

THE HISTORY OF MISSOURI VALLEY COLLEGE

So far as history is concerned, it is difficult to fix on definite data, and yet it may be said that the history of Missouri Valley College began with a conference of the representatives of the several synods in the state of Missouri, which was held at Sarcoxie, Missouri, October 27, 1874.

Ever since the lamented failure of the McGee College, brethren on both sides of the Missouri River had been hoping, praying, and planning for the projection of some new educational enterprise. These representatives, gathered at Sarcoxie in the fall of '74, "formulated a system of endowment under which the work should be prosecuted until one hundred thousand dollars were secured." Each synod of Missouri thereafter elected its quota of what was known as the Educational Commission. *McAdow Synod*, Rev. J. B. Mitchell, D.D., Rev. E. D. Pearson, D.D., and Ben Eli Guthrie, Esq. *Missouri Synod*, Rev. J. H. Houx, Rev. T. S. Love, and Rev. P. H. Rea. *Ozark Synod*, Rev. T. W. Pendergrass, Rev. E. E. Baker, and W. H. Ritchie, Esq. These nine constituted the Educational Commission as at first organized. Rev. J. B. Mitchell, D.D., was president; Ben Eli Guthrie was secretary, and A. W. Ridings was elected treasurer. In 1875, one year later, Dr. Mitchell resigned, whereupon the Rev. J. H. Houx was elected president. In the years '80 and '81, after various changes had been made in the plan of operation, conferring greater authority upon the president of the Commission, particularly in the matter of receiving and disbursing funds, the enterprise took on new life and made encouraging progress. This continued, with ebb and flow of interest, until the meeting of synod in 1885 at Odessa, Missouri, when, after ten years of faithful service as president of the Educational Commission, Rev. J. H. Houx resigned. As Dr. Pearson said in his report to synod, in reviewing the history of the movement, Rev. J. H. Houx had been a veritable "John the Baptist" in the work that he had done in laying broad and deep the foundations for the future college enterprise. He had not only collected money, and secured bequests, but he had fixed in the minds of the people, a deep and abiding faith in the desirability, the possibility, the practicability, and the reliability of the enterprise. This was no small work, in view of the previous history of the educational interests in the state of Missouri. The Rev. J. B. Mitchell, D.D., was again elected a member of the Commission at Odessa in '85, and subsequently made the president thereof. They were dark days which followed, and the light did not break upon the Educational Commission or upon those interested in the educational work of the Cumberland Presbyterian church in Missouri, until a definite proposition was made by certain brethren in the city of Sedalia, Missouri, with reference to the location of the projected college in their city. Their proposition was, that if the twenty-nine thousand dollars then in bank and in securities, and the twenty-five thousand dollars in bequests were made available, that is to say, if the twenty-nine thousand dollars in bank and securities and the twenty-five thousand dollars in bequests, making fifty-four thousand dollars, were made available in actual income-producing endowment for a college, then Sedalia would give forty-six thousand dollars to the endowment, thereby completing the hundred thousand dollars endowment; it would add to its gift fifteen acres of ground for the college, and twenty-five thousand dollars to build the college edifice. This was the proposition, emanating from Sedalia, which brought light on the subject of the new college. The Sedalia people

gave bond for the fulfillment of their contract. Immediately, there was revived interest on the subject of the college. Financial agents were appointed in all of the presbyteries. President Mitchell traveled two hundred days, without salary, in arousing interest and soliciting funds for the completion of the synod's part of the required amount. On the thirteenth of September, 1887, the Educational Commission met and rejoiced. The fifty-four thousand dollars had been raised, and the bond of Sedalia was good for all that remained. It was only necessary to carry out the instructions of the synod and the terms of the Commission's charter in order to secure the location, the building and all the details connected with the establishment of the enterprise in its practical form. Ninety days were given for the taking of bids, as the charter of the Commission required. Three bids were received. These were from Sedalia, Odessa, Marshall.

