundraising leaders of the campaign to raise money for the seminary nationally. Colver was able to raise modest sums in New England, while Everts encountered the paradoxical and (in a prospective sense) dangerous phenomenon that several of the donors whom he approached for support for the University indicated that they would in fact prefer to give their gifts to the seminary. This led to unpleasant collisions between the boards of the University and of the seminary, with each side eager to claim gifts that, they insisted, were given for their cause. In 1869, such a collision took place over Samuel Colgate's earlier pledge of an acre of land worth \$5,000 to the University, which came with the stipulation that in the event that a seminary were created, the land would go to the seminary, not the University. Questioned about his desires, Colgate wrote, "We have had but one opinion, [and] it is to aid in the education of the ministry. We want the Seminary to have it [the land]. We think well of the University, but more of the Seminary." Based on this clear guidance of the donor, the seminary took possession the land, to the chagrin of the University authorities.⁹⁸

The seminary was finally launched in September 1866, with the understanding that it would exist "by the side of the University of Chicago, yet without organic connection."⁹⁹ The aim of the new institution was to eliminate the dependence of Baptist parishes in the West on ministers trained in the East, with the organizers insisting, "[I]t will be impossible for the East to furnish a Ministry adequate in numbers to our present and coming necessities. Besides, the men who are to mould this

98. See the "Report to the Board of the Baptist Theological Seminary by James E. Tyler, G. W. Northrup, and C. N. Holden," [1869], *Old University of Chicago Records*, Box 2, folder 12; and Everts, *The Life of Rev. W. W. Everts*, p. 110.

99. *Christian Times and Witness*, October 11, 1866, p. 3. Classes officially opened in the fall of 1867.

vast region need to be educated here, that they may understand and know how to grapple with the great problems which this mighty West offers for solution."¹⁰⁰ The trustees of the seminary authorized the construction of a building half a block west of that of the University, which opened in the summer of 1869. The building contained four apartments for faculty, rooms for 60 students, and several classrooms. The land on which the building stood was not part of the Douglas gift, but was purchased separately and remained in the possession of the Baptist church well into the twentieth century.¹⁰¹ The first president of the seminary was George W. Northrup, who held a chair in church history at the Rochester Theological Seminary at Rochester, New York. Northrup will play a minor, but still critical role in the founding of our own University, which I will discuss below.

This connection was fateful, and in the wrong ways. When the Baptists first organized their seminary, they managed to raise considerable sums to support it, allowing them to provide free tuition for all students enrolled in the institution and free board for students who lived in the seminary building. The lack of tuition income meant that the seminary had to be much more focused on immediate contributions than did the University, and it created a more disciplined approach to budgeting. For nearly a decade, the seminary seemed to prosper, attracting a small but dedicated group of students (enrollments grew from 20 in 1867 to 60

100. *Plea for a Union Theological Seminary for the Baptists of the North-West* [1869], p. 1, in *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 10. See also Jesse L. Rosenberger, *Through Three Centuries. Colver and Rosenberger Lives and Times, 1620–1922* (Chicago, 1922), pp. 93–99.

101. After the seminary moved to Morgan Park, the building was converted into a hospital, called the Chicago Baptist Hospital until 1912.

students by 1875).¹⁰² Students with college degrees matriculated into a two-year curriculum that stressed biblical study and moral theology, while students without undergraduate training were required to study for three years. The seminary attracted students from across the nation, including students from Brown, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Amherst, and Rochester.¹⁰³ But the seminary depended both on small-scale voluntary contributions from all over the western states as well as from generous donors in the East, and the late 1860s and early 1870s proved to be exceedingly challenging for both donor groups. In 1869, Pastor William Everts, who was a steady and loyal fundraiser for the seminary, wrote to his son William Jr., “Times are extremely close. Hard to raise money for anything. . . . Br. S. Hawkins has failed. Others are embarrassed. Better keep me constantly posted about state of finances, all else escapes my mind.”¹⁰⁴ The Great Fire of 1871 and financial upheaval in 1873 made matters worse, leading to (in C. E. Hewitt’s words) “the general business depression, the shrinkage of values, the frequent financial failures and general discouragement.”¹⁰⁵ In the 1874–75 fiscal report, the leadership of the seminary observed that “the financial affairs of the Seminary have

102. W. W. Everts Jr. claimed that Dwight L. Moody, the young preacher who would eventually go on to create a powerful rival evangelical movement in Chicago, was an early student at the seminary. See Everts, *The Life of Rev. W. W. Everts*, p. 111.

103. For the early student body, see “Special Report of the Executive Committee on Character of Students,” [1876], *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 7.

104. Everts to William W. Everts Jr., October 7, 1869, *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 1a.

105. C. E. Hewitt, “Twenty-Five Years, History of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary, 1867–92,” in *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 8.

given us great anxiety the past year. The continuance of the financial stringency, the extensive failure of crops in this region of [the] country, the depression of manufactures, and the large contribution levied to aid those regions devastated by grasshoppers, have combined to retard new subscriptions and the collection of old ones. Few, except those engaged in the work, can realize the difficulties which we have met."¹⁰⁶ By 1876, the financial situation looked even more grim, with the second Chicago fire of 1874 having "affected our interests even more severely than the first." The chairman of the board of the seminary further complained that "by reason of these and other causes some of our large churches in the city from which most was to be expected have become greatly embarrassed and unable to aid us as they would gladly have done. We have been unable to dispose of the large amount of real estate held by us, many of our notes have yielded no income, the warmest friends of the enterprise have been forced by the exigencies of the time to deny themselves the pleasure of carrying out their cherished plans of liberality towards it. To secure help from strangers or new friends was well nigh impossible."¹⁰⁷

Facing this crisis in funding, in September 1876 the leaders of the seminary decided that the environment of the Cottage Grove Avenue site was unsuitable for future growth and for the successful achievement of a permanent endowment, and they relocated their facility to a far south suburb, Morgan Park. In order to construct their original building

106. *The Annual Meeting of the Baptist Theological Union, and Annual Report for 1875 and the Seminary Commencement, May 13, 1875*, p. 2, in *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 11.

107. D. B. Cheney, *Report of the Board of Trustees of the Baptist Theological Union located at Chicago, made to the Union, May 8, 1877*, p. 1, in *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 11. See also the explanation in *The Standard*, October 19, 1876, p. 4.

at 34th Street and Rhodes Avenue, the trustees of the seminary had authorized the expenditure of \$36,500 in 1867, but the final costs came in well over \$60,000, to cover much of which they then had to float bonds at 8 percent interest. In the aftermath of the 1871 fire many of their subscriptions proved worthless. Burdened with their own heavy loan, an unfortunate parallel to the behavior of the University, key seminary leaders came to believe that their best long term hope was to divorce themselves from the Oakenwald site, sell or lease their land and the existing building to help finance a move, and start anew, with a new location distant from the grimness and noise of the city. The chair of the board, D. B. Cheney, insisted that the new location was easily reached by rail connections, and that "the chief business of the student during the limited time he can spend in a seminary is study. He looks first to his instructors, to the library, to mutual intercourse with his classmates, and to prolonged, uninterrupted investigation and thought. This will be greatly facilitated by being a little removed from the noise, distractions, and allurements of a busy city." Moreover, the aesthetic difference between the old site and the new was stunning:

The new site is on an elevated plateau, nearly one hundred feet above the level of the lake, less exposed to the damp, cold winds from the lake, commanding an extensive and beautiful view of the surrounding country, and susceptible of most perfect drainage. It is attractive and healthful. . . . The Seminary now stands immediately in [the] rear of the University, which dwarfs and overshadows it, on less than [an] acre of ground, closely shut in by other buildings, which obscure the view, increase the noise, and multiply the risk of fire. The residences built for the professors in connection with the Seminary are larger and more

expensive than they can afford to live in, besides being too public for that retirement which every studious teacher so greatly desires. . . . The site chosen contains more than five acres, ample for all time to come, with streets on three sides, which prevent the possibility of encroachment, ensuring sunlight, air, freedom from noise and fire.

Finally, the move was a financial boon in that “the new building affords commodious and pleasant accommodations for all purposes for the present. . . . The removal [from the 34th Street site] . . . enables us to dispose of the present site and buildings, and to devote the proceeds to the liquidation of our indebtedness. It gives us a new site, and building complete. It secures us a large quantity of land, which when sold, will add very considerably to our means.”¹⁰⁸

The leaders of the seminary were motivated by the persuasive largesse of George C. Walker, a financier and real estate investor who, with other investors, controlled a huge tract of land in Morgan Park under the aegis of the Blue Island Land and Building Company and who was eager to burnish the aura (and financial value) of his holdings with educational institutions.¹⁰⁹ Walker led a group of eight investors in giving the Baptists a large tract of land on which to construct a new set of buildings, as well plots for homes for the seminary’s leaders and additional land that could be sold for profit. In addition, Walker’s consortium provided the first

108. Ibid., pp. 2–3.

109. See Thomas W. Goodspeed, “George Clarke Walker,” in *Biographical Sketches*, pp. 112–115.

building for the seminary, the main instructional facility, Morgan Hall.¹¹⁰ Thomas Goodspeed himself was given a half-acre of land on which to build a home at 112th Street and Oakley Avenue, a structure that still exists today.

Walker's family spanned both the old and new Universities. Walker's father, Charles Walker, was a personal friend of Stephen Douglas and was present at the dinner in 1856 where Douglas announced his intention to give land to the Baptists if they were willing to erect a college, and the elder Walker became one of the founders of the first University in 1857, serving as vice chair of its board of trustees until his death in 1869. George Walker succeeded his father on the old University's board, serving until 1886, and when the new University of Chicago was founded in 1890 George Walker agreed to continue on as a trustee. In 1892 he donated \$100,000 to the new University to create a museum building for the natural sciences and continued to press Harper and his fellow trustees that his building should be used for the purposes for which it had been given, and not for classrooms (Walker's insistence on this issue was one of the motives behind the decision of the University administration to build a classroom building immediately adjacent to his museum for the Geology and Geography Departments, Rosenwald Hall).

Thomas Goodspeed gave up his vocation as a pastor to become the secretary and financial agent of the Morgan Park Seminary in 1876, which provided the institution with strong leadership. Goodspeed was

110. The total gift comprised 50 acres of land. The original gift document is *Baptist Theological Union Records*, Box 2, folder 9. A second hall, a library named in honor of Nelson Blake, was built in 1886–87 for \$38,000. See "Annual Report of the Board of Trustees, April 19th, 1888," pp. 3–4, *ibid.*, folder 11.

an alumnus of the old University, having attended it from 1859 to 1862. After graduating from the University of Rochester in 1863 and from the Rochester Theological Seminary in 1866, he worked at several midwestern churches. From 1872 until 1876 he worked with his brother Edgar, who was the pastor of the Second Baptist Church, where he proved himself to an effective fundraiser and enterprising leader. In January 1876, Goodspeed was hired to lead a fundraising campaign for the seminary, and in spite of the adverse financial milieu in Chicago in the mid-1870s, he was able to raise a respectable \$40,000. Five years later, he launched a second and more ambitious appeal in the Chicago area for \$100,000, for which he was able to secure a \$30,000 matching gift from an unusually generous Baptist businessman, E. Nelson Blake. Another far wealthier Baptist, John D. Rockefeller, then matched Blake's gift in the context of a second \$100,000 canvass directed to donors outside of Chicago.¹¹¹ The result of the Blake and Rockefeller gifts enabled Goodspeed to raise an additional \$200,000 for an endowment for the seminary, a record that stood in stark contrast to the miserable record of the University. Not one to rest on past successes, Goodspeed then launched a further campaign in the autumn of 1885 to raise an additional \$50,000 to build a library, a new dormitory, and a fund for operating expenses, and he again persuaded Rockefeller to provide another matching gift, this one for \$20,000.¹¹² Goodspeed was especially interested in raising major gifts, publicly acknowledging, "We need large contributions, and

111. Blake to Goodspeed, June 8, 1881, *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 1; Thomas W. Goodspeed, "E. Nelson Blake," *Biographical Sketches*, p. 73.

112. Thomas W. Goodspeed, *The Baptist Union Theological Seminary, Morgan Park, Ill. A Great Opportunity* (November 1885), pp. 1, 5, in *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 10.

hope it may be laid on the hearts of some who have already done much for the Seminary to crown their benefactions with large gifts at this critical juncture. They are necessary. We *cannot succeed without them*.”¹¹³ These fundraising efforts gave Goodspeed a wide network of acquaintances among the national Baptist community, including John D. Rockefeller, and a rich fund of valuable fundraising experiences that would serve him well in the critical years between 1887 and 1891. Characterized by his colleague C. E. Hewitt as “a conquering general in the financial field,” over time Goodspeed developed an uncanny ability to solicit large gifts from wealthy donors, a skill and facility that seemed to escape those who sought to raise money for the old University.¹¹⁴

The decision of the seminary to relocate to Morgan Park in 1877 was perhaps the most decisive negative turn of events endured by the University in this tumultuous decade. As early as 1875, the supporters of the seminary had used the Moss Affair as an occasion to stress that their institution was “an independent organization, having no connection whatever to any other.” The editor of *The Standard* made this point crystal clear when he intoned, “[S]hould our denominational interests as represented by the University meet with disaster, the Seminary would in that very circumstance acquire additional importance. . . . We have always found it reassuring, while so many have been ready to point to the University and its troubles with the taunting inference that Western Baptists are not competent to manage a great educational enterprise, to be able to show in the Seminary a proof to the contrary.”¹¹⁵ One reader

113. Ibid., pp. 7–8.

114. C. E. Hewitt, “Twenty-Five Years, History of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary, 1867–92,” *ibid.*, Box 2, folder 8.

115. *The Standard*, August 12, 1875, p. 4.

of *The Standard*, an “Indianian” from our neighboring state, agreed with this doctrine, writing that “it is gratifying indeed, and a just cause for denominational pride and exultation, that while the interests of the University have suffered and still do suffer, through unholy partisan zeal and bad management, the interests of the Seminary have been wisely and kindly cared for, and its prosperity and influence constantly increasing.”¹¹⁶

Although the leaders of the seminary were too discreet to associate themselves with such self-indulgent rhetoric in public, their decision to move to Morgan Park had all the telltale signs of an effort to abandon a sinking ship, all the while praising the remarkable success story of their own institution. Henceforth, the Baptists in Chicago had to fundraise for two independent institutions in direct competition, and the University was the big loser, for the seminary represented a pragmatic vocational program with a clear educational mission that many Baptists — most of whom had no university training themselves — could more easily understand. Had the seminary stayed in Oakenwald, the University’s chances for survival might have been greater. By 1892, the seminary had assembled an endowment of nearly \$250,000, with a student body that had steadily increased to 190 and a respectable library of almost 30,000 volumes, including the famous Hengstenberg Library of biblical literature, a collection of 12,000 volumes that Northrup and Everts purchased in 1869.¹¹⁷

116. *The Standard*, August 26, 1875, p. 1.

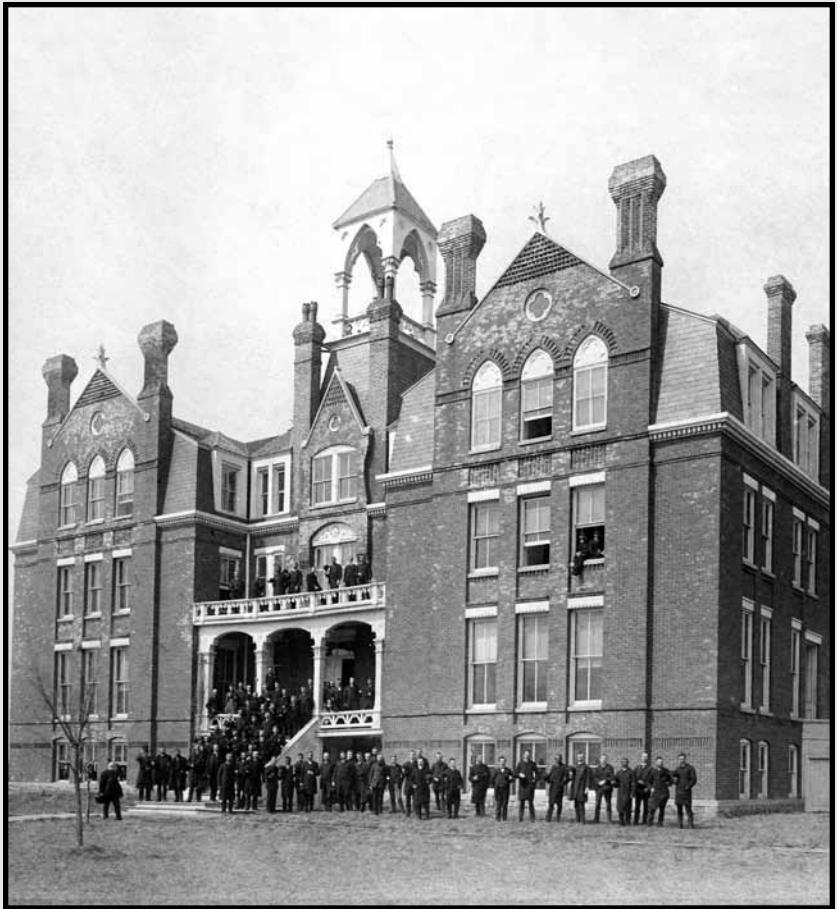
117. The Hengstenberg Library was secured with the leadership of William W. Everts, who used his son, William Jr., as a purchasing agent (his son was studying at the University of Berlin at the time). The younger Evert was sure that the collection would put the seminary on the map as a place of enlightenment and learning: “I stand in awe within these walls of man’s mind; the lowermost strata . . . in the Church fathers, the rest furnished by the Christian intellect of nineteen centuries. I should judge that Latin and German works take equal shelves in the concern. You have weighed while reading this what this library might be worth to Chicago and

Unlike its erstwhile neighbor on 34th Street, the seminary had not only survived, but modestly prospered, and in the course of its new existence had attracted loyal support from the denomination and a respectable teaching faculty, including a young but unusually promising young professor of Semitic languages, William Rainey Harper, who joined the seminary faculty in the winter term of 1880. Harper would first begin to make a public-scholarly name for himself with his Hebrew Correspondence School and the summer school sessions for the intensive study of Hebrew that he organized at Morgan Park in the early 1880s.¹¹⁸ The seminary also enjoyed the good fortune of a board of trustees that was generally harmonious and that pulled in the same direction. Financial problems always remained, including the fact that the seminary also established separate branches for Scandinavian students for whom it proved difficult to raise sufficient endowments to cover their costs. But by the 1880s, at least compared to the old University, the seminary seemed like a model of good and wise governance. Goodspeed later remembered, "[T]he Theological Seminary always had loyal and generous friends. It always had an able, conservative, interested and faithful Board of Trustees. The Board always conducted its work with the utmost harmony. . . . They won and retained the confidence of the people. A united board had behind it a united denomination."¹¹⁹

to our Baptist home; I will add no flighty assertions, no childish . . . castles; only this, America would thereby find its Christian-scientific center in its material and artificial middlepoint!" W. W. Everts Jr. to Everts, undated but most likely 1869, *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 1a.

118. *The Hebrew Student. A Monthly Journal in the Interests of Old Testament Literature and Interpretation*, Volume 1, July 1882, pp. 71–72, 79.

119. Thomas W. Goodspeed, *A History of the University of Chicago. The First Quarter-Century* (Chicago, 1916), p. 25.



*Baptist Union Theological Seminary
Morgan Park, Illinois
Faculty and Students
1886-1887*

Finally, situated in the Chicago area, the leaders of the seminary were confident that they were well positioned to become the leading seminary west of the Allegheny Mountains. As one eastern colleague, J. Warren Merrill of Cambridge, Massachusetts, wrote enviously to Goodspeed in 1886, "The Star of Empire has gone West. You must increase, *we* must decrease. You will have a constantly increasing number of students. You must have accommodations for them. You must have the Professors chairs filled with the best talent, [and] you must increase your salaries. You will want a larger chapel and will probably take the one you are now building for a library or other purpose. Chicago, if Rome, Communism, Socialism and Infidelity do not run riot, is to be the largest city in the country, it will reach out to you and you must do a large share towards saving it from the fate of Sodom."¹²⁰ This rhetorical device of a surging, Gilded Age Chicago, filled with both apocalyptic promise and fearsome evil and also having a special destiny in the West, is one that Frederick Gates and William Rainey Harper will later seize upon as well in affirming the special opportunity that awaited new forms of higher education in the burgeoning metropolis.

The relocation of the seminary was but one blow in a steady pattern of adversity for the University. Yet another point of stress was what one might characterize as the University's situational dilemma. Just as the University sought to deepen its roots in other Protestant communities, Chicago saw an explosion of new forms of non-denominational evangelism, like the YMCA movement and the "big tent" Moody movement, as well as a mushrooming interest in large-scale charitable activities on

120. Merrill to Goodspeed, December 9, 1886, *Records of the Baptist Theological Union*, Box 2, folder 1.

behalf of the newly arrived poor.¹²¹ These causes claimed substantial financial backing from wealthy Chicagoans, eager to provide ways to civilize rough-hewn immigrants arriving in Chicago, and in the face of such causes the humble South Side college was easily lost in the shuffle. Given the deep ambivalence the many early Baptist leaders in Chicago felt toward the newly arrived immigrants after 1870, they were hardly well positioned to seek philanthropic assistance for broader social projects that would, in turn, help to broaden their denomination's altruistic social profile with the new wealthy of Chicago.¹²²

Equally challenging was the invidiously comparative success story that Northwestern University provided. Northwestern was founded by Methodists in 1855, and it endured the same financial environment and same demographic challenges as the old University of Chicago. But Northwestern had key advantages, and over time these proved crucial to its survival and relative success.¹²³ Northwestern had a group of early donors who committed relatively large gifts to help launch its building and construction programs. By the time the University opened in 1855,

121. See James F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody, American Evangelist, 1837–1899* (Chicago, 1969), pp. 54–135; Bruce J. Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D. L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* (New York, 2003), pp. 123–163; Darrel M. Roberstson, *The Chicago Revival, 1876: Society and Revivalism in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Metuchen, NJ, 1989), pp. 17, 41, 48; Timothy George, ed., *Mr. Moody and the Evangelical Tradition* (London, 2004), pp. 3–4.

122. See Lawrence B. David, *Immigrants, Baptists, and the Protestant Mind in America* (Urbana, 1973), pp. 51–52, 58–59, 158–159, 193. Local Baptist leaders like George Lorimer and Eri Hulbert were known for their hostility to immigration. The Baptist newspaper in Chicago, *The Standard*, was outspoken in its condemnation of the Haymarket rioters, for example.

123. See Arthur H. Wilde, ed., *Northwestern University. A History, 1855–1905* (New York, 1905).

it already had \$250,000 in assets, which had increased to \$779,000 by 1870. Northwestern also enjoyed an amicable relationship to its sister seminary, the Garrett Biblical Institute, and derived substantial income from leasing land to the seminary. Its location proved equally beneficial in that it was sufficiently distant from the metropolitan center so that it was less subject to the skeptical scrutiny of the Chicago press, but also proximate to new residential communities on the North Shore that would grow in high net wealth by the end of the nineteenth century. Northwestern also enjoyed strong and stable leadership from its first presidents, who were experienced administrators, and steady and generous support from its trustees, who seemed generally cohesive and effective as a group and who self-consciously tried to keep expenses within the range of available income. Moreover, when Northwestern did experience financial difficulties — as it did in 1860 and the mid 1870s — it was able to rely on a steady stream of pledges from local and national Methodists to carry the institution forward. Finally, Northwestern enjoyed the support of key capitalists, like John Evans and Orrington Lunt, who were both extremely successful businessmen and loyal Methodists, and who stood by Northwestern when it encountered difficulties. For example, the Evans family provided a gift of \$50,000 in 1881 to help lead a campaign to eliminate the heavy debt the university had accumulated in the 1870s. All of these factors contributed to the ability of Northwestern to weather the adversities of 1857, 1871, and 1873, and to continue to grow and prosper.

The relative success of Northwestern, compared to the dreary portrait presented by the University of Chicago in the early 1880s, was yet another burden facing the leaders of the University as they sought to pull out of the political nosedive that the Moss Affair had launched. In 1884, a prominent Baptist educator in Chicago complained that “the

Northwestern University at Evanston, under the control of the Methodists, has already virtually paid its debts, and has, in its real estate, a very large endowment.” After noting similar positive stories about Beloit College and Knox College, this writer observed, “[W]hat can be said truthfully of these, can be said of many others, while our own university goes begging from church to church and door to door. Its President carries his hat in his hand outstretched to every passerby, until, at this state of things, his cheek mantles with shame.”¹²⁴ The writer who invoked the unhappy comparison with Northwestern was Galusha Anderson, the last president of the first University of Chicago.

G A L U S H A A N D E R S O N A N D
T H E C O L L A P S E O F T H E F I R S T
U N I V E R S I T Y O F C H I C A G O

By 1880, the city in which the University of Chicago was located was profoundly different than that 1855 frontier town in which it was initially founded. The population of Chicago had mushroomed to over 500,000 (it would grow to over one million people by 1890), the economic structures of the city were much more varied and complex, and the social problems raised by the legions of new immigrants were ever more acute. Chicago was already the home to a new generation of immensely wealthy entrepreneurs, businessmen, and speculators, who were generating new networks of philanthropic resources. The University had no plausible or evident way to appeal to these new elites, and, in fact, its very self-understanding and institutional modesty made it almost

124. *The Standard*, January 31, 1884, p. 4.

impossible for serious connections to be made. Nor was there huge wealth among the Baptists, for as Frederick Gates later noted, “The fact is, there is not much more money among them. The fire [of 1871] swept away what little money there used to be and most of the brethren have been doing business on small capital, with heavy debts, ever since. They are not able to do anything great. But I have found them cordial, without serious dissension, and ready to do all that they are really justified in doing for a new University.”¹²⁵

The last president of the first University of Chicago, Galusha Anderson, would experience colossal frustrations over the gap between the good intentions of the University and its lack of legitimacy among the new wealthy elites who were shaping the cultural landscape of the city. In so doing, Anderson would become the most publicly visible victim of the last stage of the University’s history. A graduate of the University of Rochester and the Rochester Theological Seminary, Galusha Anderson held pastorates in Janesville, Wisconsin; St. Louis, Missouri; Newton, Massachusetts; and Brooklyn, New York, before he succeeded Thomas Goodspeed as pastor of the Second Baptist Church in Chicago in 1875. Making an excellent impression on his congregation and his fellow ministers, Anderson seemed the ideal choice to step into the leadership vacuum and the administrative chaos created by Alonzo Abernethy’s sudden departure in early 1878. As a sign of the further desperation of the trustees, John Burroughs was finally pressured to resign as chancellor, given that the trustees finally acknowledged (as the *Chicago Tribune* tactfully put it) that Burroughs came to be “regarded as not altogether suitable in a financial way.”¹²⁶

125. Gates to Harper, November 19, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders’ Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 4.

126. *Chicago Tribune*, February 1, 1878, p. 7.

Anderson was thus officially elected president of the University of Chicago in March 1878. He lived in North Kenwood, where he was a popular and respected local leader in Hyde Park cultural life. Anderson was a "staunch Republican" and involved himself deeply in local politics (in the Citizens' League and as vice president of the First District Republican Club) seeking to displace the hold of the Democratic Party on municipal politics. He was also a favorite civic speaker on current public policy topics. And he became a close acquaintance of Paul Cornell, the founder of Hyde Park. From external appearances it seemed, therefore, the University had chosen well.

Anderson was honest, forthright, and persistent, and a man of integrity. His view of the University was primarily as a teaching institution, as a site of higher culture where the sons and daughters of the Baptist community might gain exposure to the knowledge and skills of general education that would prepare them effectively for any career. He deliberately sought to counteract the idea that the University existed mainly to train men for the ministry. Rather, its real goal was "to make educated men, educated merchants, educated mechanics, educated people in all walks of life."¹²⁷ Yet the task before him was daunting, made all the more so when he discovered that many of the alleged assets of the University were worthless, that the salaries of the faculty had gone unpaid for several months, and that Burroughs and his cronies had run up large unpaid debts in the operational side of the budget that impeded such basic things as obtaining coal for heating the University building.¹²⁸

127. *Chicago Tribune*, April 8, 1878, p. 2.

128. Frederick L. Anderson, *Galusha Anderson. Preacher and Educator, 1832–1918* (privately published, 1933), part 2, p. 2.

In June 1881, Anderson reported to the board of trustees, "I wish to call the attention of this Board to the manner in which the current expenses of the University are met. We have only \$600 of endowment and the few dollars of income from that are applied to the extinguishment of an old debt. Our reliance is on our tuitions." Although the Law School just managed to cover its expenses with tuition, the undergraduate college and the preparatory school were unable to meet their expenses, in part because "the endowment for scholarships was consumed as it was gathered" and because "children of ministers of all denominations are required to pay half the ordinary rates."¹²⁹

In 1882, Anderson again wrote to the trustees to the effect that "the able professors ought to be more liberally compensated. Their salaries are less than the salaries of some of our teachers in the public schools of the city. . . . As to the college building, taste and convenience suggest many improvements. Some of the floors and ceilings are so defective that they ought to be replaced; the roof leaks so that several rooms are wetted whenever it storms, and the library has been injured by rains."

Equally critical, Anderson discovered that Burroughs had spent endowment money for current expenses, which, since the University still had to honor the intent of the donors, reduced substantially the number of tuition-paying students the University could recruit each year:

I am still compelled to do much outside work that belongs neither to my office nor my professorship. Money must be gathered to meet our current expenses. We may have a large number of scholarships. The money, unfortunately, by which they were endowed was used long before the present administration

129. "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," June 29, 1881.

began, for the current expenses of the university, but the contracts remain and must be sacredly kept. But the keeping of these contracts cuts down to a large extent our income from tuitions. This deficiency, among others, must be made good by soliciting subscriptions from the friends of the university. I was greatly hindered in this work by a long, tedious illness. . . . I . . . have succeeded in gathering enough money to pay all the bills of the year up to the 10th of July next.¹³⁰

Anderson was offended by the debt to the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company, and tried to find ways to resolve it.¹³¹ Immediately after Anderson became president in 1878, a representative of the company proposed that they would waive the full amount of the debt if the University could pay \$100,000 in cash within one calendar year. Anderson agreed to try to meet this goal, but found that raising such a sum was beyond his capabilities, and the company withdrew its offer. In 1881, the trustees approached the company with a similar proposal, but this time the company took a harder line and insisted on repayment of the total debt.

Anderson worked with great assiduity to raise money for the University, spending endless hours in appeals to businessmen in the downtown center of the city and to various Baptist communities across the region. Yet he failed miserably. Even direct appeals to John D. Rockefeller led to sour results, with Rockefeller candidly informing Anderson that he regretted "not to be able to give you any encouragement. I have promised to do something for the [Morgan Park] Seminary. . . . This

130. Reprinted in *The Standard*, June 22, 1882, p. 2.

131. *Chicago Tribune*, May 14, 1878, p. 8; March 16, 1879, p. 7.

with my other engagements, is all that I can take now, but I sincerely hope that you will work it through all right.”¹³² So troubled were the finances of the University by 1884 that Anderson wrote to a friend, “I have had no pay for services for months, except as I have received a few dollars for the preaching of a Sunday now and then; am deeply in debt and don’t know just now which way to turn. People are apparently more willing to help anything rather than this University.”¹³³ In a later memoir on his father’s experiences in Chicago, Frederick L. Anderson observed:

He left the largest, pleasantest, and most fruitful of his pastorates and a salary of \$5,000 to embark upon a sea of troubles at \$3,000 year. This was guaranteed him by three or four of the Trustees, but they paid it in full only for the first quarter and none at all after the first year of the seven years’ war. For the last six years, as he himself expressed it, “The President of the University had no stated salary; he skirmished for it.” . . . He taught Psychology, Ethics, Logic and International Law, and often a term of English history. Every morning he walked or rode two miles with me to the University, taught and attended to his administrative duties there and disappeared about ten for his downtown office and his begging. Free evenings and often midnight hours, as well as the time on trains and horse cars, he

132. Rockefeller to Anderson, April 20, 1882, “John D. Rockefeller, Private Letterbook, ‘Pledges, Donations, Family, etc.’, May 20, 1881 to April 3, 1886,” p. 2, *Richard J. Storr Papers*, Box 6. Rockefeller continued to reject Anderson’s appeals out of hand, writing letters in January and March 1883 and February 1885, again refusing to offer any support.