The bid of Marshall was forty-six thousand dollars cash to the endowment fund, thirty-eight thousand dollars cash to the building fund, seventy-four lots in College Addition to the city of Marshall, valued at twenty-two thousand dollars, and forty acres in the College Addition to Marshall, valued at thirty-two thousand dollars, making a total in their proposition of a hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars. After looking at all the bids, in all their bearings, it was finally concluded by the Educational Commission that the proposition of Marshall was the most favorable, and therefore the location of the institution was awarded accordingly and the bond of Sedalia returned to the hands of its originators. The location having been determined, there were still some details to be attended to by the Educational Commission before its work should be finally concluded. It was necessary to secure a charter for the new institution, to give a name, and to render such assistance to a Board of Trustees to be elected as would be necessary in transferring the business from one body of men to another. The synods elected a board of trustees composed of thirteen members, and gave them instructions to proceed to build the college at Marshall. The name chosen was that of Missouri Valley College, "A name euphonious and significant. We are pleased to find that it gives universal satisfaction," said Dr. Pearson in his report to the synod in 1888. The Educational Commission had its final meeting September 11, 1888, "hoping and believing," they said, "that there will exist no cause for our being called together again." They adjourned in a state of jubilation, as is evident from their report to synod in the month following, when they said: "We hail you happy, on the completion of that grand and noble work, which has engaged your minds and hearts for more than a half score of years." Their work had been done at almost no expense to the church. The minimum amount of a hundred thousand dollars of college endowment had been secured through the comprehensive labors of Rev. J. H. Houx and the intensive work of Rev. J. B. Mitchell, D.D., with no expense to the church save that incidental to traveling, and yet the Educational Commission had been able to turn over to the Board of Trustees of Missouri Valley College for endowment in cash, notes, and securities, a hundred and four thousand, three hundred and eighty-one dollars and eight cents (\$104,382.08) for the college building in cash, notes, etc., thirty-eight thousand dollars, seventy-four unsold lots, estimated at twenty-two thousand dollars, bequests secured, two thousand five hundred dollars, and a deed to forty acres of college campus, valued at thirty-two thousand dollars. In addition, bequests promised but no papers on hand, twenty-two thousand, five hundred dollars, the charter of Missouri Valley College, the charter and the records and papers of the Educational Commission. Thus closed,

crowned with great success, the work of the Educational Commission, which had lasted through fourteen years--years of patient labor, of uncertainty in the minds of many, of great perseverance on the part of a few, of intense hope, and which redounded to the glory of God.

Called meetings of Missouri, Ozark, and Kansas synods were held in May and June, of 1888, for the purpose of electing the trustees of Missouri Valley College, thirteen in number. The first meeting of the new Board of Trustees was held in Marshall, Missouri, June 13, 1888, at which time Rev. E. D. Pearson, D.D., was elected president of the Board; W. T. Baird, Esq., vice-president; D. D. Duggins, Esq., secretary, and T. C. Rainey, Esq., treasurer. A number of meetings were held during the summer, when plans and specifications were discussed, architects interviewed, plans adopted, and contracts finally awarded. After having advertised for bids from contractors, a meeting was held October 15, 1888, and the contract for erecting the building was awarded at forty-two thousand, three hundred and fifty dollars exclusive of heating, furnishing and painting, the building to be completed October 1, 1889.

At one of these early meetings the Board resolved, "There shall be a chair in the college for Biblical instruction. The endowment of the chair is not provided for, but it is hoped that the necessary amount will be secured by the time the college is opened." This action was confirmed by the synod at its meeting in October, as per the following resolution offered by Dr. Mitchell: "*Resolved*, That after the Chair of Biblical instruction in our college is open, the regular course of study for both males and females preparatory to graduation shall include the biography, history, geography, literature and moral code of the Bible, to which may be added such elective studies therein as the faculty may prescribe." It was also decided by synod that the institution should be co-educational, as per the following resolution: "That the faculty and trustees of our college, in organizing the school, while arranging for such separate courses for male and female students respectively as their judgment shall suggest, shall, however, admit female students to any and all the classes of the institution as may be desired by them and award to them the regular honors of such classes upon the same basis as that established for males."

A work of very great importance in carrying out the construction of the college was done by Rev. E. D. Pearson, D.D., by the sale of lots and the obtaining of a large sum of money by this means for completing the college edifice. This work of his was duly recognized in the following resolution of synod adopted at Macon, Missouri, 1889: "*Resolved*, That we express our hearty appreciation of Dr. E. D. Pearson's self-sacrificing and indefatigable efforts, and his marked success in the sale of the college lots for building purposes."