133. Anderson to Mrs. Marsh, December 8, 1884, *Old University of Chicago Records*, Box 2, folder 12.

devoted to the subjects he taught. But it was a good school and he did high-grade teaching. As he said in leaving it, “the University has done more on less money in the last seven years than any institution in the United States.”¹³⁴

The financial mess also took a toll on Anderson’s professional reputation. In July 1885, Anderson came close to being elected president of Vassar College, but was ultimately turned down because of the adverse publicity surrounding the bankruptcy of the University of Chicago.¹³⁵ Feeling overwhelmed by his burdens, Anderson resigned from the presidency in July 1885. He soon rebounded, however, with the offer of the presidency of Denison University, where he had a short but successful tenure, and eventually returned to Chicago to teach homiletics first at Morgan Park and then at the University of Chicago Divinity School, from which he retired as a full professor in 1903.

The months between November 1884 and February 1885 also saw the final public humiliation of the University in the wider eyes of the public because of the unfavorable outcome of the trial that took place in the U.S. District Court involving a petition from the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company to execute a foreclosure on the University’s property. Stories first appeared in the Chicago press in 1877 to the effect that the University was near bankruptcy, with the *Chicago Tribune* reporting that the insurance company was putting pressure on the trustees for

134. Anderson, *Galusha Anderson*, p. 2.

135. Anderson was elected by the Vassar board by a vote of 13 to 11, but the vote was sufficiently divisive, with his opponents arguing that “from the fact that he had been president of Chicago University, which is at present in a bad condition, he was hardly the proper person to be placed at the head of an institution like Vassar.” *Hyde Park Herald*, July 25, 1885, p. 1.

nonpayment of the interest on the loan by threatening foreclosure of the property.¹³⁶ In response, some members of the board argued that the trustees who had voted to approve the original loan in the 1860s had not understood that a not-for-profit organization could not alienate its own property, as provided by the original charter of gift of Senator Douglas from April 1856, and that the University's land holdings were protected against any foreclosure action. Since the University had no other means to settle the debt, this position was widely viewed as the University essentially trying to repudiate its debt to the insurance company. A clash in court was avoided in 1877 by the company agreeing to renegotiate the loan, but by the early 1880s it was clear that the company would never be repaid, given the financial trajectory of the University.¹³⁷

Upon assuming the presidency, Galusha Anderson accepted the argument about the inalienable nature of the University's land holdings and supported a lawsuit filed in the state courts in March 1881 by friends of the University to clarify the question of whether the original trustees had the right to encumber the University's property with a mortgage, given that Stephen Douglas had initially specified that the land had to be used in perpetuity for educational purposes. The University's suit in the Illinois courts triggered the decision by the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company to file a foreclosure suit in federal district court in order to recover the \$300,000 in principal and interest that it insisted was owed to it. In late November 1884, the attorney for the company, Leonard Swett, excoriated the trustees for financial mismanagement and unethical behavior, arguing:

136. *Chicago Tribune*, June 5, 1877, p. 2; June 15, 1877, p. 8.

137. *Ibid.*, July 1, 1877, p. 8; July 3, 1877, p. 8.

[Y]et this institution professes to stand for the great Baptist Church of America! An ordinary uncircumcised sinner who expects, in the next world, the *quantum meruit* of his deserts, would not dare to such a thing. It is reserved for the elect, the predestinate, the foreordained, to borrow other people's money, to build the walls of their building, to roof it in from the storms of winter, to pay bills long past due for its construction, to insure that building from year to year, to erect lamp-posts to light them at night, to build pavements and walks to walk over, and even, lastly, to borrow \$13,000 to pay their own salaries, and repudiate the debt, and still to believe that such election will not be contested. It is to be hoped when this President and these Professors teach moral philosophy and the evidences and principles of Christianity to the youth of our land, that they teach solely the principles laid down in the text-books, keeping far in the background, and if possible wholly out of sight, their own personal example.¹³⁸

Swett's insults were not only an open attack on the board's financial fecklessness, but also a deliberate and sarcastic insult toward the Baptists, their theology, and their piety. Such gratuitous language may have been common in the courtroom context, but it signaled that Anderson and the trustees would not be allowed to use their ethical good intentions to shield themselves from the rules governing the secular marketplace of commerce and finance.

138. See "Oral Argument of Mr. Swett in Foreclosure Case," *In the United States Circuit Court, Northern District of Illinois. The Union Mutual Life Insurance Co. vs. the University of Chicago. Argument for Complainant, Swett, Haskell and Grosscup Complainant's Solicitors* (Chicago, 1884), p. 52; as well as the coverage in the *Chicago Tribune*, November 27, 1884, p. 9.

Galusha Anderson's defenders insisted that he was willing to negotiate a reasonable settlement with the insurance company, in spite of the legal nettles in which the University found itself, but this line of argument was too little and too late. When the threat of foreclosure first arose in 1877, *The Standard* argued that the attempt of the trustees to repudiate their debt cast the Baptist denomination nationally in a bad light:

[I]nto the legal features of this question we of course do not propose to enter. . . . Whatever lawyers or courts may say upon a subject like this, will be of comparatively small account to Christian men who find themselves pledged, directly or indirectly, in a matter involving questions of equity and good faith. It may be true that the chief responsibility of this action will rest with the University trustees, and perhaps, owing to peculiar circumstances, with a very small minority of the Board; but indirectly, it is a matter involving the credit of the whole Baptist denomination. . . . If . . . it is our purpose as a denomination to assert our rights in the University, and claim all that its charter assures to us, then we must face the question whether, either by silence or by formal assent, we will endorse a measure which is, so far as questions of equity are concerned, a violation of good faith.¹³⁹

Whether the insurance company actually wanted to foreclose in 1884 or was merely using this legal weapon to force the wider civic community in Chicago to put pressure on Anderson and the trustees to come up with a plausible counteroffer is not clear, but the final result was the same, namely, another public relations disaster for the University, in

139. *The Standard*, June 14, 1877, p. 4.

many respects even worse than the Moss Affair. A final judgment by Judge Henry W. Blodgett in early January 1885 rejected the inalienability argument on the grounds that when Stephen Douglas deeded the land to the Baptists in September 1858 he did so unconditionally in fee simple and with “no restriction or limitation upon the title with which it clothed the University.” Since the University had been legally entitled to secure loans using its property as security, Blodgett concluded that the company was legally entitled to exercise foreclosure on the University’s site at 34th Street.¹⁴⁰

As the end neared, accusations and ruminations abounded as to why the University was on the verge of financial collapse. As an easy answer, the denominational character of the place was cited often as the primary cause for its demise. For example, as early as 1874 an editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* insisted, “That the University is not a financial success, and, as a consequence, not an educational success, is due to a radical defect which requires a radical remedy. It is a sectarian institution. This may be denied, but the fact remains unchanged, and, wherever it is known at all, it is known as a Baptist university. The day of denominational schools and colleges has gone by. They are a relic of the past, as is attested by the scores of starveling colleges of that kind scattered all over the country. Those who wish to educate their sons at a sectarian college, select a college of their own sect, so that in the end a Baptist college must rely upon Baptists. . . . Such institutions being thus limited in their influence suffer from cramped and precarious incomes, and never attain or can hope to attain that general prominence and credit which follow schools that are not classified by the theology most affect. . . . The

140. “Opinion of Judge Blodgett in Foreclosure and Scholarship Cases,” *In the United States Circuit Court, Northern District of Illinois. The Union Mutual Life Insurance Co. vs. the University of Chicago*, p. 5.



public look upon denominational colleges as for the most part asylums for clergymen who have broken down or failed in their profession.”¹⁴¹ Twelve years later, the *Hyde Park Herald* took up the same refrain when it insisted in 1886, “The one great draw-back with the Chicago University is that it is in the hands of a denomination — and a denomination too, in regard to which there is a strong feeling among western people, that it is illiberal with respect to other Christian denominations. This, although its course in appointing the members of its boards of trustees has been liberal, has doubtless kept many Christians and philanthropists from donating to the institution.”¹⁴²

In contrast, George Northrup argued that the old University collapsed both because of miserable leadership *and* because it was insufficiently Baptist, and thus lost support within the denomination, in contrast to the seminary:

The ruin of that educational undertaking, of such magnificent promise in its beginning, was due, mainly, if not exclusively, to the mismanagement of its Board, a close corporation, sustaining no direct relation to our churches, and having among its most influential members Jews, Swedenborgians, Unitarians, and men of no religious belief. It was this body, whose history was marked by bitter personal conflicts, perversion of trust funds, and violation of sacred pledges, that utterly destroyed, in the course of twenty-five years, the confidence, interest, and hopes of our people. . . . The history of the Seminary is a demonstration of the untruth of the charges made as to the lack of interest and

141. *Chicago Tribune*, January 25, 1874, p. 8; as well as February 1, 1874, p. 8.

142. *Hyde Park Herald*, April 17, 1886, p. 4.

liberality in our denomination in the cause of Christian education. The Board of the Seminary has always been composed of judicious and capable men who have managed its affairs with such prudence and wisdom that they have secured the confidence and liberal support of the Baptists in Chicago and of others, both in the West and the East, and so have been able to carry the institution forward for nearly twenty-five years, amidst manifold and great difficulties, to its present position of prosperity and power. Should a new university enterprise be undertaken in such a way as to insure wisdom of management and ultimate success, the response of our people would be so spontaneous, general, and liberal as to surprise the country and to show the injustice of the criticism and reproach to which I have referred.¹⁴³

Part of this rhetoric was sour grapes, with men like Northrup feeling that the old board was to blame for having allowed uncommitted and irresponsible non-Baptists to join its ranks. The big question remains: Was the first University really doomed to fail from the very beginning because of its Baptist identity, or was its ultimate failure the result of ongoing bad decisions of the board and various presidents, taken in the midst of a series of catastrophic economic crises?

The faculty were the victims of this disaster more than any other single group. As the finances degenerated, valued faculty members were dismissed, and others simply bailed out for better opportunities elsewhere. Although he had a long-standing grudge against Burroughs and several trustees, William Everts recalled a litany of senior faculty

143. Northrup to Rockefeller, December 10, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders' Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 4.



complaints in a letter to his wife in 1888, including assertions to the effect that “the University can never rise to its proper destiny under such an administration” and such. Edson Bastin, who was to have a distinguished career in pharmacology at Northwestern University and the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, again wrote to his sister in April 1882 describing the demoralized state of the faculty and blaming much of the responsibility on the Baptist community:

As regards our University affairs, I have only the same old story to repeat. We are oppressed with that debt, and it would seem hardly possible to continue much longer unless the mortgage can be lifted by some means. The President speaks hopefully when we meet him, but for my life I cannot see what he has to base hope upon. I used to have some respect for the Baptist denomination, but I fear I am fast losing it all. I once supposed they took an intelligent interest in higher education, but I now see they do not. We are not supported by the Baptists, and the fact that we bear the unfortunate name of Baptist prevents people who do appreciate the needs of a University from giving us their support. . . . I am inclined to think that to take our affairs by the right end would be to begin at the charter and strike out the word “Baptist” and insert a clause making the college strictly and forever undenominational.¹⁴⁴

In fact, the old University had two identities, and they became more and more in conflict — one as a Baptist denominational school, the

144. Bastin to Anna Bastin, April 9, 1882, *Old University of Chicago Records*, Box 2, folder 12.

other as a general agent of civic progress for the city, to help Chicago in its general cultural development. Especially as the 1870s and 1880s unfolded, it became more and more difficult to sustain a credible version of the urban civic mission, as the elites of the city changed so dramatically in levels of wealth formation and as those elites devoted their cultural philanthropy to projects and causes that would bring high social prestige. As a missionary church, the Baptists were most at home on the margins where conversion was crucial, not in an increasingly wealthy metropolis where new cultural structures and new understandings of American history were quickly built and deposited. Yet the Baptist side of the University's identity was also severely impaired by the secession of the seminary to Morgan Park, which became the real educational home of the Baptists in the Chicago metropolitan area after 1877.

The actual experience of students on the ground was probably described rather accurately by a committee of three alumni leaders of the University in 1878, who argued that the denominational issue was a red herring and:

We believe that the experience of all the graduates satisfies them that while the university is under the charge of the Baptist churches it is not used as an apparatus for the propagation of Baptist tenets, nor even for the propagation of general Christian doctrine, except in that general and indirect way which prevails in very nearly all our colleges, and which should be objectionable to no one. In the faculty, in the body of students, on the board of trustees and among the benefactors of the university are persons of various Christian faiths, and on the board of trustees are persons not representative of any Christian body. While there are devotional exercises daily in the university

chapel, and while the influence of members of the faculty is on the side not only of Christianity, but of what is generally termed orthodox Protestant Christianity, yet there is no effort made to influence students in favor of or against any one church or denomination, or to indoctrinate students one way or another. The University of Chicago is Baptist only as Yale College is Congregational, or Harvard, Unitarian.¹⁴⁵

Aside from the comparison with Harvard and Yale, which masked the fact that the Congregationalists and Unitarians were utterly different than the Baptists by the late 19th century and that their universities occupied a prestigious social space given they were already ancient by American standards, this was a reasonable statement and accurate on its own terms. But the denominational issue was cited on numerous occasions to explain why wealthy Chicagoans refused to give. Hard-line Baptists like George Northrup might decry the view and argue instead that, in reality, the University was not Baptist enough, but such arguments simply confirmed the fact that, for better or worse, the issue of denominational identity was a powerful signaling device in a multi-religious, multi-ethnic city like Chicago that seemed to box in the broader image of the University. And it is undeniable that the University did not constitute a strong point of appeal to most Chicago Baptists, who were, as Frederick Gates argued, poor and middling folk who were not inclined to support higher education beyond the work of their local seminary. E. Nelson Blake, the chair of the board of the seminary, captured this paradox well when he insisted to Thomas Goodspeed, "I should be more ready to favor an un-denominational school that could appeal

145. *The Standard*, July 11, 1878, p. 4.

to the neutral wealth of the city. The denomination is *not wealthy*, and the givers are hard pressed now. The membership have not been educated to give by their spiritual fathers.”¹⁴⁶

Religion was still a powerful influence on institutional-cultural identity in many areas of civic life in Europe and America in the 1860s and 1870s, and the fact that the University proclaimed itself to be self-consciously “Baptist” was in some respects the worst of all options. True, such an identity provided it with a clearly demarcated religious home community, but this was a socially modest community that was both unable *and* unwilling to support large philanthropic fund drives necessary to support a real university. As Richard Storr noted many years ago, the Baptists were an unexpected source of higher educational impulses to begin with, since they were a relatively poor denomination, with unsteady membership levels and with no formal ecclesiastical structure, no synod, no bishops, and no national system of governance. They were not really a “church” in the European sense of the word, and their early colleges were often poor creatures, badly financed, and under-endowed. Earlier in the 19th century, some Baptists had even been hostile to the idea that their ministers should be well educated.¹⁴⁷ The very existence of this loyal and deeply self-regarding home community based on one denomination made it all too easy for wealthy non-Baptists in Chicago to believe that they should direct their charitable resources elsewhere in the city and especially toward ventures that would accelerate the city’s corporate prestige. Moreover, whatever chance the University might

146. Blake to Goodspeed, July 2, 1888, *Baptist Theological Union Records*, Box 2, folder 1.

147. “The Pursuit of Order in Late Nineteenth Century Education,” p. 4, *Richard J. Storr Papers*, Box 4, folder 12.



have had to appeal to Blake's "neutral wealthy" was less and less plausible as its internal disorganization and public feuding became objects of public derision. Wealthy donors viewed colleges and universities as if they were businesses, like railroads or steel mills, and successful businesses did not take on excessive debt or tolerate weak, indecisive leadership.

Finally, the University itself in its half-on, half-off Baptist identity did not project a compelling model of educational or research professionalism that would have made investments in faculty and their research needs both compelling and socially gratifying. The University's educational programs did provide ample evidence of useful civic service, and the fact that it educated a number of successful lawyers and businessmen might have been touted more than it was. Moreover, most extant reports on the quality of teaching at the University suggest that it was reasonably high and that most alumni remembered their studies as having been valuable and informative. Even during the chaotic final year of 1885–86, when the remaining faculty were scrambling to find other teaching jobs, the dean reported, "The work of the class-rooms has been carried on with a vigor and enthusiasm which are remarkable when we consider the uncertainties that have been before us. There has been occasion for no severe discipline, the students generally having entered heartily into sympathy with the situation, doing what they could to lighten the labor of their instructors and increase their own stores of knowledge."¹⁴⁸ But supporting routine forms of civic service and investing in good undergraduate teaching did not (unfortunately) provide wealthy donors, especially non-Baptist donors, with a striking level of social prestige, and by the 1890s prestige was an independent variable in the operation of elite philanthropy in Chicago. It was not until a much wealthier

148. "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," June 15, 1886.

Baptist (John D. Rockefeller) emerged at the end of the 1880s, one who could be persuaded to invest in higher education in Chicago, that a totally different platform of Baptist philanthropy was imaginable, one that could immediately attract the respect and social emulation of wealthy Chicagoans.

THE TRANSITION FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW UNIVERSITY



hen the annual commencement of the Morgan Park Seminary occurred on May 5, 1885, the young professor of Hebrew, William Rainey Harper, proved to be a shining star of the seminary's faculty, praised in *The Standard* as “the energetic Professor of Hebrew [who] had it all his own way Tuesday morning, and was happy in the undivided and protracted attention of the board of visitors.” Harper was also present at a dinner later that same day at which President Galusha Anderson discussed the hamstrung situation in which he found himself, in remarks entitled “The Razed (Raised) University.”¹⁴⁹ What Harper really thought of Anderson as a leader is uncertain. After 1892, Harper was always appropriately solicitous of Anderson and the old faculty both in public and in private, and the alumni reciprocated.¹⁵⁰ Professor Charles R. Henderson, an

149. *The Standard*, May 14, 1885, p. 1.

150. Upon Anderson's retirement in 1903, Harper graciously wrote, “I think I appreciate more than I can tell you the splendid service you have rendered the cause of education in the West through these many years. I wish also to testify to the cordial spirit with which you have worked these last ten years in the University.” Harper to Anderson, June 13, 1903, *Office of the President. Harper, Judson, and Burton Administrations*, Box 8, folder 9.



alumnus of the old University and a professor of sociology at the new, proudly proclaimed at an alumni banquet in 1907 at the Union Hotel, "[T]he old University of Chicago planted good seed from which has grown the great university of today. . . . The spirit of the old university still lives. It is with us to inspire us in the future. It is this spirit which President Harper often praised and according to which he taught men that their riches were but the means of promoting the love of truth, beauty, and faith through higher and broader education."¹⁵¹ But what *is* certain about Harper's views at the time is that when, in desperation, Thomas Goodspeed and other ministers approached Harper in April 1886 with the last-ditch proposal that he should become the president of the "wrecked and ruined" University, promising him their stalwart support to raise additional funds for reviving the University at a new site, Harper dismissed the offer as lacking in financial substance. Instead, he resigned from the seminary in May and headed off to Yale University, where he became a full professor of Semitic languages in the fall of 1886.¹⁵²

Had Harper accepted the presidency of the University of Chicago in the spring of 1886, he would have ruined his career. And it was particularly telling when Goodspeed appealed to John D. Rockefeller for help in retaining Harper in Chicago, Rockefeller was willing to add money

151. *Chicago Tribune*, February 23, 1907, p. 6. Henderson is a fascinating example of a late 19th-century Protestant progressive whose intellectual career straddled the old and new Universities. A dedicated moralist and booster of Chicago, he also developed an impressive scholarly persona in his various publications to give his social reform activities in the city the aura of professional legitimacy. On Henderson see now the excellent portrait by Andrew Abbott, "Pragmatic Sociology and the Public Sphere. The Case of Charles Richmond Henderson," *Social Science History*, 34 (2010): 337–371.

152. Goodspeed to Rockefeller, April 7, 1886, *University of Chicago Founders' Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 1.

for a raise in Harper's salary at Morgan Park Seminary but refused to have anything to do with a scheme to revive the old University.¹⁵³

Yet Goodspeed's offer already signaled a new departure. By late 1885, it was clear that the old University was doomed. No reasonable or plausible effort could save it, and when in January 1886 the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company rejected a last-ditch offer by George C. Lorimer, the pastor of the Immanuel Baptist Church who had become acting president in the wake of Anderson's resignation, to settle the debt with a one-time payment of \$100,000, the game was over. A meeting of the Baptist ministers of Chicago on February 8, 1886, signaled a new option, namely, to walk away from the old institution, abandoning it to the insurance company, and to reestablish it in a different location with new leadership and new sources of support, which was tantamount to "the founding of a new University." George W. Northrup, the president of the Morgan Park Seminary, urged that the Baptists should rent some rooms in the city and retain the current faculty, immediately raising funds for \$10,000 a year to keep a bare-bones operation going and then to raise a permanent endowment of \$250,000 to secure the current institution's life. Thomas Goodspeed, in contrast, argued that Chicago's far South Side was rapidly developing and that it made most sense to kill off the old University legally, secure a new charter and appoint a new board of trustees, and move the site of the University ten miles south to Morgan Park, where it would be linked to the seminary. At the end of the meeting, the ministers voted to endorse the idea of founding a new University.¹⁵⁴ In his role as acting president, George Lorimer informed

153. Rockefeller to Goodspeed, April 13, 1886, *ibid.*

154. *The Standard*, February 11, 1886, p. 5; Francis W. Shepardson, "Recollections of First Things at the University of Chicago," pp. 6–7, *Thomas*



the board of trustees on February 12 of the ministers' views, which he strongly shared, and argued, "[I]t is a matter of grave doubt whether the property for college purposes is worth more than \$200,000, and whether we could induce our friends to give more we would be justified in spending it on this property, when less expensive grounds and better buildings can be obtained at a more moderate outlay."¹⁵⁵ In a word, it would be far better to allow the insurance company to take possession of the 34th and Cottage Grove property and building, and start over in a new location.

The Harper presidential episode, even if it failed, fueled Thomas Goodspeed's determination to involve himself in higher education in Chicago. In June 1886, he decided against accepting an offer to become president of Kalamazoo College, telling John D. Rockefeller, "I have felt that I could not leave the Seminary until I had carried to success the undertaking your kindness has made possible. . . . I could not get the consent of my conscience to go," and again insisting, "We need here a college. The seminary needs it. Our cause needs it, and I cannot but believe that it is certain to come. This is one of the elements that enters into my wish to remain here though I may never have any connection with the new movement. . . . What I write calls for no response, but I hope you will not be unwilling to permit me to say a word from time to time in the hopes of those who cannot willingly let our University die without making an effort to rebuild it under better auspices. My interest

W. Goodspeed Papers, Box 4, folder 11; "An Historical Sketch," *President's Report*, July, 1897–July, 1898, with *Summaries for 1891–97* (Chicago, 1899), p. 1.

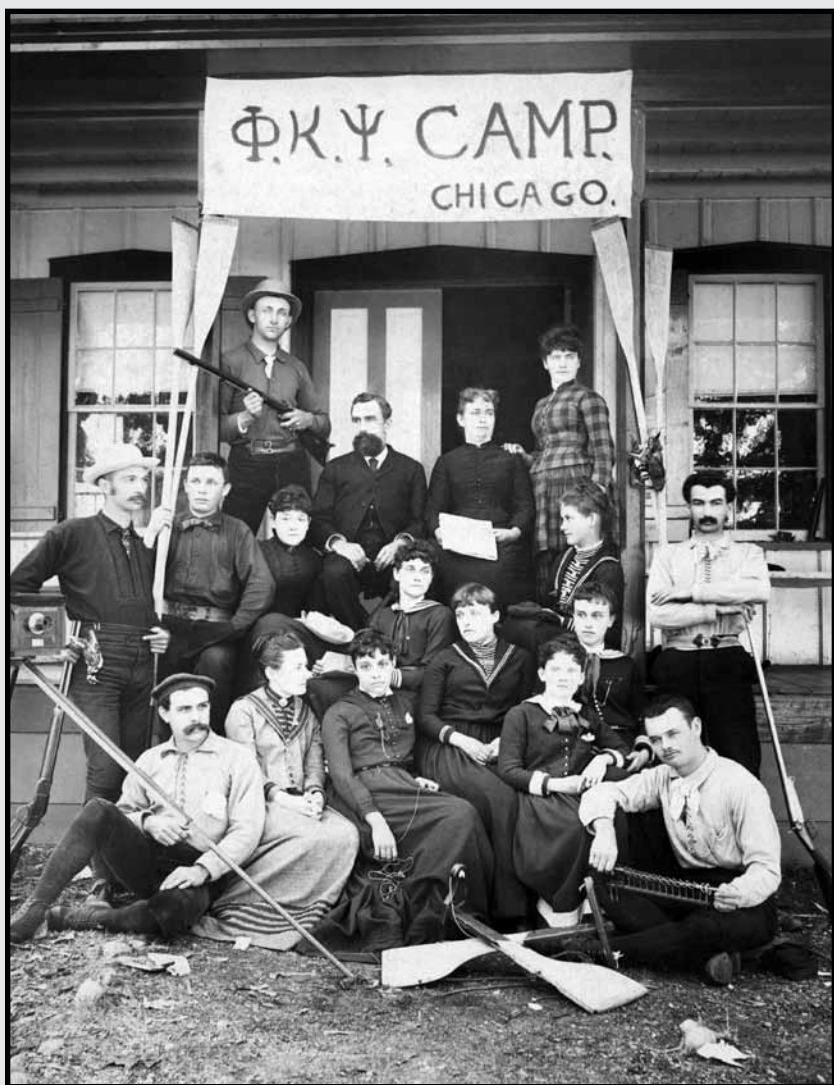
155. Lorimer to the Board, "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," February 12, 1886. Lorimer mentioned the option of abandoning the 34th Street site as early as November 1885. See his letter of November 8, 1885, in "Minutes of the Board of Trustees," November 9, 1885. On Lorimer, see A. H. Newman, ed., *A Century of Baptist Achievement* (Philadelphia, 1901), pp. 384–385.

in the seminary would be spurious and false if I did not feel as deep an interest in a University in this great central point.”¹⁵⁶

When the old University officially collapsed in insolvency in the summer of 1886, Thomas Goodspeed led an effort to organize a temporary academy in rooms in the old seminary building on 34th Street, using three of the former faculty members.¹⁵⁷ Goodspeed then organized an appeal to George Walker and the Blue Island Land and Building Company in October 1886, asking that they consider supporting the re-creation of the University in Morgan Park and asking for a large gift to ensure its future success, namely the gift of a partial share of the profits of 100 acres of land, the income from which would provide operating costs of the new University, plus land for the college itself and a gift of \$25,000 for a new building. Goodspeed insisted, “[W]e are compelled to act in view of the disastrous history of the University of Chicago. We cannot venture to repeat that history. We must avoid the mistakes that led to the destruction of that institution. We cannot go before our people with any new enterprise, the success of which is not completely assured from the

156. Goodspeed to Rockefeller, June 15, 1886, and June 16, 1886, *University of Chicago Founders' Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 1.

157. See *The Standard*, September 16, 1886, p. 4; September 23, 1886, p. 4. A committee of five alumni, led by Trustee David G. Hamilton, drafted a last-minute proposal to try to preserve the current University, arguing that the University might negotiate a deal with the insurance company under which it would continue to occupy the 34th Street building on a lease basis and try to pay off its debt via a new subscription drive, but this was too little and too late. Hamilton happened to be a director of the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company, and this sudden intervention might suggest that the company was having second thoughts about having to dispose of the site. See Minutes of the Board, May 8, 1886. *The Watchman*, the Baptist newspaper in Boston, characterized Hamilton's scheme as “delusive,” and rightly so. *The Watchman*, October 21, 1886, filed in *George C. Walker Scrapbook, 1873–1903*, Box 1, folder 1.



*Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity. Outing in Wisconsin.
1885*

outset. If you can do what we suggest, we believe it will be assured. We can build in Morgan Park a great institution that will be the glory of the place, in which our denomination will feel a universal interest, and that will attract scores of families to the neighborhood and hundreds of students to its halls.”¹⁵⁸ Walker balked at Goodspeed’s request, and subsequent negotiations resulted in a more modest offer—the company agreed to give the Baptists 20 acres of land, an existing building currently occupied by an academy for girls, and \$5,000 to help pay for a new building, on the condition that they raise \$100,000 in operating costs within one year and commit to build the new building for no less than \$20,000—and the offer was finalized in late November 1886.¹⁵⁹ Now Goodspeed and his colleagues simply needed to find a donor with \$100,000.

For Goodspeed the answer lay in the East, in the person of John D. Rockefeller. Goodspeed had known Rockefeller since the early 1880s, when Goodspeed had begun to correspond with him asking for money for Morgan Park Seminary. Rockefeller liked Goodspeed, and he gave the seminary intermittent but generous gifts, in four and five figure amounts, most recently a pledge of \$20,000 in October 1885.¹⁶⁰ Goodspeed’s initiative with Rockefeller was to prove of historic importance, not in the least for the deeply ironic fact that the seminary, which ten years earlier had fled the mismanaged and publicly embarrassed University,

158. P. S. Henson, T. W. Goodspeed, and J. A. Smith, “To the President and Directors of the Blue Island Land Company,” October 1, 1886, *ibid.*

159. See the letters of October 27, 1886, November 16, 1886, November 24, 1886, and November 29, 1886, *ibid.*

160. “John D. Rockefeller, Private Letterbook, ‘Pledges, Donations, Family, etc.’, May 20, 1881 to April 3, 1886,” p. 11, *Richard J. Storr Papers*, Box 6.

was now to become the central agent of a complex effort to revive and re-imagine the University by transferring it to the Morgan Park site.