During 1889, the board pushed the building toward completion as rapidly as they were able, elected a faculty of seven teachers, and announced the opening of the college on September 17, 1889. At that time, only eight or nine rooms of the college building were sufficiently completed for use. In fact, the organization took place in the old Cumberland Presbyterian church. But those rooms in the college that were completed were in a few days, used by the faculty and students, at which time it was found that in addition to the

seven teachers there were ninety-two students in attendance, among them nine young preachers. By the time synod met, a month later, there were a hundred and twenty-four in attendance, and for the year there was an enrollment of a hundred and fifty-three. Seventy-two of the students at the time of the meeting of synod were from Saline county and fifty-two from a distance. A Y.M.C.A. had been organized with fifteen members. The faculty was constituted as follows: A. J. McGlumphy, D.D., LL.D., chairman of the faculty and Professor of Mathematics; W. H. Shaw, A.M., Professor of Languages; L. B. Seawell, B.L.D., Professor of Natural Science; W. E. Grube, A.M., Principal of the Academy; Zada Seawell, Preceptress; Miss C. C. Carr, Instructor of Music; Mary L. Armstrong, Instructor in Art.

During the previous summer, Pres. G. L. Osborne, LL.D., had been elected President, but had declined. Subsequently William H. Black, D.D., was elected, and he also declined, but was re-elected the following February, 1890, and accepted, beginning his work April 1, of that year.

As per agreement with the President, the course of study in the college, received certain very marked modifications. The Faculty was revised, laboratories and libraries were installed and the disposition of the rooms of the college was made with reference to the requirements of the new course. The reorganization of the Faculty was as follows: William H. Black, D.D., President of the College and Professor of Psychology and Ethics; A. J. McGlumphy, D.D., LL.D., Dean of the College and Professor of Mathematics; W. E. Grube, A.M., Dean of the Academy and Professor of Greek; A. McGinnis, A.M., Professor of Advanced Latin and German; R. T. Kerlin, Professor of Academic Latin and French; J. M. Penick, A.M., Professor of Physics and Chemistry; Joan C. Orr, Professor of History and Elocution; E. S. Place, School of Music; Mary L. Armstrong, School of Fine Arts.

The summer of 1890 was a short summer because of the amount of time required and the vast amount of work needing to be done in order to effect these changes. The building, however, was entirely completed and furnished, the laboratories installed, the library under way, the new faculty in their positions, and all ready for the reception of new students at the opening of school in September. The heating plant had all been put in place, the painting done, everything looked bright, fresh and beautiful. The spring before, on Arbor Day, the students had planted about two hundred trees in the college campus, which previously had been unadorned. In the spring of the following year, 1891, under the inspiring leadership of L. A. Goodman, Esq., of Westport, Missouri, the indefatigable secretary of the State Horticultural Society, twelve hundred evergreen and deciduous trees were planted in the college campus. A half-holiday was given to the students for this purpose, and Mr. Goodman in person superintended the work. Previously, the landscape gardener of the State Horticultural Society had come and laid off the ground preparatory to the work, according to an artistic design.

Further additions and modifications were made in the course of study, by which the requirements for admission were raised, the course of study in the college elevated, and

enriched. In 1891, the School of Biology was added, and T. W. Galloway, A.M., was elected professor in charge.

In 1896 the work was further broadened by the founding of the chair of French and the election of Miss Myrtle Thorp to that chair. Mrs. Ada Brasfield was elected assistant in music in 1891 in order to meet the demands of the School of Music.

In 1894 the Dormitory was built, providing for the comfort of students for the ministry and other necessitous young men.

In 1890 W. T. Baird, Esq., of Kirksville, Missouri, had added to his previous subscriptions to the college sufficient to make the total amount ten thousand dollars, whereupon the Board of Trustees unanimously and heartily named the chair of Greek after him, and at his request, associated his long-time pastor and friend, Dr. J. B. Mitchell, with him, so that the chair bears the name, "Baird-Mitchell Chair of Greek." The Bible has been taught in the college since September, 1890, until September, 1895, as a labor of love, all the members of the Faculty participating. But in 1895 John C. Cobb and wife of Odessa, Missouri, increased their previous contributions to the college, by the agreement to support the Biblical chair at one thousand dollars a year for two years ending June, 1897. Thus the Biblical chair was inaugurated in Missouri Valley College, and the President was elected by the Board to give instruction in that department.