Thomas Goodspeed patiently pursued John D. Rockefeller throughout 1887, writing in January to ask for the \$100,000 needed to restart the university and insisting, "I feel profoundly about the re-establishment of our University. I would be willing to risk a good deal personally in the effort to found a new and first-rate Baptist university in this great centre. It is likely to take a long and hard struggle. I shrink from it. If some one else could be found to undertake it, I would earnestly entreat you to help the enterprise," and again in May, "The West is so lamentably weak in Baptist Colleges and this is manifestly the centre for the leading Baptist University in the country that I trust you will continue to entertain the question. Perhaps in the course of another year or two you may make some money for its foundation."¹⁶¹

By October 1887, Goodspeed wrote with growing urgency and determination, reporting that one way or another his "brethren" intended to revive the University:

Our brethren here are moving in the matter of a University of which we feel every month more and more the imperative need. The Seminary needs it beyond measure. There is a general and profound interest being manifested and a harmony of views that surprises and cheers me. We shall go slow and launch no new enterprise prematurely. If we can see our way to some basis of endowment, we shall make a beginning. So far as the movement

161. Goodspeed to Rockefeller, January 4, 1887, May 7, 1889, and May 19, 1887, *University of Chicago Founders' Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 2.

has taken shape, the brethren have placed me in the position of responsibility, as chairman of the committee appointed. I shall use great care to encourage no scheme that is not prudent and clearly practicable. It seems, however, now clear that if we had \$50,000 we could speedily add \$50,000 to it and thus make a good and safe beginning, for there is a living interest in the matter among all our people. The trouble is they are discouraged over the former disasters and afraid to begin. But I did not intend, when I began, to say so much. You have always heard me so patiently that I have learned to speak to you frankly all that is in my heart.¹⁶²

Rockefeller respected Goodspeed, but he remained studiously noncommittal towards the Morgan Park project. Other Baptists with Chicago connections also appealed to Rockefeller, but he remained complacently tone deaf to their appeals as well. To George C. Lorimer, the former acting president of the old University, he wrote in February 1888 that “the report was incorrect about my being connected with the effort to establish a university in Chicago, and I am so heavily weighted with other undertakings I cannot give any encouragement in this direction.”¹⁶³ And with some irony to another Chicago minister, Poindexter S. Henson of the First Church in Chicago, Rockefeller wrote in June 1888, “As

162. Goodspeed to Rockefeller, October 15, 1887, *ibid.*

163. Rockefeller to Lorimer, February 6, 1888, *ibid.*, folder 3. Goodspeed reported to Harper that William Everts was also spreading rumors that Rockefeller would give a large gift and asked Harper to assure Rockefeller that he, Goodspeed, was not the source of these rumors. Goodspeed to Harper, February 11, 1888, *ibid.*

you deem it so important, I assume you will persevere in other directions to secure necessary funds.”¹⁶⁴

Goodspeed's pleas were not in vain, however, because they helped to prepare the way for the formal initiative launched in May 1888, when a National Educational Convention of Baptists in Washington, DC, voted among considerable controversy to establish a new Education Society to investigate the possibilities and options for strengthening higher education in the middle west. The principal organizer of the society, Pastor Henry Morehouse of New York City, arranged for Frederick T. Gates to become the secretary of the new American Baptist Education Society in June 1888. Educated at Rochester, Gates had been the pastor of the Central Baptist Church in Minneapolis until early 1888, when he resigned to lead a fundraising effort for the Pillsbury Academy, for which he was able to raise \$50,000. Gates was a pragmatist who had superb organizational and political skills. He was also a personal friend of Morehouse, having attended Morehouse's services at the East Avenue Baptist Church in Rochester, when Gates was a student at Rochester. As Soma Hewa has noted, he was also a tough-minded rationalist with little patience for soft-hearted social causes.¹⁶⁵ Henceforth he would play a critical role in advocating Goodspeed's cause, but with some major modifications.

Henry Morehouse's motivations in establishing the Education Society in May 1888 were complex, but in part they reflected both the shame and embarrassment that Baptists across the United States felt about the collapse of the old University of Chicago and strong views that a new

164. Rockefeller to Henson, June 19, 1888, *ibid.*

165. Soma Hewa, "The Protestant Personality and Higher Education: American Philanthropy beyond the 'Progressive Era,'" *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 12 (1998): 150–151, 154–155.

institution of higher learning should be built in the West. It is here that one sees a subtle, but still very real organic link between the old and the new Universities of Chicago. A former member of the board of trustees of the Morgan Park Seminary in Chicago and of the board of Kalamazoo College in Michigan, Morehouse was closely familiar with the personalities and problems facing higher education in the Midwest and especially in Chicago. In a survey of the activity of Baptist missions between 1880 and 1886, Morehouse was particularly concerned with the fate of Christianity in the western states (in which he most certainly included Chicago and Illinois). In almost apocalyptic terms he urged, “[W]ho shall have that mighty West — Satan or the Lord Jesus Christ? What is our duty to these swarming millions of immigrants, among whom are communists, socialists, nihilists, anarchists, haters of government and of God, and among whom are multitudes of State Church nominal Christians, of whom it has been aptly said, ‘They have the Gospel candlestick but they have put the light of man thereon!’”¹⁶⁶ Determined to improve educational resources in the West, Morehouse proposed the creation of a new American Baptist Education Society, whose mission was to “gather on a common platform, untainted by past bitterness, our leading educators from every section, whose hands and hearts shall be united in high endeavor, and whose faces shall glow with the dawning day of a brighter future.” Morehouse was particularly candid when he asserted, “[I]t would not be surprising to hear almost any day that some broad-minded, large-hearted man among us had given a million or two for the upbuilding of a great institution or for the establishment of a dozen struggling institutions in the South and West. We

166. H. L. Morehouse, “A Seven Years’ Survey,” *Fifty-Fourth Annual Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, Convened in Educational Hall, Asbury Park, NJ, May 27, 28, and 29, 1886* (New York, 1886), pp. 151–152.

are living in a marvelous age. We may reasonably expect great things in the near future.”¹⁶⁷

As Kenneth Rose has shrewdly pointed out, the strong division of voting among delegates at the convention in Washington DC in May 1888 as to whether the society should be established was based on the fact that most key Baptist leaders, including Morehouse, knew exactly what was at stake, namely, whether and where to build a great Baptist institution of higher education: “A major reason for the geographically based division among Baptist leaders over the establishment of the Society was the on-going debate about whether to build a great Baptist university and where to locate it.”¹⁶⁸ The western leaders led by Goodspeed and Northrup from Chicago supported Morehouse, whereas key eastern leaders like Augustus Strong and Edward Bright opposed the plan. The creation of the society was, as Gates put it in his autobiography, “a popular victory for the moneyless and educationally destitute West and South, over the moneyed and educationally well-provided Eastern and New England states.”¹⁶⁹ That Morehouse was actually committed to the Chicago option is apparent from a letter that he sent to

167. *The National Baptist Educational Convention and Organization of the American Baptist Education Society, held in Calvary Baptist Church at Washington, DC, May 16th and 17th, 1888* (Washington, DC, 1888), pp. 63, 70. On Morehouse’s later advocacy of immigration restrictions, see Davis, *Immigrants, Baptists, and the Protestant Mind in America*, pp. 75–77, 86–87.

168. Kenneth W. Rose, “John D. Rockefeller, The American Baptist Education Society, and the Growth of Baptist Higher Education in the Midwest,” unpublished ms., 1998, pp. 6–7; as well as idem, “Why Chicago and Not Cleveland? The Religious Imperative behind John D. Rockefeller’s Early Philanthropy, 1855–1900,” unpublished ms., 1995.

169. Frederick Taylor Gates, *Chapters in My Life* (New York, 1977), pp. 91–102, here 91.

Gates in mid-June 1888, less than a month after his victory in getting the Education Society established, in which he observed, “I am very glad to know of the shape things are taking in regard to Chicago. I hope that something substantial will come out of it. . . . Your comprehensive view of the educational situation in the West shows that you have grasped the idea thoroughly and I hope you may live to see your plans realized, namely, a great institution at Chicago with academic feeders in adjacent states.”¹⁷⁰

In appointing Frederick Gates, who was his personal choice, to lead the new society, and in supporting Gates consistently as he honed in on a recommendation to reestablish the University of Chicago, Henry Morehouse played a decisive role in the creation of our University. Morehouse was so committed to the project that he wrote in his private diary, “I fully decided that if he (Mr. Gates) did not accept, I would resign, giving at length my reason for doing so, and leave the Home Mission Society to take the Corresponding Secretaryship of the Education Society, throwing myself upon the denomination. I resolved to dedicate myself to this work rather than to have a halt or failure, even though it should reduce me to poverty.”¹⁷¹ Yet Morehouse’s deeply religious convictions also remind us that both Gates and he, and Goodspeed as well, imagined the new University as a strong asset to the Baptists in their broader concerns of religious renewal.

It was absolutely crucial to John D. Rockefeller that a disinterested, national body of Baptists be in charge of the deliberations about where

170. Morehouse to Gates, June 12, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders’ Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 1.

171. Quoted in Lathan A. Crandall, *Henry Lyman Morehouse. A Biography* (Philadelphia, 1919), p. 128.



to create a new college. Had Henry Morehouse not created the Education Society and then personally appointed Frederick Gates as its strategic leader, it is no exaggeration to say that there would have been no second or new University of Chicago to begin with. As much as Rockefeller respected men like Goodspeed and his ministerial colleagues, he felt extremely uneasy about responding to their ad hoc pleas, especially since he was also being approached by rival petitioners asking for support for universities in New York City and in Washington, DC.

Henry Morehouse was motivated by a pragmatic desire to provide a rational structure to organize and screen the many pleas for help that were ending up on Rockefeller's doorstep, for which Rockefeller was extremely grateful. But Morehouse was also motivated by a larger concern for the future welfare of Baptist-driven higher education in the West, and the timing of his initiative, coming less than a year after the final collapse of the University of Chicago, was surely no accident. For the shame and confusion that the collapse of the first University engendered in 1885 and 1886, seen as a single instance of a much broader problem, had a direct impact on the way in which Morehouse chose to organize the Education Society's charter mission in the first place. Surely it was not accidental that George Lorimer, one of the most outspoken Baptist ministers advocating a new institution in Chicago, was invited to present a detailed commentary at the May 1888 meeting that voted to create the society, entitled "The Baptists and Higher Education in the Northwest." In his address Lorimer candidly argued,

[T]here is hardly anything so difficult for a Chicago man to understand as failure, or anything that is more of an unpardonable sin. To be burnt out is a trifle; he can recover from that; but to fail is to be permanently discredited; it looks like a

reflection on a city that is conscious of nothing but success. Well, the old university failed, no matter what the cause; certainly it was on a lee shore before I migrated to the Western metropolis, and it is now exceptionally hard to convince the Baptists that any new thing can possibly succeed. But we are not without hope, and if you know all the difficulties in the way, I am sure you would admit that we are not without courage. If some of you people in the East would give me \$50,000 to spend on a university, you would so stir up our people that \$250,000 would be forthcoming in a year, and once started, I am satisfied in a little while we should have one of the greatest and most liberally endowed seats of learning in the country.¹⁷²

Later at the same meeting, Morehouse himself defended his initiative against skeptics from the eastern states who sought to derail it, insisting, “[R]ecently the president of a prominent college remarked in our presence that our educational matters are in a chaotic condition, and that it is a serious question even, what, by force of uncontrollable circumstances, shall be the future of our some of our older and established institutions. As to the establishment of denominational schools in the West, what should be our policy? While others are doing much, shall we do nothing? Shall they be left to spring up how and where and when inexperienced men, desirous of fostering local interests, shall take a fancy to start them, and then in a crisis send their representatives to scour the East for help?

172. *The National Baptist Educational Convention and Organization of the American Baptist Education Society, held in Calvary Baptist Church at Washington, DC, May 16th and 17th, 1888*, pp. 47–48.

Or, shall there be consultation, advice, recommendation, and judicious support given by a competent and responsible organization?"¹⁷³

While Morehouse sought to give structure and direction to the new plans, with the strong hope that Rockefeller would then be persuaded to invest serious money in collegiate education, self-help initiatives in Chicago continued to percolate. In early May 1888, the Chicago Baptists' Conference decided to go public with a slightly modified version of the offer that they had received in late 1886 from George Walker to donate land in Morgan Park to the seminary for the construction of a University campus, provided they could raise \$100,000 to launch the institution (Walker had agreed in February 1888 to extend the offer until November 1889). Led by Pastors P. S. Henson and George Lorimer, the clergy decided to poll 150 prominent Baptist laymen in Chicago about the feasibility of this offer, whether the University of Chicago should be reestablished in Morgan Park in light of the fact that "[w]ithin the past few weeks propositions have been made by persons living or holding property in Morgan Park, where our seminary is situated, offering for a new University in substance (33) thirty-three acres of land, valued by them at \$66,000, a building which cost \$24,000, and \$5,000 in cash toward another building—on condition that within one year a [second] building worth from \$25,000 to \$30,000 shall be erected and an endowment of \$100,000 be secured. . . . We as ministers are not willing to assume the responsibility of declining this proposition, which seems to us most advantageous; but of course we cannot accept it without the hearty endorsement of the laymen of our churches." The ministers asked their lay colleagues if they should call a conference of the "principal

173. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

brethren” to discuss the idea, further asking, “[A]re you willing to cooperate as far as in you lies, for the accomplishment of such a purpose?”¹⁷⁴

Unfortunately, Gates noted with some chagrin that of the laymen who replied affirmatively to the circular most were not wealthy and, referring to the much needed moneyed men, “This class was silent.”¹⁷⁵ One of the wealthier supporters of the seminary, E. Nelson Blake, refused to join the push for reviving the dead University, arguing “too much advice and too little money was the disease that killed the former institution.” Another prominent Baptist, John M. Van Asdel, warned, “I would deprecate another University fiasco,” and given the difficulty of raising an endowment, observed, “I would not be in favor of the institute starting off in a crippled condition.”¹⁷⁶ Thomas Goodspeed later remembered, “Our ablest men feel that we need an institution founded on a broad and liberal basis and that we have not here the strength to found such a University. They look with distrust on the launching of a feeble and struggling enterprise and are not disposed to go into it.”¹⁷⁷

174. Sent by Dr. P. S. Henson, George Lorimer, A. K. Parker, W. M. Lawrence, Everett D. Burr, J. Wolfenden, and J. B. Thames “to about 150 prominent Baptist laymen in Chicago and vicinity.” A copy of this appeal is filed with Gates to Morehouse, July 14, 1888, *Frederick T. Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 1. For a contemporary survey of the most important Baptist churches in Chicago, see Alfred T. Andreas, *History of Chicago from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (3 vols., Chicago, 1884–86), 3: 811–818.

175. Gates to Morehouse, July 14, 1888, *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 1.

176. Blake to P. S. Henson et al., undated [June 1888]; Van Asdel to George Lorimer, P. S. Henson et al., June 11, 1888, *ibid.*

177. Goodspeed to Harper, October 15, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders' Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 3.



In the meantime, Gates set to work by launching a survey of all Baptist institutions of higher learning in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Colorado, and the Dakotas, trying to gauge what the Baptists were doing compared to other denominations. In the context of this survey, Gates informed Morehouse in late June 1888, "I am figuring underground with the Chicago University matter through Dr. Smith to see if there is anything in it, if so whether the Education Soc. can be of service. Confidentially my present opinion is that there is a greater case, better prospects, more need, and, for the Society better outcome here than anywhere else. If we can take hold of the matter, raise half a million, by no means a quixotic dream, and set an institution on its feet, we shall have done more for education and made the Society a more powerful machine than in any other way. . . . All the interests you have suggested are on my mind, and I shall strike somewhere just as soon as something promising and definite turns up." But Gates also cautioned, "[W]e can not afford now to make any false moves, and can touch nothing that has not substance in it and sure success. We must have a big case, an overwhelming case."¹⁷⁸

Having met the Baptist ministers who pushed the Morgan Park option, Gates was unimpressed with the leadership capabilities of most of them: "There is not among the Chicago brethren that perfect freedom and outspoken frankness born of mutual love and confidence that I have been accustomed to see in our Minnesota counsels, and which we ought to expect among Baptist brethren. While brethren spoke freely, there was a certain lack of seriousness, a certain lightness of tone, on the part of most of the brethren that disappointed me." Gates deliberately exempted

178. Gates to Morehouse, June 21, 1888, *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 1.

Goodspeed and Northrup, both of whom he admired for their energy and consistency, from these negative comments, but as for the others, he concluded that they "did not exhibit that sort of feeling out of which great things are carried to successful issue amid difficulties. Besides this, I felt constantly that there was a lack of perfect frankness. One could not be sure that the whole truth was being spoken. . . . I did not observe any tendency to get right down to business and expose the bed rock facts."¹⁷⁹

The timid reaction of the Chicago lay community did not dissuade the pastors in early July from officially endorsing Walker's offer, but they also asked Gates, acting on behalf of the new Education Society, to take over the planning and fundraising process for the new institution in Morgan Park.¹⁸⁰ Gates was already sympathetic with some kind of project in the Chicago area, and both Morehouse and he were convinced that someone other than George Lorimer and his ministerial friends was needed for the project to succeed. Morehouse commented to Gates, "There is a feeling . . . that Lorimer is not the man to be at the head of such an institution as is proposed, for many don't regard him as a safe and sound leader, to say nothing of his deficiencies as an educator, but if interest can be enlisted in securing property and endowment a great thing will have been gained."¹⁸¹ Gates now reported to Morehouse that the pastors "want to put the Chicago matter in my hands," meaning that they wanted him to take over the campaign to try to obtain the matching

179. Gates to Morehouse, July 14, 1888, *ibid.*

180. Gates attended the meeting held on July 2, 1888, at the Grand Pacific Hotel where Lorimer and a group of ministers officially voted to launch a fundraising campaign to secure \$500,000 for a new University of Chicago. See Lorimer to Walker, July 3, 1888, *George C. Walker Scrapbook*, folder 2.

181. Morehouse to Gates, June 12, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders' Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 3.



funds for the Morgan Park project. He agreed to do so, informing Morehouse, "[M]y own view is that we should take hold of it, provided we can, by a quiet and underground canvass, assure ourselves of success before we become publicly involved in it. . . . The case is the biggest and resistless in appeal and furnishing a wider constituency than anything in sight or that has been in sight for many years in our denomination."

But never one to mince words, Gates made it clear that he was dissatisfied with the rhetorical arguments and political savvy of the pastors: "I have never yet heard the case stated for a tithe of what in my opinion there is in it. . . . These brethren have never had the leisure or the data for studying the question on its merits. It has been chiefly a matter of denominational and local pride. I confess that I am vain enough to believe that their failure with Rockefeller and others, and among them some of the wealthiest brethren in Chicago, does not necessarily close the case. Still we ought to be exceedingly cautious. To succeed is to open a path for measureless good, but to fail is to close that path completely for our generation at least."¹⁸²

With Morehouse's explicit support, Frederick Gates now entered the campaign to revive the University of Chicago in his official capacity as the leader of the new Education Society. But after three months of conducting a detailed survey of existing Baptist colleges in the middle west and of prospective donors for such an institution in Chicago, Gates came to the conclusion that relaunching the University in Morgan Park would be a huge mistake: It was too isolated from the city; it was surrounded by unattractive settlements; students who needed part-time work to pay their tuition would be unable to obtain employment; if the new University decided to have professional schools they would have to

182. Gates to Morehouse, July 29, 1888, *ibid.*

be located in Chicago in any event; and, finally, the city gave the Baptists access to potential wealthy donors. Summoning his rhetorical powers and a host of statistical data, Gates thus recommended to a meeting of the Chicago pastors on October 15, 1888, that a new Baptist college should be established, but that it should be founded in the city of Chicago, not in a distant suburb like Morgan Park.¹⁸³ Gates justified Chicago as the place by appealing to the city's new role as capital of the West: “[T]he city is the most commanding social, financial, literary and religious eminence in the west. It will lift so far aloft a Baptist college as an intellectual and religious luminary, that its light would illumine every state and penetrate every home from Lake Erie to the Rocky Mountains. The Old University in '82–83, when moribund and ready to drop into its grave, attracted students from sixteen states. Chicago is the heart of the west, the foundation of western life. In that fountain should be placed our Christian college. Chicago is quickly and cheaply accessible from every part of the west. All roads lead to Chicago, all cities, all rural homes face Chicago. Already the chief seat of western learning, the educational supremacy of Chicago is becoming every year more marked.” Thousands of young Baptists would go to Chicago from across the western states who would be otherwise lost to the denomination, and that would be “a boon to the cause of Christ in the west.”

Gates further insisted, “Our great and fatal difficulty has been in the unfortunate locations chosen for our institutions. With perhaps the

183. “The Need of a Baptist University in Chicago, As Illustrated by a Study of Baptist Collegiate Education in the West,” *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 1. Gates subsequently wrote to Morehouse explicitly arguing against the Morgan Park option: “The fact is that the *thing* to do is to locate *in* the city and not at Morgan Park. Both the Presbyterians and Methodists are *out* of the city. The city is the place and make no mistake.” Gates to Morehouse, October 17, 1888, *ibid.*, Box 1, folder 2.



*Grace Reed, Class of 1884, Teacher and Principal, Drake School,
Calumet Avenue School, and the Frances E. Willard School, Chicago*

exception of Des Moines University, they have been fixed in small, obscure towns, surrounded by a most worthy but wholly impecunious population.” This meant that the existing Baptist colleges in the West were “beyond the horizon and out of the sight and interest of our wealthy men.” For Gates, large cities had wealth, and the Baptists needed to unlock the wealth of the cities. The huge metropolis that Chicago had become by the late 1880s now became of irreplaceable importance to the re-imagining of the University.

Hence Gates called for a “great college, ultimately to be a University” in Chicago with “endowment of several millions, with buildings, library and other appliances equal to any on the continent; an institution commanding the services of the ablest specialists in every department, giving the highest classical as well scientific culture and aiming to counteract the western tendency to a merely superficial and utilitarian education, an institution wholly under the Baptist control as a chartered right, loyal to Christ and his church, employing none but Christians in any department of instruction, a school not only evangelical but evangelistic, seeking to bring every student into surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord.”

Gates reported to Henry Morehouse that he received a wildly enthusiastic reaction from the Chicago ministers: “The room was full with several standing. To say that such a paper or rather the facts presented produced a sensation would be mild language. The Brethren were ‘all torn up’ over it. They were astonished, astounded, confounded, dumfounded, amazed, bewildered, overwhelmed.” The ministers were particularly startled by Gates’s “terrible truths” involving the weakness of existing Baptist colleges: “The truth has never before been told, but I told it for once without reproach of course and mingled with praise for the heroism and self abnegation of our western educators. I am greatly

encouraged, believing that a great victory has been won in Chicago from which we shall reap substantial and lasting fruits.”¹⁸⁴

Several days later, Gates reinforced his anti-Morgan Park arguments to Morehouse, asserting that Baptists needed to be in the city, for wealth lay in the city, and wealthy men never visited Morgan Park:

We can get ultimately hundreds of thousands of dollars from moneyed men [who are] not Baptists for the ONLY institution in the city where we would get tens of thousands with the location out at Morgan Park, a suburb seldom or never visited by wealthy men, and almost unknown to the wealth of the city. Chicago, the CITY is the true fulcrum for our lever. The Baptists of Chicago do not prefer Morgan Park. They prefer the city. No one but the Land Company is interested in that special location. It is regarded on all hands as the second best thing. Its only commendation is that it is the only thing in sight. You see my very great embarrassment. If Mr. R. is really aiming to become a large Patron, the sooner we can come to an understanding, the surer will we be to avoiding unpleasant complications. If we have to start small possibly we shall have to accept the humiliations of the suburban location. I hesitate to push the present enterprise as hard as I might for fear of clinching it. I do not dare to quit altogether and await some action from Mr. R for fear he is waiting to see what Chicago will do. I do not dare approach him for various reasons. Now you are going to see him. You must not give the least hint that you even suspect his intentions. I want him to know just how the case stands here, and yet I fear if he

184. Gates to Morehouse, October 16, 1888, *ibid.*

does, he will simply put off doing anything until something better is offered in Chicago and I fear this will be never. What I wish he would do is to offer a large sum provided the Chicago people will select a location that is satisfactory to him—not Morgan Park, that can be had at a reasonable price. What shall be said, what done, I leave of course to your own judgment. . . . My speech has been requested for the purpose of putting it without my sanction in the hands of Mr. Rockefeller’s closest adviser on educational matters. This too must be kept secret. May the Lord guide you.¹⁸⁵

Morehouse in turn agreed with Gates’s strategy and its potential appeal for Rockefeller: “I fully believe that he [Rockefeller] will yet see that the establishment of a strong institution at Chicago will do more for the denomination in the west than possibly could be done by the establishment of a great university leaving the west unprovided for. I most thoroughly concur with you in the view that the institution must be located in the city. Scores of students living at home will attend such an institution, who would not attend it if located at Morgan Park. We retrieve ourselves, if possible, in the city of Chicago.”¹⁸⁶

Thomas Goodspeed was present at the October 15 meeting and immediately wrote to Gates asking for a copy of his report, adding, “I do not wish to steal your thunder for any public use whatever, but . . . [t]he paper stirred my heart. I want it to stir another’s heart.”¹⁸⁷ To Harper he commented, “The thing that seems to me to make the

185. Gates to Morehouse, October 23, 1888, *ibid.*

186. Morehouse to Gates, October 26, 1888, *ibid.*

187. Goodspeed to Gates, October 15, 1888, *ibid.*

paper extraordinarily impressive is this. It is not the view of a Chicago man, or of a man who has any interest in Chicago, but in the first place, of a stranger to this city and in the second place, of the Secretary of the American Baptist Education Society. It is the result to which he has come after profound study of the entire educational situation.”¹⁸⁸

The executive board of the American Baptist Education Society adopted Gates’s proposals for a new college in Chicago on December 4, 1888, which effectively killed off the Morgan Park option and which set the stage for the critical events of May 1889. The next six months were filled with anxious skirmishing, weaving and counter-weaving, as Goodspeed and Gates sought to persuade Rockefeller to commit himself. Gates’s calm passion and deep commitment, together with Morehouse’s political wiliness and Goodspeed’s flexibility in being willing to abandon the Morgan Park project for a major new college in the city of Chicago, were all crucial in finally persuading John D. Rockefeller to support Gates’s plan. Gates visited John D. Rockefeller at his home in New York City on the morning of May 15, 1889, to make his final plea. Gates later remembered in his autobiography:

The only encouragement I got was an invitation to breakfast next morning. I was not late to that breakfast. After it we stepped out on the street and walked to and fro in front of Mr. Rockefeller’s house. It was a fine, balmy May morning. It was agreed between us that the least possible sum for a mere start, that would give confidence of perpetuity, would be One Million Dollars. He confided to me that he thought he might give as

188. Goodspeed to Harper, October 25, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders’ Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 3.

much as Four Hundred Thousand Dollars. You will recall that many months before he told Dr. Goodspeed and Dr. Harper that he might give “several” hundred thousand. Mr. Rockefeller’s present proposal was entirely consistent with every word he had said up to that time. But I was obliged to reply with sincerity to Mr. Rockefeller that with Four Hundred Thousand Dollars we could not raise the balance of the Million. He then offered Five Hundred Thousand. I told him also regretfully that we could not possibly wing the other half. I then called his attention to the advantage of going before the denomination with *more than half already pledged*. Such a leverage we would be obliged to have. Such a gift would win. The denomination could not and would not let it fail. He would have to start the movement with nothing less than Six Hundred Thousand Dollars toward the Million. Otherwise the attempt would be hopeless. At last he yielded the point, promised the Six Hundred Thousand, and we went down to his office to write out the pledge and get everything ready for the Boston meeting.¹⁸⁹

Accordingly, in his famous message of May 15, 1889, to the Education Society meeting in Boston, Rockefeller offered a gift of \$600,000 to establish a college in Chicago, on the condition that the Chicago organizers were able to obtain a matching fund of \$400,000 to create a permanent endowment of \$1 million within one year.

Coming at the end of a long chain of contingent shifts, in which pressures, pleas, and hopes from the local Baptist community in Chicago melded together with Gates’s and Morehouse’s brilliant outsider strategies,

189. Gates, *Chapters in My Life*, pp. 111–112.



the re-creation of the University in Chicago was as much an indigenous and organic Chicago event as it was a national and eastern event. Yet if Gates forced Goodspeed to give up the idea of Morgan Park, it would fall to William Rainey Harper to compel Gates, as well as Goodspeed and Morehouse, to accept a much broader and less denominationally fixed understanding of the new University. In December 1888, Goodspeed was convinced that “the plan” that was shaping up did not involve “a great Baptist national university” but rather a “university for the West” that would serve students primarily from midwestern states, on the grounds that “we want only what is needed by Chicago and the denomination in the West.”¹⁹⁰ Goodspeed urged Harper to modify his ambitions and try to mollify Augustus Strong (who was lobbying Rockefeller to create a great Baptist research university in New York City) by arguing, “Do not insist with him on the University feature of the new institution. They are in the future anyway. The initial part of our plan, the essential part for the first ten years is a College of the very highest class.”¹⁹¹ Harper, in contrast, had no interest in mollifying Strong, and he rebuked Goodspeed with the observation, “[I]f the thing you are working in Chicago is only a college, I have been working upon a wrong tack.”¹⁹² To Goodspeed’s urgency that they might scale back their demands of Rockefeller, Harper insisted, “[T]he result would be that

190. Goodspeed to Gates, December 7, 1888, *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 3.

191. Goodspeed to Harper, November 24, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders’ Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 4. For Strong’s involvement in these events see John W. Boyer, “Broad and Christian in the Fullest Sense”: William Rainey Harper and the University of Chicago (Chicago, 2005), pp. 47–51.

192. Harper to Goodspeed, November 24, 1888, and Harper to Goodspeed, November 28, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders’ Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 4.

a college is all that we shall get. This would be very sad, indeed, for it is not a college, but a university that is wanted. . . . I can hardly think that any but a straightforward, definite line of action will be successful.” As late as May 1889, Goodspeed confided to Gates that “it has been, as you know, my hope that such an arrangement might remove the Seminary from the field of appeal, leave it free to the college and unite all our forces in the next five or six years on that.”¹⁹³ Given that the world of higher learning that Thomas Goodspeed understood was largely a *teaching* world—he was always grateful for the quality teaching that he had received as a student at the old University—his focus on a college made perfect sense.¹⁹⁴

Frederick Gates, too, favored a more modest agenda, largely out of the pragmatic sense that this was a goal that could be sold to John D. Rockefeller, whereas the dream of a university might spook him into further inaction and ultimately lead to a refusal to support the enterprise under any circumstances. He argued to Morehouse in January 1889, “[M]y opinion all along has been that if I were to decide the question I would hold the question of a university in abeyance,” in favor of launching a well-endowed undergraduate college.¹⁹⁵ And to Rockefeller himself

193. Goodspeed to Gates, May 10, 1889, *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 5.

194. See Goodspeed, “The Founding of the First University of Chicago,” pp. 257–258.

195. Gates to Morehouse, January 6, 1889, *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 4. Indeed, Gates added, “I will say to you what I have not ventured to say to any one else and what I wish to hold strictly private and this is that I think that it is a serious question if Mr. Rockefeller would not devote a million or two more wisely to helping struggling colleges and endowing Academies through the Education Society for the next ten years than to putting it into professional schools in the city of Chicago. I am not averse to giving the humbler education the benefit of the doubt.”

Gates posed the directed query, “[M]ay not the question whether the institution contemplated in Chicago shall be a college or a university be held in abeyance for a few years without imperiling any valuable interest? Even if a university were more designed the college would naturally be the first work, and to thoroughly equip a college in the wisest way will almost of necessity be the exclusive work of the earlier years and would probably require all the funds we reasonably anticipate in that time.”¹⁹⁶

Harper’s patient diplomacy with Goodspeed and Gates over the course of 1889 and 1890 gradually brought them to understand that the only plausible guarantee for the success of a new “University of the West” in Chicago was to insist that the new institution also become a great national university. As Harper had bluntly put it, “[I]t is not a college, but a university that is wanted.”¹⁹⁷ And the very logic of Gates’s own rhetoric about the need of the Baptists to gain the support of the “mon-eyed men” meant that the new institution would have to accept a radically different self-understanding and a different cultural identity from that which Gates outlined to the ministers in October 1888. Hence it was Harper’s role not only to push the idea of a full-fledged university, as opposed to a stand-alone undergraduate college, but also to insist that this university would have to be open to students and faculty of all denominational backgrounds, Christian or not. Both Goodspeed and Gates wanted a first-class Baptist college, attended (mainly) by Baptists and filled with good Christian professors. Gates was explicit about the latter when he noted in October 1888 that he sought “to bring every student into surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord,” insisting to his fellow

196. Gates to Rockefeller, January 13, 1889, *University of Chicago Founders’ Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 5.

197. Harper to Goodspeed, November 28, 1888, *ibid.*, Box 1, folder 4.

ministers, “They are lost to their fellow men and to the cause of Christ in the world. Few Christians are greatly useful who do not move in the strong swift currents of some denominational life, with whose tenets, spirit, membership, and aims they are in hearty and somewhat exclusive accord. I view this question not from the standpoint of a sectarian but of a Christian. Christian effectiveness requires denominational schools. Each must have its own.”¹⁹⁸ Indeed, what is most surprising about Gates’s and Goodspeed’s deeply felt commitment to a renewed Baptist identity for the new University is that it came *after* the cascade of criticisms in the early 1880s that they, the Baptists, had driven the first University into the ground because of its earnest denominationalism.