It is earnestly hoped that this chair will be speedily and adequately endowed.

At the meeting of synod in 1889, the Board of Trustees reported that the Chapel "will be large." It is now found, however, that it is very much too small, and the Board has taken steps for the building of a new Chapel. It is hoped that some generous friend of the college will come forward with a donation sufficient to build and name it. Ten to fifteen thousand dollars should be sufficient of the building, with an equal sum as an endowment to maintain its operation.

Missouri Valley College was first mentioned by name to the General Assembly, by the Board of Education in its report, wherein it was stated that "Missouri Valley has 14" candidates in attendance. A similar legend appears in the minutes of 1891. At Memphis, Tennessee, May 26, 1892, the Assembly gives its first official recognition in the report of the late Rev. E.B. Crisman, D.D., chairman of the Committee on Education, who devotes a separate paragraph to a description of the work and equipment of Missouri Valley College. In 1894, at Eugene, Oregon, in the report of Rev. Prof. D.S. Bodenhammer, the College is commended because "the Bible has a place in the course of instruction." The recognition since has been very generous on the part of the General Assembly.

[Source: *Eleventh Annual Catalog, Missouri Valley College*. Marshall Missouri 1899-1900, pages 11-23]

Missouri Valley College:

1. History of the Organization.--The College was the outgrowth of a desire on the part of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to have a College to take the place of the old McGee College which had been closed in the early seventies. This desire led the Synod of Missouri of that Church to undertake the work securing an endowment for the Institution. As early as 1874 the Synod elected members of an education commission whose business it was to secure funds for the Institution. It was agreed that the College would not be opened until a permanent endowment of \$100,000.00 should be raised. Rev. J. H. Houx was made President of the Commission, and it was very largely through his efforts and leadership that the endowment was finally secured.

2. Charter Obtained. In September, 1888, the Commission secured a Charter for the organization of the new college, but the Institution was not opened until September, 1889, for the reason that the endowment was not secured until about that time.

3. Location.--An offer, made by Sedalia in 1887 to complete the endowment fund on certain conditions, brought the matter of locating the College to a crisis. Finally the Commission met to consider Sedalia's position and it was thought best to open up the whole matter for bids for the new College, ninety days being allowed in which to receive bids. After the bids had been made the Commission met and finally decided that, all things considered, Marshall, located in Saline County, had made the best proposition, consequently the new Institution was located in that town, and the College named "Missouri Valley."

4. Board of Trustees Organized.--The Synods elected a Board of Trustees made up of thirteen members, which held its first meeting in June, 1888, at which time the Rev. E. D. Pearson, D.D., LL.D., was chosen President. Thus after fourteen years the school was ready to begin its organization.

5. First Faculty.--The first Faculty was composed of seven members. No President having been chosen, A. J. McGlumphy, D.D., LL.D., was made chairman of the Faculty and Mr. W. E. Grube was chosen Principal of the Academy.

6. Securing a President.--Some difficulty was experienced in securing a President. During the summer of 1889, Dr. George L. Osborne who was President of the Warrensburg State Normal, was elected President but declined. Some time later Dr. W. H. Black, who was then Pastor of the Lucas Avenue Cumberland Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, was chosen President, but he declined. In February, 1890, Dr. Black was elected again and accepted entering upon his duties as President April 1, 1890, and he has been President of the Institution continuously since that time.

7. Present Organization.--As soon as Dr. Black became President the school underwent a re-organization and was made to include the following departments: the College proper; the Academy and the School of Music.

8. Buildings.--The school now has the main building, the dormitory which was built in 1895, which was afterwards named "Birkhead Dormitory" and accommodates forty-eight men, and the "Stewart Chapel" which was recently erected by the Hon. A. C. Stewart of St. Louis.

Statistics.--(A) Faculty.--The Faculty at present consists of eighteen Professors and Instructors.

(B) Students.--The Institution enrolled two hundred nineteen students for the year 1909-1910. This number is slightly less than for some other years, due no doubt to the problems growing out of the union of the two Presbyterian Churches.

(C) Student Organizations.--There are three literary societies for the students, The Pearsonian, the Houxonian and the Bairdean. The societies are composed of both sexes and each regular student in the institution is expected to be a member of one of them. The institution also maintains a Young Men's Christian Association and a Young Women's Christian Association.

(D) Graduates.--Since the foundation of the institution it has granted two hundred fourteen diplomas.

(E) Attendance.--Since the organization of the College it has enrolled five thousand and thirty-one students.

(F) Library.--The libraries now consist of fourteen thousand volumes.

(G) Endowment.--The permanent endowment of the College is \$186,385.19.

(H) Value of the Plant.--The present value of the school plant, including buildings, grounds, libraries and laboratories is \$225,083.76.

(I) Tuition and Fees.--The tuition in the Academy is \$9.00 a quarter and \$12.50 in the College. Each student also pays an incidental fee of \$5.00 a quarter. There are special fees for some of the Sciences.

10. Characterization.--Since its organization it has maintained a high Academic and religious standard for its students. Special emphasis has been given to Bible study and many young men have received their preliminary training in the Institution for the Ministry and other religious work.

[Source: Phillips, Claude A. *A History of Education in Missouri*. Jefferson City, Mo.: Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1911, pages 215-218]

WILLIAM HENRY BLACK

(Prepared by President George Herbert Mack, Missouri Valley College)

William Henry Black, son of the Rev. Felix G. and Lydia (Carruthers) Black, was born in Centerville, Indiana, March 19, 1854. Intending to practice law, the sudden death of his father turned his purpose to the gospel ministry. His college and seminary courses were carried closely together and while pursuing these he was in the active ministry. He graduated from Waynesburg College in 1876 and from Western Theological Seminary in 1878. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Miami (C.P.) April 10, 1875, and was ordained by the Presbytery of Pennsylvania (C.P.) Sept. 14, 1876. He was at the same time supplying the churches of Old Concord, Pa., 1875-6, Centerville, Ind., 1876-7, and entered upon his Pittsburgh pastorate in the latter year before the end of his seminary course. In 1881 he became pastor of the Lucas Avenue (C.P.) church of St. Louis, Mo. Thus fourteen years of his life, up to 1889, were given to active ministry in the pulpit.

When the Synods of Kansas and Missouri of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church founded the college at Marshall, known as Missouri Valley College, they offered the presidency to Dr. Black. He first declined it, but on being pressed he accepted, and, with his family, moved to Marshall to March, 1889. He became President Emeritus in 1927. Thus during thirty-seven school years President Black was the active and efficient head of this institution.

In several respects did President Black make distinct contributions. As head of the College he made many friends throughout Missouri, and elsewhere, and received from them generous support. Under his administration six buildings were erected on the campus beside the Main Building, which was here at his coming. He saw the endowment grow from the original \$100,000 secured by the Commission of Synod to \$650,000. Likewise growth marked the student body through the years.

He was a pulpit and platform speaker of great ability, much sought after for addresses and sermons. He was an orator of dignity, culture and great appeal. Some very important decisions followed addresses which he delivered.

A further distinct contribution was made by his leadership in the union negotiations which brought together the Cumberland Presbyterian and Presbyterian Churches. As chairman of the committee for the former body, he was a wise leader. As one who directed the subsequent litigation, he showed remarkable legal acumen. The result of his services in this respect has been to place upon the records of the United States Supreme Court opinions which will aid in any further church union projects.

Finally, as a leader in the Church, President Black exercised wide influence. Prominent in the General Assembly, listened to always with marked respect, and as a member on important committees, he was one of the honored Church statesmen of his time.

President Black passed away quietly among friends and loved ones at Marshall on June 22, 1930. His funeral in Stewart Chapel was conducted by graduates of the College that he loved, including President George H. Mack, Rev. George P. Baity, of the Westport Avenue Church, Kansas City; and Rev. W. R. VanBuskirk, of the Odell Avenue Church, Marshall.

Dr. Black was married April 3, 1879, at Pittsburgh, Pa., to Miss Mary E. Henderson, whose death occurred on October 14, 1930. Three daughters of this union survive.

[Source: *Minutes of the Synod of Missouri (PCUSA)*, 1931, pages 66-67]