Harper, in contrast, wanted a “university of the highest character, having also a college,” equipped with an endowment that within ten years “will place it in the rank with the first six universities in the land.”¹⁹⁹ The difference was notable, on the level of both resources and ideology, and the essential spiritual character of the University was at stake. The final settlement of June 18, 1890, designed by Goodspeed and Gates in the form of a letter to the secretary of state of the State of Illinois requesting the incorporation of the new institution, provided for two-thirds of the board and the president to always be Baptists, but then noted, “[N]o other test or particular religious profession shall ever be held as a requisite for election to said board, or for admission to said university, or to any department belonging thereto, or which shall be under the supervision or control of this corporation, or for election to any professorship, or any place of

198. “The Need of a Baptist University in Chicago, As Illustrated by a Study of Baptist Collegiate education in the West,” *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 1.

199. Harper to Goodspeed, November 28, 1888, *University of Chicago Founders’ Correspondence, 1886-1892*, Box 1, folder 4.



honor or emolument in said corporation, or in any of its departments or institutions of learning.” Gates later justified these dual stipulations with the further explanation that, on the one hand, “the prosperity of the institution, no less than its obligations to that denomination under whose auspices it has been created, and which has given by far the larger portion of the funds” deserved to be recognized, but that, on the other hand, “the college, however, being of a purely literary and scientific character, is not designed to be sectarian.”²⁰⁰ Essentially, Gates now acknowledged that the only real authority that the Baptists had was of a general foundational nature, having nothing to do with instructional or research content, and that within the broad range of its own academic affairs, the University would function as a nondenominational institution.

Because the need for Harper’s leadership of the new institution was critical for Rockefeller, both sides found themselves in a kind of political game of chicken: Harper would not sign on as president unless assured of the resources to organize a university, and Rockefeller had no interest in putting money into a university without the strong, charismatic leadership of Harper. Frederick Gates later asserted that each man viewed Rockefeller’s commitment to “provide sufficient resources” for the new institution from a very different perspective.

In the end, Harper held the trump card, because Gates, Goodspeed, and Rockefeller all desperately wanted him to assume the presidency of the new University, and Harper refused to accept the presidency until Rockefeller had agreed to another major gift of \$1 million to allow the start of graduate programs. A crucial component of these “graduate” programs involved the willingness of the leaders of the Morgan Park

200. Statement of Gates to the Board of Trustees, July 9, 1890, *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 7.

Seminary to move their operations back to Chicago, becoming the (graduate) Divinity School of the new University. As Harper informed Henry Morehouse,

You will be interested in knowing that Mr. Rockefeller has just given his pledge for a million dollars to the new university without any condition; it being understood, however, that the seminary at Morgan Park shall be united organically with the institution and moved to the city and that the million dollars shall be used for post-graduate instruction. The next step is the securing of a million dollars in Chicago for building. I think this can be done without much trouble. Keep the matter close. It is not yet time for the announcement.²⁰¹

Once such an agreement had been secured from the leaders of the Morgan Park Seminary, Harper was in a position to square the circle of religious identity and curricular purpose.²⁰² The new University thus not

201. Harper to Morehouse, Sept. 6, 1890, *University of Chicago Founders' Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 11.

202. Harper tried to further squash any whiff of independence for the seminary/Divinity School by eliminating the Baptist Theological Union, the official body that sponsored the institution. Gates noted to Morehouse in February 1891 that on this issue Harper had overreached himself and had been forced to back down: “Dr. Northrup’s difficulty was that in one form or another Dr. Harper was insistent upon destroying the Theo. Union behind the Seminary and which owns and controls it or if not that to compel the Union to elect certain men — all Baptists on Univ. Board — as Trustees. Harper wanted an (illegal) organic union. Northrup wanted Seminary however, kept under the Baptist thumb. I sided with Northrup. He was not as you have been informed seeking personal ends. All those were waived. Harper yielded and the autonomy of Seminary is rightly preserved, as you will agree.” Gates to Morehouse, February 7, 1891, *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 8.



only became, in the minds of its original sponsors, a successful refoundation of the failed former University, but its birth also depended upon the willingness of Baptist leaders to remerge their seminary with the University, thus undoing the fateful secession that had taken place in 1877.

CONCLUSION

The fanfare with which the new University was launched by Harper, always a preeminent showman with a “magnetic personality,” obscured important institutional continuities between the old and new.²⁰³ Several of the largest early gifts to our University came from donors who were either associated with the old University or who were acting on behalf of those who did have strong ties. The gift of \$800,000 by Helen Culver from the estate of Charles Hull essentially came because Helen Culver was honoring the intention of Charles Hull, who was a trustee of the first University and whose son had attended the school, to make an estate gift to Chicago. When Culver announced her gift in 1895, George Walker wrote to her observing, “[I]t is with peculiar satisfaction that I learned of your very generous gift to the University of Chicago. It brought up many recollections of former days, when my father was a Trustee of the old University, and in close touch with Mr. Hull on the Board; also later when I was elected to the same position. I know that it was with deep regret that Mr. Hull saw the old Institution losing its influence and ceasing to exist, but there was even then a hope that [a] new one would take its place. The success of the new University would surely give him great

203. Ira M. Price, “Some Personal Recollections of W. R. Harper prior to 1892,” p. 14, *Ira M. Price Papers*, Box 6, folder 2.

joy if he were living. You could not have done a wiser thing for his memory, and we honor you for the act." To which Culver responded: "The belief that I am acting as he would wish is a joy to me too."²⁰⁴

Similarly, the decision of the executors of the estate of William Ogden provided the new University in July 1891 with over \$560,000, essentially the major gift that Ogden had refused to give out of disgust with the feuding on the old board of trustees.²⁰⁵ The gifts that we received from the Rosenberger and Culver estates also came from alumni of the first University, showing confidence in the second; and, as mentioned above, the gift by George Walker of \$100,000 in 1892 came from a former trustee of the old institution, now translated into the same role for the new. The first endowed professorship created at the new University of Chicago was funded by contributions from alumni of the old University during the 1889–90 pledge drive, in honor of Edward Olson, an alumnus (Class of 1873) and former professor of Greek at Chicago who had also served as the president of the University of South Dakota and who had died tragically at the age of 46 in a fire in Minneapolis in November 1889. This professorship is now held by our colleague James M. Redfield of the Department of Classics. Finally, in the domain of academic culture, it is perhaps not too much to assume that the peculiar strain of academic seriousness and dedication to the liberal arts that defined the student *and* faculty culture of the old University was a fitting prelude to the kinds of values with which our founders endowed the new University. Certainly, an alumnus like Charles R. Henderson, with his deep commitment to hard-hitting social

204. Walker to Culver, December 17, 1895, and Culver to Walker, December 19, 1895, *George C. Walker Scrapbook*, folder 9.

205. Goodspeed, "William Butler Ogden," pp. 55–56.



reform in Gilded Age Chicago, but with the ultimate goal (as Andrew Abbott has argued) of “creating a world in which spiritual interests ultimately predominate,” can be seen as drawing upon older midcentury notions of moral character development as a godly necessity and godly warrant that were key assumptions of the liberal arts curriculum of the early University.²⁰⁶ There is, thus, every reason to assume that Henderson was completely sincere when, in describing the alumni of the old University in 1907, he insisted that the “men who have gone out from it have had impulses to do the work of men and to make the world better than they found it. They have brought into the world of business, commerce, and law high and noble impulses.”²⁰⁷

Six of the original 21 Trustees of the new University had served as trustees of the old University: E. Nelson Blake, Frederick A. Smith, Eli B. Felsenthal, Francis E. Hinckley, Henry R. Rust, and George C. Walker. Other trustees, like Ferdinand W. Peck and David G. Hamilton, were alumni of the old University. Still others were donors to the first University, like Alonzo K. Parker, or active members of the Baptist community in Chicago who had regularly interacted with the leaders of the University, like Edward Goodman, the owner of *The Standard* who had also served as the treasurer of the Morgan Park Seminary. All told, over 40 percent of the new board of trustees had some significant personal connection to the old enterprise. Several of the leading donors to the new University, including Silas Cobb and Sidney Kent, had had philanthropic conversations with Galusha Anderson, and it is perhaps with some justice that Anderson’s son later claimed that Anderson had helped to pave the

206. Abbott, “Pragmatic Sociology and the Public Sphere,” p. 365.

207. *Chicago Tribune*, February 23, 1907, p. 6.

way for Harper, in the sense that he had begun the cultivation of several key donors from whom Harper was later able to obtain major gifts.²⁰⁸

The old University also gave its successor institution both its name and its people. In order to enable the new institution to use the name of “The University of Chicago,” the trustees of the old University met at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Chicago on June 14, 1890, to acknowledge that their corporation “for want of financial aid has discontinued the work of maintaining a university” and that “it is requested by alumni of the old university that the new institution shall bear the same name as the old.” They then voted to give permission “to the new corporation about to be organized as aforesaid to take and use the name ‘The University of Chicago’, and the Secretary of State is hereby requested to issue a license to the new corporation aforesaid, with the name of ‘The University of Chicago’.”

At the first meeting of the board of the new University, on July 9, 1890, a resolution was moved by Judge Daniel Shorey to the effect that upon the new University being officially organized, “[I]t will recognize the alumni of the former university as alumni of the new university.” At the eighth meeting of the new board, on February 2, 1891, William Rainey Harper moved, “[I]n view of the relation of the new University of Chicago to the institution that formerly bore that name, we hereby confirm and re-enact the degrees of B.A. and B.S. conferred by the former University of Chicago, and we invite the graduates to consider themselves the alumni of the University, and to co-operate with us in the building of its greatness.” Thus did the new University gain, from an alumni relations perspective, a plausible genealogy as a pre-Civil War institution.

208. Anderson, *Galusha Anderson: Preacher and Educator*, p. 4.



But in spite of all such nominal (and sympathetic) efforts to make connections, a certain ambivalence against acknowledging links between the old and new remained, and the choice of a campus for the new University openly revealed this approach-and-avoidance paradox. Specifically, the choice of Hyde Park for our campus reflected the ambivalent image of the first University. Ever the outspoken partisan of the old University, William Everts tried to urge revival of the University on the old site of 34th Street, issuing a public statement on October 15, 1889, entitled “Reasons for Rehabilitating the Chicago University on the Property Bequeathed Towards Its Endowment by Senator Douglas. An Appeal to the National Baptist Educational Society.” For Everts, the best possible outcome of the re-creation of the University of Chicago would have been its reappearance at the old site, thus redeeming all of the (in his mind) sins of omission and commission committed by Everts’s former enemies on the old board of trustees: “Would not the rehabilitation [of the 34th Street site] wipe away the reproach of failure in a great public trust, and turn a painfully conspicuous memorial of disaster into a glorious arch of triumph? May we not best restore our credit where we lost it, and recover and wave in triumph our banner over the field from which we were disgracefully driven?”²⁰⁹

According to Henry C. Mabie, an alumnus of the old University and a local alumni leader, most of his fellow alumni agreed with Everts and wanted to return to the 34th Street site, because it would eliminate the failure and humiliation caused by the collapse of 1886. Mabie was “much inclined to think the very reasons — petty in my judgment — which some Chicago men urge for abandoning the old site,

209. *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 5.

form just the reason why all traces of former dishonor should now be wiped out, and chiefly by Chicago people.”²¹⁰

Gates and Morehouse, in contrast, were deeply noncommittal about the issue, which they rightly suspected of carrying immense emotional baggage, and they resented Everts’s meddling in the affair. Gates wrote to Morehouse:

Dr. Everts circular is annoying and nothing more. He has not the least influence hereabouts. His advocacy of any cause is more likely to damage that cause than to help it. I am very glad, however that you wrote him as you did. Both Goodspeed and I have told him the same thing over and over. His last interview with Goodspeed was stormy. Goodspeed told him among other plain truths that he was going about to wreck this enterprise just as he wrecked the other. He warned Everts that his work could result, if he got any fair measure of success, only in raising the price of the old property and on several of his absurd statements forced Everts to the wall. But Everts is irrepressible and irresponsible almost.²¹¹

Morehouse, too, thought that they should try to avoid the issue of the site as long as possible, until the fundraising campaign was successfully concluded, reporting to Gates that he had “said that I regret any agitation of the subject at this time lest discussion may arise and

210. Mabie to Gates, May 28, 1889, *University of Chicago Founders’ Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 7.

211. Gates to Morehouse, October 23, 1889, *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 5.

divisions result which shall weaken the present effort to secure the \$400,000.”²¹²

Similarly, William Rainey Harper refused to be drawn out before he needed to make a decision. Harper had no sympathy for Everts’s plan, but he urged Gates to try to placate him by appointing a commission to study the question, which Harper deemed to be very divisive. The Baptist Education Society would not have to follow the commission’s report, “but my impression is that in order to secure harmony it will be necessary to appoint some such commission as suggested. The commission may be appointed and a report made without committing the Society. Unless something like this is done, there will undoubtedly be estrangement on the part of a large number. Can it not be worked quietly, and carefully and harmoniously?”²¹³

This skirmishing in the autumn of 1889 also reflected the slow but certain success that Gates and Goodspeed had in their fundraising campaign among wealthy Chicagoans and their resentment that the pastors like Lorimer and Everts had proven of little help to them in securing necessary commitments. Gates confided to Morehouse, “We shall have a long hard pull and shall make it, I think. Between you and me we were not helped as much as we hoped by the clergy in Chicago and have had to do nearly all that has been done by our own personal hand to hand work.”²¹⁴

Still, Gates was very relieved when the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company overplayed their hand and asked far too much money for the old site, perhaps seeking to finally make a profit on their bad loans to the

212. Morehouse to Gates, October 18, 1889, *ibid.*

213. Harper to Gates, October 21, 1889, *ibid.*

214. Gates to Morehouse, September 11, 1889, *ibid.*

fallen school. Gates was very relieved when he informed Harper in November 1889, "By the way the old site is very happily disposed of. The insurance people do not even want to sell to us. . . . They will not take a cent less than \$400,000 and agree with us and everybody else that this is beyond our means. . . . The old site is so completely out of the question that no one thinks for a moment of our buying it. So that question may be regarded as finally disposed of. Everything is bright, and barring our personal embarrassment for lack of funds, we are perfectly happy and confident."²¹⁵

By early January 1890, Gates had turned his attention to a parcel of land owned by Marshall Field in the newly incorporated district of Hyde Park. The chance to secure a gift from a prominent Chicago business leader that was worth almost \$100,000 and that would greatly impress Rockefeller, and to gain a large piece of property in a more attractive area of the city was very alluring. Gates alerted Morehouse that "the Field site, if we get say 15 or 20 acres, would be a better one in some respects than the old one."²¹⁶ Finally, Gates was able to inform Morehouse in mid-January 1890 that the gift had been secured and that the University now had a perfect new site with which to work:

I wrote you a card announcing Mr. Fields' gift. It is located twenty-one blocks south and four blocks east of the old site. The land is sufficiently elevated and drained — an important item here is one block from the Cottage Grove Avenue [: the] Grip line running down this avenue and Wabash to the heart of the city, the loop turning on Lake Street. From the river dividing the

215. Gates to Harper, November 12, 1889, *ibid.*

216. Gates to Morehouse, January 1, 1890, *ibid.*, Box 1, folder 6.

north and south sides it is a 45-minute ride in “Grip” to the site. The Ill. Cent line with its city and suburban trains runs about 5 or 10 minutes walk from campus, with depot on the nearest point of the line. From this depot to the Illinois Central (and Mich Cent) Depot the time is 25 minutes, 47 trains running each way daily. . . . The territory of the south side and especially that for several miles in every direction from the site is residence property and forms the location of the higher middle and aristocratic classes. No manufacturing will ever be possible in the neighborhood. The land lies about 1200 feet East of Washington Park and about 2000 feet west of Jackson Park. These are the two great parks of the South Side. And are being developed with vast expense into great beauty. Each contains several hundred acres. The “Plaisance” which connects these two parks with a waterway Boulevard and pleasure grounds runs two blocks south of the site.²¹⁷

Writing in *The Standard*, Justin A. Smith applauded Field’s gift and predicted that the new site “is almost ideally perfect. . . . The locality for some miles in every direction forms the best residence portion of this city, while the immediate vicinity of the campus is not now so thickly peopled as to prevent the institution from surrounding itself with its own peculiar and stimulative social and intellectual atmosphere.”²¹⁸

Marshall Field’s gift of land in Hyde Park was not only crucial in enabling Gates and Goodspeed to put five miles of distance between themselves and the institutional memories cherished by Baptist pastors like William Everts, but it also signified the galvanizing effect that

217. Gates to Morehouse, January 17, 1890, *ibid*.

218. *The Standard*, January 23, 1890, p. 4.

a larger-than-life gift from an eastern Baptist would have on the wealthy new elites of Chicago. When Field wrote to Gates confirming his gift, he deliberately connected Rockefeller to all of Chicago, not just to the religious denomination to which he happened to belong, and he also invoked the cultural impact the new institution would have on the whole metropolis: “In common with all citizens of this city, I appreciate the splendid benefaction of Mr. Rockefeller to Chicago. I congratulate the people of this city and the entire West on the success achieved, and with all friends of culture I rejoice that another noble institution of higher learning is to be founded, and founded in the heart of the continent.”²¹⁹ In making itself worthy in the eyes of men like Marshall Field, the new University had now connected to those sectors of “the neutral wealth of the city” that Nelson Blake had so long admired.

Choosing a site distant from the bad memories of the old University was also immensely useful to Gates and Goodspeed as they worked their way through lists of Chicago millionaires, many of whom needed to be reassured that the new institution was truly new and not a carbon copy of the old University. As early as October 1889, Gates had reported to Harper, “[W]e have been importuned by our largest givers and ablest men not to commit ourselves in any way to any part of the old affair. We have been obliged frequently to disconnect this movement bag and baggage from the old in order to get a respectful hearing. Only today Drs. Goodspeed and Lorimer in conversation with C. L. Hutchinson, President of the Commercial Club (who promises our cause a hearing before the club next month), inquired anxiously if this had anything to do with the old institution in any way. Their assurance that it had *not*

219. Field to Gates, May 26, 1890, quoted in Goodspeed, *A History of the University of Chicago*, p. 93.



unlocked him and the Commercial Club.”²²⁰ Gates was also eager to obtain releases from all those to whom the old University owed money before he launched his appeals to men like Hutchinson and Martin Ryerson, so as to demonstrate that the bad fiscal habits of the past were gone forever. He confided to Nelson Blake, “[I]t will contribute much to the moral success of the new movement if we can say that every debt has been honorably settled. I wish we could say this at the very beginning of our canvass of the wealthy outside men of the city.”²²¹

The decision to locate the new University in Hyde Park meant that longer-term memories of the 34th and Cottage Grove site and all that it had contributed to our history would inevitably slip into the deep freeze of history, soon to be bypassed if not altogether forgotten. And so, too, has the very existence of the early University been elided out of our normal understanding of who we are and whence we came.²²²

220. Gates to Harper, October 23, 1889, *University of Chicago Founders' Correspondence, 1886–1892*, Box 1, folder 8.

221. Gates to Blake, July 15, 1889, *Old University of Chicago Records*, Box 3, folder 5.

222. The insurance company first tried to use the buildings of the old University as a rooming house in order to generate rental income, and by the summer of 1889, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that at least 50 families and individual tenants were occupying the buildings, including “artists, music teachers, school teachers, dressmakers, house and sign painters and day laborers. Those who follow the more distinguished callings occupy the main building, while the laboring population of this hive of humanity is relegated to the south wing.” “At the Old University,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 16, 1889, p. 29. Given the serious dilapidation of the building, however, the insurance company decided in late 1889 to raze the structure in order to clear the site for new development. Some of the stone was sold to a saloonkeeper who used it to build his house and to the Calvary Baptist Church at 38th Street and Wabash Avenue, whose building was largely constructed from these materials.

Other disjunctions soon followed, pushed by the revolution in faculty identity and institutional purpose that was at the heart of William Rainey Harper's plans for the new University. In ruthless contrast to the practices of the old University, Harper treated his faculty as key agents of professional prestige, whose individual and collective attainments, sanctioned by the competitive evaluations of the general scholarly community, would define the very essence of what the University was. Harper believed in relentless competition as the basis for merit, even if this proved discomfiting. Professor Ira Price remembered of Harper's tenure at the Morgan Park Seminary in the early 1880s, "Dr. Harper's classes in Hebrew were the talking feature of the institution. Indeed, the professors in the other departments had a chronic complaint that too much of the students' time was required by the Hebrew Department."²²³ Research was salutary not only as a way of advancing new knowledge, but as a way of publicly demonstrating the imagination, the creativity, and the professionalism of the new faculty, and of mobilizing and legitimating the capacity of the new University to improve and enrich society. This image of research as a social prophylactic matched well the rising confidence and prestige of the university-based professoriate in the United States that had coalesced since the 1880s as a new professional group with enhanced scholarly standards and rising levels of compensation, and protected by the growing power and authority of the academic disciplines.²²⁴ Hence Harper's conviction that

223. Ira M. Price, "Some Personal Recollections of W. R. Harper," pp. 5–6.

224. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform. From Bryan to FDR* (New York, 1955), pp. 153–154; as well as Roger Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge. The Growth of the American Research Universities, 1900–1940* (New York, 1986), pp. 20–39; Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, *The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States* (New York, 1955), pp. 274, 404–412; Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism. The Middle Class and the Development*



the new University would be a powerful defender of democracy and liberal values by its capacity to touch “life, every phase of life, at every point. It enters into every field of thought to which the human mind addresses itself. It has no fixed abode away from man; for it goes to those who cannot go to it. It is shut behind no lofty battlement, for it has no enemy which it would ward off. Strangely enough, it vanquishes its enemies by inviting them into close association with itself. The university is of the people, and for the people, whether considered individually or collectively.”²²⁵ Hence also Harper’s frenzied efforts to take the University everywhere via an extension division — Harper’s University would not only be public in a profoundly new way, but it would create its own publics in the city and the region.

The tendency to make the early institution disappear was evident in Frederick Gates’s own later appreciations and reflections. Thinking about how our University was born and lived to flourish, Gates minimized the role of the Baptists when he wrote to Thomas Goodspeed in 1914, “[T]he marvelous development into a great university in rapidity unapproached in human annals — all that was, if dreamed by anyone the stuff of dream’s only. The denomination did not foresee it, least of all accomplish it. All the wondrous growth has resulted from the large views of its two great Presidents, the limitless contributions of its founder, the

of Higher Education in America (New York, 1976), pp. 269–296, 323–331; Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University*, pp. 121–179; Steven J. Diner, *A City and Its Universities. Public Policy in Chicago, 1892–1919* (Chapel Hill, 1980), pp. 4–10; and Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity. A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865–1905* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1975), pp. xi, 2, 107–108, 125–126, 144–145, 289.

225. William Rainey Harper, “The University and Democracy,” in *The Trend in Higher Education* (Chicago, 1905), p. 8.

wisdom and fidelity of the Trustees, the generosity of citizens of Chicago, the needs of a vast field and a rapidly increasing student body.”²²⁶ In this reading of our history, the University was basically hatched out of the ethereal air of Harper’s genius.

Similarly, when Thomas Goodspeed was completing his history of the first quarter century of the University and sent draft chapters to Gates for his comments and review, Gates reacted with little enthusiasm to Goodspeed’s detailed chronicle of the early University and the seminary as a prelude to the new institution. Gates thought that the old University and the seminary taken together were a “sad and disheartening story, notwithstanding your praiseworthy and successful efforts to qualify, excuse, [and] wherever possible to commend and praise.” Gates was particularly annoyed that Goodspeed devoted so much of the early text to the seminary in Morgan Park and to the faculty of the seminary. He wrote with some impatience, “[Y]our paper would carry more weight and, in my opinion, suffer no loss of dignity, if the bouquets which you throw to a good many of the old seminary teachers, etc., were reserved for a history of the seminary to be distributed among its alumni[.] Your kind heart, your grateful memory, have betrayed you, as it seems to me, into a work of supererogation here, quite manifest to all your readers, which detracts from the unity, cogency, and disinterestedness of your presentation.”²²⁷

Goodspeed persisted, however, and rightly so, for the history of the early University and the seminary were not only part of the narrative of failure, but also gave hope to the Baptists in 1885 and 1886 that they might be able to reestablish a center of higher learning and teaching, and that, indeed, they needed to do so for the future of their denomination.

226. Gates to Goodspeed, March 6, 1914, *Goodspeed Papers*, Box 1, folder 11.

227. Gates to Goodspeed, May 19, 1914, *ibid.*, Box 1, folder 21.

It is particularly telling, moreover, that in 1890 a much younger Frederick Gates, fresh from the political battles which led to the revival of the University, saw things very differently than he did in 1914. In addressing the newly constituted board of trustees of our University at their first meeting on July 9, 1890, Gates emphasized with great eloquence the moral and cultural links between the old and new Universities:

There is a certain obligation of honor which we have gladly assumed, the full discharge of which we desire to commit to you. The Trustees of the University of Chicago founded in 1857, the work of which was discontinued some years since, have unanimously and heartily bequeathed to you the name [of] the University of Chicago, and with the name they bequeath also their alumni. The new University of Chicago rises out of the ruins of the old. The thread of legal life indeed is broken. Technicalities difficult or impossible to be removed have prevented our use of the charter of 1857. The new University of Chicago, with a new site, a new management, new and greatly multiplied resources, and free from all embarrassing complications, nevertheless bears the name of the old, is located in the same community, under the same general denominational auspices, is supported by the same class of public spirited citizens, will enter on the same educational work, and will aim to realize the highest hopes of those who were disappointed in the old. A generation hence the break in legal life will have lapsed from the memory of men. In the congeries of interests, affections, aspirations, [and] endeavors which do in fact form the real life of an institution of learning, in these there has been no break. The alumni of the institution in its older form are the true sons of

the new, and as such we bespeak for them such appropriate and early recognition as your thoughtful courtesy may suggest.²²⁸

There was indeed no break, if one sees the University through a Burkean spectrum of transgenerational partnerships. That is, if one views the University as a self-governing *civitas* of free scholars, defined by an intense love of learning and suffused by strong and resolute intergenerational partnerships over history, then it is possible to argue that each generation has profited from the good works of those who came before and that each generation has also added something of its own to the collective virtue and wisdom and resources of this great University. What began as a humble and inchoate project for a frontier college in the 1850s evolved into a noble and sustainable ideal, and one grounded in the firm and plausible support of social elites of Chicago. The moral urgency of the Baptists like Goodspeed and Morehouse, the intellectual imagination and daring of Harper, the cunning and deep pragmatism of Gates, and the extraordinary generosity of Rockefeller and his fellow Chicago donors combined to relaunch the University founded by John Burroughs and his colleagues. Ironically, the one thing that Burroughs and Harper had in common was their willingness to spend large sums of money that they did not have. Harper had a plausible and patient benefactor, a distinguished faculty, and an attractive educational plan, however, while Burroughs lacked all three.

Yet in creating a new University of Chicago, Harper also defended the intrinsic value of teaching in ways that honored the humble but still transformational instructional work that defined both the old University

228. *Gates Papers*, Box 1, folder 7.



and the Morgan Park Seminary. After all, Harper too came from that world, even though his institutional ambitions and intellectual aspirations ultimately moved him beyond it. Shailer Mathews later observed that Harper “was the spiritual father of an entire generation of biblical teachers who are in the seminaries and colleges of the country.”²²⁹ Characteristically, however, Harper moved teaching to a higher plane than that imagined by his predecessors in the 1860s and 1870s. Harper’s distinguished colleague Albion Small later observed that one of Harper’s most original conceptions was the idea that teaching was yet another way of discovering new knowledge. Small argued:

He wanted all the teachers to do their teaching with the ambition, in the first place, to find out by means of their teaching experience something that had not previously been understood about the mental workings of pupils at the stage of growth with which each teacher was particularly dealing; and second, with the aim of discovering better methods of furnishing that stage of growth with the precise kind of exercise which would advance it most normally to its next stage of growth. This was the reason too why Dr. Harper was interested in discouraging the idea that the teacher of graduate students was necessarily more “scientific” and entitled to higher academic rank than teachers of primary or secondary grades. He thought of all the instructors as investigators in the broad field of pedagogy, whether they were investigating in any other field or not. . . . [O]f all the ideals about which Dr. Harper expressed himself to me, this is

229. Shailer Mathews, “President Harper as a Religious Leader,” *The Standard*, January 20, 1906, p. 10.

the one which impressed me as the most distinctive, and at the same time as most central in his entire plan.²³⁰

The story of the old University revealed in a dramatic way that universities and colleges, like all complex social institutions, do have to pay attention to the wider world in which they seek to live and that, for better or worse, they must adjust and change as that world changes. Our ideals may be constant, based on centuries of productive and creative learning, but our people and their lived environments are ever changing, with different habits, tastes, and social meanings governing their lives.

The rise, fall, and re-creation of the University also demonstrated the importance of philanthropy and of “fit” with the larger socioeconomic and urban environment. Universities have to be cognizant of the importance of these variables. In our own history, we tried going it alone, without the support of major donors who were perforce the “wealthy men” whom Goodspeed and Gates so coveted, and the result was a total disaster. The story of the old University was one of hope and faith in the value of the liberal arts, but also one of frustration and embarrassment born of steady penury, and ultimately shame born of humiliating defeat.

This does not mean that we must sell our souls, nor that we should allow others to tell us what to teach, what to write, and what to speak. Rather, it does suggest that we must never cease to explain to all of our constituencies what a real university is and what it is not, and that the heart and soul of the modern university is scholarly freedom, a freedom that empowers individual creativity while necessitating individual responsibility. Nor should we forget that our university became great

230. Small to Goodspeed, August 2, 1915, *Goodspeed Papers*, Box 4, folder 12.



because of the sacrifices, the generosity, and the faith placed in it by past generations and by our many publics of the present. Those alumni and friends expect us to use our freedom for the good of the most talented of young Americans, opening our doors to the most qualified students, doing well by those students once they matriculate, teaching them to the very best of our abilities, in a word, becoming and remaining, as William Rainey Harper once put it, “the guide of the people, and an ally of humanity in its struggle for advancement.”²³¹ Harper’s vision — that the University would constitute a force for democratic enlightenment that would enrich the public good — is no less compelling today than it was over a century ago.

The early trustees of the first University aspired, as they stated in 1857, to a University “not as a thing for the moment, but for all time.” They proved unable to sustain such an institution, but the urgency felt by local Chicago Baptists in the 1880s to make good on the failed leadership of the first University led them to again take up that cause, resulting in our University. In the end, the new University was born because the existence and unfulfilled promise of the old University, with all its disappointments and shortcomings, had raised a profound consciousness of the importance of a preeminent and noteworthy institution of higher education in Chicago. Goodspeed, Northrup, Gates, and Morehouse wanted a new University because it would function as a *successful* heir to the old, not simply because they admired newness for its own sake. Seen in the light of the extraordinary and deeply contingent stream of *va banque* politics that was played out by these determined leaders between 1886 and 1889, it is fair to say that the demise of the old gave birth both to the possibility and the necessity of the new.

231. “The University and Democracy,” p. 1.

It takes nothing away from the enormous organizational achievements of William Rainey Harper and from the scholarly eminence of the first research faculty after 1892 to remember that it was this endless cascade of advocacy and appeals by Goodspeed and his fellow Baptist colleagues, insisting that Chicago needed a first-class teaching college, that gave Harper and his fellow professors the opportunity to create a great new center of international learning, a chance that they used so effectively and so well.

Let me close by thanking all members of the faculty for their dedication to the College and to our students. It is a pleasure and honor to serve as your dean, and I am very grateful for your support for our students and our alumni.

May we all have a safe, stimulating, and fruitful academic year. Thank you very much.

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THE COLLEGE
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